![DIVERCITIES governing urban diversity]

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

Governance arrangements and initiatives in Athens, Greece

Work package 4:	Governance arrangements and initiatives
Deliverable nr.:	D 5.1
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Nature:	Report
Dissemination level:	PP
Status:	Final version
Date:	24 August 2014

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1   Introduction

As highlighted in the report about Urban Policies in Greece (Maloutas et al., 2014), urban policies, as well as urban initiatives, deal with the notion of 'diversity' in a rather *indirect* way. As a matter of fact, urban policies address the issue of diversity in order to introduce European policies and, most likely, impinge on the importance of migrant integration and assimilation. From a similar perspective, governance schemes do not deal with the issue of diversity *per se*, however tackle it via projects and initiatives related to migration issues, competitiveness and amelioration of inner city living conditions.

In this report we analyse the perception of diversity as addressed by governance initiatives in the city of Athens, especially by focusing on issues related to i) social cohesion, ii) social mobility and iii) economic performance. As suggested by Peters and Pierre (1998), governance is about a process, the networking and the change in the relationships between government and the private sector. The blending of public and private resources provides us with new governance potentials. In this report, our main scope is to reflect on the way diversity is conceptualized within the researched governance initiatives, as we seek to identify the main factors of success or failure of the researched governance arrangements. We argue that by studying these schemes, new ideas for innovative policies and governance concepts may emerge, especially by reflecting upon the structural organisation, the incentives and practices, thus on the social impact related to multiculturalism and diversity.

In our typology, we have followed the analytical frameworks posed by Pierre (1991), Kooiman (1999) and Kooiman and Jentoft (2009), which underlie the fact that governance has to do with the broader societal dynamics. After all social dynamics emerge under specific conditions of interaction amongst the public and the private sector. In the case of Athens, due to the current humanitarian and socio-economic crisis, we focused on perspectives of first order governance, i.e. problem solving (Kooiman, 1999), where we tried to indicate different perspectives in urban governance. Our research further dealt with the elements of interactive governance (see Kooiman and Jentoft, 2009), and focused on the new structures that emerge under the current condition. By analysing the hierarchies that arise within and amongst the governance initiatives, the modes of self- governance, the values and scopes we try to indentify the innovative governance factors or failure implications that may serve urban policies in promoting diversity.

Reflecting on the diversity, thus on the hyper-diversity which is currently characterising European cities (Tasan-Kok et al, 2013), we decided to study initiatives whose practices aim at influencing the everyday lives of various social groups that inhabit the centre of Athens, especially in third and fourth municipal districts where urban diversity is more prominent. The selection of governance arrangements was based on our contextual knowledge of initiatives which deal with social cohesion and mobility and on economic performance. We tried to approach arrangements that deal with social cohesion from a top-down and a bottom-up perspective. From a bottom-up standpoint, we conducted interviews with a local residential committee that focuses on the amelioration of inner city living conditions and the preservation of archaeological green spaces (the people's committee of the neighbourhood of Akadimia Platonos), and an organisation aiming at coordinating local solidarity initiatives (Solidarity for All). From a top down approach, we conducted interviews with the organisers of the municipal project 'Neighbourhood in action' and members of the Migrants Integration Council. In order to approach the way social mobility is promoted, we investigated bottom-up projects that deal with migrants' rights and provide classes of Greek language teaching (migrants' social centre and the Sunday immigrant school). It should be highlighted that in the case of Athens, social mobility emerges mostly as a side-effect of sever-

al practices that deal with social discrepancies. In order to approach economic performance, we conducted an interview with an initiative that fosters de-growth, environmental and economic solidarity economy, though the everyday projects which take place at a *kafeneio* in the neighbourhood of Akadimis Platonos (European Village). Economic performance and urban renovation were investigated via the initiatives Reactivate Athens and InnovAthens, both focusing on enhancing inner city productivity, and boosting small and medium size entrepreneurship.

The following section of this report analyses the afore mentioned initiatives that promote social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance. The third section presents the main results and drives attention to innovative approaches and ideas. The conclusion critically reflects on the issues of diversity within this researched governance initiatives, which could serve in the formation of innovative ideas for policies and governance schemes.

2 Governance Arrangements

2.1 Arrangements targeting social cohesion

Residents' local committee of Akadimia Platonos

Strategy, focus and organisation
The resident's local committee of Akadimia Platonos is a local initiative focusing on the amelioration of the living standards of the residents in the area. The neighbourhood is highly diverse as many inhabitants are of different ethnic backgrounds. Improvement of the local condition is promoted via the solution of social problems, the preservation of green spaces, especially the park (which in ancient times hosted Plato's Academy), and the conservation of the built environment against governmental plans that favour high rise and mall developments. The local assembly was formed in 2009 and it is open to the social groups that inhabit in the area. The activities, except from political mobilizations, include open discussions and exhibitions on Plato's philosophy and on the historical and cultural importance of the park. Through such initiatives, social cohesion is promoted as people of different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds interact with each other on a daily basis, and collaborate for better living conditions. Moreover, as the crisis has affected most of the households, the assembly has expanded its practices by informing people on taxation, red mortgages and by organising bottom-up solidarity practices such as soup kitchens, collection and distribution of second clothes, provision of private classes to school children, both of Greek and migrant background, and a market without intermediates where producers sell their products directly to consumers.

The people from the assembly have rented a space in the area where people can meet and interact on a daily basis (Akadimia Platonos, 2013). The assembly has a horizontal structure. It takes place every Monday when the participants meet, discuss and take decisions on local issues. Decisions are taken consensually after a process of open discussion, without voting and the formation of majorities or minorities. Under this approach, social cohesion is fostered intensively, as people participate and interact on an equal basis. As the interviewee stated, the assembly does not have permanent members and it is open to all neighbourhood residents. Participation in the assembly, as well as in the exhibitions and the local protests varies significantly. In celebrations and soup kitchens 200 people may show interest, while local demonstrations and manifestations may gather 400 people. However, less people show interest in the process of the assembly, but the respondent avoided to provide us with a clear number.

The economic resources of the assembly are restricted as funding comes from the participants' contributions. The latter are not assigned on a stable basis and each member can contribute

whatever amount of money, whenever it is possible. The economic deficiency is faced by the fiestas that are organised in public spaces of the area, where activists sell beers and kebabs, and by the local newspaper, which is printed in 2,500 copies every three months and costs € 1. As indicated in the interview, the locales' cost is rather low, around € 300 for rent and bills, and gets easily covered by the afore mentioned initiatives. Moreover, members' commitment can be considered a social capital resource. As indicated by an activist "*even if you manage to make a person happy for one moment, all your struggles are worthy*". It is thanks to this strong activity in the area that the assembly has managed to preserve the green spaces and the monuments of the industrial heritage, which were threatened by government's redevelopment plans.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
The word diversity as such is not used by the initiative, whilst there is a strong preference in the word multiculturalism. As stated by the interviewee, multiculturalism is considered a diachronical phenomenon of Athens. During the 1950s and the 1960s the urbanising population enhanced local life with the culture and the tradition of their areas of origin, and this trend now is taken by the migrant population, which brings the culture from their countries of origin. Hence multiculturalism is considered as a combination of cultures and ideologies upon which solidarity actions can take place and the culture of individualism may be challenged. Additionally, as the initiative tackles mainly societal problems and focuses on the distribution of services and goods that alleviate the impact of the crisis, we may argue that the practices of this initiative deal most with the negative aspects of diversity as they try to combat social problems and enhance social interaction and cohesion amongst the diverse social groups. As discussed in the interview, migrants participate in the soup kitchens and in the distribution of food and clothes. This way they get to meet other people from the neighbourhood and participate in the cultural initiatives and exhibitions in the park.

Main factors influencing success or failure
The basic success factor of this initiative is the participant's commitment and belief on what they can achieve. As expressed in the interview:

> "*When the other people tell you that you cannot go against the government and the interests of Bobolas* [a major construction company] *and in the end you win the battle and you manage to preserve the archaeological spaces from construction, you get hope for the future and other people start entrusting you*".

Through continuous motivation and daily presence in the neighbourhood, what was characterized by the interviewee as solidarity practices, the assembly has managed to build strong ties amongst the divergent residents and activate local people to struggle for a better quality of life. Additionally, through the free private classes that are offered to school children, students of ethnic or gypsy background manage to advance in school and feel more integrated in the local society, thus bonds are created amongst the parents and the local activists. This way the initiative, manages to promote and establish social cohesion amongst the different social groups that live in the area.

However, in the interview it was indicated that the basic problem now faced is the issue of fear and individualism that have augmented due to the crisis, which make people disregard collective activities and common goods. These can be considered as external factors of failure, as the majority of the society is under stress due to the austerity budgetary cuts.

Conclusion

The local assembly of *Akadimia Platonos* is formed in order to tackle the societal issues and ameliorate the living standards of the local people regardless of their ethnic background. By promoting initiatives that help people to tackle crisis-related issues thus enact practices based on solidarity actions (classes, food and cloth distribution, cultural fiestas), prejudices are destructed and the public spaces of the area become actual spaces of encounter. Although diversity does not appear in the initiative's agenda, the so-called solidarity actions promote social cohesion. The issue of solidarity is of great importance as it leads to the creation of urban bonds thus to the maintenance of societal tissue of the area. The *innovative* outcome of the solidarity agenda is that Neo-Nazi practices have not taken place in the area, in contradiction to the neighbouring ones. This is due to the fact that the residents in this lower income diversified neighbourhood support each other, thus are active in the commons. This motivation leaves little space for racist practices to flourish. However, as fear has become a major issue in the centre of Athens, it is challenging the future outcome of most bottom-up initiatives that promote alternative solutions.

Solidarity for all (SFA)

Strategy, focus and organisation

'Solidarity for all' is an organisation seeking to foster networking amongst the various social solidarity structures, which exist currently in Greece. By putting in contact independent solidarity structures, which promote alternative productive methods, health, educational and food structures, social cohesion is promoted. Such structures seek to ameliorate the living conditions of the social groups hit most by the crisis, such as the elderly, women, the unemployed, migrants and homeless people. Under such initiatives social cohesion is promoted as the burdens of the crisis that fall upon the underprivileged groups, the lower social strata and parts of the middle classes are lessened.

As different solidarity structures get in contact with each other and start collaborating on a common basis (e.g. productive structures, food, health, education), social cohesion is fostered. Self-organisation structures alleviate the burdens that have fallen upon the society since the collapse of the minor welfare state. People get to satisfy basic needs, instead of isolating themselves and feel helpless. The SFA acts as an umbrella for these, often local and relatively small, initiatives, facilitating communication, mutual support and exchange of know-how (through the creation of a register of initiatives, an internet site, the financing of concrete actions, the organisation of events etc.). Simultaneously, under such initiatives, the SFA runs counter to social exclusion that poverty and alienation may impose to a society under crisis. The SFA has been created in 2012 by members of the radical left party of SYRIZA (actually the major opposition party) who had acquired an important activist experience through their participation in the movement of the indignant in Syntagma square in 2011.

The broader sociopolitical goal of SFA is to promote the idea that self-organisation, resistance and solidarity are the means by which people can cope with the devastating social and economic impact of the crisis and austerity measures (Solidarity for all, 2014). Groups which are mostly hit by the crisis, such as the unemployed, young, migrants, women, pensioners and homeless are encouraged to form new structures and help each other. However, as our interviewee notes, this is not an easy task, as the crisis tends to increase individualisation:

> *"Self-organised structures and mobilisation become very difficult, especially as the time passes and everybody sinks more into their problems. It has become very difficult to make people believe in and trust collectivities".*

Economic issues per se are not a priority of SFA, except from the support of initiatives related to social economy.

The 'solidarity for all' initiative has the legal structure of a non-profit organisation, which facilitates the collection and distribution of money to the solidarity structures. SFA's personnel includes 12 people working part- or full–time. Those who contribute with a full-time job get monthly salaries and insurance. Although SFA is based in the centre of Athens, its action is nation-wide as it fosters networking amongst the various solidarity structures that have emerged throughout the whole country. It is run by two bodies; the first one it the assembly that takes place once per week with the participation of all the members of the SFA, and the second one, the administrative board of SFA that consists of three members of SYRIZA's central committee. The general assembly discusses on the main activity of SFA, such as the provision of help to solidarity structures and the organisation of new campaigns. The administrative board deals mainly with economic issues.

The economic resources of this initiative basically come from the SYRIZA's deputies who offer 20% of their monthly salaries for the financing of the SFA. Due to the international campaigns that have been launched from SFA, donations from European countries have been added to the organisation's economic resources. According to our interviewee, SFA's monthly income is around € 35.000. This amount is used to cover the basic costs of SFA, to assist solidarity structures and organise campaigns.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
Diversity is not an explicit priority of SFA. However, the organisation has a favourable attitude vis-à-vis diversity and considers that the respect of diversity is a central element of solidarity amongst the various social groups. According to our interviewee, the crisis seems to widen the importance and the scope of the term 'diversity'. While solidarity initiatives of the 1990s and 2000s used to focus on migrants, the crisis created the need for mutual help between Greeks as well. Within this framework, diversity takes also the meaning of the different ways of experiencing the socioeconomic effects of the crisis. According to our interviewee:

> "*Some years ago, diversity would be about getting to know each other's culture. In times of crisis this notion has to be differentiated, and unite people against those who deprive us from the right to a decent living*".

This may entail the amplification of the target audiences of solidarity initiatives (for example, whilst the social medical centre in Rethimno, Crete, was initially established for the migrant population, now it serves both locals and migrants).

Main factors influencing success or failure
A major success factor of the SFA is the quite balanced relationship of the organisation with the party of SYRIZA. Although SFA draws upon SYRIZA in terms of economic resources and personnel, it has applied a strategy of maintaining some autonomy vis-à-vis the party mechanisms. The members of the SFA are free to work and organise their activity independently of the party's decisions (although they are monitored by the party as far as economic issues are concerned). This autonomy provides two advantages; Firstly, it permits a larger flexibility and adaptation of the organisation to the social reality, and especially to the dynamic field of movements and bottom-up initiatives. Secondly, it provides SFA with credibility towards the movements and grass-root initiatives, given the generalized distrust against the party system.

Another strategy applied by SFA in order to increase its credibility vis-à-vis solidarity initiatives is discreteness. SFA avoids self-publicity through the actions and the initiatives that it supports. This guarantees the 'disinterest' of SFA and facilitates the creation of bounds between the organisation and the various solidarity initiatives. The negative aspect of this strategy is that it impedes the communication of SFA's activity to the wider public of the country, something that could serve better its general sociopolitical goals.

A major limitation concerns the range of the organisation (and of solidarity structures in general). According to the interviewee, the 'beneficiaries' of solidarity structures registered by SFA in the whole country (more than 300) could be between 20.000-30.000 people. This number is not negligible, but it remains restricted compared to the total population. It could be argued that solidarity structures serve a concrete sociopolitical space which consists of individuals who share common progressive values and activist cultures.

Conclusion

The SFA is a space of encounter and networking amongst collectivities, which promotes alternative structures on food, education, health and social economy. It embraces a widened idea of diversity, which covers not only ethnic differences, but also the variety of the ways people experience the socioeconomic effects of the crisis. Initiatives are often local and based on small groups of activists. SFA operates as an umbrella organisation that coordinates this fragmented field. As the SFA aims at playing a nodal role in the landscape of the numerous solidarity initiatives that emerge in today's Greece, the *innovative* approach of this arrangement is consisted of the promotion of solidarity structures, which actively challenge the crisis. The main *challenge* faced by SFA concerns its relationships with the initiatives. As an organisation stemming from a major political party, it has to 'reassure' bottom-up initiatives that it does not seek to play a hegemonic role and to capitalize politically and electorally on them (something that will certainly become very difficult in case SYRIZA becomes a governmental force). A *medium-term challenge* concern is the relation of solidarity structures with the welfare state. Our interviewee argues that solidarity structures can provide basic social services only for a short period of time, while the major political goal must remain the reconstruction of the welfare state. However, considering the condition of Greece's public finances, the reconstruction of the welfare state may be addressed in the long run.

Neighbourhoods in action (NIA)

Strategy, focus and organisation
'Neighbourhoods in action' was an initiative launched by the Municipality of Athens, the City of Athens Cultural, Sports and Youth Organisation (CACSYO), in collaboration with other state actors, in order to promote the cultural co-existence and the social capital that exists in the neighbourhoods of the city of Athens. By organising workshops of gardening, composting, reuse of old clothes, local history, cooking, music and journalism, the local government was aiming to foster social cohesion amongst the divergent groups that live in the city of Athens. In order to promote the initial goals, neighbourhoods with high mix of ethnicities were selected. Another crucial factor in the area selection was the existence and operation of the municipal cultural centres. In total 35 workshops took place in 7 neighbourhoods of Athens (City of Athens, 2013).

This purely public arrangement had a year of duration (2013), as this was the timetable of the project proposal achieving funding (both European and national) for enhancing social cohesion and interaction in Athens. The practical part of the workshop took place for six months, from February till June 2013. The project was launched by the Municipality of Athens in collaboration with other public services and it was monitored by the ministry of Interior. As discussed by the interviewees, the organisers had to follow a clear set of rules, for example on the number of the

participants and the social impact, but at the same time they had the ability to make suggestions for the better implementation of the project. As claimed in the interview:

> *"The ministry requested that the workshops take place in all the neighbourhoods, but we explained that it was difficult to promote them in areas where there were not municipal installations, so areas that did not have a cultural centre in the end didn't participate… but we invited the people of these areas to the neighbouring ones".*

So, although the programme had a clear-cut structure that was imposed by the ministry of Interior, the experts who participated in the organisation were flexible enough to suggest ideas that would boost the success of the project.

The NIA initiative was funded by 75% by the European Union (the European Integration Fund) and by 25% by national resources. A great amount of the economic resources was dedicated to educational programmes to instructors who would deliver the project to the people in the neighbourhoods by establishing face-to-face interaction with the divergent social groups. The education the civil servants got was twofold; training initially focused on the idea and the importance of the project and secondly on cultural and diversity issues, since the employees would interact with diverse social groups. Hence, apart from the economic resources, the project was moreover enhanced by educational capital. An additional asset was the knowledge and the experience of the organising committee from the CACSYO who had already worked for other European projects promoting social cohesion amongst the migrant groups and the local population.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
The concept of diversity is approached via the notion of interculturalism (*diapolitismikotita*) and multiculturalism. It is perceived as the co-existence amongst different civilizations with respect to difference. The NIA initiative, by organising cultural workshops, is focusing on the promotion of the positive aspects of diversity, by promoting spaces of encounter where people from different ethnic backgrounds can meet, participate in the project, learn about each other, and actually get a taste of the different cultures that co-exist in the centre of Athens. However, in the interview with the NIA organisers it was indicated that the Greeks are not that tolerant yet as *"we don't let people free to speak, celebrate and believe in their own religions"*, but at the same time *"we are very sympathetic to people who are in need"*. This quote is indicative of the complicated way the Greek population perceives of diversity. On the one hand, some parts of the society, such as Golden Dawn supporters, are reluctant to any idea of multiculturalism, but at the same time, a large part of the society is sympathetic to vulnerability and the way the crisis has hit the migrant population.

Main factors influencing success or failure
The organisers of the NIA characterized the initiative as successful because of the good planning and organisation, and the participation level of the local people. In total 850 people attended the workshops out of which 38% were of migrant origin from countries of the 'third world' (i.e. non-European countries). Although their initial target for documented migrant participation was 16%, this number was outreached, and additionally many migrants asked to participate more than once in the workshops. Basic factors of success were i) the space of the municipal cultural centres, ii) the local people who participate in the cultural initiatives of the centres, iii) the networks and the entrusting relationship that the personnel of the cultural centre has developed with the native and the migrant population. These factors contributed to the local success of the project; in some highly mixed neighbourhoods the initiative was rather successful and friendships were developed, whilst in others the participation was lower, as the municipal centres were neither active enough nor embedded to the local society, or the centre's location was not safe.

However, the medium term of the project, the fact that its practical duration lasted only for six months, is a factor that is challenging the success of the project. According to the interviewees, such initiatives actually foster social cohesion when they are longer-term or get renewed. The organisers from the CACSYO participated in an open competition to get extra funding and promote the sequel of the NIA, however, their proposal was not successful.

Conclusion

The Neighbourhoods in Action was a purely public arrangement highly inspired by the idea of co-existence amongst different ethnic groups in the city of Athens. The initial scope of the initiative was to promote multiculturalism and celebrate diversity by organising workshops that bring together Greek locals and migrant populations. The fact that the participation rates were high and that migrants showed great interest in the initiative can be considered as an indicator of success. However, the short term of the initiative minimizes the impact of its scope. Multiculturalism and diversity should not be promoted as celebrations and fiestas, especially in societies under humanitarian crisis where racist ideas gain importance. This fact was highlighted by the respondents, who organised the NIA and adopted a positive approach about the success of the initiative. However, they underpinned if such initiatives do not have a long run potential, then they end up as fiestas of diversity, as "*fireworks*", in a society where the divergent social groups live quite isolated and in fear of each other. Nonetheless, even if the NIA was a short-run initiative, we should highlight the fact that many migrants and Greek participated in the workshops, they got to know each other and develop friendships. Hence, even short-term initiatives that create spaces of encounter contribute to the social cohesion at the local level.

Regarding the further development of NIA-like initiatives, the respondents could not provide us with a clear answer. Although they and their agency (CACSYO) want to promote projects and workshops focusing on the promotion of social cohesion, due to the political condition, their ideas cannot be put in practice. Sometimes the selection processes, which correlate to specific political purposes, become obstacles in succeeding in competitions and receiving funding.

Migrant's Integration Council (MIC)

Strategy, focus and organisation

Migrants' Integration Councils (MICs)[1] are municipal bodies aiming at 'reinforcing the integration of immigrants in local societies' through the 'investigation of immigrants' problems' and the provision of consultative services to the municipal authorities (Law 3852/2010). The MICs aim specifically at promoting social cohesion, as their basic scope is the integration of the migrant population with the local society. The presidents of MICs are city councillors, while other members include, except from city's councillors, representatives of immigrants' organisations and communities, and social agencies dealing with immigration issues. Immigrant city councillors, if existing, participate *a priori* to MICs. The representatives of the migrant communities can put forward and discuss their problems with the local government. This way systemic deficiencies related to migrant issues can be better elaborated, and the framework towards a more cohesive society can be better set. All members of MICs are appointed by the City Council.

The creation of MICs has been part of a wider recent reform of Greek administration system (Law 3852/2010) intended to adapt the Greek local administration system to the principles of EU 'multi-level' governance system.

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[1] For a more analytical presentation of MICs see Maloutas et al. 2014, p. 19-21.

The Athenian MIC was established in April 2011. It has 11 principal members, 6 of which are immigrants, and 11 alternate members. As indicated in the interview, the criteria used by the City Council to invite organisations and communities to participate in the MIC were based upon the size of the population of immigrant communities, the representation of communities from different geographical areas and a minimum participation of women and youth. Since its establishment, the MIC of Athens convened 15 times. Actually, the MIC of Athens, except from providing consultation to the City Council, is also responsible for the organisation of an annual festival dedicated to immigrants, the Immigration Day.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
As was claimed by our interviewee, the political attitude of the current municipal administration towards the MIC is explicitly characterized by an 'integrationist' approach. According to the respondent, this term refers to the incorporation of immigrants to the Greek society (through actions such as Greek-language programmes), by opposing to 'communitarian' goals (preservation of ethnic identities and distinct cultural practices), which are considered as the task *par excellence* of the immigrants' organisations themselves.

The reference policy document of City's integrationist approach is the National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals of the Ministry of the Interior (GSPSC, 2013). This official document defines the 'structural integration' as the main strategy of the Greek state towards 'legal' immigrants. The term 'structural integration' means the 'full acceptance of the political and cultural principles of reference of the host country' by immigrants (GSPSC, 2013). It is opposed to 'multiculturalism', which segments society through the compulsory preservation of immigrants' ethnic identities, as well as to 'simple integration', which focuses on the economic and political integration and does not require the disclaimer of previous cultural and ethnic identity (GSPSC, 2013).

Main factors influencing success or failure
Although the MIC is functioning the last four years, it gives the notion of being in a transitive stage. Its main success has been its acceptance by migrants' communities and organisations, which recognize in MIC a unique opportunity to formulate publicly their positions. At the same time, the MIC failed to become an influential agency, which would catalyse migration policies, at least at the municipal level.

The main negative condition is an external one, as the crisis introduced xenophobic elements to the central and local politics. The year of the establishment of MICs was also the first year of the crisis. During the next years, the extreme right increased its power at both central and local level, the governing parties and the municipal administration of Athens adopted a more 'hard' approach towards immigration (emphasizing security issues), while the Constitutional Court rejected the provision of Greek citizenship to second generation immigrants. This dynamic reduced the potential of MICs, whose public visibility remained limited.

Last, it seems that there is a discrepancy between means and scope in the MIC itself. Migrants' communities and organisations seek to promote through MIC issues associated with *central* government politics. According to the interviewee, so far, the MIC's main resolution concerned the granting of residence permits, while the MIC is a consultative body of the local authorities and has no influence of central government.

Conclusion
The establishment of the IICs has been the most significant reform of local governance related to diversity issues during the last years. Despite the integrationist approach of the municipal admin-

istration it has been embraced by migrant communities, which consider it an important tool of empowerment. The MIC institutionalises the debate on migration issues at the local level, especially by recognising migrants themselves as equal interlocutors of public authorities. From this point of view, the MIC is without doubt an *innovative* political initiative, which may contribute to a positive use of diversity in urban policies.

However, the experience of the MIC, at least in Athens, reveals that the influence of this kind of agencies depends very much on the general political climate. The fact that the MIC does not have decision-making authority increases this dependence, as its 'powers' consist mainly in influencing the public opinion and in exerting pressure on the Municipal administration. Furthermore, we observe that consultative bodies, which consist of organisations' representatives, lose efficacy when they are not coupled with reforms in 'classical' procedures of representative democracy. In other words, the provision of consultation to Municipal authorities is jeopardized when immigrants do not take part in the electoral process.

2.2 Arrangements targeting social mobility

Sunday Immigrants' School (SIS)

Strategy, focus and organisation
Sunday Immigrant's School (SIS) fosters social mobility as its main initiative is to provide migrants Greek lessons so that they can better integrate and climb the social ladder in the Greek society. Through its activities, the SIS aims at empowering migrants. It was established in 2003 as a volunteer-based initiative, run by immigrants and Greeks, in a central and highly diversified neighbourhood of Athens (Kolonos). The main activities of the School are the Greek language courses offered every Sunday and the provision of legal support to immigrants and refugees concerning asylum applications and validation of legal documents. Legal documentation is not requested for the participation in SIS' activities. As classes may consist of students of various geographic origins (Venezuela, Pakistan, Syria etc.) and social bonds are created amongst students and teachers, this initiative promotes in practice cultural diversity and mutual understanding.

The SIS' activity is not restricted to the provision of language courses, as it acts rather as a people-based initiative serving broader political goals concerning the struggle over equal human rights and the legalisation of all migrants. Under this perspective, social mobility is promoted, as people of non-Greek origin get to understand the local language and the legal framework. This way, they can achieve better living conditions and employment status. Currently, the SIS numbers almost 200 students and 35 volunteer teachers. It is run by a general assembly consisting of migrants and Greeks, which convenes once per month. The participants of the assembly discuss over the function of the SIS and raise concerns over more general issues related to migrants' rights. The assembly is coordinated by the secretary of the school (a volunteer), who also deals with other basic organisational issues (number of classes, allocation of students to each class).

The SIS' resources are raised by volunteer actions and contributions. The school's building was granted to the SIS by a member, and was later refurbished by the voluntary work of other members. Other economic resources emanate from the SIS participants and donations by the wider anti-racist movement. The SIS receives some funding from the incomings of the "Expel racism" festival and from sales of a calendar it publishes yearly. When available money does not cover current costs (like power supply and water consumption), its members, both Greeks and migrants, are requested to contribute with the amount of money they can afford. In the first years of SIS' operation, its members opted for self-financing and rejected external offers for sponsor-

ing coming from private companies (Interamerican, Vodafone) in order to maintain initiative's autonomy.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
The SIS's members do not refer explicitly to 'diversity' in their discourse. They approach migration issues through the lens of 'equality', 'respect' and 'solidarity'. These values are expressed in the way that the SIS operates in various initiatives and campaigns that deal with migrant issues beyond the language classes. This way the SIS establishes a space of encounter and interaction amongst migrants and Greeks. The provision of Greek lessons is not perceived as an act of 'philanthropy'. It is rather perceived on the basis of mutual respect of cultural identities and a sense of solidarity. These elements constitute the framework of a collective socio-political action against racism and xenophobia. Furthermore, cultural diversity is perceived in a sentimental way. The interaction with persons coming from different cultures within the framework of SIS' activities (assembly, courses, parties) is described by the activists as an act engendering rich, positive emotions, which "*makes you feel complete with yourself*". Moreover, the SIS defends the idea (and the associated practices) that the initiative must maintain a bottom-up character based on self-organisation. The members of the organisation also discard any collaboration with the central or local government, arguing that the latter stand against their agenda (legalization of all migrants and equal right to all) through policies of surveillance, control and expulsion of undocumented migrant population.

Main factors influencing success or failure
The basic factors of success of SIS have to do with the ideological cohesion of the group, the networking with other bottom-up initiatives and its location. The SIS, like other similar initiatives, is in the hands of a small number of persons who share common political references and cultural values. This may be seen as a feature that limits the scope of the initiative, but at the same time it assures its consistency. Moreover, the networking of SIS assures circulation of information, access to economic resources and mutual help. Migrants approach the SIS via information that they may get in local campaigns, in anti-racist festivals and other similar activities, through other initiatives that collaborate with the SIS (like the European Village), as well as via informal personal networks. The SIS also participates in common actions and public discussions with other initiatives related to migration issues (like the migrants' school of Kypseli market). As a result of the organisational and cultural characteristics of SIS (self-organisation, prioritization of equality, mutual respect of cultures and solidarity), the initiative is highly appreciated by the migrants.

However, the SIS undergoes severe pressures from the wider political, social and economic crisis. The number of the students has declined significantly (in 2005 there were 700 students). This decrease seems to be an outcome of the crisis, as migrants are less interested in staying in Greece and perceive the country as a transitory point on their way to other European countries. Additionally, the migrants who are settled in Greece are in a state of shock due to increased xenophobia and unemployment (the latter also leading to the loss of residence permits); hence they are neither interested in Greek classes nor in active participation in whichever initiative.

Conclusion
The SIS is a case of a bottom-up initiative aiming at fostering migrant's social integration through voluntary work and collaboration of Greeks and migrants. It has a horizontal, self-governed structure, as discussed by Kooiman (2000) through which the actors take care of themselves and come out of their own accords. The SIS claims openly its autonomy from the state and the private companies. It frames its activity through 'equality', 'respect' and 'solidarity' and avoids the term 'social cohesion', which is mostly used in state programmes and actions. The SIS illustrates

the strengths of initiatives run by relatively small, ideologically coherent and motivated groups, which are quite well connected with other similar grassroots organisations. Its *innovation* lies in the horizontal structures and in the commitment the members show in promoting their ideals. At the same time however, the SIS is affected by the crisis in the sense that it becomes more difficult under the current conditions to mobilise migrants in collective activities like those promoted by the SIS.

Migrants' Social Centre (MSC – Steki Metanaston-Koinoniko Kentro)

Strategy, focus and organisation
The Migrants Social Centre (MSC) is a space of encounter and solidarity between Greeks and migrants. Its primary goal is to help migrants integrate in the local society and achieve better living conditions via language classes, legal and moral support in daily problems related to legality or employment issues. This way social mobility is fostered, as migrants get to better integrate in the local society and receive local knowledge on how they can tackle with their daily issues. The MSC's broader political scope consists in struggling against racism, and promoting equality and freedom. The MSC was created in 1997 by the Network for the Social Support of Refugees and Migrants. Currently, it brings together 13 social, political and cultural collectivities, which make use of the MSC's space (a rented building) for their meetings and activities. The latter include Greek language courses, computer training lessons, collective kitchens, film shows, concerts, book presentations and open discussions. Within the MSC initiatives the idea for the Antiracist Festival was born, which is considered as the most important event of its kind in Athens.

Each of the collectivities coexisting in the MSC is organised around an assembly, which takes places once per week. Assemblies are open to all collectivities members[2], while there is collaboration amongst the different assemblies (for instance, every second week the Greek lesson organisers' Assembly participates in the Assembly of the Network for the Political and Social Rights). The MSC itself follows a model of self-organisation and it is run by three groups: one which is responsible for the political and cultural activities, second one deals with economic issues and the third one is taking care of technical issues. Every three months a general assembly takes place, in which issues of collective life in MSC are discussed.

Actually the MSC is both a place- and group- based grassroot initiative with a relatively long-term duration. The economic resources are raised from the members' monthly contributions and from the savings that can be raised from the Antiracist Festival. A secondary additional economic resource has been the participation of the MSC in some European Union research projects. The interviewee provided us with no actual numbers, but he stated that last year (2013) the savings based on the members' contributions and the profits from the Antiracist Festival were not sufficient to cover MSC's needs. The social resources of the MSC include the dedication of its members and the networking that develops amongst collectivities.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
Although the MSC does not explicitly refer to the notion of 'diversity', it actually addresses it in various ways throughout the practices of the collectivities it hosts. The MSC is a space where migrants feel comfortable and at 'home'. The MSC also contributes to the coordination of initiatives that provide migrants, with or without papers, with tools which help them interact with the Greek society. As stated by the interviewee:

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[2] The interviewee could not provide us with actual numbers of the assemblies' participants. He estimated, however, that because of the crisis, assemblies' participants have been reduced.

> *"We work for the integration of the migrants in the Greek society and not their absorption… preserving their culture thus by learning the Greek language, they better integrate in the local society as equal members".*

At the same time, although MSC focuses mostly on migration, its activities go beyond it and embrace other forms of diversity as well. More recently, a lesbian group has become part of the MSC promoting the rights of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community and, especially, the right to an alternative lifestyle and attitude.

Main factors influencing success or failure
The main factors influencing the success of the MSC is the member's commitment and the networking that has evolved amongst the activists, the local society and the migrants' communities. As indicated in the interview, the MSC has gone through activisms and projects, which would have been impossible to deliver without the commitment of the participants and the "*stubbornness to fight for things which seem impossible*". Additionally, the strong networks that have been built amongst the MSC and other social centres, which are active in the same neighbourhood (Exarchia), as well as with the local residents' committees have proved major success factors.

Nonetheless, an external negative condition was mentioned in the interview. The outcome of the crisis that hit the Greek society is apparent in the peoples' participation in activist initiatives. As outlined by the respondent, the economic problems that households in Athens have to face are harsh, leading to disengagement from the local common activities and practices. The MSC has experienced a loss in members and a loss in the support of the initiatives. People's disappointment in participation in the commons affects indirectly the economic and the social resources of the MSC, which are nowadays much reduced.

Conclusion
The MSC is a bottom-up initiative organised by activists and migrants who, although foster diversity straightforwardly, do not use the term 'diversity' in their rhetoric. Instead they use verbal combinations such as 'social support' or 'multiculturalism' in order to promote the basic ideas of '*equity, co-existence, freedom and interaction*' (MSC, undated). The MSC has a horizontal structure, where all decision- making is the outcome of assembly participation. This openness is considered a major factor of success, which at the same time encourages the members' commitment and support. The networking amongst the MSC, other social centres and city activists empowers them politically and further serves in the delivery of solidarity to the migrant population.

2.3   Arrangements targeting economic performance

European Village (EV)

Strategy, focus and organisation
The European Village is a non-governmental organisation, functioning as a non-profit organisation, whose aim is to foster societal (non-profit) solidarity economy, bio-cultivation, moral consumption patterns and alternative models of living in eco-communities. The initiative was formed in 2006, initially organising youth exchange programmes via projects funded by the European Union. In 2010 the founders' group decided to include in its services a kafeneio, i.e. a traditional café, where diverse people can meet and produce collectively alternative modes of living and thinking. In their economic interactions, they mostly deal with local organic producers they personally know, and most products they sell and promote are fair trade. This way their economic activity is considered more humanitarian and environmental friendly. One of the fundamental purposes of the initiative is to challenge the culture of individualism and greed of the contempo-

rary society (European Village, 2014). In order to achieve the goals of solidarity economy, the tolerance of the 'other' and respect to the environment, they organise initiatives such as seminars on de-growth development, tai chi and yoga classes, puppet-shows and fairy-tale reading, creative writing, music and dance festivals, initiatives on green construction, organic cultivation and exchange of seeds and plants.

The EV consists of 15 people, but the most active ones are 10. They are organised around an assembly, which takes place once per month. All the members participate in the assembly, and decisions are taken by consensus. As they do not believe in majority or minorities in decision-making, they prefer to take decisions after thorough and extensive discussion until all the members reach consensus. *"We believe that if decisions are taken via majority, then this will lead to a kind of segregation, as subgroups will be created and more problems will be created"*. Fostering direct democratic decision-making is considered very crucial. As narrated by the interviewed member of the EV, for a problem that could not be resolved, they asked for the help of a consultation initiative that will conduct interviews with everyone and help them resolve the issue. And this way of thinking which is beyond segregation and isolation of the members with different ideas is considered basic aspect of alternative thinking and acting, indicating a paradigm of problem-solution to other initiatives.

The EV profits from the economic function of the *kafeneio*, thus from the money they gather for the classes and the seminars via a moneybox. As discussed in the interview, the money that is gathered from selling food and coffees is quite enough to cover the stable costs of the *kafeneio*. Profits hardly rise, but when they do, they use them for experimenting on new structures. For example, recently the EV has bought a plot of land that its members will experiment on it as an eco-community, for the plantation of organic crops. The members of the initiative work on a voluntary basis, hence they earn no money from the activities they foster. Moreover, the money raised in the moneybox is used to provide some allowance to the teachers and the performers.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
The concept of diversity is considered by the EV as something positive, thus necessary in modern societies; however it has a negative notion if diversity is promoted in order to deliver assimilation and homogenisation.

> *"Diversity is like biodiversity which is essential for the ecosystem to survive… diversity works the same in cities […] it is a necessary ingredient which helps the system reach stability"*.

The initiative promotes diversity as, especially in the kafeneio, people of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds get together and exchange ideas and everyday realities. The openness of the *kafeneio*, thus of the people it attracts as clients, has created an open space of actual encounter of different people and alternative ideas. As explained in the interview, the Greek locals are more biased against the initiative, and sometimes they characterise them as 'hippies'. The migrants show more interest in the *kafeneio*, where they feel more welcome to hang out and participate in the projects. Social groups that would not communicate to each other, like hipsters, anarchists, environmentalists, migrants and homeless actually get to meet and interact with each other. The positive aspect of diversity is promoted, thus a vague concept of hyper-diversity is put forward, as one of the basic principles that are promoted by the EV in the space of the kafeneio is that of tolerance of the 'other' and respect of the different cultures.

Main factors influencing success or failure
Besides the openness that characterises the function of the EV and its projects, the democratic processes in decision-making can be considered a strong factor influencing its success in promot-

ing solidarity economy. Moreover, in the interview it was highlighted that the deficiency of economic resources is a major factor of success; otherwise profits would become an issue of conflict. Hence the ideas and projects that are promoted are basically the outcome of democratic discourse, relying on little economic resources, following the principles of de-growth development theory. Moreover, the experimentation on alternative economic and sustainable structures can be considered as innovative approach, which has the potential to serve as an example to a society hit by the current monetary crisis. However, a factor that narrows the impact of the initiative is that such ideas are developed and discussed amongst like-minded people who are interested in de-growth. The interviewee expressed high expectations on the potential of the initiative, as their strategy is to develop after small steps, learn from their mistakes and offer an alternative example to the society.

Conclusion

The EV is an initiative inspired by sustainable development thinking and de-growth development. It does not foster diversity *per se*, however diversity, tolerance and respect of the different culture are considered as high qualifications of modern urban societies. Actually, a multicultural and diverse environment is considered as a prime background for the development of democratic decision-making and new inspirations. The openness of this initiative is expressed on the one hand, by the impetus to bring together different cultures, alternative and ethnic ones, thus on the way they promote new ideas that are based on low economic input and high societal potential, such as the cultivation of plots and the organisation of eco-communities. Actually, a positive of notion of hyper- diversity is promoted, as the basic goal of the arrangements in the established of a common ground for the divergent cultures that exist in the city. The European Village can be considered a small but innovative approach in fostering social cohesion and economic performance though in alternative modes of production and consumption.

Regarding the further development of the EV, the members are optimistic. The interest that is expressed by new members, the new ideas that are brought by groups that want to participate by adding to the existing initiatives, thus the new groups that have sprung out of the initial project are indicators that show the potential of this initiative. However, whether new ideas and creative approaches may contribute to alternative and sustainable de-growth development is put under question. On the one hand, such an approach may actually contribute to the development of alternative economic solutions; on the other hand it may end up as the experimentation of an inspired group of people.

The Meet Market (MM)

Strategy, focus and organisation

The Meet Market is a non- profit cultural organisation, which aims to foster creativity in the local economy of Athens. It was created in 2007, aiming at promoting the economic performance of the local society, and it takes place for a weekend, once a month, each time in a different space in Athens. Because of its nomadic character, the manager of the initiative noticed that the MM *"coined the idea of a moving market in Athens, and now new markets like that are popping up in the city"*. The MM serves as a platform where creative young local producers (small-size entrepreneurs) can promote innovative products, such as jewelry, crafts, homemade cosmetics and remedies, clothes, accessories, vintage and retro, arts and food. Though this initiative, the organisers are promoting economic performance in a colourful environment, so as to make people happy and encourage the idea that:

> *"We don't all have to pack up and leave for Berlin and New York in terms of finding a creative environment. It is here [...] and how do we survive the crisis? I don't have to lean on the state to do everything for me. We have to do things on our own"*

The MM is a purely private arrangement with a commercial focus. The team of the Meet Market consists of six people who organise the venue and select the participants. People who want to participate at the MM, either as performers, or in order to expose and sell their products, are invited to send up to five photographs of their projects to the MM team. The team gathers, and after closely examining the photos, they select the people that participate in the venue. As indicated in the interview: *"We are a private company and we have an aesthetic that we want to maintain… we look for quality, design, aesthetic, for something unique, for a fresh idea, for something we haven't seen too much before"*. In their collaboration with other actors there is a hierarchy, as their basic scope is to have clear-cut outcomes and that things *"will not get too messy"*.

The resources of the MM lie on budget that can be raised from the participation and the success of the venue. The participants are asked to participate with a fee that ranges from € 80-100, so that the organising team can cover the costs of the venue. *"If 50 people participate then we have a budget of € 3.500-5.000"*. This way expenses, such as the rent of the space, security, posters, lights, are covered, thus accountants get their payments. The initiative had the opportunity to raise more money, as it was approached my multinational corporations to participate in the venue. However, as their aim is to enhance local small creative producers, they declined the offer. Moreover, the organisers' inspiration and innovation can be considered as another resource of the MM. The fact that the MM has inspired other same-like initiatives is considered as something good that comes out of competition in the market, and forces them to think about new ideas so that the spirit of the initiative will not stagnate.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
Although diversity as a word it not used by the initiative, the notion of diversity is rather crucial in the strategy of the project and it is considered as a very positive aspect to improve economic performance and innovation. Diversity has a twofold dimension in the conception of the MM: on the one hand, it refers to the creative people who participate in the market as sellers and promote various lifestyles, and on the other hand, it signifies the differentiation amongst the people that are attracted as clients. Under this perspective, the MM serves the notion of hyper-diversity. As claimed by the MM manager in the interview:

> *"Greeks, French, English, Italians, Germans, Australians, South-African people, young lads, grandpas and grandmas, parents. Families, hipsters, heavy metal dudes, vintage women with high heel and lots of make-up… we have many different styles… it is mixed."*

The basic scope is to create a space of encounter, where different people can meet, engage with each other and create new ideas and see new things. This way social interaction this economic creativity is promoted, especially as people get to interact with each other and exchange views and perceptions.

Main factors influencing success or failure
The success of the Meet Market is closely linked to the imagination, the openness and the creative thinking of the board. They are open to new ideas and help people with innovative creations, but little economic resources, to approach a broader public. Their approach is not hindered by competition and other market forces, as their basic idea is to form a market where people meet. Hence, they want to think in ways that are *"ahead of themselves"* and include other more cultural initiatives that boost the idea of the Meet Market, such as music performances, and games for

people. Moreover, the idea to create a common space –the market that provides economic opportunities to small salesmen, as they get a way to expose their products and get to meet with clients and other producers, have encouraged the local economic potential. The success of the initiative can be identified from the fact that each time it attracts more participation offers, thus the number of people who participate has risen significantly, from 25 participants in 2007, to more than 250 in 2013. Moreover, the MM has inspired other groups that have formed similar initiatives in the city. The MM's innovative approach to the local economic and its economic performance can be considered crucial factors of success considering the fact that, in economic terms, the city of Athens has been seriously hit by the crisis, and the unemployment rates are rather high. The strong economic orientation of the initiative is enhanced by the disappointment they show to the state mechanisms, especially the bureaucracy that is faced and the big amounts of money that have to be paid when trying to start a new business or promote something innovative. Bureaucracy and legal obligations are considered as time consuming, this way the MM focuses on private initiatives, creativity and economic performance.

Conclusion

Although the word 'diversity' is not used by the MM, however, the concept of diversity is very strong in the initiative. Diversity is perceived in a positive way, as creativity. Moreover, the encounter of creative people is considered as an innovation in order to support the local economy and promote the economic performance of young vendors. Actually the *innovative* approach of this arrangement lies on the fact that their philosophy focuses more on creativity than profit making. The idea to provide a platform and organise a venue that supports creativity and economic support in times of crisis is working as a snowball, as other people get inspired and launch creative-like initiatives. This way, the MM has provided the local economy of Athens with an innovative approach to the crisis that works as a paradigm to small entrepreneurs and other same-like initiatives. The potential of the initiative can be further encouraged by the new cultural approach that is adopted via the music performances and the games for participants. Additionally, by promoting creativity and a '*colourful environment*' inner city diversity is encouraged, as people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds and of divergent lifestyles interact with each other.

The board of the MM is enthusiastic with the future development of the initiative. The fact that more people show interest, either as participants, either as clients, and more initiatives have sprung out of it, is considered as a further dynamic, thus a challenge to keep the MM going. This way other approaches are considered that introduce a festive side to the venue, and not solely focus on the local economy and the economic performance. However, as the crisis is something endemic that works counter to innovative initiatives, it depends on the creativity and the imagination of the board of MM to engage more people and tackle with the reverse economic conditions of the city.

InnovAthens

Strategy, focus and organisation
InnovAthens is an innovation and entrepreneurship hub created by the Municipality of Athens, mainly aiming at supporting youth entrepreneurship and enhancing the economic performance of the city. It brings together the Technopolis SA, a municipally-owned cultural private agency, with six associations of innovative and export-oriented businesses in new technologies (mobile applications, semi-conducts, biotechnology, space technology, open source software), which represent a total of 317 businesses. InnovAthens originated from a previous cycle of municipal actions related to innovation and entrepreneurship, which run after 2010 under the title '*Creatives meet their audience*'. The idea for InnovAthens was born in discussions between the personnel of Technopo-

lis SA and the six business associations, which took place in the framework of this early cycle of actions.

Organisationally, InnovAthens is a part of Technopolis SA. The project manager of InnovAthens is Konstantinos Bitzanis, the Managing Director of Technopolis SA; the personnel working for InnovAthens consists of seven individuals, who include a scientific manager (Stavros Ioannidis, professor at the Panteion University of Athens and collaborator of the influential private economic research institute IOVE), a site manager (who is responsible for the programming of InnovAthens) and four supportive members. The six business associations and the sponsor of InnovAthens (see below) participate, along with the personnel of Technopolis SA, in a steering committee, which convenes once a month in order to take decisions about the activity of the hub.

The main activity of InnovAthens focuses on the transferring of know-how from established new technologies businesses to young entrepreneurs. According to planning, InnovAthens will also organise a competition for innovative young entrepreneurs the winners of which (60 groups of 3-5 persons) will be hosted in a business accelerator (to be initiated in the beginning of 2015). Lastly, InnovAthens will organise exhibitions and festivals of innovation and, more generally, aims at operating as the main info point of the city regarding public and private hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship. InnovAthens is funded by EU Structural Funds (a budget of € 2 million) as a part of Project Athens, the development plan of the Municipality for the years 2012-2015 (on Project Athens see Maloutas et al., 2014); it benefits from a private sponsorship (€ 500,000 from Samsung, which will also offer through InnovAthens courses on repairing of cell phones and LCD monitors); and makes use of the infrastructures of Technopolis SA (the rehabilitated locales of a Gas factory at the city center).

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
InnovAthens does not make explicit reference to diversity issues. However, as a structure providing entrepreneurial opportunities without distinctions may have a positive impact on economic performance of different groups (especially the youth). As Bitzanis put it, InnovAthens does not develop a 'strategic' action on diversity, but it promotes it indirectly through its more general philosophy. Assuming that diversity is a 'constituent of the building of contemporary cities', InnovAthens and Technopolis SA seek openness and host different approaches contributing to the 'polychromy' of Athens.

Main factors influencing success or failure
As InnovAthens has been inaugurated in 5 May 2014, we will contain ourselves to an estimation about the conditions and factors that may lead to success or failure. A favourable external factor is the dominance of crisis-induced economic policies focusing on entrepreneurship, innovation and export-oriented activities. The congruence of InnovAthens with this wider political climate – in fact, InnovAthens itself is an outcome of this climate – may ensure its legitimacy and acceptation by public opinion.

A basic favourable internal factor is the coherence of the partnership, which lies at the core of InnovAthens. The Municipality supports InnovAthens by providing the infrastructure (with its 600,000 visitors per year) and by ensuring the funding for equipment, communication and activities (exhibitions, festivals). Thanks to its institutional status, the Municipality may also involve in InnovAthens other public and private agencies as well (as the Innovation Units of Universities and the Centre of Volunteers Managers which already collaborate with the hub). The six business associations offer their know-how and gain in visibility. As indicated in the interview with the manager of the project, as export-oriented businesses they remain in Greece are relatively un-

known, the InnovAthens initiative may constitute an excellent opportunity for publicity. Bitzanis, a production engineer who has worked as manager in the manufacturing sector and in cultural institutions, seems the appropriate person to link the Municipality with the private sector. The 'light' organisational structure may also prove a positive element as it reduces the possibility for bureaucratisation.

Possible threats include; Firstly, the competition from other private or semi-private hubs, which has been created in Athens during the last years (by the Dutch Embassy, a Greek private bank – Eurobank – and other individual entrepreneurs), and secondly, the impact of the hub on entrepreneurship may be very limited in a wider economic context of deep recession.

Conclusion

InnovAthens is one of a number of recent 'avant-garde' initiatives, which foster the reorganisation of Athens' production base through entrepreneurship and innovation. Main strengths of the initiative include the favorable political context, the win-win partnership between the Municipality and new technology businesses, and the flexible organisational structure. Main limitations may be posed by the current situation of the Athenian economy, which is currently characterised by lack of investment funds and weak private demand. InnovAthens offers support to entrepreneurial initiatives indiscriminately, by posing as the only criterion, their innovative character. From this point of view, it may contribute to the diffusion of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, a criticism that may rise is that existing inequalities and barriers in the economy (for instance, exclusion of undocumented migrants from the opportunities of the formal economy) may lead to unequal access to the services of InnovAthens. One could thus suggest that initiatives like InnovAthens should include also actions of positive discrimination in favor of specific groups (women, migrants etc.).

Reactivate Athens/101 Ideas

Strategy, focus and organisation

Reactivate Athens 101/Ideas is a research project directed by RA Lab, a joint collaboration of Zurich-based ETH Professors of Architecture Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumper with Greek experts from social geography, architecture and other fields. The project was funded by the private charity Onassis Foundation and was carried out under the auspices of the Municipality of Athens. The project took place between October 2013 and March 2014. It aimed at producing innovative ideas regarding the regeneration of a large part of the historical centre of Athens. The results of the project, which will be gathered in a volume, will take the form of a 'toolkit' of urban planning and architectural ideas, and will be delivered to the Municipality of Athens. The basic scope of the arrangement is to promote economic performance in the most underdeveloped part of the city centre, by providing incentives to the existing local businesses, thus to attract new businesses and new residents in the area. The 'reactivation' of this part of the city will boost inner city life, both in economic and residential terms.

The project's main resources are three. Firstly, the Onassis Foundation is a prestigious private charity with strong visibility, which is accepted as interlocutor in Athens' urban issues by the central and local political authorities. The Foundation funded in 2012-2013 a European Architectural Competition (under the title 'Rethink Athens') for a large-scale intervention in the city centre of Athens, mainly around the major axis of *Panepistimiou* Street. The competition was organised under the auspices and in collaboration with the Greek central government, the Attiko Metro S.A., the Region of Attica and the Municipality of Athens. Public criticisms have stressed that 'Rethink Athens' did not consider sufficiently the social impact of the intervention. 'Reactivate Athens' was meant to fulfil this lacuna, although it rapidly evolved to an autonomous project, as the ex-

perts who run it opted to disassociate it from the somewhat contested 'Rethink Athens' project. Secondly, Professors Brillembourg and Klumper have extended experience of urban planning in developing countries, especially in Latin America. Although it is questionable whether Athens is a comparable city, this experience led Brillembour and Klumper to avoid 'star architect'-type propositions and 'top-down' planning procedures. This brings us to the third resource of the project, which is the use of participatory methods in urban planning. The project is based on a fieldwork, which includes a survey and interviews aiming at bringing together ideas from the whole spectrum of the Athenian society (communities, experts, politicians). By introducing bottom-up and top-down approach in formulating new ideas for the potential of the city centre, the initiative launches a participatory way of promoting social participation in the amelioration of the built environment and the economic activity of the city.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity
The project makes an explicit, positive reference to 'diversity'. As highlighted at the initiative's website:

> *'The RA Lab will critically analyse the urban core to develop a new framework for reading and acting within the city, highlighting the social and cultural diversity of central Athens while serving as the basis for innovative, implementable proposals. As part of the participatory design process, a structure has been established as a dynamic platform to collect ideas from existing initiatives, leading experts, and local community members'.*

This positive conception of diversity has two aspects. As indicated in the interview with a lead researcher, the use of participatory planning in a particularly socio-culturally differentiated area may reveal that diversity can be a valuable resource of innovative planning ideas. Diversity is seen also as an urban asset, which should be maintained. This is why one of the goals of the project is to avoid gentrification in the intervention areas.

Main factors influencing success or failure
The main criteria for assessing the success of 'Reactivate Athens' could be two: Firstly, the acceptation and use of the results of the project by its official recipients, that is the central state and the Municipality of Athens. Secondly, the efficacy of the proposed interventions in regard to their goals may be considered as a factor of success as the RA inspires to bring together architectural, social and economic sustainability. As it is declared in the interviews with the researchers the basic aim of the project is to generate sustainable urban transformations of the marginalized areas and populations, by developing a new strategic vision for the city. Under this perspective, they elaborate on the idea of the combination of working and living in the same space; an example of the 'work to live' idea foresees the concession of vacant apartments to poor households in exchange of social work.

It is obviously early to proceed to an assessment of success or failure of the project. However, we can speculate on the factors that *may* lead to one or another direction: A first negative element is the short duration of the project and the relatively limited committed resources, which reduce, *a priori*, the scope of the project. Secondly, the fact that the 'political entrepreneur' of the project is a prestigious private charity entails some advantages. The preparation of the project has been characterised by rapidity and flexibility and one could expect that the public promotion of the research results will be also effective. However, at the same time the Onassis Foundation is an unofficial 'partner' of the central and local state in Athenian urban planning. Thus in comparison with an official planning procedure, which would have a binding character, the informal procedure followed in the case of 'Reactivate Athens' could condemn the project results to no-use. Finally, there is some ambiguity over the adoption of a participatory planning method by a private

agency. While the citizens of the city are the source of the '101 ideas' of the project, asked through the survey, the ownership of the results belongs to RA Lab. This could be an impediment to the broader acceptance of the project's proposition, as the participatory planning process, is not capitalised by an agency, which would represent the community.

Conclusion

The innovative elements of 'Reactivate Athens' consist of its institutional background and research method. In a country where urban policies are characterized by centralism, the participation of a private charity in urban planning procedures is a new element (in fact a permissive condition for this participation is the sovereign debt crisis, which weakened the state's urban planning capacity). The use of a participatory planning method can fuel the discussion on the urban regeneration in the centre of Athens with new, *innovative* ideas. Last, in a wider socio-political context characterized by xenophobic elements, the explicit reference to diversity as an asset in urban planning is, without any doubt, a positive input to the public debate on the city centre. However, at the same time the impact of the project could prove more limited than the initial ambitions. Although the results of the project could indeed be considered as a useful 'toolkit' by the municipal authorities, it is less likely that 'Reactivate Athens' will be influential in the formation of a new strategic vision of the city, mainly due to the non-binding character of the whole procedure and the maintenance of the results ownership by a private agency.

3   Synthesis and analysis of the results

Synthesis of the investigated governance arrangements

The governance initiatives that we approached for the purposes of this research are actively promoting diversity, through fostering social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance. Social cohesion is fostered by both bottom-up and top-down initiatives. Bottom-up initiatives, such as the people's committee of *Akadimia Platonos* and the solidarity structures supported by the 'Solidarity For All' arrangement, focus on the amelioration of the living conditions of the population, either by promoting the idea of the improvement of the urban tissue and the preservation of the green spaces, either by fostering solidarity structures that alleviate the burdens of a collapsed welfare state and a hindered local economy. The organisation of festivities, the promotion of commerce without intermediates, soup kitchens, the collection and distribution of second-hand clothes, social medical and educational centres and food distributive initiatives, bring together the divergent social groups that live in Athens and create spaces of encounter where people learn to collaborate and help each other for a common good. People interact, learn and support each other, foster solidarity and help amongst the social groups that are mostly hit by the crisis, such as the young, women, the unemployed and the migrant population. Social cohesion is promoted as people interact with each other, in order to promote better quality of life.

Moreover, social cohesion is promoted by top-down initiatives that serve the creation of bonds amongst the migrant with the Greek local population. Either in more formal ways, for example via the Immigrants Integration Council, either in more informal ways, for example via the 'Neighbourhoods in action' initiative, the migrants population collaborates with the local one in order to promote their rights and cultures. Social cohesion is promoted as, on the one hand, the migrants play an active role in the formation of policies related to the immigrants' issues, and on the other hand, workshops that promote multiculturalism and social co-existence create a barrier to the xenophobia that rises due to the crisis.

Table 1: Contribution of the governance arrangements towards the three main objectives

Governance arrangements	Social cohesion	Social mobility	Economic performance
Residents' Local Committee of Academia Platonos	***	**	*
Solidarity for All	***	*	***
Neighbourhoods in Actions	***	*	
Migrants' Integrations Council	***	**	
Sunday Migrants' School	***	***	*
Migrants' Social Centre	***	***	**
European Village	**		***
The Meet Market	*	**	***
InnovAthens			***
Reactivate Athens	*		***

* = low contribution; ** = medium contribution; *** = high contribution

Furthermore, social mobility is promoted by initiatives that provide the migrant population with assets to achieve better living and working conditions. Arrangements, such as the Sunday Immigrants' School (SIS) and the Migrants' Social Centre (MSC), deliver classes of the Greek language to migrant population that help them integrate in the Greek society and achieve better living standards. Moreover, the migrant groups are provided with legal advice and support. By learning the language and getting familiar with the legal and the constitutional framework of the country, the migrant population may better integrate with the local society, thus claim better job opportunities and elaborate with daily issues. Moreover they get more efficient in claiming for their rights, by promoting principles of equity, respect of the divergent cultures and solidarity.

Diversity is also promoted through the enhancement of the economic performance of the society. Innovative ideas that serve creative thinking in promoting initiatives that foster local economic performance, help to create better living conditions, or even alternative opportunities to vulnerable groups. Initiatives, such as the European Village and the Meet market, promote the idea that creativity and alternative thinking is able to foster economic productivity. By encouraging the young, and most of the times informally employed or unemployed population, to overcome the stagnation that is imposed due to the crisis, and use imagination and innovative ideas so as to create their own jobs, they encourage small entrepreneurship and help to boost the local economy. Moreover, arrangements, such as the InnovAthens and the Reactivate Athens, foster diversity as they encourage innovative thinking for the ameliorating the business climate of the city centre and the collaboration amongst young creative thinkers with international companies, such as Samsung, which may play a leading role in supporting the economic base of the city. Such arrangements and initiatives offer new paradigms to the rest of the society as they may seek solutions beyond the strict economic standards of profit making, or they focus on innovative and creative thinking in order to enhance profit making in the city. By bringing together ideas of people of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, an alternative way of economic development is put forward that promotes creativity, innovation and social sustainability through an economic development that respects difference and operates under more just rules for all.

Conceptualisation of diversity within the surveyed governance arrangements

Diversity as a word is hardly used by the arrangements. Although their practices work in tandem with ideas such as diversity and hyper-diversity, the stakeholders from the initiatives prefer to use the notion of multiculturalism, which is verbally a more common term. When asked about the word diversity, most of the interviewees would argue that it is a very vague term. Diversity is perceived in a positive way, as the 'wealth' or 'richness' of the society, which is challenged by the crisis. The co-existence of alternative lifestyles and ethnic backgrounds, i.e. of hyper-diversity (Tasan-Kok et al, 2013), thus diversity, is perceived as a factor that will provide the society with a chance of establishing better social relations, and that it will, moreover, provide the local economy with innovative approaches.

Most importantly, the bottom-up initiatives show a strong reference in the term 'solidarity' and the importance of promoting social solidarity by developing networks and structures that self sustain population that is hit by the crisis. Based on the assumption that under the austerity regime that is introduced to the country, several social groups and cultures are challenged the same way, solidarity initiatives aim at fostering mutual help between them. Moreover, the way the word 'solidarity' is used, it is opposed to 'philanthropy'. The members of initiatives argue that philanthropy, which also develops in the context of the crisis, presupposes and reproduces an unequal relation between the donator and the receiver: the first one is a wealthy person, often representing the upper social classes or an institution like the Church, and the second one, a person in need. The philanthropic act reveals the generosity of the wealthy and demands the gratitude of the poor. On the contrary, 'solidarity' takes place between persons at more or less the same social level, and stems from the desire for mutual help and self-organisation. Similarly, solidarity initiatives avoid using the term 'social cohesion' as they see it as a part o the rather hypocritical language of official public policies. However, what is actually being promoted through the bottom-up initiatives is the co-existence and collaboration amongst the divergent social groups and lifestyles in the city; i.e. social cohesion.

The localisation of the main factors influencing success or failure

The main factors that influence the success of the initiatives have to do with their structures and the way they build up networks amongst them and the local society. Most of the arrangements are characterized by openness in the decision-making and horizontal hierarchies. Mostly every member can participate in the decision-making procedures where decisions are taken by consensus and not by following procedures of majorities or minorities in voting. This approach fosters dialogue and communication amongst the members of the group and creates a strong feeling of belonging. In some arrangements, the whole process of discussion becomes a space of encounter not only amongst regular 'members', but of individuals who participate on an occasional basis. Additionally, the strong commitment that the members of the arrangements express may be due to the fact that democratic decision-making and horizontal structures foster equality; thus strengthen the dedication to the purposes of the arrangement.

Moreover, due to the engagement and the high commitment to the scope of the initiative, the arrangements tend to establish strong networks amongst them in order to better promote their ideas and achieve their goals. Networking emerges between initiatives sharing similar goals and characteristics, for example bottom up initiatives fostering solidarity, respect of the other and social cohesion. Networking develops also between initiatives with different background, for example public or quasi-public arrangements that collaborate with NGOs in order to better engage with the migrant communities.

Networking and strong commitment in the purpose of the arrangement are the main resources of most of the initiatives. The latter rely on limited economic resources, mainly members' contributions, and their budgets are small. The economic resources are used to cover the basic costs, such as rents and bills, and for the rest of the projects they mobilise their networks or their members to support via actively contributing their personal labour.

The duration is both an indicator and a condition of success of the arrangements. In Most of the researched initiatives are grassroots and their duration is long-term. This way they manage to build up networks, raise public awareness and prove their commitment in promoting their goals in practice. The interviewees from public or private initiatives of short-term duration, such as the 'Neighbourhoods in action' or the 'Reactivate Athens' expressed their anxiety that these initiatives will turn up into festive exhibitions, if they last shortly and there is no further interaction with the communities.

What was clearly discussed in the round table amongst the participants from the initiatives was the fact that urban policies that deal with migration issues have become so hostile, that ideas such as multiculturalism and diversity are hardly promoted in practice. Surveillance projects of socio-spatial cleansing in the city centre, such as arresting of migrants and transferring them to detention camps away from the city, contribute less to cleansing and more to the raise of fear of the Greek population, as well as the migrant groups. Under this perspective, promoting multiculturalism gets out of the national agenda and is rather limited to EU projects. The latter focus on the micro-scale of the neighbourhood, where co-existence amongst different social groups takes place and diversity can be promoted, as long as fearful syndromes and arrogant behaviours are challenged.

Identification of new ideas for innovative policies and governance concepts

New ideas on innovative policies regarding diversity in cities, should relate more to the notion of diversity as a resource of the city, a source of wealth, as indicated in the interviews by bottom-up arrangements, than relating diversity to social control and assimilation mechanisms. For example, providing migrants with employment opportunities that promote their cultural difference may endow the city with more economic resources. Additionally, from our point of view, urban policies should consider the solidarity structures as new governance input that promotes social cohesion; thus they act as a nest against the crisis that provides the most vulnerable groups with basic welfare services (health, food, education). From this perspective, solidarity structures should be enhanced by funding and publicity, so that they gain legitimisation and broaden their social impact, at least until the reconstruction of the welfare state. Moreover, new governance tactics may consider the importance of openness and consensus in decision making, as well as networking, in order to better promote their initiatives, especially when related to diversity and hyper-diversity of European cities.

4   Conclusions

As the minor welfare state has been shrinking, governance initiatives that cater for the vulnerable population are eliminated. Moreover, migrant issues are increasingly promoted by NGOs and other agents of civil society than by governmental institutions. Actually, whichever services should be delivered by welfare state institution, are now undertaken by governance arrangements. This is something really crucial that policy makers should take into consideration. We do not suggest that welfare services should be left upon governance structures. An NGO or a grassroot initiative is not able to deliver health services as appropriately as a hospital. Urban policies should

consider this complementarity; the way governance arrangements have reacted and the way they have built up their initiatives, serve the most vulnerable social groups, promote social cohesion and foster diversity. At least till the moment that welfare state provisions are re-established, urban policies should recognise and support governance arrangements that provide support mechanisms against the crisis. Moreover, policy makers should take into consideration the way governance arrangements increase their social impact because of their basic characteristics in their structures: openness and consensual decision making. By promoting more transparent procedures in the decision-making processes, policy makers may re-gain trust of the local society. Instead of promoting policies that deal solely with economic recovery, the left hand to the state should be supported as well, and ideas such as diversity and multiculturalism should be put back in the policy agenda.

In the case of Athens, governance arrangements, although they hardly use the concept of diversity *per se,* they address urban diversity in practice. Social cohesion and social mobility are promoted by both bottom-up and top-down arrangements. By providing support to the migrant communities and to the most vulnerable groups of the society, by undertaking the initiative to organise solidarity structures related to learning the Greek language, food distribution and health issues, bottom-up initiatives undertake the role of the welfare state, thus promote a self-organisation and self-support agenda. Such tactics help the migrant population to better integrate with the local society, thus to establish better working and living conditions, which help them climb the social ladder. Top-down initiatives serve social cohesion by focusing on the need to create a space of interaction amongst the divergent cultures and social groups that inhabit Athens. Moreover, economic performance is again promoted by top-down and bottom-up initiatives. Whilst top-down approaches encourage the ideas of creativity and innovation in order to boost the local economy, grassroots approaches encourage solidarity economy by promoting de-growth initiatives and establishing structures that serve social economy.

A governance perspective make us look beyond the institutions of the local state and to search for processes and mechanisms through which significant actors coordinate their actions and resources in the pursuit of collectively defined objectives (Pierre, 2011). In Athens, in times of crisis, most of the researched governance arrangements discuss on the issue of solidarity, promote horizontal structures that adopt consensus procedures on decision-making. With minor resources, that steam out of the economic contributions and support of the members or out of the organisation of festivities, they manage to cover the basic costs and promote their scope. In their missions, another resource of basic importance is the commitment and the loyalty that the members show in promoting ideas such as co-existence, equity and solidarity, as well as the networks they develop with other likeminded initiatives, thus other social groups, such as migrant communities.

Urban policies in Athens that relate to diversity issues promote a neo-assimilationist agenda. Social, cultural and ethnic groups, which could be considered as assets for the city's economy, are perceived as possible sources of tension. Under a humanistic approach, these groups may be categorised as 'disadvantaged', and this way they get access to targeted and 'minimalistic' social services aiming at covering basic needs. Nevertheless the majority of these groups may be categorised as something negative in urban life, as in the case of undocumented immigrants whose concentration in the city centre is a 'problem' to be addressed or cleansed. What is interesting is the use of the word 'diversity' or 'multiculturalism' in urban policies. These words are used in order to receive European funding by following the guidelines in policies that the European Union poses. At the same time, regional and municipal authorities tend to converge with public order-oriented and neo-assimilationist policies, especially regarding migration policy issues.

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6   Appendix

List of the interviewed persons

- Sevasti Papamichael, secretariat, Sunday Immigrant School
- Mertzelou Athina, member, People's Committee of Akadhmia Platonos
- Giorgos Dededikas, member, Migrants' Social Centre
- Maria Kaltsa, research associate (leader), Reactivate Athens
- Lina Liakou, research associate, Reactivate Athens
- Klelia Thermou, research associate, Reactivate Athens
- Ioanna Pothou, research associate, Reactivate Athens
- Lola Velona, research associate, Neighbourhoods in Action
- Sissy Linardaki research associate, Neighbourhoods in Action
- Evdoxia Samoulididou, member, European Village,
- Alison Damianou, director-coordinator, the Meet Market
- Eleni Tsipoura, secretariat, Immigrats' Integration council
- Georgia Bekridaki, member, Solidarity for All

List of the participants of the round table-talk

Date: May 7th, 2014
Place: National Centre for Social Research, EKKE, Athens

- Giorgos Dededikas, Migrants' Social Centre
- Maria Kaltsa, Reactivate Athens
- Lola Velona, Neighbourhoods in Action
- Sissy Linardaki, Neighbourhoods in Action
- Evdoxia Samoulididou, European Village,
- Alison Damianou, the Meet Market
- Olympia Christoforidou, the Meet Market
- Eleni Tsipoura, Immigrats' Integration council
- Georgia Bekridaki, member, Solidarity for All