Governing Urban Diversity: Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today’s Hyper-diversified Cities

The Case of Athens

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Dealing with Urban Diversity

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DIVERCITIES: Dealing with Urban Diversity

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This book is one of the outcomes of the DIVERCITIES project. It focuses on the question of how to create social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance in today's hyper-diversified cities. The project's central hypothesis is that urban diversity is an asset; it can inspire creativity, innovation and make cities more liveable and harmonious. To ensure a more intelligent use of diversity's potential, a re-thinking of public policies and governance models is needed.

Headed by Utrecht University in the Netherlands, DIVERCITIES is a collaborative research project comprising 14 European teams. DIVERCITIES is financed by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (Project No. 319970).

There are fourteen books in this series, one for each case study city. The cities are: Antwerp, Athens, Budapest, Copenhagen, Istanbul, Leipzig, London, Milan, Paris, Tallinn, Toronto, Warsaw and Zurich.

This book is concerned with Athens. The texts in this book are based on a number of previously published DIVERCITIES reports.

The authors
1 DEALING WITH URBAN DIVERSITY: AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Cities are diverse environments. They are always mixed in all respects, including activities, housing and population groups. This mix can be organised at different scales depending on the historical, economic and socio-demographic processes that have shaped the city space. In some cities, economic activities and residences are somewhat separated into distinct areas. In other cities, as in Athens, which is the subject of this book, production and housing coexist in the urban tissue. The same goes for populations. In some cities, urban neighbourhoods may be fairly homogeneous residential areas housing social and ethnic groups with similar characteristics and resources. In other cities, neighbourhoods show a more mixed population with respect to, for example, income, ethnicity, age and household composition. In all cases, compared to non-urban areas, cities are places where diversity prevails.

This diversity has always been one of the motors driving the social, cultural and economic dynamism of cities. From almost the beginning of their existence, the social sciences (sociology, social geography) have attempted to conceptualise and explain the emergence of diversity in cities. Scholars have focused on issues such as the concentration of strangers in the city, the primacy of ‘secondary’ groups in urban social life and the patterns of social mix and segregation of the groups that constitute the population of the city. At the same time, however, urban diversity has continuously taken different forms due to various economic, social and technological changes. Waves of immigration (whether linked to country-specific reasons or wider processes such as globalisation), the transformation of social stratification (including phenomena like the increase in professional occupations and the reduction of the working class in post-industrial cities), deindustrialisation and the rise of services, technologies and creative activities, and the development of new transport systems are just a few of the factors that have led to astonishing transformations of urban diversity, which calls for the understanding of new scientific concepts and approaches.

At the same time, diversity constitutes a politically contentious issue and hence often becomes the target of attacks. Ethnic diversity may be seen as a threat to national identity, native workers’ interests and so on. Diversity in terms of sexual orientation may be seen as a threat to moral order, while diversity in lifestyles may be seen as a threat to traditions. The DIVERCITIES project adopts a critical stance towards these perceptions as well as an explicitly positive attitude towards diversity. The project’s main normative and analytical concern was to investigate whether and, if so, how diversity may function as an asset for urban social, cultural and economic life.
It is within this framework that this book focuses on living with urban diversity. We are aware of the negative consequences of living in diverse urban areas, but we want to specifically focus on the often-neglected positive aspects that residents and entrepreneurs see, feel and experience. Living with diversity may take place in a neighbourhood that – at first glance – is not the most attractive place to live. However, it will become apparent that those who live and work in diverse urban areas do see the advantages and positive aspects of living in such areas, for example, in terms of activities, social cohesion and social mobility.

The City of Athens, the focus of this book, is a highly diverse city with a current population of approximately 664,000 inhabitants (the metropolitan area of Athens, however, is home to 3.8 million inhabitants). Athens has never been a major industrial centre and its economy was traditionally based on light industry, building activity and public administration. Nowadays, its economy is heavily based on the tertiary sector, while prior to the onset of the 2008 financial crisis, a number of large-scale investments in infrastructures led the city’s growth. Athens has been urbanised through a rather piecemeal process, wherein small land ownership went hand in hand with small construction companies. This created the material substratum for a fairly extended mix of activities and social groups on the small scale. Indeed, in Athens social segregation remained diachronically low, while ghetto phenomena are relatively unknown in the Athenian experience.

The research took place in the Akadimia Platonos district in eastern Athens. This area can be considered one of the most diversified areas in the city in terms of its population. In many respects it represents a ‘typical’ Athenian neighbourhood, being characterised by a mix of productive/commercial activities and housing, as well as the coexistence of different social and ethnic groups. Today, having lost part of its middle-class population during the suburbanisation since the 1980s, it is rather a lower- and lower-middle-class area, although it has recently started to attract some young and educated people.

Brief definitions of the core concepts

Diversity is defined as the presence or coexistence of a number of specific socio-economic, socio-demographic, ethnic and cultural groups within a certain spatial entity such as a city or a neighbourhood. We want to pinpoint how diversity relates to social cohesion, social mobility and the performance of entrepreneurs. Social cohesion can, in a very general way, be defined as the internal bonding of a social system (Schuyt, 1997). Social mobility refers to the possibility of individuals or groups moving upwards or downwards in society, for example, with respect to jobs and income (and status and power), while economic performance is concerned with the way in which individuals and groups perform in the city as entrepreneurs. Governance is seen as shorthand for a diversity of partnerships on different spatial and policy levels that lead to a certain goal.
1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Our aim is to discover whether diversity can constitute a resource for the enhancement of the social, cultural and economic life of cities. This investigation has both an empirical and a normative aspect. Empirically, we search within policy-makers’, inhabitants’ and entrepreneurs’ practices, perceptions and discourses for elements of positive approaches to urban diversity. From a normative point of view, we attempt to arrive, based on our empirical findings, at policy suggestions that will hopefully offer new means for the positive governance of urban diversity.

The research for this book is based on qualitative fieldwork. We interviewed politicians and policy-makers from both national and local levels, leaders of local initiatives, residents of the neighbourhood and entrepreneurs who own businesses in the area.

The next chapter outlines the main theoretical starting points for the book.

1.3 DIVERSITY AND ITS EFFECTS: SOME KEY ARGUMENTS

1.3.2 Diversity and urban governance

Governance can be defined as a process whereby “resource-full actors coordinate their actions and resources in the pursuit of collectively defined objectives” (Pierre, 2005, p. 452). Governance differs from government in that it refers to political processes (decision making, policy making, policy implementation) that involve not only public political institutions but also actors from the business world and civil society. Contemporary governance practices have entailed new institutional structures and policy-related tools (quasi-private planning agencies, public-private partnerships), which indicates a shift from hierarchical relations linked to standard statutory planning procedures to more stakeholder-based schemes of urban planning.

Within the European Union (EU), urban governance has increasingly been integrated in a ‘multi-level’ governance system. This term (see, among others, Marks et al., 1996) refers to a political system wherein authority is shared not only by different public and private actors at the horizontal level, but also at the vertical level. Multi-level governance therefore comprises complex formal and informal policy-making processes that bring together supranational institutions (mostly the European Commission), executives from the national level, subnational authorities (regions, cities) and non-state actors (businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) etc.). Within this framework, national executives possess no monopolistic powers, since subnational actors may bypass them, at least as far as it concerns issues handled by supranational authorities. Further, policy making is supposed to be non-hierarchical, collaborative and characterised by mutual dependence.

However, we should stress that the transition to governance and to multilevel governance in particular is far from a linear and uniform process. It has a rather variegated character and is
contingent upon different national and local contexts. The ability of cities to take advantage and influence EU policies, as well as to develop partnerships with public authorities of different levels and civil society, is highly dependent upon conditions such as the existence of bureaucratised and professionalised local authorities or the dominance of political clientelism, the unitary or federal state structures, traditions of centralism or decentralisation, the degree of development of civil society, and so on (John, 2000, p. 883; Jouve, 2005, p. 285-290). In this regard, scholars have proposed different typologies to determine the context-dependent variations of urban governance in European cities (Stoker and Mosseberger, 1994; Kantor et al., 1997; Pierre, 2005).

Critical scholars have argued that the ‘collaborative’ urban governance schemes (mainly the institution of public-private partnerships) of the 1990s-2000s have not uniformly benefited the different segments of civil society but have instead mainly involved the fusion of economic, political and technical elites, which indicates their highly socially exclusive character (Swyngedouw et al., 2005; Jouve, 2005, p. 290-292; Souliotis, 2013). The onset of the 2008 financial crisis and the 2011 Eurozone crisis significantly increased pressures on urban governance. The resultant austerity programmes reduced the financial resources of cities, while at the same time, urban authorities were asked to fulfil more functions which were transferred to them within the framework of local administration reforms and in the name of the enhancement of local communities’ autonomy.

1.3.4 Diversity and social mobility

Social mobility refers to the possibility for individuals or groups to move upwards or downwards in society, for example, with respect to jobs and income (and status and power). Social mobility has been defined in many ways (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992), in narrow as well as in broad senses. In almost all the definitions, the notion of the labour market career is mentioned. Individuals are socially mobile when they move from one job to another (better) job or from a situation of unemployment to a situation of having a job. Thus, social mobility is almost always concerned with labour market transitions. The new job is often related to a higher income, which in many cases is also seen as an aspect of social mobility. Less commonly do we see other aspects of the job, including job satisfaction, appear in the social mobility literature. Social mobility can also be related to education, since mobility can be seen as obtaining a diploma from school or university, which provides access to other resources (skills, professional rights, social networks).

The concept that links diversity to social mobility is that of social capital. In its most simple sense, social capital refers to the possible profit of social contacts (Kleinhans, 2005). For Bourdieu, social capital is a resource that agents achieve through social networks and connections: “Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). This definition focuses on the actual network resources that individuals or groups possess that
help them to achieve a given goal, for example, finding a job or moving to a better home. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) draw on Bourdieu’s definition of social capital when they specifically talk about immigrants. They stress that social capital should not only be seen as positive because it can also have negative effects. Capital is positive when the social network is enabling, for example, when the network enables immigrants to achieve better job opportunities, education, etc., but it is negative when the network becomes restraining, for example, when cultural norms and values become repressive.

The question of how individuals can profit from their social contacts is crucial here. With respect to these contacts, we can think of practical knowledge or important information. The literature makes an important distinction between bonding capital on the one hand and bridging capital on the other (Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 2001). Bonding capital refers to the strong ties within one’s social circle (often to similar individuals), while bridging capital is concerned with relations outside one’s social circle (weak ties). The latter type of tie is much more likely to deliver a lot of important information about opportunities such as jobs (Granovetter, 1973). In this research project, we see social capital as a resource for social mobility. In other words, this resource can be used as a means to achieve social mobility. Social capital is thus not seen as an equivalent of social mobility. The concept of social capital does have some overlap with the concept of social cohesion, but while social cohesion can be seen as an outcome of social processes, social capital should instead be interpreted as a means of reaching something.

The relationship between diversity, social capital and social mobility has been examined in the literature concerning the so-called neighbourhood effects. The general finding of such studies is always that personal characteristics are much more important for social mobility than the characteristics of the neighbourhood, at least in European cities. For instance, in a study conducted in Sweden on the effects of the income mix in neighbourhoods on adults’ earnings, Galster et al. (2008) showed that neighbourhood effects do exist, although they are only small. Urban (2009) identified only a small effect of one’s childhood neighbourhood on income and unemployment risks in Stockholm. Brännström and Rojas (2012) found mixed results with respect to the effect of living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and areas with a relatively large minority ethnic population on education outcomes. Gordon and Monastiriotis (2006) also found small neighbourhood effects on educational outcomes for disadvantaged groups. At the same time, they identified more substantial positive effects of segregation for middle-class households.

Why are the neighbourhood effects on various aspects of social mobility so small? This can probably be attributed to the fact that people’s lives are not completely organised around the home and the neighbourhood of residence. Due to increased mobility, better transport and the almost unlimited contact possibilities available through the internet and mobile devices, people now take part in multiple networks, visiting several places and meeting many people both physically and virtually (Van Kempen and Wissink, 2014). People may have contacts all
over the city and (ethnic) groups may form communities all over the world (Zelinsky and Lee, 1998), in the neighbourhood where they reside, in their home countries where large parts of their families may still live, and possibly in other regions where family members and friends have migrated to (Bolt and Van Kempen, 2013).

1.3.5 Diversity and economic performance

Urban diversity is seen by many scholars as a vital resource for the prosperity of cities, as well as a potential catalyst for socio-economic development (Bodaar and Rath, 2005; Eraydin et al., 2010; Tasan-Kok and Vranken, 2008). Although some successful entrepreneurs may live in homogenous neighbourhoods, and while some scholars even argue that diversity and *economic performance* are not positively connected (Angrist and Kugler, 2003; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2005), the general opinion is that diversity has a positive influence on the economic development of cities. For other researchers such as Florida (2004), diversity contributes to attracting knowledge workers and hence increases the creative capital of cities. Based on these ideas, policy-makers have sought to establish ‘creative cities’ built around the now familiar arguments put forward by Richard Florida (2002; 2005), who claimed that competitiveness results from the co-presence of talent, technology, and tolerance. Such development focuses on the “importance of diversity as a positive way to enhance economic growth and development” (Thomas and Darnton, 2006, p. 156), particularly the presence of gay couples, bohemians and foreign-born populations. However, these theories have been blamed for creating sterile uniformity in urban policy making worldwide, thereby stifling innovative approaches (see Peck, 2005; McCann and Ward, 2011). Inspired by similar ideas, urban diversity is seen as a characteristic feature of the so-called ‘diversity dividend’, which will increase the competitive advantage of a city (Cully, 2009; Eraydin et al., 2010; Nicholas and Sammartino, 2001; Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007).

All these overviews facilitate a good understanding of how diverse communities can contribute to the *economic performance* of cities. But what about the impact of living/working in a *hyper-diversified* city or area within a city or the *economic performance* of the ‘individuals and groups’ living in such areas? In this research project, we adopt a different perspective and focus on the way in which individuals and groups perform in the city as entrepreneurs, since we see the *economic performance* of people as an essential condition for the *economic performance* of a city. The economic performance of individuals within a *hyper-diverse* urban setting (where prominent multi-layers of diversities exist) is usually covered by the existing literature on ethnic entrepreneurship because it usually takes one particular dimension of urban diversity into account, namely the impact of immigration. In this project, we approach entrepreneurs within the conditions provided by the multi-layered characteristics (ethnicity, cultural background, gender, age, etc.) they are surrounded with, and by the mutual interactions they have with other individuals and groups.

In this respect, considerable attention has been paid in the literature to the influence of diversity on *economic performance*, although positive correlations have not always been pointed out.
In order to offer some examples of the negative correlations between diversity and economic performance we can refer to the work of Alesina and La Ferrara (2005), who found that the shift from homogeneity to heterogeneity could reduce annual growth performance. Further, Angrist and Kugler (2003) proved the negative impact of migration on employment levels within the EU, while Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) argued that higher levels of diversity might damage the growth performance in the long run. However, as Bellini et al. (2008) argued, research conducted at an urban level also shows positive correlations between diversity and economic performance, and it sees cultural diversity as an economic asset (Nathan, 2011). Some of these positive impacts of diversity can be highlighted here:

- **Increasing productivity**: The study by Ottaviano and Peri (2006) showed that average US-born citizens are more productive (on the basis of wages and rents) in a culturally diversified environment. As Bellini et al. (2008) showed, diversity is positively correlated with productivity, since it may increase the variety of goods, services and skills available for consumption, production and innovation. In the same vein, Syrett and Sepulveda (2011, p. 489) provided an overview of how the urban economy benefits from a diversity of population. According to their analysis, individual preferences and individual strategies influence productivity. Thus, the potential benefits of diversity are most apparent in production gains achieved through a mix of skills, particularly within more advanced economies.

- **Increasing chances for networking**: Some scholars (Alesina et al., 2004; Demange and Wooders, 2005) have pointed to the emerging literature on club formations, wherein ethnic networks grow from within. Alesina et al. (2004) found strong evidence of a trade-off between economies of scale and racial heterogeneity in the USA. According to Alesina and La Ferrara (2005), a social mix facilitates variety in terms of abilities, experiences and cultures, which may be productive and may also lead to innovation and creativity. Saunders’ (2011) work on the arrival city concept is quite interesting in this regard. He argued that some areas of the city characterised by high levels of social mix provide a more permissive environment for immigrants to start small businesses, especially newcomers, due to the easy access to information afforded by the well-developed networks in these areas.

- **Increasing competitive advantage**: Emphasising the increasing levels of population diversity, Syrett and Sepulveda (2011) suggested using population diversity as a source of competitive advantage. Some other studies have highlighted diversity as an instrument for increasing the competitive advantage of cities, regions or places (see, among others, Bellini et al., 2008; Blumenthal et al. 2009; Eraydin et al., 2010). The common argument of these studies is that areas that are open to diversity are able to attract a wider range of talent by nationality, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation than those that are relatively closed. As a result, they are more likely to have a dynamic economy due to their creative, innovative and entrepreneurial capacities than more homogenous cities (see also Scott, 2006).

- **Increasing socio-economic well-being**: A number of studies have pinpointed the positive contribution of urban diversity to the socio-economic well-being of mixed neighbourhoods (Kloosterman and Van der Leun, 1999; Kloosterman and Rath, 2001). In fact, proximity to mixed neighbourhoods seems to be a locus for networking and the fostering of social capital
Moreover, ‘attractive’ and safe living environments, ‘good’ and attractive amenities, nice dwellings and a ‘nice’ population composition can be crucial factors for attracting and binding entrepreneurs to a city or neighbourhood (Van Kempen et al., 2006).

1.3.6 The main arguments of this book

In the previous subsections we have seen that the DIVERCITIES project aims at (a) contributing to the conceptualisation of the growing diversity of contemporary cities and (b) exploring how diversity may be used as an asset in building social cohesion, ameliorating economic performance and increasing individuals’ chances for social mobility. In the next few paragraphs, we place within this general framework the main arguments stemming from the research in the Athenian case study.

The population of Athens has diversified over the last five decades through successive waves of in-migration. During the 1950s and 1960s, in-migrants typically came from rural areas of the country, while in more recent years in-migration has had an international character. The international immigrants from the last three decades have been highly differentiated. The first wave of immigration came from the Balkans (mainly Albania) and Eastern Europe after the fall of communist regimes in the region. Later on, waves of immigrants came from the Middle East, Africa and Asia (see Chapter 2). During the last two years, the in-coming populations mostly comprise refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. Thus, the immigrant population in Athens is highly diversified in terms of both ethnicity and motivations for settling in Greece (motivations that are, in turn, linked to very different historical and geopolitical circumstances). Furthermore, the immigrants are diversified in terms of their demographic composition (age, gender), modes of integration into the labour market and residential patterns (see Chapter 2).

At the same time, political, cultural and social dynamics fuel the diversification of the Athenian population in terms of identities and lifestyle (for instance, questions of religion and gender have been at the centre of public debates during the last two decades; see Chapter 3).

As will be clear from the analyses that follow in this book (see Chapter 3 in the main), diversity is not an explicit concern of public policies in Athens or in Greece in general. The ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the city is governed by a set of regulations, interventions and actions that are inscribed in other fields of public policy, for example, measures for increasing the competitiveness of the urban economy, reform of the local administration system, legalisation processes for immigrants, the policing of public spaces, and social actions and services for groups in need. These policies do not only manage populations, since they also contribute to their diversification through the institutional and social formation and reformation of various ‘categories’ of natives and immigrants: foreign populations that are seen as useful for the development of the city (investors, tourists) and others that are considered undesirable (unskilled persons from poor countries), ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ immigrants, recognised ‘representatives’ of ethnic communities, ‘vulnerable’ populations, ‘dangerous’ and ‘mainstream’ populations.
At the socio-spatial level, the relationship between diversity and social as well as economic life is largely shaped by the relatively low level of social segregation that has been one of the main characteristics of the urban social geography of Athens over the last five decades. Due to the particular features of the Athenian labour and real estate markets (small land property, limited industrialisation, etc.; see Chapter 2), Athens has never been highly segregated. During the first post-World War II period, this meant that residential areas were relatively mixed in socio-economic terms (although, in general, the upper and middle classes occupied the northern and southern areas of the agglomeration of Athens, while the working classes occupied the western suburbs). The arrival of international migrants in the 1990s did not alter the general landscape. Although different ethnic groups follow different residential patterns, immigrants have not been isolated in specific areas and they tend to mix with natives, especially the lower-middle and lower social strata.

As we have seen in our research, this spatial proximity is a condition that favours social interaction, although it does not guarantee it (see Chapter 4). Individuals and groups may remain at a distance from the ‘other’ due to sentiments of distrust and fear or in order to protect a distinct way of life. These stances towards diversity cause different ethnic, cultural and social groups to live parallel lives, even if they coexist in a small part of the urban space. However, attitudes towards diversity may be more positive. In turn, positive stances towards diversity may have a rather instrumental or active character. Thus, a part of the native population celebrates diversity as an element of the ‘cosmopolitan’ character of Athens, approaching the ‘other’ mainly through the lens of consumer practices (consumption of ‘ethnic’ products and habits). Immigrants often see diversified urban areas as spaces of tolerance that allow them to maintain their particular way of life and networks of mutual support. This is a positive stance towards diversity that, however, does not entail interaction between different ethnic groups. Other people prove to be more open to interaction with diverse individuals and groups. In these cases, it is interesting to note that the neighbourhood-based personal networks are more diversified (in ethnic, cultural and social terms) than the networks of the same person that are formed in other social fields (work, school). The bonds that are created in everyday life at the neighbourhood level acquire a particular strength when personal esteem and relations transcend ethnic, cultural and social differences. In this respect, diversity becomes a background element of social relations.

Furthermore, our research findings indicate that the relationship between institutions and public spaces at the neighbourhood level plays a fundamental role in the promotion of the social cohesion of diverse populations. We have observed that relationships mainly emerge when individuals share common concerns or interests (children going to the same school, common concerns about the future of the neighbourhood, etc.). Social relationships, including those between diverse individuals, are thus mainly developed within institutional settings such as the schools and local associations that are established and run by inhabitants. What is more, within the context of the financial crisis, the importance of local associations has increased, as citizens turn to forms of self-organisation in order to fight some of the negative consequences of the economic recession. Local associations thus become settings that promote solidarity. The members of
such associations often explicitly refer to the need to expand solidarity between different
groups (ethnic groups, men/women, young/elderly), thereby contributing to the promotion
of social cohesion in diverse populations. Certainly, the participation of local populations in
such associations is quite limited and the socio-economic impact of the associations’ action is
relatively narrow as well; however, the symbolic and paradigmatic value of the associations is
high because they indicate means of self-help for citizens. As far as it concerns public spaces
(squares, green parks, etc.), research has shown that the coexistence of different groups in such
spaces does not necessarily entail interaction and the creation of social relationships; however,
public spaces offer the framework for the further development of the relationships that are created
within the institutional settings. Thus, overall, local associations and local public spaces form
a nexus on which policy-makers may focus if they want to implement policies and actions
intended to foster social cohesion in diverse neighbourhoods.

Finally, as far as it concerns the relation between diversity and economic performance, we
have found that significant differences exist between diversity in terms of urban functions
and diversity in terms social, cultural and ethnic terms, as well as between creative and
innovative businesses and businesses active in more ‘routine’ sectors. While the mix of land
uses is perceived by entrepreneurs as a factor that favours the economic performance of their
businesses because it creates a vibrant local market and encourages synergies between businesses,
the socio-ethnic diversity is less appreciated. Entrepreneurs rarely address a diverse clientele:
businesses active in commerce and other everyday services target the ‘good’ (middle and high
income) local native customers; creative and innovative businesses address a specific, supra-
local clientele; and migrant entrepreneurs address co-ethnics. Thus, diversity is not integrated in
entrepreneurial strategies. However, for some businesses diversity becomes a part of entrepreneurial
activity in a rather ‘natural’ way. Although this is not a part of their initial planning, businesses
active in commerce and other everyday services, as well as migrant entrepreneurs, widen their
clientele socially, culturally and ethnically by virtue of the fact that they are located in a diverse
area. This proves to be a beneficial evolution, since the diversification of the clientele reduces
dependence upon specific categories of customers.

1.4 THE OUTLINE OF THIS BOOK

In the second chapter, we place Athenian diversity in context. We show how the diversification
of the city is linked to its economic trajectory after World War II (WWII), the demographic
changes (especially after the 1990s and the increase of in-migration flows) and the patterns of
socio-spatial segregation (which remain rather limited in comparison to other European cities).

Chapter 3 focuses on policy discourses. How do policies deal with urban diversity? Is diversity
explicitly recognised as an important public policy issue? Which aspects of diversity are stressed
by public policies? What is the relationship between diversity-related policies and other domains
of public policy (social policy, public finances)? How are diversity-related policies shaped by
the changing relationships between different scales of political power (supranational, national, regional and local)? Overall, is diversity mostly treated as an asset or a liability by policy-makers? In addition to the top-down policy discourses, we also pay attention to bottom-up initiatives. How do the leaders of local projects perceive diversity? How do they profit from diversity?

Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of fieldwork conducted in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood of Athens.

Chapter 4 focuses on how the residents of Akadimia Platonos experience social, cultural and ethnic diversity as a part of their local and personal life. We investigate whether diversity affects housing choice; how residents perceive their neighbours and the attention they give to their (diverse) attributes; and whether residents’ activities within and outside the neighbourhood are affected by diversity. We also examine whether residents’ local and personal networks tend to be heterogeneous or homogenous, as well as whether these networks influence their occupational choices and strategies. Last, we examine residents’ perception of diversity-related policies and local initiatives.

In Chapter 5 our attention turns to the entrepreneurs and businesses established in the area under study. What are the main motivations of entrepreneurs in terms of establishing a business in the specific neighbourhood and what is the importance of urban diversity? What is the current level of economic performance of businesses in the area and how did it change? To what extent does urban diversity play a role in the economic performance of businesses? Which policies, measures and initiatives contribute to the economic performance of businesses? To what extent do such policies, measures and initiatives address urban diversity? The basic idea here is that diversity plays an important (multiple and ambiguous) role in the development of entrepreneurship, the locational choices of entrepreneurs and their economic performance.

We conclude with Chapter 6, in which we answer the question of whether urban diversity can be seen as an asset or whether it should be seen as a liability, mainly by presenting a typology of residents’ and entrepreneurs’ attitudes towards diversity. The book closes with the formulation of some suggestions for policy-makers, politicians and other stakeholders who deal with diversity and diverse urban areas.
2 ATHENS AS A DIVERSE CITY

2.1 LOCATING ATHENS
The metropolitan region of Athens (MRA) is the largest city, as well as the most important political, economic and cultural centre, in Greece. It is located in central Greece and it covers the whole Attiki region (Figure 2.1). The Athens agglomeration is home to 3,812,330 million inhabitants (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2013), which accounts for 35.4% of the population of Greece. In economic terms, the significance of Athens is even larger; in 2012, 48.9% of the country’s GDP was produced in the MRA. With a land area of 3,808 square kilometres, Athens’ population density is 1001.11 persons per square kilometre (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2013; see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1 Location of the metropolitan region of Athens (Attiki) in Greece
Athens’ post-WWII growth was driven by the manufacturing industry, rural-urban migration and building boom. The city’s industry specialised in housing-related consumer goods and building materials and it was mostly made up of traditional small-scale commodity production units and a few large modern industrial plants (Maloutas, 2007). The city’s economy was also based on public administration, personal services and invisible assets from shipping, tourism and emigrant remittances (Leontidou, 1990; Maloutas, 2010).

This economic structure has changed significantly since the mid-1970s. The secondary sector shrunk and was then restructured as a result of the oil crisis, the opening of the Athenian economy to international competition following Greece’s affiliation with the European Community and other domestic economic factors (wage increases, rising bank rates, etc.; see Stathakis, 2010; Souliotis, 2013). In the 1990s, the Athenian economy started recovering based on traditional but henceforth liberalised and internationalised activities (Stathakis, 2010). Deregulation and privatisation gave banks, the media and telecommunications a new dynamic (Stathakis, 2010). The construction sector and real estate services thrived due to the growth of the housing market and large public investments in transport and sport infrastructure, which
culminated in the preparation for the 2004 Olympic Games (Souliotis et al., 2014; Tarpagkos, 2010). Leisure and tourism activities benefited from the increase in local and international demand. Since the mid-1980s, the transfer of European Union resources through structural funds, which were largely directed towards the construction of transport infrastructure, also contributed to the growth of the Athenian economy. The changes in the economy entailed a transformation of the city's social structure. In the 1980s, the upper and upper-middle socio-professional segments (large employers, professional, administrative and managerial occupations) grew impressively, while lower occupations (lower white-collar, skilled and routine occupations) were reduced (Maloutas, 2010).

Throughout a large part of the 20th century, Athens has been a rather introverted national metropolis. This was the result of particular historical circumstances, mainly difficult Greek-Turkish relations and the Cold War isolation from northern neighbours (Maloutas, 2007, p. 737). Regime change in neighbouring ex-socialist countries allowed the reconnection of Athens with its geo-economic hinterland. After 1990, Greece received waves of immigrants from the Balkans and Eastern Europe, which contributed to the economic recovery by offering low-cost labour to the manufacturing and services sectors. Furthermore, several Athens-based companies (in banking, telecommunication, retailing, etc.) extended their activities in other Balkan cities, thereby rendering Athens a relatively important regional urban centre in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Since 2010, Greece's sovereign debt crisis has plunged the city's economy into recession. Unemployment soared, reaching 25.5% in 2012. The shrinkage of domestic demand, public investments and bank loans struck the economic sectors that had spearheaded the Athenian growth of the previous twenty years (real estate, media, telecommunications, cultural economy). The programmes of economic adjustment agreed between the Greek government, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the European Central Bank emphasised structural reforms (in the labour market, public administration, etc.) and privatisations as the means to enhance national competitiveness and create an export-oriented economy.

During the first three post-WWII decades of intense city growth, urbanisation in Athens had a rather piecemeal character (Maloutas, 2007). The constitution of the urban fabric has been the result of the unplanned aggregation of individual housing operations and the localisation decisions of medium and small productive units. Housing has been provided by the private sector as well as instances of often illegal self-construction. Consequently, the built environment has been characterised by high density, lack of public spaces and a mix of uses (which took the form of a mix of residencies and small manufacturing in lower strata suburbs). From the 1980s onwards, the production of housing through the market grew at the expense of self-construction, while the presence of manufacturing activities in the urban tissue was reduced as many productive units closed or were relocated to neighbouring regions (Viotia, Korinthia; see Sayas, 2004). The new dynamic economic activities (high-end commerce and shopping malls, media, producer services and telecommunications) were localised along the main axes linking
the city centre with the well-off northern suburbs and with the waterfront, as well as in the peri-urban areas in eastern Attiki, which became easily accessible following the construction of Attiki’s new ring road that connects the city with the new airport (Gospodini, 2009; Leontidou et al., 2007). As in other Greek cities, the regulation of urban development in Athens had a rather ‘minimalistic’ character, since it has been confined to building legislation and the master plan of the area (controlling only land uses, building densities and the shape of the street system; Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004). This changed somewhat in the 2000s when the central government designed and implemented a number of metropolitan transport and environmental infrastructures in Attiki.

During the first few post-WWII decades, the population of the MRA more than doubled to reach 3.3 million by the late 1970s and almost four million by the late 1990s. After a period of stability during the 1980s, the population started growing again in the 1990s (Figure 2.3) due to immigration from neighbouring countries and despite the very low birth rate in Greece (Maloutas, 2007).

During the same period, the population of the city of Athens was decreasing (-3.35% from 1991-2001 and -16.90% from 2001-2011). This was the outcome of the continuing suburbanisation that began in late 1970s (Maloutas, 2013; Emmanuel, 2013). During the 1970s and 1980s, the city of Athens lost a very large part of the MRA’s higher occupational categories, with share being reduced from 62% in 1971 to 27% in 1991 (Maloutas, 1997). In fact, the loss of population of the central municipality would have been more intense if immigrants had not settled in several areas of the city centre since the early 1990s, especially in the western part. The immigrants occupied part of the building stock that had been constructed in the post-WWII period and that had gradually been degraded due to the deterioration of living conditions in the city centre (congestion, increase of building density). In the 1990s and the 2000s, members of the middle class, especially professionals and ‘creatives’, settled in the degraded neighbourhoods of the historical centre. However, the gentrification processes have been localised and they have only transformed small parts of the historical centre (Maloutas and Alexandri, forthcoming).
2.2  DIVERSE-CITY ATHENS

Athens is a diversified city as a result of the demographic, socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the previous decades (rural-urban migration, international immigration, unequal distribution of wealth, etc.). Amongst the various forms of diversity, international immigration is the most significant in terms of the impact on the social cohesion and economic performance of the city, while it also continuously attracts the attention of the public. For these reasons, in this book we place an emphasis on immigration, although without neglecting other major forms diversity (mainly gender-sexual orientation, religion and socio-economic inequalities; see Chapter 3).

Athens is today an ethnically diverse city, despite some common representations that insist on its perceived mono-ethnic character. According to census data, people with non-Greek nationality accounted for 10.6% of the population in the wider MRA\(^5\) in 2011. The figure was identical ten years earlier, indicating the lapse of a decade not only in terms of new arrivals but also the departure of international migrants. It was significantly lower (2.3%) in 1991, when the massive inflows of immigrants to Greece had only just started. Despite the dominance of the Albanian nationals who represent 47.5% of the total non-Greek population, a wide range of smaller national groups from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the Indian Peninsula, North Africa and other parts of the world are represented.

Nationality is by no means the only distinctive characteristic among the total immigrant population. National groups exhibit important variations regarding several demographic and social features, which indicate both intergroup and intragroup differentiations in terms of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National group</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Below 15</th>
<th>Over 65</th>
<th>Econ. active</th>
<th>Routine occupations</th>
<th>Tertiary education</th>
<th>Housing surface &lt; 20 sq.m. per person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Case of Athens  25
gender distribution, age structure, household structures, educational skills, socio-economic composition, tenure, housing conditions and, crucially, legal status. Based on the most recent census data, some of these dimensions of differentiation are presented in Table 2.1. One can observe, for example, the imbalance between male-dominated and female-dominated groups, the varying proportions of economically active individuals or of individuals in routine occupations, and the disparities concerning the proportions of individuals living in poor housing conditions.

The selected case study area of Akadimia Platonos is located in inner Athens, quite close to the commercial and administrative centre of the city, and it is part of the vast older multifunctional residential areas of Athens. It is characterised by a percentage of local non-Greeks that is higher than the metropolitan average, together with an age structure that is not very different from the average and an education level and unemployment rate somewhat worse than the average (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Basic indicators concerning Greece, the MRA and Akadimia Platonos, Sepolia, Kolonos, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>MRA</th>
<th>Akadimia Platonos, Sepolia, Kolonos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area (km²)</td>
<td>131,960</td>
<td>3,025</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>10,816,286</td>
<td>3,793,066</td>
<td>61,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (5-19)</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working age population (20-64)</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (&gt;65)</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Greek nationals</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of education attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education; lower secondary education (ISCED 0-2)¹</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle vocational education; upper secondary education (ISCED 3-4)¹</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher vocational education; tertiary education (ISCED 5-8)¹</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 25 or over without a school certificate, diploma or degree (ISCED 0)</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate⁷</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household income (Euro per inhabitant, 2010)</td>
<td>13,100</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2014)</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Among the 25- to 64-year-old population.

2.3 ORIGINS AND CAUSES OF DIVERSITY IN ATHENS

Transnational migratory movements to Greece and Athens are often interpreted as a sudden interruption to the (perceived as undisturbed) ethnic homogeneity of the country and the
city (Kandylis, 2006). However, the unplanned arrival of a massive new population to Athens (as to other Greek cities) is not an unprecedented phenomenon in the modern history of the Greek state. During the 20th century in particular, the process of Greek urbanisation was in fact determined by two major migratory waves:

a. The arrival of refugees from Asia Minor in the 1920s following the end of World War I and the population exchange between Greece and Turkey that was agreed with the Lausanne Treaty. About 1.3 million people of ‘Greek origin’ replaced a relatively small Muslim population. Some 600,000 settled in urban areas, either immediately or gradually (Voivoda et al., 1977).

b. The rural exodus during the first two post-WWII decades. Net internal migration to the city between 1956-61 and 1966-71 amounted to 212,300 and 250,600 individuals, respectively (Athanassiou, 1986), before declining from the mid-1970s onwards.

It was in the early 1970s that a few migrant workers started to arrive in Athens in order to work in the developing or traditional manufacturing industries and in domestic services. However, it was in the early 1990s that Greece started to receive larger inflows of mostly undocumented transnational immigrants, at first from Eastern European countries and later from more distant areas of the world such as the Middle East, Africa and Asia (Cavounides, 2002). Due to having the largest formal and informal labour market in Greece, as well as having inherited sufficient housing stock from previous cycles of urban development, Athens would be their main destination. During the last few years, a new migratory wave has appeared, consisting of people making dangerous and all too often fatal escapes from war, oppression or poverty zones in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

The settlement of immigrants has been a major ‘source’ of increasing social inequalities and exclusion. Several migration laws adopted by the Greek Parliament failed to establish a framework of integration policies (Georgoulas, 2001), instead leaving this task to civil society and local initiatives. The immigrants’ integration has thus taken place in an environment of poor institutional regulation combined with severe institutional racism. Although the first legalisation procedure was launched in 1997, by far the most important political intervention of the Greek political system has been the reproduction of a status of restricted social rights for the majority of immigrants due to the various legal ways the right to stay in the country is left in doubt. At the same time, the vast number of opportunities that existed in the labour market until the mid-2000s started to diminish during the period of the economic crisis, while finding affordable housing started to become more and more difficult for newcomers.

Some recent developments illustrate several contradictions and doubts concerning Greek migration policy. In 2010, non-EU immigrants in Greece were granted the right to vote and to stand as candidates in local elections for the first time, which seemed to be a step towards political recognition. Despite the fact that it was actually restricted to those few immigrants who were able to prove at least five years of legal residence while holding valid long-residence permits or having been recognised as refugees, in 2013 the Supreme Court declared that the
immigrants’ elective right was incompatible with the Constitution. The same also applied to the legal procedures that ensured the access of second-generation migrants to Greek citizenship, although a new legal procedure was adopted in 2015 in order to provide young students with full citizenship rights. Together with the interruption to any procedure other than an application for asylum in order to acquire a new residence permit after having been in Greece as an undocumented immigrant since 2005, all these ambiguities contribute to the establishment of a complicated and unjust legal infrastructure.

After a period of intensification of policing and incarceration measures in the midst of the rise of extreme right-wing influences and violence, new migratory flows are visible at the moment. The porosity of the extended sea border is the single most important reason why immigration flows to Greece and Athens will not disappear in the foreseeable future. A contemporary question of present and future importance therefore concerns whether the MRA will continue to be an undesired home for people who are trapped in Greece on their way to other European countries.

2.4 SOCIO-SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF DIVERSITY IN ATHENS

Post-WWII Athens has been characterised by low levels of segregation. This was the result of a number of factors that impede the conversion of social inequality to urban segregation. As with other southern European cities, Athens has been socio-spatially organised with respect to family-centred processes of social reproduction, relying on spatial proximity, wide social access to home ownership and reduced residential mobility (Maloutas, 2016, p. 181). Consequently, the growth of the upper social strata since the 1970s did not lead to an increase in segregation, since socially mobile individuals did not necessarily move to well-off areas but instead often stayed attached to family networks and property (Maloutas, 2016). Moreover, the relatively even spatial distribution of different types and quality of housing facilitated the urban social mix, especially in central areas (Maloutas, 2007).

The important waves of immigration of the 1990s-2000s increased polarisation in the social structure of the city, since immigrants became members of the lower occupational categories. However, this polarisation did not alter the pre-existing pattern of relatively low urban segregation. In fact, in Athens there has been no widespread marginalisation/ghettoisation of the different ethnic and social groups (Kandylis et al., 2012). The settlement of immigrants in Athens instead led to a de-segregation of unskilled and skilled workers (Maloutas, 2016). Immigrants did not concentrate in the city’s traditional working-class areas because the extended owner-occupation limited the supply of rental accommodation (Maloutas, 2016). As indicated in Figure 2.4, population diversity characterises extended areas of the MRA. In particular, immigrants were attracted by the small and affordable low-quality apartments privately rented around the city centre, which started to be vacated by many Greek citizens following the suburbanisation trend of the 1970s and 1980s (Maloutas, 2016; Kandylis et
In these areas the immigrants mixed, often in the same buildings, with lower- and middle-middle-class native Greeks who had remained in the city centre. As native Greeks kept apartments on the higher floors of buildings and immigrants occupied apartments on the lower floors, a pattern of 'vertical segregation' emerged (Figure 2.5) (Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001). The resulting ethnically diverse composition is nowadays the most prominent socio-spatial characteristic of areas in and around the western part of the city centre (Maloutas, 2016).

Table 2.3 presents the distribution of non-Greek nationals in the MRA. Their percentage in the urban core is about double the average for the MRA; it decreases in the suburban ring and then increases again as one moves to the peri-urban areas of the region.
Significant socio-spatial inequalities exist amongst immigrants of different nationalities and origins (Arapoglou, 2006). Segregation tendencies are most evident for the upper managerial and the lower unskilled occupations of the foreign population (Arapoglou, 2006). Nationals from developed countries, who represent only a very small part of the foreign population, share the well-off suburban areas with Greeks. Albanian nationals, who constitute the largest immigrant group, tend to share residential space across large city areas with Greeks, thus contributing to the overall low segregation levels (Arapoglou, 2006). On the contrary, immigrants from Central and Eastern European countries and from Sub-Saharan African and Asian countries (especially those from the Indian peninsula) tend to concentrate in smaller communities, which are located in deprived areas in terms of both housing and environmental conditions (see Figures 2.6-2.8; see also Arapoglou, 2006; Kandylis et al., 2012). Residential patterns depend upon the economic activities in which the immigrant groups specialise. In the early 2000s, many Albanians inhabited areas with important building activities, Pakistanis inhabited areas with small industries, while Bulgarians and Filipinos were scattered over the whole city as they mostly worked in domestic services (Maloutas, 2007, p. 749).

Even at the census tract level, non-Greeks rarely live in separate neighbourhoods. In other words, residential segregation between immigrants as a whole and native Greeks in Athens remains relatively low, mainly because of the spatial structure of the housing market. However, different national groups sometimes tend to follow different residential patterns, mainly due to their employment characteristics and previous waves of settlement in the city, as illustrated in Figures 2.6-2.8.
Figure 2.6 Citizens of Eastern European countries at the census tract level, MRA, 2011. Data source: EKKE-ELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011 [https://panorama.statistics.gr/en/], authors’ elaboration

Figure 2.7 Citizens of countries in the Indian Peninsula at the census tract level, MRA, 2011. Data source: EKKE-ELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011 [https://panorama.statistics.gr/en/], authors’ elaboration
The model of growth of the 1990s-2000s followed in part the international trends; it has been based on deregulation, privatisations and public-private partnerships in a number of sectors (banking, media, telecommunications and construction) and on consumption-led activities (commerce, cultural economy). In addition, some of the most dynamic Athens-based firms (in commerce, telecommunication and banking) expanded their activities in other Balkan countries. Nevertheless, the Athenian economy remained principally introverted in the sense that growth was mostly led by domestic demand and public investments (mainly based on EU funds), rather than on exports and foreign direct investment (FDI). Furthermore, the performance of the Athenian economy in the basic sectors of the ‘new economy’ (high-technology industry, neo-artisanal manufacturing, business services; see Scott, 2006) has been poor.

The most significant outcome of this model of growth in terms of diversity was that immigrants were confined to the lowest positions in the occupational hierarchy. Athens’ foreign population can scarcely be found in the upper socio-professional groups. The percentages of immigrants employed as managers, professionals, technicians and clerks fluctuate between 3% and 4% in each of these categories, while the respective percentages of the native population are 11-16% (Arapoglou, 2006). During the last few decades, the number of managers and professionals
increased, but they remained almost entirely of local origin. Athens did not attract members of the international corporate elite, since it never became a significant hub for the functions of multinational corporations and advanced producer services (Maloutas, 2016, p. 181). The waves of immigration of the 1990s and 2000s have been integrated into the Athenian economy as an input of cheap labour. Immigrants worked in growing, labour-intensive sectors (mainly in construction; Table 2.4). They were given jobs involving artisan activities in small firms (which were facing problems of viability due to increased international competition through the use of a cheap labour force), in hotels and restaurants. Immigrants also worked in domestic services, contributing to the social reproduction of Greek families (especially facilitating the integration of women into the labour market; Maloutas, 2010). The position of immigrants in the labour market has been further deteriorated by the fact that they (mostly the undocumented ones) were often employed informally. The absence of a coherent immigration policy, especially during the 1990s, in practice facilitated this incorporation of immigrants into the informal

### Table 2.4 Distribution of Greeks and the foreign population in sectors of economic activity, MRA, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Greeks</th>
<th>Foreign population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry (excl. construction)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale, retail, transport</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communication</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and insurance</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, admin. and support</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public admin., defence, education, health and social work</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic services</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2.5 Employment status of Greeks and the foreign population (percentages), MRA, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Greeks</th>
<th>Foreign population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage earners</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sector. Overall, the immigrants contributed much to the pre-crisis growth of the Athenian economy, albeit through low-end occupations. This is reflected in the low percentages of entrepreneurs and self-employed people among the immigrant population (Table 2.5). During times of crisis, immigrants suffer more than Greek natives from unemployment, since the larger loss of jobs occurred in the lower occupational categories to which they mostly belong.

### 2.6 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ATHENS AS A DIVERSE CITY

The main question posed regarding urban diversity in Athens today is: how can diversity be managed/governed in a city struck by a severe economic crisis? What is more, can urban diversity be treated as an asset in such a context?

There are two main factors that impede a positive political approach to diversity. First, the historical background. For a long period, the collective self-image of Greeks was that of a homogeneous nation in cultural and religious terms. This comes from 19th century romanticism and the idea that the new Greek State was based on the rebirth of Greek civilisation. The homogeneity of Greece’s population was reinforced by the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey which followed the end of the war between the two countries in the 1920s. In a region like the Balkans, which had faced a number of wars initiated on the basis of minority issues, this homogeneity was perceived as a strong advantage. But even when Greece started to receive important waves of immigration in the 1990s, policy-makers delayed in shaping a political-institutional framework that could regulate immigrants’ integration into the local labour market and society. In fact, the absence of a sound immigration policy facilitated the over-exploitation of immigrants in the informal sector.

Second, in the context of a scarcity of resources, diversity may be seen as a factor that increases social competition, not cooperation. As incomes and jobs decrease, parts of Greek society tend to see immigrants as rivals who covet the existing resources and not as a population that could contribute to the creation of new ones. The sharpest expression of this stance has been the spectacular increase in the electoral force of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn political party, which has soared from 0.5% before the crisis to 7% nowadays. The existing macro-economic conditions (weak domestic demand, reduced public and private investments) encumber any political project wishing to use urban diversity to enhance economic performance and social cohesion. Whether or not the model of growth promoted by the current programme of economic adjustment could contribute in this direction remains an open question. The strategy of increasing national competitiveness through lower wages and a more flexible labour market does not seem able to ameliorate the condition of the immigrant population (as well as of low-skilled native Greeks). The goal of attracting FDI targets only a small part of the foreign population, namely investors and high-end managerial staff. The encouragement of start-up businesses and youth entrepreneurship (mainly through EU programmes) could prove more seminal.
At the level of social cohesion, diversity is mainly approached through rhetoric and practices of ‘social solidarity’. However, ‘solidarity’ is not univocal; it has rather a plurality of socio-political meanings and uses. In many bottom-up initiatives and movements (Kavoulakos, 2013), ‘solidarity’ has the meaning of mutual support between equal individuals, the absence of exploitation in the work and equality in decision making. In this framework, activists battle explicitly against social and cultural discrimination. The notion of ‘solidarity’ has also been appropriated by political forces. This is the case with the radical left SYRIZA party (currently in government), which attempted to coordinate solidarity initiatives through the creation of a specific umbrella organisation (‘Solidarity for All’). It is also, however, the case with the Golden Dawn party, whose ‘solidarity’ practices (food collection and distribution) took on an exclusionary and paternalistic character at the expense of immigrants.

The case study area

The research takes place in the fourth administrative district of the municipality of Athens, i.e. the area of Akadimia Platonos, Kolonos and Sepolia (in the report, the area will be referred as Akadimia Platonos). This area is located in the south-western part of the city (Figure 2.9), in close proximity to the city centre, and it has 61,297 inhabitants (EKKE-ELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011). Akadimia Platonos is a privileged place where one can examine issues of diversity. The population of the area has been shaped by successive waves of in-migration and today it is characterised by a high degree of social, cultural and ethnic diversity. Akadimia Platonos was urbanised rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s when Greek internal migrants from rural areas of the country settled there. During the 1980s, Akadimia Platonos lost a considerable number of its middle- and upper-middle-class inhabitants, who searched for better living conditions in the suburbs, following a general trend of suburbanisation (Emmanuel, 2006; 2013). Another important demographic change took place following the early 1990s, when Greece started receiving large flows of immigrants, initially from the Balkans and Eastern Europe (Cavounides, 2002) and more recently from Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Kandylis et al., 2012).

Today, Akadimia Platonos is one of the most multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in the city, with immigrants representing 20% of the local population. Immigrants from Albania constitute by far the largest migrant group in the neighbourhood (representing 9% of the local population), followed by Pakistani immigrants, who represent only 0.83% (EKKE-ELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011). Other ethnic groups in the area include Bulgarians and Bangladeshis. Some 80% of the local population consists of Greek nationals (EKKE-ELSATAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011), some of them having been born and raised in the neighbourhood, others having in-migrated during the urbanisation period of the 1960s and 1970s, and others having moved in recently (i.e. during the last decade). Particularly during the last five years, it seems that the neighbourhood has attracted newcomers of a young age and a high educational background, such as engineers and artists. This population appreciates the combination of affordable rents and proximity to green spaces and archaeological sites that is offered by the area (for background information on the neighbourhood of Akadimia...
DIVERCITIES: Dealing with Urban Diversity

In terms of economic activity, Akadimia Platonos is characterised by a mixture, including long-established businesses and start-ups active in many different sectors. The large majority of businesses in Akadimia Platonos are small size commercial firms, including both wholesale and retail trade. The local market also includes a significant number of creative businesses such as engineering offices, companies active in the production and management of cultural events, multi-purpose art spaces and private schools engaged in theatre, dance, music, painting, etc. Last, in the west part of Akadimia Platonos, there is a cluster of manufacturing businesses, logistics and garages. Most of the businesses established in the neighbourhood are owned by Greeks, although a significant percentage of them (such as food and clothing stores, hairdressing salons, etc.) are owned also by foreign immigrants. At the same time, many migrants are informally employed in businesses owned by Greeks or else informally work at home, especially migrant women providing services such as house cleaning, elderly care and child care.

In the following chapters, we attempt to examine in depth the diversity-related challenges faced by Athens with regard to governance, social cohesion and economic performance. Chapter 3 depicts the historical background of diversity-related policies and investigates how these policies have been redefined during the past few years in relation to dynamics in other public policy domains (promotion of competitiveness policies, reform of local administration, tighter surveillance and policing of urban spaces, restructuring and retrenchment of social services). In Chapters 4 and 5, we turn to the experience of citizens. First, we examine how diversity is embedded in social life at the neighbourhood level (everyday communication, use of public spaces, local associations) and, second, how diversity is related to entrepreneurial practices (starting a business, creating a clientele, synergies amongst producers).
3 POLICY DISCOURSES ON DIVERSITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As we mentioned in the introduction, in the DIVERCITIES project we approach diversity through the concept of hyper-diversity, with this term meaning that cities are not only diverse in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but that significant differences also exist with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013, p. 4). In this chapter, we examine diversity-related public policies in Greece in general, and in Athens in particular in light of this concept: are there any elements in Greek and Athenian public policies that are related to what we define as ‘hyper-diversity’? Could these policies benefit from the concept of ‘hyper-diversity’ and in which ways?

In order to empirically operationalise this problématique, we pose three questions. First, are there any urban policies that explicitly take ‘diversity’ as their object? What other urban policies indirectly affect the means of coexistence between various social, cultural and ethnic groups in the city and what vocabulary do they use? These questions obviously entail distinguishing between policies directly affecting urban diversity and those that affect it indirectly. Second, which social, cultural and ethnic groups are recognised and/or desirable as components of Athenian society and the economy? Third, in which terms is the coexistence of various groups recognised or desirable (egalitarian, selective, hierarchical, etc.)?

In our analysis of the diversity-related policies, we attempt to distinguish the main political discourses and strategies and, then, to detect which is/are the dominant one(s). In order to identify the discourses and strategies, we make use of Fincher and Iveson’s typology of the logics of diversity planning (Fincher and Iveson, 2008; Fincher, 2007). According to these scholars, diversity planning may follow the logics of redistribution (reduction of the discrepancy between rich and poor), recognition (acknowledgement of the ‘multiple publics’ that constitute the population of the city) and encounter (fostering the sociality and interaction in lived spaces). Although Fincher and Iveson (2008) propose this typology as a tool for designing and evaluating social planning interventions in cities, we use it for heuristic purposes to analyse existing policies. Furthermore, we draw upon the literature concerning ‘existing neoliberalism’ (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck et al., 2010). The examination of the diversity-related policies in Athens and in Greece shows that in addition to the three logics suggested by Fincher and Iveson, the logic of competitiveness plays a significant role, especially in the context of the crisis-induced austerity policies. For this reason, we have extended our analytical framework by incorporating elements from the discussion on the dynamics of neoliberalism in recent
years. Overall, based on the abovementioned studies, we will attempt to detect the main goals of diversity governance in Athens. Does diversity governance address the different needs of the diverse range of people who live in the city (recognition policies)? Does it promote equality of access to resources, thereby reducing difference (redistribution policies)? Does it foster interaction and contact between diverse people (encounter policies)? (Fincher and Iveson, 2008). Or does it subordinate diversity to the needs of supply-side economic policies (competitive-city policies)?

We find that the dominant urban policies in Athens do not explicitly use the notion/term ‘diversity’. ‘Diversity’ appears as a term of public policy only when it is related to European Union-funded projects and activities and, in fact, reproduces discourses promoted by EU institutions in a rather ritualistic way. Athenian urban policies mainly deal with diversity in indirect ways. The most salient diversity-related issue in the public sphere is by far that of migration, while other aspects of diversity (gender/sexuality, age) are rather underestimated and only preoccupy policy-makers and public opinion sporadically. Following the categorisation of the logics of diversity planning, we identify the following strategies. (a) The competitive city strategies tend to dominate diversity planning and governance in the current conjuncture. Neoliberal policies, as they are shaped within the specific context of deep recession and the changing relations amongst the different levels of political power (supranational, national, regional, municipal), significantly affect the terms and the content of social and cultural coexistence: they promote a selective opening of the city to the European and international environment, privileging the attraction of investors, tourists and students. On the contrary, unskilled and semi-skilled workers are not desirable in the context of a severe economic downturn. (b) Regarding the logic of redistribution, what characterises the social policies in Athens is the fact that they are targeted towards specific social and cultural groups (Roma, homeless, etc.) and they have the rather ‘minimalistic’ goal of reducing the possibility of significant social tensions between the more unprivileged groups and the rest of ‘mainstream’ society. (c) The recognition policies in Athens are still in a relatively early stage of development. The most important step in this direction was the recent recognition of representatives of immigrant communities as legitimate interlocutors of municipal authorities. (d) The encounter-related policies are rather ambiguous. From one side, various urban interventions in the city centre act as catalysts for ‘spontaneous’ processes of social mix and exclusion in public spaces. From the other side, policing appears as a means to ‘reconquer’ public spaces and maintain social peace and public order under conditions of impoverishment and increasing social inequality.

The chapter begins with a brief presentation of the methodology (section 3.2). It then presents an outline of the main immigration and anti-discrimination policies at the national level, which reveals the transition from non-policy (i.e. no active integration policy) to neo-assimilationist strategies and policing (section 3.3). The following sections examine the policies and governmental discourses on diversity and migration in Athens (section 3.4), as well as the views of non-governmental organisations on this issue (section 3.5). The chapter ends with a presentation of conclusions.
3.2 METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a qualitative approach and involves documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and a round-table talk. The documentary analysis drew on relevant legal documents and policy texts of the central and local government. Interviews were conducted with selected relevant actors from different levels of the public administration responsible for integration policy or other diversity-related matters, as well as with representatives of non-governmental organisations and bottom-up initiatives in the field of diversity and integration policy. Additionally, a round-table talk with representatives of the selected initiatives was organised in order to validate the results of the analysis. The fieldwork was carried out from November 2013 to January 2014 and March 2014 to July 2014.

3.3 NATIONAL POLICY APPROACHES TOWARDS DIVERSITY: STRUCTURE AND SHIFTS

Public debates and policies in Greece primarily focus on external migration, while other forms of diversity are somewhat overlooked. The following pages first examine the migration policies in some detail and then provide a brief overview of debates and policies on other forms of diversity (religion, gender, class inequalities).

Immigration policies in context

Athens has become quite a diverse city in cultural and ethnic terms over the last two decades. Due to its geographical position and broader geo-political changes, especially after the collapse of the existing socialism, Athens received large numbers of economic immigrants from the Balkans and, primarily, from Albania. Since the mid-2000s, due to the political unrest in various Asian and African countries, people from such ethnic backgrounds also migrated to Greece. Recently, Greece has been one of the main stopovers for Syrian refugees on their way to Western Europe.

The increasing presence of immigrants since the early 1990s has largely affected the city’s socio-economic and socio-spatial structures. Immigrants have been integrated rather smoothly into the labour market, despite the lack of integration policies, due to the positive economic trend of the 1990s and early 2000s. Construction works, niches in small family businesses and personal services to private households provided considerable opportunities for work. However, illustrating a clear case of fair weather policies, the rather smooth integration of immigrants began to meet increasing difficulties in the mid-2000s as the available niches in the labour market were reduced, especially after the onset of the financial crisis, and the profile of incoming migrants changed (i.e. less educated/skilled, male over-representation) in ways that increased integration difficulties.

Although the presence of immigrants increased class and income differences in Athens (Maloutas, 2007), class segregation remained at former levels, and perhaps even slightly
decreased (Arapoglou, 2006; Maloutas et al., 2012). This outcome was produced by the structure of the housing supply, which drove migrants to the most affordable areas of private rented housing around the city centre, where they eventually mixed with a broad array of native Greek middle-class groups in various neighbourhoods (Leontidou, 1990; Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001). However, this unintended – in terms of policy – production of a social mix did not bridge social distance by spatial proximity. Separation in terms of everyday life, consumption patterns and the use of services, along with a mix of cooperative and conflicting coexistence, have marked these two and a half decades of substantially increased ethnic diversity in Athens.

Migration policies
For a large part of the post-war period, Greece has been a country of emigration (mainly towards the countries of Western Europe and West Germany in particular). Since the early 1990s, Greece has been transformed into a host country due to the massive migratory flows from Albania and Eastern Europe. At the time, immigration was perceived by successive governments primarily as an issue of public order. Indeed, border controls and police operations in the cities constituted the initial state reaction towards immigration (Kandylis, 2006; Karyotis, 2012; Swarts and Karakatsanis, 2012). It was in 1991 that a specific legal framework was adopted (Law 1975/1991 on Entry-Exit, Residence, Work, Expulsion of Foreigners, Procedure of Refugee Recognition). The key elements of this law were the perception of in-migrants as a temporary labour force (by associating a characteristically legal presence with employment, i.e. a minimum number of insurance stamps per year), while citizenship and welfare issues were overlooked (Kountouri, 2009, p. 54; Georgoulas, 2001). The preconditions for legal residence were strict and aimed at regulating undocumented immigration as well as discouraging new waves of immigration. As an outcome of this policy, large parts of the immigrant population remained in an irregular status, either because they were never able to access legality, or because they did not manage to meet the necessary requirements. In order to address this reality, the Greek government fostered for the first time in 1997 a massive legalisation process of undocumented immigrants. The participation of immigrants was particularly high: 371,641 persons participated in the first stage of the process, although bureaucratic problems and insufficient information reduced the number of persons who applied for a green card at the second stage to 212,860. A second legalisation process took place in 2001, with the participation of 351,000 immigrants, and a third in 2005-2007, with the participation of approximately 150,000 immigrants.

In 2001, a new law on immigration was enacted (Law 2910/2001 on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Greek Territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship through Naturalisation and New Legal Framework for Granting Residence Permits), which pointed in a different direction. In a period of economic growth led largely by large-scale public works (which employed large numbers of immigrants), the 2001 law fostered a guest worker policy (Bagkavos and Papadopoulos, 2002 cited in Kountouri, 2009, p. 68), which sought to regulate issues of education, health, family status and labour (Sarris, 2012, p. 44). In the same year, the
Immigration Policy Directorate (IPD) was founded in the Ministry of Interior, the first specific immigration policy administrative body in the country. The IPD undertook responsibility for non-EU documented immigrants and immigrants seeking permits for humanitarian reasons, while the Ministry of Public Order maintained control over undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, EU immigrants and immigrants of Greek origin. However, the persistent strong linkage between residence permits and employment remained an indication of the perception of immigrants as ‘guests’ for a specific purpose and, thus, as a possibly temporary necessary evil.

The current legal framework for immigration is based on a law that was enacted four years later, in 2005 (Law 3386/2005 on Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory). Under the influence of EU immigration policy and the pro-immigration movement, this law indicated a significant shift in immigration policies in Greece, particularly by making the first explicit reference to integration (Kandylis, 2006, p. 167). The 2005 law simplified the procedure for obtaining the right to stay temporarily in the country, although it maintained strict conditions for obtaining permanent residence and did not address crucial issues like citizenship for second-generation immigrants.

This issue was addressed in 2010 (Law 3838/2010 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants’ Residence) when second-generation immigrants obtained the right to acquire Greek citizenship, under the condition of being born in Greece or having attended a Greek school for six years. The same law also provided for the first time the right of immigrants to vote in local elections. Another important reform from that year, the reform of the local administration system, introduced the Immigrants’ Integration Councils (IICs) as advisory bodies to municipal authorities. The members of the IICs are city councillors, representatives of immigrant organisations or communities and social agencies that deal with immigration.

If the 2010 reforms still echoed to some extent the climate of the mid-2000s, the onset of the sovereign debt crisis in the same year marked the beginning of a new shift in Greek immigration policy. G. Ragkousis, then Minister of the Interior, who promoted the regularisation of second-generation immigrants, rejected at the same time a new regularisation process for undocumented immigrants. The 2012 national elections led to a profound change in the political rapport de force in the country, as the two traditional governing parties (PASOK and Nea Dimokratia) lost about half of their votes, while the pro-European Radical Left (SYRIZA) multiplied its power by six and the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party obtained about 7% of the vote and became a parliamentary force for the first time. Under pressure caused by the austerity measures and the rising force of Golden Dawn, the ND-PASOK-DIMAR government (DIMAR being a Left-Centre party that parted from SYRIZA a few years ago), which took power after the 2012 elections, hardened its immigration policy. The Ministry of Public Order undertook extended operations of arrest and expulsion of undocumented immigrants in the centres of major Greek cities. A number of detention centres were created around Athens and in other parts of the country in order to detain undocumented immigrants until their expulsion. Border controls
were intensified and a wall was erected in Thrace to impede the entry of illegal immigrants from the Greek-Turkish border. The conservative party in the coalition government (ND) rejected a bill promoted by the left-wing party in the government (DIMAR) that, drawing on an EU regulation, provided for the penalisation of racist behaviour. Last, but certainly not least, the Constitutional Court rejected on technical grounds the 2010 law on Greek citizenship for second-generation immigrants, leaving this question once again unresolved.

In 2015, a major political change in Greece, as well as the broader geo-political conjuncture in the Middle East, entailed a new dynamic in migration (and refugee) policies. The radical left SYRIZA party and the Independent Greeks (ANEL), a small party of the populist right, formed a coalition government in January 2015 that abandoned some of the practices of the previous government. The new government loosened policing in the urban space and reduced the number of detention centres by keeping open those in the two main urban centres of the country (Athens and Thessaloniki) while closing those in the rest of the country. What is more, it returned to the question of the provision of Greek Citizenship to second-generation immigrants. Via an initiative by SYRIZA, which was opposed by the government partner ANEL and backed by a centre-left party (PASOK) and a centrist one (Potami), the government enacted a law (Law 4332/2015 on Modification of provisions of the Greek Citizenship Code) according to which second-generation immigrants could acquire Greek Citizenship under conditions linked to education and their parents’ length of stay in the country.13 However, at the same time some level of continuity between the previous conservative government and the SYRIZA-ANEL government has been observed, since detention centres have not been fully abolished and the wall in Thrace has been maintained despite pre-election commitment. Since mid-2015, new pressures have been exerted on migration and refugee policies due to the increase in the number of migrants and refugees (mainly Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis) crossing the Greek-Turkish border in the Aegean on their way to Western Europe. In this large-scale population transfer (about one million people crossed the country in 2015; UNHCR, 2015), Greece has been a transit point. However, even the temporary stay of refugees and migrants created the need for new types of infrastructures beyond the pre-existing detention centres for ‘illegal’ migrants, which comprised new registration centres for incoming refugees and migrants at the border crossings and open accommodation structures in the rest of the country. The situation altered again after the agreement of the EU with Turkey (March 2016) regarding the control of refugee and migrant flows towards Europe. This agreement put an end to the ‘open-door’ policy of 2015 and imposed strict restrictions on the movement of refugees in Europe. This meant that a number of refugees and migrants (about 50,000 as of April 2016) would probably remain in Greece and that any refugees and migrants arriving in the country after the agreement would be detained in registration centres, which were no longer open structures as in the previous period, until the examination of their request for asylum by the authorities.

Overall, immigration policies since the early 1990s have failed to efficiently regulate immigration and hence the country continues to suffer from severe imbalances. Immigrants from third countries can only obtain permanent residence permits with difficulty, despite long-
term residence in the country, while second-generation immigrants only recently acquired access to Greek citizenship. On the contrary, immigrants of Greek origin arriving from countries in the former Soviet Union are able to claim and obtain permanent residence and even Greek citizenship (Kandylis, 2006). Legal residence in the country is still associated with employment (despite a relatively recent reduction in the number of insurance stamps required to obtain residence), so that fluctuations in labour status may lead to the loss of residence permits at any time. In this way, tens of thousands of formerly regularised immigrants lost their right to stay in the country. The financial crisis and rising unemployment caused more immigrants to lose their residence permits. Furthermore, Greek governments insist on the differentiated treatment of ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ immigrants and of Greek citizens and third country nationals. Characteristically, the 2005 law against discrimination does not apply to cases where immigrants undergo discrimination as a result of not having Greek citizenship (for example, non-Greek citizens who do not have access to a number of professional rights enjoyed by Greek citizens; Varouxi and Sarris, 2012). For years, partly as a consequence of the implementation of the Dublin II Regulation, Greece has been responsible for examining the asylum applications of growing numbers of immigrants who were irregularly crossing its border. In 2011, while the number of regularised immigrants in Greece was about 620,000, it was estimated that irregular ones numbered about 450,000 (Varouxi and Sarris, 2012). The recent EU-Turkey agreement on refugee and migrant flows created new challenges for Greece, especially regarding the control of its borders in the Aegean (in a complex interaction with Turkey, NATO and Frontex) and the integration of refugees and migrants who will eventually remain in Greece despite their initial intention to reach a Western European country.14

Policies and debates on other forms of diversity
Several other forms of diversity have been the objects of public debate, policies or both. Religious beliefs have been an important issue on the agenda since the early 2000s when the PASOK (a socialist party) government introduced a law into parliament according to which the identity cards of Greek citizens would no longer indicate their bearer’s religion. This was part of that government’s modernisation agenda and a step towards the separation of church from state. The measure was adopted despite opposition by the very active former Archbishop of Greece, Christodoulos, whose campaign against this law was supported by some three million signatures. However, the issue of religion on identity cards would not have been of particular importance if Greece was not experiencing rapid ethnic – and, therefore, religious – diversification. The opposition to that law did not argue in terms of religion, but rather in terms of the nationalist feelings and political agendas of the church and conservative parties. The latter pleaded against the growing ‘peril’ of Greece losing its national homogeneity through surrender (i.e. native Greeks not being permitted to exhibit their religious credo as a sign of their threatened nationality). This issue is, therefore, closely related to the diversity brought about by immigration.

Another issue concerning diversity, which is also related to the power of the Orthodox Church and of conservatism in Greece society, is sexual orientation. Direct claims about rights in these
### Table 3.1 Core changes in national policies concerning migration, citizenship and diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Evolution</th>
<th>Immigration Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late 1980s</strong></td>
<td>The Ministry of Public Order is responsible for the total immigrant population. Emphasis on restrictive policy measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First regulatory framework, shift towards ‘guest worker’ policy.  
1996 Law 2413 on Intercultural Education.  
1998 First regularisation process (Presidential Decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997, 210,000 immigrants). |
| **1990s**                                                                        | 2001 Second regularisation process (350,000 immigrants).  
2001 Law 2910 on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Greek Territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship through Naturalisation and New Legal Framework for Granting Residence Permits.  
2005 Law 3386 on Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory.  
Marks a shift towards a social integration agenda.  
2005 Law 3304 on Equal Treatment Independently from Ethnic or Racial Origin, Religious or Other Convictions, Disability, Age or Sexual Orientation.  
2005-2007 Third regularisation process (150,000 immigrants). |
| Large-scale urban projects (highways, new airport, wastewater treatment plant) begin in the mid-1990s. Immigrants as labour force. | 2010 Implementation of Immigrants’ Integration Councils (Municipal Authorities).  
2010 Ragkousis Law 3838 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants’ Residence.  
2012-3 ‘Sweeping’ police operations, intensification of border controls and construction of a wall at Greek-Turkish borders.  
Marks a return of measures focusing on urban order.  
2013 Rejection of Law 3838 by the Constitutional Court.  
| **2000s**                                                                        | 2010 Sovereign debt crisis and bailout agreement between Greece and the IMF-EC-ECB.  
2012 Coalition government of ND-PASOK-DIMAR. The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party gets 6.92% in the national vote.  
2015 Coalition government of SYRIZA-ANEL.  
Culmination of large-scale urban projects in preparation for the 2004 Olympic Games  
Enactment of Dublin II Regulation (2003), which establishes the principle that only one EU member state is responsible for examining an asylum application.  
Development of anti-racist movement (NGOs, immigrant communities and organisations, trade unions, political parties and political collectives) |
| **2010**                                                                         | 2010 Implementation of Immigrants’ Integration Councils (Municipal Authorities).  
2010 Ragkousis Law 3838 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants’ Residence.  
2012-3 ‘Sweeping’ police operations, intensification of border controls and construction of a wall at Greek-Turkish borders.  
Marks a return of measures focusing on urban order.  
2013 Rejection of Law 3838 by the Constitutional Court.  
| **After 2010**                                                                    | 2010 Implementation of Immigrants’ Integration Councils (Municipal Authorities).  
2010 Ragkousis Law 3838 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants’ Residence.  
2012-3 ‘Sweeping’ police operations, intensification of border controls and construction of a wall at Greek-Turkish borders.  
Marks a return of measures focusing on urban order.  
2013 Rejection of Law 3838 by the Constitutional Court.  

After 2010
terms were rather marginal and they have for a long time been limited to a few small active
groups. The preparation of the law on civil partnership in 2006 instigated for the first time a
broad discussion on the recognition of equal rights for homosexual couples. However, under
pressure from the church and other conservative forces, the law that was eventually enacted was
stripped of the provisions concerning homosexual couples and limited to heterosexual couples
not bound by marriage. It was about ten years later that the SYRIZA-ANEL government (with
the partial support of the ANEL party and the full support of the parties of the centre and
centre-left) brought the issue back on the agenda. In late 2015, the Greek parliament voted
for the extension of the provisions on civil partnership to homosexual couples, albeit without
recognising the right to marriage and to adopt children (Law 4356/2015 on Civil Partnership,
Exercise of Rights, Penal and Other Provisions).

The broader issue of gender was important in political debate and policy reforms during the
1970s and 1980s when the feminist movement was still active and the socialist governments of
the 1980s brought about a number of measures aimed at achieving gender equality. Although
gender equality issues are still present (the pay gap in Greece is amongst the highest in the
EU at 22%; unemployment is much higher for women, even though it increased less rapidly
than for men since the beginning of the crisis in 2010 due to the more precarious nature of
women’s jobs; lower participation of women in political representation and in managerial
jobs in the corporate world; Avdela, 2011), the question of gender equality has been eclipsed
from debate. As an illustration, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality was renamed in
2014 as the General Secretariat for Equality and since then it is supposed to address all sorts of
discrimination.

Finally, the major issue of class inequality has been constantly overlooked due to joint
pressure: a. from conservative-neoliberal policies to isolate issues of extreme social necessity
(e.g. homelessness or youth unemployment) so as to justify the reshaping of social spending
in a more targeted way to increase efficiency (even though Greece has always been far from an
ecumenical welfare model); and b. from left-wing party policies that also reduce their social
policy agenda in order to increase their appeal to a wider electoral audience and to realign their
agenda with crisis-induced austerity policies.

3.4 GOVERNMENTAL DISCOURSES AND THE GOVERNANCE OF
DIVERSITY IN ATHENS

In this sub-chapter, we analyse the diversity-related discourses and practices in Athenian urban
policies. In the first section, we present an overview of the system of urban governance in
Athens, especially as it has been implemented following the reform of the local administration
in 2010. In the second section, we focus on the management of urban diversity in Athens
through the analysis of official policy texts and interviews with policy-makers and experts.
Background to urban policies in Athens

As an outcome of an extended reform that took place in 2010 (Law 3852/2010 on the New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralised Administration – Kallikratis Programme), the local administration system in Greece is composed of two levels: a. the regional level, which comprises 13 regions (peripheries) with elected heads and councils and seven decentralised administrations whose heads are appointed by the Minister of the Interior, and b. the 325 municipalities (demoi) of the country. The Kallikratis reform reduced the number of municipalities by two-thirds compared to the period prior to 2010 (from 1034 in 1998 to 325). This new political framework aimed at the delegation of autonomy at the metropolitan level and thus at the devolution of powers for the municipality of Athens, thereby introducing a change from the traditional centralism of the Greek state.

The institutional and governance structure for urban policy in Athens is currently divided into three main tiers: national, metropolitan/regional and municipal. At the national level, the Ministry of the Interior supervises the local authorities and is responsible (together with the Ministry of Public Order and Citizens’ Protection) for immigration policy. A number of other ministries contribute either directly or indirectly to the formation of urban policies: the Ministry of Environment, which promotes programmes of urban regeneration; the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, which is responsible for the large-scale transport public works in Athens; the Ministry of Culture, which used to contribute indirectly to urban policies through the supervision of a major urban regeneration agency, namely the Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens SA (UASA) (also supervised by the Ministry of Environment), which was abolished in 2014; and the Ministry of Finance, which became significantly important in terms of urban policies during the crisis, not only because it controls the distribution of economic resources to local authorities, but also through control of the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF), which carries out the extended privatisations programme of real estate assets and transport infrastructures prescribed by the EU-ECB-IMF bailout programme. The initiatives and strategies put forward by the different ministries often develop in parallel and poorly coordinated ways. Concomitantly, conflicts are generated over the responsibilities among the different central agencies, which impedes the implementation of strategic planning in Athens.

At the metropolitan/regional level there is the Regional Government of Attica (RGA). The RGA has, as a specifically metropolitan government, enhanced responsibilities in terms of transport, environment, spatial planning and civil protection. At the regional level, the Ministry of the Interior controls seven decentralised administrations, which supervise and coordinate the 13 regional authorities. The decentralised administrations have enhanced responsibilities in terms of nation-wide policies such as spatial planning and immigration management. At the metropolitan level, the Organisation of Planning and Environmental Protection for Athens (OPEPA), a consultative agency supervised by the Ministry of Environment, used to be a major planning institution. However, similar to the UASA, the OPEPA was abolished in 2014. The abolition of both agencies illustrates the way in which the reduction of public spending affected the already poor capacity of the central government to plan and implement urban policies.
At the municipal level, Attica comprises 48 municipalities, among which we find the municipality of Athens and its seven municipal districts. The municipality of Athens is responsible for forming the city’s urban policies through a number of semi-autonomous municipal agencies, particularly the Municipality of Athens Development Agency, the Double Regeneration Votanikos-Alexandras Avenue SA, the Municipality of Athens Homeless Shelter, the ‘Athina Health’ Addiction Prevention and Healthcare ‘Treatment Centre, the Municipality of Athens Cultural Organisation and the Technopolis. In the government system of Athens, the EU cohesion funds play an important role in funding urban projects, as well as in the reforms to the local administration system.

Urban policies in Athens, as more generally in Greece, are traditionally characterised by centralism. During the last two decades, the central government has maintained control over all major decisions regarding Athenian urban policies: large-scale infrastructural projects (new airport, peripheral highways), rehabilitation of the historical centre (realised by the UASA) and the organisation of the 2004 Olympic Games (Souliotis et al., 2014). The municipality of Athens played only a limited role in Athens’ urban policies during that period. At the same time, the availability of EU funds increased the central state’s capacity in terms of urban policies and permitted the implementation of the abovementioned policies (in the post-WWII period, the central state's capacity has been persistently low; Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004; Souliotis et al., 2014).

Contemporary tools of ‘urban governance’, especially public-private partnerships (PPPs) and quangos, have been extensively used in Athenian urban policies; however, not in order to increase civil society’s participation in the decision-making process and to build a socio-political consensus on urban policies. PPPs have been used in large-scale projects, regulating the terms of their realisation and exploitation (Delladetsima, 2006; Souliotis et al., 2014). Quangos have been used in the implementation of a number of public works, mainly as a tool for resolving conflicts in responsibility among public agencies (ministries, municipalities), as well as a means of relieving the central government of having to directly confront citizens’ opposition to controversial urban projects.

The reform of local administration in 2010 was meant to introduce more autonomy into subnational decision-making processes (Chorianopoulos, 2012; Souliotis, 2013). Aiming explicitly at adapting the Greek local government system to the EU’s ‘multi-level governance system’, the 2010 reform introduces for the first time a metropolitan government in Athens, with increased responsibilities in terms of developmental and planning issues, in order to benefit from EU funding opportunities. A more open governance scheme has been promoted through the implementation of participative metropolitan and municipal institutions: a. Municipalities and regions acquired a consultation committee where local stakeholders are represented and an ombudsperson for citizens and enterprises, and b. Municipalities acquired the Immigrants’ Integration Council where immigrant communities and NGOs working with immigrants are represented (Sarris, 2012).
The 2010 sovereign debt crisis annulled the abovementioned strategies. The reduction in financial resources interrupted the urban projects in Athens. Urban policies have been reduced to privatisation programs, which are controlled by a specific agency, the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund, whose administration is appointed by the Greek government and the international lenders to Greece (EC, ECB, IMF). Several regeneration projects focusing on specific ‘problematic’ parts of the city centre have been announced since 2010, only to be postponed or cancelled afterwards. Moreover, as the 2010 reform of the local administration coincided with the beginning of the financial crisis, the EC-ECB-IMF bailout programme was used as a model for the reshaping of relations between the Greek central state and subnational authorities, which suffer from excessive deficits and hence may have to follow local stability programmes (Souliotis, 2013).

Another significant effect of the crisis and the resultant austerity policies is a rupture in the relations between the political elites of both the national and subnational authorities and their electoral basis (Souliotis and Alexandri, 2016). This allowed for the development of a large number of local movements and social centres that aim at aiding Athens’ inhabitants to cope with the consequences of the crisis (Arampatzi and Nicholls, 2012). The overall picture is completed by a number of immigrant organisations and NGOs that are active in social policy issues (shelter provision, health services, legal assistance, etc.); however, they have poor access to the formal processes of decision-making and urban planning.

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<th>National</th>
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<td>Chamber of Commerce, National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce</td>
<td>Greek Central Government</td>
<td>Commercial Association of Athens, Association for the Centre of Athens</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs e.g. Pakistani Community, Bangladesh Community</td>
<td>Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund</td>
<td>City of Athens (Municipal Council)</td>
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**Figure 3.1** Map of key institutions and governance structures in Athens
**Governmental discourses and the governance of diversity in the city of Athens**

In this section, we explore the dominant political discourses and practices related to the management of the coexistence of various social, cultural and ethnic groups in Athens. We develop three principal arguments. First, the dominant political vocabulary concerning the current or desirable coexistence of various social, cultural and ethnic groups stems from a crisis-induced agenda of neoliberal inspiration. At the same time, this agenda prioritises the regaining of urban competitiveness as a means of achieving economic growth and the maintenance of social peace through targeted social policies and the policing of the urban space. Major official documents (Regional Operational Programme, Developmental Plan of the Municipality of Athens, Athens Plan for Integrated Urban Intervention) concerning Athens’ developmental and social policies adopt the abovementioned line. The political categories used in this framework include the imperative to create an ‘externally-oriented’ (exostrefis) urban economy, the need to take care of ‘disadvantageous groups’ (evalotes omades), the goal of immigrants’ ‘integration’ (entaxi) and the policy of ‘reconquering’ (anaktisi/anakatalipsi) the city’s public spaces. Second, to a lesser extent, the dominant political vocabulary is the result of the introduction of ‘multi-level’ governance principles into local government. Third, ‘diversity’ as a category for public action in Athenian urban policies only appears in specific EU-funded projects. From this point of view, the use of ‘diversity’ is a product of policy transfer through the mechanisms of the EU. The discourse of the EU’s cohesion funds, which fosters notions such as ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’, has a superficial influence and appears as technical language that accompanies the implementation of EU-funded urban projects.

**The desirable foreigners of an ‘externally-oriented’ urban economy: investors, tourists, students**

The major policy texts of the Attica periphery and the municipality of Athens, the *Regional Operational Programme of Attica 2014-2020*, the *Athens Plan for Integrated Urban Intervention* and the *Project Athens* converge to create a competitive city model of urban growth. The region of Attica defines five levels of its developmental strategy (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 39): promotion of developmental resilience aimed at attenuating the negative impact of the economic and social crisis; the recovering of Attica’s regional competitiveness and the reintegration of Attica into the European and international developmental and investment map; the change of the developmental model of Attica; the developmental reorientation of the existing productive structures of Attica; and the gradual adjustment of the region of Attica in the new conditions and challenges of Europe 2020. These five levels are supposed to represent distinct, successive steps that may lead Attica back to growth through the implementation of a new economic and productive model.

The municipality of Athens adopts a similar economic model, which emphasises entrepreneurship, competitiveness and exports. This strategy is presented in the development programme for Athens, the *Project Athens*. This is promoted by a private agency controlled by the municipality of Athens, namely the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA), under the current administration of the centre-left mayor of Athens, Giorgos Kaminis (ADDMA, 2012). The programme’s first priority focuses on helping the city’s...
businesses to improve their competitiveness, with an emphasis on innovation, employment and social entrepreneurship. Other priorities include the improvement of citizens’ quality of life (mainly through ‘green solutions’), the regeneration of the urban environment (redevelopment of deteriorated areas, reconquering of public spaces), handling of the social crisis, and the improvement of the city of Athens’ capacity for development planning. According to the initial design of Project Athens, in economic terms an emphasis would be placed on entrepreneurship and urban regeneration, which would respectively absorb 44.8 million euros (30.4% of the total budget) and 44.7 million euros (30.3% of the total), while handling the social crisis and improving citizens’ quality of life would respectively absorb 26.3 million euros (17.8% of the total) and 28.4 million (19.3% of the total), and the amount allocated to technical support and development planning would be 3.1 million (2.1% of the total budget; ADDMA, 2012, p. 17-18).

The new policy texts of the Attica periphery and the municipality of Athens deepen and further foster a competitive city strategy that has been implemented since the late 1990s and that culminated in the preparation for the Olympic Games (GSRA, 2007, p. 84; Stathakis and Hadjimichalis, 2004; Economou et al., 2001). While the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 included in its list of priorities the improvement of the quality of life and the creation of better job opportunities, the 2014-2020 programme focuses exclusively on economic development without reference to social goals. As regards the municipality of Athens, Project Athens is the first attempt by the municipal authorities to formulate a competitive city strategy for the city.

The abovementioned policy texts of the Attica region and the municipality of Athens reproduce the main terms of the economic policy decided at higher levels. This occurs in part by definition, since they constitute reference policy documents for the programming of EU cohesion funds at national and regional levels in Greece. In the period 2007-2013, the EU’s cohesion policy defined as its major priorities the convergence of European regions, the enhancement of regional competitiveness and employment, and territorial cooperation (European Commission, 2007). Within this framework, emphasis has been placed on other secondary objectives such as the modernisation and diversification of economic structures, the promotion of sustainable urban development, the fostering of R&D (research and development) and innovation, the increase of migrants’ participation in employment, etc. (European Commission, 2007).

The region of Attica, along with the other regions of the country, has produced regional operational programmes since the mid-1990s. The municipality of Athens composed an EU-oriented development plan for the first time in 2014, as a result of an amendment to the implementation of cohesion policies in Attica that redirected to the municipality of Athens a part of the EU amounts initially assigned to the region of Attica for the period 2007-2013 (respondent p, 4 February 2014). The municipality of Athens thus manages 120 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund, an amount that supports the implementation of Project Athens (ADDMA, 2012). Overall, this means that the regional and municipal
authorities produce their main policy texts while taking into consideration the EU political guidelines and in direct interaction with EU officials.

This relationship between urban policies and EU policies is crucial because, especially during the current crisis, the EU funds represent the only source of public investment. At the same time, the policy documents produced for the programming of EU cohesion funds represent the only strategic plan for the development of Attica and Athens. The result is that urban policies are fully aligned with the priorities of the EU. However, at the same time, the adoption of EU political goals by the regional and municipal authorities often remains superficial. The repetition of EU political rhetoric becomes a technical prerequisite for the use of EU funds in the implementation of specific projects. As we will see later, this has a determinative impact on the way in which regional and municipal policies make use of the EU’s discourse on urban diversity.

The alignment of the regional and municipal policies with political directions decided at the supranational level is further fostered by the bailout agreement between the Greek central government, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The economic agenda of the bailout programme focuses on the promotion of an export-oriented production model, the attraction of FDIs, the fostering of entrepreneurship and innovation, and the enhancement of regional competitive advantages (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Greece, 2010). The economic strategy of the bailout agreement has a compulsory character to the extent that the international financing of Greece depends upon its consistent implementation. From this point of view, the peripheral and municipal developmental strategies are imposed by higher political levels, notably the supranational one (Souliotis, 2013).

The competitive city model of growth implies an implicit but crucial reference to some kind of openness on the part of the city towards the European and the international environment. The attraction of international flows of capital and people is seen as key to achieving economic growth (public investment is underestimated in this model). At the core of this strategy lie the private investments in the sectors of new technologies, public real estate assets, cultural and urban tourism, shipping and tourism. The implementation of this strategy therefore leads by definition to the diversification of the urban population. However, this is a highly selective opening of the city. The competitive city strategy aims at attracting investors, tourists and students, as people whose presence will enhance the city’s resources and competitive advantages.

The financial crisis seems rather to reinforce this selectivity. The Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, which was written when the city was enjoying relatively high rates of growth, acknowledged that the attraction of economic migrants, mainly those occupied in the construction sector, was one of the indices of the dynamism of the city’s economy (GSRA, 2007, p. 12). The concentration of economic migrants also attenuated the problem of Athens’ ageing population (GSRA, 2007, p. 12, 31). Last, the SWOT analysis of the programme in terms of occupation and social cohesion acknowledged the integration of non-Greek employees
These positive references to the unskilled and semi-skilled economic migrants coexisted with negative references to the pressures exerted by the increase in immigrants on educational and health infrastructures, as well as to the downgrading of several urban areas as a result of the concentration of immigrants (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 42, 71, 162). The Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 still considers the economic integration of foreigner workers as an ‘opportunity’ (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 28), although it does not include other positive references to the presence of unskilled and semi-skilled non-Greek workers. The term ‘economic migrants’ is instead replaced by the distinction between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ migrants. Illegal migration is perceived as a ‘threat’ to social cohesion (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 27), while the presence of illegal migrants is associated with the downgrading and ‘ghettoisation’ of urban areas (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 81).

Redistribution in the age of crisis: targeting the ‘disadvantaged groups’

The municipality of Athens runs a number of social policy agencies and services that are addressed to particular social groups: the elderly, immigrants, women, disabled and homeless. These agencies and services are funded by the city’s budget, while the most emblematic of them also attract important private sponsorship (City of Athens Homeless Shelter, Social Food Store). Some of them (City of Athens Homeless Shelter, Social Food Store, Social Pharmacy and the Athenian Cloth Market) were established in 2007-2010 under the administration of the then centre-right mayor of Athens, Nikitas Kaklamanis.

Project Athens, which is promoted by the municipal administration of Giorgos Kaminis, adopts a similar line. Under the fourth priority of the project, titled ‘Handling the social crisis’, immigrants and Roma, along with the homeless and ex-prisoners, are targeted as ‘socially disadvantaged’ groups (evalotes omades). Policies combating poverty and social exclusion are primarily addressed to these groups and, following a neoliberal rationale, this targeting is argued to be a way of enhancing results with fewer available resources in a spirit of social justice (i.e. by covering those most in need).

The abovementioned institutions and policies could be seen as indicative of the resilience of municipal social policies during the crisis. However, to achieve a better understanding of current municipal social policies we have to stress four points:

First, municipal social policies include the provision of services to strictly targeted social groups. This option is very different from a universalistic model or a traditional corporatist-welfare model. Since the 1980s, Greece has attempted to develop the anaemic services of the local South European familialist model, an attempt that coincided with a negative international trend for spending on social policies. The current crisis reinforces the tendency to restructure and restrict social services to those that cover the basic needs of vulnerable social groups. At the municipal level, it is characteristic that in the years 2011-2012, when the overall budget of the municipality of Athens was reduced by 9.2% (from 899 to 820 million euros), the budget of
municipal organisations of a more general nature such as the Nursery and the City of Athens Cultural Organisation was respectively reduced by 19% and 25% (from 43 to 32.3 million euros and from 37.7 to 30.5 million euros), while the budget of the targeted – and much less costly – City of Athens Homeless Shelter was reduced by ‘only’ 15% (Portaliou, 2013). When, in 2013, the municipal budget increased by 6.7%, the budget of the first two organisations continued to shrink by 16.4% and 13.4%, respectively, while that of the City of Athens Homeless Shelter increased by 4.1% (Portaliou, 2013).

The targeted character of municipal social policies was also manifested in the social goals of Project Athens. For the years 2012-2014, the ADDMA expected that the beneficiaries of the social actions and programmes of the Project would be 1600 unemployed, 250 homeless, 1200 persons who follow training programmes in social entrepreneurship and 1170 persons who are drug addicts (ADDMA, 2012). Up to November 2012, the projects launched by the ADDMA regarding health, children’s care and education amounted to 20 million euros, which was 17.1% of the total 116.8 million euros budget of Project Athens (an amount close to the provisions of the abovementioned initial design of Project Athens; ADDMA, 2012, p. 24).

According to Kalliopi Giannopoulou, the deputy mayor in charge of social policy issues at the time of the interviews (2013), the city’s priority is to contribute to meeting the needs for shelter, food and clothing of people most exposed to the crisis:

“We have focused on the migrants’ integration into Greek society, so that we can adapt ourselves to the new condition as well, but the rest of our priorities lie in the logo ‘no one without a home, no one without food’, this is our basic issue… […] in the beginning it was 150 students in public schools, and it was the teachers who informed us that there is a food necessity issue, then this increased to 1300 children, which means 1300 families, which is a number that increases all the time, but I don’t know how many people we can serve, since more and more people are added to the catalogue of homelessness […] nowadays, every day we cater for at least 10,000 people” [respondent c, 29 November 2013].

Second, municipal social policies seem to aim at the maintenance of social peace by providing basic services and goods to social groups considered to be probable sources of tension and violence. From this point of view, the choice of implementing targeted social policies is not only a result of the scarcity of economic resources. It also reflects a concept of the role of social policies in a context where basic economic policies aim at competitiveness rather than at egalitarian goals. In fact, there is a reversal between goals and means: growth is no longer the means of attaining social goals, while social objectives (prevention of social conflict in this case) are legitimated as policy objectives because they prevent impediments to economic growth.

Third, the targeted municipal social policies imply a rather negative perception of ethnic diversity as a source of social problems. However, while politicians from the extreme right blame immigrants as being responsible for these problems, a moderate conservative politician
following a rationale of negative neighbourhood effects may see immigrants as being, at the same time, victims of the difficult conditions created by their concentration in some city areas. Eleutherios Skiadas, the deputy mayor during the mandate of N. Kaklamanis, noted that one of the main motives behind municipal authorities establishing the municipal agencies related to immigration issues was to address the poverty and exclusion that went hand in hand with the increase in the number of immigrants in Athens in the early 2000s.16

“The municipality of Athens, when we realised that migration was becoming an issue, we acted immediately and established facilities under a social policy framework in order to address the various problems… these facilities dealt with the distribution of food, clothes, care facilities and reception […] Today, the situation is different – the migrants bring pollution and contamination with them. They cannot live here, they cannot survive, they don’t even have anything else to steal. They stole the irons, the bars in the public streets, the metals from the railway stations, the public lights, and that is it. It’s over… now they cannot even steal these things, the city’s equipment doesn’t exist; the urban equipment that should exist in cities is gone. Before we reach a point where we start killing each other, we should establish facilities for the problems arising today” [respondent b, 22 November 2013].

This statement is indicative of the way in which immigration is perceived by city-level politicians, namely as a ‘problem’ that has to be addressed with social policy measures. Political discourse, in politicians’ public performances as well as in our interviews, constantly return to the negative effects that are perceived to stem from the increasing number of immigrants and, especially, of ‘illegal’ immigrants in the city centre: the emergence of pockets of extreme poverty, criminality and threats to public health.

“We should check on tuberculosis… Its levels have risen and we are facing a kind that we don’t know… we should check on all those matters that came up because of the crisis. There are diseases that appear again or appear for the first time that are not ours, i.e. they are not part of the hygienic culture of the city… we need a national plan for Athens” [respondent b, 22 November 2013].

Fourth, there is a convergence between the targeted social policies of the city and the EU-funded social policies. A large part of the municipal social policy actions are funded by the EU cohesion policies and run by municipal agencies, for example, the ADDMA, often in collaboration with other public and private agencies. These actions concern social inclusion, social economy and social entrepreneurship and they are mostly targeted to small groups of beneficiaries. The adoption of the vocabulary of the ‘socially disadvantaged’ in policy texts like Project Athens is thus directly linked to EU cohesion policies, since they are formulated in the National Strategic Reference Framework, while the EU calls for the implementation of specific actions.
Recognition policies are rather limited in Athens. The most important institution related to the recognition of diversity at the city level is the Immigrants’ Integration Council (IIC). The general establishment of the IICs has been the most significant reform of local governance related to diversity issues of the last few years. The creation of the IICs was part of a wider reform of the Greek administration system (Law 3852/2010). The IICs are municipal bodies that aim at ‘reinforcing the integration of immigrants in local societies’ through the investigation of immigrants’ problems and the provision of consultative services to municipal authorities. The members of the IICs include city councillors, representatives of immigrants’ organisations and communities, and employees of social agencies dealing with immigration issues. All the members of the IICs are appointed by the City Council. Immigrant city councillors, if available, by definition participate in the IICs. The president of each IIC is a city councillor. The creation of the IICs was one of the changes intended to adapt the Greek local administration system to the principles of the EU ‘multi-level’ governance system. The participation of civil society organisations in municipal policies, even though this participation takes place through a consultative body, ruptured, in principle at least, the tradition of the dominance of central political parties in local politics.

The Athenian IIC was established in April 2011. It has 11 principal members, six of whom are immigrants, and 11 alternate members. The criteria used by the city council to invite organisations and communities to participate in the IIC included the population size of immigrant communities, the representation of communities from different geographical areas and a minimum level of participation of women and youth (respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). Since its establishment, the IIC of Athens has convened 15 times. In fact, the IIC of Athens is responsible for the organisation of an annual festival dedicated to immigrants, the Immigration Day.

The political attitude of the municipal administration towards the IIC at the time of the fieldwork was explicitly characterised by an ‘integrationist’ (entaxiaki) approach. According to Eleni Tsitoura, a municipal employee working for Maria Kouveli, the president of the IIC, the IIC serves integrationist purposes as opposed to ‘communitarian’ (kinotiki) ones (respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). The latter promotes the preservation of ethnic identities and the promotion of distinct cultural practices through various activities (festivals, celebrations, etc.). The communitarian functions are fulfilled by different immigrant organisations, while the city, as a part of the Greek state structure, has to provide for the integration of immigrants into Greek society (which, in practice, means greater emphasis on actions such as the provision of Greek-language programmes):

“The basic issue is the integration of the migrants… Integration into the society in which these people live, if a community has specific problems, we might suggest something that is related more to this community, but the common denominator is integration, and not to satisfy the community...
in relation to their country so that something is reminiscent of their country… this is something they should foresee in their charters, our common denominator is integration” [respondent d, interview 29/11/2013].

The city’s integrationist approach draws upon the National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals as formulated by the Ministry of the Interior (GSPSC, 2013; respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). In this official document, the central government defines ‘structural integration’ (domiki ensomatosi) as the main strategy of the Greek state towards ‘legal’ immigrants. The term ‘structural integration’ means “the functional integration of immigrants in the new political/legal, economic and cultural framework of the host country along with the full acceptance of the political and cultural principles of reference of the host country” (GSPSC, 2013, p. 22). Structural integration is opposed to ‘multiculturalism’, which segments society through the compulsory preservation of immigrants’ ethnic identities. It is also opposed to ‘simple integration’, which focuses on economic and political integration and omits the importance of social and cultural integration (GSPSC, 2013, p. 21-22).

The activity of the IIC of Athens seems to face two distinct challenges. A significant challenge consists of the reconciliation of two logics that seem to coexist in the IIC: the ‘integrationist’ attitude of the city councilors and the ‘communitarian’ one expressed by immigrant communities. A second challenge concerns the association of urban politics with the micro-politics of the immigrant communities. The establishment of the IIC by definition entails the recognition of some immigrant organisations as legitimate representatives of their communities and official interlocutors of the municipal authorities. This process creates opportunities for organisations and may hence create tensions inside communities for the ‘monopoly’ on participation in the IIC. In a city like Athens, there are several organisations that claim to represent the immigrant communities and the municipal authorities therefore have to choose from among them those who will become members of the IIC:

“[Maria Kouveli, councillor and the head of the IIC] thanks to her legal expertise, can examine the representativity [of organisations] in terms of geography and population so that these people may be fairly and objectively represented. It is a large municipality. Some municipalities have to beg to find even two organisations, regardless of representativity. [In Athens] we have plenty of them; it’s the opposite. We have to be fair” [respondent d, interview 29/11/2013].

In this selection process, the municipal authorities tend to privilege organisations that represent the different immigrant communities as a whole. Organisations that represent the interests of more specific ethnic, age or gender groups, although they are not excluded, are only selected on condition that they do not add to the over- or under-representation of the main ethnic groups:

“Even now, regarding the alternate members, we have to see whether a group is overrepresented or not. For instance, it may be one group of Africans, another group of Africans, or a third group. What issues do they represent? Are they women who promote [solutions for] the specific problems
of women? Are they young people who promote the issues of the second generation? Is it a broader group that represents a large part of the continent that promotes the issue [of African immigrants] as people coming from a different continent? All these issues have to be taken into consideration. If you take the women only, you don't get the rest. If you say I have the Nigerian women’s group, I can’t include another women’s group [it’s wrong], it doesn’t work like that” [respondent d, interview 29/11/2013].

The IIC also faces three important limitations. First, the institution has low public visibility. The IIC’s activity is not (yet?) widely known (characteristically, two of the city councillors with whom we conducted interviews almost completely ignored its activities). Second, the most important political issues addressed by the IIC are associated with central government politics. What is perceived as the major political intervention of the IIC by its own members was a resolution on the regulations related to the granting of residence permits (respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). There is thus a discrepancy between the scale of regulation of important immigration issues (central politics) and the scale where immigrant organisations have access (local politics). Third, there is some contradiction between the participation of immigrant organisations in a new governance institution like the IIC and the exclusion of immigrants from ‘classical’ procedures of representative democracy. The difficulty of obtaining long-term resident permits excludes the majority of immigrants from the right to vote in local elections. While immigrants are represented in a consultative body such as the IIC, they have very limited influence over the decisive processes that are carried out by the elected political personnel.

Creating spaces of social interaction
The urban interventions of both the central and local state in the Greek capital since the mid-1990s mainly involved rehabilitating and constructing public spaces (squares and pedestrian streets). The result of this policy was the creation of a relatively extended network of free spaces in the city centre, with a more emblematic example being the two-kilometre pedestrian street at the foot of the Acropolis rock, which links the major archaeological sites of the historical centre. The largest urban intervention planned for Athens over the last few years consisted of the rehabilitation of the two major axes of the city centre, the Panepistimiou and Patission streets (Tournikiotis, 2012), a project that was eventually suspended after being rejected by the EU, which was supposed to finance it. Furthermore, two of the priorities of the current development plan for Athens, the ‘improvement of quality of life’ and the ‘regeneration of urban environment’, also concern similar interventions in the physical environment (albeit with some new elements that we will return to later).

What characterised the interventions in urban public spaces so far was the absence of social planning. The rehabilitation of squares and the pedestrianisation of streets through physical planning (often associated with the redefinition of the land uses of surrounding areas) was perceived as a means to ‘improve the quality of life’ of Athenian citizens (Unification of Archaeological Sites in Athens, http://www.astynet.gr/static.php?c=5) in general, without particular provisions assuring the access of specific social groups. In fact, this meant that the
urban interventions acted as catalysts for ‘spontaneous’ processes of social mix and exclusion in public spaces, often determined by the dynamics of the real estate and cultural markets, which primarily favoured tourists and the local middle classes.

It seems that the absence of social planning in urban interventions is, at least as far as it concerns the municipality, a result of the organisational characteristics of the administration. Elli Papakonstantinou, former director of the Planning Authority of Green and Public Spaces of the Municipality of Athens, notes that:

“It is a matter of the structure of the municipality of Athens. There are technical services, economic services, administration, and social services that do not communicate with each other, not even at the level of the deputy mayor… The programmes and the plans follow the same structure. The operational plan of the previous four-year period, and of this three-and-a-half-year period, is structured according to the proposal that each department or service will put forward” [respondent i, 18 December 2013].

This organisational characteristic has diachronically formed a way of planning and implementing urban interventions that is reproduced in the current projects:

“In whatever is related to the technical services of city planning, there is no reference to the social dimension. The projects that are selected for implementation do not include this dimension […] Even the current operational project, I would not characterise it as operational, but rather a series of projects that the municipality wants to put forward” [respondent i, 18 December 2013].

Categories such as ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ only appear as a technical discourse that accompanies specific EU-funded actions. For instance, among the ADDMA’s recent and current actions, we found a project with the title Actions in neighbourhoods. I live and act in my neighbourhood, which is explicitly associated with diversity issues. The project took place between March and June 2013 and aimed at the “creation of common places of interaction at the local level and of harmonious coexistence in neighbourhoods” (Actions in Neighbourhoods, 6th Press Release). The general principle of the project has been that the “social capital of an area is formed through the active participation of citizens in this [area], the recognition of multiculturalism (polipolitismikotita) and interaction in the neighbourhood” (Actions in Neighbourhoods, 6th Press Release).

The project included the organisation of 35 workshops in seven neighbourhoods of Athens and one neighbourhood of Thessaloniki, as well as six daily festivals in open urban spaces. Apart from the ADDMA, the agencies that participated in the project included the municipal cultural agencies of Athens and Thessaloniki, the municipal radio of Athens and the Centre for Professional Training of the City of Athens. The overall budget was about €250,000, 75% of which was covered by the European Integration Fund for Third Country Nationals and the remaining 25% by the Greek central state. This sole example of a project oriented towards
‘multiculturalism’ illustrates in an eloquent way the position of this issue in the local agenda: the municipal authorities turn to ‘multiculturalism’ as a response to the relevant EU policies and, in particular, to funding opportunities. The interest in ‘multiculturalism’ is not really part of local policies and remains rather ephemeral.

When asked about the ‘diversity’-related actions of the municipality of Athens, the president of the City of Athens Cultural Organisation, Nelly Papachela, mentioned Actions in neighbourhoods:

“Culture unites people... through programmes by the Ministry of Interior, by the European Integration Fund for Third Country Nationals. Although we never had a similar experience, we started last year with a programme which we named ’Actions in neighbourhoods’, which was very successful, especially in neighbourhoods with a high migrant concentration, for example, in Kypseli. Many migrant communities as well as the local population participated in the project and in the fiestas... We organised workshops with percussion, music, cooking, and food as cooking is part of culture. The event was very successful; it took place at the offices of the Filipino community of Kasapi. The Greeks participated and the Nigerian community as well, and this is very important as there are contrasts amongst the different migrant communities” [respondent m, 13 January 2014].

During the last few years, there has been a change in the policy texts in the way the discourse around urban public spaces is formed. As we have already noted, Project Athens breaks down the priority of the ‘regeneration of the urban environment’ in the goals of the ‘redevelopment of deteriorated areas’ and the ‘reconquering (anaktisi) of public spaces’. Similar discourse is formulated in the Plan for Integrated Urban Intervention (PIUI), a strategic plan promoted by the Ministry of Environment, the region of Attica and the municipality of Athens in order to address the effects of the crisis in Athens. Among the seven basic goals of the PIUI, are the ‘reconquering’ (anaktisi) and improvement (anavathmisi) of public space and the ‘restoration of conditions of security and legality’. The basic goals are broken down into 66 actions, among which we find actions ‘to face delinquency’, ‘actions to face the high concentration of illegal immigrants in the centre of Athens’, the ‘reinforcement and increase of art actions in public space’, the ‘regeneration (anazoogonisi) of open spaces’, and the ‘training of immigrants to enable their social integration (language, etc.) and to decrease the gap [with the Greek society]’. We thus witness a transition from an apparently neutral emphasis on the ‘improvement of quality of life’ for all citizens to a security and order-related rhetoric concerning urban public spaces. This transition echoes the wider dynamics of central state immigration policies, as described earlier.

To return to the questions posed in the introduction, we can summarise our arguments as follows:

a. Athenian urban policies only explicitly take ‘diversity’ as their object in the case of the implementation of EU-funded policies. The adoption of ‘diversity’ political discourse
in this framework is part of a wider, path-dependent adjustment of Greek public policies towards European policies that is fuelled by cohesion funds, which became increasingly important for public investments during the crisis. However, at the same time, this adjustment remains rather instrumental and it aims at the utilisation of EU funds rather than leading to the adoption of a ‘diversity’ agenda by local political forces. As a matter of fact, the most important policies that indirectly affect the coexistence between various social, cultural and ethnic groups in Athens are associated with attempts to address the financial crisis and the ensuing deep recession. This crisis-induced political agenda prioritises economic recovery through the enhancement of the international competitiveness of the city and the maintenance of social peace.

b. The aforementioned dominant political agenda entails a selectivity towards in-migration flows that privileges the social groups whose presence may contribute to the city’s economic development (investors, tourists, students).

c. The terms of coexistence of the different social, cultural and ethnic groups are characterised by hierarchies, targeted redistributive policies and practices of maintaining urban order. Hierarchies concern the divisions between ‘useful’ in-migrants (investors, tourists, etc.) and the abundant unskilled labour, legal and illegal immigrants etc. This marks a change in respect to the previous laissez-faire or fair weather immigration policies. ‘Useful’ guests are clearly separated from the ‘problematic’ and by far the larger part of the migrant population becomes the target of a neo-assimilationist policy: compliant adoption of local norms, values and identity leading – in contrast to the assimilationist policy of French republicanism that offered full social and political integration in return – to a limited form of integration with curtailed social and political rights. Redistributive policies concern the provision of services to specific social groups, which are framed as ‘disadvantaged groups’. The maintenance of urban order is turned against these groups, which are deemed to be sources of social problems, as the ‘illegal’ immigrants.

Last, other arrangements that focus on the recognition and empowerment of immigrants, for example, the IIC, are also connected with the adjustment of Greece to EU multi-level governance and remain, at least at the moment, relatively weak within the local political arena.

### 3.5 NON-GOVERNMENTAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GOVERNANCE OF DIVERSITY

At the time of the fieldwork, there was a consensus amongst migrant associations and NGOs that Greek policies are negligent towards the broader needs of the different migrant communities. Issues such as multiculturalism and diversity are scarcely part of the political agenda.

In order to research the openness of the policy-making process in relation to diversity issues, we conducted interviews with employees of NGOs active in migrant matters (the United African Women Organisation (UAWO) and the Support Centre for Children and Family (SCCF)), as well as with the presidents of migrant communities (the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi
community of Greece), the coordinator of research and documentation of the National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce (NCHC), and the director of the NGO Generation 2.0.

The formation and regulation of NGOs is relatively new in the Greek public sphere, being related to funding opportunities provided by the EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) during the 1990s (Afouxenidis and Sirakoulis, 2008). According to Afouxenidis (2006), this sector occupies an ambiguous position between the dominant political system and civil society. In the current time of crisis, the role and the practices of the NGOs tend to fill, to some degree at least, the void produced by the shrinkage of the welfare state and the collapse of the left hand of the state (Bourdieu, 2008).

However, the assignment of such a role to NGOs is an ambiguous process. NGOs and other agents of civil society are extremely varied in terms of their agendas, capacities, thematic interest and organisation. The work of those with explicit social concern may range from top-down philanthropic activity to participatory bottom-up solidarity building, with the latter claiming at the same time the enhanced responsibility of the state.

Diversity, surveillance and political initiatives
In the interviews, especially with the representatives of the migrant associations, there was a strong reference to the Hospitable Zeus project launched by the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (POCP). This project aims at the control of migrants without papers, by arresting and transferring them to ‘hospitality centres’ (i.e. detention camps) away from the city of Athens. NGOs and migrant communities alike have ironically associated the issue of diversity/multiculturalism (politisimikotita) in the city of Athens with the abovementioned practices against the migrant population. It should be noted that the people who are transferred to the detention camps are mistreated.

“The aggressive discourse expressed by politicians and the media has resulted in a wider differentiation and alienation between the immigrants and the Greek population” [respondent g, interview 21 November 2013].

According to the representatives of the migrant associations, this surveillance and control project is related to the broader political discourse on the migration issue in big city centres such as Athens. Such discourse actually capitalises on the residents’ fear related to the high levels of delinquency, the high unemployment rates and the deterioration of inner city living conditions.

The representatives of small- and medium-sized merchants and entrepreneurs explained that the merchants and entrepreneurs of the city perceive the arrival of different migrants, especially the undocumented ones, as a negative element.

“If you bring up the issue of migrant entrepreneurship in the Confederation, this is something really bad… the stereotypical thinking of merchants goes like this: illegal – black – selling bags –
on a piece of cloth on the streets… A strategy focusing on the migrant entrepreneurial initiatives will never be implemented…” [respondent j, 19 December 2013].

From another perspective, according to the interviewee from the National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce, multiculturalism is not considered to be negative element so long as it takes place under the umbrella of legality. Migrant entrepreneurs and employees who are documented and who adhere to the commercial law standards are accepted, so long as legality ensures that competition is fostered ‘on equal terms’.

The most prominent policy initiative related to diversity in Athens over the last few years has been the creation of the Immigrants’ Integration Council. The IIC is highly appreciated by the migrant communities that participate as members. As stated in the interviews, the IIC provides migrants with a political opportunity to speak out about their problems to the local government.

“If the IIC did not exist, then we could not even discuss matters such as citizenship, especially now that the government has dismissed the issue. At least at the IIC, we can put forward and discuss our burdens […] In relation to the past, there was nothing, now the IIC is our hope” [respondent k, 21 December 2013].

It is highlighted by the migrant communities that the IIC is the first initiative by the Greek state that facilitates their access to policy making. Actually, the IIC serves as a space for the recognition of diversity in Greek society. According to the interviewees, its establishment and function is something very positive, since diversity policies can be better shaped, initiatives can be formed and laws related to migrants’ issues can be better designed.

The migrant communities, besides recognising the importance of the IIC, highlight that it is only the beginning in relation to the policies that have to be shaped in order to address better opportunities to the diverse communities of Athens.

“But there are lots of things to be done. The IIC is only a start” [respondent k, 21 December 2013].

At the same time, the creation of the IIC has led to political empowerment amongst the different migrant communities. Migrants have established substantive networks in order to collaborate regarding the issues and the proposals to be introduced for discussion at the IIC. Hence, despite the integrationalist approach adopted by local politicians (see section 3.1), the IIC has served as a platform that promotes political discourse amongst the local government and the migrants, and thus within the different migrant communities.

Additionally, the IIC has led to the creation of a space of political encounter that, in a more festive way, is reflected in the establishment of the Day of the Migrant. The Day of the Migrant
was celebrated on 18 December 2013 and it was an initiative of the IIC. Different cultures (via music, dance and theatrical performances) and cuisines were brought together in the public space next to the Technopolis cultural hub, while simultaneously politicians from the central and the local government discussed migrants’ issues with various communities in a more relaxed way.

Besides the celebration of multiculturalism on the 18th of December, the establishment of the IIC and the allotment of public spaces to migrant communities for cultural and religious events, the NGOs and the migrant communities would suggest that public policies do nothing else to encourage their activities; hence, diversity.

Self-regulated welfarism and spaces of encounter
Fearful behaviour and discrimination are not the only problems faced by the migrant population. Many immigrants deal with communication problems, since they barely speak and write the Greek language. In their everyday life, they face issues related to the labour market and to state bureaucracy. The NGOs focus on practices that help migrants in their interaction with the state and the rest of Greek society. Hence, a kind of self-regulated welfarism is established, which actually helps to create spaces of encounter. Such initiatives take the form of Greek language lessons available to the migrant population. Rented spaces that host NGOs’ or migrant communities’ activities undertake educational projects launched by the Ministry of Education that are intended to promote the Greek language and culture.

“Since 2010, in this place (e.g. the Bangladeshi Community Cultural Centre) we have collaborated with the Ministry of Education on their project ‘Learning Greek’. The Ministry sent teachers and books, but no other kind of funding. Last year we participated in a project by the municipality called ‘Mummy, I am earning Greek’, which was about language lessons available to the mothers of our children” [respondent l, 24 December 2013].

Hence, the NGOs and migrant communities retrieve resources, including programmes that provide books and teachers, from the local and the central government, which helps them to better integrate into the local culture and ameliorate their quotidian status.

The municipality and several ministries sponsor diversity by providing public spaces or buildings to migrant associations for cultural and religious events, or by sponsoring the gay pride event once per year [respondent m, 13 January 2014]. Additionally, other events that deal with ethnic clothes, cuisine, theatre and dance are organised in collaboration with the municipality of Athens, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, migrant groups and other NGOs. Through such initiatives, instantaneous spaces of encounter are created amongst the Greek and the migrant cultures. Furthermore, informal relations amongst the municipal services and the NGOs have emerged, mainly due to the crisis.

“It has been some years now since our initiative has gained a reputation, so the civil servants know that we are helping migrants and their families. So, when they cannot communicate with
the migrants, or when migrants don't know how to fill in the documents required by the state, then the public employees send the immigrants to us [...] We have helped many people this way” [respondent h, 22 November 2013].

Both the NGOs and the migrant associations stress that, apart from multicultural festivals or the allocation of space for religious and ethnic celebrations, the local government barely supports them directly in terms of their basic needs. The NGOs create networks and collaborate with other members of civil society (such as Doctors Without Borders, initiatives against homelessness, lawyers’ unions and antiracist and feminist groups) in order to secure migrants’ rights and help them to alleviate the burdens they face in daily interactions. By organising supportive Greek language classes and projects dealing with the distribution of food, clothes and school materials for students, the NGOs establish practices that create spaces of redistribution for the less privileged population.

As the welfare state is withdrawing, the provision of social services is left to the NGOs. The NGOs have therefore undertaken the delivery of social services, especially to the people most in need, namely the migrant population. They assist migrants in legal interactions with the state by filling in legal documentation for them and advising them about issues in the labour market and civic rights.

**Policy-making, dialogue with social partners and issues of distrust**

When reflecting upon the initiatives and the strategies of the local government, doubts about the openness of policy-making emerge:

“The state, be it local or central, would only engage with the social partners after the 2000s, when the European Directives would require so. [...] Recently, the municipality of Athens has asked us to participate in the dialogue for the new strategic development plan (Project Athens), but this was only for formal reasons” [respondent j, 19 December 2013].

According to the interviews, the local government fosters social dialogue so as to adhere to the guidelines of the European Union for the implementation of the operational programmes and, most importantly, in order to be able to absorb the European funds. The policies are formed by members of government and experts who are hired for specific initiatives, for example, regeneration proposals for the city centre (for instance, the Urban Think Tank of ETH Zurich has been hired for a regeneration project called ‘Reactivate Athens’), whilst the rest of civic society barely participates in policy making.

In every interview, mistrust of public policies, the state and its practices was expressed. In relation to the migration issue, especially in respect to undocumented migration, the central government has initiated discussion with NGOs in order to secure better policy formation. As formulated in the following quote, the NGOs consider that such initiatives remain verbal commitments without the potential of actual implementation.
"We went to the Greek parliament and discussed the problems of migrants and they said that they would take care of it… but this is only bla-di-bla-bla" [respondent g, 21 November 2013].

As we have already noted, until recently there was no legal framework providing second-generation immigrants with the opportunity to acquire political rights. Therefore, for a long time these people were not recognised by the state as Greek citizens and they used to use residence permits as their only legal documentation. As indicated by the NGO Generation 2.0, this was the basic reason that second-generation children faced identity problems.

"If you don't have citizenship, you get restricted access to the labour market […] you don't have civil rights and you are forced to live with a residence permit in the country that you are born and raised in and this is the major identity issue that creates questions such as 'Who am I?', 'What am I doing?', 'Why am I treated this way?'" [respondent f, 4 February 2014].

The policies formed around migrants’ issues, especially those related to permits and citizenship, are perceived as weak by most of the interviewees. The distrust of the state actually serves the self-governance practices, hence the re-ordering of the state-civil society nexus.

In relation to resources promoting diversity and multiculturalism in Athens, the interviewees showed dissatisfaction. The only resource allocation was confined to Greek language classes, however, none of the interviewees were aware of the exact funding dedicated to the educational projects. NGOs have claimed that due to the crisis, funding opportunities have diminished and nowadays their budgets are sustained via members’ economic contributions, private donors or money raised from activities and projects. Likewise, the migrants raise money from members of their community on a monthly basis. Reflecting the general mistrust of the state and public policies, the interviewees claimed that there is an unwillingness to search for public funding and a preference for self-sustaining their initiatives or, even better, asking for European funding.

On the whole, due to the financial crisis, the nexus between civil society and the state is being reshaped and the role of NGOs is being transformed. In relation to diversity issues, NGOs and other civil initiatives tend to undertake in practice, at least to some degree, the role of the welfare state and their initiatives have hence gained legitimacy. Migrants and the more underprivileged members of society count more on bottom-up initiatives than on the policies produced by the local or the central government. Whether the NGOs’ role will be institutionalised will depend on future socio-political dynamics, as will the question of whether their initiatives will be legitimised as welfarism in the conscience of the society.

3.6 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND INITIATIVES

Presentation of diversity-based initiatives
To complement the analysis of the policy discourses on diversity, 10 small-sized initiatives, both private and public, in the city of Athens have been investigated. These arrangements pursue at
least one of the three overarching objectives of the DIVERCITIES project: strengthening social cohesion, enhancing social mobility and boosting economic performance.

Four of the 10 initiatives we studied focus mainly on the goal of *strengthening social cohesion* within the population of the city of Athens. A bottom-up initiative in this direction is the residents’ local committee of Akadimia Platonos. Like several local committees that emerged during the last 15 years and especially during the crisis in Athens, the committee of Akadimia Platonos brings together residents of the neighbourhood in actions aimed at ameliorating their living standards. The committee initially developed actions concerning the preservation of public spaces in the neighbourhood, but during the crisis it has expanded its activities by organising solidarity practices such as soup kitchens, the collection and distribution of second clothes, the provision of private classes to school children, of both Greek and migrant backgrounds, and a market without intermediaries where producers sell their products directly to consumers. Solidarity for All is an organisation mainly run by members of the radical left SYRIZA party that aims at coordinating local solidarity initiatives. Solidarity for All attempts to fill the gap in the interconnection that exists between the numerous but segmented local solidarity initiatives that have mushroomed in Athens over the last few years. The Immigrants’ Integration Council is a consultative body of the city of Athens that brings together representatives of migrant communities (see section 3.5). Neighbourhoods in Action is an EU-funded municipal project that aims at strengthening social cohesion at the neighbourhood level through the organisation of events and common activities (see section 3.4).

Only two of the 10 initiatives mainly pursue the objective of *strengthening the social mobility* of the inhabitants of the city of Athens. Both primarily focus on immigrants. The Sunday Immigrants’ School provides migrants with Greek lessons as well as legal support concerning asylum applications and the validation of legal documents. The Migrants’ Social Centre (MSC) provides a wide range of services to migrants that include language courses, computer training lessons, collective kitchens, film showings, concerts, book presentations and open discussions. It was the MSC that initiated the Antiracist Festival, which remains the most important event of its kind in Athens.

Four initiatives aim at *boosting the economic performance* of entrepreneurs in the city of Athens. This is the case for InnovAthens, a hub for entrepreneurship run by the city of Athens over the last two years. Meet Market is a non-profit organisation that arranges a market in Athens once a month, in a different place each time. Meet Market serves as a platform where creative young local producers (small-sized businesses) can promote innovative products (jewellery, crafts, etc.). The last two initiatives have a rather mixed character, since they serve both economic performance and social cohesion. The European Village is a non-profit organisation that fosters a solidarity economy and moral consumption through a wide range of activities (seminars on de-growth development, music and dance festivals, initiatives on green construction, organic cultivation and the exchange of seeds and plants, etc.). Reactivate Athens 101/Ideas is a research project funded by a private foundation and carried out under the auspices of the city of Athens.
The aim of the project is to produce innovative ideas for the regeneration of the city centre and the promotion of local entrepreneurship through participatory urban planning.

The bottom-up initiatives that we have examined are indicative of the practices developed by Athenians, especially during the financial crisis, to alleviate the burden on more vulnerable groups and increase social solidarity. These initiatives are characterised by self-organisation and open structures, but at the same time they remain rather segmented (a problem that the Solidarity for All initiative attempted to address). Initiatives such as Reactivate Athens and the Migrants’ Integration Council represent efforts to integrate the wider public and communities of migrants in particular in urban governance. In the context of Athens, these efforts have an innovative character, although they are still in an early stage of development. A comparison of the Neighbourhoods in Action and European Village initiatives reveals the importance of continuity and the local embeddedness of EU-funded actions. European Village has been much more successful in this respect, since it has evolved as an organisation deeply rooted in the neighbourhood’s social and economic life.

Conceptualisation of diversity within the surveyed governance initiatives

With the exception of the EU-funded initiatives (Neighbourhoods in Action and European Village) and the Reactivate Athens initiative, the rest of the initiatives scarcely refer explicitly to ‘diversity’. Although their practices could be seen as working in tandem with ideas such as diversity and hyper-diversity (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013), the stakeholders of the initiatives prefer to stress the notion of multiculturalism, which is verbally a more common term. When asked about the word ‘diversity’, most of the interviewees argued that it is a very vague term. However, irrespective of the terms used, the mere co-existence of alternative lifestyles and ethnic backgrounds is perceived in a positive way, as the ‘wealth’ or ‘richness’ of the society, a factor that might contribute to establishing better social relations.

Most importantly, the bottom-up initiatives show a strong reference to the term ‘solidarity’ and the importance of promoting social solidarity by developing networks and structures to sustain any population that is hit by the crisis. Based on the assumption that under the austerity regime introduced in the country several social groups and cultures are challenged in the same way, solidarity initiatives aim at fostering mutual help between them. Moreover, the way in which the word ‘solidarity’ is used is opposed to ‘philanthropy’. The members of the initiatives argue that philanthropy, which also develops in the context of a crisis, presupposes and reproduces an unequal relationship between the donor (a wealthy person, an institution like the Church) and the receiver. On the contrary, ‘solidarity’ takes place between persons at more or less the same social level, and it stems from the desire for mutual help and self-organisation. Similarly, solidarity initiatives avoid using the term ‘social cohesion’ because they see it as part of the rather hypocritical language of official public policies.
3.7 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the recent reform of the local administration system and the implementation of a metropolitan government in Athens, diversity-related policies and urban policies in general are characterised by a lack of autonomy and they mainly consist of the reproduction of the main political goals decided at the national and supranational level. In the past, local policies in Athens were determined by central politics due to the centralism that characterised the administrative structure of the country. Actually, during the financial crisis, it was the shortage of public economic resources that increased the political dependence of the city and the region on the central and, most notably, supranational authorities. All the major political texts of the region of Attica and the municipality of Athens reproduce the main policy directives included in the bailout agreement between the Greek government, the IMF, the EU and the ECB, as well as in the aims of the EU’s cohesion funds.

However, the regional and municipal authorities adopt EU policies in a rather selective way. They use the ‘diversity’ and ‘multicultural’ vocabulary only to promote successful funding for specific actions through EU initiatives. At the same time, however, the regional and municipal authorities tend to converge with the public order-oriented and neo-assimilationist policies of the Greek central state regarding issues of migration policy.

Overall, we argue that the urban policies that affect the terms and the content of the coexistence of various groups in Athens are of neoliberal inspiration. The path-dependent character of this neoliberalisation process is shaped by distinct elements of the current Athenian political-economic context: the scarcity of public resources and other consequences of the recession; the changing relations between the scales of political power as well as the ways they are expressed in the bailout agreements; and the 2010 reform of the Greek local administration system in order to adjust it to the EU’s ‘multi-level’ governance.

The dominant developmental policies in Athens aim at attracting specific categories of desirable foreigners to the city, including investors, tourists and students, whose presence is considered to be a prerequisite for the recovery of the local economy. This strategy entails the selective opening of Athens to the international environment, which implies a hierarchy among foreigners in both ethnic and socio-economic terms (for instance, ‘western’ investors and tourists being more desirable than Balkan and African workers). At the same time, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, who represent the large majority of immigrants to Athens since the mid-1990s, are becoming marginalised as the sectors in which they were occupied have now collapsed (notably the construction sector).

Social policies and policing play a complementary role in relation to competitive city policies. While competitive city policies aim at fostering the recovery of the city’s economy by means of attracting international flows of capital and persons, targeted social policies and the policing of public spaces aim at maintaining social peace. The shrinking of the social agenda makes it
appear more as an instrument for promoting competitive strategies than as a goal per se. Under conditions of the impoverishment of even a large part of the middle classes and of increasing inequality, the maintenance of public order is one of the main ‘provisions’ that the local and central state seem willing to offer to citizens, especially under the administration of conservative political forces.

Social, cultural and ethnic groups, which could be seen as assets to the city’s economy and society in general in better economic circumstances, are now considered to be possible sources of tension. At best, these groups may be categorised, along with others, as ‘disadvantaged’ in order to have access to targeted and ‘minimalistic’ social services aimed at covering basic needs. At worst, the presence of these groups may be seen as a negative element of urban life, as in the case of the undocumented immigrants whose concentration in the city centre is a ‘problem’ that needs to be addressed. Actually, with the shrinking of the welfare state (which was never particularly developed), initiatives that cater to the vulnerable population, including migrants, are increasingly promoted by NGOs and other agents of civil society rather than by governmental institutions. Such initiatives undertake the role of the minimalist welfare state by filling the void created by specific policy choices and exacerbated by the crisis.

Urban interventions over the previous twenty years left the terms and content of social interaction in public spaces to ‘spontaneous’ market and social processes, which were privileging the then prosperous middle classes. During the financial crisis, policies tended to frame the social coexistence in urban public spaces through the lens of policing and the restriction of immigrants’ concentration.

Policies of recognition are rather marginal in Athenian urban policies. The only noteworthy case is the introduction of the Immigrants’ Integration Councils. The creation of this institution is associated with an ambiguous, long-term adjustment of the Greek local administration system towards the EU governance structures, mainly in order to ameliorate access to EU funds. It also reflects an era of relative consensus on national policies concerning the integration of immigrants, which ended more or less when the 2008 crisis began. The operation of the Athenian IIC shows that it permits some empowerment of immigrant organisations, although this suffers from important limitations such as low visibility and the discrepancy between the central government level where the regulation of immigration issues is implemented and the local political level to which immigrant organisations have been given some access through their participation in the IICs.

Under conditions of a scarcity of resources (jobs, incomes), the coexistence of various social and ethnic groups is perceived as a zero-sum competition: what one group or individual gains is taken from another. Thus, the concept of diversity as an asset is fading. Furthermore, as long as the crisis is still unfolding, it is the repartitioning of the cost of the crisis, rather than of the social resources, that is at the epicentre of policies and public debates. This very much affects the content of the issue of social inequality. Overall, the main policy problem is economic recovery.
and, under the domination of a neoliberal political rationale, it is accepted that competitiveness and an ‘externally-oriented’ economy are the best means to address that recovery.
4 RESIDENTS DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Within cities, different population groups can live in segregation or somewhat mixed. Thus, urban neighbourhoods may be fairly homogeneous or highly diverse with respect to housing (type, tenure, price etc.) and population categories (income, ethnicity, household composition, age etc.). Even individuals who belong to the same ‘official’ demographic category may possess quite different lifestyles and attitudes and involve themselves in a wide range of activities. For example, some may have a neighbourhood-oriented life (with all their friends and activities located in a very small area) while others may have their social activities stretched over the whole city or even beyond. Overall, residents of the city’s neighbourhoods may happily live together, live parallel lives, or be in open conflict with each other (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

This chapter aims to explore how urban diversity affects social cohesion and social mobility in the city, focusing on the neighbourhood of Akadimia Platonos, a diverse, lower-middle class neighbourhood located in the western part of the city of Athens (for contextual information, see Chapter 2). Our study is based on interviews with 50 residents of the neighbourhood, conducted between September and December 2014. First, we examine why people settled in the specific study area and to what extent diversity has been a pull factor for their residential choice. Second, we explore what residents think about the neighbourhood where they live and whether they perceive their neighbourhood’s diversity as an asset or a liability. Third, we evaluate to what extent diversity of the neighbourhood is important for social cohesion and social mobility. Last, we explore the way that diversity-related policies are perceived by residents.

Overall, we argue that there are diverging perceptions of diversity in the neighbourhood, which range from the celebration of social, cultural and ethnic differences, as elements of metropolitan cosmopolitanism, to the fear of cultural and ethnic ‘other’, seen as a source of criminality and a factor of degradation in the area. Regarding social cohesion, we find that social relationships between diverse persons emerge mainly within particular institutional settings (local associations, school), where people develop common concerns and interests, as well as within public micro-spaces, which offer favourable conditions for social interactions, at least between people who have already established relationships within institutional settings. On the contrary, we did not find any significant connections between diversity and residential choices, which depend much more on other factors such as price and location. The same goes for the relationship between diversity and social mobility, as personal city-wide networks (associated with other social fields like university, working spaces etc.) are a more efficient form of social
capital in finding jobs. Last, concerning the relationship between residents with urban policies, we found that residents are remarkably unaware of policies, something that indicates the need for a restoration of citizens’ interest and trust in public (central and local) authorities.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

Our research focused on the fourth administrative district of Athens, where a mixture of ethnic backgrounds is more evident in comparison to other parts of the city centre. We chose as initial entry points for fieldwork research two local initiatives: the neighbourhood local association and the collaborative kafenio, called the “European Village”. However, during the fieldwork it rapidly became clear that people active in these two local initiatives have quite distinct lifestyles (environmental concerns, progressive thinkers and/or are politically oriented towards the left) that do not reflect mainstream local society. Moreover, the migrant population in the area is hardly active in these schemes. In order to approach the rest of the social and ethnic groups living in Akadimia Platonos, we obtained contact details of local people from our social networks (families, friends, relatives, political and social initiatives). We also approached two local schools (the 60th and the 66th public primary schools), asking for the collaboration of directors and a parents’ association. In order to avoid the problems that arise with snowball sampling techniques (ending up with a sample consisting of like-minded people, of the same origin, or people with established social relations) (Robson, 2002; Chorianopoulos, 2006), we initiated multiple snowballs. Through these tactics, we approached households of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as households with alternative lifestyles.

Our purpose was to construct a sample of interviewees reflecting the successive waves of in-migration that shaped the neighbourhood socially and culturally during the last decades. The migrant population of our sample consists of Albanians (the most numerous ethnic group) and other groups from Eastern Europe who have migrated to Greece since the 90s, i.e. Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Romanians. Furthermore, we approached more recent in-migrants such as Pakistanis (the second largest migrant group in the area) and Syrians. We got in contact with individuals from other groups (indicating the diversity in the area), such as a return-migrant from South Africa of Greek origin, a Spaniard and a Swede. People who settled in the area before the 1990s are Greeks, (Athenians or internal migrants from rural areas) and members of the Roma community (either from northern Greece or from Albania). Regarding the Greek population, we interviewed members of elderly households, people who were born and raised and still live there, young households who recently settled with their families in Akadimia Platonos and younger people who started living in the neighbourhood in the last five years. The people interviewed maintained different social and economic statuses; many showed a high cultural capital, mainly evidenced from their educational degrees and their cultural distinction. Due to the economic crisis, most of the interviewees were facing economic difficulties. Nonetheless, we also interviewed wealthier residents so as to better reflect the social and income
mixture in the area. In total, we conducted 32 interviews with Greeks, two interviews with Roma group members and 16 interviews with migrants.

A number of people that we approached did not agree to participate in the project, feeling suspicious of a project connected with the European Union or were mistrustful of the fact that it was being undertaken by a national research centre. This distrust towards the EU and the Greek public sector is associated with the current crisis as common representations tend to ascribe the responsibility for the latter to these two institutions. In times of austerity and persistent crisis, people in deprived areas can feel distrust and scepticism about the aims and objectives of social research. In terms of ethnicity, we did not manage to contact any Indian or Polish residents of the neighbourhood, while we interviewed only one Syrian person.

We conducted interviews with 22 men and 28 women who reside in the area (see Appendix 2). Most of them are between 40 and 50 years old, although some elderly households and younger people participated in the research. Most of the interviewees work in the private sector as independent employers or in routine occupations (27) or in the public sector (6); however, many indicated that they are recently or are long-term unemployed (12). The elderly participants indicated that they are pensioners (5). The majority of migrant women work largely in the informal economy, for example as cleaning ladies in households in other neighbourhoods, and indicated that their husbands are unemployed. Migrant men stated that they work in unskilled and semi-skilled manual occupations or that they are unemployed. The interviewees from Greek households are employed in tertiary occupations, mainly in the private sector (secretaries, teachers, employees) or in the public sector (teachers, clerks) or in skilled manual occupations (plumbers). The majority of the people who participated in the research have secondary education degrees (28), fewer have higher-education degrees (17) and in some cases, they lack primary (elementary) education (5) (for example, the Roma households and three elderly interviewees had dropped out of primary school). The fact that there is a social and economic mix in the area is reflected in the incomes declared by the interviewees. Some of them stated a monthly gross household income between €1,000 and €2,000, which may be characterised as the lower-middle-income category, some stated higher gross incomes (more than €3,000 and may be characterised as the middle-income category) whilst one-third of the participants stated that they earn less than €1,000 per month (and may be characterised as the lower-income category).

The fieldwork was carried out between September 2014 and July 2015.

4.3 HOUSING CHOICE AND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY

Housing choice is strongly related to the economic resources of households. However, other social and environmental factors may play a crucial role in residential mobility. As Blokland (2003) argued, urban bonds, i.e. social and family ties that develop in a specific place, may play
a crucial role in housing selection and settlement in an area. Social ties in the neighbourhood may support place attachment as people build a sense of belonging through their daily interactions (Curley, 2010). Housing trajectories may differ amongst natives and migrants as the latter are less able to realise their housing preferences (Bolt and Van Kempen, 2002). Moreover, natives and migrants may indicate different housing needs and express different preferences with regard to similar housing conditions. Additionally, housing preferences depend on age, household types (single, families) and income (ibid.).

People may choose to live in the city centre because of the cheap housing stock, the easy access and the presence of compatriots and friends. Strong homeownership rates (around 51.3% in 2001, (EKKE-ELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011) and low residential mobility rates (5% in Greece in 2001) are basic characteristics of the housing market. Low residential mobility for the Greek population is related to strong family ties (Maloutas, 2004); the persistent economic crisis reduced it even further. For the migrant population, access to homeownership is an indicator of integration and upward social mobility. This is becoming visible for long-established groups – especially Albanians – whilst, in most cases, migrant groups are constrained to renting and present higher residential mobility rates (Kandylis and Maloutas, 2012).

4.3.1 Why move to a deprived and diverse area?
In this section, we focus on the housing choices of people who live in Akadimia Platonos and we try to clarify their patterns of residential mobility. As the area consists of cheap housing and is inhabited by households with low incomes, we argue that economic factors are more significant in the selection of the area. However, other socio-psychological factors are crucial, as well. The main reason for settling in the area is related to economic factors, but also proximity to family members and place attachment. Last, other pulling factors for settling in the area include its central location and the fact that it is well served by mass transport. Social, cultural and ethnic diversity is not mentioned as a pull factor related to the housing choice of the interviewees.

In Akadimia Platonos, the housing stock mainly consists of buildings of six to seven floors; however, there is also a large number of low-rise housing. Low-storey housing is simple working class or lower middle-class construction. The main landmark of the area is the Akadimia Platonos Park where, in ancient times, Plato established his philosophical school. Until the 1980s, in the place of today’s park space there were low-rise houses. At the beginning of the 1990s, these residences were expropriated and demolished by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Planning, Environment and Public Works. This space was turned into a park, a green space of archaeological importance as, after excavations, parts of Plato’s school were discovered. Construction around this park is limited to reduced height (up to four floors) buildings; some buildings are restored and at the same time, new developments emerge, which are mainly privately owned.
Economic factors
Rents and house prices in the area are lower than other inner city neighbourhoods, which is considered to be the main factor of settling in Akadimia Platonos by the Greek and the migrant population. As expressed by R49 (female, 28, waitress, Greek) who moved to the area in the last five years:

“I initially decided to live in Akadimia Platonos as it was close to my job. The area really suited me and it was cheap here. I was thinking of living in Petralona, but in comparison to Petralona it is cheaper here, so I stayed in Akadimia Platonos.”

Many respondents stated that inheriting a house became the main factor for settlement in the area. In these cases, home ownership itself becomes the main reason for deciding to stay in the area, in order to minimise living costs.

Other younger Greek residents (in their 30s) stated that they live in their parental home, as their economic resources were insufficient to be able to live on their own. Again, the economic factor emerges as a crucial one, leading people to reside in the area: younger people remain in the family nest as their salaries are rather low or they are unemployed and their living expenses are covered by their family.

Socio-psychological factors
Many respondents stressed that the main reason for settling in the area was the presence of friends and relatives and place attachment. Middle-aged Greek respondents said that they decided to live in the area because their parental families or their partner’s paternal family was already living in Akadimia Platonos. As expressed by R43 (male, 41, researcher, Greek):

“The main reason was that my parents were born and raised here. The economic one was that there was a house available for us… and the fact that every time you have someone next to you when you need help is very important, and with the children, my parents collect them every day from the kindergarten…”

The presence of the broader family is considered to be an advantage as one can get assistance in daily issues and/or in the raising of their own family. This social asset is further related to the minimisation of expenses and added costs such as private kindergartens or hiring a nanny.

Other respondents, especially those born and raised in the area, referred to place attachment and the relationships developed with the local society. For example, R36 (male, 36, plumber, Greek) noticed that:

“I was born and raised here and I love this neighbourhood a lot. I cannot imagine myself living in another neighbourhood for a long period. I left for many years, I travelled, but I always come back here. This is my benchmark, my neighbourhood.”
The interviewee characterises the neighbourhood as his “benchmark”. This characterisation, as well as the statement that he “loves” the area, indicates a strong place attachment, which, as he later stated in the interview, is related to his family, his friends, his memories and the experiences he had throughout his life in the area. Moreover, other interviewees born and raised here indicate that they did not want to leave the area as they grew up and built their own families, as they “know” the place and they did not want to leave. The fact that other relatives and friends live close by enhances their need to stay put. The close spatial and social relationships developed in the area create a sense of belonging, which is related to the housing preference of some households.

Elderly people, who settled in the area during the first post-war decades, explained that the main reason for settling in the area was the presence of compatriots already inhabiting Akadimia Platonos. In the case of the Greeks, the presence of people from the same village became a pull factor for housing choice. Likewise, the main pull factors for the Roma population are the presence of relatives and the cheap and affordable rents. As indicated in the interviews with the Roma households, their relatives (mother-in-law, aunt and cousin) mentioned the houses they currently rent in the area.

Migrant interviewees stated that they settled in the area in order to be close to friends and compatriots (who had already settled in Akadimia Platonos). The support that can be offered by compatriots and the convenience of being close to people who share the same characteristics (language and culture) leads to settling in close proximity. Migrants from Eastern European countries claim that although they had settled in the area on their own, when in later years their wives joined them, they preferred to remain in the area in order not to lose contacts and networks. Due to the economic crisis, they expressed how they would rather migrate to another country, but the fact that their families have settled in the area and their children go to school stops them from further migration.

**Urban environment and location**

Some respondents indicated that they were attracted by the urban environment and the central location of the area. Migrants, in particular, stressed that living in the city centre, in a cheap area with good transport connections (metro station, rail station, bus lines) is crucial as they have to travel long distances for their jobs. If they work in different places (e.g. provision of personal services, construction), being close to transportation enables good travel facilitation. The central location was mentioned as a pull factor by many Greeks. Living in the city centre makes easy access to the rest of the city possible. Additionally, as the area is close to the national highways, its location facilitates travels away from Athens.

Some respondents indicated that they were attracted by the ‘human scale’ of the building stock and the green space of the park. Compared with other gentrified neighbourhoods, Akadimia Platonos has remained as the only place with affordable prices in the city centre that has these characteristics.
4.3.2 Moving to the present neighbourhood: improvement or not?

In the following lines, we address the question of whether settling in Akadimia Platonos is thought of as being an improvement or not.

The Greek households who recently moved to the area consider their housing choice as an improvement in comparison with their previous housing conditions. Either because the house is better or because of the condition of the environment, they mention that their living standards improved. For example, newly settled R48 (male, 35, chef, Greek) stated that:

“I used to live in Gkizi… and I freaked out completely, I had to spend lots of time driving from one place to the other… I wanted to leave Athens… but then by chance I met a friend who lives here and he introduced me to the collaborative kafenio and I liked the idea, I saw the place here with the park; it was like a village, and I said to myself ‘this is it’.”

The relatively low heights and density of the built environment, the green park in Akadimia Platonos and the tranquillity in the area together create the sense of an urban village, which is highly appreciated by interviewees in comparison with where they used to live and with the rest of the city centre. A newcomer, R37 (male, 49, school teacher, Greek) describes his experience of the new urban environment as follows:

“When I entered the house, I could see the Acropolis from my bedroom! No more, a high building being constructed opposite mine; the construction of my building is very good. My house is 57 square metres with a bedroom and a bathroom with a united interior space… with a south-east orientation… It is surrounded by glass and it has a fireplace. It is very beautiful. I really like my house.”

The interviewees who moved into better housing, into newly-built apartments or well-maintained low-storey houses clearly expressed their satisfaction, and they mentioned that, in terms of housing, moving into the area was an improvement. However, for other interviewees, living in the area is not considered as being an improvement; those who inherited a house in the area spoke rather negatively about it.

Other interviewees indicated that life in their former area was better as the municipality took better care of the public spaces and the cleaning of their former neighbourhoods (especially the ones that used to live in the neighbouring area of Peristeri).

The issue of diversity was indicated negatively by some interviewees. For example, R12 (male, 44, unemployed, Albanian) was straightforward when he noted:

“I would rather live in Glyfada, but I cannot… what should I like here? Here, it is full of gypsies and Roma people.”
The presence of immigrants and minority groups in the area is perceived by some as a factor in the decline of the living conditions in Akadimia Platonos. Elderly households and lifelong residents, especially, expressed feelings of discomfort about the migrant ‘other’. According to them, the living standards in the neighbourhood deteriorated when the migrant population settled in the area, which was after the 1990s.

The migrant interviewees, however, talked positively about the neighbourhood. The fact that the area has many mini-markets and shops where they can satisfy their consumption needs, is considered an improvement in comparison to the previous areas they had settled which were less lively (for example next to Omonia or Vathis squares).

The Roma interviewees talked positively about the living conditions in the area. According to their perceptions, living in the area is an improvement in comparison to their previous locations. Akadimia Platonos, as a central neighbourhood, is characterised as a better location in relation to the area in the western part of Athens where there is a Roma clustering (Zefiri), or Agios Panteleimonas (city centre of Athens) where there is a strong migrant presence.

4.3.3 Conclusions
Interviewees mention mainly economic, social and other environment factors rather than diversity as pull factors for settling in Akadimia Platonos. In some cases, diversity is perceived negatively, as a factor that has led to the devaluation and degradation of the area.

Economic factors are important: low housing prices, lower rents in comparison with other central areas and inheriting or owning a house are the main reasons for settling in Akadimia Platonos. Other social factors, such as the presence of the broader family, of friends or compatriots, influence the household’s decision to choose the area, as well. Greek people who settled in the area in the last five years also mention environmental factors. The low density and heights of the built environment and the green space of Plato’s Park, which create the atmosphere of an “urban village”, offer good living conditions. Especially for them, living in Akadimia Platonos is thought to be an improvement in comparison to the previous areas where they used to reside.

For the migrant interviewees, housing choice is related to limited economic means and social bonds. Seeking better housing conditions, they moved several times within the area, showing stronger housing mobility than the Greek population. Most of the interviewees stated that the area is more convenient in comparison with other central areas, mainly because of the facilities in Akadimia Platonos, such as the mini-markets and the shops. From a similar standpoint, for the Roma interviewees, housing in Akadimia Platonos is considered an improvement as the area offers affordable housing and better living conditions in comparison with other areas where they settled in the city.
4.4  PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIVERSITY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

In the area of Akadimia Platonos, residents seem to live parallel lives isolated from each other. Nonetheless, everyday interactions in local associations or public institutions, like the local public schools, create micro-encounter spaces, as Valentine (2013) discussed, where cultural and ethnic diversity is perceived as a new positive aspect of city living. In these micro-spaces, prejudices against the other reduce. As Wessendorf (2013) indicated, while in the public realm diversity may be acknowledged as difference, in the parochial realm, diversity may lead to mutual understanding and acceptance of difference.

The next section will focus on the way the residents of Akadimia Platonos define the geographical boundaries of their neighbourhood. The following parts examine how residents perceive their neighbours and their neighbourhood, especially in relation to cultural, ethnic and social diversity in their area.

4.4.1  Perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood

Most of the interviewees describe the boundaries of the area in relation to physical landmarks: venues, big streets, hills, churches and public squares of the area. As R17 (female, 55, journalist, Greek) described in the interview:

“The defining streets are Lenorman and Konstantinoupolios streets, so this part is called Akadimia Platonos… It is called that because of the ancient monuments that were discovered in the park… The upper part of the area surrounding the hill of the Kolonos area to Omonia… antiquities were discovered there as well – this is called Kolonos… From the hill of Kolonos to the Kifisos river, this is Sepolia… These are the three areas and there is a landmark.”

For R17, the perception of the area relies mainly on its physical geography, the landmarks and the historical findings of ancient monuments rather than its social composition. Many interviewees pinpointed that the main landmark of the area is Plato’s Park, which is reminiscent of its ancient history. Similarly, others put great emphasis on the surrounding avenues and the easy access to the area from the city centre and the national highways.

In many interviews, there was a strong reference to the recent past (the era of urbanisation of the 1960s and the 1970s) and the way it is being recalled in several toponyms. Such representations are related to the social history of the place. As discussed by R42 (male, 32, unemployed, second-generation Egyptian):

“I live in Kolonos […] but this area here is called Kolokynthou21 […] So after the drainage works of river Kifisos were completed, […] there were plots of land here full of zucchinis […] so someone named the area Kolokynthou, and it has remained ever since.”
Some micro-areas within the broader area of Akadimia Platonos maintain the place name obtained during the first urbanisation period. For example, the toponym *Kolokynthou*, mentioned by the interviewee above, has its roots in the 1960s as this micro-area was a place for zucchini cultivation. According to the views of many locals, this name is more prevalent than the one used for the broader area.

Before the excavation of the micro-area, the park was called *Bythoulas*. As described by the interviewees, the word *Bythoulas* refers to the dirt and the poor conditions of the people living in this space. This word also refers to the lack of sewage systems and the problems people faced during bad weather conditions. However, this place name has basically been erased from memory since it is now used only in relation to a TV comedy. The Akadimia Platonos name seems preferable and more appropriate as it is connected to the ancient past of the city. Once again, perceptions regarding the boundaries of the micro-areas are related to the city’s past. The recent social dynamics, such as diversity, are not yet reflected in the cognitive structures of the local people.

4.4.2 Perceptions of neighbours
Most of the interviewees describe their neighbours in terms of standard social and demographic categories (nationality, age, education, job). The relationships that emerge amongst the diverse groups vary from strong social bonds to loose social relations, whilst in some cases discomfort and feelings of fear are also expressed.

Most of the interviewees use mainstream categorisations such as age, ethnicity, educational level and employment status to describe their neighbours. In many interviews, it was illustrated that the majority of neighbours, i.e. of the people who live in the same street or in the same building, are mainly elderly of Greek origin, pensioners who used to work in routine occupations. However, other interviewees focus upon the ethnic and social mix, as well. R20 (female, 39, cleaning lady, Bulgarian) described that on her street there are:

“[…] lots of elderly Greeks, three families of Bulgarians, four families of Albanians, a Ukrainian family and some Indians, and all the rest are Greek; but if you shout for help, everyone will come out to help.”

Most of the interviewees refer to education, indicating that the educational status of their neighbours is rather low. R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) links the low-level education with the high percentage of neo-Nazi votes in the recent local elections:

“The Greeks that live in this block […] mostly own their apartments and their educational level is very low. This is why we had such electoral results with Golden Dawn here. Kasidiaris got the highest percentages in the city.”
Most of the respondents indicated that their neighbours mostly work in routine occupations, although some stated that some of the residents are occupied in intermediate or higher professions. As expressed by R36 (male, Greek, 36, plumber):

“There are as many men as women in the area, working in technical jobs to science, everything […] However there are more blue-collar workers, as the area is close to garages and warehouses and there were many small industries. During the previous decades, there were cabbage gardens so there were farmers as well. It is only in the last two decades that people turned to education, so their children go to school, university and so… so many people became like that as well.”

Many interviewees highlighted that their migrant neighbours are restricted to routine occupations or unemployment, as mentioned by R46 (female, 66, Greek, pensioner):

“Most of the women from Albania clean houses and staircases, their men used to work in construction, but now that there is no construction they help their women in cleaning and in bringing up their children.”

Interestingly, some interviewees stress that the crisis-induced deterioration of economic conditions has worked as an equalising mechanism for the local population. For instance, R20 (Bulgarian, cleaning lady in her 30s) states that the new situation, in a sense, makes her feel more comfortable with her neighbours:

“In the past, neighbours used to look down on me and think ‘oh the poor Bulgarian’, but now we have become equal because rich people don’t live in the area […], now we are all equal.”

The qualifications that each group would assign to each other, or the words and the verbal combinations used for the description of the neighbour vary significantly. There is a broader consensus that people who live in the area are “good” people, but then the narratives vary according to the perspective of the interviewee. For example, R7 (female, 31, school teacher, Greek) described her neighbours as:

“I would characterise them as ‘lumpen’. They are these very ‘folksy’ kinds of people. They are dressed in a folksy way. The kind of guy who puts on his flip flops, his shorts and t-shirt with overhanging belly.”

The above interviewee uses this way to describe her “lumpen” folksy neighbours in order to demarcate herself from the lower cultural capital that characterises the rest of the population. For other residents, words such as “folksy” and “popular” (laikos) are used in a rather positive way. For example, R30 (female, 33, unemployed, Romanian) describes her neighbours as “popular”, people that have accepted her as a migrant; this tolerance for diversity makes her feel comfortable amongst them. A Greek man (R36: male, 36, plumber) describes his neighbours as “good” “folksy” living in “reality” without pretending and behaving as middle class, relating the
low-income statuses with dignity and simplicity. According to these perceptions, “popular” is a basic characteristic of the people in the area with limited economic resources, who express high cultural values as they live with dignity.

Another interviewee (R35: female, 41, cleaning lady, Greek) characterised her neighbours (referring to her Greek neighbours) as “sad and melancholic” due to the crisis, with the economic problems and the issues of insecurity they face. Another respondent, R6, described her neighbours (both Greek and migrants) as “melancholic” and “thoughtful” as the crisis has created major economic burdens and deprivation in their lives. According to these perceptions, impoverishment due to the crisis is the main factor for the isolation and melancholia experienced by the neighbouring population. In this case, economic deprivation is portrayed by the interviewees as isolation and psychological instability.

The vocabulary used changed significantly when the discussion referred to the migrant and the Roma population, especially by interviewees with low cultural and economic resources. An interviewee (R29: male, 82, pensioner, Greek) stated that migrants who do not have a family and are not assimilated in Greek society are “junk” who deal in drug trafficking and loiter in public spaces. From a different perspective, R40 (female, 41, actress, Greek) indicated that migrants are “deprived alcoholic people” who are characterised by resignation and do not contribute to the local cultural life as they could. However, R28 (Swedish, makeup artist, in her 40s) characterised her Pakistani neighbours as “very polite” people and her Albanian neighbours as “very good” people, while R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) indicated that she has developed very strong relationships with her Roma neighbours that make her feel “secure”.

The presence of the Roma population in the area creates feelings of discomfort in many interviewees, of both migrant and Greek origin. The low educational level (Roma in Greece barely go to school), their hardy outdoor life and some behavioural elements (such as joking and teasing loudly in public spaces) create feelings of dislike or fear. As stated by R30 (female, 33, unemployed, Romanian), very close to her home there is:

“A building full of Gypsies and to tell you the truth I am afraid to pass through this street […] It is not that I am afraid of something, it is that these people have their own culture.”

The above interviewee could not specify why she is afraid of the Roma population, apart from the fact that they have their own culture that is distinct from other social groups. Moreover, many women expressed feelings of fear of the Roma population. Although they could not express specifically what makes them feel scared, they indicated that the way they tease their children (R30), their loudness, (R28) or the informal economic activities they engage in, (R6) makes them feel uncomfortable and scared. Other interviewees were more straightforward when referring to the Roma population. The qualifications used were expressed via tougher words that indicate frustration. Greek respondents maintain that they are annoyed by the way the Roma “loiter” in public spaces (R37: male, 47, school professor, Greek) or by the fact that they
are “annoying” as they try to “manipulate you” and “scare people” (R32: male, 41, unemployed, Greek); these phrases are indicative of the fact that the Roma population is considered unwelcome due to the specific approach they have to public spaces (being loud and loitering) and to their interaction with other groups (panhandling or begging). From a similar perspective, R9 (male, 33, factory worker, Pakistani) characterised the Roma as a “knavish” race because of the attacks and robberies that Pakistani people have suffered from the Roma in the area.

Nevertheless, the interviewed Roma characterised their neighbours as “good” people. They indicated that they have good relationships with their neighbours, especially with the Greeks who help them with clothing or ask for their services (e.g. in transporting heavy things) and give them a little money. As stated by a Roma respondent, apart from an elderly Greek lady that wanted to evict the family, and two Albanian families they did not get along with, there are no broader conflicts in the area.

Most of the interviewees indicated that people rarely develop social relationships with their neighbours. Expressions like “people live enclosed in their homes” or “everyone is enclosed in their own shell” are indicative of a broader atmosphere of social isolation shared by most interviewees; people are cohabiting in the same space but they are living parallel lives isolated from each other. For example, the Pakistani interviewees expressed that they want their “peace and quiet” so they prefer to hang around with their fellow countrymen, while migrants prefer to meet with other compatriots and Greeks spend most of their time with their families or other friends of the same ethnic and socio-economic status.

However, in the micro-space of the building or the immediate neighbourhood this perception of isolation is attenuated. Some interviewees said that although they might not have any relationships with neighbours in the same building they might have developed closer relationships with people who live on the same street. For example, R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) said that she trusts the old lady who lives next to her, as she always keeps an eye on her, but she has not developed bonds with anyone else in the building. Her closest friend in the area is the neighbour who lives in the opposite building as they grew up together playing on the street. R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian) enjoys drinking coffee once a week with the (Greek) elderly lady who lives next door, even though she claims that she does not have any friends in the building. Good relationships amongst neighbours develop irrespective of the ethnic background. Within this framework, diversity is strengthened and negative perceptions of ‘otherness’ collapse. R41 (male, 32, unemployed, second-generation Egyptian) indicated that he would never have expected to become friends with the Bulgarian couple living next door if their daughters were not classmates. Hence, in this case, the closeness that characterises the inter-cultural social relationships is breached by them having children.

4.4.3 Perceptions of the neighbourhood: positive and negative aspects
Lifelong residents claimed that the configuration of Plato’s Park through the arrangement of the green space was of great importance as it provided the residents with an open space to visit
and relax and a place for the children to play and do sports. At the same time, the replacement of the old building stock with green spaces has provided the area with better air and living quality. In this way, the creation of the park has improved neighbourhood conditions, whilst the increase in the housing prices of the surrounding buildings is perceived as an upgrading factor. Moreover, the replacement of a parking space with a municipal swimming pool and the configuration of the surrounding space as a public space are judged as change that has further improved the living conditions. However, some lifelong residents indicated that, especially after the earthquake of 2001, the replacement of the old housing stock with high-rise buildings has negatively affected living standards in the area. For example, the high-rise buildings have imposed a more aggressive architecture; moreover, the social relationships with the pre-existing population were ruptured as their houses were demolished, while with the new residents who live in the new apartments hardly any interaction exists.

The arrival of migrants is considered by some lifelong respondents with a weak educational and economic profile as a downgrading factor. However, other lifelong residents with higher cultural capital have pinpointed the fact that crime in the area has ceased. Moreover, it was broadly stated that the activities undertaken by local initiatives have created a positive impact in the area as they act as a magnet for new residents of higher cultural capital, especially artists. The attraction of this social group is viewed as upgrading, changing the profile of the area.

People who perceive living in Akadimia Platonos positively stressed that the area has a lively social life. Diversity is viewed as a positive phenomenon by R8 (female, 36, Spanish teacher, Spanish), a newcomer who pointed out that:

“I like the multiculturalism in this area... I like to gaze at the little gypsy children playing when I wait for the bus and I try to imagine what their lives might be like.”

The interviewee perceives the area’s diversity through a positive view of ‘multiculturalism’. The presence of Roma children gives the impression of a lively city receptive to diverse cultures. From a similar perspective, another respondent, R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) indicated that diversity in the area gives her the impression that she is in “London, a big city that I like”. The parallelism between Akadimia Platonos and London refers to the diversity of social groups that are present and active in each case, a fact that is highly appreciated by the respondent. There is some evidence that people who have travelled and experienced multiculturalism in other countries appreciate the expression of diversity in the area of Akadimia Platonos.

Some respondents indicated that living within diversity is a neutral factor in their everyday lives. From the Greeks’ perspective, the presence of migrants, and from the migrants’ perspective, the presence of diverse social groups is not considered to be positive nor negative, rather simply a fact of inner city living. As they indicated in the interviews, living in the same neighbourhood with various social groups does not affect their everyday living, nor their personal life. The
emphasis is rather put on specific aspects of their neighbours (for example, if they are loud or not) no matter their nationality.

The negative perceptions of the neighbourhood deal with the crisis and its impact on the lives of the local people, whilst in terms of diversity, negative perceptions were related to feelings of fear of the migrant ‘other’. More precisely, the negative effects of the crisis on the area were pinpointed by many respondents: deprivation, loss of jobs and income, school foreclosures and local shop foreclosures have been the main outcomes of the crisis. The lack of infrastructure, the bad maintenance of the existing infrastructure and the lack of cleaning services were mentioned as downgrading factors that form a perception that the neighbourhood is not clean and not well maintained by the local government. In terms of diversity, Greek interviewees, with limited cultural and economic resources, expressed concern that the neighbourhood is deprived because of the migrant population and that this has created feelings of insecurity and fear.

4.4.4 Conclusions
Amongst different kinds of diversity, Akadimia Platonos’ inhabitants focus on culture and ethnicity (while socio-economic differences are generally perceived as a matter of class and economic inequality). We can distinguish three main attitudes of inhabitants towards cultural and ethnic diversity. First, some interviewees, mostly the elderly and those with a low educational and economic profile, expressed discomfort about the migrants, seeing them as a cause of the degradation of the neighbourhood. In its extreme version, this perception of diversity comes close to the neo-Nazi ideology of Golden Dawn, which exerts some influence in the neighbourhood. Second, other interviewees, mainly highly-educated young people, tend to be positive about cultural and ethnic migration as they perceive it as an element of ‘multiculturalism’. According to this perception, diversity is a phenomenon of a big metropolis, which creates vibrant environments through the co-existence and interaction of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This mixture is considered to be a sign of progress and westernisation. Third, several interviewees adopted an attitude that we could call ‘routinised’ or ‘ordinary’ to cultural and ethnic diversity, in the sense that they perceive diversity as a background element of everyday social relations and interactions in the micro-spaces of the area (public spaces, blocks of flats). In this case, diversity becomes a part of ‘good neighbourly relations’, although it was not explicitly idealised as in the case of interviewees who celebrate diversity as an element of ‘metropolitan multiculturalism’.

4.5 ACTIVITIES IN AND OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

As Van Kempen and Wissink (2014) noted, a neighbourhood is a multitude of nodes that relate to the diversity of mobility and activities. Focusing on the variety of the daily social and spatial practices may shed light on the importance of diversity within a neighbourhood. The basic questions that we will address here are: What are the activities of the inhabitants in Akadimia Platonos? Do they use the public spaces in the area, and if yes, in what ways? What
is the importance and impact of the local associations in the social life in the area? What social relationships emerge and how is diversity addressed?

In this section, we argue that diversity influences the social life in the area in a rather indirect way. Through the use of public space, diversity is enhanced as social relationships emerge amongst the various social groups. Local associations in Akadimia Platonos consist of politically progressive people who are active in issues such as solidarity, justice and claims for better living conditions. Within this framework, the interest in diversity has emerged as a side effect as local associations create bonds of trust with people of diverse cultures who reside in the area. Local initiatives have an important effect on the development of social capital (Curley, 2010), especially amongst people who share common concerns; they create comfort zones, as Blokland and Nast (2014) argued, within the area, where people feel at ease to interact with their acquaintances.

4.5.1 Activities: where and with whom? 
The majority of the interviewees claimed that, due to limited time, they rarely undertake activities in the neighbourhood. The activities they engage in are mostly leisure and entertainment activities. However, their patterns of entertainment vary significantly in relation to the economic abilities, the age and the lifestyle of the respondents.

Older persons stated that although they have a lot of free time, they hardly engage with any activities in the area. During the daytime, women prefer to visit close relatives (brothers, sisters, or even children) in other areas after they have finished with their housekeeping. Middle-aged households, with or without children, stated that for their entertainment, for example for dinner or for drinks, they prefer to go out in other parts of the city. Most of the interviewees, especially the migrants and Greeks with limited economic resources, indicated that since there are not many options in the area, they prefer to go out in the neighbouring municipality of Peristeri, which is close by, rather than visiting other areas of the city centre of Athens. Greek residents with higher incomes said that for their entertainment, for “a night out with friends who are not from the area”, they may visit other areas, such as the neighbouring area of Thissio (at the foot of the Acropolis rock), the city of Piraeus (next to the sea), and the municipality of Ksariani in the eastern part of Athens (next to the mountain of Imitos). The younger people we interviewed prefer to visit other inner city areas such as the gentrifying area of Metaxourgio, or the ‘alternative’ area of Exarchia.

In the area of Akadimia Platonos, most of the activities undertaken by the interviewees relate to leisure and entertainment. Elderly Greek men pass their days in local traditional kafenio; in these places, they meet their (male) friends, discuss political issues and joke with each other.

It should be noted that traditional kafenio are spaces where mostly elderly men spend their free time; women of these generations are mostly restricted to the private space of the home. However, all the interviewed elderly households indicated that after seven o’clock in
the evening, they stay at home, as they feel scared of the migrants, who, according to their perception, are responsible for delinquent behaviour. Hence, diversity is not a factor that triggers the participation of elderly people in the area.

Middle-aged couples with young children indicated different lifestyle patterns in their activities. Although they underlined that their spare time is limited because of their parental duties, they engage in various activities which mainly relate to their entertainment. Many interviewees declared that they are active in the parents’ association of their children’s school. They have thus met other parents and developed friendly relationships. Other middle-aged interviewees, who are not active in local associations, mentioned that they became close friends with the parents of their children’s friends. Stronger ties develop amongst parents of the same nationality. For instance, the interviewed Pakistani people indicated that in their free time they prefer to meet with each other, either at their homes or at the specific internet cafe run by a Pakistani friend. R14 (male, 33, waiter, Syrian) indicated what when his countrymen resided in the area, in their spare time they preferred to visit each other in their houses. Since many people from this group are without documentation, meetings and social interactions are safer if they are set in private spaces (houses) rather than in public ones (neighbourhoods).

It seems that children are more open to creating friendships with their schoolmates, independent of ethnicity. Other middle-aged respondents (with or without children) said that they have developed close ties with people they met in their political activities, either at local political parties or at the local residents’ assembly.

Other respondents indicated that they engage in cultural activities in the area, such as traditional dancing and singing classes. After class, a drink in the area is a good opportunity for interacting with each other. Some Greek respondents stated that in their free time they go to the municipal swimming pool in the area or to the gym.

4.5.2 The use of public space
Akadimia Platonos is one of the very few inner city areas with open public spaces which are highly appreciated by the neighbourhood’s inhabitants. There are four important public spaces in Akadimia Platonos: the Plato’s Park, often called the “archaia” (the ancient vestiges) by the inhabitants, the square next to the municipal swimming pool, Petroula Square opposite St Constantine’s church on Lenorman Avenue and St George’s Square. These spaces are used by most of the residents, although different social groups show strong selective preferences, for example the Roma mostly enjoy Petroula Square, the Albanians St George’s Square and the activists Plato’s Park.

Akadimia Platonos Park
The Akadimia Platonos Park is the most prominent open and public space in the area. Most of the interviewees stated that they use it, but their reasoning varies significantly. Migrant and Greek families with young children often visit the park so that their children meet their
friends, play in the green spaces, or train with the local football team (Photo 4.1). Although they claimed that they hardly visit the park on their own, they take advantage of being there with their children, and therefore chat and have informal discussions with other parents of mixed ethnic backgrounds. The descriptions of the social environment of the park that they have provided us with are quite similar. For example, R13 (male, 50, clerk, Greek) stated that:

“You will meet the whole neighbourhood there. Especially if you visit the place during the summer, you will see lots of elderly people as it is an oasis of freshness. You will meet people with their dogs, grandfathers and grandmothers, or aunties who have accompanied their children to play… You will meet Roma who have settled with their tents, musicians rehearsing… You will meet homeless people to culture lovers who have come to discuss the ancient… You can meet everyone… and you listen to all the kinds of languages… and they interact with each other in a very harmonious way.”

The respondent refers here to the diversity of the people who visit and use the park. As mentioned, the park is a place that is open to all cultures and lifestyles existing in the area. Elderly people, migrants of various ethnic origins, dog owners, Roma, homeless people, artists and culture lovers use the park. The interviewee characterised the way people use this public space as “harmonious”, indicating how relationships develop among the users. However, as will be analysed in the next section, the park became a vibrant social place only after the activities of the local associations and the opening of the European Village kafenio.

The interviewees active in the associations indicated that the park and the kafenio have become daily meeting points where they can meet their friends, discuss local issues and develop ideas for new initiatives. Respondents who own dogs mention the frequent visits to the park (up to three times per day) where they have developed relationships with other dog owners (i.e. they meet and talk to each other). However, Greek respondents with low incomes and low education indicated that they do not like to visit the park as they feel insecure due to the migrants’...
presence or because when they visit the park, they do not allow their children to play with migrant children. For example, R35 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Greek) indicated that:

“We have lots of issues with the migrants. It is a matter of security. We cannot leave our children to play on their own in the playground as someone has to watch over them constantly as we are afraid that something bad will happen to them, that they will steal from them […] and there are gangs of Albanian children.”

From a similar perspective, elderly people of Greek origin claimed that they do not like to visit or spend time in the park as they are scared of the migrants.

**The square next to the municipal swimming pool**
The interviewees whose houses are located close to the municipal swimming pool stated that they prefer to visit the square next to it (Photo 4.2) rather than the Akadimia Platonos Park as this place is smaller, cosier and cleaner and the design of the square is nicer. As indicated, interviewees – of various ethnic backgrounds – talk to each other while their children are playing, as described by R20 (female, 39, cleaning lady, Bulgarian):

“We gather there – Bulgarians, Greeks – and we form groups. We speak in Bulgarian, others speak in Russian, others Albanian […] but our children play together and they know all the languages. I cannot understand how they can communicate with each other.”

The children's need to play becomes the major reason for people to meet and spend time in the public spaces of the area. Neighbours with children may develop friendships, regardless of the ethnic background. As Camina and Wood (2009) indicate, parents tend to do engage more with their neighbours due to the locus of their children's life-world (making friends and playing), the convenience of local support and, sometimes, the overlap of school and neighbourhood. As indicated by the respondent, while the children play, the adults talk and have a good time with each other. In such places, those barriers that might exist amongst the diverse cultures seem to be negligible as, according to another interviewee, people talk and interact with each other, either in their own languages or in Greek. At the same time, we should bear in mind that households in the area cannot afford the current trend of middle-class households, who prefer private playgrounds for their children and their entertainment. The use of a public space is the main occasion for outdoor games and social interaction.

**Petroula Square, St George’s Square**
Petroula Square is mostly used by members of the Roma community (Photo 4.3) and older Albanian men. The Roma occupy the central part of the space, while the elderly Albanian are on the fringes of the square, playing cards and chess on the public benches. As indicated by R24 (male, 22, unemployed/rubbish collector, Roma) this is the space where he will go with his wife and his children and meet his mother-in-law, brother-in-law and his friends. The ‘loudness’ of the Roma population, their hardy outdoor life and their tendency to loiter in public spaces
is highly criticised. Women (migrant and Greek), particularly, stated that they avoid passing through this square as they feel threatened. From a similar perspective, a Pakistani interviewee expressed that he does not like to visit any of the public places in the area for fear of the police controls and the Roma people. As R4 (male, 40, carpenter Pakistani) stated:

“I don’t like this square, it is full of gypsies [...] We don’t go there; when they see us they start calling us names and shout at us [...] The other thing that makes me feel scared is the Golden Dawn. And the police controls all the time. I am OK, I have papers; but if they put you in the bus, then they don’t let you free for at least 3 or 4 hours, and you lose your time…”

4.5.3 Conclusions

Everyday leisure activities of our interviewees are not focused on the neighbourhood. The inhabitants of Akadimia Platonos, like Athenians in general, are more or less mobile. They visit various areas of the city, mostly adjacent ones, depending on their tastes, networks and income (individuals with lower income visit the popular suburb of Peristeri while more affluent individuals prefer the area of Thissio). They act, thus, as residents of a metropolis in which people are connected through complex mobilities. The only exceptions to this trend are vulnerable groups such as the elderly and the undocumented migrants, who tend to be more attached to their home space.

However, public spaces in the neighbourhood retain their importance. People dedicate a significant amount of their free time to the squares and parks in their neighbourhood. The role of public spaces as places of encountering diverse people, to use Fincher and Iverson’s term
(2008), is complementary: public spaces act mainly as a complement to local institutions. An examination of the preferences of different social, cultural and ethnic groups shows that public spaces are characterised mainly by micro-segregation rather than social mix. Natives, migrants and minorities frequent different spaces. Social mix appears mostly as an outcome of the meeting of different people within the framework of institutional settings, i.e. people with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds come together as parents whose children go to the same school or as members of local associations. Once relationships are created within institutions, however, public spaces may contribute to their development as they offer the framework for further interaction and bonding.

4.6 SOCIAL COHESION

In this section, we approach the relationship between diversity and social cohesion in the area of Akadimia Platonos. Based on Kearns and Forrest (2000), we focus on the dimensions of social cohesion related to civic culture, social order, solidarity, social capital and the sense of belonging. We examine the way local people organise their social and spatial relationships and the contribution of diversity to these relationships. Which people are part of the inhabitants’ personal network? Do inhabitants develop friendships with neighbours, hence boost social cohesion and diversity in the area, or do they restrict themselves to limited interactions? How do they live together with their neighbours? Do they create bonds and networks? Is there mutual support? Do they enhance social solidarity within the area or do they live isolated from each other? Initially, we focus on the personal relationships that inhabitants develop and on the ways they interact on a daily basis with their neighbours. We then analyse the social bonds, the forms of mutual support, as well as the factors which lead to social distancing. We argue that the bonds that are created amongst specific social groups may be interpreted as local social capital. At the same time, distrust of ‘otherness’ leads to social distancing, which contradicts the social cohesion theoretical framework.

4.6.1 Composition of interviewees’ personal networks

Many interviewees indicated that the most important people in their life are their families (husband, children). Others stated that their personal networks mainly include their friends, while some noted that neighbours have become their best friends. In all these cases, the mechanisms of network creation tend to favour social, cultural and ethnic homogeneity rather than diversity. This subsection refers to the way people develop their networks in the neighbourhood of Akadimia Platonos through their kin, friendship and neighbourhood ties.

For many interviewees, family, either members of nuclear or broader family who live in the area, plays a crucial role in everyday living. The family is very important in everyday life, and in many interviews, it was stated that the husband/wife and children are best friends. Within the family network, they feel comfortable sharing the economic burdens, and the network is where they can get psychological support and enjoy free time. As indicated by R39 (male, 37, assurer, Greek):
“Look, above all it is the family. There is no one closer to you than your family. It is the family that will support you in a good or in a bad moment.”

Elderly people and families with young children place a particular emphasis on family bonds and on the presence of family in the neighbourhood. For elderly people, the fact that they live close to other relatives, such as brothers and sisters, is considered to be very important since it is with them that they spend their time during the day. As expressed by R46 (female, 66, pensioner, Greek):

“I don’t have other friendships, apart from Katerina who is married to my husband’s brother […] We meet each other every day, we talk on the phone, go for walks together, we go out for coffee […] With her husband we have become a little company: we go out together, even in the village we share the same house; we have never fought with each other.”

Moreover, people with young children indicated that it is very important to live close to their parents or relatives as they help them with the upbringing of their children. As noted by R18 (female, 44, accountant, Greek):

“I brought my parents from Petroupouli to live here as I had to work and someone should stay with the children […] I like the fact that my husband’s relatives live in the area, especially for my children, as I would like them to know their cousins, their families, and not to be disconnected from their grandfathers and grandmothers…”

The support of the broader family is thought of as crucial in the raising of grandchildren since the parents have to work. Moreover, the fact that other relatives live in the area is thought of as positive – the children get to know who their “family” is, i.e. to know where they come from. Even in indirect terms, family arises as a crucial factor: the spatial proximity of the broader family is viewed as an important factor for the development of children’s personalities.

Many interviewees declared that the people they feel closer to are the friends they met in the past, either through activities or in the neighbourhood. Younger respondents (people in their 30s), especially, indicated that their best friends are people they met as a result of former or current activities (studies, occupation) and do not reside in the area. In these cases, friendships have emerged with people with the same hobbies or life perspectives. There is strong evidence that younger people relate more and develop friendly relationships with people who have the same interests or who share similar hobbies, such as enjoying going out to the same cafes or bars, thus not necessarily with people who live in the same neighbourhood.

However, those, both younger and older, active in the neighbourhood’s associations stressed that the people they feel closer to are their neighbours who are active and who engage in the same associations. Sharing the same worries and similar beliefs becomes a factor for developing stronger ties with each other. This bonding is facilitated by living in proximity. As indicated by R49 (female, 28, waitress, Greek) who is active in the European Village kafenio:
“The people I see most and hang out with are the people I met at the kafenio. They are about my age and we met as colleagues, as volunteers in the same organisation.”

According to the interviewee, the same socio-environmental worries and the same way of passing free time are the basic reasons that make her feel closer to her new friends.

As stated by respondent R17 (female, 55, journalist, Greek, journalist):

“[I will meet up] with all the people that participate in the structures… With the people from the parents’ association, from the neighbourhood assembly. Here in Platonas, you can even see each other twice a week… With the other friends who do not reside in the area, it is difficult – you have to arrange to meet them… I think that locality is a crucial factor to determine who your friends are, and this not only counts for me but for the rest of the people as well… At least this is what I think.”

As pinpointed by the above interviewee, place emerges as a crucial factor for the way people shape their activities and with whom they pass most of their time. Neighbours who are active together in local-structure networks have a stronger social life, which allows for daily encounters and deeper interactions. From a similar perspective, common political and social perceptions and similar lifestyles have become the main reasons to better connect and become friends with neighbours. As discussed by R16 (female, 55, NGO directress, Greek):

“It is my brothers and sisters, the people I work with at the NGO, people I have met here in the initiatives… This is something that I especially like, that I can go there whenever I like and meet someone and stay with them. I don’t have to arrange anything to go out […] It feels like a village.”

The fact that she can meet people, without arranging an appointment, makes her feel relaxed and is convenient as if living in “a village”; the socio-spatial relationships that have emerged create feelings of trust and comfort. Moreover, respondents active in local initiatives indicated that they feel closer to their neighbours/local activists than other, older friends. It seems that sharing the same ideas and having similar dispositions are crucial factors in the development of personal networks in the area.

Moreover, some respondents claimed that their best friends are people of the same nationality, having met at their children’s school or at the playground. As indicated by R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian):

“The people I feel closest to are two women from my country. These are the friends I have (and I have a cousin here as well […]). We met at the square where our children play… I know lots of people but these are my friends.”
4.6.2 Living together with neighbours: bonds and forms of mutual support

While personal networks tend to be socially, culturally and ethnically homogeneous, broader neighbouring relationships are more diverse. Many interviewees stressed that they enjoy conviviality with people of diverse socio-ethnic backgrounds. Most interviewees provided us with a clear description of their direct neighbours, i.e. the people living in the same building or the same street. They stressed that people from different cultures and nationalities and at different stages of life live in the micro-spaces of their neighbourhood, shaping diverse patterns of living. In many cases, they indicated how close relationships have gradually developed between them and some of their neighbours. For example, R18 (female, 44, accountant, Greek) described how:

“In this area, due to our economic deficiencies, we inevitably co-exist with each other, so we respect each other’s cultures […] The lady that lives next to me is a pensioner and she is older than me… We discuss the wage cuts, her pension cuts, our bad economic conditions etc. […] I ask her if she can watch over my children when I am not there, if she can iron my clothes. And I will give her a gift. I will lend her money on the 20th when she doesn’t have any… this kind of interaction. – And how did you start communicating with each other?
By sharing food. ‘Today I cooked a nice pastitsio – have some.’ The other day it was ‘Taste my food’. Like that – very simple, everyday things.”

The respondent indicates that sharing difficult economic conditions increase sentiments and practices of solidarity. There is respect for people’s cultures and differences in various lifestyles. As she describes, the woman next door is an elderly woman, who she initially met through sharing food exchange – a practice of good neighbouring. Since then, their relationship has developed further into daily encounters and discussions about the economic crisis, into a more in-depth relationship of helping each other when in need (watching over the children, ironing, lending money). Migrant women also narrated similar stories of bonding with their (direct) neighbours. A second-generation Egyptian man stated that he often visits the Bulgarian couple who live next door, while a Bulgarian woman, after stressing that she knows everyone in her street, indicated that people help each other by sharing “a plate of food” or exchanging old clothes every now and then.

People know each other in the area and they connect with each other in different ways; with some neighbours, relationships are more superficial while with others, stronger bonds of friendship have developed. A respondent (R13) expressed that, although he does not have any friends in the area, he invites his neighbours to his children’s baptism ceremonies and he is invited to weddings or even joins his neighbours for an afternoon drink at home. He characterised his relationships with his neighbours as typical and formal relationships of neighbouring. However, such invitations (to religious events) or home visits indicate stronger bonds than simple encounters on the street. It seems that in the micro-spaces of the neighbourhood (the streets or the buildings) the social relationships that develop are stronger.
This bonding is essentially expressed in the way neighbours help each other. Jane Jacobs (1993) indicated how people who keep “an eye on the street” contribute to higher levels of safety and control in an area, elements that, according to Kearns and Forrest (2000), are part of the conceptual framework of social cohesion. We find this characteristic, for instance, in a case of a house fire, where the neighbourhood was mobilised to help. As expressed in the interview by R28 (female, 43, make-up artist, Swedish):

“Some years ago, I was not at home as I was working, and my veranda caught fire […] The whole neighbourhood mobilised – the pharmacy owner, the neighbours, they were all struggling to put out the fire until the fire brigade arrived… I was at work at Schinias and a neighbour called me and asked ‘What is going on at your house?’ and then I started calling too, and the neighbours were calling the police and they were telling them that there are children inside the house. They knew I had children. Everybody mobilised, everybody helped, and they became one team. I really liked that.”

Nonetheless, mutual support is not only indicated in times of emergency. Many respondents talked about the ways they have helped or have received help from their neighbours. R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) described how, after having a car accident, her Roma neighbours assisted her by:

“… carrying my daily shopping, carrying things I could not carry on my own. Sometimes they brought me coffee, cigarettes or beer when I could not move. Even the Greeks […], they offered to clean my house, they asked me if everything was OK on a daily basis…”

Later on in the interview, she pointed out that she had helped one of her Roma neighbours by hiring a lawyer when he was threatened with eviction. Such acts are indicative of the mutual support that can be expressed in a neighbourhood on a daily basis. Feelings of sympathy turn into acts of solidarity that encourage support and build stronger social ties, beyond the cultural or ethnic background of each neighbour.

Social solidarity is expressed in cases where people get to know each other from social associations through the public school in the area. As indicated by many interviewees, when someone is in need, activists in the local associations mobilise in order to address their direct needs (money, clothes, medicine). Similar practices of solidarity take place amongst women whose children are classmates. As stated by R18 (female, 44, accountant, Greek) and R34 (female, 41, shop owner), when a neighbour asked for their help with her husband’s documentation, they assisted him without a second thought:

“He was from Iran […] and in order to get his papers to be legalised, to become a Greek, they needed two witnesses to claim that they are married. So I and R34 went to do so. Of course, we would do so, without any doubts.”
Other interviewees also illustrated the ways they have offered assistance to their neighbours. R29’s (male, 82, pensioner, Greek) wife noted that she offered practical and psychological support to her baker when the latter’s husband died. R34 (female, 41, shop owner) stated that older ladies in her street call her to help them with medical injections as they know she worked as a nurse before she got married. R21 (female, 34, cleaning lady, Ukrainian) claimed that people in her neighbourhood assist her a lot by often providing her with food and clothes for her children. Furthermore, R20 (female, 39, cleaning lady, Bulgarian) stated that whenever she runs out of money she feels she can ask for milk and cigarettes at the local shop or ask neighbours for some money until she gets paid. Simple daily practices encourage interaction amongst neighbours, leading to the construction of stronger networks based on respect, solidarity and support.

Other daily practices that indicate social networking in the area deal with entrusting the neighbours with the collection of children from school or with the house keys for watering the plants. R13 (male, 50, clerk, Greek) expressed that his confidence to send his children to the mini-shop next door is related to the trust he has for his direct neighbours (that they will keep an eye on the child). However, it should be indicated that such feelings of trust develop only amongst people who live in the same street or in the same building, i.e. in the micro-spaces.

The interviewees that do not have children, or have children who have graduated from school, and interviewees who do not participate in local associations, characterise their relationships with their neighbours as “formal”. As noted in the interviews, other than greeting each other, they seldom develop deeper relationships. For example, R6 (female, 50, Greek teacher, Greek) noticed that:

“There is a sense of acceptance, in the sense that they will exchange a ‘good morning’ with you, but apart from that they will not offer you any kind of support in anything else. Apart from some people who have relationships, the rest of the people do not have any interaction in the street, nor do they visit each other at home. They don’t relate.”

The impact of the economic crisis on social cohesion is ambiguous. As we have seen above, some interviewees stressed the development of solidarity in times of crisis. Other interviewees, however, describe people in the area as closed. They indicated that the problems people face due to the economic crisis leave no space for interaction nor the will to interact with neighbours.

As we have noticed earlier (see section 4.4), many respondents indicated feelings of discomfort and fear of ‘otherness’. From the Greeks’ perspective, the neighbourhood started declining after 1992 when the first migrants from Eastern European countries arrived in the area as economic migrants. The arrival of the recent wave of migrants from countries in the Middle East has intensified these feelings of discomfort. As mentioned by R33 (female, 42, unemployed, Greek):
“There are many Albanians and Pakistanis from all kinds of races... They are all blacks [...] I don't know exactly where they are from as I get confused by their blackness [...] They fight with each other, they get drunk, they get into many things. The other day, my son told me there were gunshots in the square [...] In the old days you were not afraid to go out. Now you lock yourself inside the house...”

Other respondents indicated that they are scared of migrants and their delinquent behaviour, so they end up being restricted to their home and do not use public spaces, although they would like to. At the same time, migrants express feelings of fear of the Roma community and the Greek population. R14 (male, 33, waiter, Syrian) states:

“I would like to meet the people in my area, but I am scared of their reaction when I talk to them [...] Once I was going home at night and some Greeks started shouting at me and calling me names [...] I felt very scared [...] In my country, where there is a dictatorship, we never talked to people like that...”

The issue of harassment was brought up by other migrants, as well. One Romanian said that she had to move house as the Greek lady living below her was complaining and creating problems for them because her child was very loud. An Roma interviewee narrated a similar story, that a Greek woman residing on the upper floors of the next building tried to convince the owner to evict him and his family. Quite similarly, a Pakistani migrant stated that a Greek neighbour called the police when they celebrated Ramadan and gathered for dinner at his home. The fact that diverse cultures co-exist in the same place is, additionally, perceived as something bad. As stated by R21 (female, 34, cleaning lady, Ukrainian), diversity is something negative and unavoidable:

“I now think that there is no way around it anymore. We have become a very mixed, very diverse society, but we learn to compromise with each other. There are lots of gays, drug addicts; we cannot go anywhere where they don't exist...”

4.6.3 Conclusions

In this section, we have seen that personal networks tend to be socially, culturally and ethnically homogeneous as they develop amongst family networks, both nuclear and broader, and acquaintances from professional and other activities. Comfort, security and confidence underlie people's need to interact strongly and be close to their relatives. Within family networks, economical, ethical and psychological support is provided. At the same time, personal networks evolve around friendship. Friends from the past, from work, or neighbours with similar lifestyles form the core of personal networks. Children's schooling and playing habits, as well as participation in local associations, offer the main opportunities for creating friendship with neighbours.

Compared with personal networks, relationships with neighbours tend to be more diverse. Frequent daily encounters lead to typical relationships, constructing feelings of security and
convenience. The micro-spaces of the neighbourhood, i.e. on the level of the building and the street, offer opportunities for social exchange that may turn into mutual support and solidarity in cases of emergency or need. These relationships and bonding emerge independently of the ethnic or social background of the neighbour.

However, at the same time, diversity in the area has created feelings of insecurity for parts of the population. The presence of migrants in the area is perceived as the cause of delinquency and deterioration of living conditions, creating feelings of fear of otherness, which can turn into mistrust and social distance.

4.7 SOCIAL MOBILITY

Social mobility refers to the upward or downward movement of people in their occupational trajectories. Social networks may play a pivotal role in finding (better) jobs. In his classical study, Granovetter (1973) indicated how weak ties may actually be more effective than strong ones for a person seeking a better position in the labour market. In this section, we examine, more particularly, whether social networks organised at the neighbourhood level might play a similar role. Furthermore, we investigate whether a neighbourhood’s reputation affects its inhabitants’ opportunities in the labour market. Our main purpose was to find out whether diversity as a characteristic of local social relationships could function as an asset for upward mobility – although we are aware that in the literature it has been argued that living in a deprived neighbourhood may jeopardise upward social mobility (Pinkster, 2012).

Overall, the findings of our research did not meet our expectations. The analysis of the interviews shows no significant association between diversity at the neighbourhood level and social mobility, either upwards or downwards. Interviewees mention relationships other than local social relationships (family, friends, former colleagues) as important in ameliorating their chances of getting a better job or, in the context of a crisis, preventing the downwards spiralling of the job ladder.

4.7.1 Current and previous jobs

Most of the interviewees declared that they are working in routine occupations. The majority of women, some Greeks and all migrant women, stated that they provide domestic services at private houses away from the area. Migrant women stated that this is the only occupation they have ever had since they started working in Greece. Most of them work informally, only a few have formal contracts with cleaning companies.

Many interviewees said that they found their jobs through the networks they had with their fellow countrymen. Greek women who work as cleaning ladies mostly work formally in cleaning companies. Prior to this job, they were occupied in other unskilled jobs such as saleswomen or shop assistants. Many Greek female pensioners stated that when they were active
in the labour market, they used to work as cleaning ladies or as seamstresses, either formally or informally. Hence, there is no indication of upwards or downwards mobility.

Greek men are employed in skilled manual occupations, such as plumbers, and in unskilled occupations such as ushers and errand men. One plumber stressed that this was always his occupation. One usher said that prior to his current post, he worked in a factory, preparing sewing machines. Likewise, the respondent who is currently working as an errand man for a pasta factory used to work at a supermarket in a similar post. The employed migrant men stated that they work in furniture factories, garages or as waiters. Before these jobs, they were unemployed, worked informally in other factories, indicating no or marginal improvement in their social mobility. Pensioners stated that they used to work as bakers or as building labourers. In the case of unskilled or semi-skilled workers, there are barely any indications of social mobility.

An exception is R41 (male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian), who improved his socio-occupational position in the construction sector. He benefited from the building boom of the late 1990s and, until after the Olympic Games in 2004, his construction company was profitable. However, as he further narrated in the interview, after the 2008 crisis, as construction activity shrank, his company made losses, his income reduced and he had to shut down the company. Nonetheless, as he was old enough, he managed to get a pension. At the end of his career, R41 experienced downward social mobility due to the crisis in the construction sector.

A significant number of respondents stated that they are unemployed, especially unskilled workers with low educational levels. Greek men declared that they used to work as lorry drivers or clerks, and migrant men stated that they used to work in construction as builders. The bankruptcy and the closing down of private companies led to many becoming unemployed. In many interviews, it was noted that many migrants left the area and the country in search of better job opportunities, either moving back to their countries of origin (Albania, Romania, Syria) or migrating to other European countries (Germany, Finland). Unemployed women stated that they used to work as waitresses or in restaurants as dishwashers. Migrant women stated that after losing their jobs, they decided to mainly occupy themselves as housewives and raise their children. The difficulty of getting a new job was noticed both by Greek and unemployed women; although they are looking for work, it is very hard to find a new job, especially as unskilled workers. For those unemployed, there is a clear tendency towards downwards social mobility, which is more than likely irreversible due to the bad economic conditions and the crisis of the country.

The respondents that declared higher educational capital (university graduates) indicated that they are occupied in lower managerial and professional occupations in the public or the private sector. They are mostly of Greek origin and referred to occupations such as professor, accountant or director. Most of these interviewees stated that they have not changed occupations. People occupied in the private sector mentioned more often that they have changed jobs. However,
even these interviewees present mostly horizontal mobility as they occupy similar positions in different companies (for example working as an accountant in different companies or as a journalist in several newspapers etc.).

4.7.2 Using neighbours and others to find a job

As the country’s economic conditions are at stake and unemployment rates are skyrocketing (see Chapter 2), the chance of finding a job, especially in a city like Athens, is considered highly unlikely. The daily interactions that emerge amongst people who live in the same area may help people in getting access to new job opportunities; however, there are very few opportunities. Only two informants stated that they employed people from the neighbourhood (R36: male, 36, plumber, Greek, and R41: male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian).

R6 (female, 50, Greek professor, Greek) stated that many neighbours have hired her as a private teacher for their children, and in this way she feels that the neighbourhood has supported her a lot in terms of employment. People active in local associations said that whenever they know that someone is looking for a job, they try to show their support, for example by being alert if a job comes up where they work, or, if they can, collecting some money and donating it to the unemployed or by helping the person with the preparation of their CV. R28 (female, 43, make-up artist, Swedish) stated that she gained a network of clients in the area through her hairdresser, who introduced her to some of his clients. It can be suggested that, in direct or in indirect terms, people who have established closer relationships in the area can help each other in getting jobs or can more easily find jobs through their networks.

A particular case is that of Roma people, who make their living occasionally as rubbish collectors. They state that neighbours are supportive of their activities, asking them to collect white goods (fridge, kitchen units etc.) that are out of order.

Most of the interviewees, however, indicated that other networks, like family, friends, compatriots and ex-colleagues, prove more effective in finding a job. Migrant women claimed that they are assisted by their compatriots. For example R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian) said that she got her first jobs from Albanian friends and relatives that live in Athens, not in the neighbourhood. R26 (female, 35, cleaning lady, Romanian) stated that she got her job from people she met in church, the Romanian association and other Romanian friends.

Other respondents mentioned that they got their jobs from other networks or services. Many indicated that they found their jobs from job announcements in newspapers. People who work in the public sector stated that they got their job after following the legal procedures in civil-service staff hiring (via ASEP, i.e. via the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection). Other people stated that they found their jobs through former colleagues or from the networks they have established within their field of specialisation (e.g. teaching, journalism, entertainment). Younger people claimed that they found their jobs through friends that do not live in the area. Most of the interviewees indicated that neighbours may help each other in everyday life but there are no
grounds for helping each other in the labour market. This may suggest that personal networks are more effective in getting better job opportunities than neighbourhood acquaintances.

4.7.3 Neighbourhood reputation as an asset in upward social mobility
Some respondents indicated that the neighbourhood has a bad reputation, associated with the presence of migrants and the Roma community, as well as with the post-war presence of the working class and the poor. R8 (female, 36, Spanish teacher, Spanish) said that one of her students reacted in a negative way when she moved to Akadimia Platonos, claiming that “she would never live in such place”. R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian) and R21 (female, 34, cleaning lady, Ukrainian) noted the negative reactions of people when they heard the name of the area.

However, the majority of respondents stressed that it is not the area that is an obstacle to upward social mobility, rather the economic crisis that has dismantled the local economy. Since the shops and the businesses run by local people face bankruptcy and foreclosures, the number of unemployed has risen.

The outcome of the crisis in the locality is shop closures and the shrinkage of small and medium-sized economic activities. Even the reallocation of bigger enterprises and companies does not help local populations as the companies do not hire new personnel. The bad economic conditions of the country have led many migrants to leave Greece and either return to their home country or settle in other countries of the European Union. The economic crisis in Athens harms diversity as people are driven out of the city to seek better job opportunities.

Overall, the reputation of the area has a neutral relationship with the social mobility of individuals as it does not provide any help though nor does it create problems. Local initiatives may play a more important role since they favour social networking and the diffusion of information. As expressed by R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) regarding the neighbourhood’s reputation:

“[…] does not create any problems, but it does not provide any opportunities either. Only the collaborative kafenio and Politeia next to it [do provide opportunities]. [The people that run the kafenio] provide you with opportunities as they organise lots of free classes, they provide the area with information, and they organise lots of nice celebrations. It is them that made the park alive with concerts and everything. And there are opportunities to meet people and network.”

4.7.4 Conclusions
Due to the economic crisis affecting the local labour market, several individuals in the area of Akadimia Platonos experience pressures of downward social mobility. Many people have lost their jobs, and migrant men and Greeks, especially those with low educational capital, indicated how difficult it is to face unemployment as there are very few job opportunities. Interviewees in intermediate occupations also undergo pressures from a significant reduction of income.
The analysis of this section has not been able to reveal any relationship between diversity and social mobility in Akadimia Platonos. As such, we can argue that positive and negative neighbourhood effects are not indicated in this case study area. Migrants from the same ethnic background may help each other in getting a job, whether they live in the same area or other areas in the city. Networks supporting people to find a new job develop within the Greek population as well, independent of their place of residence.

4.8 PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICIES

In this section, we examine how the residents of Akadimia Platonos evaluate urban policies and the initiatives developed in the area, as well as their proposals concerning local policy priorities. We argue that, due to the economic crisis and the tradition of clientelism in Greek politics, there is mistrust and despair concerning the local and the central government. Local bottom-up initiatives are considered to be spaces of positive interaction and encounter. Beyond feelings of disbelief, the respondents proposed many ideas aiming to ameliorate their living conditions. Policies that deal with better working conditions and employment opportunities, better cleaning and preservation of the area and the highlighting of cultural heritage (Plato's Park and the ancient findings from excavations in the area) are recommended by interviewees as crucial initiatives that might contribute to a better urban and social living environment.

4.8.1 Perception and evaluation of existing policies and initiatives: What do residents know?

Mistrust and despair

Most of the interviewees stated that they do not have any knowledge of the general urban policies nor about those that deal with their neighbourhood. The most negative answers are accompanied by further expressions of distrust of the politicians of the local and central state. As cuts in pensions and salaries, unemployment and inner city delinquent behaviours directly affect the locality, many residents have expressed feelings of despair for politics and politicians. Especially the Greeks blamed the local politicians for being indifferent towards the neighbourhood. For example, R33 (female, 41, unemployed, Greek) stated that:

“We are left to the mercy of God in this neighbourhood. As I said before, this area has a bad name and they got it into this condition. Now the residents want to leave here, they are tired.”

This quote is rather indicative of the despair that many residents feel. Another interviewee (R1) (female, 61, pensioner, Greek) expressed her disappointment and anger with the local government by stating that “they have spit on us”, indicating that there is no provision for anything related to the public spaces, schooling or the local economy. From a similar perspective, especially the elderly households have indicated that although they pay the same local taxes as the rest of the Athenians, the municipality has “turned its back on the area” as there are no municipal services or initiatives for the local population.
Moreover, despair and mistrust in local politics were expressed by some migrants, especially the ones originating from countries that do not participate in the European Union. The problems they face with bureaucracy, police, and the impoliteness of civil servants working in the public services cause them to feel offended, as described by R41 (male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian, pensioner):

“My problem has always been with the state apparatus. We are treated in a different way and they always try to pester us; ‘bring me this paper, bring me the other’. It is the state apparatus and it is these civil servants in the state apparatus. People in power always consider us as if we are inferior […] More precisely, at the migrants’ centres they look down on us as if we are worms […] And this is my complaint.”

Migrants face severe bureaucratic difficulties in trying to get their documentation. The complexity of the legal framework is deemed by the migrants to be a kind of pestering. The rudeness of the police and the civil servants is intimidating for the migrants who feel discrimination and injustice.

As mentioned before, almost all interviewees claim that they know nothing about urban policies and initiatives in the area. The only exception is a respondent who uses the municipal services that cater to vulnerable groups, like soup kitchens and dormitories. None of the other (49) interviewees had any idea about the social services provided by the municipality, reflecting the lack of information which exists for people in need. Only Greek respondents stated that they are aware of some local programmes, referring to the unaccomplished project of the Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens (which involved improvements in accessibility to archaeological sites and a number of urban interventions in the historical centre, like square redesign, construction of pedestrian streets etc.). The respondents expressed their disappointment that pedestrianisation, which would improve the connection between Plato’s Park and the rest of the city and contribute to local development, has not reached the area.

From a different perspective, people who support or participate in local associations consider local associations as the only initiatives that are active and contribute to the improvement of living conditions in the area. Actions by associations bring life to the park and exposes people to alternative, less commercial, ways of thinking and entertainment. Additionally, associations enhance social networking and solidarity amongst the residents, thus boosting the social capital of the area. Moreover, activists in the local assemblies pinpointed the importance of their mobilisation against the local governments’ plans to allow building in parts of the park and demolish buildings of architectural importance (the former yarn and textile Mouzaki factory) in favour of commercial malls.

4.8.2 Policy priorities proposed by interviewees: What do residents want?
As many respondents have experienced the loss of their jobs or cuts in their wages and their pensions, they suggest that policies should focus on the boost of the labour market so that
people can get new jobs. This suggestion of “more jobs” was put forward by most of the migrants and the economically vulnerable Greeks. Such suggestions were accompanied by remarks (especially by Greek interviewees) that politicians should stop being indifferent towards local issues and actually do their jobs.

Moreover, many respondents asked for better cleaning services in the public spaces of the area. Some stated that as the municipal cleaning services barely pass through their streets, they wash the streets themselves, whilst others indicated that rubbish collection is not that effective. Additionally, other interviewees indicated that the abandoned buildings and plots of land have become sources of infection. As such, they suggested better care of the neglected spaces in the city centre.

Interviewees who expressed fear of ‘otherness’, stated that they would appreciate more policing and surveillance in the public spaces of the area, and some expressed overtly that the state should drive out the migrant population from the neighbourhood and the country. Migrants from non-European countries indicated racism and xenophobia as major concerns.

Furthermore, the majority of the interviewees proposed that the local state should take better care of the green and public spaces of the area and implement projects for the spotlighting of Plato’s Park. As expressed by R17 (female, 50, journalist, Greek), with minor interventions the state could rejuvenate the local urban landscape:

“It is only a few things that they need to do, and they don’t need money for it. They do not need lots of stuff as the local people have embraced the park. If they created spaces for people and for cyclists, and they defined spaces for dog walking, installing playgrounds… such things would change the whole picture.”

According to many interviewees, the connection of the area with the rest of the archaeological sites, spotlighting the park as an ancient monument, might attract tourism and new shops might open to support the new clientele. Within this framework, unemployment at the local level could be reduced as local people could be employed in the new economic activities related to tourism, culture and entertainment. As proposed by the residents, regeneration of the area via the preservation and amelioration of Plato’s Park could work as an engine of economic growth to reverse the decline of the urban tissue and the unemployment faced at the very local level. Moreover, other respondents underpinned the importance of the creation of the Museum of Athens in the area where the archaeological findings of Akadimia Platonos can be exhibited. As some respondents stated, there is a presidential decree that foresees the digital museum of Athens in Akadimia Platonos; what the residents are actually asking for is the implementation of this decree.

In general terms, since diversity is not judged as being an aspect of inner city upgrading, there are no suggestions or proposals concerning it from the residents of Akadimia Platonos. Their
suggested policies mostly deal with the regeneration of the urban tissue and the creation of better opportunities in the labour market.

4.8.3 Conclusions
Distrust and despair characterise the perceptions of the local population concerning local politicians. Discriminative and offending behaviour in services related to migrant affairs cause further feelings of annoyance and mistrust from the migrant population. Moreover, many residents feel neglected by the local state as there is no provision for local issues nor any kind of catering for local needs, hence they feel that living conditions have worsened.

Interviewees are more aware of and appreciate social solidarity practices of local bottom-up initiatives. Many respondents indicated the importance of the local associations for the interaction and the networking that develops in local society. Local associations also defend public spaces and partially fill the vacuum left by the state in social services.

Our interviewees prioritise economic issues, especially combating unemployment. Other proposals deal with the amelioration of the built environment and the preservation of green spaces. Better cleaning services, the preservation and development of Plato’s Park and spotlighting the ancient culture and history of the place are perceived as urban policies with multiplier effects. As proposed, such initiatives could contribute to the touristic regeneration of the area, boost the local labour market and lead to the redevelopment of the urban tissue, providing the local residents with a better and upgraded living environment.

4.9 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we addressed two of the main research questions of the DIVERCITIES project: Can diversity contribute to social cohesion at the neighbourhood level? Can diversity as a characteristic of local social networks contribute to the social mobility of individuals? Within this framework, we examined how the inhabitants of Akadimia Platonos perceive and experience diversity in the neighbourhood and whether diverse local social networks played some role in inhabitants’ occupational trajectories, especially in access to their current job.

Concerning the relationship between diversity and social cohesion, we met a range of very different stances towards diversity, which include indifference, fear, positive appropriation and celebration. These stances tend to correspond to social groups with different features: the less privileged natives, in terms of education and income, more often express fear; young and educated natives tend to celebrate diversity as an element of cosmopolitanism; and immigrant communities see diversity in the neighbourhood as a favourable condition that allows them to maintain their way of life and networks of mutual support. These different stances take, to a degree, the form of real social tensions, as in the case of the activity of the neo-Nazi organisation, Golden Dawn, which is perceived in a highly controversial manner in Akadimia Platonos, as it is elsewhere in Athens and in Greece.
Given the relatively low level of social segregation that characterises Athens, it is interesting to answer the question of whether the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and social groups leads to interaction between them. Overall, our findings indicate that different groups tend to live parallel lives: homogeneous city-wide personal networks prevail over heterogeneous local ones and public spaces do not foster, per se, social encounter. Within this framework, local institutions (schools, residents’ associations) play a nodal role: they constitute social fields where people develop common interests and, to a degree, common ways of action to serve these interests. In particular, residents’ associations approach the relationship between diverse ethnic, cultural and social groups as a matter of ‘solidarity’, thus contributing to local social cohesion in a way that is adapted to the needs created by the current economic crisis.

Concerning the relationship between diversity and social mobility, our research was less fruitful. Data does not show any significant relationship between diversified local social networks and occupational mobility. City-wide mechanisms, like sectoral labour markets and job advertisements, as well as the social networks associated with them, prevail in the definition of the chances of getting a job over local factors.

As we will stress in the general conclusions of this book, these findings comprise information that may be useful for policymakers: On the one side, it seems that if policymakers want to implement actions fostering social cohesion at the local level, they might target the nexus of local institutions – local public spaces, while it is imperative to address the striking disconnection of citizens from urban policies. On the other side, it seems that policies fighting unemployment cannot benefit from local social networks in diversified neighbourhoods; policymakers have to address the structural factors that generate it.
5 ENTREPRENEURS DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of entrepreneurship in today’s diverse cities constitutes an essential means to achieve the main objectives of current urban policies, such as attaining high levels of economic growth and increasing well-being (Fainstein, 2005; Bodaar and Rath, 2005). Cities focus on creating favourable conditions for start-ups and compete for enterprises with high economic performance and talented entrepreneurs. The literature emphasises that cities open to diversity are able to attract a wider range of entrepreneurs than cities that are relatively closed (Fainstein, 2005; Florida, 2002; Tasan-Kok and Vranken, 2008; Eraydin et al., 2010). However, empirical research on how economic competitiveness relates to urban diversity is quite limited and typically provides only macro-level evidence.

This chapter adds empirical evidence at the neighbourhood level based on the experience of entrepreneurs in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood of Athens. First, we examine the basic characteristics of the local entrepreneurs and their businesses, such as fields of activity and occupational trajectories. Second, we explore the entrepreneurs’ motivations for establishing and locating businesses specifically in Akadimia Platonos. Third, we identify the factors that facilitate or hinder the economic performance of businesses. Fourth, we explore the role of policies, measures and initiatives taken at different levels. At the centre of our analysis is the relationship between entrepreneurship and urban diversity, particularly the question of whether diversity at the neighbourhood level provides conditions for individuals and groups to enhance their creative forces and economic performance.

Our findings indicate that different aspects of diversity affect the performance of businesses differently. According to entrepreneurs, diversity in terms of the mix of urban functions and land uses affects businesses positively because it creates a vibrant local market and favourable conditions of proximity and synergy among colleagues. On the contrary, diversity in terms of income, ethnicity and lifestyle has a more ambiguous impact and depends on the sector of entrepreneurial activity. Businesses engaged in commerce, education, everyday and specialised services attract and benefit from a very diverse local clientele. This is mostly the ‘natural’ outcome of being located in a diverse neighbourhood and not the result of business strategies that often target so-called ‘high-quality’ clientele (rather than middle to lower income customers). Businesses engaged in the creative and innovative sector do not depend upon local diversified customers, as they address a city-wide and very specific (thus much narrower in social
and ethnic terms) clientele. In addition, migrant entrepreneurs mostly rely on the presence of co-ethnics (rather than on customers of all different ethnic origins).

As far as policies are concerned, it is remarkable that diversity-related demands are coming from businesses in the creative and innovative sector and not from those that are in practice more dependent upon local diversified clientele. It seems that diversity-related demands are mostly ideological in nature, which is compatible with the more 'open' and 'cosmopolitan' profile of creative and innovative businesses.

5.2 METHODOLOGY

To explore the research questions presented above, we conducted 40 interviews with entrepreneurs established in the neighbourhood of Akadimia Platonos. To select our sample of interviewees, we took into consideration the general characteristics and various types of entrepreneurial activities developed in the neighbourhood. At first, we relied on personal contacts established during a previous series of interviews with inhabitants (see Chapter 4). Some of the interviewed inhabitants brought us into contact with entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood who they know personally. We also used our personal social networks, namely colleagues, friends and family members who live, work or spend time in the neighbourhood. In addition, we visited several local businesses ourselves and asked the owners for an interview. Once the interview process started, we also selected interviewees through snowball sampling. Our respondents introduced us to other local entrepreneurs, which was important in terms of establishing trust and confidence between ourselves and the interviewees (especially migrant entrepreneurs or people working in the informal sector). Snowball sampling was initiated several times to avoid bias in the sample of interviewees, that is, to avoid ending up with a sample of like-minded people with similar social and ethnic profiles.

The large majority of local entrepreneurs with whom we came in contact were very willing to give an interview. This may have been because the time period for conducting the interviews (October-December 2015) was one of relative economic and political stability in Greece after the recent disruptive experience (especially for entrepreneurs) of capital controls (in June 2015) and the third election that year (in September 2015). Only a few of the entrepreneurs we approached refused to give an interview, stating that they either had no time due to a heavy workload or that they were disappointed in and distrusted initiatives undertaken by public institutions. We also missed some interviews with migrant entrepreneurs, collecting no more than five such interviews; some of the migrant entrepreneurs we approached were very reluctant to speak about their businesses, others have temporarily left Greece to find work abroad and many businesses in the neighbourhood owned by migrants are permanently closed because of the current economic crisis (which is also true for businesses owned by Greeks). Last, we were unable to interview entrepreneurs who own big firms in the manufacturing and logistics sectors, as they never replied to our written request for an interview.
Despite the difficulties we faced gaining the trust of certain entrepreneurs, the final sample of interviewees is diverse and sufficiently reflects the general characteristics and various types of entrepreneurship developed in Akadimia Platonos. The interviews relate to businesses located throughout the whole neighbourhood and not only those along the very central and commercial streets. Some of the interviews are given by two people (the partners of the business), while others relate to more than one business owned by the respondent. Most of the interviews took place at the businesses during opening hours (except for a few interviews that took place in a coffee shop or at the respondent’s home). During opening hours, entrepreneurs could not devote more than one hour to the interview; nevertheless, this gave us the opportunity to observe how their businesses operate in real place and time, including, for example, the number of customers and their profiles and the products and services provided.

5.3 THE ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR BUSINESSES

The entrepreneurship that has developed in Akadimia Platonos has very diverse characteristics, both in terms of the entrepreneurs’ social profiles (age, gender, level of education and ethnic origin) and the type and operation of their businesses (products and services, size, staff, facilities, ownership pattern, etc.). The general characteristics of the interviewed entrepreneurs and their businesses (see Appendix 2) differ with respect to the field of activity in which they are engaged.

The fields of activity the interviewed entrepreneurs are engaged in are representative of the entrepreneurial activities developed in the neighbourhood as a whole. First, the large majority of the interviewed entrepreneurs are engaged in common commercial activities and everyday services, such as food and clothing stores, coffee shops and restaurants, pharmacies, hairdressing salons, tailoring and shoemaking businesses and garages (Photos 5.1 and 5.2). However, a significant number provide more specialised services in the education, sports and health sectors through local businesses such as private schools for secondary education, language learning and computer classes, fitness centres and private clinics. In addition, a smaller number of our respondents are engaged in creative and innovative businesses related to various cultural activities, arts, engineering and new high-technology products and services.

The majority of businesses engaged in commercial and manufacturing activities and everyday services are very old, having been established in the neighbourhood during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. A significant increase in commercial activities and everyday services occurred in the late 1980s and during the 1990s, while only a few such businesses opened later than that. The most recently established businesses in the neighbourhood are those engaged in creative and innovative activities and opened mostly during the 2000s, with some opening after 2010. It seems that creative and innovative start-ups take risks more easily than more traditional businesses, opening even in the midst of a deep and continuing economic crisis. After the outbreak of the crisis, not only were there no new commercial businesses in the neighbourhood, a lot of the existing ones closed, even some on the most central and commercial streets.
5.3.1 Characteristics of the entrepreneurs

The age range of the interviewed entrepreneurs engaged in commercial activities and everyday services is 25-70, that of those engaged in more specialised services is 40-60 and that of those engaged in creative and innovative businesses is 30-45. In terms of gender, there is no significant imbalance between men and women (24 and 18 respondents, respectively), and nor is there a specific business sector (commercial activities, services, creative or innovative businesses) that is male- or female-dominated.

Important differences among the interviewed entrepreneurs were observed with respect to their level of education. The most low-skilled entrepreneurs are those engaged in commerce and everyday services, having only basic secondary education and no previous professional experience. In the case of entrepreneurs providing more specialised products and services (eyewear shops, hairdressing salons, accounting offices, garages, etc.), most have higher skill levels, having had post-secondary or higher technical education. Regarding the entrepreneurs who provide specialised services in the education, sports and health sectors (e.g. private schools for secondary education, language learning and computer classes, fitness centres, pharmacies and private clinics), they all have university education. However, the most highly skilled entrepreneurs are those involved in creative and innovative businesses, such as cultural management and production, arts, engineering, and high technology; they not only have higher education but usually also have additional post-graduate qualifications, such as a
master’s degree and/or a PhD obtained in Greece or abroad. Furthermore, it is usual that they practice various jobs at the same time (as freelancers), take more risks and initiate new forms of entrepreneurship and engagement, such as partnerships, non-profit businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Migrant entrepreneurs do not constitute a particular case in terms of their educational level. Similar to Greeks, some may have received only basic secondary education, some may have obtained additional technical skills (either in their country of origin or in Greece) and some may have university qualifications. The crucial difference here is that migrant entrepreneurs with a higher educational level do not manage to engage in activities demanding a higher skill level, which is described in the literature as ‘de-specialisation’ (Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2012). Therefore, while Greek entrepreneurs are represented in all entrepreneurial sectors, migrants are absent from businesses engaged in high-quality services and creative and innovative activities. In our sample of respondents, there are three Albanian and two Pakistani entrepreneurs who are engaged in low-status services and common commercial activities. This is also the case for other Albanian, Pakistani, Polish and Chinese entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood who refused to give interviews or who had to close down their businesses.

5.3.2 Characteristics of the businesses
Businesses engaged in commerce and everyday services are usually small and/or family-based, creating no significant employment opportunities. Only occasionally do some of these businesses employ staff (no more than two people) in seasons of high demand or during periods when family members are not able to help. Contrary to these businesses, those engaged in more specialised services (in the education, sports and health sectors) are medium-sized and employ a larger number of people, up to 20 employees. However, the most employment opportunities are created by creative and innovative businesses (such as partnerships, non-profit businesses and NGOs) that employ a large number of people and involve a large number of partners and members through particular entrepreneurship and engagement schemes. Such schemes result in new kinds of facilities (especially in the case of cultural activities), such as multi-purpose and multi-functional spaces for theatre, dance and music classes, exhibitions, concerts, performances, coffee shops, bars and restaurants.

Most of these businesses share some common characteristics. Most have only one facility, with the exception of just a few businesses that used to have multiple locations (during past years of high demand and economic performance) and two that are branches of a bigger company. Most of the entrepreneurs rent their facilities, while a significant percentage (about 20%) are owners. Entrepreneurs in all fields of activity seem to be willing to make changes in the operation of their businesses, such as improving and expanding their products, services and facilities. However, this depends on their economic performance and financial means. To give a characteristic example, after the outbreak of the economic crisis and in order to face the continuing decrease in turnover and profits\(^26\), most of the entrepreneurs interviewed instituted significant changes based on the different ways they were affected and their attitudes regarding
the crisis. On one hand, many entrepreneurs had to reduce their staff (even by more than 50%), reduce their products and services and/or rent smaller, less expensive facilities to keep their business running. On the other hand, some entrepreneurs took the risk to expand their products and services, increase opening hours and/or renovate their facilities with a view to attracting more customers and increasing their profits. Two of our respondents provided characteristic examples of such contrasting entrepreneurial strategies:

‘In order to survive without owing money or evading taxes, we had to reduce our staff. Two years ago, seven trainers used to work here. Today, we have only three trainers and no secretary. We even had to look for another cleaning lady working for a lower salary. […] And, fortunately, the owner of the building agreed to reduce the rent from €3,000 to €1,500.’ (R37: male, 42, sport association, Greek)

‘We tried to initiate more commercial activities. As you can see, we also sell jewellery. We had this idea for years but it came true in 2009, along with some renovation works. The idea was good but actually failed… due to the crisis.’ (R35: male, 45, hairdressing salon and jewellery shop, Albanian)

5.4 STARTING AN ENTERPRISE IN A DIVERSE URBAN AREA

5.4.1 Introduction

In exploring motivations for entrepreneurial engagement, scholars have revealed various factors that make people start their own business. These factors may relate to individual socio-demographic characteristics (such as gender, age, family background and educational level), individual preferences and perceptions (such as the preference for self-employment, the perception of job security, advancement and economic performance or the perception of administrative complexities, financial support and risk tolerance) and country-specific variables (such as the economic environment, technological progress, institutional framework and cultural particularities) (Armington and Acs, 2002; Blancflower, 2004; Freytag and Thurik, 2007; Grilo and Thurik, 2008). Regarding the factors that make people locate their business in a specific neighbourhood of the city (in other words, the factors that influence their locational choices), scholars have put a particular emphasis on the importance of social networks (Granovetter, 1985; Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Greve, 1995; Jensen, 2001; Hoang and Antoncic, 2003; Ripolles and Blesa, 2005). Local social networks, including family bonds, friendly contacts and relationships between colleagues, provide entrepreneurs with a wide range of valuable resources, such as access to information, advice, knowledge, skills, financing, social legitimacy, reputation and credibility (Klyver et al., 2008).

Particular attention has been paid to migrant entrepreneurship, with scholars revealing a wide range of factors that motivate migrants to engage in entrepreneurial activities. For instance, entrepreneurship is usually an option for migrants who face long-term unemployment or
economic and social discrimination in the local market (Bonanich, 1973). Their involvement in specific entrepreneurial sectors may depend on their family, educational, professional, ethnic and migration status, the stage in the family life cycle and even on individual characteristics and preferences (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Basu, 2004). The localisation of migrant businesses in specific neighbourhoods of the city may relate to the existence of a gap in the local market or certain attractive spatial patterns, such as the so-called entrepreneurial ethnic ‘niches’ or ‘enclaves’ (Waldinger, 2003). Ethnic-based social networks play an important role in the choice of location; relatives and friends from the homeland often provide migrant entrepreneurs with start-up capital, low-cost labour, a first customer base and supplier chain, information, knowledge and solidarity (Portes, 1995).

An additional factor that seems to play a certain role in the development of entrepreneurship is urban diversity. As stated in the literature, the impact of urban diversity on the development of entrepreneurial activities, employment rates and urban wages may vary significantly (Nathan, 2011). For example, Alexandre-Leclair (2014: p. 173) states that diversity in terms of gender, culture and ethnicity is only partially ‘a core motive for entrepreneurship’ and calls for further research and theoretical elaboration on this topic.

The relationship between urban diversity and entrepreneurship in Athens needs to be further explored. To date, the research is limited (Lianos and Psiridou, 2008) and focuses on ‘ethnic’ entrepreneurship in central neighbourhoods of the city. Some scholars have explored the particular forms, economic performance and geography of ‘ethnic’ businesses and the perceptions of ‘ethnic’ entrepreneurship by the locals (Kandylis et al., 2007; Mavrommatis, 2008; Tsiganou, 2013). Others have investigated the concentration of migrant entrepreneurs in specific neighbourhoods of the city (Mavrommatis 2008; Balampanidis and Polyzos, 2016; Hatziprokopiou and Frangopoulos, 2016). However, urban diversity as a motivating factor for the development of entrepreneurship is rarely examined and further empirical research is therefore required.

In this section, we explore motivating factors for establishing a business in general and for locating businesses in the specific and diverse study area of Akadimia Platonos. These motivating factors clearly include individual motivations and perceptions of the neighbourhood; the functional, economic and aesthetic attributes of the neighbourhood and the human (social and ethnic) capital of the neighbourhood. Regarding diversity, it will be shown that it is not always a motivating factor for start-ups but plays an ambiguous role in the development of entrepreneurship in the neighbourhood, depending on its different forms – diversity in professional activities, social and ethnic diversity and diversity in lifestyles and attitudes.

5.4.2 Motivations for establishing a business
Establishing a business, particularly one engaged in commercial activities and everyday services, seems to offer a career prospect for people who have not pursued higher education and who have not acquired specialised skills. This is often a conscious strategic choice influenced by
parents (or other relatives) who have similar professional experience and who help their children start a business or who pass their business on to their children. In this case, entrepreneurs get on-the-job training, sometimes following a long intergenerational tradition. During their career, some of them upgrade their skills by participating in training programmes at technical schools. The experience of R20 (male, 52, clock and jewellery shop) is indicative:

‘This is a job that my father knew how to do, my grandfather and my great-grandfather as well, and that’s how I learned it. My family originates from a village in northern Greece, a beautiful village with quarries, goldsmiths and silversmiths. […] I worked in my father’s business, which I inherited when he passed away, and I also learned new job skills in a watchmaking school.’

Regarding those who have acquired higher education, establishing their own business (closely relating to their skills) may be their first choice after graduation. This is the case for teachers, doctors, artists, engineers, etc. However, establishing a business may also be a ‘plan B’ for those who have had difficulty finding a job (as employees) in the sector of which they have knowledge and those who have faced long-term unemployment. Such individuals often decide to start their own business instead of working as employees (either in the sector they are specialised in or in another one), believing they can ensure job security, a higher income and better opportunities for advancement. Many participate in collective entrepreneurial schemes, such as family businesses, partnerships or non-profit companies. They stress that they share similar or complementary professional experience and interests and even common political views with their partners. After the outbreak of the economic crisis, it was mostly young people who engaged in such collaborative entrepreneurial schemes, seeking to address job insecurity, unemployment and economic difficulties through mutual investment and support. One of the respondents (R10: male, 30, engineering office, Greek) explained why he searched for a partner after having previously worked independently as freelancer:

Q: ‘Why did you set up an engineering office during a crisis period, especially in the construction sector?’
A: ‘Previously, we were both working independently as freelancers. I proposed to my friend that we collaborate because we have much in common: we share common skills, experiences, perceptions, aesthetics, communication codes; even political views.’

In the case of migrant entrepreneurs, many established their own businesses in a specific sector for similar reasons. Some engage in business activities closely related to the technical skills they acquired in their home country, while others acquired technical training in Greece. This is the case of the Albanian and Pakistani hairdressers R35 and R39. It is also usual that migrants set up a business following the example of co-ethnic relatives, such as the Pakistani retailer R4. As for migrants who acquired higher skills in their home country, it is usual that they do not manage to find a job in Greece in which they can use their skills, which is described in literature as ‘de-specialisation’ (Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2012). In fact, they undertake flexible and low-paid jobs, usually in the informal economy; many men are employed in the construction sector
and women are often employed in housing cleaning, elder and child care or sewing at home (Hadjimichalis and Vaiou, [1997] 2003; Lazaridis, 2000; Tastsoglou and Hadjicostandi, 2003).

In order to set up their own business, no matter what their motivations, most of the entrepreneurs interviewed (both Greeks and migrants) do not rely solely on their own economic power but also receive some kind of initial support. This support may be in the form of start-up financial capital, information and professional knowledge or shared networks of social contacts. In most cases, some support is provided by family and friends. Very few entrepreneurs seem to trust official institutions, such as banks or state actors.

In terms of material support, it is very common that entrepreneurs inherit their business from relatives. In cases where there is no established business, it is also common that parents allow their children to use a part of their house to set up a home-based business. Alternatively, children are often offered start-up capital to rent a workspace, renovate and buy the necessary equipment and commodities.

Migrant entrepreneurs in particular rely on relatives and friends who lend them money to start their business or to renovate. This is also a common practice for Greek entrepreneurs, especially in the case of collective businesses, namely in case of partnerships, associations and non-profit organisations. Colleagues and friends help with renovations, donate equipment they no longer need and, if they are suppliers, accept payment in the form of credit instead of cash.

The entrepreneurs we interviewed who had no support in starting their business relied exclusively on personal savings or on income from a parallel professional activity. Entrepreneurs in jointly owned businesses shared the expenses with their partner. Regardless of having, or not having the support of family and friends, very few of the entrepreneurs interviewed contracted bank loans. Some borrowed money from a bank when starting up their business, and the rest borrowed money some years later in order to expand their facilities or improve their products and services. Very few benefited from state and European start-up funding and faced serious bureaucratic inefficiencies and delays.

Apart from material support, many of the entrepreneurs interviewed were provided with useful information by experienced relatives and friends in order to improve their job skills and their ability to communicate with customers or deal with practical issues, such as bookkeeping and accounting. Furthermore, many respondents benefited from the social networks of family and friends to build and enlarge their clientele. In the case of migrant entrepreneurs, co-ethnic social networks are of great importance, especially for setting up a business at the beginning of their stay in Greece.

5.4.3 The importance of location and the role of urban diversity
Apart from the motivations and support for establishing a business in general and selecting a specific sector, the entrepreneurs interviewed also revealed a wide range of motivations for
locating their businesses in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood of Athens. We divide these motivations into four basic categories, paying particular attention to the role of diversity in its various forms – diversity in professional activities, social and ethnic diversity and diversity in lifestyles and attitudes.

**Individual motivations and perceptions of the neighbourhood**

Many of the entrepreneurs interviewed established their business in Akadimia Platonos because they were born and raised there or are long-time residents. These entrepreneurs located their business near home or set up a home-based business. They find it pleasant and practical to work in a place they are familiar with and emotionally attached to. Furthermore, this is an economically advantageous choice, especially for those who own their homes or the properties that house their businesses. This is quite a common motivation because homeowners in Akadimia Platonos, as in the rest of the city centre, represent a large part of the total population (51.3% of the population of the City of Athens are owners of their primary residence; EKKE-ELSTAT, Panorama of Greek Census Data 1991-2011). The description of R5 (female, 38, coffee shop-restaurant, Greek) sums up most of the above individual motivations:

‘We were born and raised in this neighbourhood. […] We live very near here. Obviously, this was a very important reason for us and very practical. And second, we love this neighbourhood very much, that is why we bought a house here and we also wanted to work here. We like the fact that Akadimia Platonos is still a friendly neighbourhood and we like the neighbours very much, who support us a lot’.

Regarding the newcomers in Akadimia Platonos, both Greek and migrant entrepreneurs often settle and set up a business in the neighbourhood because this is where their work or life partners or family and friends reside. Particularly for migrants, it is very common that they settle and work in the neighbourhood because relatives and friends from their homeland have settled there. As R11 (female, 41, elder care and house cleaning, Albanian) explained:

‘I came to Akadimia Platonos because my husband was living here for many years […] We were all here. My mother-in-law, the brothers and sisters of my husband […] I found them all here.’

Social (family and friends) networks constitute a very important motivation for settling and working in the neighbourhood, not only for emotional but also for practical reasons related to entrepreneurship, as will be shown below.

A last motivating factor for settling and working in Akadimia Platonos relates to more subjective individual perceptions of the neighbourhood. Some respondents were attracted to the area’s historical significance as the archaeological site of the ancient Academy of Plato. Others were attracted to the intimate atmosphere of the neighbourhood, particularly the good relationships between neighbours. The argument of R9 (female, 60, production and management of cultural events, Greek) is indicative:
'I was looking to buy a house back in the 1980s. I already knew Akadimia Platonos and I was impressed, not only by Plato’s work but also by the energy this neighbourhood has [...] I bought a house here and I immediately became close to the people, which was very important. Walking from home to work, I spend half an hour saying ‘good morning’, ‘how are you’, etc.’

**Functional, economic and aesthetic attributes of the neighbourhood**

Beyond the individual motivations and perceptions of the neighbourhood mentioned above, the entrepreneurs interviewed also stressed motivating factors that relate to certain functional, economic and aesthetic attributes of Akadimia Platonos. These include functional advantages of the neighbourhood, opportunities in the local labour and real estate market and even the aesthetic characteristics of the buildings, all of which create favourable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship.

Before establishing their business in Akadimia Platonos, some of the entrepreneurs seriously considered the characteristics of the built environment and the urban infrastructure, such as large sidewalks and public lighting along certain streets, and the significant building stock available for professional use. This building stock is still rented at low prices, which is also an important criterion in establishing a business.

Another important factor is the neighbourhood’s proximity to the city centre and ease of access via major roads, bus or trolley lines and the metro. The neighbourhood is well connected to the suburbs of the Attica region and to the northern and southern regions of Greece via the National Road on its north side. The neighbourhood’s proximity to the city centre and other areas gives allows clients and suppliers easy access and also facilitates the daily movements of entrepreneurs. As R10 (male, 30, engineering office, Greek) explained:

‘The first reason why I chose this neighbourhood is its location in the region of Attica. It is a central neighbourhood [...] and it is easy for a professional like me to move around. Because I have to be flexible, to move all the time [...] So, the office had to be near major road axis, such as the National Road [...] This also facilitates the access to our office by our customers.’

The proximity to the city centre is particularly important for creative businesses, such as theatres, concert halls and art galleries, as most of the cultural activities are already concentrated in the city centre and its surrounding neighbourhoods. According to R38 (female, 40, multi-purpose art association, Greek):

‘[...] we were looking for a neighbourhood where alternative artistic activities develop [...] such activities do not develop in a bourgeois suburb or a posh neighbourhood [...] they usually develop in abandoned central parts of the city, where some artists form their ‘artistic niches’ [...] young people follow them and thus rises an alternative neighbourhood.’
The functional attributes of Akadimia Platonos presented above create favourable conditions for the development of a vibrant local market, namely for the establishment of multiple professional activities along busy commercial roads and squares. Furthermore, there have been significant gaps in this vibrant local market that motivated some of the interviewed entrepreneurs to engage in certain professional activities that were lacking in the neighbourhood. For example, until the mid-1990s, there was a lack of private education services, which was partially filled by R15 (female, 45, private language learning institute, Greek). Until recently, there was also a lack of cultural activities; this has been partially filled by R33 (male, 33, private dance school, Greek).

Another important factor that favours the development of entrepreneurship in this neighbourhood is that Akadimia Platonos is a neighbourhood ‘in transition’. De-industrialisation since the mid-1980s has left behind a large stock of industrial buildings (along with the old and degrading residential stock) waiting to be renovated and reused, creating opportunities for future investments and multiple new entrepreneurial projects. To a certain extent, this attracts new professional activities, especially creative and innovative businesses, such as engineering offices, high-tech companies and cultural businesses. One of the respondents (R10: male, 30, engineering office, Greek) clearly described emerging perspectives of the neighbourhood:

‘In Akadimia Platonos and the neighbouring area of Eleonas, we noticed considerable real estate activity with foreign investors involved, who buy old and abandoned buildings at low prices with a view to renovating and reusing them. […] We thought that we’d better set up our engineering office near this ‘real estate game’ since the construction of new buildings in Greece is finished. […] And it’s not only the abandoned spaces but also spaces in use. All these degraded residential condominiums need to be renovated urgently.’

The characteristics of the available industrial building stock in Akadimia Platonos, especially large buildings, are appropriate for the special needs of certain cultural businesses, such as ballrooms, theatres, concert halls, etc. At the same time, industrial buildings suit the aesthetic criteria of the people involved in cultural activities who usually look for facilities with a ‘particular’ and ‘alternative’ architecture. As R33 (male, 33, private dance school, Greek) explained:

‘[…] a dance school needs large spaces […] we were looking for an old warehouse, a factory, a bit industrial […] and we were basically looking for a building with an alternative style, a little bit particular.’

The archaeological site of Plato’s Academy also attracts entrepreneurs to locate their business in the neighbourhood. This is an archaeological site of great historical value and worldwide fame. Therefore, some of the entrepreneurs anticipate the development of tourism in the neighbourhood and seek to integrate tourists into their clientele, as in the case of R5 (female, 38, coffee shop/restaurant, Greek):
Another motivation is the archaeological park that we have here, which is of particular importance and its importance grows year by year. The archaeological site is becoming more and more popular, the number of visitors and tourists is rising and our clientele is gradually changing.

**Human (social and ethnic) capital of the neighbourhood**

It is not only the functional, economic and aesthetic attributes of the neighbourhood that motivate entrepreneurs to establish their business in Akadimia Platonos. The human capital of the neighbourhood, both social and ethnic, is also a significant resource that entrepreneurs count on when they estimate the amount and profiles of potential customers.

With Akadimia Platonos being a densely populated and socially and ethnically mixed neighbourhood, some of the entrepreneurs foresee a large and diverse clientele. However, they mainly count on ‘high-quality customers’, namely those who have steady jobs and relatively high purchasing power. One of the respondents (R3: male, 53, grocery store, American-Greek) recalls his thoughts back in the early 1990s when he was planning to set up his business in the neighbourhood:

’I was walking in the neighbourhood and I noticed all these condominiums inhabited by lots of residents [...] and ’high-quality’ neighbours [...] I mean people who had jobs, money and could buy their milk from a grocery store rather than go to the supermarket.’

The entrepreneurs who are also residents in Akadimia Platonos have already established a network of social relationships, a crucial motivating factor for setting up their business in the neighbourhood. This network of social relationships includes childhood friends, schoolmates, neighbours, relatives and family friends, people who participate in communal activities in the neighbourhood and even customers and their families from previous businesses. The established social relationship networks expand as people’s businesses gain good reputations by word of mouth, and therefore more customers trust their products and services. As mentioned, the intimate atmosphere that this specific neighbourhood preserves favours the development of social relationships between neighbours but also between entrepreneurs and customers.

Social networks are of particular importance for the respondents who have not set up a ‘visible’ business along the street but work as freelancers, work from home or work in the informal sector. This is the case for Greeks (such as tailors, artists and private tutors working at home) but also for many foreign migrants who are very often employed in informal jobs (for example, house cleaning and elderly or child care). Similar to Greeks, migrants rely heavily on social networks, primarily ‘ethnic’ networks, to find a job or set up and develop their own businesses; relatives and friends from the homeland help with renovations, voluntarily engage in shopkeeping if necessary and are part of the clientele. One migrant respondent (R4: male, 31, grocery store, Pakistani) gave a characteristic example:
‘I opened this grocery store in Akadimia Platonos because I’ve lived here for 14 years and I have relatives and friends here, both Greeks and Pakistanis who can help me with the business […] If I need something, I call them and they come immediately […] Almost every year we paint the walls […] People know me here and they come to me to do their shopping.’

A particular kind of business that relies heavily on the human (social and ethnic) capital of the neighbourhood is local non-profit organisations that organise cultural events and courses for the area’s residents. A neighbourhood centre run by this organisation gives Greek and migrant residents the chance to meet and interact. As R9 (female, 60, neighbourhood cultural centre) explained:

‘There is a large diversity of people who participate here. Because arts and knowledge make different cultures meet. […] There are Kurdish and Pakistanis who come and play music here with their musical instruments. Or we organise cooking in the park and everyone cooks something different. This exchange of different knowledge, customs and traditions is something positive for me.’

Diversity
Compared to the obvious importance of the human capital and the functional, economic and aesthetic attributes of Akadimia Platonos, diversity constitutes only in part a motivating factor for entrepreneurs to set up their business in the neighbourhood. In fact, when entrepreneurs draw up their initial business plans, diversity is perceived in multiple and ambiguous ways, depending on its different forms (diversity in professional activities, social diversity, ethnic diversity and diversity in lifestyles and attitudes).

Diversity in professional activities positively affects the entrepreneurs’ decision to locate their businesses in the neighbourhood, as it creates a vibrant local market with high demand for new services and products and favours cooperative relations. As two of our respondents explained:

‘When we opened this business 10 years ago, the neighbourhood was full of businesses, garages, printing shops, private companies… it was crowded here. And there was no coffee shop to serve all these professionals. That’s why we decided to open a coffee shop. And businesses kept increasing.’ (R14: male, 26, coffee shop/snack bar)

‘Diversity in activities was a motivating factor for me… the fact that this neighbourhood is ‘dirty’. […] I mean it is not a posh neighbourhood nor mono-functional. One can find everything here: industries, merchants, wholesalers, logistics, jobs related to mine.’ (R10: male, 30, engineering office, Greek)

However, there are certain limits to the positive view of diversity in professional activities. The absolutely unregulated mix of land uses are perceived by some entrepreneurs as a negative condition for the development of their entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurs engaged in commerce and everyday services or engineers in particular argue that the lack of regulation of
the spatial distribution of activities prevents the creation of small professional clusters that could be beneficial for the development of certain businesses. This ambiguous impact of diversity on professional activities is clearly highlighted by R8 (male, 34, engineering office, Greek):

‘I would prefer it if there was a kind of order. If there was a certain place for each activity, where similar professionals could concentrate and collaborate, a place of reference. But, everything is dispersed here: engineering offices, butcher shops, clothing crafts… We’d rather find a fine balance.’

Unlike diversity in professional activities, the social diversity of the neighbourhood does not seem to be a motivating factor for the entrepreneurs’ choice of location. As mentioned, although Akadimia Platonos is a socially diverse neighbourhood and entrepreneurs foresee a large and diverse clientele, they mostly target what they call ‘high-quality’ customers, namely individuals with medium or high incomes. During the last years, they also particularly target young people settling in the neighbourhood, as they constitute an active population group that consumes more than others. In this sense, entrepreneurs are rather indifferent to the coexistence of individuals and households of diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ages, etc. in the area. However, once their business starts running, they actually gain and benefit from a socially diverse clientele, but this is more an unplanned result of setting up a business in a socially diverse neighbourhood rather than the outcome of their initial business plan and strategy.

As for ethnic diversity, the presence of migrants of various nationalities in the neighbourhood is viewed both positively and negatively and is perceived differently by Greek and migrant entrepreneurs. The latter rely heavily on the migrant population to establish their businesses and to become their clientele but mostly rely on compatriots (who provide help with renovations and shopkeeping and constitute an initial customer base) and not necessarily on migrants of all ethnicities. In this sense, migrant entrepreneurs are rather indifferent to ethnic diversity.

Greek entrepreneurs have a neutral perception regarding the presence of migrant groups. They see it as neither a positive nor negative condition for the creation and operation of their businesses. Therefore, they avoid stereotypes that are usually (re)produced by the media that link the presence of migrants in the neighbourhood with insecurity. Nevertheless, some of the Greek entrepreneurs interviewed clearly stated they do not consider migrants to be ‘good customers’ because they often face economic difficulties, do their utmost to save money instead of consuming or prefer ‘ethnic’ businesses in order to support co-ethnics. The statement of R17 (female, 39, grocery store, Greek) is indicative:

‘Immigrants do not support us. Can a Pakistani support my business? They live all together in 50 square meters, 20 persons in less than 50 square meters… they buy only the basics and if some of them open a business they all do their shopping there.’

It is important to underline that the social and ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood does not relate at all to the operation of certain businesses that manage to build a very specific and narrow
customer base. Paradoxically, this is the case for some cultural businesses (such as theatres), which are generally expected to attract a diverse clientele. However, they actually attract customers of a very specific social and ethnic profile, almost exclusively middle to upper class Greeks who are young and have a higher educational level and who are not residents of the neighbourhood.

Some of the respondents explained that they face difficulties in handling diversity when planning the products and services of their business in order to meet the needs of all different customers. Coping with many different consumer habits is not easy. The difficulties posed by diversity are not necessarily a deterrent for the development of entrepreneurship; but certainly diversity in lifestyles and attitudes constitutes a complex condition that entrepreneurs need time and effort to deal with. This concerns both Greek and migrant entrepreneurs, such as R8, a Greek civil engineer, and R35, an Albanian owner of a hairdressing salon and jewellery shop:

‘This extreme diversity in ethnic groups and the mobility of these groups is not very helpful for a businessman who should have a regular clientele with specific needs.’ (R8: male, 34, engineering office, Greek)

‘Our customers vary from people who are unemployed to people who may still earn 2,000 euros per month. […] It is difficult for the entrepreneur to plan services for five different social classes. […] The same goes for different ethnic groups. You don’t know the preferences, the tastes, their habits… It is very difficult to deal with this, it needs time and experience.’ (R35: male, 45, hairdressing salon and jewellery shop, Albanian)

5.5 ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND THE ROLE OF URBAN DIVERSITY

5.5.1 Introduction
In contrast to pure ‘market’ approaches (see Granovetter’s critique, 1985), the field of economic sociology has examined the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic performance with factors such as social networks, contextual variables and the socio-demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs, parameters that according to Audretsch and Keilbach (2004) form ‘entrepreneurship capital’. Social capital (formal, informal or both) emerged as one of the most important factors for upward economic performance of businesses (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Völker and Flap, 2004; Pichler and Wallace, 2007). It has also been shown that the location vis-à-vis entrepreneurs’ social capital has a positive impact on economic performance, as stressed by Schutjens and Völker (2010). Contesting the argument that local social networks are losing significance because of new means of communication and transportation, they claim that social contacts in the neighbourhood still matter and positively relate to entrepreneurial success. Additional positive factors for entrepreneurial success relate to contextual variables. Among them, the growing diversity of cities is considered to be one of the most important. Ethnic diversity in particular has been thoroughly studied and proved to be significantly beneficial for the increase of wages but also for productivity, knowledge
creation, innovation, creativity, etc., at least in the long term (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2005; Ottaviano and Peri, 2006; Nathan, 2011). In addition, a special interest developed around the contribution of the so-called ‘creative class’. It has been considered that creative entrepreneurs have a strong preference for cultural diversity and are key drivers of economic growth (Florida, 2002; Boschma and Fritsch, 2009); however, this has not been confirmed in all different contexts (about the USA, see Glaeser, 2005; about the UK, see Nathan, 2015).

In the case of Greece and the city of Athens, research attention over the last few years has turned to the study of the economic performance of businesses under the conditions of a deep and continuing economic crisis. The Hellenic Statistical Authority estimates that turnover in retail trade has dropped by almost 40% since 2008 (ELSTAT, 2015). Closed businesses in the city centre of Athens reached 32% in 2013 compared to 16% in 2010 (INEMY-ESEE, 2015: p. 4), with the variances relating to the street, the neighbourhood and the type of business (Balampanidis et al., 2013). In this context, scholars focused on entrepreneurial relationships and competition, especially between Greek and migrant entrepreneurs (Tsiganou, 2013), and stressed the significant contribution of cultural diversity and ‘migrant entrepreneurship’ to the attractiveness of the city (Mavrommatis, 2008) and the regeneration of local markets (Balampanidis and Polyzos, 2016).

In this section, we provide more insight into developments relating to the economic performance of businesses in the specific neighbourhood of Akadimia Platonos. First, we describe changes in the local economy. Second, we explore key factors that favour or hinder entrepreneurial success, such as the diversity of the customers and the diversity of the entrepreneurs themselves. The current economic crisis crosses all research findings, and its impacts vary according to the type of business.

5.5.2 The economic performance of businesses
At the beginning of the operation of their business, most of the interviewed entrepreneurs had a moderate but sufficient income that gradually increased in the following years. For long-established businesses in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood, the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s marked a period of remarkably upward economic performance. As R20 (male, 52, clock and jewellery shop, Greek) explained:

‘Since the 1980s, the economic performance of my business has absolutely been on the rise. Over the years, my profits increased by 20%. In other neighbourhoods, other colleagues’ profits increased by 40% or even more.’

Through the upward economic performance of their businesses, many entrepreneurs managed to improve their social status and the living standards of their families; they bore the cost of their children’s studies, bought a car or even a second one, moved to bigger apartments or bought their own homes. They did not leave their neighbourhood while improving their living conditions, a common phenomenon in several central neighbourhoods in Athens that is
described in the literature as ‘spatially entrapped social mobility’ (Maloutas, 2004). One of our respondents (R26: male, 60, microbiology laboratory, Greek) gives a clear example:

‘We have always lived in Akadimia Platonos and we still live here, but we managed to rebuild and extend my wife’s family house. […] I didn’t have a car but I bought one. My wife also bought her own car a few years later and we have replaced both of them. It is clear that our lives have been upgraded.’

The social and residential upgrade of the entrepreneurs due to the upward economic performance of their business also occurred for migrants. After many years spent in Greece, some managed to fund their children’s studies, improve their living conditions and acquire property both in the host country and the country of origin. One of our migrant respondents (R39: male, 48, hairdressing salon, Pakistani) gives a characteristic example:

‘Five years ago, I got a loan from the bank and bought a store in the city centre of Athens. It is 20 square metres and cost €45,000. I rent it out for 800 euros per month to a migrant from Bangladesh. […] Back in Pakistan, I own three stores and I also own land. If I go back home, I will not die, I will have an income from the rents.’

For most of the entrepreneurs interviewed, the economic performance of their businesses have dramatically decreased since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008. The successive cuts in wages and pensions and the increase in unemployment have led to a drastic decrease in the purchasing power of households and therefore in the profits of businesses, primarily those engaged in commercial activities and everyday services but also those in the construction, culture, education, sports and health sectors. Along with the decline in profits, which varies from 40% to 90%, there have been significant increases in fixed costs, such as taxes, insurance contributions and operating expenses. One of the respondents (R3: male, 53, grocery store, American-Greek) gave us some hard figures revealing the changes in his business:

‘To give you some figures, until 2008, the turnover of my business ranged from €1,200 to €1,600 per day. With the profit being about 10%, I was earning more than €200 per day. Today, €200 per day is my turnover, which means that my daily profit is not more than €20.’

In order to face the deepening economic crisis and the dramatic decrease in turnover and profits, entrepreneurs have had to reduce staff, especially in the case of medium-sized businesses and non-profit businesses and associations. Some are in debt and unable to afford rentals, taxes and insurance contributions. Entrepreneurs whose profits dropped by more than 80% are at risk of having to close their businesses. The closing of both Greek and migrant businesses is a common occurrence in the neighbourhood, even along central commercial streets.

However, despite the general decline in turnover and profits of businesses described above, some of the entrepreneurs interviewed have not only fought against the crisis but have performed
better than in the past. For example, businesses that tended to disappear in the past, such as tailors and shoemakers, gained more and more clients after the outbreak of the crisis because many people started having their clothes and shoes repaired instead of buying new ones. Another example of high economic performance in the midst of the crisis is businesses such as coffee shops and restaurants whose owners renovated, improved their products and services, modified their opening hours and implemented new ideas and advertising techniques. Thus, during the last five years of economic crisis, they managed to attract new customers and increase their profits by up to 50%. This is the case with R5 (female, 38, coffee shop/restaurant, Greek):

‘The economic performance of our family business reached its peak during the last five years, when we spent money for renovation works, changed the menu, fixed live music events and, thus, increased our profits. […] We also extended our opening hours. From morning to evening hours or on weekends, we serve different types of customers, from older to younger people. […] We worked a lot on the advertising of the business, we have our own website and page on Facebook […] We managed to attract tourists… […] And we take part in common actions and initiatives in the neighbourhood.’

The economic performance is still high for certain innovative businesses (such as businesses dealing with high technology products and services) and certain creative businesses (such as engineering offices) that target a ‘high quality’ clientele. Their customers vary from upper class households living in the suburbs to big firms and industries established in the region of Attica, in other regions of Greece or abroad. In the case of other creative businesses, there is stability but no remarkable increase in their economic performance. For example, non-profit art businesses and associations have not lost their members. As for businesses like theatres and multi-purpose art spaces, they have always had ups and downs in terms of their economic performance, depending on the subjective taste of their audience, as explained by R24 (female, 35, multi-purpose art space, Greek):

‘In our case, the economic performance is a question of subjectivity. We may stage a play that we consider to be artistically perfect but the audience or the critics may not like. […] During the last years, our plays are successful and we have good economic performance. However, next year we may stage a play with no success. And that would cost us a lot.’

5.5.3 The role of diversity
In exploring the profiles of customers and entrepreneurs in Akadimia Platonos, it seems that social and ethnic diversity plays an important and positive role in the economic performance of businesses, at least until the outbreak of the crisis and depending on the different fields of entrepreneurial activity.

Regarding social diversity in the neighbourhood, most of the businesses (especially those engaged in commercial activities and everyday services) benefit from a socially diverse customer base, namely from a large variety of incomes that can support the local economy. Particularly
until the outbreak of the crisis, middle to upper class customers contributed to increasing the business turnover and profits. Lower to middle class customers also constituted a large customer base that could guarantee a stable income for entrepreneurs. As explained by R20 (male, 52, clocks and jewellery shop, Greek):

“There’s always been a rich social mosaic in Akadimia Platonos: mainly lower and middle class households but also upper classes. Until recently, the latter constituted about 20% of my clientele. By chance, there would also be some rich businessmen.”

In addition to social diversity in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood, ethnic diversity is also a beneficial factor in the economic performance of businesses, both Greek and migrant. Most of the interviewed entrepreneurs have an ethnically diverse clientele, which is beneficial not only for Greek but also for migrant entrepreneurs. The latter rely heavily on clients of the same ethnic origin but are looking for and manage to have an ethnically mixed clientele that includes Greeks. According to two migrant respondents:

‘About 70% of my customers are Greeks. Most of my customers are Greeks and Albanians… also from Bulgaria… migrants of all ethnic origins that live here. And 30% of my customers are Pakistanis.’ (R4: male, 31, grocery store, Pakistani)

“We have customers of all ethnic origins. To be honest, I am glad about this. I wouldn’t like to have an ‘ethnic’ hairdressing salon.’ (R35: male, 45, hairdressing salon and jewellery shop, Albanian)

The social and ethnic profile of business customers in Akadimia Platonos has changed significantly since the early 1990s. Over the years, a large part of the middle to upper class households left the neighbourhood in search of better living conditions in the suburbs. Migrants arriving in Athens from many different countries took their place. Due to this change in the neighbourhood’s population, local businesses lost many of their ‘high quality’ clientele. This got even worse after the outbreak of the crisis, when residents of all social categories and ethnic origins in the neighbourhood became poorer. Today, according to the entrepreneurs interviewed, the clientele of their businesses includes impoverished lower to middle class households. A few customers with serious economic difficulties and only a few migrant customers can still afford to shop for non-essentials. In general, customers consume less; they usually buy on credit and some owe the entrepreneurs money. Only civil servants are currently considered to be ‘good clients’, as they still have a stable income. As for migrant customers, opinions are divided. On one hand, some of the respondents consider migrants to be ‘bad clients’, as (in their opinion) they only support the businesses of their compatriots and have very low consumption power. On the other hand, especially in the midst of the crisis, migrants are considered to be reliable as clients, as they are used to saving money and are more experienced in dealing with economic instability. These two contrasting perceptions of migrants in the neighbourhood were clearly expressed by two of our respondents:
‘[…] a lot of migrants have settled here. What can they buy? They save money and send it back to their country. […] They work in Greece but spend their money abroad. […] Of course, they support their compatriots’ businesses. […] They only come to do shopping in my store to get rid of counterfeit banknotes.’ (R17: female, 39, grocery store, Greek)

‘Many customers have left me clothes to repair and they never came to pay and take them back. Usually, they are Greeks. […] It is rare for migrants to miscalculate, but not for Greeks. Greeks have not realised their economic situation yet and have difficulties in handling the crisis. On the contrary, migrants are used to economic planning, planning for simple living.’ (R16: female, 47, tailor, Albanian)

Most customers of businesses in Akadimia Platonos are settled in the neighbourhood. Private and non-profit businesses and associations engaged in cultural and athletic activities (dance, music, theatre, sports, etc.) in particular manage to gain a significantly diverse local clientele consisting of people with lower to middle incomes, people with lower and higher educational levels, children, young adults and elderly people, Greeks and immigrants, women and men and disabled people. Apart from customers who are settled in the neighbourhood, most of the businesses in Akadimia Platonos also have a supra-local clientele, including customers from neighbouring or distant areas of Athens and even from other regions of Greece. This is true for almost all types of businesses, such as commercial stores, private or non-profit businesses and associations engaged in cultural and athletic activities, engineering offices, etc. According to the entrepreneurs interviewed, customers who are not settled in the neighbourhood prefer their businesses because of their good and wide reputation due to their highly skilled staff (such as highly qualified teachers, artists, coaches, etc.) and the quality of their services and certain specialised products that cannot be easily be found elsewhere in the city (such as clothes in extra-large sizes). After the outbreak of the crisis, some of the businesses lost part of their supra-local clientele and currently attract clients almost exclusively from the neighbourhood.

Contrary to the majority of businesses that have a significantly diverse and local clientele, some of the businesses engaged in cultural activities have a more particular group of customers, usually from outside the neighbourhood. This is the case for certain theatres and multi-purpose art spaces that manage to attract mostly young middle to high income people with a higher educational level who are typically not migrants or residents of the neighbourhood. Other cultural businesses that are engaged in organising big cultural events mostly target large customers, such as big companies, advertising agencies, casinos, shopping malls, hotels etc.) located on the periphery of Attica, in other Greek cities and even abroad. The few examples of innovative businesses (dealing in high technology products and services) exclusively target big companies and industries located in many different cities in Greece, Europe and the USA.

Apart from diversity in the customer base of businesses, another beneficial factor for economic performance in Akadimia Platonos is the diversity of the entrepreneurs themselves, which does not cause problems in the development of friendly relations among them. It seems that
professional relationships are not developed on the basis of common ethnic origin, cultural background, lifestyle, etc.; nor are there entrepreneurs excluded from professional networks. For most of the respondents, friendly relations among entrepreneurs creates a favourable business milieu of professional solidarity through a shared clientele and through practices of mutual support; for example, entrepreneurs recommend each other to their customers, buy products and order supplies from each other’s businesses and thus increase their turnover and profits. As explained by R16 (female, 47, tailor, Albanian):

‘We all have good relationships. This is not just our neighbourhood, but a friendly neighbourhood – very friendly. We used to recommend one another to our customers. When I don’t have the time to repair someone’s clothes, I recommend Thalia’s business to my customer. And Thalia just brought me clothes from her business to repair, or Michalis brings me shoes. […] We all put in a good word for each other to our customers, like ‘he or she is doing good work.’

Most of the respondents also have a positive view of the existence of ‘competitors’ in the same neighbourhood and even in the same sector in which they are active. Although they compete with each other, together they attract a large and diverse clientele and create a vibrant local market. This positive attitude towards other entrepreneurs includes not only entrepreneurs of the same ethnic origin but both Greeks and migrants, as stressed by R34 (male, 60, men’s XL clothing store, Greek):

‘We believe that it’s good when the market is lively. And it’s the same for us if this is because of our business or because of another. The important thing is that customers circulate. […] Near our business, there is another store selling Chinese clothes, as well as many same businesses, Greek and migrant. All have a positive impact on our clientele. Chinese businesses have lower prices than ours. But, their customers also come to us.’

Overall, relations between entrepreneurs of different social backgrounds, ethnic origins, lifestyles, etc. are friendly and are beneficial for the economic performance of their businesses. Only entrepreneurs engaged in specialised sectors (such as innovative and high technology businesses) have limited relations with other entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood, as their professional contacts (similarly to their customer base) are not locally based but are mostly supra-local or even transnational. Apart from the existence of good relations among entrepreneurs settled in the same neighbourhood, which is mostly the case, jealousy and competitiveness also exist. After the outbreak of the crisis and the following decline of businesses’ economic performance, such feelings clearly increased, especially among entrepreneurs engaged in the same sector.
5.6 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

5.6.1 Introduction
In order to support the development and competitiveness of entrepreneurship, central and local governments often initiate special policies with more or less successful results. Of such policies, scholars have focused on taxation systems, employment protection legislation, product market regulation, etc. (Torrini, 2005). Particular attention has been paid to governing the cultural diversity in cities to ensure labour market inclusion of migrants and turning their increasing presence in urban spaces into a positive asset for economic performance (Syrrett and Sepulveda, 2012). The governance of cultural diversity may include an institutional framework for immigration and citizenship and publicly funded initiatives to encourage the development of ethnic/minority businesses or policies to improve communication with ethnic entrepreneurs (Collins, 2003). Scholars question the effectiveness of these policies in the development of socially just and economically inclusive cities (Ram and Jones, 2008), indicating there is a limited understanding of the complex relationship between population diversity and economic development (Syrrett and Sepulveda, 2011).

Addressing urban diversity in relation to ‘super-diverse’ populations seems to be a big challenge, particularly at a time when central and local governments are faced with increasing social inequality and large-scale cuts in public funding (Syrrett and Sepulveda, 2012). Against this background, bottom-up initiatives and informal institutions are proved to be of particular importance. At the grassroots level, many kinds of support schemes emerge, such as community organisations, non-profit businesses, NGOs, etc. (Kemeny, 2012; Syrett and Sepulveda, 2012). Overall, the question is whether different types of support schemes (top-down and bottom-up initiatives, official and unofficial institutions) at various levels of governance and participation (local, supra-local and national) could lead to the regeneration of local markets, help entrepreneurs to face multiple effects of the current crisis and contribute to the survival of entrepreneurship in the city’s neighbourhoods.

In this section, we explore support schemes that may enhance entrepreneurship in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood, from official government policies to unofficial grassroots initiatives. It will be shown that, especially during the current economic crisis, the support provided by central and local governments is insufficient and entrepreneurs are becoming more disappointed with and more mistrustful of official institutions. In this context, emerging bottom-up initiatives will prove to be of particular importance but will only provide a partial solution to the dramatic decrease in businesses’ economic performance. It will also be shown that the appropriate form of support depends on the types of businesses concerned, as each of them (commercial, creative, innovative, etc.) has different needs and prospects. It will be clearly shown that diversity is not on the political agenda and therefore there are no policies that directly address it, either as an asset that businesses can benefit from or as a parameter that may hinder entrepreneurship. At the same time, addressing diversity is not prioritised in
terms of entrepreneurs’ needs and recommendations, although they recognise and discuss both its benefits and difficulties.

5.6.2 Support provided by central and local governments

Regarding official policies that enhance entrepreneurial activities, all entrepreneurs interviewed in Akadimia Platonos proved to be aware of the European funding programmes through the EU Regional Policy Framework. These programmes are widely known, mostly through the media but also through awareness campaigns organised by the local government (i.e. the Municipality of Athens). However, most of the respondents have a negative view of these funding programmes. They are dissatisfied with and distrust the complexity of the procedures, bureaucracy, delays in payments and financial return through taxation. Due to such inadequacies, only a few of the respondents have benefited from European funding programmes. The funds were provided to entrepreneurs active in different sectors (such as commerce, engineering, cultural and athletic activities, innovative jobs, etc.) and used for various purposes, such as to cover fixed rental costs and operating expenses; renovations; buy modern machinery, equipment and products; create new jobs and recruit new staff or invest in innovative and environmentally friendly projects.

Beyond European funds, there are no funding programmes instituted by the Greek central government, except for an annual state grant provided by the Ministry of Culture to entrepreneurs engaged in cultural activities. This funding programme was also characterised by delays in payments. After the outbreak of the crisis and the subsequent cuts in public expenditure, it was phased out.

Apart from financial assistance, entrepreneurs have profited from assistance with professional training through educational seminars organised by the central and local governments in collaboration with professional associations. As such public initiatives are few in number, entrepreneurs also benefit from similar initiatives instituted by the private sector. To promote their products, large private companies often organise product and material exhibitions and training seminars (in-class or online), especially for entrepreneurs engaged in commerce, educational or athletic activities.

Despite the general lack of support, an important initiative has recently been undertaken by the local government (i.e. the Municipality of Athens) with a view to initiating entrepreneurs into innovative practices. Through a newly founded service (the Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship INNOVATHENS), entrepreneurs are being advised by business consultants on future business plans and strategies. Additionally, entrepreneurs can attend numerous seminars for free to become familiar with new technologies and increase their economic performance. The municipal initiative of INNOVATHENS is well-known amongst the few innovative businesses in the neighbourhood and also amongst some of the interviewed entrepreneurs engaged in commercial activities. One of our respondents (R34: male, 60, men's XL clothing store, Greek) gave us some examples of the support of which he was aware:
'Through INNOVATHENS, the municipality organises seminars concerning online commerce, namely e-shopping, the dangers of the internet etc. [...] They also give us the possibility to advertise our business for free through their official website.'

5.6.3 Support provided by professional associations and bottom-up initiatives

Beyond official policies, important support for entrepreneurs in various sectors has been provided by their professional associations, at least until the outbreak of the crisis. In the commerce sector, for example, the Merchants Association and the Chamber of Trade used to organise training seminars, provide legal advice, etc. and were also in a position to influence the government’s decisions on market rules of fair competition, labour market regulations (concerning, for example, opening hours, holidays, insurance) and taxation. In the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood, there used to be a local branch of the Merchant Association that undertook initiatives to attract customers and increase profits, such as special offers and discounts, promotional campaigns and advertising banners. In the sports sector, the Sports Federation keeps trying to provide support for training athletes in order to participate in local and international championships. In addition, the Union of Tutors organises low-cost seminars on teaching, marketing and advertising and provides useful information, such as professional and legal advice.

As the support initiatives of professional associations have significantly decreased during the crisis, some of the entrepreneurs (representing various sectors) have started organising alternative actions themselves or in collaboration with colleagues in the same sector. Two entrepreneurs engaged in commerce gave us some characteristic examples of bottom-up initiatives (not only in the neighbourhood but also country-wide) to attract customers and increase profits:

‘Last year, a colleague here had a nice idea. We would create a network of clothing stores in the neighbourhood and make our customers an offer: if they bought clothes from our network, they would have a discount of 15%.’ (R7: female, 36, lingerie store, Greek)

‘Our business is member of a network called AMA connecting about 60 eyewear stores throughout Greece. Our headquarters are located in Athens’ city centre and decisions are made by the management board. All together, we order products from suppliers and we manage to buy them at lower prices. We have also patented our own products under a brand name and we often provide special offers to our customers. This initiative exists about 10 years and it works well.’ (R31: male, 35, eyewear shop, Greek)

Other initiatives of entrepreneurs to reduce their expenses and increase their profits include partnerships, non-profit businesses and NGOs, especially in the case of creative businesses, such as architectural offices, theatres and multi-purpose art spaces. Some of the non-profit businesses and NGOs active in the culture sector are linked in citywide professional networks, connecting small to medium art spaces in order to collaborate on common projects, organise
Indirect support of entrepreneurs is provided by informal initiatives in the neighbourhood undertaken by local groups of citizens or NGOs and includes actions of social solidarity, open public events in the central square or in the archaeological park, etc. Entrepreneurs have a positive view of such bottom-up initiatives, which are considered to contribute to the upgrading and regeneration of the neighbourhood and thus to increase the flow of customers and create a lively local market.

5.6.4 Addressing diversity

Whether more or less affected by the current economic crisis, most of the entrepreneurs interviewed expressed their disappointment in and distrust of the institutional policies of the EU, the state and the local government. In order to face the multiple effects of the crisis, entrepreneurs first ask for relief measures, namely the reduction or suspension of insurance contributions, VAT and other taxes and even operating expenses of their businesses. Second, they ask for the simplification of bureaucracy, which is necessary not only for applying for official funding but also for carrying out basic business functions, such as accounting and bookkeeping, which are very complex and time-consuming. Another kind of support entrepreneurs ask for is not directly related to the operation of their businesses but concerns the regeneration of the neighbourhood. Entrepreneurs expect the local government to initiate urban policies to ensure cleanliness, public lighting, large sidewalks and high-quality public infrastructure, open green spaces for neighbours, security for pedestrians and recreation spaces for children – in other words, policies addressing deprivation and creating a safe and lively neighbourhood. It is also expected that the central and local governments ensure the archaeological site of Plato’s Academy will soon become a major tourist attraction and thus attract more visitors to the neighbourhood and customers to local businesses. Entrepreneurs engaged in creative and innovative activities in particular have more specific demands of the central and local governments. They are particularly interested in more outward-looking government initiatives. Such initiatives may include advertising campaigns for local businesses through official websites and social media, branding of Akadimia Platonos based on its historic value, tourism promotion of the neighbourhood in collaboration with tourist agencies and connections between local businesses on one hand and between production industries and educational institutes on the other.

Urban diversity, which is the central topic here, is noticeably absent from the entrepreneurs’ expectations, ideas and recommendations. Although they recognise and discuss both the benefits and difficulties associated with diversity in the neighbourhood (diversity in professional...
activities, social and ethnic diversity and diversity in lifestyles and attitude; see Sections 5.4. and 5.5.), they do not prioritise the question of diversity when discussing urban policies. This closely relates to the fact that the notion of diversity and the actual term itself are not yet on the official political agenda and are not widely used in public discourse and therefore are not commonly discussed in everyday life. None of the entrepreneurs interviewed referred to official policies that address diversity either as an asset that businesses can benefit from or as a parameter that may cause difficulties. For instance, there are no official policies to ensure businesses a large and socially diverse clientele, such as policies that favour social mixing, discourage the exodus of people with higher incomes to the suburbs and attract dynamic population groups to the neighbourhood. There are no official policies that address the ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood, such as policies that encourage migrant entrepreneurship (through financial or other incentives) or facilitate interethnic co-existence and reduce professional conflicts and competition between entrepreneurs of different ethnic origins. Overall, diversity is absent not only from policies concerning the development of entrepreneurship but also from all urban policies, as stressed in Chapter 3. Urban policies and initiatives do not deal with the issue of diversity per se but in a rather indirect way; ‘diversity’ appears as a term in public policy only when it is related to EU-funded projects and activities and. In fact, public policy reproduces discourses promoted by EU institutions in a rather ritualistic way.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

To draw the most important conclusions of this chapter, we emphasise three main issues: diversity’s role as a motivating factor for the establishment and development of entrepreneurship, diversity’s importance for the economic performance of businesses and diversity’s place in public policies and the entrepreneurs’ policy recommendations.

First, diversity is only partially a motivating factor for entrepreneurs to set up a business in the Akadimia Platonos neighbourhood. In fact, when entrepreneurs make business plans, diversity is perceived in multiple and ambiguous ways.

In terms of multiplicity in urban functions and land uses, entrepreneurs have a positive view of diversity. The mix of various professional activities in Akadimia Platonos is considered to create a vibrant local market and favourable conditions of proximity, mutual support and synergies among colleagues. In this sense, diversity clearly constitutes a motivating factor for entrepreneurs to set up their business in this specific neighbourhood. However, there are certain limits to this positive view of diversity. The unregulated mix of entrepreneurial activities is sometimes negatively viewed by entrepreneurs, who seem to favour some kind of small-scale zoning or clustering of similar and complementary activities.

Unlike diversity in professional activities, social diversity does not constitute an influential factor for the establishment and development of businesses in the neighbourhood.
Entrepreneurs mostly target so-called ‘high-quality’ clientele, namely customers with medium to high incomes. Therefore, they are rather indifferent regarding the coexistence of households with diverse socio-economic profiles in the area. However, once their business starts running, they actually benefit from a clientele that is socially diverse. This is more a unplanned result of setting up a business in a socially diverse neighbourhood than the outcome of their initial business plan and strategy.

Regarding ethnic diversity, the presence of migrants in Akadimia Platonos is viewed both positively and negatively and is perceived differently by Greek and migrant entrepreneurs. For the former, the presence of migrants is not a motivating factor to set up their business in the neighbourhood. Many Greek entrepreneurs consider migrants to be ‘bad customers’, as they often face economic difficulties, are used to saving money instead of spending and mostly support ‘ethnic’ businesses. However, contrary to Greeks, migrant entrepreneurs rely heavily on the presence of compatriots in the neighbourhood, as they typically provide help and constitute a first customer base (although migrant businesses usually manage to gain an ethnically diverse clientele eventually). Migrant entrepreneurs especially rely on the presence of co-ethnics in the neighbourhood and not necessarily on the presence of migrants of all different ethnic origins. In this sense, migrant entrepreneurs are rather indifferent to ethnic diversity in the neighbourhood.

Regarding diversity in lifestyles, coping with different consumer habits is not always an easy question. Some of the entrepreneurs face difficulties when planning the products and services of their business to meet the needs of all the different customers. The more diverse the clientele is, the more complicated it is to deal with it. The complexity of dealing with diverse lifestyles may not be a deterrent in establishing businesses in the neighbourhood; however, it constitutes an additional parameter that entrepreneurs need to take into account and become familiar with.

With respect to the economic performance of businesses, diversity clearly has a positive impact and therefore is usually positively viewed by the majority of entrepreneurs. However, ambiguities regarding the effects and perceptions of diversity still exist.

Diversity in urban functions and land uses clearly has a positive impact on the economic performance of businesses. As previously explained, the mix of various professional activities in Akadimia Platonos creates a vibrant local market and attracts a large number of customers (those settled in the neighbourhood and also those from many different areas of Athens), which directly increases the turnover and profits of local businesses.

Regarding social and ethnic diversity, all types of businesses seem to benefit from the social and ethnic mix in the neighbourhood and have quite a diverse clientele. People with high incomes may be considered to be the ‘good customers’, but middle and lower income households also guarantee the survival of local businesses. Back in the 1990s and 2000s, when a large number of high-income residents left the neighbourhood and searched for better living conditions in the suburbs, it was mostly middle-class residents that businesses relied on. This kind of ambiguity
also extends to migrant residents in the neighbourhood; although they are widely considered by Greek entrepreneurs to be ‘bad customers’, some of them constitute an important and stable customer base for local businesses (such as migrants from Albania, who constitute the largest, most integrated and best paid migrant group). Particularly after the outbreak of the crisis, migrants turned out to be ‘more reliable’ customers than Greeks, as they have experience facing conditions of austerity and poverty and are not overly in debt. Another population group that businesses benefit from are young people. The number of young people residing in the neighbourhood has significantly increased recently, and they constitute a dynamic and very welcome customer base that consumes more than others.

It is important to underline that some businesses benefit from diversity more than others. These are businesses that provide specialised services in the education and health sectors (such as private schools and sport centres) and creative businesses, especially those engaged in cultural activities (such as private dance schools and non-profits offering theatre, dance and music classes etc.). Providing multiple activities, such businesses manage to attract and benefit from a very diverse clientele – children, older people, high- and low-income customers, men and women, Greeks and migrants, disabled people and people with reduced mobility – living in Akadimia Platonos and coming from many other neighbourhoods of the city. There are also businesses that target and benefit from a clientele with a very specific social and ethnic profile. These are businesses dealing in innovative products and services (such as high technology systems) with only high-income customers that are typically big companies located in other neighbourhoods, other cities or even abroad. Some businesses with very specific clientele are engaged in the cultural sphere, such as theatres or multi-purpose art spaces. In this case, customers are mostly young to middle-aged people with higher education and incomes and are exclusively Greeks not residing in the neighbourhood.

Despite its social, cultural and economic importance, diversity is not on the political agenda and is not considered by entrepreneurs with respect to their demands and policy recommendations. Official policies launched by local and central governments to enhance entrepreneurship focus mostly on financial support for businesses (through funding programmes) and only recently have provided entrepreneurs with know-how and skills in product, service and process innovation. This is also true regarding the support provided by professional associations; they might not provide entrepreneurs with financial means, but they provide them with very useful assistance in terms of training, advertising, employment protection legislation and market regulation. Diversity was not included in the above support schemes, either as an asset that businesses can benefit from or as a parameter that may cause problems for entrepreneurship.

Apart from the official policies and initiatives, diversity is also notably absent from the entrepreneurs’ plans, demands and policy recommendations. Entrepreneurs ask for basic relief measures and simplification of bureaucratic procedures. They also expect the central and local government to initiate urban policies to address deprivation in the neighbourhood and arrange for urban regeneration. It is only certain types of businesses that take diversity into
account when making plans and formulating demands and policy recommendations. These are businesses engaged in creative and innovative activities that take various initiatives to deal with diversity and benefit from it. First, such businesses initiate diverse forms of entrepreneurship and participation (such as partnerships, non-profits and NGOs) involving various partners and employees. Second, they take initiatives to attract as diverse a clientele as possible, also targeting young people, migrants and disabled people. They also search for and suggest more outward-looking government initiatives that may support and benefit from diversity, such as advertising local businesses; branding and touristic promotion of the neighbourhood; connecting local businesses, production industries and educational institutes; city-wide networking and even country-wide and global networking.
6 CONCLUSIONS:
DEALING WITH URBAN DIVERSITY

6.1 BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

This book is the outcome of research carried out in Athens within the framework of the DIVERCITIES project. DIVERCITIES examines how diversity may be governed in contemporary cities so that it contributes to social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance. The main idea behind the project is that diversity may act as an asset in the development of urban social and economic life. This is a normative idea that aims at redefining the place of diversity in urban policies. Regarding the analytical approach of DIVERCITIES, the main concept we proposed and used is that of ‘hyper-diversity’. This concept suggests that contemporary cities are diverse not only in social, socio-economic and ethnic terms but also in a more radical way in terms of lifestyles, attitudes and activities (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013, p. 4).

This book developed in five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the key questions and concepts of the book, especially the idea that contemporary cities can use diversity as an asset in policies fostering social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance. Chapter 2 provides a general overview of the context of the social, demographic and economic transformation of Athens during the last decades. The increase in immigration since the early 1990s, the continuing suburbanisation since the 1970s, the rather ‘mild’ socio-spatial segregation of the city and the development of the metropolitan economy that has been abruptly interrupted by the economic crisis define the framework in which diversity-related perceptions and practices emerge. Chapter 3 examines diversity-related public policies at the national and local levels. The underestimation of ‘diversity’ as a policy issue is combined with emphasis on neo-assimilationist immigration policies and neoliberal competitiveness policies that aim at attracting what we have called ‘desirable foreigners’, that is, investors, tourists and students. Chapter 4 explores inhabitants’ perceptions of diversity. Diversity is an integral part of everyday life, although people do not thematise it often. Local institutions (such as local associations) are the main sites of interaction between diverse social, cultural and ethnic groups. Otherwise, diverse groups tend to live parallel lives, even at the micro-level of the neighbourhood. Chapter 5 examines entrepreneurs’ attitudes towards diversity. Entrepreneurs do not thematise diversity either. However, in some respects diversity proves to be an important resource in economic activity; for instance, the social and ethnic diversification of clientele serves as a way to reduce risk and dependence upon concrete categories of customers.

The next section summarises the main findings of our research in Athens under the main question of whether policymakers, inhabitants and entrepreneurs tend to consider diversity an
asset or a liability for urban life. The last section includes some suggestions for policymakers based on our empirical research findings.

6.2 URBAN DIVERSITY: AN ASSET OR A LIABILITY?

In order to codify our findings regarding inhabitants and entrepreneurs, we propose a typology of their attitudes towards diversity. We argue that we can distinguish four takes on diversity. First is what we could call the ‘idealisation’ of diversity. Some interviewees consider diversity an advantage. They perceive the coexistence of different ethnic groups through the lens of ‘multiculturalism’. They believe increasing diversity indicates that Athens is becoming a vibrant, modern metropolis following its western European counterparts. Interviewees who adopt this point of view are mostly young, educated Greeks, both inhabitants and entrepreneurs. However, they are not many in number. What is more, they do not necessarily translate these ideas into a way of life. Their social networks tend to be confined to Greeks and to people with similar occupational and educational status. In fact, this ‘idealisation’ of diversity finds its more characteristic expression in sphere consumption, where people are attracted by products with a specific identity (ethnic, local/regional etc.).

Second, several interviewees express fear of diversity, in the sense of ‘the migrant other’. This attitude is xenophobic and associates migrants with delinquency and the deterioration of the neighbourhood. Interviewees who adopt this attitude are mostly, although by no means exclusively, poor elderly Greeks.

Third is what we could call a ‘community-based’ perception of urban diversity. People appreciate diversity in an urban area to the extent that it allows different ethnic communities to develop their separate ways of life and activities. In this respect, the concentration of individuals of the same origin creates a tolerant environment for their cultural and religious practices. It allows the creation of networks of mutual support that are helpful, especially for newcomers, and it creates the base for a reliable clientele for ethnic businesses. The community-based perception of diversity is adopted by migrants. The disadvantage of this stance is that it leads to parallel lives of different ethnic groups who remain isolated from one another.

Fourth is a rather ‘neutral’ or ‘routinised’ attitude towards diversity. People do not pay much attention to differences in ethnicity and tend to take them for granted. Therefore, neighbours establish relationships that transcend different origins and entrepreneurs learn to serve a differentiated clientele (something which, as we have already stressed, increases the viability of their business).

These meanings of diversity are associated with different practices. The idealisation of diversity fuels formal but rather superficial relations between different ethnic and socio-cultural groups. The fear of the ‘other’ fuels social distance or even conflict, especially when it meets political
forces like the Golden Dawn neo-Nazi party. The community-based perception of diversity favours separate social networking and mutual support. The routinised stance allows the creation of personal relationships between members of different groups. As a matter of fact, we could argue that this stance is the most productive in generating positive experiences of diversity; it removes psychological barriers between individuals and permits the development of personal interactions. Individuals experience the positive feeling that they move beyond cultural distinctions and build relationships based on trust and mutual support with people who are significantly different than them. In fact, a virtuous cycle may be established: the personification of relationships promotes tolerance towards social, cultural and ethnic differences and social, cultural and ethnic differences may function as resources for the further enhancement of personal relationships.

The generation of positive experiences of diversity is also linked to three elements of urban life: urban public spaces (green parks, squares) and micro-spaces (buildings, streets), common everyday practices (especially having children in the same school) and local associations. Amongst these places and practices, institutional settings are the more important in fostering interaction between diverse social, cultural and ethnic groups. This happens for two reasons. The first is that institutional settings create spaces of common interest; for example, people with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds come together as parents whose children attend the same school or as members of local associations. The second is that institutions often explicitly adopt a diversity-friendly ideology in a ‘programmatic’ manner (values of solidarity, anti-discrimination, etc.). The relationship between public spaces and diversity is more ambivalent. Natives, migrants and minorities frequent different spaces. However, even when they coexist in the same public spaces they develop parallel activities that reconfirm relationships that are created in institutional settings and in homes in the first place. In this sense, public spaces are rather places of micro-segregation rather than social mixing.

Our analysis shows that if diversity has an ambiguous relationship with the neighbourhood life, it is even less present in personal networks and activities that take place outside the neighbourhoods. Individuals’ relationships that are established through study, work, etc. and that do not relate to the neighbourhood tend to be more homogeneous and based on professional and other commonalities.

Furthermore, the neighbourhood in general occupies a rather secondary place in individuals’ lives. The everyday occupational and leisure activities of our interviewees are not focused on the neighbourhood. The inhabitants in our research area, as with Athenians in general, are more or less mobile. They visit various areas of the city, mostly adjacent ones, depending on their tastes, networks and income. Thus, they act as residents of a metropolis in which people are connected through complex mobilities. The only exceptions to this trend are vulnerable groups like the elderly and the undocumented migrants who tend to be more attached to their home territory.
The economic crisis has a contradictory impact on the relationship between diversity and social cohesion. On one hand, as the majority of the inhabitants face impoverishment, the economic distance amongst the various social groups has started to diminish, creating a sense of social equality. Many migrant interviewees stated that they now feel more equal to the Greek population, as the crisis has affected all social groups in the area in the same way, and vice versa. On the other hand, as the crisis pushes some individuals toward depression and resignation, social isolation is increasing.

Regarding the question of social mobility, in our case study we found very little correlation between diversity and the amelioration of the socio-economic position of individuals. Macro-economic conditions (recession, unemployment) and city-wide social networks that are related to individual professional trajectories and skills are much more important for finding a job than participating in diverse social networks at the neighbourhood level. However, the latter may provide individuals with some opportunities in conjunction with the macro and city-wide mechanisms.

As far as the relationship between diversity and businesses, our findings indicate that entrepreneurs appreciate the mix of land uses and economic activities at the neighbourhood level. However, this is not the case in terms of social, cultural and ethnic diversity. Entrepreneurs tend to target specific and homogeneous clientele: they may target well-off customers, co-ethnics or customers interested in specialised services, depending on the characteristics of the business (the main differences between commercial and other routine activities, migrant entrepreneurs and creative/innovative businesses). However, those businesses that are in practice more embedded in local socio-economic life (commerce/routine services, migrant entrepreneurs) see their clientele becoming diverse by the very fact of being located in a diverse neighbourhood.

A final issue examined in the chapters on inhabitants and entrepreneurs is that of the relationship between citizens and policies. Our main research finding is that citizens are not at all aware of policies that are implemented at both the city and neighbourhood levels. The only exceptions are activists and, probably, people who are highly dependent on social services. This lack of awareness is associated with feelings of distrust towards politicians and politics. The gap between citizens and policies is certainly negative, as it undermines the representation of social interests in the political sphere.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR POLICY: HOW TO MAKE USE OF THE RESULTS

We will conclude this book by presenting, in a codified way, the main suggestions for policy based on our empirical analysis. While some suggestions are closely connected to the specific Athenian context, especially the conjuncture about the crisis, others may have a more general appeal for European urban policymakers.
Suggestion 1: Diversity in its various forms (social, cultural, ethnic) did not prove to be an important factor for housing mobility. In general, people prioritise other criteria when choosing a house, such as rent, transportation and location. Therefore, policymakers should not have the expectation that diversity can help attract new residents to specific neighbourhoods. However, at the same time, there are specific social groups that are more sensitive to diversity, either in a positive or a negative way. Young and educated people may be described as ‘diversity-seekers’, as they are attracted to diverse neighbourhoods, while the upper-middle and middle classes may be reluctant to settle in neighbourhoods that are ‘stigmatised’ as places where migrants congregate.

Suggestion 2: Interaction between different social, cultural and ethnic groups develops primarily in institutional settings, such as local associations and schools. Public spaces, even if they are visited by diverse groups, tend to be characterised mainly by micro-segregation. In fact, social interaction in public spaces occurs between people who are already connected within the framework of institutions. Therefore, policymakers interested in promoting social mixing should focus on local institutions, while public spaces are of secondary importance.

Suggestion 3: Perceptions of diversity vary according to different urban settings. People tend to be positive about diversity in consumer settings, such as shops and restaurants. They are rather ambivalent about diversity in public spaces and schools, where they feel that ‘a lot’ or ‘excessive’ diversity (i.e. concentration of immigrants in public spaces and immigrants in schools) in these places is a negative or even threatening element. Policymakers interested in promoting social mixing should be aware of these commonly perceptions about the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ aspects of diversity.

Suggestion 4: Diverse neighbourhoods offer an ambivalent environment for vulnerable groups, such as immigrants or homosexuals. The concentration of such groups in specific urban areas may facilitate their settlement and social life, as diverse neighbourhoods provide a tolerant environment and networks of mutual help for members of the same community. However, at the same time communities may impose social control on their members and hinder their integration into the broader society. These observations are important as far as policies of recognition and social integration are concerned. Policymakers may cooperate with community representatives in order to approach communities. However, at the same time policymakers should be aware of the fact that this cooperation increases the institutional power of representatives and may change the power balance inside the communities between representatives and ‘ordinary’ members.

Suggestion 5: Regeneration projects (such as public squares, open green and recreation spaces, sidewalks and public lighting) are always a means to attract new and dynamic population groups and encourage business creation in a neighbourhood to revive the local economy and social life. However, these projects may lead to the replacement of vulnerable populations by more privileged ones (mainly through effects on rents) rather than to increasing diversity. In this respect, we would insist on low-cost and small-scale interventions in public spaces and
infrastructure that could help attract more dynamic and wealthier population groups without forcing middle and lower income residents to leave the neighbourhood.

**Suggestion 6:** In the context of crisis and scarcity of resources (jobs, incomes), diversity may be perceived by some urban dwellers, mainly those of lower social status, as a zero-sum competition. This perception fuels xenophobia and racism. The political answer to this will be more effective if it prioritises anti-poverty actions rather than focusing on anti-racist messages.

**Suggestion 7:** In the case of Athens, we have observed that policies dealing explicitly with diversity-related issues are essentially those that are funded by the EU. In this sense, EU funding schemes play a positive role in attracting the attention of national and local policymakers to the question of diversity. However, upon implementation, EU-funded diversity-related policies tend to remain ‘superficial’. National and local policymakers should see EU initiatives as a catalyst that will enable them to tailor context-specific diversity planning that will be further developed in the long term, well beyond the implementation of specific EU projects.

**Suggestion 8:** A striking finding of our research was that residents of diverse neighbourhoods are barely aware of urban policies of any kind (either diversity-related or otherwise). Distrust of politicians and state institutions tends to be common. Most inhabitants are not active in bottom-up initiatives. Policymakers and civil society organisations should build trust and communicate more effectively and directly what they are doing in the neighbourhood. Policymakers do not only have to address urban social problems, but they also have to rebuild channels of communication with citizens. In this endeavour, they would probably benefit from cooperating with social activists and members of local associations who may act as intermediaries between themselves and local society, especially the more vulnerable members (such as the poor and the elderly).


Bolt, G. S. and R., Van Kempen (2002). “Moving up or moving down? Housing careers of Turks and Moroccans in Utrecht”. The Netherlands Housing Studies, 17: 401-422.


### APPENDIX 1 LIST OF POLICY DOCUMENTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Public Body</th>
<th>Policy Document</th>
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<td>Law 2910/2001 on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Greek Territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship through Naturalisation and New Legal Framework for Granting Residence Permits</td>
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<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
<td>Law 3838/2010 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants’ Residence</td>
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<td>Hellenic Statistical Authority</td>
<td>Press release on the income and living conditions of households</td>
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<td>Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and National Technical University in Athens</td>
<td>Changing character and policies in the centres of Athens and Piraeus, Research Programme, Third Phase,</td>
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APPENDIX 2 LIST OF ACTORS INTERVIEWED

• Aggeliki Vassiliou, employee, Development programmes department, Municipality of Athens
• Alison Damianou, director-coordinator, the Meet Market
• Andromachi Papaioannou, Programme Director of Generation2.0
• Dimirta Gounari, Coordinator of research and documentation, National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce
• Eleni Portaliou, councilor, radical left party, Municipality of Athens
• Eleni Tsipoura, secretariat, Immigrants’ Integration council
• Eleutherios Skiadas, councilor, conservative party, Municipality of Athens
• Elli Papakonstantinou, Director of the Planning Authority of Green and Public spaces, Municipality of Athens
• Evdokia Samoulididou, member, European Village,
• Farouk Houssain, President of the Cultural Association of the Bangladeshi Community
• Georgia Bekridaki, member, Solidarity for All
• Giorgos Dedekas, member, Migrants’ Social Centre
• Kalliopi Giannopoulou, Deputy mayor on local social policy, Municipality of Athens
• Lauretta Macaulay, President of the The United African Women Organisation
• Lazaros Petromelidis, employee, Development programmes department, Municipality of Athens
• Lina Liakou, research team, Reactivate Athens
• Lola Velona and Sissy Linardaki, research associates, Neighbourhoods in Action
• Maria Kaltsa, research associate, Reactivate Athens
• Mertzelou Athina, member, People’s Committee of Akadhmia Platonos
• Mirto Lemou, President of the Support Centre for Children and Family
• Nelli Papachela, Deputy Mayor, President of the City of Athens cultural, sports and Youth Organisation, Municipality of Athens
• Psathas Panagiotis, employee in the Centre for Migrant Issues, Municipality of Athens
• Sevasti Papamichael, secretariat, Sunday Immigrant School
• Ssavek Aslam President of the Pakistani Community of Greece
• Vasilis Chronopoulos, Expert on migration issues- Advisor of the Vice minister of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs

List of round-table talk participants
Date: May 7th, 2014
Place: National Centre for Social Research, EKKE, Athens
• Giorgos Dedekas, Migrants’ Social Centre
• Maria Kaltsa, Reactivate Athens
• Lola Velona, Neighbourhoods in Action
• Sissy Linardaki, Neighbourhoods in Action
• Evdokia Samoulididou, European Village,
• Alison Damianou, the Meet Market
• Olympia Christoforidou, the Meet Market
• Eleni Tsipoura, Immigrants’ Integration council
• Georgia Bekridaki, member, Solidarity for All

List of inhabitants interviewed

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<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position in household</th>
<th>Income group (gross income in € per month)</th>
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<td>R42</td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Single parent with 1 child</td>
<td>0-500</td>
<td>Second-generation Egyptian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R43</td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Family with 2 children</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R44</td>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Living with her mother</td>
<td>0-500</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R45</td>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Living on his own</td>
<td>1000-2000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R46</td>
<td>61-75</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>1000-2000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R47</td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Living on his own</td>
<td>1000-2000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R48</td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Living on his own</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R49</td>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Living on her own</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R50</td>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Family with 2 children</td>
<td>1000-2000</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of entrepreneurs interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of enterprise (size, main activities)</th>
<th>Type of entrepreneur (ethnic/cultural/economic background) (immigrant-non-immigrant) (high skilled-low skilled)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Medium business Managing cultural events</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Ceramicist-Sculptor</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Grocery store</td>
<td>Middle class American-Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Grocery store (+ethnic products)</td>
<td>Lower class Pakistani, immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Medium business Coffee shop-Restaurant</td>
<td>Lower middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business (branch of a larger business) Accounting/Tax consultancy office</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher (technical) education (TEI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Lingerie store</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Engineering office</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher (technical) education (TEI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1. Small non-profit business Production and management of cultural events</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Small non-profit business Neighbourhood cultural centre (cultural events/actions/courses + coffee shop-bar-shop)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1. 30</td>
<td>1. M</td>
<td>Small business Engineering office</td>
<td>1. Lower class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 30</td>
<td>2. M</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Self-employed (informal sector) Elderly care + House cleaning</td>
<td>Lower class Albanian, immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Liquor store (wholesale + retail)</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education + Post-secondary technical education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Type of enterprise (size, main activities)</td>
<td>Type of entrepreneur (ethnic/cultural/economic background) (immigrant-non-immigrant) (high skilled-low skilled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Restaurant</td>
<td>Lower class Greek, internal migrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1. Small business Coffee shop-Snack bar</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Small business Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Medium business Private language learning institute</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Tailor</td>
<td>Lower class Albanian, immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(clothing, curtains and furniture covers repair)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Grocery store</td>
<td>Lower class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Clothing store</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Basic (secondary) education + Post-secondary technical education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Bookstore-Stationary</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Basic (secondary) education + Post-secondary technical education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Clocks and jewellery shop</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education + Post-secondary technical education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Frozen foods</td>
<td>Lower middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Garage</td>
<td>Lower middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) school + Higher (technical) education (TEI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Medium business Private tutors school for secondary education + pc classes + studying space</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Medium business Multi-purpose art space (theatre, concerts, art exhibitions, acting classes, theatrical writing classes, café-bar)</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Type of enterprise (size, main activities)</td>
<td>Type of entrepreneur (ethnic/cultural/economic background) (immigrant-non-immigrant) (high skilled-low skilled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Engineering office</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Microbiology laboratory</td>
<td>Middle to upper class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medium business Automatic control systems (machine vision systems)</td>
<td>Middle to upper class Greek, non-immigrant Higher (technical) education (TEI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medium business Printing centre (lithography)</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Private dental clinic</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small business Pharmacy</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Eyewear shop</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher (technical) education (TEI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Middle business Technical installations and support</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Middle business Private dance school</td>
<td>Middle to upper class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Men's XL clothing store</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Hairdressing salon + Jewellery shop</td>
<td>Lower class Albanian, immigrant Basic (secondary) education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1. M</td>
<td>Medium business Private tutors school for secondary education</td>
<td>1. Middle class Greek, non-immigrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2. F</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Sport association (kick boxing, body building, self-defence, capoeira)</td>
<td>Lower middle class Greek, non-immigrant Basic (secondary) education + High sport skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small multi-purpose art association + Medium non-profit business Music, dance, theatre etc.</td>
<td>Middle class Greek, internal migrant Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Type of enterprise (size, main activities)</td>
<td>Type of entrepreneur (ethnic/cultural/economic background) (immigrant-non-immigrant) (high skilled-low skilled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small business Hairdressing salon</td>
<td>Lower class Pakiastani, immigrant Technical education (Hairdressing diploma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medium business Electric mobility products and industry equipment</td>
<td>Middle to upper class Greek, non-immigrant Higher (technical) education (TEI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 We offer only some very general definitions at this stage, since we will elaborate on these concepts later in this chapter.

3 Large parts of this text were previously published in Tasan-Kok *et al*. (2013).

4 Large parts of this text were previously published in Tasan-Kok *et al*. (2013).

5 The MRA is henceforth defined as the mainland of the administrative region of Attiki plus the island of Salamina.

6 ‘Legalisation’ procedures for those who arrived informally in Greece (i.e. the majority of people for most groups) started in the late 1990s. The immigrants who arrived on a large-scale following the last legalisation operation in 2005 did not have access to any process that would legalise their presence.

7 The unemployment rate reached its maximum in 2013 when it surpassed 27%. Today, it is slightly lower (24.4%) (data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority).

8 Belonging to the national community was ruled to be an issue of recognition of someone’s individual bond with the Greek national identity, rather than of general procedures equally applicable to all members of groups.

9 Since 2015, a challenging new contextual element has been added: the refugee crisis. The larger part of the fieldwork upon which this book is based was already completed prior to the culmination of the refugee crisis. Thus, our data does not reflect the refugee crisis, although the reader will find some references to it (see Chapter 3).

10 Akadimia Platonos hosts the important archaeological site of Plato’s Academia, which gives its name to the area, as well as the graveyard of important ancient politicians and warriors (*Dimosio Sima*).

11 A list of policy documents is provided in Appendix 1.

12 Lists of the interviewed actors and the participants in the round-table talk are provided in Appendix 2.

13 More precisely, a second-generation immigrant obtains the right to Greek citizenship in the following cases:
   a. When he/she is enrolled in the first year of primary school and his/her parents have been in Greece for five years (this amount increases to ten years for immigrants born before the arrival of their parents in the country);
   b. When he/she has completed primary school and lower secondary school in Greece (a total of nine years of education);
   c. When he/she has completed secondary school in Greece (a total of six years of education); or
   d. When he/she has graduated from secondary school and holds a diploma from a higher education institute in Greece. Overall, it is clear that an emphasis is placed on education, while the right to Greek citizenship following the mere fact of being born in the country, as included in the Ragkousis law of 2010, is removed.

14 We should remind the reader that the fieldwork on which this chapter is based was completed in mid-2014, so the data analysed here are not affected by the refugee crisis of 2015.

15 The Greek government officially requested IMF-EU-ECB financial support in April 2010. The agreement that followed the request foresaw a four-year borrowing programme of 110 billion euros from the IMF and
the member states of the eurozone. The programme underwent three major revisions: in July 2011, when a restructurining of the Greek debt held by the private sector was decided; in February 2012, when an additional loan of 130 billion euros was provided to Greece; and in November 2012, when a new round of austerity policies was decided. In August 2015, a new bailout programme was agreed between Greece, the EU and the ECB (the IMF remained part of the process with a consultative role).

16 The available statistical data confirm that a large number of the beneficiaries of these services are indeed immigrants. The City of Athens Homeless Shelter offers 1400 meals per day in two shifts: at noon 10% of the beneficiaries are immigrants, while this percentage increases to 47% in the evening (Portaliou, 2013).

17 From this point of view, ‘illegal’ immigrants are simply under the jurisdiction of the police and the Ministry of Public Order.

18 The PIUI is also an EU-related policy instrument. It was institutionalised in Greece at the end of the 1990s following the model of URBAN initiatives and it aimed specifically at addressing the problems of urban crises. The current PIUI of Athens is meant to be the strategic plan that will support the participation of Athens in the next programming period of the EU cohesion funds (2014-2020).

19 Other goals include: supporting the economic base of the city, reconquering of social and cultural cohesion, improvement of environmental conditions and urban function, reinforcement of the identity and image of the city, and improvement of mechanisms of governance, planning and participation.

20 This entails that the municipality adopts different political discourses addressed to the domestic public and those abroad. It is characteristic that on the English version of the city of Athens’ site the rhetoric concerning immigration makes use of categories such as ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘diversity’, which are generally absent from the municipality’s domestic political discourse. Thus, in the presentation of the services addressed to immigrants, it is stated that the “municipal administration does not view the migrant issue as a problem but rather as a reality which can bring about myriad positive consequences for society as a whole”. It is explained that the city of Athens develops actions for migrants’ integration based on two principles: a. “migration is not a problem if it is correctly managed”, and b. “in most cases, integration encompasses more than the social aspects (including elements such as equal opportunity, right to citizenship etc.)”. The same presentation continues in a rather pompous way: “We are transforming Athens into a global multicultural metropolis. We are developing initiatives that deal with diversity in such a way that it […] promotes the idea of cohesion […], guarantees equal rights for migrants […] and ensures that all migrants also consider Athens to be their city […].”

21 Zucchini in Greek is kolokythi.

22 Candidate mayor supported by the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party.

23 Lasagna-like local dish.

24 It should be noted that the interviews were conducted during the last months of 2014, before the national elections in January 2015.

25 The interviewee refers to camps which hosted undocumented immigrants before being repatriated (see Chapter 3).

26 It is estimated that turnover in retail trade in Greece has dropped by almost 40% since 2008 (ELSTAT, 2015), while closed businesses in the city centre of Athens reached 32% in 2013 compared to 16% in 2010 (INEMY-ESEE, 2015, p. 4).
Governing Urban Diversity:
Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today’s Hyper-diversified Cities

This book is one of the outcomes of the DIVERCITIES project. It focuses on the question of how to create social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance in today’s hyper-diversified cities. The project’s central hypothesis is that urban diversity is an asset; it can inspire creativity, innovation and make cities more liveable.


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