



*Governing Urban Diversity:*

*Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities*

## Report 2j

### Fieldwork inhabitants, Athens (Greece)

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## 1. Introduction

There is a growing conventional wisdom in writings on European cities that presents them as centres of "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007). This refers specifically to their increasing ethnic diversity and to the demographic diversity between and within such ethnic groups. However, cities are becoming increasingly diverse, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities. To indicate this enormous diversity, we proposed to use the term hyper-diversity (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

Within cities, groups can live segregated or rather mixed. Urban neighbourhoods may be fairly homogeneous residential areas in terms of housing and population, but they may also be heavily mixed with respect to types of housing (tenure, type, price) and population categories (income, ethnicity, household composition, age). In addition, individuals who belong to the same "official" demographic category may possess quite different lifestyles and attitudes and involve themselves in a wide range of activities. Some may for example have a very neighbourhood-oriented life, with all their friends and activities in a very small area, while others may have their social activities stretched over the whole city or even beyond. Residents of mixed urban neighbourhoods may happily live together, live parallel lives, or be in open conflict with each other (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

This report is written as part of the EU-FP7 DIVERCITIES project. In this project we aim to find out how urban hyper-diversity affects social cohesion and social mobility of residents of deprived and dynamic urban areas and the economic performance of entrepreneurs with their enterprise in such areas. In this report we focus on the findings from our interviews with residents in which we explored their experiences of living with hyper-diversity and how it affects their lives.

This general aim can be broken down into more detailed and concrete research questions. They are central in the chapters of this report:

1. Why did people move to the diverse area they live in now? To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor? Or were other aspects (such as the availability of inexpensive dwellings) a much stronger motive to settle in the present area? (Chapter 3)
2. How do residents think about the area they live in? Do residents see their neighbourhood's diversity as an asset or a liability? (Chapter 4)
3. How do residents make use of the diversified areas they live in? Do they actively engage in diversified relations and activities in their neighbourhood? To what extent is the area they live in more important than other areas in terms of activities? (Chapter 5)
4. To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion? Which elements foster social cohesion, which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the area? (Chapter 6)
5. To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility? Which elements foster social mobility and which elements hinder social mobility? (Chapter 7)
6. How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the area? (Chapter 8)

The research in this report focuses on the city of Athens. This city currently has 756,652 inhabitants (EKKE-ESYE, 2011). It is a highly diverse city in terms of population especially since the 1990s, when Greece started to receive flows of migrants, initially from Eastern European Countries (Cavounides, 2002) and more recently from African and Middle-East countries (Kandylis et al., 2012). Albanians are by far the most important immigrant group since they

represent about 60% of the immigrant population (Kandylis et al., 2012). People from Balkan and Eastern European countries represent as a whole no less than 80% (ibid). During the last decade, immigration from Balkan countries has been regressing in growth rates, mainly due to the economic crisis. But a new wave of immigrants has appeared, originating from war, oppression or poverty zones in the Middle-East and Africa, escaping through dangerous and sometimes fatal routes. This new wave of in-migrants mainly consists of undocumented migrants, so a precise number cannot be estimated. As the immigrant population comprises people with different legal statuses, it is still hard to estimate the total number and much more difficult to delineate the exact ethnic composition. In Athens, the majority of the migrant population settled in the city centre, causing feeling of discomfort to the already existing population (Arapoglou and Maloutas, 2011). In the gentrifying areas of Athens, where new residents opt to introduce an alternative inner city lifestyles, diversity is either welcome, as it is connected to memories and experiences from cities like London and New York, either it is considered negatively, as a main factor of inner city deterioration (Alexandri, 2014).

Since social housing is almost non-existent in Greece, immigrants sought shelter in the most affordable areas of the private rental sector. That is, in small, devalued apartments on the lower floors of antiparochi buildings, in the less affluent neighbourhoods of the city's south-west. (Maloutas et al., 2012). Antiparochi refers to the housing system where construction is co-exercised by small owners and small construction firms in ad hoc joint ventures to produce small condominiums (Maloutas, 2003; Sarigiannis, 2000). During the 1960s and the 1970s, its implementation led to the demolition of the majority of the low-rise housing stock, especially in the central areas of the city, and its replacement by high-rise and dense blocks of flats. This system led to a form of vertical social differentiation (Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001) in the central parts of the city, where the more affluent households settled on the higher floors of the buildings and the lower classes on the lower floors and in the basements (ibid). In the last three decades the migrant population that settles in the city, resides in the apartments on the lower floors (mostly ground floor and below ground) of the antiparochi buildings, introducing ethnic diversity to the vertical social differentiation pattern of the city (Maloutas, 2011).

Within Athens the research takes place in the area of the fourth administrative district of the Municipality of Athens, i.e. the area of Akadimia Platonos, Kolonos and Sepolia (in the report, the area will be referred as of Akadimia Platonos), which is located at the south-western part of the city. This area has 64,155 inhabitants and can be considered as one of the most ethnically diversified areas in the city. Following the diversity composition of the city of Athens, the major migrant group consists of Albanians who represent 9% of the local population (EKKE-ESYE, 2005). The second largest migrant group consists of Pakistani, who are mainly migrants without papers; hence the number of Pakistanis in the area (0.83 %) is less reliable. 80% of the local population consists of native Greeks (EKKE-ESYE, 2005) who are either born and raised in the area, or have in-migrated during the rapid urbanisation period of the 1960s and the 1970s, or have moved-in recently, i.e. during the last ten years. Especially the last five years, the area seems to attract artists and people of high cultural capital who cannot afford to live in the nearby gentrifying or other inner city areas.

We conducted 50 interviews with residents of Akadimia Platonos. These interviews were performed between September 2014 and December 2014. In the next chapter we will first give some information on the methodology that was adopted. This is then followed by six chapters in which we will answer the research questions above. In the conclusions we summarise the main results and address our main questions. We will also give some broader guidance for policy-making.

## 2. The interviewees

### 2.1 Selection procedure: how did we select our interviewees?

Our research focused on the fourth administrative district of Athens where a mixture of ethnic backgrounds is more evident in comparison to other parts of the city centre. For our sample we aimed at approaching people that reflect both the dimensions of diversity in the area as well as its social composition. We chose as initial entry points for fieldwork research two local initiatives that we studied in the previous stage of the DIVERCITIES project, the neighbourhood local association and the collaborative kafenio called "European Village". However, during the fieldwork it became rapidly clear that people active in these two local initiatives have quite distinct lifestyles (environmental concerns, progressive thinkers or/and politically oriented towards the left) which do not reflect mainstream local society. Moreover, the migrant population in the area is hardly active in these schemes. In order to approach the rest of the social and ethnic groups that live in Akadimia Platonos we got the contacts of local people from our social networks (families, friends, relatives, political and social initiatives). We also approached two local schools (the 60<sup>th</sup> and the 66<sup>th</sup> public primary school), asking for their directors' collaboration. One director was helpful enough and provided the contacts of parents active in the parents' association of the school, whilst the other director did not collaborate and asked us to acquire permission from the Ministry of Education. We applied for such permission, in order to be able to approach other public schools as well, but we still have not got an official reply. Nonetheless, we managed to bypass this problem and get directly in contact with the president of the Parent's association of the second school, who put us in contact with other parents that live in the area and send their children to the same school. Through these tactics we approached households of different socio-economic and ethnic background, as well as household with alternative lifestyles.

Through snowball sampling we conducted 50 interviews with local residents. In order to avoid the problems that arise with snowball sampling techniques (ending up with a sample consisting of like-minded people, of the same origin, or people with established social relations) (Robson, 2000; Chorianopoulos, 2006) we initiated various snowballs. This way we managed to conduct interviews with the various in-migrant groups that have inhabited the area the last years. The migrant population of our sample consists of Albanians (the most numerous ethnic group) and other groups from Eastern Europe who have migrated to Greece since the 90s, i.e. Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Romanians. Moreover we conducted an interview with the first migrant in the area; an Egyptian who has been living in Akadimia Platonos since the 1980s. Furthermore we approached more recent in-migrants such as Pakistanis (the second largest migrant group in the area) and Syrians. We got in contact with individuals coming from other groups indicating the diversity in the area, such as a return-migrant from South Africa of Greek origin, a Spaniard and a Swed. People who have settled in the area before the 1990s are Greeks, (Athenians or internal migrants from rural areas) and members of the Roma community (either from northern Greece or from Albania). Regarding the Greek population we interviewed members of elderly households, people who were born and raised and still live there, young households who have recently settled with their families in Akadimia Platonos and younger people who started living in the neighbourhood in the last five years. The interviewed people maintained different social and economic statuses; many indicated a high cultural capital mainly expressed by the educational degrees and their cultural distinction. Due to the crisis, most of the interviewees indicated a decline in their economic capital and some may be considered as economically vulnerable. Nonetheless, we also interviewed wealthier residents so as to better reflect the social and income mixture in the area. In total we conducted 32 interviews with Greeks, 2 interviews with Roma group members and 16 interviews with migrants.

The contacts were made by phone; the phone numbers of each person came up as an outcome of the snowball processes. In the initial conversation we gave details about the research related to the DIVERCITIES project. People who agreed to participate gave us their consent for the interview. The interviews took place either in the house of the interviewee, in local kafenios, in three cases in local grocery shops and in two other cases in cafes away from the area.

## **2.2 Which groups did we miss?**

At this point we should pinpoint that many people did not agree to participate in the project, feeling suspicious of the project connected to the European Union or be mistrustful of the fact that it is undertaken by a national research centre. This distrust towards the EU and the Greek public sector is associated to the current crisis, as common representations tend to impute the responsibility for the latter to the these two institutions. Others declined to participate, although they initially agreed to give an interview, and eventually cancelled their participation. In times of austerity and persistent crisis, people in deprived areas may feel distrust and scepticism about the aims and objectives of social research.

We managed to get in contact with members of most in-migrant groups that have settled in the area the last years; lifelong residents, inner migrants (Greeks) before the 1980s, Egyptians in the 1980s, Eastern Europeans and especially Albanians after the 1990s, Pakistanis and Syrians after the 2000s, as well as (Greek) newcomers with alternative lifestyles after 2005. However, the snowball method did not work out in order to get contact with Indian families that have resided in the areas since the 1980s. Regarding the Syrian group, we managed to get an interview only with one Syrian who could not provide us with contacts of other fellow country people. As he claimed in the interview, it has been three years now that the Syrians who were living in Akadimia Platonos have moved out of the area as they have tried to migrate to other countries of (Northern) Europe. Hence from this group we managed to conduct only one interview. Moreover, we aimed at conducting interviews with Polish people, who, according to the census of 2001 (EKKE-ESYE, 2005), construct an evident social group. Through the various snowballs that we initiated we did not manage to get contacts with this ethnic group. According to the locals, the last two years the Polish have left the area and have moved to some areas of the Northern (more affluent) suburbs, or have moved back to their country of origin.

## **2.3 Some general characteristics of the interviewees**

In general terms we conducted interviews with 22 men and 28 women who reside in the area. By coincidence most of them are between 40 and 50 years old, although some elderly households and younger people participated in the research. Most of the interviewees work in the private sector as independent employers or in routine occupations (27) or in the public sector (6), however many indicated that they are recently or long-term unemployed (12). The elderly participants indicated that they are pensioners (5). The majority of migrant women are working as cleaning ladies in households in other neighbourhoods, indicating that their husbands are unemployed. Migrant men stressed that they work in routine occupations (restaurants, industries) or that they are unemployed. The Greek households were employed in tertiary occupations mainly in the private sector (secretaries, teachers, employees) or in the public sector (teachers, clerks) or in routine occupations (plumbers). The majority of the people who participated in the research had secondary education degrees (28), very few had advanced to higher education (17), and in some cases they even lacked primary (elementary) education (5)(for example the Roma



households and three elderly interviewees had dropped out of primary school). Most of the interviewees declared a decline in their economic capital, mainly due to the crisis. However, the fact that there is a social and economic mix in the area, it is reflected in the income groups that the interviewees declared. Some of them stated a gross household income which ranges between 1.000-2.000€, which may be characterised as lower middle income category, some stated higher gross incomes (more than 3.000€ and may be characterised as middle income category) whilst one third of the participants stated that they earn less than 1000€ per month (and may be characterised as lower income category).

### **3. Housing choice and residential mobility**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

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

People may choose to live in the city centre because of the cheap housing stock, the easy access and the presence of compatriots and friends. In central Athens, housing is mainly provided by the antiparochi buildings. Strong homeownership rates (around 51.3 % in 2001, (EKKE-ESYE 2005) and low residential mobility rates (5% in Greece in 2001) are basic characteristics of the housing market. Low residential mobility for the Greek population is related to strong family ties (Maloutas, 2004); the persistent crisis reduced it even further. For the migrant population, access to homeownership is an indicator of integration and upward social mobility. This is becoming visible for the long established groups—especially Albanians— whilst, in most cases, migrant groups are constrained to renting and present higher residential mobility rates (Kandylis and Maloutas, 2012).

In this section we focus on the housing choices of people who live in Akadimia Platonos and we try to clarify their patterns of residential mobility. We address research questions which deal with the reasoning of moving into the area and if settling in Akadimia Platonos is considered an improvement or not. As the area consists of cheap housing and is inhabited by households with low incomes, we argue that economic factors are more profound for the selection of the area, although other social factors are crucial as well.

#### **3.2 Why did the residents come to live here?**

In Akadimia Platonos the housing stock mainly consists of high-rise antiparochi buildings (6 to 7 floors); however there is also a large number of low-rise housing. This low-storey housing is not of architectural importance, i.e. it is not of neoclassical or of Bauhaus design, but simple working class or lower middle-class constructions. The main landmark of the area is the park of Akadimia



Platonos where, in ancient times, Plato had established his philosophical school. Until the 1980s this space consisted of low-rise houses. In the beginning of 1990s, these residences were expropriated by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Planning, Environment and Public Works, the houses were demolished and people were evicted. Nowadays, this space is turned into a park, a green space of archaeological importance as, after excavations, parts of Plato's school were discovered. Construction around this park is limited to reduced height (up to 4 floors), some buildings get restored and at the same time, new developments emerge, which are mainly privately owned. The main reasoning for settling in the area is related to economic factors, however, over social factors, such as proximity to family members and place attachment, are equally mentioned. Diversity is not mentioned as a pull factor related to the housing choice of the interviewees.

#### *Economic Factors*

The fact that the rents and the house prices in the area are lower than the rest of the inner city neighbourhoods, is considered as the main factor of settling in Akadimia Platonos by the Greek and the migrant population. Especially the Greek households that wanted to buy a house, were attracted to Akadimia Platonos due to the low house prices per square metres, as they could not afford to buy an apartment in other areas. Likewise, migrants and Greeks who wanted to rent a house, were attracted in the area because of low rents. As expressed by R49 (female, 28, waitress, Greek) who moved in the area the last 5 years:

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

The respondent settled in the area of Akadimia Platonos, in order to minimise living costs. Likewise, other Greek respondents who bought houses with mortgages illustrated that they selected the area because of the cheap housing prices. Two migrant (Albanian) homeowners stated that the main reason for buying an apartment in Akadimia Platonos, was again the economic one as housing prices are lower in comparison to central areas. However, before becoming homeowners, they were living in several rental apartments in the same neighbourhood.

The basic reason to remain and buy a house in the same area is further related to the fact that other relatives and compatriots live close by, that children go to school in the area and they did not want to change their schooling environment, and they have developed socio-spatial bonds and feelings of place attachment.

Cost minimisation was mentioned as another factor of settling in the area, mainly by Greek people. Especially, the ones that had inherited an apartment, or their husband/partner was a homeowner, indicated that homeownership was the only factor determining their residential choice. For example, R1 (female, 61, pensioner, Greek) stated that:

*"I am a bride here. The house was the parental house of my husband.  
-So which was the main reason that you decided to stay here?  
-But we had a house here!"*

As indicated by the respondent she did not have any other bonds in the area beyond getting married to someone who was born and raised there and owned a house. Many other respondents stated that inheriting a house became the main factor of settlement in the area. In these cases, the fact of homeownership, becomes the main reason for deciding to stay in the area, in order to minimise the living costs.

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

#### *Social Factors*

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

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

As stated in the interview, the economic reason (owning a house) was accompanied by the social one: the parents living in close proximity is translated into free help in the upbringing of the children. Many respondents referred to the same argument: the presence of the broader family is considered as an advantage as they can get assistance in daily issues and/or in the raising of their own family. This social asset is further related to minimisation of expenses and added costs like private kindergartens or hiring a nanny.

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

*"I am born and raised here and I love this neighbourhood a lot. I cannot imagine myself living in another neighbourhood for a long period. I have left for many years, I have travelled, but I always come back here. This is my benchmark, my neighbourhood."*

The interviewee characterises the neighbourhood as his "benchmark". This characterisation, as well as the statement that he "loves" the area, indicates a strong place attachment, which, as he latter stated in the interview, is related to his family, his friends, his memories and the experiences he had throughout his life in the area. Moreover, other born and raised interviewees indicate that they did not want to leave the area as they grew up and built their own families, as they "know" the place and they do not want to leave from there. The fact that other relatives and friends live close by enhances their need to stay put. It may be argued that the close spatial and social relations developed in the area, create a sense of belonging which is related to the housing preference of some households.

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

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

#### *Urban environment and location*

Some respondents indicated that the main reason that attracted them in the area was the urban environment and the central location of the area. Especially the migrants stressed that living in the city centre, in a cheap area with good transport connections (metro station, the rail station and the bus lines) is crucial, as they have to travel long distances for their jobs. If job locations are not stable (e.g. provision of personal services, construction), being close to transportation means, facilitates their travels. The central location was mentioned as a pull factor by many Greeks. Living in the city centre makes possible the easy access towards the rest of the city. Additionally, as the area is close to the national highways, its location facilitates travels away from Athens.

Some respondents indicated that their main reason to settle in the area was the building stock. As they wanted to live in a two-storey building with a backyard, the only place with affordable prices in the city centre was Akadimia Platonos. As expressed by R17 (female, 55, journalist, Greek):

*"This neighbourhood looks like it belongs to the past, it had lots of low-storey houses and you could look at the sky, so we said we are here. So we got our house by chance, we first selected the area, and then we found the house [...] our target was the city centre. We wanted to live in the city centre."*

This interviewee indicated that the humane scale of the buildings in the area (low heights, low storey houses) were crucial factors in their housing choice. Additionally, the dream to regenerate and live in a low story house is economically possible in this area, as in other gentrified inner city areas where the housing stock is more expensive.

From a similar perspective, R47 (male, 41, employee, Greek), a newcomer, indicated that the park and the green spaces of the area was the main factor in his housing choice.

*"I arrived here in 1999, without having any clue how this area will develop, that it is going to become better, after the collapse of the stock market in 1999, they were selling the properties here for free, in very low prices [...] and I came here because of the park, other people are afraid of the park, but I like it. Then the stock market arrived in the area, and it has become much better. Now they are going to appropriate the houses in front of my building and turn them into a park, so it will improve much more."*

The respondent indicated that the main reason he settled in the area, was the green space of the Park and the fact that some years ago the land prices were very cheap. As, later on, the area around the park starts to get upgraded and more properties are appropriated in order to enlarge the park, he feels very convenient with his investment and he likes the area even more. Moreover, other respondents of Greek origin, that have recently settled in the area, indicated that they were

attracted to the area by the green space of the Park, by the lower heights of the buildings surrounding the park which contradicts the high buildings of other inner neighbourhoods. Hence, diversity per se is not a pull factor for housing in the area. The central location, the urban environment (green space and low heights) and the cheap land prices seem to be the main factors that have attracted new residents of Greek origin.

### 3.3 Moving to the present neighbourhood: improvement or not?

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

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

The inhumane daily rhythms (congestion, bad air quality) and the dense built environment of Athens are considered as worse living standards. The lower heights, the lower density of the built environment, the green park in Akadimia Platonos and the tranquillity in the area give them the notion of an urban village, which is highly appreciated in comparison to their previous locations. Another newcomer, R37 (male, 49, school teacher, Greek) indicated, that apart from being attracted to the area:

*"When I entered the house, I could see the Acropolis from my bedroom! Now not anymore as a high building was constructed opposite mine, but the construction of my building is very good. My house is 57 square metres with a bedroom and a bathroom with a united interior space... with southern-eastern orientation... It is surrounded by glass and it has a fireplace. It is very beautiful. I really like my house."*

The interviewees who moved in better housing, in apartments in new constructions, or in well-maintained low storey houses, expressed clearly their satisfaction and characterised that in terms of housing, moving in the area is an improvement.

However, for other interviewees living in the area is not considered an improvement. Especially the ones who inherited a house in the area, expressed themselves rather negatively. For example R28 (female, 43, make-up artist, Swedish) expressed her disappointment by saying:

*"When I moved in here, I didn't like it at all. I don't know why. Maybe because I didn't know the area... I preferred something more central that would be more convenient for my job."*

The above interviewee could not, or did not want to indicate the reasons, that made her dislike the area when she moved in. Other interviewees indicated that life in their former areas was better, as the municipality took better care of the public spaces and the cleaning of their former neighbourhoods (especially the ones that used to live in the neighbouring area of Peristeri). However, R12 (male, 44, unemployed, Albanian) more straightforwardly noted:

*"I would rather live in Glyfada, but I cannot... what should I like here? Here it is full of gypsies and Roma people"*

The above interviewee clearly indicated his discontent about the fact that members of the Roma population are his neighbours. The issue of diversity was indicated in a negative way by other interviewees as it was perceived as a factor of decline of the living conditions in Akadimia Platonos. Especially elderly households and lifelong residents expressed feelings of the discomfort against the migrant other. According to their perception the living standards in the neighbourhood started to deteriorate especially when the migrant population settled in the area, after the 1990s.

Nonetheless, the interviewed migrants expressed themselves positively about the neighbourhood. The fact that the area has many mini-markets and shops where they can satisfy their consumption needs, is considered as an improvement in comparison to the previous areas they had settled which were less lively (for example next to Omonia or Vathis square).

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

### 3.4 Conclusions

As economic, social and other environment factors are mainly expressed as pull factors for settling in Akadimia Platonos, diversity cannot be considered as factor which attracts population to the area. In some cases, diversity is perceived negatively, as diversification is perceived as a factor that has led to the devaluation and degradation of the area.

Economic factors are important: low housing prices, lower rents in comparison to other central areas, inheriting or owning a house are the main reasons for settling in Akadimia Platonos. As the economic abilities of the households have shrunk with the crisis, the minimisation of housing costs is considered as crucial by the majority of the interviewees. Simultaneously other social factors, such as the presence of the broader family, of friends or compatriots, influence the household's decision for housing in the area. However, for the Greek people who have settled in the area in the last five years, other environmental factors are equally important. The low density and the lower heights of the built environment as well as the green space of Plato's park, which create the atmosphere of an "*urban village*", construct better living conditions. Especially for them living in Akadimia Platonos is considered an improvement in comparison to the previous areas that they used to reside.

It may be argued that for the migrant interviewees diversity has not affected their housing choice, as it is related to limited economic means and pre-existing social bonds. Seeking for better housing conditions, they have changed several apartments in the area, indicating stronger housing mobility than the Greek population. Most of the interviewees stated that the area is more convenient in comparison the other central areas, mainly because of the facilities in Akadimia Platonos, such as the mini-markets and the shops. From a similar standpoint, for the Roma interviewees, housing in Akadimia Platonos is considered as an improvement, as the area is

offering affordable housing and better living conditions in comparison to other areas they have settled in the city.

## 4. Perceptions of the diversity in the neighbourhood

### 4.1 Introduction

The basic research questions we aim to address in this chapter are related to the interviewee's perception of the boundaries of the area, of their neighbours and of their neighbourhood.

In the area of Akadimia Platonos residents seem to live parallel lives isolated from each other. Nonetheless everyday interactions in local associations or public institutions, like the local public schools, create the space of micro-encounters, such as Valentine has discussed (2014), where diversity is perceived as a new positive aspect of city living. In these micro-spaces prejudices against the other cease and diversity is conceived as an aspect of multiculturalism of the city. As Wessendorf (2013) has indicated, while in the public realm diversity may be acknowledged as difference, in the parochial realm, diversity may lead to mutual understanding and acceptance of difference.

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

### 4.2 Perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood

Akadimia Platonos is a 3.4 km<sup>2</sup> neighbourhood on the south-west of the city centre of Athens, in close proximity to Omonia Square (the second largest square of the centre of Athens). However, as space is socially constructed (Harvey, 1990; Massey, 2005), the perception of the size or the scale of an area relies on the way the residents have organised and experience their social lives. Spatial practices gain importance through the way social life is structured and reflected on space (Harvey, 1990). As such, the perception of the spatial boundaries of an area are constructed, formed and reordered within the framework of dense and extensive social relations (Petronoti, 2000). Nonetheless, as the perceptions of the boundaries are cognitive constructions, they are not clear nor palpable (Caftantzoglou, 2000); hence they are conceptualised in different ways, which reflect the individual socio-spatial relations.

#### *Perceptions of the borders of the area*

Most of the interviewees describe the boundaries of the area in relation to physical landmarks, i.e. avenues, big streets, hills, churches or public squares of the area. As R17 (Female, 55, journalist, Greek) described in the interview:

*"The main determinant streets are Lenorman and Konstantinoupoleos streets, so this part is called Akadimia Platonos... it is called like that because of the ancient monuments that were discovered in the park... the upper part of the area, which is the surrounding of the hill of Kolonos area until Omonia... there as well antiquities were discovered, this is called Kolonos... from the hill of Kolonos until the Kifisos river, this is Sepolia... these are the three areas and there is a landmark."*

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

#### *Perceptions of the micro-areas*

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

*"I live in Kolonos [...] but this area here it is called Kolokynthou<sup>1</sup> [...] so after the drainage works of river Kifisos were completed, [...] there were plots of land full of zucchinis here [...] so someone named the area as Kolokynthou and it has remained ever since."*

Some micro-areas within the broader area of Akadimia Platonos maintain the place name which obtained during the first urbanisation periods. For example, *Kolokynthou* has its roots in the 1960s, as this part of this land was a place for zucchini cultivation. In the perception of many locals, this name, is more prevalent than the one used for the broader area.

Another elderly couple (R29, male, 82, pensioner, Greeks) living close to the park mentioned that:

*"-They used to call it Bythoula, do you remember Madam-Sousou<sup>2</sup> [...] they used to call it Bythoula as it was a big hole full of soil [...]  
-Yes inside there it was only old rookeries, land and sheep [...] yes I remember the sheep."*

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

### **4.3 Perceptions of neighbours**

Most of the interviewees describe their neighbours through standardised qualifications (nationality, age, education, job), while the qualifications they use vary significantly. The relations that emerge amongst the diverse groups vary from strong social bonds to loose social relations whilst in many cases discomfort and feelings of fear are also expressed.

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<sup>1</sup>Zucchini in Greek is kolokythi.

<sup>2</sup>Greek series of the 1980s indicative of the class divisions in Athens of the 1950s (rich lady initially married to a fisherman living in Vythoula, inherits lots of money, abandons the fisherman, gets married to an upper class phony and moves in the area of Kolonaki (inner city upper class area), who steals her money). At the end of the series she goes back to Vythoula to live with the fisherman who still loves her.



*Quantification*

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

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

Although the majority of the inhabitants are of Greek origin, migrants from various ethnic backgrounds, either from Eastern European cities, from the Middle East and Asia, and in other cases members of the Roma community, form parts of the local population. Most of the interviewees illustrated that the educational status of their neighbours is rather low. As expressed by R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek):

*"The Greeks that live in this block [...] mostly own their apartments and their educational level is very low. This is why we had such electoral results with the Golden Dawn here. Kasidiaris<sup>3</sup> got the highest percentages in the city."*

According to the interviewee, the high percentage of the neo-Nazi party in the recent local elections is related to the low educational status of the neighbours. Most of the respondents indicated that their neighbours mostly work in routine occupations, although some referred that some of the residents are occupied in intermediate or higher professions. As narrated by R36 (male, Greek, 36, plumber):

*"In the area there are as many men as women, from technical jobs to science, everything [...] however the blue collar jobs are more, as the area is close to garages and warehouses, there were many little industries, during the previous decades there were cabbage gardens so there were farmers as well. It is only in the last two decades that people turned to education, so their children go to school, university and so... so many people became like that as well"*

The fact that the population is occupied mostly in technical positions is related to the presence of technical companies and small industries in the broader area. When referring to the Greek population, R36 identified that the last two decades prior to the crisis, when there was a boom in the economy and the households put a strong emphasis on their offspring's higher education (Maloutas, 2007), people in the area turned to higher education as well.

However, in many interviews it was highlighted that their migrant neighbours are restricted to routine occupations or unemployment. As portrayed by R46 (female, 66, Greek, pensioner):

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

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<sup>3</sup> Candidate mayor supported by the Golden Dawn party

Migrant women are mostly occupied informally as cleaning ladies, while migrant men used to be employed in construction and technical posts. However, the economic crisis that has hit especially construction, has left many people -mainly migrant men- without jobs.

Similarly, R17 (female, 55, Greek, journalist) noted that in the street that she lives most of the people:

*"... are unemployed now... especially the migrants... the Greeks are still supported by the grandpa's pension"*

According to the interviewee, unemployment, has acted as an equalising mechanism amongst the local population. Although the Greek population may still take advantage of the protective nest of the family. As indicated by R20 (Bulgarian, cleaning lady in her 30s):

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

Most of people in the area face the crisis in a rather brutal way as they are deprived of their jobs and the consumption status they used to have. Impoverishment has acted as equalising mechanisms which has encouraged the perception that people are being equally affected by the crisis.

### *Qualification*

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

*"I would characterise them as lumpen. They are these kind of very "folk" people. They are dressed in a folk way. The kind of guy who puts on his flip flops, his shorts, this t-shirt with his belly overflowing"*.

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

Another interviewee (R35: female, 41, cleaning lady, Greek) characterised her neighbours (referring to her Greek neighbours) as "sad and melancholic" due to the crisis, as the economic problems and the issues of insecurity they face. Another respondent, R6 described her neighbours (both Greek and migrants) as "melancholic" and "thoughtful" as the crisis has created major economic burdens and deprivation in their lives. According to these perceptions, impoverishment, due to the crisis, is a main factor of isolation and melancholia expressed by the

neighbouring population. In this case, economic deprivation is portrayed by the interviewees as isolation and psychological instability.

The vocabulary used changed significantly when the discussion referred to the migrant and the Roma population, especially by interviewees with low cultural and economic capital. An interviewee (R29: male, 82, pensioner, Greek) stated that migrants who do not have a family and are not assimilated in the Greek society are "*junk*" who deal with drug traffic and loiter the public spaces. From a different perspective, R40 (female, 41, actress, Greek) indicated that migrants are "*deprived alcoholic people*" who export images of withdrawal instead of supporting and introducing their cultural distinction in the area. However, R28 (Swedish, makeup artist in her 40s) characterised her Pakistani neighbours as "*very polite*" people and her Albanian neighbours as "*very good*" people, while R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) indicated that she has developed very strong relations to her Roma neighbours that make her feel "*secure*".

The presence of Roma population in the area creates feelings of discomfort to many interviewees, of both migrant and Greek origin. The strong outdoor living, the low educational level (Roma in Greece hardly go to school), the tendency to cheat and laugh at people creates feelings of fear or dislike. As stated by R30 (female, 33, unemployed, Romanian) very close to her home there is:

*"A building full of Gypsies and to tell you the truth I am afraid to pass from this street [...] it is not that I am afraid of something, but it is that these people have their own culture".*

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

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

#### *Description of relations*

Most of the interviewees indicated that people hardly develop any social relations with their neighbours. Expressions like "*people live enclosed in their homes*" or that "*everyone is enclosed in their own shell*" are indicative of a broader atmosphere of social isolation shared by most interviewees;

people are cohabiting in the same space but they are living parallel lives isolated from each other. For example, the Pakistani interviewees expressed that they want their "*peace and quiet*" so they prefer to hang around with their fellow countrymen, migrants prefer to meet with other compatriots, and Greeks spend most of their times with their families or other friends of the same ethnic and socio-economic status.

However, in the micro-space of the building or the immediate neighbourhood this perception of isolation is broken down. Some interviewees illustrated that although they might not have any relations with the neighbours in the same building they might have developed closer relations to people who live in the same street. For example, R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) narrated that she trusts the old lady who lives next to her, as she always keeps an eye on her, but she has not developed bonds with no one else in the building. Her closest friend in the area is the neighbour who lives in the opposite building as they grew up together, playing in the street. R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian), although claimed that she not friends in the building, she enjoys once per week to drink coffee with the (Greek) elderly lady who lives next door. Hence good neighbouring builds up relations amongst neighbours irrespective of the ethnical background; within this framework diversity is strengthened and negative perceptions of 'otherness' collapse. R41 (male, 32, unemployed, second generation Egyptian) indicated that he would never have expected to become friends with the Bulgarian couple living next door, unless their daughters were not classmates. Hence, in this case, the closeness that characterises the inter-cultural social relations is breached by the children's life world and the way they impose it to the parents.

#### 4.4 Perceptions of the neighbourhood: positive and negative aspects

##### *Changes in the neighbourhood*

Most interviewees indicated that there are not any major changes in the neighbourhood; the housing stock, the urban environment and their neighbours remain the same.

##### *Changes in the built environment*

However, lifelong residents, indicated some changes of great importance. Respondents claimed that the configuration of Plato's park through the arrangement of the green space was of great importance, as it provided the residents with an open space to visit and relax and a place for the children to play and do sports. At the same time, the replacement of the old building stock by green spaces has provided the area with better air and living quality. This way, the creation of the park has ameliorated neighbourhood conditions, whilst the increase of the housing prices of the surrounding buildings is perceived as an upgrading factor. Moreover, the replacement of a parking space by a municipal swimming pool and the configuration of the surrounding space as a public space are considered as a change that has further improved the living conditions. However, some lifelong residents indicated that, especially after the earthquake of 2001, the replacement of the old housing stock by high rise buildings has affected negatively the living standards of the area; on the one hand, the high buildings impose a more aggressive architecture, and on the other hand, the social relations with the pre-existing population were ruptured, as their houses were demolished, while with the new residents who live in the new apartments hardly any interaction exists.

##### *Social changes*

The arrival of new neighbours, especially of migrants, is considered by some lifelong, respondents with low educational and economic capital, as a change in the local social composition which has acted in a negative way; the presence of the migrant population is

perceived as downgrading factor. However, other lifelong residents with higher cultural capital have pinpointed to the fact that criminality in the area has ceased. Moreover, it was broadly stated that the activities undertaken by the local initiatives (see section 5.4 this report) have created a positive impact in the area as they act as a magnet to new residents of higher cultural capital and especially artists. The attraction of this social group is considered as an upgrading input which changes the profile of the area.

#### *Positive perceptions of the neighbourhood*

People who perceive living in Akadimia Platonos positively, stress the area has a lively urban tissue with daily neighbour interactions. Diversity was considered as a positive phenomenon by R8 (female, 36, Spanish teacher, Spanish), a newcomer who pinpointed that:

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

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

Most of the other interviewees put a positive emphasis on the assets of the neighbourhood: the richness in public and private amenities, green spaces, parks, and local stores (mini markets, supermarkets, bakeries, pharmacies) and public schools (primary and secondary). Moreover, its location was highly appreciated (easy access area, close to the city centre as well as the national highways). Additionally, the social relations and the daily interactions, like greetings and brief chats, are considered as a very positive aspect.

#### *Neutral perceptions of the neighbourhood*

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

#### *Negative perceptions of the neighbourhood*

The negative perceptions of the neighbourhood deal with the crisis and its impact upon the lives of the local people, whilst in terms of diversity, negative perceptions were related to feelings of fear of the migrant 'other'. More precisely, the negative effects of the crisis in the area were pinpointed by many respondents: deprivation, loss of jobs and income, school foreclosures (due to the restructuring policies promoted by the memorandum governments) and local shop foreclosures have been the main outcomes of the crisis. Moreover, the lack of infrastructures, the bad maintenance of the existing infrastructures, the lack of cleaning services, have been mentioned as downgrading factors that form a perception that the neighbourhood is not clean

and not well maintained by the local government. In terms of diversity, Greek interviewees, with low cultural and economic capital, expressed the concern that the neighbourhood is deprived because of the migrant population and this has created feelings of insecurity and fear.

## 4.5 Conclusions

Diversity is not perceived as an important phenomenon in everyday living in Akadimia Platonos. The boundaries of the area are expressed in accordance to the physical geography of the neighbourhood (big streets, avenues, hills, parks) or in relation to the past of the city (Plato's park, "*kolokythous*", "*bythoulas*"). Moreover the issue of diversity either is not discussed in the interviewees' perception of their neighbours, or there is a negative perception of the notion. The neighbours are classified by nationality, age, the educational and the professional status. Neighbours are characterised as "*good*", "*folk*" (*kaloi, laikoi*) people in general terms. Some interviewees, when referring to the migrant neighbours make use of rough adjectives indicative of their discomfort against the migrant "*other*". However, social relations develop in the micro-spaces of the area, amongst people who live in the same building or in the same street. Good neighbouring relations end up to the enhancement of diversity as daily encounters resulting a continuous interaction of people from different backgrounds.

The issue of diversity is perceived as a positive factor by respondents who put it straightforwardly within the framework of multiculturalism. According to this perception diversity is a phenomenon of a big metropolis which creates vivid environments through the co-existence and interaction of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This mixture is considered as a sign of progress and westernisation. Many interviewees have a positive perception of the neighbourhood they live in, as they put more emphasis on the public assets or the social bonds that develop. The impact of the crisis and the rise of the neo-nazi ideology and behaviours are considered as negative aspects of everyday living in Akadimia Platonos.

## 5. Activities in and outside the neighbourhood

### 5.1 Introduction

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

Although diversity does not play a straightforward role in the activities developed by local people, it influences the social life in the area in a rather secondary or indirect way. Likewise, diversity is not a main driver behind the use of public space, nor is it associated to the formation of local associations. However, through the use of public space diversity is enhanced, as social relations emerge amongst the various social groups. Local associations in Akadimia Platonos consist of politically progressive people who are active in issues such as solidarity, justice and claims for better living conditions. Within this framework, the interest in diversity has emerged as a side effect, as local associations create bonds of trust with people of diverse cultures who reside in the area. Local initiatives have an important effect of the development of social capital (Curley,

2010), especially amongst people who share common concerns; as they create comfort zones, as Blokland and Nast (2014) have argued, within the area, where people feel at ease to interact with their acquaintances.

## 5.2 Activities: where and with whom?

The majority of the interviewees claimed that due to limited time they hardly develop activities in the neighbourhood. The activities they engage with mostly deal with spare time and entertainment. However, their patterns of entertainment vary significantly in relation to the economic abilities, the age and the lifestyle of the respondents.

### *Activities outside the neighbourhood*

Older households stated that although they have lots of free time, they hardly engage with any activities in the area. During daytime, women prefer to visit close relatives (brothers, sisters, or even children) in other areas, after they finish with housekeeping. Middle-aged households, with or without children, stated that for their entertainment, for example for dinner or for drinks, they prefer to go out at other parts of the city. Most of the interviewees, especially the migrants and Greeks with low economic capital, indicated that since there are not many options in the area, they prefer to go out in the neighbouring municipality of Peristeri which is close by, than visiting other areas of the city centre of Athens. Greek residents with economic capital expressed that for their entertainment, for "*a night out with friends who are not from the area*", they may visit other areas, such as the neighbouring area of Thisio (archaeological space), the city of Piraeus (next to the sea), and the municipality of Kessariani in the eastern part of Athens (next to the mountain of Imitos). It seems that interviewees with economic capital prefer distinctive neighbourhoods where the local ambient, due to natural characteristics, offers refreshment. The interviewed younger people prefer for their entertainment to visit other inner city areas, such as the gentrifying area of Metaxourgio, or the nightlife of Exarchia.

### *Activities inside the neighbourhood*

In the area of Akadimia Platonos, most of the activities undertaken by the interviewees deal with free time and entertainment. Elderly men pass their day time in local traditional kafenios; in these places they meet their (male) friends, discuss political issues and joke to each other. As expressed by R41 (male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian):

*"I will meet my friends at the local kafenio, where we chat a bit, we exchange a couple of words, and this way we exchange our opinions."*

Likewise, another (Greek) elderly respondent declared that kafenio are the places where he can amuse himself by joking with friends and neighbours. It should be noted that traditional kafenio are spaces where mostly elderly men spend their free time, as women of these generations are mostly restricted to the private space of home. However, all the interviewed elderly households indicated that after 7 o'clock in the evening, they stay at home, as they feel scared of the migrants, who, according to their perception, are responsible for the delinquent behaviours. Hence, diversity is not a factor that triggers the participation of elderly people in the area.

Middle-aged couples with young children indicate different lifestyle patterns in their activities. Although they underline that their spare time is limited because of their parental duties, they engage in various activities which mainly relate to their entertainment. Many interviewees declared that they are active in the parents' association of their children's school. As will be



analysed in a following section (5.4), through this scheme they have met other parents and developed friendly relationships. Other middle-aged interviewees, who are not active in local associations, mentioned that they became close friends with the parents of their children's friends. Stronger ties develop amongst parents of the same nationality (all the interviewees mentioned that they become friends with people from the same ethnical background). This is not necessarily the case of children who seem more open to create friendships with their schoolmates independent of ethnicity. Other middle-aged respondents (with or without children) declared that they have developed close ties with people they have met from their political activities, either at local political parties or at the local resident's assembly (section 5.4).

Other respondents indicated that they engage in cultural activities in the area such as traditional dancing and singing classes. After class, a drink in the area becomes a nice opportunity of interacting with each other. Other, mainly Greek respondents stated that in their free time they go to the municipal swimming pool in the area or to the gym (for health reasons). Some respondents indicated that in their free time they enjoy craft, such as knitting and embroidering at home, or even reading books and relaxing.

Diversity does not play a major factor in the activities of people in Akadimia Platonos. The need to interact with their friends or spend the free time in an amusing way, seem to play a more crucial role in engaging with activities. Quite distinctively, the interviewed Pakistani people indicated that in their free time they prefer to meet with each other, either at their homes or at the specific internet cafe run by a Pakistani friend. R14 (male, 33, waiter, Syrian) indicated what when his country fellows resided in the area, in their spare time, they preferred to visit each other in their houses. Since many people from this group are without documentation, meetings and social interactions are safer if they are set in private space (house) than in the public one (neighbourhood).

However, activities in the neighbourhood turn into places of encounter for the various groups. Hence, in indirect ways diversity seems to be encouraged through daily social interactions, especially for people who share the same patterns of entertainment and outdoors activities

### 5.3 The use of public space

The public spaces which constitute the area of Akadimia Platonos are four: the park of Plato, called often by the inhabitants as the "*archaia*" (the ancient vestiges), the square next to the municipal swimming pool, Petroula's square opposite St Constantine's church on Lenorman Avenue and St George's square. These spaces are used by the majority of the residents, although different social groups show strong selective preference, for example the Roma mostly enjoy Petroula's square, the Albanians St George's square, and the activists and environmentalists Plato's park. It should be noted that although in Athens the use of public space is mainly perceived as the time passed at the outdoor spaces of cafe's, i.e. use of public space via private means, the majority of the interviewees stressed that they like to use the public spaces in the area. After all, Akadimia Platonos is one of the very few inner city areas with public spaces.

#### *The Park of Akadimia Platonos*

The Park of Akadimia Platonos is the most prominent open and public space in the area. Most of the interviewees stated that they use it, but their reasoning varies significantly. Migrant and Greek families with young children often visit the park so that their children meet their friends, play in the green spaces, or train with the local football team. Although they claimed that they hardly visit the park on their own, they take advantage of the occasion of being there with their children,

so as to chat and raise informal discussions with other parents of mixed ethnic background. The descriptions of the social environment of the park that they have provided us with, are quite similar. For example, R13 (male, 50, clerk, Greek) illustrated that:

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



**Photo 1: Chatting at the park when the children are playing**

Through this quote the respondent refers to the diversity of the people who visit and use the park. As mentioned, the park is a place receptive of all cultures and lifestyles existing in the area. Elderly people, migrants of various ethnic origins, dog owners, Roma, homeless people, artists or culture lovers use the park. The interviewee characterised as *"harmonic"* the way people use this public, indicating the relations that develop among the users. However, as it will be analysed in the next section, the park has become a vibrant place of the social life in the area, only after the activities of the local associations and the opening of the European Village kafenio.



**Photo 2: Outside the municipal swimming pool**

The interviewees who are active in the associations have indicated that the Park and the kafenio have become a daily meeting point where they can meet their friends, discuss the local issues and develop ideas for new initiatives. Respondents who own dogs mention the frequent visits in the park (up to 3 times per day) where they have developed relations with other dog owners (meet and talk to each other). However, Greek respondents with low income and low education, indicated that they do not want to visit the park, arguing that they feel insecure due to the migrants' presence, or that when they visit the park they do not allow their children to play with migrant children. For example, R35 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Greek) indicated that:

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

The issue of fear against the migrant other is put in a straightforward way by the above interviewee, as she is afraid for the security of her family. By claiming that there is a need of constant surveillance the respondent expressed her feelings of fear against otherness. From a similar perspective, elderly people of Greek origin claimed that they do not like to visit, nor spend time in the park, as they are scared of the migrants.

#### *The square next to the municipal swimming pool*

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

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

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

*Petroula square, St George's square*

Petroula square is mostly used by members of the Roma community and older Albanian men. The Roma occupy the central part of the space, while the elderly Albanian are in the fringes of the square playing cards and chess on the public benches. As indicated by R24 (male, 22, unemployed- rubbish collector, Roma) this is the space where he will go out with his wife and his children and meet his mother in law, the brother of his wife and his friends. The loudness of the Roma population, the strong outdoor life and their tendency to loiter public space are highly criticised. Especially women (migrant and Greek) stated that they avoid to pass this square as they feel threatened. From a similar perspective, a Pakistani interviewee expressed that he does not want to visit any of the public places of the area in fear of the police controls and the Roma people. As R4 (male, 40, carpenter Pakistani) claimed in the interview:



**Photo 3: Roma people at Petroula's square**

*"I don't like this square, it is full of Gypsies [...] we don't go there, when they see us they start calling us names and shouting at us [...] The other thing that makes me feel scared is the Golden Dawn<sup>4</sup>. And the police that controls all the time. I am OK. I have papers, but if they put you in the bus then they don't let you out free for at least 3 or 4 hours, and you lose your time..."*

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<sup>4</sup> The Neo-Nazi party in Greece



The lack of documentation and the fear of police and neo-Nazi brutality restrict the Pakistani population to the private sphere of the house where they feel more secure.

Nonetheless, it may be suggested that public spaces become the places in the area where diversity is expressed. People from various ethnic backgrounds use public spaces for various reasons (meet friends, children to play, relax). This encounter becomes a prime opportunity for interaction and amusement. It is where the prejudices against difference and diversity are surpassed, people cross the barriers of fear and mingle with each other.

#### 5.4 The importance of associations

The active associations in the area of Akadimia Platonos are the residential committee, the collaborative kafenio European Village, the Sunday's migrant school and a newly formed cultural NGO called Platonas. Furthermore, following a common practice at public schools in Greece, there is the parents' associations in the local schools.

##### *Limited or no participation*

Most of the migrants and the Roma interviewees indicated that either they do not know anything about the existence and the activity of the local associations, or they know that they exist but they do not want to participate. The migrant interviewees are more likely willing to participate at the parents' association of their children's school. The reasoning for not participating in the local associations varies. Some respondents argue that they do not have free time left, while others briefly mention that "*I don't want to participate in such things*". This answer may get several interpretations; it may be that the migrants in the area do not feel comfortable to engage with local associations, as they mainly consist of Greek people. It may, as well, be that they feel scared of manipulation as such, according to their perception; associations maybe controlled by political parties. Likewise, middle aged Greeks with low education, do not participate in local associations as, according to their perceptions, local initiatives consist of and deal with migrants' issues; such view is supported by further beliefs that political parties (of the left) are hidden behind.

##### *The importance of participation*

##### *Local associations*

However, people who participate or support the local associations, indicate the importance of their activities in various ways.



**Photo 4: The European Village, the local assembly and the Platonas' initiative opposite the park**

*Environmental importance and demands for better quality of life*

Many respondents pinpointed the significance of the activities undertaken by the residential committee for the preservation of the architectural heritage of the area and of the green space. In order to oppose the construction of Plato's park, the initiative raised awareness in the neighbourhood and mobilised against the destruction of the green space. Moreover, they turned against the demolition of an old factory of architectural importance and stopped the construction of a shopping mall pushed by the international company Blackrock. Such initiatives, in combination with the organisation of cultural and solidarity activities (such as soup kitchens) inside the area of the Park, have further stimulated the use of public space.

*Social importance*

People who participate in the residential committee and the European Village kafenio, interact with each other and develop social and spatial bonds. As indicated in many interviews, people have become close friends with neighbours who share similar cultural, social and political thoughts. Simultaneously, the space of the kafenio and the park have become meeting points, where daily and spontaneous encounters take place. The exchange of ideas has inspired the organisation of new initiatives which aim to attract and bring together the rest of the residents. As illustrated by R16 (female, 55, NGO directress, Greek):

*"We organised the fiesta of St Trifonas in front of the church of St Trifonas in the park, as he is the protector of agriculture [...] we wanted it to be like the fiestas in villages with food and drinks [...] Ok the first year the priest was angry at us, the next year he didn't pay any attention, maybe the next year he will come dancing with us".*

As mentioned by the interviewee, people who are active in the local associations decided to organise a fiesta related to the celebration of agriculture. The first year church goers (mainly elderly conservative women) did not participate and were rather suspicious of the initiative. However, the following years they become friendlier to the initiative. Such initiatives aspire to bring the diverse people together, beyond political, religious and lifestyle differentiations, while bridging the gap that exists in the local social relations. As Putnam (2000) would indicate, such initiatives encourage the development of bridging social capital.

*Solidarity*

Local associations, especially the resident's committee and the Sunday's migrants school, put forward the idea of solidarity and cater for the needs of the most deprived population. Through food and clothing distribution, and the provision of supportive classes to school children, there is an exchange of goods, ideas, worries and hopes amongst both the Greek and the migrant population. As indicated by R4 (male, 40, carpenter, Pakistani):

*"In the Sunday school, the Greeks and the migrants are the same, there is no difference between the Greek and the migrant, as we don't have anything to split [...] I will talk to people, I will discuss things about what I need for my papers, my boss asked me to sing a paper, I will ask people about it... so that people know how it is to live in Greece."*

Within the local associations people feel equal to each other, and there is a broader sense of trust; entrusting each other daily problems and personal frustrations. Within such activities, issues of diversity are celebrated as bonds are created amongst the diverse social groups and the notion of equality is promoted.

*Parents' associations at public schools*

The parents' associations seem to attract both migrant and Greek parents. The basic aim for this associations is the amelioration of the school environment, of children's activities at school and the resolution of problems that may occur. The broader impact of this initiative is the creation of a common space of interaction amongst the diverse groups which, in some degree, fuels the creation of social bonds. As illustrated by R28 (female, 43, makeup artist, Swedish) she met her two best friends in the area from the parents' association, while other Greek respondents stated that although they did not relate to the migrants, through the parents' associations they came metand became friends with migrant parents. It may be suggested that such associations indirectly encourage diversity as they help in the development of bridging social capital.

## 5.5 Conclusions

Diversity does not play a major role in people's activities, public associations nor the use of public space. In Akadimia Platonos, the inhabitants arrange their activities in relation to their spare time, their family status and their age. Single people prefer to meet friends (from in and outside the neighbourhood) in neighbouring areas or in the collective kafenio of European Village. Parents spend more time with neighbours they meet from their children's activities(school playground). Many elderly people are restricted to their home in fear of the migrants and of their supposedly "delinquent" behaviours in public space.

Nonetheless, public associations in the area are social places where people from different ethnic backgrounds interact. These associations also propel the idea of solidarity amongst the diverse social groups in order to overcome the problems of the crisis. Although diversity concerns are not put forward in a straightforward way, nor do they affect people's participation, they emerge as a side product of encounter and interaction. Under the framework of the local associations, differences and fears are left aside. Positive ideas for the amelioration of everyday life, such as improvement of the school and/or the built environment, solidarity for all, are expressed. This way, the need to overcome local problems brings together various people, and social encounters enhance the bridging social capital of the area.

Moreover, the public spaces of the area emerge as space of encounter and interaction. Then again, diversity is not perceived as a factor which leads people to the use of public spaces, but it emerges as an outcome of the act (of using public space). The use of the public spaces, especially of the Akadimia Platonos' park, is a daily activity for most of the residents. The public spaces are the places where they satisfy personal needs to meet or interact with like-minded people, where they satisfy their children's need for playing, where they organise activities for the broader area. The outcome of a strong use of local public spaces is the interaction of people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, of different lifestyles and cultures, hence the encouragement of diversity.

## 6. Social cohesion

### 6.1 Introduction

As Forrest and Kearns (2001) have indicated, social cohesion is about getting by and getting on at the more mundane level of everyday life. Nonetheless, social cohesion is a rather ambivalent term, as with a basic scope to advocate better social relations, it ends up in contextual ambiguity, in need for more conceptual analysis (Maloutas and Malouta, 2004). In order to diminish this



epistemological fallacy, we focus on the dimensions of social cohesion which are related to civic culture, social order and control, solidarity, networks and social capital, the sense of belonging and identity (Kearns and Forrest, 2000).

In this section we aim to approach the relation that emerges between diversity and social cohesion in the area of Akadimia Platonos. The research questions we aim to address deal with the way local people organise their social and spatial relations and the way diversity enmeshes in these relations. Which people is part of the inhabitants' personal network? Do they develop friendships with neighbours, hence boost social cohesion and diversity in the area, or do they restrict themselves to limited interactions? How do they live together with their neighbours? Do they create bonds and networks? Is there mutual support? Do they enhance social solidarity within the area or do they live isolated from each other? Initially we focus on the egocentric relations that inhabitants develop and on the ways they interact on a daily basis with their neighbours. We then analyse the social bonds, the forms of mutual support, as well as the factors which lead to social distancing. We argue that although diversity does not influence the everyday social relations, the bonds that are created amongst specific social groups may be interpreted as local social capital. At the same time, distrust against "otherness" leads to social distancing which contradicts the "social cohesion" theoretical framework.

## 6.2 Composition of interviewees' egocentric networks

Many interviewees indicated that the most important people in their life are their families (husband, children), others stated that their personal networks mainly constitutes their friends, while some of them noted that neighbours have become their best friends. This section refers to the way people develop their networks in the neighbourhood of Akadimia Platonos, through their kin, friendship and neighbourhood ties.

### *Family*

For many interviewees their family, either their nuclear or members of the broader family who live in the area, plays a crucial role in everyday living. Family is very important in everyday life and in many interviews it was stated that the husband/wife and children are best friends. Within the family network they feel comfortable to share the economic burdens and political anxieties, and where they can get psychological support and enjoy free time. The support provided within this network is considered very significant. As indicated by R6 (female, 50, Greek teacher, Greek):

*"People that I feel closer to are my partner, my daughter and a friend of mine [...] we are politically very active, so the little time there is free we will go to cultural events organised by the political initiatives."*

According to the interviewee the most important people in her life is her husband, her daughter, and an old friend of hers. Moreover, younger people have declared that the most important people in their lives are their families who live in the area, as they within the framework of family, relations are true and honest. As indicated by R39 (male, 37, assurer, Greek):

*"Look, above all it is the family. There is no one closer to you than your family. It is the family that will support you in a good or in a bad moment."*

According to the respondent the family network acts as a support mechanism in good and bad moments, providing people with comfort, as it is family that is closer than anyone else.

Additionally, the existence of the broader family is characterised as significantly important by elderly people and by families with young children. For elderly people, the fact that they live close to other relatives, such as brother and sisters, is considered as very important, as it is with them that they pass their time during the day. As expressed by R46 (female, 66, pensioner, Greek):

*"I don't have other friendships, apart from Katerina who is married to my husband's brother [...] we meet each other every day, we talk on the phone, go for walks together, we go out for coffees[...] with her husband we have become a little company, we go out together, even in the village we share the same house, we have never fought with each other."*

The interviewee organises her daily practices with the relatives who live in the area. From a similar perspective, another respondent (R23) claimed that, on a daily basis, she meets her sister who lives in the same area, for a coffee or to accompany each other to the doctor. Again, the fact that a member of the broader family lives in close proximity emerges as an important factor in the organisation of daily social life. There is a strong evidence that the egocentric networks, especially of elderly people, consist of and develop around the family circles.

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

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

The support of the broader family is considered as crucial in the raising of the grandchildren, as the parents have to work. Moreover, the fact that other relatives live in the area, is considered as positive so that the children know who their "family" is, i.e. to know where they come from. Even in indirect terms, family arises as a crucial factor; the spatial proximity with the broader family is considered as an important factor for the development of the personality of the children.

### *Friends*

Many interviewees declared that the people they feel closer to are the friends they have met either in the past, either in their current activities, either in the neighbourhood. Especially younger respondents (people in their 30s) indicated that their best friends are people whom they have met in former or in current activities and do not reside in the area. For example R22(female, 39, unemployed, Greek) indicated that:

*"My two best friends do not live in Greece anymore [...] one of them is in France [...] and the other one in Australia [...] they left the country [...] with the last one we used to work together in an advertising agency, and the first one we used to play together as children, her grandmother used to live here... my other two best friends the first one I don't see her a lot as she has a different lifestyle, she has three children, and with the other one we teach Spanish every week together."*

The interviewee's best friends are people beyond the neighbourhood, who she has met in past. Friendship has emerged with people with the same habits or life perspectives. From a similar perspective, other respondents indicated that their friends are not from the neighbourhood, they met at school, at work, in meetings with other friends or in bars. There is a strong evidence that younger people relate more and develop friendly relationships with people who have the same

interests, or share similar habits in their entertainment, i.e. like to go out to the same cafes or bars, thus not necessarily with people who live in the same neighbourhood.

However, people, both young and older, active in the neighbourhoods' associations stressed that the people they feel closer to are neighbours who are active and engage in the same associations. Sharing the same worries and similar beliefs becomes a factor of developing stronger ties with each other. This bonding is facilitated by living in close proximity. As indicated by R49(female, 28, waitress, Greek) who is active in the European Village kafenio:

*"The people I meet most and I hang out together are the people I have met in the kafenio. They are about my age and we met each other as colleagues, as volunteers in the same organisation."*

According to the interviewee, the same socio-environmental worries, and the same way of passing free time and amusing are the basic reasons that makes her feel closer to her new friends. As stated by respondent R17 (female, 55, journalist, Greek, journalist):

*"[I will meet] with all the people that participate in the structures... With the people from the parents' association, from the neighbourhood assembly, here in Platonas you can even meet each other twice per week... with the other friends who do not reside in the area, it is difficult, you have to arrange to meet them... I think that locality is a crucial factor for who is your friend, and this does not only count for me but for the rest of the people as well... at least this is what I think"*

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

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

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

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

*"The people I feel closer too are two women from my country, whom I will call, these are the friends I have, and I have a cousin here as well [...] we met at the square where our children play... I know lots of people but these are my friends."*

People with children seem more open to interact as they share same worries and similar lifestyle patterns. In the above case, the respondent has developed stronger ties with women from the

same ethnic background. Other respondents stated that the new friends from the parents' association are of the same origin. It seems that, sharing the same language and culture facilitate the development of friendship. Nonetheless, through the children's activities people have developed bonds with neighbours who, in other circumstances, would not have been able to meet.

Diversity does not seem to play a role in the development of the respondents' egocentric networks. Personal networks establish amongst family members (broader or nuclear family), amongst people of the same political or environmental dispositions- active in local associations-, or amongst people with similar family status (children at the same age).

### 6.3 Living together with neighbours: bonds and forms of mutual support

Living together in the area of Akadimia Platonos is not only about sharing the same space. Social encounters and networks, as well as social distancing and fear of the "other" characterise the socio-spatial relations that evolve in the area. After all, as Massey (2007) has indicated, space is a mosaic of disputes. As such, space should not be recognised only as a place for encounter of diversity, but as a meeting place of joint though conflicting trajectories of people. Before discussing issues of social cohesion, this section will highlight the socio-spatial disputes which are caused due to fear of the "other". After all, understanding the reasoning behind social distancing, which undermines social cohesion, may lead us to suggestions that enhance both the bonding and bridging social capital of the area.

#### *Fear of the "other"*

Many respondents indicated feelings of discomfort and fear against "otherness". From the Greeks' perspective, the neighbourhood started declining after 1992 when the first migrants from Eastern European countries arrived as economic migrants in the area. The arrival of the recent wave of migrants from countries of the Middle East has intensified these feelings of discomfort. As narrated by R33 (female, 42, unemployed, Greek):

*"There are many Albanians, and Pakistanis from all kinds of the races... They are all blacks [...] I don't know exactly where they are from as I get confused from their blackness [...] they fight with each other, they get drunk, they get into many things. The other day my son told me there were gunshots in the square [...] The old days you were not afraid to go out. Now you lock yourself inside the house..."*

According to the interviewee, the presence of different cultures is perceived as negative. The migrants are described as people with black skin colours who are considered as responsible for the delinquency in the area (problems with alcohol, gunshots, fight in the public space). Other respondents indicated that they are scared of the migrants and their delinquent behaviours, so they end up being restricted at home without using the public spaces although they would like to. Diversity is considered as the main reason for the downgrading of the area, related to the fear against the migrant "other" may be considered as a factor of social distancing. Simultaneously, migrants expressed feelings of fear against the Roma community and the Greek population. As expressed by R14 (male, 33, waiter, Syrian):

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

This respondent wants to be open and meet his neighbours, but he is afraid of the Greeks' reaction, as once he was harassed in public space by a group of people. The issue of harassment was brought up by other migrants as well. Many migrants stated that they had problems with the police when dealing with their documentation. Especially two Romanians indicated that the attitude of the police was very hard before Romania joined the European Union, and they were treated in a way they felt inferior. Moreover, one Romanian narrated that she had to change house, as the Greek lady living below her was complaining and creating problems to them as her child was very loud. An interviewed Roma narrated a similar story that a Greek woman residing in the upper floors of the next building is trying to convince his owner to evict him and his family. Quite similarly, a Pakistani migrant stated that a Greek neighbour was calling the police when they were celebrating the Ramadan and they gathered for dinner at his home. The fact that diverse cultures co-exist in the same place is, additionally, perceived as something bad. As stated by R21 (female, 34, cleaning lady, Ukrainian) diversity is something negative and unavoidable:

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

Although this interviewee would prefer to live in more homogeneous environments, she recognises diversity as an aspect of living in the city, without alternative.

The negative perception about diversity is not the prominent one. Other respondents described the cohabitation in more positive ways, which may be analysed under the framework of social cohesion and living with diversity.

#### *Everyday living in Akadimia Platonos*

Diversity in Akadimia Platonos is not only linked to negative perceptions and fearful feelings. Many interviewees stressed that they enjoy conviviality with people of diverse socio-ethnic backgrounds. Most interviewees provided us with a clear description of their direct neighbours, i.e. the people living in the same building or the same street. They stressed that people from different cultures, nationalities and life spans live in the micro-spaces of their neighbourhood, shaping diverse patterns of living. In many cases they indicated the close relations that have gradually developed between them and some of their neighbours. For example, R18 (female, 44, accountant, Greek) illustrated that:

*"In this area, due to our economic deficiencies, we inevitably co-exist with each other, so we respect each other's cultures [...] the lady that lives next to me is a pensioner and she is older than me... we discuss about the wage cuts, her pension's cuts, our bad economic conditions etc. [...] I ask her if she can watch over my children when I am not there, if she can iron my clothes, and I will give her a gift, I borrow her money on the 20th when she doesn't have any... this kind of interaction.*  
*-And how did you start the communication with each other?*  
*-With food exchange. "Today I cooked a nice pastitsio<sup>5</sup>, have some of it" the other day it was "now taste my food". Like that, very simple, everyday things."*

The respondent indicates that co-habitation emerged as an outcome of the small economic resources. However, there is respect of people's cultures and of the difference in the various lifestyles. As she illustrates, the woman next door is an elderly woman, who she initially met

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<sup>5</sup>Lasagna-like local food.

through food exchange; a practice of good neighbouring. Since then, their relationship has developed further to daily encounters and discussions about the crisis, into a more in-depth relationship of helping each other when in need (watch over the children, cloth ironing, money loaning). Migrant women also narrated similar stories of bonding with their (direct) neighbours. A second generation Egyptian man stated that he often visits the Bulgarian couple who live next door, while a Bulgarian woman, after stressing that she knows everyone in her street, she indicated that people help each other by sharing "a dish of food" or exchanging old clothes every now and then.

Other people have stated that their relations to their neighbours are less strong. They meet in the street and discuss with each other, invite or meet each other at a social event, and more rarely pay a visit to each other's home. For example, R1 (female, 61, pensioner, Greek) argued that, social relations in the neighbourhood are similar to the ones in:

*"... a village, if someone dies, we well go all together to the funeral. We talk to each other, we look after each other, but we don't exchange visits at home. There is another group of people that we will meet for diner and celebrate together at fiestas. And there is a narrowest cycle that we go out to the tavernas of the neighbourhood. There are three cycles let's say, the neighbourhood, the broader cycle and the narrowest one."*

As indicated, people know each other in the area and they connect to each other with different ways; with some neighbours, relations are more superficial, while with other stronger bonds of friendship are developed. Similarly, another respondent (R13) expressed that although he does not have any friends in the area, he invites his neighbours at his children's baptism ceremonies and he is invited in weddings, or even joins his neighbours for an afternoon drink at home. He characterised his relations to his neighbours as typical and formal relations of neighbouring. However, such invitations (to religious events) or home visits indicate stronger bonds to simple encounters in the street. It seems that in the micro-spaces of the neighbourhood (the streets or the buildings) the social relations that develop are stronger. This bonding is essentially expressed in the way neighbours help each other.

#### *Helping each other*

Jane Jacobs (1993) has indicated how people who keep "an eye upon the street" contribute to higher levels of safety and control in an area; elements that according to Kearns and Forrest (2000) are part of the conceptual framework of social cohesion. In our research, two cases of house fires were mentioned which share the same characteristic: the mobilisation of the neighbourhood to put the fire out. In one case, the owner was absent. As expressed in the interview by R28 (female, 43, make-up artist, Swedish):

*"Some years ago, I was not at home as I was working, and my veranda was set on fire [...] the whole neighbourhood mobilised, the pharmacy owner, the neighbours they were all struggling to put out the fire until the fire brigade arrives... I was at work at Schinias and a neighbour called me and asked "what is going on in your house" and then I started calling too, and the neighbours were calling the police and they were telling them that there are children inside the house. They knew I had children. Everybody had mobilised, everybody helped, and they had become one team. I really liked that."*

Although the respondent did not have any close relations with her neighbours, they were aware of the fact that she has children. So when they realised that her house was set on fire, they mobilised in order to save the children and help their neighbour who was absent at that time.

Such reaction from the local society creates feelings of security and trust, as indicated by the interviewee. The "eye on the street" was also crucial in the second case of house fire. According to R47 (male, 41, employee, Greek), when there was fire in the house next door, all the neighbours mobilised in order to put it out. Hence, although there might be loose relations amongst neighbours, in times of emergency there is a clear tendency of helping each other.

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

*"... carrying my daily shopping, carrying things I could not carry on my own, sometimes they brought me coffee, cigarettes or beer when I could not move, even the Greeks [...] they have offered to clean my house, they ask me if everything is OK on a daily basis..."*

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

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

*"He was from Iran [...] and in order to get his papers, to be legalised, to become a Greek, they needed two witnesses to claim that they are married. So me and R34 went to do so. Off course we would do so, without any doubts."*

As illustrated by the respondent, both women offered their support to a migrant neighbour in order to get the legal documentation. As discussed, they offer their assistance *"without any doubt"* indicating the trust and solidarity that develops amongst the people that live in the area.

#### *Trust and social cohesion*

Moreover, other interviewees have illustrated the ways they have offered their assistance to their neighbours. R29's (male, 82, pensioner, Greek) wife noted that she was offering her support, in psychological and practical terms, to her baker when the latter's husband died. R34 (female, 41, shop-owner) stated that older ladies in her street call her to help them in medical injections, as they knew that she was working as a nurse before she got married. R21 (female, 34, cleaning lady, Ukrainian) claimed that people in her neighbourhood assist her a lot as they often provide her with food and clothes for her children. Furthermore, R20 (female, 39, cleaning lady, Bulgarian) stated that whenever she runs out of money she feels ok to ask for milk and cigarettes at the local shop, or ask neighbours for some money until she gets paid. Simple daily practices encourage interaction amongst neighbours, leading to the construction of stronger networks based on respect, solidarity and support.

Other respondents indicated that saluting their neighbours and exchanging small discussions in the street makes them feel nice and. Such description refers to Granovetter's (1973) approach on weak ties; even when strong bonds are not apparent, weak ties that emerge are significant for the establishment of a sense of social cohesion. Other daily practices that indicate social networking in the area deal with entrusting the neighbours with the collection of children from school, or with the house keys for watering the plants. R13 (male, 50, clerk, Greek) expressed that his confidence to send his children to the mini-shop next door is related to the trust he has for his direct neighbours (that they will keep an eye on the child). However, it should be indicated that such feelings of trust develop only amongst people who live in the same street or in the same building, i.e. in the micro-spaces.

#### *Weak ties and social distance*

The interviewees that do not have children, or children who have graduated from school, and interviewees who do not participate in local associations, characterise their relations to their neighbours as *"formal"*. As noted in the interviews, apart from saluting each other, they hardly develop further relations. For example R6 (female, 50, Greek teacher, Greek) noticed that:

*"There is a sense of acceptance, in the sense that they will exchange a "good day" with you, but apart from that they will not offer you any kind of support in anything else, apart from people who have some relations, the rest of the people do not have any interaction in the street, nor do they visit each other at home, they don't relate."*

As indicated, people interact and engage with each other only if there is a prior acquaintance in the area, e.g. in the school or in the building. A salute may be the only interaction that may exist. Other interviewees who have described people in the area as enclosed to themselves, they indicated that the problems people face due to the economic crisis leave no space for interaction nor will to meet with the neighbour. Moreover, as noticed in a previous section, fear of the "other" counteracts social interaction, as some people are reluctant to meet and engage with people of different ethnic background. Prejudice against difference and fear of the fear seem to create feelings of mistrust that better encourage social distance than social proximity, hence act counter to any form of social cohesion.

## 6.4 Conclusions

Diversity is little related to the social capital and cohesion which emerge amongst some groups in Akadimia Platonos. Diversity does not influence the daily social interactions nor the networks that have created in the area. Personal networks develop amongst family networks, both nuclear and broader, and friends. As identified, comfort, security and confidence underlie the people's need to strongly interact and be close to their relatives. Moreover, within the family networks, economical, ethical and psychological support is provided. At the same time, egocentric networks evolve around friendship. Friends from the past, from work, or neighbours with similar lifestyles form the basic cycles upon which personal networks establish. However, the participation in local associations or children's schooling and playing habits, are the main spaces where friendships emerge amongst neighbours.

Diversity in the area has created feelings of insecurity for parts of the population. Delinquency and deterioration of the living conditions are projected as outcomes of the migrants' presence in the area; this has created fearful feeling against otherness, which turn into mistrust and social distance. Nonetheless, social bonds emerge in the micro-spaces of the neighbourhood, i.e. on the level of the building and the street, enhance social cohesion and diversity. Frequent daily



encounters may turn into bonding and exchange of support and solidarity in cases of emergency or need. This bonding emerges independently of the ethnic or social background of the neighbour. Moreover, the ties that develop amongst people of similar political thinking (in the local associations) or of social interactions (children, school) may enhance both the bridging and the bonding social capital in the area. Typical relations which are interpreted as "weak ties" construct feelings of security and convenience. Within this framework, the social capital that develops in the area mainly deals with the support, solidarity and social control that neighbours express for each other independently of the ethnic background. Diversity is enhanced through social bonding and the social behaviours related to cohesion.

## 7. Social mobility

### 7.1 Introduction

Social mobility is related to the upward or downward movement of people in their professional careers. Tasan-Kok et al.(2013) state that social mobility, in a broader sense, is not only related to income and jobs, but also to power and status. Social networks, or else the social capital of an area, may play a pivotal role in finding (better) jobs. For example Granovetter (1973) has indicated how weak ties in a neighbourhood may be more effective for a person's seek of better positions in the labour market. At the same time, living in a deprived neighbourhood may jeopardise the upward social mobility, as actions and choices may be shaped by local social practices and expectations among fellow residents may influence negatively personal trajectories (Pinkster, 2008).

In this section we pay attention to the ways the interviewees from Akadimia Platonos have shaped their careers in the labour market. The basic research questions are related to: which is the current job position and which was the previous one? How did people get the job they have now? Did they find it through the neighbourhood networks? Has the neighbourhood reputation been used as an asset for upwards social mobility? Through the interviewees' social mobility we try to shed light on how they have used the networks in the area in order to find a better job. In the Greek society, there is a general tendency towards a downwards social mobility, due to the wage cuts or the job loss because of the crisis. In the case study area, the majority of the respondents indicated that other networks, than their neighbours, have led them to their current post. Diversity may be considered as a neutral factor for the social mobility in the area, as it does not seem to lead to better nor worse working trajectories. Family, friends, former colleagues and job advertisements have provided them with better chances of getting a job and preventing the downwards spiralling in the job ladder.

### 7.2 Current and previous jobs

#### *Working in routine occupations*

Most of the interviewees declared that they are working in routine occupations. The majority of women, many Greeks and all migrant women stated that they provide personal services at private houses away from the area. Migrant women stated that this is the only occupation they have ever had, since they started working in Greece. Most of them work informally, only some have formal contracts with cleaning companies. R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian) informed us:

*"-What do you do?  
-I am a domestic keeper.*

*-Do you get insurance?*

*-No it is in the black market... I clean houses... I worked like that since the beginning, I preferred to be independent and to arrange my timetable with the ladies, as I wanted to have time for my children.*

*-And how did you get started with this job?*

*-My husband's aunts got me my first jobs [...]"*

Many interviewees illustrated that they found their jobs through the networks they had with their fellow-country people. Greek women who work as cleaning ladies mostly work formally in cleaning companies. Prior to this job they were occupied in other unskilled posts such as saleswomen or shop assistants. Many pensioner Greek women stated that when they were active in the labour market, they used to work as cleaning ladies or as seamstresses, either formally or informally. Hence, there is no indication of upwards nor downwards mobility.

Greek men in unskilled occupations are employed as plumbers, ushers in public services or employees for external affairs. One plumber stressed that he has always been working like that, while one usher illustrated that prior to his current post, he was working at a factory, preparing sewing machines. Likewise, the respondent who is currently working as an external affairs employee for the pasta factory, used to work at a supermarket in a similar post. Also in these cases, there is no indication of social mobility. The employed migrant men stated that they work in furniture factories, garages or as waiters. Before these jobs, they were unemployed, or working informally in other factories, indicating no or marginal improvement in their social mobility. Pensioners stated that they used to work as bakers or as building labourers. R41 (male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian) narrated how he climbed the social ladder after his success in the construction labour market:

*"I started as a builder, as I could tell at that time that there was lots of money in construction. I started out as an unskilled worker, carrying sand and bricks, gravel and iron, then as a labourer, then as trained worker, then as a constructor and then head constructor."*

The interviewee indicated how he managed to change positions within the construction sector, gained the experience, become a constructor and run his own company. Until after the Olympic Games in 2004, his construction company had lots of profit, and he was indicating a tendency of strong upward mobility. However, as he further narrated in the interview, after the 2008 crisis, as construction ceased, his company was indicating losses, his income shrunk and he had to shut down the company. Nonetheless, as he was old enough, he managed to get a pension. R41 at the end of his career, experienced downward social mobility, due to the crisis in the field of construction. In general terms, it can be argued that the employed people in unskilled occupations indicate stability in their labour market position.

### *Unemployed*

Many respondents stated that they are unemployed, especially the ones with little educational capital who used to be employed in unskilled occupations. Greek men declared that they used to work as lorry drivers, or clerks, and migrant men stated that they used to work in construction as builders. The bankruptcy and the closing down of the private companies led many people to unemployed. In the interviews migrant men state that it is their wives who now support the families, as they cannot find any job due to the crisis. Additionally, in many interviews it was noted that many migrant people have left the area and the country in search for better job opportunities; either they have moved back to their countries of origin (Albania, Romania, Syria) or they have migrated to other European countries (Germany, Finland). Unemployed women

stated that they used to work as waitresses or in restaurants in dish washing. Greek women who participated in this research stated that they were left out of job, as their companies ceased their payments. Migrant women stated that after losing their jobs, they decided to mainly occupy themselves as housewives and raise their children. However, the difficulty of getting a new job was noticed both by Greek and unemployed women; although they are looking for an occupation, it is very hard to get a new job especially as unskilled workers. For the unemployed people, there is a clear tendency towards downwards social mobility, which is hardly reversible due to the bad economic condition and the crisis of the country.

#### *Intermediate occupations*

The respondents that declared having educational capital (university graduates) indicated that they are occupied in lower managerial and professional occupations in the public or the private sector. They are mostly of Greek origin and referred to occupations such as professor, accountant or director. The interviewees stated that they have not changed occupations and they are working within the same sector (for example getting a permanent job as a teacher in a public school, providing private classes to students at home). Only people occupied in the private sector mentioned that they have changed jobs, although it was always in same positions but in different companies (for example changing companies but working as an accountant or in the economic department, working as a journalist in several newspapers, etc.). Upward social mobility seems not to be common: all of the respondents claimed that the last years they have experienced big cuts in their salaries and shrinkage in their economic capital. So, although they are employed in middle-class occupations, their mobility trajectory is backwards due to their income reductions, which is related to the crisis and the cuts that have been imposed by austerity.

### **7.3 Using neighbours and others to find a job**

#### *Finding a job via neighbours*

As the economic condition of the country is at stake and the unemployment rates are skyrocketing (reaching 26.4% summer 2014 according to Eurostat (2015)), the chance to get a job, especially in a city like Athens, is considered highly unlikely. The daily interactions that emerge amongst people who live in the same area may help people in getting access to new job opportunities, however, there are very few. Only two informants stated that they employed people from the neighbourhood (R36: male, 36, plumber, Greek, and R41: male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian). Moreover, Roma people have stated that they get business out of their neighbours; as they occasionally work as rubbish collectors, their neighbours ask them to collect their white goods (fridge, kitchen etc.) which do not function any more, i.e. their waste. This is considered as a job opportunity by the Roma people, as they sell the iron they collect from waste to bazaars or other suppliers.

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

*Using other networks to get a job*

However, most of the interviewees indicated that other networks, like family, friends, compatriots and ex-colleagues, prove more effective in getting a job. Migrant women claimed that they are assisted by their compatriots. For example R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian) stressed that she got her first jobs from Albanian friends and relatives that live in Athens, but not in the neighbourhood. R26 (female, 35, cleaning lady, Romanian) stated that she got her job from people she met in church, the Romanian association and other Romanian friends. R20 (female, 39, cleaning lady, Bulgarian) narrated how she got her last job:

*"So this woman from Bulgaria, we met each other at the square when our children were playing, and I told her that I don't have any job, and she tells me that her husband is working at a cleaning company. And I ask her, can we do something? And she replies, send your CV and if they hire you, it is ok. So I send my CV and they hired me at the airport."*

Migrant people better support each other job-wise as the sharing of the same language, facilitates the better communication of the problems faced in the labour market. Moreover, similar daily practices, such as the use of public space, may prove beneficial for getting -a better- job; the above interviewee managed to get a job through chit-chatting with a compatriot friend, while their children were playing in the park.

Other respondents mentioned that they got their jobs from other networks or services. Many indicated that they found their jobs from job announcements in newspapers. People who work in the public sector stated that they got their job after following the legal procedures on civil service staff hiring (via ASEP, i.e. via the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection). Other people stated that they got their jobs from former colleagues, or from the networks they have established within their field of specialisation (teachers, journalism, entertainment). Younger people claimed that they got their jobs from friends who do not live in the area; as they addressed them to their bosses or to people who were looking for employees with their qualifications. This way they managed to get a better quality job. Most of the interviewees indicated that neighbours may help each other on a daily basis, but there is not ground for helping each other in the labour market. This may be related to the poor conditions of the labour market of Athens. It may be suggested that personal networks are more effective in getting better job opportunities than neighbourhood bonds.

#### 7.4 Neighbourhood reputation as an asset in upward social mobility?

Some respondents indicated that the neighbourhood reputation produces negative reactions. The presence of the migrants and the Roma community, as well as the place history related to working class and the economically weak people, constructs perceptions of the neighbourhood which are damaging. R8 (female, 36, Spanish teacher, Spanish) illustrated that one of her students reacted in a negative way when she moved in Akadimia Platonos, claiming that *"she would never live in such place"*. R10 (female, 41, cleaning lady, Albanian) and R21 (female, 34, cleaning lady, Ukrainian) noted of the negative reactions of people when they listen to the name of the area.

However, the majority of the respondents stressed that it is not the area that becomes an obstacle to upward social mobility, but it is the economic crisis that has dismantled local economy. Since the shops and the businesses run by local people face bankruptcy and foreclosures, the percentages of the unemployed people rise. As stated by R47 (male, 41, employee, Greek):

*"First of all there are no jobs in the area [...] all the small shops shut down, there were 10 garages and now there is only one, and after the Athens' stock exchange and some other huge companies settled in buildings in Kavallas avenue, they brought their own personnel, so no one got a job from the area[...] things got worse."*

The outcome of the crisis in the locality is the shop foreclosures and the shrinkage of the small and medium-sized economic activities. Even the reallocation of bigger enterprises and companies, does not help the local populations, as the companies do not hire new personnel. The bad economic conditions of the country have led many migrants to leave Greece and either return to their home country or settle in other countries of the European Union. R18 (female, 44, accountant, Greek) noticed, when her first son had to go to the kindergarten there was no space, as mainly migrant children would be accepted (due to the societal criteria of the municipality). As the last few years the migrant population has left the country, there is space in the public kindergartens, and she did not face a problem when her second son had to go to school. The economic crisis in Athens harms diversity, as people are driven out of the city in seek for better job opportunities.

However, people who are active in the local associations, stressed that the neighbourhood reputation has improved because of the new initiatives in the park. The networks and the daily encounters help people in their daily interactions and work as a network against the negative feelings that the crisis has generated. Moreover, sharing the anxiety of joblessness and unemployment makes people feel better, as neighbours may suggest alternatives (if they have something in mind). As expressed by R22 (female, 39, unemployed, Greek) the neighbourhood reputation:

*"No it does not create any problems, but it does not provide with any opportunities neither. Only the collaborative kafenio and Politeia next by. They provide you with opportunities as they organise lots of free classes, they provide the area with information, and they organise lots of nice celebrations, it is them that made the park alive with concerts and all these. And there are this opportunities that you can meet people and network."*

According to the interviewee, the reputation of the area is neutral towards the social mobility of a person, as it does not provide with any help, nor does it create problems. However, the new initiatives in the area and the social networking that develops is considered as an opportunity. Especially in times of crisis, the psychological, even the material support (via the solidarity practices), is considered as very important, as it makes people *"come closer"* (R34: female, 41, shop owner, Greek). From this perspective, although the reputation of the area is not related to upwards social mobility, and there are scarcely any neighbourhood effects, social networking works as a supportive net; the intense networking and interacting works contrary to social isolation and depression.

## 7.5 Conclusions

Due to the general economic depression and the crisis that affects the local labour market, social mobility in the area of Akadimia Platonos is mainly downwards. Many people have lost their jobs; especially migrant men and Greeks with low educational capital have indicated that it is very difficult to face unemployment as there are sparsely any job opportunities. Migrant women, as they mostly work informally as cleaning ladies, indicate stability in their social mobility, as they continue working in the same post. Moreover, interviewees in intermediate occupations express

downwards social mobility as the income cuts and their financial losses have diminished their economic power, their status and prosperity.

Moreover, there is no relation between diversity and social mobility in the area. Migrants from the same ethnic background may help each other in getting a job, no matter if they live in the same or other areas in the city. Networks that may support people in finding a new job may develop amongst the Greek population as well. Hence, closer networks and friendships play a more important factor in getting a job than the neighbourhood per se. As such, we may argue that positive and negative neighbourhood effects are not indicated in this case study area. However, due to the negative economic climate, diversity gets jeopardized, as both migrant and Greek population seek better job opportunities and living conditions elsewhere in Europe.

## 8. Perceptions of public policies and initiatives

### 8.1 Introduction

As analysed by Maloutas et al. (2014a), urban policies in Greece are basically an issue of the central government. Devolution in the planning administration, in urban and social issues, is a recent restructuring which adheres to the multi-governance rhetoric of the European Union. Tools of urban governance such as public-private partnerships and quangos, have been used extensively in Athenian urban policies, however, not in order to encourage the civil society's participation (Delladetsima, 2006; Souliotis et al., 2015), but mostly in order to facilitate the implementation of several projects. Within the context of the current crisis, the bottom-up initiatives that have emerged actually undertake the role of the central state in social policies, as the solidarity structures and social networks alleviate the burdens faced by vulnerable social groups (Maloutas et al., 2014b).

In this chapter we pay attention to the way local people of Akadimia Platonos perceive urban policies and the initiatives that have emerged in the area. Our research questions deal with the way the interviewees evaluate local policies and we focus on their proposals over local policy priorities. We argue that due to the crisis and the tradition of clientelism in Greek politics<sup>6</sup>, there is mistrust and despair against the local and the central government. Mostly bottom-up initiatives, such as the local ones, are considered as spaces of positive interaction and encounter. Beyond the feelings of disbelief, the respondents have proposed many ideas that may result to the amelioration of their living conditions. Policies that deal with better working conditions and employment opportunities, better cleaning of the area and preservation and the highlighting of the cultural heritage (Plato's park and the ancient findings from the excavations in the area) are recommended as crucial initiatives that may contribute to a better urban and social living environment.

### 8.2 Perception and evaluation of existing policies and initiatives: what do residents know?

#### *Mistrust and despair*

Most of the interviewees stated that they do not have any knowledge of the general urban policies, nor about the ones which deal with their neighbourhood. The answers to the research questions vary between "*I don't know, I think that there is not anything here*", or "*I don't know*" or "*There is nothing here*". Most negative answers are accompanied by further expressions of distrust against

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<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that the interviews were conducted before the last national elections.



the politicians and urban politics. As pension cuts, salary cuts, unemployment and inner-city delinquent behaviours affect directly the locality, many residents have expressed feelings of despair for politics and politicians. Especially the Greeks blamed the local politicians of being indifferent and without any concerns for the broader neighbourhood. For example, R33(female, 41, unemployed, Greek) stated that:

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

This quote is rather indicative of the despair that many residents feel. According to the respondent, there is apathy and neglect by urban politics and local politicians for the problems that the local people face. As there is no precaution and no motivation by the state, the condition of the neighbourhood is left in the hands of God; indicating her mistrust against local politics as the only protective power may come from the Divine. Another interviewee (R1) (female, 61, pensioner, Greek) expressed her disappointed and anger against the local government by stating that *"they have spitted on us"*, indicating that there is no provision for anything related to the public spaces, schooling nor the local economy. From a similar perspective, especially the elderly households have indicated that although they pay the same local taxes as the rest of the Athenians, the municipality has *"turned its back to the area"* as there are not any municipal services nor initiatives for the local population.

Moreover, despair and mistrust against local politics was expressed by some migrants, especially the ones that originate from countries that do not participate in the European Union. The problems they face with bureaucracy, police, and civil servants' impoliteness at the public services make them feel offended. As illustrated by R41 (male, 63, pensioner, Egyptian, pensioner):

*"My problem has always been with the state apparatus, we are treated in a different way and it always tries to pester us;"bring me this paper, bring me the other". It is the state apparatus and it is these civil servants in the state apparatus. People in power always consider us as if we are inferior [...] more precisely at the Migrants' centres they look down on us as if we are worms[...] And this is my complaint. Employees at the Migrants' centres look down on the migrants as if they are worms, and they treat them in the offices and in the corridors as if they are rubbish."*

Migrants face severe bureaucratic difficulties in trying to get their documentation. The complexity of the legal framework is considered by the migrants as a kind of pestering. The rudeness of the police and the civil servants is intimidating for the migrants who feel discrimination and injustice. Likewise, migrants from Romania and Bulgaria illustrated their menaces with state affairs and documentation until their countries joined the European Union; ever since their affairs with the Greek state have normalised. Such discriminative behaviours put at stake the diversity dynamics that have emerged in the Greek society as they act against social cohesion by supporting behaviours of ethnic superiority than equality.

#### *What do they know*

As mentioned before, the majority of the interviewees claim that they know nothing about urban policies and initiatives in the area. Only one respondent, who uses the municipal services which address to the vulnerable groups, like soup kitchens and dormitories, has stated that:

*"The programme of the municipality has two things: the one about feeding in 49, Alikarnasou St, and the other one about housing, again in the same building. There are other initiatives in which the municipality is interfered with. There is Equal in Victoria Square, Klimaka and Doctors of the*



*World. At the dormitories, around 80 people can sleep for 5-10 days, but feeding is more selective, this is why there is medicine are well [...] There is the social grocery of the Municipality as well, which is also called the Grocery of the Heart, and many residents have applied to get access and this is situated in Sofokleous Street."*

Nonetheless, none of the other (49) interviewees had any idea about the social services provided by the Municipality, reflecting the lack of information which exists for people in need. Only Greek respondents stated that they are aware of some local programmes, referring to the unimplemented project of the Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens. This project was designed by the Ministry of Civilisation and implemented in collaboration of the Municipality of Athens for the preparation of the city for the Olympic Games of 2004. The project inspired to unify the important archaeological sites in Athens, from the Acropolis to Plato's Park, via a big project of pedestrianisation. However, it was left incomplete. The respondents expressed their disappointment that the pedestrianisation has not reached the area. According to their perspective, the unification of Plato's Park with the rest of the city would contribute to local development. Since this project is not implemented, it has increased the sentiments of distrust towards the government.

From a different perspective, people who participate in local associations, or support them without participating, consider local associations as the only initiatives which are active and contribute to the improvement of living conditions in the area. It was underlined by many interviewees that as their projects deal with the use of public space, and especially of Plato's park, these initiatives bring life to the park and expose people to alternative, less commercial, ways of thinking and entertainment. Additionally, their projects enhance social networking and solidarity amongst the residents, thus boost the social capital of the area. Moreover, activists in the local assemblies pinpointed to the importance of their mobilisation against the local governments' plans to build parts of the park and replace building of architectural importance (the Mouzaki factory<sup>7</sup>) with commercial malls. Through such initiatives the residents have managed to preserve the green spaces of the area from commercial plans; thus they have managed to bring together the people in the area in the struggle for the amelioration of the local environment.

### 8.3 Policy priorities proposed by interviewees: what do residents want?

As many respondents have experienced the loss of their jobs or cuts in their wages and their pensions, they suggest that policies should focus on the boost of the labour market, so that people can get new jobs. This suggestion of "more jobs" was put forward by most of the migrants and the economically vulnerable Greeks. As they stated, if people cannot work, they cannot go on with their lives and be happy. Such suggestions were accompanied by remarks (especially by Greek interviewees) that politicians should stop being indifferent towards the local issues, and actually do their jobs.

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

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<sup>7</sup> Former yarn and textile factory of important industrial architecture located in Akadimia Platonos

Interviewees who expressed fearful syndromes against otherness, stated that they would appreciate more policing and surveillance in the public spaces of the area, whilst some of them expressed overtly that the state should abolish the migrant population (send them back to their countries). On the contrary, migrants from non-European countries suggested that the eradication of racism and xenophobia against them, thus a change in the migration politics of Greece, would change significantly their lives and improve their living conditions. In terms of diversity policy issues, amelioration in the implementation of in migration policies should be put under consideration.

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

*"It is only some things that they can do, and they don't need money for them, they do not need lots of stuff as the local people have embraced the park. If they created spaces for people and for cyclists, they signified spaces for dog walking, installing playgrounds... such things would change the whole picture."*

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

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

## 8.4 Conclusions

Distrust and despair characterise the perceptions of the local population against the local politicians. As policies related to migrant issues are complicated and there is no municipal initiative in the area over diversity, there is no knowledge about the issue. Discriminative and offending behaviours in services related to migrants' affairs cause further feelings of annoyance and mistrust to the migrant population. Moreover, many residents feel neglected by the local state as there is no provision for local issues nor any kind of catering for local needs, hence they feel that living conditions have worsen. The broader ignorance over the social services which are provided by the local government is indicative of the little information which exists, thus of the insufficient social services.

Social solidarity which is constructed by local bottom-up initiatives is better recognised by the interviewees. Many respondents indicated the importance of the local associations for the interaction and the networking which develops in the local society. The absence of the local state is challenged by the everyday activities and arrangements which are organised by the local initiatives. As indicated by the respondents, the mobilisation of the local people against the construction plans, promoted by the local government, has resulted in the maintenance of the green spaces of the area and of buildings of architectural importance, whilst it has acted as an obstacle to the construction of the park which would result to the commercialisation of the local space and the foreclosure of the rest of the local small shops.

As such, the proposed policies put forward by the interviewed residents are not related to diversity. As people face vast economic problems due to the crisis, the suggestions for urban policies focus on the re-starting of the labour market. Combating unemployment is considered as a facet of growth which will serve against social malaise. Moreover, other proposals deal mostly with the amelioration of the built and the preservation of the green environments. Better cleaning services, the preservation and development of Plato's park and the spotlighting of the ancient culture and history of the place are perceived as urban policies with multiplier effects. As proposed, such initiatives may contribute to the touristic regeneration of the area, boost the local labour market and lead to the redevelopment of the urban tissue, providing the local residents with a better and upgraded living environment.

## 9. Conclusion

Today most European cities are characterised by diversity. People from diverse ethnic socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds cohabitate in cities, establishing dynamic patterns of everyday living and interaction. In this report, we focused on the way diversity is experienced by the residents of an inner city area of Athens, called Akadimia Platonos. This area has been constantly receiving in-migrants since the 1960s; initially the urbanising population from the rural areas settled in this southern-west part of the city centre, in order to be close to jobs in the nearby minor industries. After the 1990s, migrants from Eastern European countries, and especially from Albania, settled in the area, thus by the beginning of 2000s new waves of migrants from the Middle East, Pakistan and African countries arrived as new residents. The last five years new Greek households with strong cultural capital have started settling in the area, attracted by the green spaces and the tranquillity of this neighbourhood.

Our interest focused on the way people realise or experience diversity in Akadimia Platonos. To begin with, we paid attention to the housing preferences and choices of the interviewed people. Economic reasons, such as the low housing and rent prices, as well as property reasons, for example owning or inheriting a house in the area, were put forward by most of the interviewees. Moreover, social reasons were highlighted by many respondents. For many Greeks place attachment and the presence of the family was indicated as a basic factor for allocating in the area. Many migrants stressed that the presence of compatriots, relatives and friends was a crucial pull factor. Residing in Akadimia Platonos is considered as an improvement, only by the newcomers, characterised by strong cultural capital, who have settled in the area the last five years. The rest of the residents pinpointed that their housing decision was mostly related to little economic earnings which imposed restrictions in their housing choices. Hence, in terms of housing, diversity has not played a role in the households' decisions.

The interviewed people have described their neighbours following standard categorisations like nationality, income, age, education and profession. People with high cultural capital and education expressed positively about their neighbours, while people of low cultural capital

expressed themselves in rather negative ways. For some Greek interviewees, there is a strong evidence of feelings of discomfort and fear against otherness. At the same time, many migrants expressed feelings of fear against "other" social groups like the Roma population and the Greek, especially referring to the police and the neo-Nazi violent behaviours. Hence, in the case study of Akadimia Platonos, fear against "otherness" is a shared characteristic for most of the inhabitants. Such perceptions put at stake whichever positive approach towards diversity, as fear creates barriers in the interaction, communication and the creation of social bonds amongst different groups.

Notwithstanding, other interviewed people perceive diversity in a neutral or in a positive way. The fact that migrants have settled in the area is either considered as a fact of today's inner city living, or as a positive dimension which brings about multiculturalism and mixture of different cultures and lifestyles. Nonetheless, this positive perception of diversity still remains at a theoretical level, as the interviewees claim that they hardly develop strong relations with the migrant population in their area. At the same time, for many residents diversity is considered as a negative aspect, or as a neutral one. According to such perceptions, strained co-habitation has turned into tolerance of diversity, as living in a peaceful environment with good neighbouring relations is considered as the basic aspiration. It seems that in Akadimia Platonos residents live quite parallel lives, isolated from each other.

However, everyday interactions in local associations, the public schools and the public spaces, create spaces of micro-encounters where people come closer and develop social bonds. In such micro-spaces where social cohesion and interaction is encouraged, diversity is encompassed and developed; people with different lifestyles and cultures develop stronger bonds to each other. It may be argued that although diversity is not a driving force in the development of social relations in the area, it emerges as a secondary force in the construction of the local social world.

Public associations in Akadimia Platonos provide local people with spaces of daily interaction. As social solidarity against the fiscal crisis is put forward, people of different cultural backgrounds and lifestyles interact with each other and build social bonds aiming at the alleviation of the social burdens. Although diversity is not the main concern of the local associations, nor does it act as a magnet for the people's participation in the associations, it is enhanced through the need to boost social cohesion and solidarity in the area. Under the framework of the local associations, differences and fears are left aside, and ideas, such as amelioration of the built environment and solidarity for all against the crisis, are expressed.

Moreover, the public spaces of the area emerge as spaces of encounter and interaction, especially for people who are active in the associations, as well as the ones who are not afraid of the "other". Diversity is not a pull-factor in the use of public spaces. However, it is related to the need of the residents to accompany their children and to meet and interact with their neighbours. Hence diversity emerges as the outcome of the act of using public space, as the interaction and bonding of people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, of different lifestyles and cultures. However, people who are afraid of the "other" avoid the use of the public spaces. According to their broader perceptions, the deterioration of the public spaces is related to the presence of the migrant population, the migrants' delinquent behaviours puts at stake the interviewees' lives. However, as the majority of the inhabitants face impoverishment, the economic distance amongst the various social groups, has started to diminish, creating a sense of social equality. Many migrant interviewees have stated that they now feel more equal to the Greek population, as the crisis has affected all social groups in the area the same way, and vice versa. Their interactions are better enhanced through the outdoor activities in the area and the use of the public spaces. As

discussed, the use of these public spaces encourages frequent encounters and daily interactions which have the potential to turn into strong social bonds, encouraging the bridging and the bonding social capital of the area.

In general terms, diversity does not play a major role in people's activities, public associations nor in their use of public space. The interviewed inhabitants arrange their activities in relation to their spare time, their family status and their age. Relations mostly develop among people with the same socio-cultural and ethnic background. Nonetheless, social bonds may emerge in the micro-spaces of the neighbourhood, i.e. in the level of the building and/or the street. Life in the same street or in the same building, breaks down mainstream stereotypes against the migrants. In these micro-spaces people create stronger bonds and good neighbouring behaviours end up in the construction of strong social interaction and networking, in the construction of bridging social capital. Moreover, typical relations which are interpreted as "weak ties" construct feelings of security and frequent daily encounters may turn into bonding and exchange of support and solidarity in times of need. Within this framework, diversity is an aspect of good neighbouring relations which contributes to the amelioration of social cohesion in the area.

However, in the broader area, diversity does not seem to affect the interviewees' egocentric networks. Personal networks establish amongst family members (broader or nuclear family), amongst people of the same political or environmental dispositions- active in local associations, or amongst people with children at the same age, while social bonds develop mainly amongst people of the same ethnic background. Participation in local associations or children's schooling and playing habits, are the main spaces where friendships emerge amongst neighbours. Nonetheless, feelings of insecurity by many Greeks, mainly with low cultural capital, end up in hostile attitudes, which have created feelings of fear to the migrant population who prefer to live their daily lives within the enclosed circuits of compatriot people. Such attitudes and reactions jeopardise social cohesion and interaction.

In Akadimia Platonos, there is hardly any relation between diversity and social mobility. As the country faces severe economic restructuring, the impact of austerity is shop foreclosures, wage and pensions cuts and increased the levels of unemployment for both the Greek and the migrant people. Unemployment has mainly hit people with low educational capital and men, especially migrants. The interviewees who are active in the labour market are either employed in routine occupations, especially migrant women, or in tertiary positions, mainly Greek men and women away from the neighbourhood. There is a strong evidence of downward social mobility, as many interviewees illustrated that they are unemployed and others indicated that their economic abilities have diminished as the household income has shrunk significantly. Helping the neighbour to get a job was roughly indicated in the interviews (two cases were mentioned). Closer networks and friendships play a more important factor in getting a job than the neighbourhood per se. Simultaneously, negative neighbourhood effects were neither identified. Hence social mobility in the area is related to the broader social networks, as job opportunities have shrunk due to the crisis, whilst, in the case study, diversity seems to be irrelevant to social mobility.

Today's European cities are not only characterised by diversity, but by hyper-diversity as well, i.e. the co-habitation with people of different lifestyles values and perceptions of life (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). Although Akadimia Platonos is a diversified area, hyper-diversity is not so evident. The most recent wave of in-migrants, who are Greeks of high cultural capital and artists, may introduce a trend of hyper-diversity. However, their presence is minor and their activities mainly deal with the European Village kafenio and cultural and artistic performances in Plato's park.

Interaction emerges mainly with like-minded people, while the rest of the neighbourhood does not participate nor is it affected by these new lifestyles and cultures. However, as the inflow of these categories only recently started, their social impact may become more apparent in future years.

Apart from the analysis of the social world and the dynamics of diversity, this report wants to deliver the voices of the residents to the policy makers. The majority of the interviewees pinpointed that they have no, or very little, knowledge over local policies. The 'absence' of the state is filled out in the local level, by solidarity actions and structures. This may provide policy makers with ideas on how to encourage social restructuring of the country hit by crisis. The enforcement of local bottom-up solidarity initiatives may facilitate the government in the development and organisation of a social programme, which simultaneously diminishes the cost of a planning project from the top down. Within this framework, the shrinkage of the social distance that exists amongst various groups that live in the centre of Athens, may strengthen the positive aspects of a diversified and bursting city. Moreover, such approach may counterbalance the distrust and the despair expressed for the local policy makers.

As "more employment" was put forward as the main argument for new policies, policy makers and city planners should focus on the creation of working environments and employment opportunities, especially for the most underprivileged groups. Diversity may be considered as an important economic asset of the city centre of Athens; the promotion of each culture may introduce diverse dynamics in the local economy. As many migrants are left unemployed due to the crisis, policy makers may consider about promoting incentives which focus on the economic and cultural creativity of each group. For example, as the area is inhabited by Pakistani population, the incentives, like tax deductions or rent subsidies, for Pakistani food and cloth markets may be considered. This way new land uses may be introduced in the empty ones, providing life to the vacant shops from foreclosures. Moreover, the Sunday Roma bazaar may be transferred to Petroula square; such policy may introduce a weekly fiesta running in parallel to the cultural initiatives in Plato's park. Moreover, the Romanian population may be provided with incentives to open up bakeries and pastry shop with products and food from Romania. However, economic incentives should be provided to the Greek population as well, in order not to create social tensions amongst the various groups. Workshops on traditional handcraft production, textile and weaving, the economic enhancement of the traditional kafenios, as well as the provision of incentives for the opening of new kafenios that address to the younger population in the area, may be put under consideration. This way diversity may emerge as a new economic force that may restart the engine of the local economy.

Simultaneously, especially for the area of Akadimia Platonos, policy makers may consider promoting the restoration and the promotion of Plato's park. As the archaeological findings are locked in warehouses, the establishment of a museum about the history of the area, Plato and his school may result in the total promotion of the area. A cultural and touristic regeneration may on the one hand provide local people with jobs and on the other hand ameliorate, preserve and boost the green and the archaeological spaces. Within this framework, the neighbourhood should be enriched with better infrastructure (street maintenance and sewage systems) and cleaning services. Such initiatives may contribute to the regeneration of the area, enhance the local labour market and lead to the redevelopment of the urban tissue, providing the local residents with a better and upgraded living environment.

Although diversity is not a leading force in determining everyday living in the city of Athens, it gains importance in the formation of social capital, at least at the neighbourhood level. In the

case of Akadimia Platonos, diversity emerges as facet of social interaction and good neighbouring. Within the framework of the current crisis, and the way people organise their everyday practices, diversity may be interpreted as a threshold for social bridging, solidarity and self-sustaining practices. As such, the notion of diversity should be better encompassed and embraced in the future urban practices of city planning.



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**Appendix: List of the interviewed persons**

Interviewee	Age group	Gender	Position in household	Income group(gross income in € per month)	Ethnic group (or region/ origin)
R1	61-75	F	Family with 2 children	2.000-3000	Greek
R2	31-45	F	Couple	2.000-3000	Greek
R3	46-60	M	Family with 2 children	2.000-3000	Greek
R4	31-45	M	Cohabiting with friends	500-1000	Pakistani
R5	31-45	M	Family with 2 children	4000-5000	Albanian
R6	46-60	F	Family with 1 child	2000-3000	Greek
R7	31-45	F	Family with 1 child	1000-2000	Greek
R8	31-45	F	Couple	1000-2000	Spanish
R9	31-45	M	Cohabiting with friends	500-1000	Pakistani
R10	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	1000-2000	Albanian
R11	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	500-1000	Return migrant from South African
R12	31-45	M	Family with 3 children	0-500	Albanian
R13	46-60	M	Family with 6 children	1000-2000	Greek
R14	31-45	M	Family with 1 child	500-1000	Syrian
R15	31-45	M	Living at the parental home	500-1000	Greek
R16	46-60	F	Couple	1000-2000	Greek
R17	46-60	F	Family with 1 child	1000-2000	Greek
R18	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	2000-3000	Greek
R19	46-60	F	Single mother with one child	1000-2000	Greek
R20	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	1000-2000	Bulgarian
R21	31-45	F	Single mother with 2 children	500-1000	Ukrainian
R22	31-45	F	Living on her own	0-500	Greek
R23	61-75	F	Widow living on her own	500-1000	Greek
R24	18-30	M	Family with 2 children	0-500	Roma from Albania
R25	31-45	M	Family with 1 child	500-1000	Romanian
R26	31-45	F	Family with 1	500-1000	Romanian

Interviewee	Age group	Gender	Position in household	Income group(gross income in € per month)	Ethnic group (or region/ origin)
			child		
R27	18-30	M	Family with 2 children	0-500	Roma from northern Greece
R28	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	4000-5000	Swedish
R29	>75	M	Family with 1 child	1000-2000	Greek
R30	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	500-1000	Romanian
R31	46-60	M	Family with 1 child	2000-3000	Greek
R32	31-45	M	Living at the parental home	0-500	Greek
R33	31-45	F	Family with 5 children	1000-2000	Greek
R34	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	2000-3000	Greek
R35	31-45	F	Family with 2 children	500-1000	Greek
R36	31-45	M	Living at the parental home	500-1000	Greek
R37	31-45	M	Living on his own	1000-2000	Greek
R38	31-45	M	Living on his own	1000-2000	Greek
R39	31-45	M	Living at the parental home	500-1000	Greek
R40	31-45	F	Living on her own	500-1000	Greek
R41	61-75	M	Family with 1 child	1000-2000	Egyptian
R42	31-45	M	Single parent with 1 child	0-500	Second generation Egyptian
R43	31-45	M	Family with 2 children	2000-3000	Greek
R44	46-60	F	Living with her mother	0-500	Greek
R45	46-60	M	Living on his own	1000-2000	Greek
R46	61-75	F	Couple	1000-2000	Greek
R47	31-45	M	Living on his own	1000-2000	Greek
R48	31-45	M	Living on his own	500-1000	Greek
R49	18-30	F	Living on her own	500-1000	Greek
R50	46-60	M	Family with 2 children	1000-2000	Greek