



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

Urban policies on Diversity in Athens, Greece

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1. Introduction

Athens became a quite diverse city in cultural and ethnic terms during the last two decades. Due to its geographical position and the broader geo-political change, especially after the collapse of existing socialism, Athens has received large numbers of economic immigrants from the Balkans and, primarily, from Albania. Since the mid-2000s, due to the political unrest in Asian and African countries, people of such ethnic background migrated to Greece. However, in this case, Greece was considered as a stop-over on their way to Western Europe.

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

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

In this chapter we examine some of the most important discourses and policies related to diversity in Athens. We pose three questions: First, are there any urban policies which *explicitly take 'diversity' as their object*? What other urban policies are affecting indirectly the ways of coexistence between various social, cultural and ethnic groups in the city and which vocabulary do they use? These questions obviously entail that we have to distinguish between policies affecting directly and those affecting indirectly urban diversity. Second, *which social, cultural and ethnic groups are recognized and/or desirable* as components of the Athenian society and economy? Third, in which *terms* is the coexistence of various groups recognized or desirable (egalitarian, selective, hierarchical etc.)?

We argue that dominant urban policies in Athens do not use explicitly the notion/term 'diversity'. 'Diversity' appears as a term of public policy only when it is related to European Union-funded projects and activities and, in fact reproduces discourses promoted by EU institutions in a rather ritualistic way. Athenian urban policies deal with diversity mainly in indirect ways. The dominant neoliberal policies, as they are shaped within the specific context of deep recession and the changing relations amongst the different levels of political power (supranational, national, regional, municipal), affect significantly the terms and the content of social and cultural coexistence. Current neoliberal policies promote a selective opening of the city to the European and international environment, privileging the attraction of investors, tourists and students. On the contrary, unskilled and semi-skilled workers are not desirable in the context of severe economic downturn. Social policies in Athens are particularly targeted to specific social

and cultural groups (Roma, homeless etc.) and have the rather ‘minimalistic’ goal of reducing the possibility of significant social tensions between the more unprivileged groups and the rest of ‘mainstream’ society. Policing as a means to ‘reconquering’ public spaces –an expression used by the current Prime Minister adopting the extreme right agenda on immigration before the last parliamentary elections– converge to the same goal of maintaining social peace and public order under conditions of impoverishment and increasing social inequality.

The research on this topic was conducted between November 2013 and January 2014. The material comprises major policy texts of the Region of Attica and the Municipality of Athens, as well as 15 interviews with policy-makers, officials of the regional and municipal governments and civil society representatives.

The chapter starts with a presentation of the political system and governance structures in Athens, showing that the most important challenge faced recently by the political system in Athens was the transition from centralism to ‘multi-level’ governance. The first section includes also an outline of the main immigration and anti-discrimination policies at the national level, which reveals the transition from non-policy (i.e. no active integration policy) to neo-assimilationist strategies and, eventually, policing. The section on diversity-related policies distinguishes between four political discourses and strategies, drawing upon the literature concerning ‘existing neoliberalism’ (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) and the work of Fincher and Iveson on diversity planning (Fincher and Iveson, 2008, Fincher 2007): competitive city strategies; redistribution through targeted social policies; recognition of immigrant representatives as legitimate interlocutors of municipal authorities; and the creation of spaces of social interaction through what we call ‘laissez-faire encounter policies and policing.

2. Overview of the political system and governance structure in Athens

As an outcome of a recently extended reform (Law 3852 on the New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration – Kallikratis Program), the local administration system in Greece is composed by two levels: a. the Regional level which comprises 13 Regions (*Peripheries*) with elected Heads and Councils and 7 Decentralized Administrations whose Heads are appointed by the Minister of the Interior, and b. the 325 Municipalities (*Demoi*) of the country. The Kallikratis reform reduced the number of municipalities by two thirds (from 1034, since 1998, to 325). This new political framework aimed at the delegation of autonomy at the metropolitan level, thus to the devolution of powers for the Municipality of Athens, introducing a breach from the traditional centralism of the Greek state.

2.1 Urban policies in Athens

From centralism to ‘multi-level governance’: an impossible transition

The institutional and governance structure for urban policy in Athens is currently divided into three main tiers: national, metropolitan/regional and municipal. At the national level, the Ministry of the Interior supervises the local authorities and is responsible (together with the Ministry of Public Order and Citizens’ Protection) for immigration policy. A number of other ministries contribute directly or indirectly to the formation of urban policies: the Ministry of Environment which promotes programs of urban regeneration; the Ministry of Transport and Public Works which is responsible for the large scale transport public works in Athens; the Ministry of Culture contributes indirectly to urban policies through the supervision of a major urban regeneration agency, the Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens SA (UASA) (also supervised by the Ministry of Environment); last, the Ministry of Finance becomes significantly important for

urban policies during the crisis, not only because it controls the distribution of economic resources to local authorities, but also through the control of the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF) which carries out the extended privatizations program of real estate assets and transport infrastructures prescribed by the EU-ECB-IMF bailout program. The initiatives and strategies put forward by different Ministries often develop in parallel and poorly coordinated ways. Concomitantly, conflicts are generated over the responsibility among different central agencies that impede the implementation of strategic planning in Athens.

At the metropolitan/regional level there is the Regional Government of Attica (RGA). The RGA has, as a specifically *metropolitan* government, enhanced responsibilities in transport, environment, spatial planning and civil protection. At the regional level, the Ministry of Interior controls 7 Decentralised Administrations, which supervise and coordinate the 13 Regional Authorities. The decentralised administrations have enhanced responsibilities in nation-wide policies such as spatial planning and immigration management. At the metropolitan level, the Organisation of Planning and Environmental Protection for Athens (OPEPA) is a specific urban planning agency supervised by the Ministry of Environment. The OPEPA, established in 1985, is a major planning institution, although it has only consultative responsibilities.

At the municipal level, Attica comprises 48 municipalities, among which we find the Municipality of Athens and its 7 Municipal Districts. The Municipality of Athens is responsible for forming the city's urban policies also through a number of semi-autonomous Municipal Agencies, especially the Municipality of Athens Development Agency, the Double Regeneration Votanikos-Alexandras Avenue SA, the Municipality of Athens Homeless Shelter, the 'Athina Health' Addiction Prevention and Healthcare Treatment Centre, the Municipality of Athens Cultural Organisation and the *Technopolis*. In the government system of Athens, the EU Cohesion Funds play an important role in the funding for urban projects, as well as in the reforms of the local administration system.

Urban policies in Athens, as more generally in Greece, are traditionally characterized by centralism. During the last two decades, the central government maintained control on all major decisions about Athenian urban policies: large scale infrastructural projects (new airport, peripheral highways), rehabilitation of the historical centre (realized by the UASA) and the organisation of the 2004 Olympic Games (Souliotis et al. forthcoming). The Municipality of Athens and the OPEPA played a limited role in Athens' urban policies during that period. At the same time, the availability of EU funds increased the central state's capacity in urban policies and permitted the implementation of the above-mentioned policies (in the post WWII period, the central state's capacity has been persistently low, especially in urban design (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004)).

Contemporary tools of 'urban governance', especially Public-Private Partnerships and quangos, have been extensively in use in the Athenian urban policies, however, not in order to increase civil society's participation in the decision-making process and building a socio-political consensus on urban policies. PPPs have been used in large scale projects, regulating the terms of their realization and exploitation (Delladetsima, 2006; Souliotis et al., forthcoming). Quangos have been used in the implementation of a number of public works, mainly as a tool to resolve conflict of responsibility among public agencies (ministries, municipalities), as well as a means to relieve the central government from confronting directly citizens' opposition in controversial urban projects.

The last reform of local administration in 2010 was meant to introduce more autonomy in subnational decision-making processes (Chorianopoulos, 2012; Souliotis, 2013). Aiming explicitly

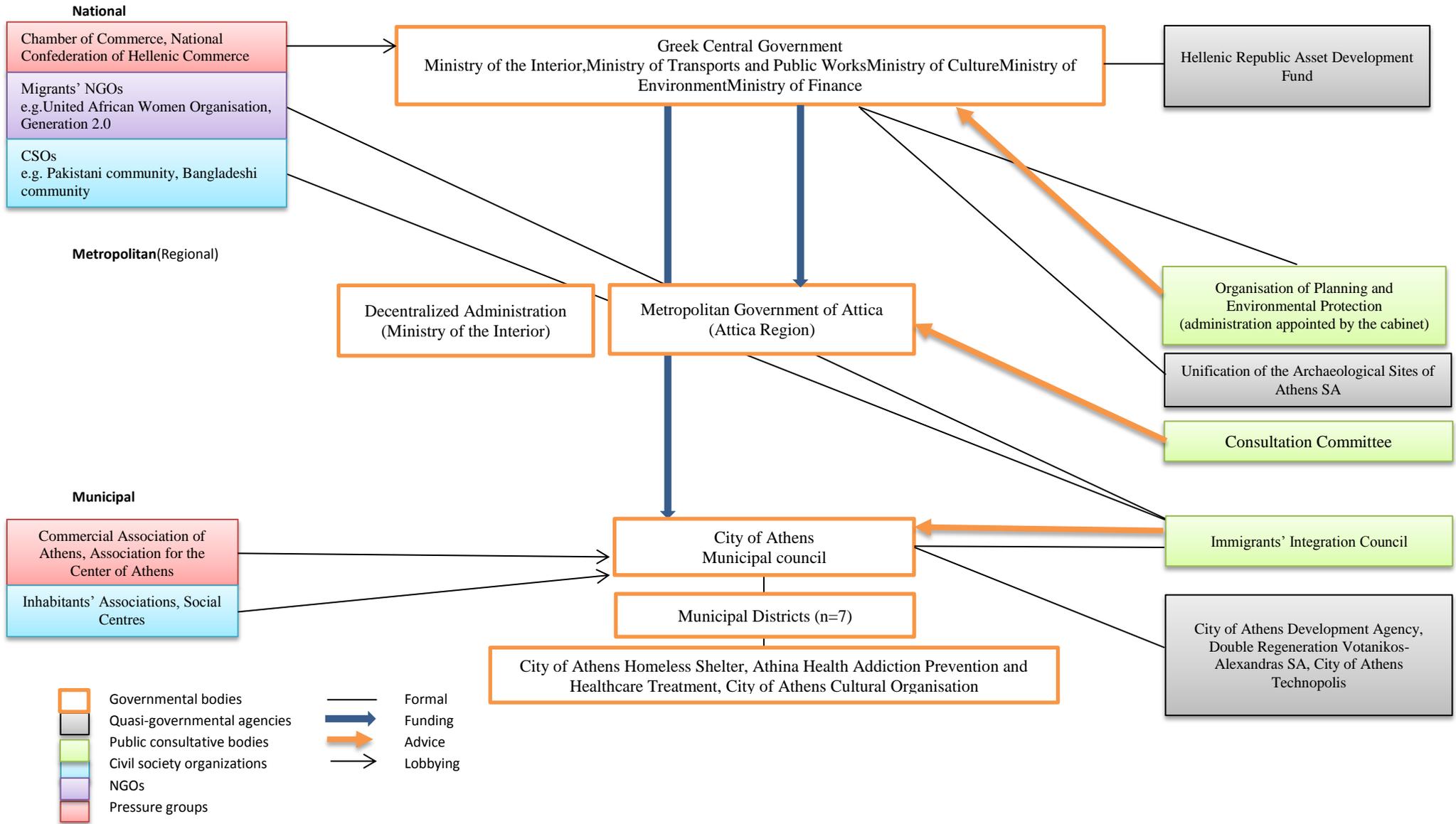
at adapting the Greek local government system to the EU's 'multi-level governance system', the 2010 reform introduces for the first time a Metropolitan Government in Athens with increased responsibilities in developmental and planning issues, in order to benefit from EU funding opportunities. A more open governance scheme has been promoted through the implementation of participative metropolitan and municipal institutions: a. Municipalities and Regions acquired a Consultation Committee where local stakeholders are represented and an Ombudsperson for Citizens and Enterprises, b. Municipalities acquired an Immigrants' Integration Council where immigrant communities and NGOs working with immigrants are represented (Sarris, 2012).

The sovereign debt crisis and the eclipse of urban policies

The 2010 sovereign debt crisis annulled the above-mentioned strategies. The reduction of financial resources interrupted the urban projects in Athens. Urban policies have been reduced to privatization programs, which are controlled by an agency constituted to carry out this specific purpose, the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund, whose administration is appointed by the Greek government and the 'troika' (EC, ECB, IMF). Several minor regeneration projects focusing especially on specific 'problematic' parts of the city centre have been announced since 2010, only to be postponed or cancelled afterwards. Local and regional authorities' responsibilities are constrained by decisions taken at higher levels, as in the case of the emblematic regeneration of Panepistimiou Av., in downtown Athens. Labelled under the slogan 'Rethink Athens', this is the only project that seems to proceed, nonetheless controlled by the Ministry of Environment and a private Foundation that funded the international architectural competition and the planning studies. Moreover, as the 2010 reform of the local administration coincided with the beginning of the crisis, the EC-ECB-IMF bailout program has been taken as a model for the reshaping of the relations between Greek central state and subnational authorities, which suffer from excessive deficits and may have to follow local stability programs.

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

Map of key institutions and governance structures in Athens



2.2 Key shifts in national approaches to policy over migration, citizenship and diversity since the late 1980s

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

Migration policies

For a large part of the post-war period Greece has been a country of emigration (mainly towards the countries of Western Europe and West Germany in particular). Since the early 1990s, Greece has been transformed into a host country due to the massive migratory flows from Albania and Eastern Europe. At the time immigration was perceived by successive governments primarily as an issue of public order: border controls and police operations in the cities constituted the initial state reaction towards immigration (Kandylis 2006, Karyotis 2012, Swarts and Karakatsanis 2012). It was in 1991 that a specific legal framework was adopted (Law 1975 on Entry-Exit, Residence, Work, Expulsion of Foreigners, Procedure of Refugee Recognition). The key elements of this law were the perception of in-migrants *as a temporary labour force* (by associating characteristically legal presence with employment, i.e. a minimum number of insurance stamps per year), while citizenship and welfare issues were overlooked (Kountouri, 2009, 54; Georgoulas, 2001). Preconditions for legal residence are strict and aim at regulating undocumented immigration and to discourage new waves of immigration. As an outcome of this policy, large parts of the immigrant population remain in an irregular status, either because they were never able to access legality, or because they did not manage to meet the necessary conditions. In order to face this reality, the Greek government fostered for the first time in 1997 a massive legalization process of undocumented immigrants. The participation of immigrants was particularly high: 371,641 persons participated in the first stage of the process, although bureaucratic problems and insufficient information reduced the number of persons who applied for a green card at the second stage to 212,860. A second legalization process took place in 2001, with the participation of 351,000 immigrants, and a third in 2005-7, with the participation of approximately 150,000 immigrants.

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

The current legal framework of immigration is based on a law which has been enacted four years later, in 2005 (Law 3386 on Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory). Under the influence of the EU immigration policy and pro-immigration

movement, this law indicates a significant turn in immigration policies in Greece, especially by making for the first time an *explicit reference to integration* (Kandylis, 2006, 167). The 2005 law simplified the procedure for obtaining the right to stay temporarily in the country, although it maintained strict conditions for obtaining permanent residence and did not face crucial issues like citizenship for second generation immigrants.

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

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

Overall, the immigration policy since the early 1990s failed to regulate immigration efficiently and continues to suffer from severe imbalances. Immigrants of third-countries obtain with difficulty permanent residence permit, despite long-term residence in the country, and second generation immigrants cannot have access to Greek citizenship. On the contrary, Greek origin immigrants coming from countries of the former Soviet Union are able to claim and obtain permanent residence and even Greek citizenship (Kandylis, 2006). Legal residence in the country is still associated with employment (despite a recent reduction of the number of insurance stamps required to obtain permission), so that fluctuations in the labour status may lead to the loss of residence permits at any time. In this way tens of thousands of formerly regularized immigrants lost their right to stay in the country. The crisis and rising unemployment drive more immigrants to lose residence permits. Furthermore, Greek governments insist on a differentiated treatment of 'legal' and 'illegal' immigrants and of Greek citizens and third country nationals. Characteristically the 2005 law against discrimination does not apply to the cases where

immigrants undergo discrimination as a result of not having the Greek citizenship (for example, non-Greek citizens who do not have access to a number of professional rights enjoyed by Greek citizens, Varouxi and Sarris, 2012). At the same time, partly as a consequence of the implementation of Dublin II Regulation, Greece becomes responsible for examining the asylum application of growing numbers of immigrants who have irregularly crossed its border. In 2011 while regularized immigrants in Greece were about 620.000, it was estimated that irregular ones were about 450.000 (Varouxi and Sarris, 2012).

Policies and debates on other forms of diversity

Several other forms of diversity have been the objects of public debate, policies or both. Religious beliefs have been an important issue on the agenda during the early 2000s when the 'government of the PASOK (Socialist party) brought a new law in the Parliament according to which identity cards of Greek citizens would no longer indicate their bearers' religion. This was part of that government's modernisation agenda and the separation of church from state that still remain entangled. The measure was adopted even though it was opposed by the very active former Archbishop of Greece, Christodoulos, whose campaign against this law was supported by some 3 million signatures. However, the issue of religion on identity cards would not have been of particular importance if Greece was not experiencing rapid ethnic –and, therefore, religious– diversification. The opposition to that law was not argued on terms of religion, but rather on terms of nationalist feelings and political agendas of the church and conservative parties. The latter pleaded against the growing peril for Greece to lose its national homogeneity/purity in a surrendering way (i.e. native Greeks not being permitted any more to exhibit their religious credo as a sign of their threatened nationality). This issue is, therefore, closely related to diversity brought about by immigration.

Another issue about diversity, also related to the power of the Orthodox Church and of conservatism in Greece society, is sexual orientation. Direct claims about rights in these terms are rather marginal and limited to a few small active groups. The attempt to provide a legal foundation for cohabitation pacts to enjoy equal social rights with married couples was, in fact, addressing the issue of homosexual couples. However, under the pressure of the church and other conservative forces, the law that was eventually voted was stripped of the provisions about homosexual couples being limited to heterosexual couples not bound by marriage.

The broader issue of gender has been important in political debate and policy reforms during the 1970s and 1980s when the feminist movement was still active and the Socialist governments of the 1980s brought a number of measures in the direction of gender equality. Although gender equality issues are still present (the pay gap in Greece is amongst the higher in the EU at 22%; unemployment for women is much higher, even though it increased less fast than for men since the beginning of the crisis in 2010 due to higher degree of precarisation of women's jobs; lower participation of women in political representation and in managerial jobs in the corporate world) the question of gender equality is eclipsed from debate. As an illustration, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality was renamed a few days ago to General Secretariat for Equality and is supposed to address from now on all sorts of discrimination.

Finally, the major issue of class inequality is constantly reduced under the joint pressure: a. of conservative-neoliberal policies to isolate issues of extreme social necessity (e.g. homelessness or youth unemployment) to justify the reshaping of social spending in a more targeted way allegedly in order to increase efficiency, even though Greece was always far from an ecumenical welfare model; and b. of left party policies that also reduce their social policy agenda in order to increase their appeal to a wider electoral audience.

All these diversity issues are interrelated in varying degrees. Gender is an issue that may present different aspects if immigration and ethnicity is considered. And class differentiates things even further. Intersectionality is, therefore, a good standpoint to consider diversities, even though its empirical implementation maybe quite demanding.

Table 1. Core changes in national policies over migration, citizenship and diversity

	Context Evolution	Immigration Policies
Late 1980s	Beginning of massive immigration from Albania and Eastern Europe towards Greece	The Ministry of Public Order is responsible for the total immigration population. Emphasis on restrictive policy measures.
1990s	Large scale urban projects (highways, new airport, waste water treatment plant) start since the mid-1990s. Immigrants as labour force.	<p>1991 Law 1975 on Entry-Exit, Residence, Work, Expulsion of Foreigners, Procedure of Refugee Recognition.</p> <p>➔ first regulatory framework, shift towards “guestworker” policy</p> <p>1996 Law 2413 on Intercultural Education</p> <p>1998 first regularization process (Presidential Decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997, 210,000 immigrants)</p>
2000s	<p>Culmination of large scale urban projects in the preparation of 2004 Olympic Games</p> <p>Gradual formulation of an EU immigration policy: Amsterdam Treaty (1999), European Council’s meeting in Tampere (1999), Charter of Fundamental Rights (1999), Dublin II Regulation (2003), Hague Programme (2004), European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (2007), Common European Asylum System, Lisbon Treaty, The Stockholm Programme (2010), European Agenda for Integration (2011)</p> <p>Enactment of Dublin II Regulation (2003) which establishes the principle that only one EU Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application.</p> <p>Development of anti-racist movement (NGO’s, immigrant communities and organisations, trade unions, political parties and political collectives)</p>	<p>2001 Second regularization process (350,000 immigrants)</p> <p>2001 Law 2910 on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Greek Territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship through Naturalization and New Legal Framework for Granting Residence Permits</p> <p>2001 Establishment of the Immigration Policy Directorate (Ministry of Interior)</p> <p>2005 Law 3386 on Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory</p> <p>➔ marks a shift towards social integration agenda</p> <p>2005 Law 3304 on Equal Treatment Independently from Ethnic or Racial Origin, Religious or Other Convictions, Disability, Age or Sexual Orientation</p> <p>2005-7 Third regularization process (150000 immigrants)</p>
After 2010	<p>2010 Sovereign debt crisis and bailout agreement between Greece and IMF-EC-ECB</p> <p>2012 New coalition government (ND-PASOK-DIMAR). The neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn gets 6,92% in the national elections</p>	<p>2010 Implementation of Immigrants’ Integration Councils (Municipal Authorities)</p> <p>2010 Ragkousis Law 3838 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants’ Residence</p> <p>2012-3 “Sweeping’ police operations, intensification of border controls and construction of a wall at Greek-Turkish borders</p> <p>➔ marks a return of measures focusing on urban order</p> <p>2013 Rejection of Law 3838 by the Constitutional Court</p>

3. Critical analysis of policy strategies and assessment of resource allocations

3.1 Governmental strategies and discourses of urban policy and diversity

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

The analysis of these political discourses has to take into consideration the relations between different levels of policy-making (supranational, national, urban), as well as those between the local political elites and the city’s social forces. For the needs of the analysis we draw upon two discussions. First, we approach growth policies in Athens drawing upon the literature on the neoliberalisation of urban policies as a path-dependent process (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck et al., 2010). We identify Athens’ current growth policies as a ‘competitive city’ strategy and we analyse it putting emphasis on the relations between different political levels and city’s major socio-economic forces. Second, we approach social planning issues in Athens (diversity planning, immigration policies, policies for vulnerable groups etc.) through the analytical and normative framework proposed by Fincher and Iveson (2008, see also Fincher 2007) for the conceptualization and planning of diversity in the direction of fostering a ‘just city’. Fincher and Iveson distinguish three social logics of diversity planning: redistribution of economic and other resources; recognition as the activity of acknowledging the existence of ‘multiple publics’ in urban context; encounter as the promotion of harmonious sociality in lived spaces (Fincher, 2007).

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

The major policy texts of the Periphery of Attica and the Municipality of Athens, the *Regional Operational Programme of Attica 2014-2020*, the *Athens Plan for Integrated Urban Intervention* and the *Project Athens* converge to a competitive city model of urban growth. The Region of Attica defines five levels of its developmental strategy: promotion of developmental resilience aiming at attenuating the negative impact of the economic and social crisis (Region of Attica, 2012, 39); the recovering of Attica’s regional competitiveness and the reintegration of Attica in the European

and international developmental and investing map; the change of the developmental model of Attica; the developmental reorientation of existing productive structures of Attica; and the gradual adjustment of the region of Attica in the new conditions and challenges of Europe 2020. These five levels are supposed to represent distinct, successive steps that may lead Attica back to growth through the implementation of a new economic and productive model.

The Municipality of Athens adopts a similar economic model, which emphasizes entrepreneurship, competitiveness and exports. This strategy is presented in the new development programme of Athens, the *Project Athens*. The latter is promoted by a private agency controlled by the Municipality of Athens, the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA), under the current administration of the centre-left mayor of Athens Giorgos Kaminis (ADDMA, 2013). The programme's first priority focuses on helping the city's businesses to improve competitiveness, with emphasis on innovation, employment and social entrepreneurship. Other priorities include the improvement of citizens' quality of life (mainly through 'green solutions'); the regeneration of urban environment (redevelopment of deteriorated areas, reconquering of public spaces); handling the social crisis, and the improvement of the City of Athens' capacity in development planning. According to the initial design of the *Project Athens*, in economic terms emphasis would be put to entrepreneurship and urban regeneration, which would absorb respectively 44,8 million euros (30.4% of the total budget) and 44,7 million euros (30.3% of the total); handling the social crisis and improvement of quality of life would absorb 26.3 million euros (17.8% of the total) and 28.4 million (19.3% of the total); last the amount allocated to technical support and development planning would be 3,1 million (2.1% of the total budget, ADDMA 2012, pp. 17-18).

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

The above-mentioned policy texts of the Region of Attica and the Municipality of Athens reproduce the main lines of economic policy decided at higher levels. This occurs in part by definition, as they constitute reference policy documents for the programming of EU Cohesion funds at national and regional level in Greece. The regional and municipal documents follow the priorities posed by the EU in order to ensure that the specific interventions and actions that will be promoted will be eligible for funding by the relevant EU funds (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund). In the period 2007-13, the EU's Cohesion policy defined as major priorities the convergence of European regions, the enhancement of regional competitiveness and employment and the territorial cooperation (EC, 2007). Within this framework, emphasis has been given to other secondary objectives like the modernisation and diversification of economic structures, the promotion of sustainable urban development, the fostering of R&D and innovation, the increase of migrants' participation in employment etc. (EC, 2007).

The Region of Attica, along with the other Regions of the Country, produces *Regional Operational Programmes* since the mid of 1990s. The Municipality of Athens composed for the first time an EU-oriented development plan in 2014, as a result of an amendment of the implementation of Cohesion policies in Attica which redirected to the municipality of Athens a part of EU amounts

initially assigned to the Region of Attica for the period 2007-13 (respondent p, 4 February 2014). The Municipality of Athens will thus manage 120 million euros coming from the European Regional Development Fund, an amount that will support the implementation of the *Project Athens* (ADDMA, 2012). Overall, that means that the regional and municipal authorities produce their main policy texts taking into consideration the EU political guidelines as well as in direct interaction with EU officials. Aggeliki Vassiliou, a political scientist who works as an expert for ADDMA, explains how the Municipality of Athens has defined the priorities of *Project Athens*:

“There are two restrictions. One restriction concerns the management. The resources which are assigned to [the Municipality of] Athens are coming from the Regional Operational Programme of Attica. Therefore, practically, the projects which are getting matured and integrated [in the EU funding programmes] have to match, from a managerial point of view, to the axes of the ROP, you cannot do otherwise. [...] [Regarding] the axes [of the Project Athens], as I said you are restricted because you have an assignment [of funds] coming from specific operational programmes, which have concrete axes and structures [...] we cannot get differentiated too much. So these axes [of the Project Athens] are a mixing, they are political axes, but they are guided more or less by the axes of the ROP of Attica which are concrete, like quality of life, environment... I have to say that competitiveness and entrepreneurship, although they are [found] in ROP, are something for us that... we were prompted by Brussels [to adopt it], because that was a pillar that they [the European Commission] wanted to foster in the next programming [period]. So [in the Project Athens] there is a distinct axis [of competitiveness and entrepreneurialism] while in the ROP it is integrated in the quality of life” (respondent p, 4 February 2014).

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

The alignment of the regional and municipal policies with political directions decided at the supranational level is further fostered by the bailout agreement agreed between the Greek central government, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund¹. The economic agenda of the bailout programme focuses on the promotion of an export-oriented production model, the attraction of FDIs as means to achieve growth, the fostering of entrepreneurship and innovation and the enhancement of regional competitive advantages (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Greece, 2010). The economic strategy of the bailout agreement has a compulsory character to the degree that the international financing of Greece depends upon its consistent implementation. From this point of view, the peripheral and the municipal developmental strategies are imposed by higher political levels, especially the supranational one (Souliotis, 2013).

¹The Greek government requested officially for an IMF-EU-ECB financial support in April 2010. The agreement that followed the request foresaw a four-year borrowing programme of 110 billion euros from the IMF and the member states of the Euro area. The programme underwent three major revisions: in July 2011, when a restructuring of the Greek debt held by the private sector was decided; in February 2012, when an additional loan of 130 billion euros has been provided to Greece; and in November 2012, when a new round of austerity policies was decided.

Another reason which leads to a greater emphasis on developmental strategies, at least at the regional level, is the reform of the local administration system and the implementation of a metropolitan government in Athens. The recently created Region of Attica with elected head of council is vested with enhanced authority in developmental issues, especially regarding the utilization of EU funds. This pushes the new Regional authorities to emphasize developmental strategies, something that is reflected in the *Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020*. However, this turn to the regional level does not reflect some endogenous process of policies of spatial restructuring, but the new spatial structure of EU funding in Horizon 2020.

The competitive city model of growth implies an implicit but crucial reference to some kind of openness of the city towards the European and the international environment. The attraction of international flows of capital and people is seen as the key to achieve economic growth (public investment is underestimated in this model). Investment in knowledge-intensive sectors and public real estate assets, cultural and urban tourism and education in classical studies, shipping and tourism lie at the core of this strategy. The implementation of this strategy leads by definition to the *diversification* of the urban population. However, this is a highly *selective* opening of the city. The competitive city strategy aims at attracting *investors, tourists and students*, as people whose presence will enhance city's resources and competitive advantages.

The crisis seems rather to reinforce this selectivity. The *Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013*, written when the city was enjoying relatively high rates of growth, acknowledged that the attraction of economic migrants, mainly occupied in the construction sector, was one of the indices of the dynamism of the city's economy (GSRA, 2007, p. 12). The concentration of economic migrants also attenuated the problem of ageing of the Athenian population (GSRA, 2007, p. 12, 31). Last, the SWOT analysis of the Programme regarding occupation and social cohesion acknowledged the integration of non-Greeks employees and economic migrants in the productive tissue as an opportunity (GSRA, 2007, p. 79). These positive references to the unskilled and semi-skilled economic migrants coexisted with negative references to the pressures exerted by the increase of immigrants on educational and health infrastructures and to the downgrading of several urban areas as a result of immigrants' concentration (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 42, 71, 162). The *Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020* still considers as 'opportunity' the economic integration of foreigner workers (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 28), but does not include other positive reference to the presence of unskilled and semi-skilled non-Greek workers. The term 'economic migrants' is rather replaced by the distinction between 'legal' and 'illegal' migrants. Illegal migration is perceived as a 'threat' for social cohesion (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 27), while the presence of illegal migrants is associated with radical downgrading of urban areas. Explaining what followed the 'abandonment of the traditional commercial centre of Athens by residents and businesses', it is stated in the *Programme*:

'The vacuum has been covered by the settlement of numerous illegal immigrants, the increase of criminality and the downgrading of an important part of the centre of Athens, which led to the erosion of the attractiveness of Athens as touristic destination, despite the recovery observed the years following 2004 [which was a] result of the successful organization of the Olympic Games' (Region of Attica, 2012, p. 7).

In another part, the Programme specifies that the western suburbs of Athens undergo significant pressures by poverty and unemployment. And it proceeds as follows:

‘This, in combination with the easiness of settlement for economic migrants due to low rents, involves the danger of creating permanently downgraded areas, even that of “ghettoization”’(Region of Attica, 2012, p. 81).

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

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

The *Project Athens*, which is promoted by the current municipal administration, adopts a similar line. Under the fourth priority of the project, titled ‘Handling the social crisis’, immigrants and Roma, along with homeless and convicted persons having served their prison sentences are targeted as ‘socially disadvantaged’ groups (*evalotes omades*). Policies combating poverty and social exclusion are addressed primarily to these groups and, following a neoliberal rationale, this targeting is argued as a way to enhance results with fewer available resources in a spirit of social justice, i.e. by covering those most in need.

The above mentioned institutions and policies could be seen as indicative of the resilience of municipal social policies during the crisis. For a better understanding of current municipal social policies we have though to stress four points:

First, municipal social policies include the provision of services to strictly *targeted* social groups. This option is very different from a universalistic Scandinavian type or a traditional corporatist-welfare model. It follows from an attempt to develop the anemic services of the local South European familialist model since the 1980s, which, in fact, coincided at the time with a negative international trend for spending on social policies. The current crisis reinforces the tendency to restructure and restrict social services to those which cover the basic needs of vulnerable social groups. It is characteristic of this restructuring at the municipal level that in the years 2011-12, when the overall budget of the Municipality of Athens has been reduced by 9.2% (from 899 to 820 million euros), the budget of municipal organizations of more general interest like the Nursery and the City of Athens Cultural Organisation has been reduced by 19% and 25% (from 43 to 32,3 million euros and from 37,7 to 3,5 million euros), while the budget of the targeted – and much less costly - City of Athens Homeless Shelter has been reduced “only” by 15% (Portaliou, 2013). And when in 2013 the Municipal budget increased by 6.7%, the budget of the first two organizations continued to shrink by 16.4% and 13.4% while that of the Homeless Shelter increased by 4.1% (Portaliou, 2013).

The targeted character of municipal social policies is also manifested in the social goals of the *Project Athens*. For the years 2012-14, the ADDMA expects that the beneficiaries of the social actions and programmes of the *Project* will be 1600 unemployed, 250 homeless, 1200 persons who follow up training programmes in social entrepreneurship and 1170 persons drug-addicts (ADDMA, 2013). Until November 2012, the projects launched by ADDMA on health, children care and education amounted to 20 million euros, that is 17.1% of the total budget of 116.8 million euros of the *Project Athens* (an amount close to the provisions of the above-mentioned initial design of *Project Athens*, ADDMA, 2012, 24).

According to Kalliopi Giannopoulou, the current Deputy Mayor on social policy issues, the City's priority is to contribute to the satisfaction of needs of shelter, food and clothing to people more exposed to the crisis:

“We have focused on the migrant’s integration to the Greek society, so that we can integrate ourselves in the new condition as well, but the rest of our priorities lie in the logo ‘no one without home, no one without food’, this is our basic issue... the rest is [...] the new initiatives lie in the formation of new shelters and food centres” [respondent c, 29 November 2013]

“in the beginning it was 150 students in public schools, and it was the teachers that informed us that there is a food necessity issue, then this raised to 1300 children which means 1300 families, which is a number that rises all the time, but I don’t know how many people can we serve, since more and more people add to the catalogue of homelessness [...] nowadays every day we cater for at least 10.000 people” [respondent c, 29 November 2013]

Second, municipal social policies seem to aim to the *maintenance of social peace*, by providing basic services and goods to social groups considered as probable sources of tension and violence. From this point of view, the choice of implementing targeted social policies is not only a result of scarcity of economic resources. It also reflects a conception of the role of social policies in a context where basic economic policies aim at competitiveness rather than at egalitarian goals. In fact, there is a reversal between goals and means: growth is no longer the means to attaining social goals, while social objectives (prevention of social conflict in this case) are legitimated as policy objectives because they prevent impediments to economic growth. The crisis and austerity policies do not only reduce the wealth of the city’s population, but also increase the unequal distribution of the existing wealth (HAS, 2013). The targeted social policies represent a means for averting severe social tensions under conditions of massive impoverishment and increasing inequality.

Third, the targeted municipal social policies imply a rather negative perception of *ethnic diversity as source of social problems*. However, while extreme right politicians blame immigrants as responsible for these problems, a moderate conservative politician may see immigrants as being, at the same time, victims of the hard conditions created by their concentration in some city areas, following a rationale of negative neighbourhood effects. Eleutherios Skiadas, Deputy Mayor during the mandate of N. Kaklamanis, notes that one of the main motives that pushed the municipal authorities to establish the municipal agencies related to immigration issues was to face the poverty and exclusion that went hand in hand with the increase of immigrants in Athens in the early 2000s².

“The municipality of Athens, when we realized that migration will become an issue, we acted immediately and established facilities under a social policy framework, in order to face the various problems... these facilities dealt with the distribution of food, cloths, care facilities and reception [...] today the situation is different, the migrants bring with them pollution and contamination, they cannot live here, they cannot survive, they don’t even have anything

²Available statistic data confirm that a large part of the beneficiaries of these services are indeed immigrants. The City of Athens Homeless Shelter offers 1400 meals per day in two relays: at noon 10% of beneficiaries are immigrants while this percentage rises to 47% in the evening (Portaliou, 2013). Overall, immigrants represent about 18% of the Municipality’s population (Hellenic Statistical Authority, Census 2001; data for the 2011 Census are not yet available, but the percentage has certainly increased).

else to steal. They stole the irons, the bars in the public streets, the metals from the railway stations, the public lights and that is it. It's over... now they cannot even steal these things as there are over, the city's equipment doesn't exist, the urban equipment that should exist in cities is over. Before we reach to a point to start killing each other, we should establish facilities for the problems arising today" [respondent b, 22 November 2013].

This statement is indicative of the way immigration is perceived by city-level politicians: as a 'problem' which has to be addressed with social policy measures. Political discourse, in politicians' public performances as well as in our interviews, returns constantly to what is seen as the negative effect that stem from the increasing number of immigrants and, especially, of 'illegal' ones in the city center: emergence of pockets of extreme poverty, criminality and threats for public health.

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

Fourth, there is a convergence between targeted social policies of the City with EU-funded social policies. A large part of municipal social policy actions are funded by the EU cohesion policies and run by municipal agencies, like the ADDMA, often in collaboration with other public and private agencies. These actions concern social inclusion, social economy and social entrepreneurship and are turned, mostly, to small groups of beneficiaries. The adoption of the vocabulary of 'socially disadvantaged' in policy texts like *Project Athens* is thus directly linked to EU cohesion policies as they are formulated in National Strategic Reference Framework and to EU calls for the implementation of specific actions.

Recognition policies and new forms of urban governance: immigrants as legitimized interlocutors of the Municipality
Recognition policies are rather limited in Athens. The most important institution related to the recognition of diversity at the city level is the Immigrants' Integration Council (IIC). As it has been stressed in the previous section, the establishment of the IICs has been the most significant reform of local governance related to diversity issues during the last years. The creation of IICs has been part of a wider reform of Greek administration system (law 3852/2010). The IICs are municipal bodies aiming at 'reinforcing the integration of immigrants in local societies' through the 'investigation of immigrants' problems' and the provision of consultative services to the municipal authorities. The members of IICs include city's councillors, representatives of immigrants' organisations and communities, and social agencies dealing with immigration issues. All members of IICs are appointed by the City Council. Immigrant city councilors, if existing, participate a priori to IICs. The president of each IIC is a city councilor. The creation of IICs has been one of the changes intended to adapt the Greek local administration system to the principles of EU 'multi-level' governance system. The participation of civil society organizations in municipal policies, even though this participation takes place through a consultative body, ruptured, in principle, with the tradition of dominance of central political parties on local politics.

The Athenian IIC was established in April 2011. It has 11 principal members, 6 of which are immigrants, and 11 alternate members. The criteria used by the City Council to invite organizations and communities to participate in the IIC included the size of the population of immigrant communities, the representation of communities from different geographical areas and a minimum participation of women and youth (respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). Since its

establishment, the IIC of Athens convened 15 times. Actually, the IIC of Athens is responsible for the organization of an annual festival dedicated to immigrants, the Immigration Day.

The political attitude of the current municipal administration towards the IIC is explicitly characterized by an ‘integrationist’ (*entaxiaki*) approach. According to Eleni Tsitoura, a municipal employee working for the President of IIC Maria Kouveli, the IIC serves integrationist purposes as opposed to ‘communitarian’ (*kinotiki*) ones (respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). The latter promote the preservation of ethnic identities and the promotion of distinct cultural practices, through various activities (festivals, celebrations...). The communitarian functions are the task of different immigrants’ organizations, while the City, as a part of the Greek state structure, has to provide for the integration of immigrants to the Greek society (which, in practice, means more emphasis on actions such as Greek-language programmes):

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

The City’s integrationist approach draws upon the *National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals* as it is formulated by the Ministry of the Interior (GSPSC, 2013, respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). In this official document, the central government defines the ‘structural integration’ (*domiki ensomatosi*) as the main strategy of the Greek state towards ‘legal’ immigrants³. The term ‘structural integration’ means ‘*the functional integration of immigrants in the new political/ legal, economic and cultural framework of the host country along with the full acceptance of the political and cultural principles of reference of the host country*’ (GSPSC, 2013, p. 22). Structural integration is opposed to ‘multiculturalism’, which segments society through the compulsory preservation of immigrants’ ethnic identities. It is also opposed to ‘simple integration’, which focuses on the economic and political integration and omits the importance of social and cultural integration (the latter requiring the disclaimer of previous cultural and ethnic identity, GSPSC, 2013, p. 21-22).

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

“[Maria Kouveli, councilor and the head of the IIC] thanks to her legal expertise, can examine the representativity [of organizations] in terms of geography and population. So that these people may be fairly and objectively represented. It’s a large Municipality. Some

³From this point of view, “illegal” immigrants are simply under the jurisdiction of the police and the Ministry of Public Order.

Municipalities beg to find even two organizations, no matter of representativity. We have plenty of them, it's the opposite. We have to be fair. [respondent d, interview 29/11/2013]

In this selection, the municipal authorities tend to privilege organizations that represent the different immigrants' communities on the whole. Organizations representing the interests of more specific ethnic, age or gender groups, although they are not excluded, are selected under the condition that they do not add to the over- or under-representation of main ethnic groups:

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

The IIC faces also three important limitations. First, the institution has *low public visibility*. IIC's activity is not (yet?) widely known (characteristically, two of the city councilors with whom we conducted interviews ignore almost completely its activities). Second, the most important political issues addressed by the IIC are associated with central government politics. What is perceived as the major political intervention of the IIC by its own members was a resolution on the regulations related to the granting of residence permits (respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). There is thus a *discrepancy between the scale of regulation of important immigration issues (central politics) and the scale where immigrants' organizations have access (local politics)*. Although in a critical perspective, a similar prioritization of central government politics characterizes also the discourse of Eleni Portaliou, head of the left opposition in Athens' City Council (respondent a, interview 30/11/2013): she brings into question the political usefulness of IIC by arguing that issues like the allocation of residence permits have already been part of the national agenda, mainly due to the party of radical left (SYRIZA). Third, there is some *contradiction between the participation of immigrant organizations in a new governance institution like the IIC and the exclusion of immigrants from 'classical' procedures of representative democracy*. The rejection of the 2010 law on Greek citizenship of second generation immigrants excluded the latter from the right to vote, while the difficulty to get long-term resident permits excludes the majority of immigrants from the right to vote in local elections. While immigrants are represented in a consultative body as the IIC, they have very limited influence on decisive processes which are carried out by the elected political personnel.

Overall, although the IIC represents for immigrants' organizations and communities an opportunity to participate in local political processes, at the same time the prioritization of central politics by the Greek political culture, the nature of the immigration question in Greece and the limited visibility of the new institution restrict the real possibilities for political intervention.

Creating spaces of social interaction

The urban interventions of both central and local state in the Greek capital since the mid of 1990s consist mainly in rehabilitating and constructing public spaces (squares and pedestrian streets). The result of this policy was the creation of a relatively extended network of free spaces in the city centre, with more emblematic example the pedestrian street of two kilometres at the foot of Acropolis rock which links the major archaeological sites of the historical centre. Nowadays, the largest urban intervention planned for Athens consists of the rehabilitation of two

major axes of the city centre, Panepistimiou and Patision streets which include the restriction of traffic, the increase of accessibility to pedestrians and the improvement of the built environment (Tournikiotis, 2012). Furthermore, two of the priorities of the current development plan of Athens, the ‘improvement of quality of life’ and the ‘regeneration of urban environment’, concern also similar interventions in the physical environment (although with some new elements to which we will come back later).

What characterized the interventions in urban public spaces so forth has been the *absence of social planning*. The rehabilitation of squares and the pedestrianization of streets through physical planning (associated often with the redefinition of land uses of surrounding areas) was perceived per se as a means to ‘improve the quality of life’ of ‘Athens’ citizens’ (Unification of Archeological Sites in Athens, <http://www.astynet.gr/static.php?c=5>) *in general*, without particular provisions assuring the access of specific social groups. In fact, that meant that urban interventions acted as *catalysts for ‘spontaneous’ processes of social mix and exclusion in public spaces*, often determined by the dynamics of the real estate and cultural markets, which favored primarily tourists and the local middle classes. In a nutshell, in Athens the rehabilitation of public spaces represent some kind of *laissez-faire* encounter policies.

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

“It is a matter of the structure of the municipality of Athens. There are technical services, economic services, administrative, social services that do not communicate with each other, not even at the level of the Deputy Mayor... the programmes and the plans follow the same structure. The Operational Plan of the previous 4 year period, and of this 3 and half year period, is structured according to the proposal that each department or service will put forward” [respondent i, 18 December 2013]

This organizational characteristic has formed diachronically a way of planning and implementing urban interventions which is reproduced in current projects:

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

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

The project included the organization of thirty-five workshops in seven neighborhoods of Athens and in one neighbourhood of Thessaloniki, and six daily festivals in open urban spaces. Apart from ADDMA, the agencies that participated in the project included the municipal cultural agencies of Athens and Thessaloniki, the municipal radio of Athens and the Centre for Professional Training of the City of Athens. The overall budget was about 250,000 euros, 75% of which has been covered by the European Integration Fund for Third Country Nationals and the rest 25% by the Greek central state. This sole example of project oriented towards ‘multiculturalism’ illustrates in an eloquent way the position of this issue in the local agenda: the municipal authorities turn to ‘multiculturalism’ as a response to the relevant EU policies and, in particular, to funding opportunities. The interest for ‘multiculturalism’ is not really a part of local policies and remains rather ephemeral (see also Box 1).

When asked about “diversity”-related actions of the Municipality of Athens, the president of the City of Athens Cultural Organisation, Nelly Papachela, mentioned *Actions in neighbourhoods*:

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

Box 1. The Municipality of Athens and multiculturalism: internet discourses

From a communicational point of view, it is worth noting that in the *English version* of City of Athens’ site the rhetoric concerning immigration is different. In the presentation of services addressed to immigrants, it is stated that the “municipal administration does not view the migrant issue as a problem but rather as a reality which can bring about myriad positive consequences for society as a whole”. With some realism, it is mentioned that “Athens, like other cities [...], is being called on to deal with an interesting paradox: although migration policies are decided on at the central government or EU level, ultimately local communities are being summoned to enforce integration policies on a small scale”. However, the “City of Athens has accepted this challenge” and develops actions for migrants’ integration based on two principles: a. “migration is not a problem if it is correctly managed”, b. “in most cases, integration encompasses more than the social aspects (including elements such as equal opportunity, right to citizenship etc.)”. The same presentation adds in a rather pompous way: “We are transforming Athens into a global multicultural metropolis. We are developing initiatives that deal with diversity in such a way that it [...] promotes the idea of cohesion [...], guarantees equal rights for migrants [...]; and ensures that all migrants also consider Athens to be their city [...]”. And the text ends by mentioning that “We aim for the social integration of migrants based on respect for the law and fulfillment of their obligation to the city in which they live”. This is a typical case of different political discourses addressed to the domestic public and abroad. Towards a foreign and, especially, a European public, the Municipality of Athens adopts a “multiculturalism” rhetoric adjusted to EU’s standard approach to cultural diversity, while this type of rhetoric is absent from Municipality’s domestic political discourse.

Since last year, there is change in policy texts in the way discourse around urban public spaces is formed. As we have already noted, the *Project Athens* breaks down the priority of ‘regeneration of urban environment’ in the goals of “redevelopment of deteriorated areas” and ‘reconquering

(*anakitisi*) of public spaces'. Similar discourse is formulated in the *Plan for Integrated Urban Intervention* (PIUI)⁴, a strategic plan promoted in common by the Ministry of Environment, the Region of Attica and the Municipality of Athens in order to address the effects of the crisis in Athens: among the seven basic goals of PIUI, there is the 'reconquering' (*anakitisi*) and improvement (*anavathmisi*) of public space and the 'restoration of conditions of security and legality'⁵. The basic goals are broken down into 66 actions, among which we find actions 'to face delinquency', 'actions to face the high concentration of illegal immigrants in the centre of Athens', the 'reinforcement and increase of art actions in public space', the 'regeneration (*anaxoogonisi*) of open spaces', the 'training of immigrants to enable their social integration (language etc.) and to decrease the gap [with the Greek society]'. We thus witness a transition from an apparently neutral emphasis on the 'improvement of quality of life' for all citizens to a security and order-related rhetoric about urban public spaces. This turn echoes the wider dynamics of central state immigration policies towards the same direction, as described in section 2.2.

To come back to the questions posed in the introduction, we can summarize our arguments as follows: a. Athenian urban policies take 'diversity' explicitly as their object only the case of implementation of EU-funded policies. The adoption of 'diversity' political discourse in this framework is a part of a wider, path-dependent adjustment of Greek public policies to European policies which is fuelled by Cohesion funds, the latter being more and more important for public investments during the crisis. However, at the same time, this adjustment remains rather instrumental and aims at the utilization of EU funds rather than leads to the adoption of a 'diversity' agenda by local political forces. As a matter of fact, the most important policies that affect *indirectly* the coexistence between various social, cultural and ethnic groups in Athens are associated with the endeavor to face the crisis and the ensuing deep recession. This crisis-induced political agenda prioritizes the economic recovery through the enhancement of the international competitiveness of the city and the maintenance of social peace, b. The aforementioned dominant political agenda entails a *selectivity* towards in-migration flows which privileges the social groups whose presence in the city may contribute to city's economic development (investors, tourists, students), c. The terms of coexistence of different social, cultural and ethnic groups are characterized by hierarchies, targeted redistributive policies and practices of maintaining urban order. Hierarchies concern the divisions between 'useful' in-migrants (investors, tourists etc.) and abundant unskilled labour, legal and illegal immigrants etc. This marks a turn in respect to previous laissez-faire or fair weather immigration policies. 'Useful' guests are clearly separated from the 'problematic' part and by far the larger part of the migrant population who becomes the target of a neo-assimilationist policy: compliant adoption of local norms, values and identity leading –in contrast to the assimilationist policy of French republicanism that offered full social and political integration in return– to a limited form of integration with curtailed social and political rights. Redistributive policies concern the provision of services to specific social groups which are framed as 'disadvantaged groups'. The maintenance of urban order is turned against groups which are deemed as sources of social problems, as the 'illegal' immigrants. Last, other arrangements which focus on the recognition and empowerment of immigrants, like the IIC, are

⁴The PIUI is also an EU-related policy instrument. It has been institutionalized in Greece at the end of the 1990s following the model of URBAN initiatives and aimed specifically at facing problems of urban crises. The current PIUI of Athens is meant to be the strategic plan which will support the participation of Athens in the next programming period of EU Cohesion Funds (2014-2020).

⁵Other goals include: supporting the economic base of the city; reconquering of social and cultural cohesion; improvement of environmental conditions and urban function; reinforcement of the identity and image of the city; and improvement of mechanisms of governance, planning and participation.

also connected with the adjustment of Greece to EU multi-level governance, and remain, at least at the moment, relatively weak in the local political arena.

3.2 Non-governmental views on diversity policy

Despite the neo-assimilationist approach in public policy related to migration, there was a consensus amongst migrants associations and NGOs that policies are negligent towards the broader needs of the different migrant communities. Issues such as multiculturalism and diversity are hardly part of the political agenda.

In order to research the openness of the policy making process in relation to diversity issues, we conducted interviews with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active on migrant matters (the United African Women Organisation (UAWO) and the Support Centre for Children and Family (SCCF)), with presidents of migrants' communities (the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi community of Greece), the coordinator of research and documentation of the National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce (NCHC) and the director of the NGO Generation2.0.

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

However, it should be stressed, that this hollowing out of the state is a complex process and a crucial political stake that is not easy to predict. From a political point of view, a large part of the main government party belonging to the 'radical Right' is theoretically against it and practically trying to oppose it. On the other hand, NGOs and other agents of civil society themselves are extremely varied in terms of agendas, capacities, thematic interest and organisation. Those with explicit social concern may range from top-down philanthropic activity to participatory bottom-up solidarity building, the latter claiming in fact, at the same time, the enhanced responsibility of the state.

Diversity, surveillance and political initiatives

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

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

According to the representatives of migrants associations, this surveillance and control project is related to the broader political discourse on the migration issue in big city centres, such as

Athens. Such discourse actually capitalises on the residents' fear related to the high levels of delinquency, the high unemployment rates and the deterioration of inner city living conditions.

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

"If you bring up the issue of migrant entrepreneurship in the Confederation, this is something really bad... the stereotype thinking of merchants goes like this: illegal-black-selling bags- on a piece of cloth in the streets'... a strategy focusing on the migrant entrepreneurial initiatives will never take place..." [respondent j, 19 December 2013]

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

The most prominent policy initiative related to diversity is the Immigrants' Integration Council (IIC) in Athens. The IIC is highly appreciated by the migrant communities that participate as members. As stated in the interviews, the IIC provides migrants with a political opportunity to speak out their problems to the local government.

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

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

The migrant communities, besides recognizing the importance of the IIC, highlight that this is only a start in relation to the policies that have to be shaped in order to address better opportunities to the diverse communities in Athens.

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

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

Additionally, the IIC has led to the creation of a space of political encounter which, in a more festive way, is imprinted at the establishment of the Day of the Migrant. The Day of the Migrant was celebrated on the 18th /12/2013 and it was an initiative of the IIC. Different cultures (via

music, dance and theatrical performances) and cuisines were brought together at the public space next to the Technopolis cultural hub, whilst, simultaneously politicians from the central and the local government discussed migrants' issues with various communities in a more relaxed way.

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

Self regulated welfarism and spaces of encounter

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

“Since 2010 in this place (eg.the Bangladeshi community cultural centre) we have collaborated with the Ministry of Education on their project of 'Greek-learning'. The Ministry sent teachers and books, but not any other kind of funding. Last year we participated at the project of the municipality called "Mummy I am learning Greek" which was about language lessons to the mothers' of our children” [respondent 1, 24 December 2013].

Hence, NGOs and migrants' communities retrieve resources, like programmes that provide books and teachers, from the local and the central government which help them better integrate in the local culture and ameliorate their quotidian status.

At the same, as discussed by the Deputy Mayor, president of the City of Athens cultural and Youth Organisation [respondent m, 13 January 2014], many cultural projects are encouraged, in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the IIC. By recognising diversity in the city, these cultural projects bring together the traditions and the customs of variant groups. They focus on promoting the divergent cuisines, the clothing and the ethnicity especially in the most deprived areas of the city centre where there is a high percentage of migrant population. According to the Deputy Mayor the migrant population is initially hesitant towards the projects, but with the right promotion, via schools, the IIC and the local cultural centres, these projects have been successful in advocating multiculturalism and diversity in the city by organising workshops and festivals. Nonetheless, one could remark critically that these projects are addressed to legal migrants who can access the IIC and the information provided by local municipal centres and public schools. The rest of the migrant population, like the undocumented, is unaware of such initiatives.

The Municipality and several ministries sponsor diversity, by providing public spaces or buildings to migrants' associations for cultural and religious events, or the gay pride once per year [respondent m, 13 January 2014]. Additionally, other events which deal with ethnic clothes, cuisine, theatre and dance, are organised in collaboration with the municipality of Athens, the ministry of Internal Affairs, migrant groups and other NGOs. Through such initiatives instantaneous spaces of encounter are created amongst the Greek and the migrant cultures.

Likewise, it was stressed by both the NGOs and the migrants' associations that the local government hardly supports them directly in their basic needs, apart from multicultural festivals, or the allocation of space for religious and ethnic celebrations. Actually in 2012 the government decided to suspend public funding towards NGOs (Vima, 21/8/2012). The NGOs create networks and collaborate with other members of the civil society (such as doctors without frontiers, initiatives against homelessness, lawyers unions and antiracist and feminist groups) in order to secure migrants' rights, and to help them to alleviate the burdens faced in daily interactions. By organising supportive Greek language classes and projects dealing with distribution of food, clothes and school material for students, the NGOs establish practices that create spaces of redistribution for the less privileged population. Often, the NGOs initiatives are awarded prizes by the Greek state. As noted:

“The politicians have given me awards several times [...] but when I ask for funding for something useful, like teachers and other members of staff, they claim there is no money”
[respondent h, 22 November 2013]

The good practices of the NGOs are recognised by the State; however, hardly other kind of support, especially financial, will take place. Apart from formally recognising the migrants' problems and the good practices to face them, informal relations amongst the municipal services and the NGOs emerge, mainly due to the crisis.

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

Where the state is withdrawing the safety provided by social services, public services are left upon the NGOs shoulders. The NGOs have undertaken the delivery of social services, especially to the people most in need, i.e. the migrant population. They assist migrants in legal interactions with the state by filling for them the legal documentation and advising them on the next steps, on issues in the labour market and civic rights, inaugurating practices of self-governance.

Policy making, dialogue with social partners and issues of distrust

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

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

According to the interview, the local government fosters social dialogue so as to adhere to the guidelines of the European Union for the implementation of the operational Programmes, but most importantly in order to be able to absorb the European funds. The policies are formed by members of the government and experts who are hired for specific initiatives, eg. regeneration proposals for the city centre (the Urban Think Tank of the ETH Zurich is hired for the Reactivate Athens project), whilst the rest of the civic society hardly participates in policy making.

In every interview, mistrust against public policies, the state and its practices is expressed. In relation to the migration issue, especially in respect to undocumented migration, the central government has initiated a discussion with NGOs, in order to secure better policy formation. As formulated in the following quote, the NGOs support that such initiatives remain verbal commitments, without the potential of an actual implementation.

“we went to the Greek parliament and discussed migrant's problems and they said that they will take care of it... but this is only bla-di-bla-bla” [respondent g, 21 November 2013]

The recent rejection of the Raskousis Law by the Constitutional Court (see section 2) deprived from second generation immigrants, that is children who are born and raised in Greece, the opportunity to acquire political rights. Therefore this generation is still not recognised by the state as Greek citizens and use residence permits as the only legal documentation. And as indicated by the NGO Generation2.0 this is the basic reason that second generation children face identity problems.

“if you don't have citizenship; you get restricted access to the labour market [...]you don't have civil rights and you are forced to live with residence permit in the country that you are born and raised and this is the major identity issue which create questions like 'who am I?', 'What am I doing?' 'why am I treated this way?’” [respondent f, 4 February 2014]

The policies formed around migrants' issues, especially the ones related to permits and citizenship, are perceived as hesitant by most interviewees. The mistrust for the state actually serves the self-governance practices, hence the re-ordering of the state-civil society nexus.

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

On the whole, due to the crisis the nexus amongst the civil society and the state is being reshaped and the role of NGOs is being transformed. In relation to diversity issues, NGOs, and other civil initiatives, tend to undertake in practice, at least in a degree, the role of the welfare state and their initiatives have gained legitimacy. The migrants and the more underprivileged count more on the bottom up initiatives than the policies produced by the local or the central government. It depends on future sociopolitical dynamics whether the NGOs' role will be institutionalised, and whether their initiative will be legitimised as welfarism in the conscience of the society.

4. Conclusion

Despite the recent reform of the local administration system and the implementation of a metropolitan government in Athens, diversity-related policies and urban policies in general have a lack of autonomy and consist mainly of the reproduction of main political lines decided at the national and supranational level. In the past, local policies in Athens were determined by central

politics due to the centralism that characterized the administrative structure of the country. Actually, during the crisis, it is the shortage of public economic resources that increased the political dependence of the city and the region on the central and, notably, on supranational authorities. All major political texts of the Region of Attica and the Municipality of Athens reproduce the main lines of policy included in the bailout agreement between the Greek government, the IMF, the EU and the ECB, as well as in the calls of EU's cohesion funds.

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

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

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

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

Social, cultural and ethnic groups, which could be seen as assets for the city's economy and society under better economic circumstances, are now considered as possible sources of tension. At best, these groups may be categorised, along with others, as 'disadvantaged' in order to have access to targeted and 'minimalistic' social services aiming at covering basic needs. At worst, the presence of these groups per se may be seen as a negative element of urban life, as in the case of undocumented immigrants whose concentration in the city centre is a 'problem' to be addressed. Actually, with the shrinking of the welfare state that was not particularly developed to begin with, initiatives that cater for the vulnerable population, hence the migrants, are increasingly promoted by NGOs and other agents of civil society than by governmental institutions. Such initiatives undertake the role of the minimalist welfare state, by filling the void created by specific policy choices and exacerbated by the crisis.

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

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

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

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Appendix

List of interviewees

Name	Status	Institution	Position	Interview Date	Categorised as responded
Eleni Portaliou	Governmental	Municipality of Athens	Member of the local government- liberal party	30/11/2013	a
Eleutherios Skiadas	Governmental	Municipality of Athens	Member of the local Government- Conservative party	22/11/2013	b
Kalliopi Giannopoulou,	Governmental	Municipality of Athens	Deputy mayor on local social policy	29/11/2013	c
Eleni Tsitoura	Governmental	Immigrants' Integration Council	Civil Servant (national government)	29/11/2013	d
Psathas Panagiotis	Governmental	Centre for Migrant Issues	Civil Servant(national government)	25/11/2013	e
Andromachi Papaioannou	Non-Governmental	Generation2.0	Programme Director	4/2/2014	f
Lauretta Macaulay	Non-Governmental	The United African Women Organisation	President	21/11/2013	g

Mirto Lemou	Non-Governmental	Support Centre for Children and Family	President	22/11/2013	h
Elli Papakonstantinou	Governmental	Planning Authority of Green and Public spaces, Municipality of Athens	Director	18/12/2013	i
Dimirta Gounari	Non-Governmental	Coordinator of research and documentation	National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce	19/12/2013	j
Tsavek Aslam	Non-Governmental	Pakistani Community of Greece	President	21/12/2013	k
Farouk Houssain	Non-Governmental	Cultural Association of the Bangladeshi Community	President	24/12/2013	l
Nelli Papachela	Governmental	Municipality of Athens	Deputy Mayor, President of the City of Athens cultural, sports and Youth Organisation	13/1/2014	m
Vasilis Chronopoulos	Governmental	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Expert on migration issues- Advisor of the Vice minister of Internal Affairs	21/1/2014	o
Aggeliki Vassiliou and Lazaros Petromelidis	Governmental	Municipality of Athens	Development programmes department	4/2/2014	p

List of policy documents

Public Body	Policy Document	Year	Web-link
Ministry of Justice	Law 1975/1991 on Entry-Exit, Residence, Work, Expulsion of Foreigners, Procedure of Refugee Recognition	1991	
Ministry of Justice	Law 2910/2001 on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Greek Territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship through Naturalization and New Legal Framework for Granting Residence Permits	2001	
Ministry of Justice	Law 3386/2005 on Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third Country Nationals in the Greek Territory	2005	
General Secretariat of the Region of Attica	Regional Operational Programme of Attica 2007-13 General Secretariat of Periphery of Attica	2007	http://www.pepattikis.gr/20072013/?page_id=175
Ministry of Finance and Bank of Greece	Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies	2010	http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr10111.pdf
Ministry of Interior	Law 3852/2010 on the New Architecture of local government and decentralized administration	2010	
Ministry of Interior	Law 3838/ 2010 on Contemporary Provisions for Greek Citizenship and the Political Participation of	2010	

	Immigrants of Greek Origin and Legal Immigrants' Residence		
Hellenic Statistical Authority	Press release on the income and living conditions of households,	2012	http://news.in.gr/files/1/2013/12/09/A0802_SFA10_DT_AN_00_2012_06_F_GR.pdf
Region of Attica	Strategic positions and priorities of the Region of Attica for the programming period 2014-2020: "Attica 2020+"	2012	http://www.pepattikis.gr/home/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/strathgikes_proteraiothtes_20142020.pdf ,
Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and National Technical University in Athens	Changing character and policies in the centres of Athens and Piraeus, Research Programme, Third Phase,	2012	
ADDMA	Action report of the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency for the year 2012. Perspectives for 2013, Athens Development and Destination Management Agency, Municipality of Athens.	2012	
Ministry of Interior Affairs	National Strategy for the Integration of 'Third Countries' Citizens	2013	http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/f0ff9297-f516-40ffa70e-eca84e2ec9b9/ethniki_stratigiki.pdf