University of Utrecht
Faculty of Geoscience
Msc Urban Geography

Do-It-Yourself Urbansim [def]

Who: **YOU**
What: **Change**
Where: **The city**
When: **Now**
How: *Do-It- Yourself*

Sofia Koukoura
5644216
Master Thesis: The birth and evolution of 'Do-It- Yourself urbanism' in Greece, case study Athens
Supervisor: Dr. Irina van Aalst

Acknowledgements

I would like to start my thesis by explaining that after finishing my thesis, I am feeling more complete as I have now gained knowledge of Spatial Planning and Urban Geography. I am able to identify the spatial problems, give solutions to them and in parallel understand the theories behind them as I have taught in Utrecht University and University of Thessaly.

So for the completion of this thesis, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Irina van Aalst for her assistance for the preparation of this work and her valuable guidance during these months. Her guidance was important for me as I was unfamiliar with the new educational system and during our meetings I realized that the quantitative research is very important as my background (in planning and regional development), missed this kind of quality. Also, I would like to thank Marco Helbich that gave me helpful feedbacks during the mid-term presentation and make realize in what I should focus more in my thesis. Moreover I would like to thank all the interviewees that participated in my thesis. Finally, I would like to thank the family, that believed in me and supported me in many ways to achieve my goals and my dreams during the years of my education. Also I would like to thank my friends especially Maria, Nikolina and George for listening my anxieties and supporting me psychologically during the time period of the Master program regardless the geographical distance. Also, during the Master program I made new valuable friends Anje, Eva and Wendy with who I shared the same anxieties for the future and for the Master program during our dinners.

Sofia Koukoura

November 2016

Abstract

The planning field for a long period of time followed a top-down approach and it was controlled by urban planners and the authorities (eg. Somarakis & Stratigea, 2016). But since 1960 this way of thinking was criticized and bottom-up approaches emerged, that would incorporate the opinion of the citizens into the planning system (Serraos, 2015). Hence, during this period of time Do-It-Yourself urbanism arose that is now driven from the citizens themselves by intervening to the city and reclaiming their right for a livable and user-friendly city (Iveson, 2013).

In this thesis the main research question is how Do-It-Yourself (DIY) urbanism in Greece (and especially in Athens) started and how it has been evolved through the years. In more particular, it is studied what were the explanations of the development of DIY urbanism in Greece, what is the aim of the initiators and if it has changed through the years. Last but not least, it was studied the relationship between the municipality of Athens and the selected urban initiatives, if the municipality of Athens has identified this kind of urbanism in the urban fabric and how it reacts to it. Also, it was studied how the selected urban initiatives perceive the stance of the local authorities.

Studying the existing literature for the Do-It-Yourself urbanism, we understood that on theoretical level it was used approaches about the production of space and more importantly about the right of the citizens to their city (Lefebvre, 1968). As Lefebvre proposed that the citizens ought to make their space through appropriation and their participation to the decision-making procedures. Also, in theoretical level they were used theories for the criticism of the top-down approach in planning, governance through community theories, the neoliberalism model and the economic crisis of the South European countries are the answer of the development of the DIY urbanism. Hence it was expected that the above mentioned theories were the driving forces of the DIY urbanism and regarding the goals of the urban initiatives are focusing not only at the improvement of their built environment but also the improvement of the social networks at their neighborhood. Regarding the expectations for the relationship between the local authorities and the initiators based on the literature are in a quandary.

In Athens, Greece the assumptions for the development of the DIY urbanism were confirmed and it was also added the development of the Greek cities and the problems that emerged such as high density, fragmented and limited public space. Regarding the second research question, the assumptions about the goals of the urban initiatives were confirmed, as the selected groups aim for the amelioration of their built environment and then the strengthening of the social ties. Moreover, after the strike of the economic and refugees crisis, their goals were directed to solidarity in order to aid the weaker socially fellow citizens. Last but not least, regarding the relationship between the local authorities and the selected urban initiatives, it was found that municipality of Athens attempts to follow a more collaborative model of governance and include civil society. It recognizes the presence of urban initiatives and has taken measures for their support such as creating 'SynAthina' platform and office. From the other side through the interviews it was found that the initiators perceived that there is still a barrier between the local authorities and the groups for example due to bureaucracy and the nature of the character of the groups.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Maps

List of Tables

List of Pictures

1. Introduction

The field of planning and urban strategies mostly follows a top – down approach and the decisions about the plan of the city are made by the urban planners and the authority (e.g. Somarakis & Stratigea, 2016). But this started to change the last 50 years, when a more neoliberal era of urban planning and design started. The neoliberal goal is the decentralization of the government and in parallel the devolution of the state's responsibilities to lower layers of governance or and to the private and not-for-profit sectors. As a result the local state plays the role of the key actor in economic development strategies. The neoliberal urban policy, that was started to developed, triggered the transition from 'government' to 'governance'. The strong hierarchy in planning was decreased in favor of collaborative control among local authorities, private institutions and governing coalitions (Elwood, 2002). Moreover, the current changes in socio-political and cultural conditions such as the current crisis also intensified this collaborative governance and introduced new mechanisms and processes of governing appeared (Athanassiou et al, 2015).

So under these circumstances, the trend of 'Do – It – Yourself' urbanism rose and provoked a radical shift into the field of planning. This trend of urbanism declared that as 'I argue to the planning procedures and actions, I may also contribute and involve with them' (Douglas, 2013). So, from the perspective of DIY urbanism actors/citizens do not stay idle and often refuse to wait for permission by the authorities to do things directly in the build environment (Iveson, 2013).

The practices of DIY urbanists seek to erect a democratic politics of the city by declaring the right for an appropriate city that they all share (Iveson, 2013). According to Lefebvre (1996) 'the city is as much ours to use as it is anyone else's, and as much anyone else's to use as it is ours'. Hence the declaration of the right to the city is based on the arrogation and familiarization of space for alternative purposes by the inhabitants themselves (Iveson, 2013).

In more and more cities this kind of urbanism is applied and also in Greek cites gradually the DIY approaches are established. The Greek citizens due to political, economic and cultural crisis have awakened about their right to the city and in what extent they can participate in the planning procedures. The Greek citizens collaborate more and more at the level of neighborhood, in order to solve the urban problems that concern them (eg. Serraos, 2015, Athanassiou et al, 2015). They feel the need to change their urban environment that does not satisfy them. A known Athenian example of DIY project is the Navarinou Park (2009). In this case the local residents of Exarchia collaborate in order to create a common public space on the site of a former parking. This action resulted from the lack of public spaces in the district and their protest against non-use of the abandoned plot at the junction of Navarinou Str. and Zoodochou Pigis Str.

So the goal of this thesis is to provide insights into the birth and the evolution of DIY urbanism in Greece and more specifically in Athens.

1.1. Research questions

This thesis seeks to contribute to the research on under which circumstances the Do-It-Yourself urbanism was developed in Greece and how it has evolved through the years. At this point it is necessary to explain the reasons why Greece and especially Athens has been selected are located. The reasons why I have selected Greece as a case study are justified by the need for cases that the researcher would be familiar with. Greece, the researcher's country, seems to be a proper choice, firstly because of the familiarity with the general urban and social environment and secondly because it is safer to do the research and interviews in Greek. Also, Athens was selected as case study, because it is the capital of the country and the center of events and news of Greece.

Besides the personal reasons that Greek case study has been selected, there are other reasons that are more related to the structure of the planning and the current situation in Greece. In more detail the Do-It-Yourself urbanism and the unofficial community initiatives in Greece is an issue of discussion approximately the last 7 years, because of the socioeconomic conditions that alter completely the understanding of the Greek citizen and his role into the society. Moreover, the planning system in Greece follows a more top-down approach and is strictly hierarchical (from national level to the level of the urban block). But through the years, its evaluation has shown that this approach has many shortcomings and has shown inability of timely completion of projects (Serraos, 2015). Hence there have been studies that focus more on how the Greek planning system could adopt practices of bottom up approaches and how citizens can participate in the planning procedures. Moreover, many researchers have been done on when and why the Do-It-Yourself urbanism began and what is the role of initiators (eg Serraos, 2015, Ampatzidou, 2016). But, due to the recent arrival of DIY urbanism in Greece, the research on this subject is still at early stages in Greece and focuses more in the movements of the city and their connection with the economic crisis and there has not been an in-depth study about the relationship of the urban initiators and the local authority.

So, this thesis seeks to contribute to the research by attempting to fill in the literature gap in DIY urbanism in Greece. In more details it is going to investigate how and why Do-it-Yourself Urbanism flourished in Greece and how it has evolved through the years and the relationship between the urban initiators and the local authorities. So, in order to answer the main research question, three sub-questions are formed and used. These sub-questions are:

- What are the explanations of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece?

This question attempts to investigate what reasons and which circumstances triggered the development of DIY urbanism in Greece the recent years. This question will be answered firstly via the literature in order to understand how the DIY urbanism flourished globally and what changes generated this trend of urbanism. Then, it is going to be held literature review about Greece and what specific changes in the social environment and presentation of policy documents about the planning system and participatory planning tools that enhanced the development of this kind of urbanism.

- What are the main goals of urban initiatives in Athens and how they have changed through the years?

At this point we should clarify that in this thesis, the term 'urban initiatives', as Douglas (2013) and Iveson (2013) mention in their work, are groups of self – organized non-professional urban actors. These actors are citizens who participate in Do-It-Yourself projects and their main goal is to declare their right to an appropriate city throughout their actions in the building environment. The main issue under investigation is the purpose and the goal of the urban initiatives. Why the residents of a city need to collaborate and to self – organize into groups in order to contribute and involve actively in the planning processes? What are the urban initiatives want to achieve through their action? How the goals of selected Greek urban initiatives have changed through the years? In order to answer these questions, firstly there will be presented the urban problems of Athens and also the identified problems of the neighborhood where the initiatives take action. Moreover, interviews of members of Athenian urban initiatives were held and were asked to why they started their group and what they want to achieve. Also, the urban problems of Athens that was presented will be affiliated with the goals of the urban initiatives.

- What is the relationship between the municipality of Athens and the urban initiators?

This question investigates the relationship between the local state and the urban initiatives and how the municipality reacts to this shift of urbanism. In other words in what extent the local municipality embrace or rejects the DIY practices. In 'Do – It – Yourself' urbanism the participants declare their right to an appropriate city, but the DIY projects are usually acceptable from the community, but not formally and legally from the local authorities. In most cases the participants are forced to face the municipality, because they do not defer to the rules. In other cases the local state recognizes the positive impact of DIY practices and engages them or even supports the activities of urban initiatives. This question will be answered by the literature review on this subject and it will be supported by the presentation of how the selected DIY projects were confronted by the municipality. Furthermore, interviews with employees of municipality of Athens were conducted in order to cite the measures and tools that are institutionalized by the municipality for the optimal interaction between the local authorities and the civil society. Additionally, the participants of the selected Greek urban initiatives were interviewed and were asked how they coped with the local authorities in their case and how they perceive their relationship with the authorities of Athens.

1.3. Thesis Outline

The thesis structure consists of seven main chapters. First, it starts with introduction and the second chapter is about the theoretical framework that supports the research. The theoretical background of the research is built based on literature research and analysis. The structure of it follows the queue of the sub research questions that are presented in the chapter "Research questions". Hence, firstly it is presented the definition of 'Do-It-Yourself' urbanism from the literature and which definition is going to be adapted to this thesis. Then it is presented the context of DIY urbanism, in other words how DIY urbanism was conceived originally and how it has evolved through the years. Then it is attempted to be analyzed how and which factors contributed to the generation of DIY urbanism globally. Later it is examined the impact of the DIY urbanism in the society. Finally, it will be instigated the reaction of the local authorities towards to the establishment of DIY approaches to the planning system. In other words, what is the relationship between the urban initiators and the municipality and at which extend their actions can be perceived as legal and normative. Additionally, it will be presented the expectations of the empirical research according to the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the third chapter cites the methodological approaches that were applied for this research.

The fourth chapter is about Greece. More specifically, about the participatory planning in Greece and at what level the Greek citizens can participate at the decision-making procedures and also how they can express their opinion about the city and developmental plans. Moreover, it will be examined what are the additional reasons that can explain the rise of DIY urbanism especially in Greece.

The fifth chapter cites the current situation in Athens and the DIY urbanism. The first part imprints the demographic and geographical profile of Athens and the urban problems that the city confronts. After, it will be presented the selected Greek urban initiatives and DIY projects in Athens. It will be cited when and why they started their initiative, what are their goals, what kind of project they do, how they self-organized and what are the impact of their actions at the environment. It is also mentioned the profile of the neighborhoods where the selected urban initiatives take action for the better understanding of their goals.

Last but not least, at the sixth chapter it will be examined the stance of the municipality of Athens about the DIY urbanism and how it reacts to the DIY activities. Moreover, it will be presented the perception of the urban initiatives towards the municipality of Athens. This will be achieved through the official documents and most importantly through semi-structured interviews of the municipal officers. Hence, the three research questions will be answered according to the empirical research that will be held.

The seventh chapter which is the last of the thesis will be analyzed the results of the h and fifth chapter. Moreover, it will be answered the research questions in a more critical perspective and there will be examined in what extend the theoretical assumptions that were made at the end of the second chapter are corroborated by the empirical data. Also, the reflections of the thesis and recommendations for future research will be presented.

2. Theoretical Framework

As the main subject of this thesis is the Do-It-Yourself urbanism, at this chapter it is going to be analyzed what is the DIY urbanism (the definition of this term), when it was appeared and developed. Moreover it will be presented how this term was conceived originally and by whom, how it has changed through the years and the current trends of the current DIY urbanism. After the apposition of the term, it will be presented why the DIY urbanism was flourished and which factors contributed to the development of this kind of urbanism. Then, it will be examined what are the impacts of DIY urbanism in the society. Last but not least how the local authority reacts to the establishment of the DIY approaches into the planning system. Hence, it will be cited the relationship of urban initiators with the local state and how they cope with each other.

2.1. The Definition of 'Do-It-Yourself' urbanism

The Do-It-Yourself urbanism is deeply democratic and the core of 'bottom up' approach and was developed in the decades of 1960s and 1970s as a result of the neoliberal era (for more about the neoliberal era see the chapter 2.3.)(Douglas, 2013). According to Iveson (2013) by its nature is a self-motived activity by individuals or organized groups using their funds in order to declare their right of an appropriate city that all the citizens share. This kind of urbanism introduces the notions of 'temporary' and 'experimental' space. This perception of space is produced under the limited public and private resources, the rapid economic, social changes, a plethora of vacant and 'unproductive' spaces and under the urgent need for revitalization of the city. So, in order to overcome these obstacles, "we need more drastic fluid and flexible forms of urban planning" (LaFrombois, 2015). DIY activities are more radical and local, although they utilize the same community-based, participatory and fair-share processes that planners attempt to establish in many cities (Finn, 2014).

Another definition given by Deslandes (2013) is that DIY urbanism is perceived as locally driven renovation, revamping and revivification of urban areas considered as 'empty', 'non – functional', 'wasted' by the local community and especially by the non- professional urban actors. The scale of 'Do – It- Yourself' projects can vary from building scale, to block or to a street (Lydon & Carcia, 2015). So, these projects can be from graffiti, flash mops to the construction or the renovation of a park (Finn, 2014). In more and more cities are implementing these short – term, low – budget improvements initiated by volunteers citizens.

Prime examples in micro-scale are the numerous incidents of unauthorized painting of a bike lane by the residents of the neighborhoods in California, United States of America (Fabian,2015). Also, the Chairbombing in the city of Fredericton in Canada (2015) , where the citizens painted and re-purposed tree stumps because of their need for more strategically-placed seating in the urban space (Bendix,2015). An example at the level of neighborhood is the "La Plaza Cultural" (See Picture 1), which a community garden in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City. This community garden was founded in 1976 by local residents and activists who occupied a vacant plot, which was full of pills of trash and rubble. This act by the residents was the respond of the neighborhood from a downward spiral of arson, drugs and abandonment. The local residents and the members of Latino group CHARAS reclaimed the space of "La Plaza Cultural", by clearing out truckloads and recycling

the materials that was found in abandoned building and using them for decoration of the place. "La Plaza Cultural" is used as a community space where cultural events staged, film screening such as foot matches etc. (http://laplazacultural.com).

Picture 1: Perspective of the "La Plaza Cultural" Community Garden

Credits: Sofia Koukoura, 19/04/2016

Because Do-It-Yourself urbanism is a broad topic (it is affiliated with welfare, public space, ect), hence the definition adopted for this thesis based on the abovementioned definitions from the literature (eg. Douglas, 2013, Iveson, 2013) is the activities performed by the local residents and urban initiatives for the re-purposing of urban space without the involvement and the subsidies of municipality. For this thesis the urban initiatives seek for the creation of a user-friendly urban environment by involving the construction and installation of small-scale design solutions in order to solve an urban problem that has been identified by the locals. The DIY urbanism can be associated in the literature with 'guerilla urbanism', 'pop – up urbanism' or 'tactical urbanism' and they have similar meaning.

According to Crawford in Iveson (2013) there are five key dynamics and characteristics that share the various DIY projects across different countries and cities and they are the following:

- Defamiliarization (in the sense of identifying new possibilities in taken-for-granted spaces of the city). A new example of defamiliarization is the 'PARK(ing) Day', which started in 2005 in San Francesco, when the interdisciplinary design group Rebar converted a single into a mini-park. This idea was spread to other American cities and became an annual event. Hence, the residents identify and explore through 'PARK(ing) Day' new possible uses of parking spaces in the city.
- Refamiliarization (in the sense of re-occupation of alienated spaces in the city). At the context of this key dynamic is applied the example that was mentioned above the "La Plaza Cultural". As, the local residents refamilirazed themselves with the unused space at their neighborhood by creating their space, their park.
- Decommodification (the assertion of use values over exchange values in urban space). A great example of decommodification is the inTime Bank in Exarcheia. Via the Time Bank the members are allowed to barter services and the measurement unit is the time.
- Alternative economies (such as recycling and gifting economies). The DIY activities have as key characteristic the gifting economies, for example the community gardens are perceived as a kind of this economy. The participants and members of an urban DIY garden modify a vacant plot into a garden that operates as an exchange economy. The members share the same field and

> cultivate their plants and can buy the products that they want by exchange their own with those of their co-participants.
> • Collaboration across difference (in the sense that involve emergent rather than pre-constituted subjects)

The above dynamics of DIY urbanism incrementally change the perception of planning that now is more deliberate, phased and in parallel provoke the livability of the towns and cities. This tactic offers and implements local ideas for local planning challenges, so these ideals are short-term commitment and have realistic expectations. As a result they have low-risk and a possibly high reward. Moreover, 'Do – It – Yourself' urbanism develops social capital between citizens and builds organizational capacity between public and private institutions and nonprofit NGOs (Lydon & Carcia, 2015). Hence DIY urbanism's projects are the response to the symptoms of urban decline and the evident flight of the local capital (Deslandes, 2013). So these projects we could say that they represent a 'win-win' approach to urban planning in which the residents are active agents by ameliorating and producing urban space, while city authorities derive the benefits from the revitalized spaces with little or no financial investment and support (LaFrombois, 2015).

2.2. The context of 'Do – it – Yourself' Urbanism

Despite the recent popularity of the DIY urbanism, this notion was captured and developed in a much longer period of time. More specifically the late 1960s and early 1970s artists and intellectuals posed for the first time questions about the role of the citizen into the city. More specifically, a political and artistic movement that is associated with DIY urbanism is Situationist International, which was flourished from 1957 to 1972 and stated that the professionalism of architecture and design led to the sterilization of the world and the decrease of the sense of spontaneity and playfulness (Sadler, 1999; 1,5).

According to SI (Situaltionst International) the situationist city would be designed on the principle of 'unitary urbanism' and the urban dynamics would no longer be driven by capital and bureaucracy, but by citizens (Sadler, 1999;117). Situationist International envisaged the 'unitary urbanism; as a doctrine that would reject the fixed forms and permanent solutions of traditional planning, while in parallel would envision the urban environment as a playground where everyone would play his role and participate' (Sadler, 1999;120).

For the Situationist Internationals art was utilized as a tool to alter the everyday life. Their artistic activities, which were mainly located in the public urban space, attempted to integrate art with everyday life (where the unexpected and random interactions play a major role) (Tsoukia,2012). They also mentioned the possibility of different forms of participation and political action organized by small– scale co-operative, community-based activities. These artistic activities would involve notions such as beauty, play, excitement, encounter and mainly art. They would use values of self-expression, individual choice, local autonomy, community empowerment and self-subsistence (Barnard, 2004). So, it was required the active participation of people living and moving in these areas as well as the communication between them. In other words their main idea was the reorganization of cities by the citizens, so the residents ought to decide what spaces and architecture they want to live in and how they want to live in them.

One of their methods was 'Détournement' (diversion) which can be defined as the procedure of reuse and integration of existing or pre-existing artistic creations to a better construction of the urban environment. Applying the method of 'Détournement', they used raw materials that exist in the city and by this method the city is modified from expression space to self –expression space of the society (Tsoukia, 2012). This method offers an alternative to explore the urban space in new ways by rearranging "existing aesthetic elements into new forms of expression". It also "recycles and transforms existing structures and materials in exciting and innovative ways, through artistic expression and transformed human experience" (Barnard, 2004).

Lefebvre believed that the situationist definition of 'Détournement' was very broad (it included all forms of art) and through his work 'The Production of Space' he made it narrower (only for architecture and urbanism). He stated that the diversion is an important spatial practice and not an artistic one. For him diversion 'is the broader of the two conceptions; and that (revolutionary) artistic practices are enclosed and only possible within (revolutionary) spatial practices' (Not Bored Journal). He stated that this process is perpetual and contested. The shaping and reshaping of urban space are composite procedures that involve deferent actors and stakeholders that seek from their perspective to define who and what the city is for. The resources that limits and mobilizes the power is the capital, property rights, planning codes, spatial design, law, various policing techniques and technologies, education, socialization and labor. The capability to handle these resources ought not to be addressed exclusively to one group, so that the power balance can be supervene (Iveson, 2013).

Lefebvre with the 'Right to the City' (1968) (which has become a social movement) created the motto for the modern proponents who associate with urban matters and especially DIY supporters (Finn, 2014). According to Purcell (2002) Lefebvre's right to the city is an argument for reconsideration for at that time social relations of capitalism and the reevaluation of the term of liberal – democratic citizenship. "His idea is a call for profound restructuring of the social, political and economic relations in the city and beyond." (Purcell, 2002). Lefebvre reformulated the decisionmaking procedures and in parallel he supported that these procedures should reoriented away from the central state, but towards the production of the urban space (Purcell, 2002). In other words he stated that there is a need for disassociation of the power that the capital and the authority possess and reorienting this power to the citizens.

In this context citizens ought to make known their ideas on the space and use them in their favor of their right to the city. The right to the city includes the notions of participation and appropriation. The right to participation supports that the citadin (urban dweller) must play a key role to the decisions that affiliates with the production of space. Lefebvre believed strongly that the citadin must play a central and direct role, which is opposite to the liberal – democratic doctrine. The liberal – democratic enfranchisement is more indirect and their opinions are criticized and filtered by the institutions of the state (Purcell, 2002).

The second aspect of the right to the city is the appropriation as it was mentioned above. Appropriation is the right to the access, the utilization and the occupation of the urban space. However for Lefebvre this notion was perceived to have a broader and more structural meaning. In more detail, appropriation is not only the usage of the produced space, it is also the right to the production of space, so that it can fulfill the needs of the inhabitants (Purcell, 2002). Moreover, appropriation offers to citizens the

right to 'full and complete use' of space in urban daily life and this space must be produced in a way that the inhabitants can use it to the fullest (Lefebvre, 1996; 179). The main consideration in decision-making processes ought to be how he citizens will use the space. So, the right to appropriation is again to the concept of the urban space as a private property or as a good to be valorized by the capitalist production process (Purcell, 2002).

From the above it is understood that Lefebvre's 'Right to the City' suggest a radical transformation of urban social and spatial relations. We could say that he was the pioneer of DIY urbanists, as with his oeuvre laid the foundation of DIY urbanism. He posed questions for the first time that raise awareness about the role of the citizen in the city. For instance "For whom is the city?", "Why only the central state can decide for the production of space and no other stakeholders can involve into these procedures?", "Why it is important the participation of the citizens into the planning processes?".

The Lefebvre's thoughts about the right to the city were espoused also by David Harvey. He believed that "We live in an era when ideals of human rights have moved center stage both politically and ethically. A great deal of energy is expended in promoting their significance for the construction of a better world… The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey 2008;23). Moreover, in his percept of the right to the city in his essay for New Left Review, he focused on how the capital shapes the city and the need to democratize the surplus (Iveson, 2013).

As we can see the modern DIY urbanists have a relevant connection with the Lefebvre and Harvey, but according to Douglas (2013) they perceive themselves more radicals. The term DIY urbanism was conceived firstly from artists and philosophers such as Lefebvre as a political reaction to at that time system. Their purpose was to arouse awareness to the public that the citizens have the right to play a key role to the production of their space. While, the current term of DIY urbanism has become more practical, due to its stimulation by not only experts such as artists, but by ordinary citizens too. The purpose of the current DIY urbanists is to bring on the forefront a re-newed discussion on the meanings of urban space. They are affiliated to the re-appropriation of urban space and to the idea of the right to the city; something that echoes back to Lefebvre's analysis on everyday life. As Alisdaii mentions in Athanassiou et al (2015) they attempt to create alternative structures in the urban realm through a variety of (democratic) methods seeking to challenge existing forms of governance and to build alternative ways of life.

The modern DIY urbanism acts through urban initiatives, and their goals are summarized to the following; to invite and encourage the citizens to get involved with the urban space and to be more active. They attempt to create inviting, liveable and user-friendly city (Athanassiou et al, 2015). One of their goals is to create their own space such as a playground, a pocket park that would be used by the local residents. They want to improve their environment, not only by ameliorating the built environment and by enhancing the social ties between the local residents (Douglas,2013). They aim for the social cohesion of their district and in order to achieve that they organize team projects that will produce a well operated neighborhood.

Therefore, the citizens collaborate in order to produce the space that they want bypassing the bureaucracy of the planning system. They do not want to lean on the

local authorities and they believe in the self-organization of the system. The modern DIY urbanists raise awareness to the public by organizing workshops and seminars with collaboration with locals to consider feasible solutions for their urban problems that they face. But their most important action to arouse the audience is calling assemblies in the neighborhoods, where they come in contact with the local residents and identify or propose alternative solutions for their urban problems. From the above it is understood that the contemporary DIY urbanism may have a different more tangible perceiveness of the DIY urbanism than the social movements that marked and inspired the primary DIY activities (Finn, 2014).

2.3. The explanations of the development of the DIY urbanism

As we presented what is the DIY urbanism previously, at this chapter it is going to be examined how the DIY urbanism appeared as a new kind of urbanism and what cracked the traditional hierarchical system of planning. What are the explanations that developed this alteration to the planning system? What provoked the devolution of the state power and how the bottom up approaches is established into the planning procedures? These circumstances are summarized to the following; the criticism of top –down approach and the neoliberalism which provoked the rise of the bottom up. Also, the notion of governance through community that shifted the notion of citizenship and the socio-political and cultural conditions that also contributed to the establishment of new mechanisms and processes of governing.

To begin with, for centuries urban planning was a technocratic process relied upon the knowledge of the experts such as architects, urban planners and administrative officers. Its main goal was to create social order and growth by organizing, controlling and regulating the space (Fabian &Samson, 2015), while in parallel often did not included and fulfilled the wishes and the visions of the society through the planning procedures.

This top down approach was criticized strongly from the decade of 1960s, when significant political and social shifts held and they had a major impact to the planning theories. These changes affected the planning and design approaches per se by the soaring demand for citizen's involvement. An increased openness has been observed among planners and authorities willing to learn from everyday urbanism and adopt bottom up approaches to planning (Fabian & Samson, 2015). Hence, planning passed to a more anthropocentric model, where the 'empirical knowledge' of the society has acquired a significant value and this knowledge consequently interacts and works in addition to the 'scientific knowledge' of the expert (Somarakis & Stratigea, 2016).

The top-down approach is based upon a hierarchical system of planning and bureaucracy, which in many cases decelerate the processes. The advocates of 'bottom up' approach stress that the methodology of top – downers tends to neglect and exclude other actors in the procedures of decisionmaking. In more detail, the policy makers are perceived as the key actors and the rest such as private sector's initiative or the citizens themselves, are the impediments. Another point of the criticism of top-down models is that they are difficult to apply in situations where there is no policy or regulation, but rather a diversity of government guidelines. Thirdly, the top-down doctrine underestimates and even ignores the practices of street level bureaucrats who attempt to satisfy the local needs. There are also arguments that the top-down approach made a distinction between policy formulation and policy implementation, which is misleading. In many cases this distinction is useless, because some

organizations are involved in both stages and the local implementing officials and target groups often ignore central legislators and administrators and deal directly with each other (Sabatier, 1986).

According to Hjern et al (1978) contrary to the top down approach, the bottom up doctrine follows more decentralized governance. Originally starts by identifying the network of actors in service delivery at a local level and examine their goals, strategies activities and contacts. Then it uses their contacts as a kick off for developing a network technique to identify the local, regional and national actors involved in planning and in general to the governance of the space (Hjern et al, 1978). This mechanism enables to move from street level bureaucrats (the bottom of the planning pyramid) up to the 'top' where the policy-makers from public and private sector are. Additionally the participation of the citizens and the street level bureaucrats to the planning procedures gives them the opportunity to involve in matters that concern them directly and provide information to the authorities about the prevalent perceptions inside the society (Topalidis, 2012). So, the participation of the inhabitants not only help themselves but also the governors to practice their policies, it is a win – win situation. Therefore, the DIY urbanism originates from the bottom up approach, as we cited at previous sub-chapters is based on the delivery of the power to the citizens who act directly and attempt to feel the gaps of the traditionally hierarchical system of top-down approach.

The abovementioning criticism of top-down approach in planning originates also from the rise of the neoliberal era. According to Elwood (2002) neoliberalism is interpreted "as a set of national state policies favoring privatization and unfettered free market capitalism as ideal mechanisms for regulating social, political, and economic life, emphasizing a downsized state apparatus and greater institutional and economic efficiency". The purpose of neoliberalism is to reduce the responsibilities of the authorities and reallocate them to lower tiers or to the private and not-for-profit sectors. Hence, there is a shift at the assignation of urban service delivery and decision-making towards the neighborhood level. Moreover, there is an evident growing responsibility of citizens and civic institutions for decision-making and in parallel the devolution of the state at the context of the neoliberal goal for economic and institutional efficiency (Elwood, 2002).

The neoliberalism in urbanism is emphasizing mainly on the partnership and the networks that are developed between the public and private sectors and between local authorities and civil society, rather than top-down national government. These partnerships do not only involve the actors from the private sector, but also NGOs, religious groups, community-action groups, or networks among individuals. In parallel promoting partnership between the different sectors for the interests of the "maximum welfare of all the people", it requires the reduction of the state's power (Jessop, 2002). The above characteristic can be tracked down to the DIY urbanism goals and modes of production. More particularly, the DIY urbanism is based upon "the lean state, the financial disinvestment, free and flexible modes of production, deregulations of urban rules" (LaFrombois,2015). DIY urbanism is promoting (as the neoliberalism) the reduction of state power and the individual activities.

These above discussions of neoliberalism in planning have commons with the governance theory, as they perceive changes in governing practices and the transition from 'government' to 'governance'. Both neoliberalism and urban governance focus on the devolution of the responsibilities in planning, decision-making and service

delivery. In parallel, they both wonder about the discussion of "changing spatiality of power that accompanies this devolution; and both identify the city as a critical site of struggle over the implementation and impacts of this new regime of urban policies and practices" (Elwood, 2002). So the strong hierarchy in planning is declining in favor of a collaborative control among local authorities, private institution and governing coalitions (Elwood, 2002).

Governance theory examines power not as 'social control' but as 'social production'. This theory 'moves away from fixed ideas about power as a commodity rooted particular institutions to more fluid ideas of power developed and negotiated between partners' (Taylor, 2007). The governance discourse focuses on the reevaluation of the hierarchy, the opening up of decision-making to greater participation and decentralization and devolution of the power. Furthermore, it is affiliated with 'the normative concepts of community, social capital and civil society as integrating forces built on network and trust' (Taylor, 2007).

Governance through community suggests establishing new sets of relationship and partnership between citizens, policy makers and agencies responsible for service delivery (Raco & Flint, 2001). Communities can exploit the new knowledge and expertise and they are valued for their resources both insubstantial and tangible. So, through this kind of governance, it is triggered the development of social capital and community cohesion. At the same context the governance through community has the capacity to improve service delivery; through having a greater voice on service planning monitoring and meeting the local needs through delivering their own services. It also addresses concerns for the democratic status through the re-engaging citizens with the institutions of government (Taylor, 2007).

So this conception of 'governance and power promise a more fluid and ambiguous politics in which communities are capable to generate power with or without allies from within the state' (Taylor, 2007). Hence, its implications on the relationship between the civil society and the authorities have changed the role, the responsibilities and the power of the dwellers (Elwood, 2002). Citizenship is a powerful mechanism that permits to an individual to be viewed as a member of a society and behave under the terms of the duties, obligations and its rights. But this notion has been modified from been a given status to a performative act and new terms of it has arisen. 'The flexible citizenship represents real power relations among participants in community-building initiatives' and the willingness to improve the urban material environment (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003). As a result this term has revaluated who can be a citizen, the range of the activities that a citizens can do and how he can exercise his right. Turning back to the DIY urbanism we see that it is aligned with the performative perception of citizenship of the governance theory. The citizen has the right to declare his present to the space by practicing his citizenship and to protest towards the bigger responsibilities and new power that acquires by changing his communal environment with small-scale projects.

Another circumstance that intensifies the establishment of the DIY urbanism is the current change in socio-political and cultural conditions. The current crisis also redounded the alteration of the notion of governance, as new mechanisms and processes of governing appeared. Evident impact of this crisis is the processes of new innovative forms of urban governance that occurred the last two decades and challenges the decisions and policy-making processes derived by the central state. This shift generates new mechanisms of negotiation, participation and conflicts

18

between the different actors that are involved and in parallel bring to the surface the discussion around political participation and democracy (Athanassiou et al, 2015).

From 2008 and forward especially the cities of the European South (including Greece) faced this crisis that altered every aspect of their everyday life of their citizens. This economic crisis triggered a series of "new imaginaries, discourses, spatial configurations and subjectivities" (Athanassiou et al, 2015). The chained changes reconstructed the relations between the urban actors and also brought forth again the notion of citizenship by establishing the citizens as the main actor of the urban public space. We could say that the economic crisis agitate the citizens and brought them out of their comfort zone and make them realize that they have to participate more at the commons. The urban space has now become the focus and the place of actions of the newly constituted urban initiatives, experiments and projects. These urban initiatives "challenge the existing power relations interact with existing formations, open cracks and create conflicts in and through the urban space" (Athanassiou et al, 2015)

We can sum up that the DIY urbanism developed under various circumstances. Each explanation is respectively associated with each other and we understand that the DIY urbanism is the outcome of many sociopolitical changes that especially had an impact at the involvement of the citizen to the political and public realm. These chances that started at the decade of 1960, are chained and have a various impact at the society and end up at the rage of activities of the citizens-individual and reconsider its role to the society.

2.4. Impacts of 'Do – it – Yourself' Urbanism

As it has been presented above what is DIY urbanism and how it was conceived, at this point it is necessary to mention their impact on the society. The effects on society are not only the obvious such as ameliorate the image of the city and correct the failure of the planning procedures, they are also deeper. For example it strengthens the social networks of citizens and has multiple positive societal effects in placemaking.

DIY urbanism is the driving force for producing a more community-oriented and democratic city. Through DIY urbanism, the preferences and needs of all citizens are recorded and reflected on their activities. One method of the DIY urbanists is the calling of open assembly, where all the local residents can participate and discuss for their urban problems. At the context of these democratic procedures, equality and justice are promoted as the voice of disadvantaged and marginal groups are also heard, where in contrast with traditional planning they would be neglected (Xydia et al, 2015).

The DIY urbanism espouses the idea of a city that invites and encourages dwellers to interact with the urban topography and to perform their citizenship (Mould, 2014). More specifically, through DIY urbanism can be built public awareness and provoke the citizens to realize and to identify a small but pressing issue into the urban fabric. For instance, in Baltimore a 'guerilla crosswalk' was painted because the residents of the local neighborhood identify the problem of lacking traffic sign at a busy road. So this crosswalk was painted with inexpensive white paint and rollers. Although this was an unauthorized sign, it became permanent because it fulfilled the need for better pedestrian infrastructure (Lydon & Carcia, 2015).

These democratic procedures establish and build trust between the local residents. The initiators communicate and interact with each other and the social cohesion at the level of neighborhood is increased. The local residents as they united for the creation of the urban initiatives they get out of their comfort zone and learn to collaborate. This trust is not only built between the initiators, but also between the different interest groups and the local authorities. This can be interpreted by the fact that if the public is able to participate in the improvement of the function of the city, regardless the size of the project, the likelihood of gaining public support for more permanent changes will be increased. As the local authorities will understand that the citizens actually care for their space and will appreciate their actions. Hence, the local state will be in touch with them and will seek for cooperative governance, as the physical testing of their (urban initiatives) ideas might also give a good insight for the expectations of the future users and which kind of city they want to live in (Lydon & Carcia, 2015).

Regarding the relationship between the urban initiators and the space, we could mention that an emotional attachment is also developed with the space and have impact also at the levels of safety. In more details, the initiators who perceive themselves as temporary occupants of the place that take care the property and guard it against the disuse. They prevent vandalism and graffiti as well as 'malicious damage' that the abandoned buildings and deprived areas attract (Deslandes, 2013). The renewal groups are setting new rules of behavior at the sites and alienate the 'neglectful' uses of urban space and the expulsion of undesirable social groups such as drug addicts. In Mexico City and more specifically in Miravalle neighborhood (2006) local organizations transformed an abandoned public space into an open area with a wide variety of cultural and recreational facilities such as library and digital center. The positive impact on the build environment is that the abandoned field that was used as a garbage dump and the 'sovereignty site' of drug addicts and gangsters has transformed into a clean, safe and good quality open space (Rosa & Weiland, 2013: p. 136, 138).

2.5. The relationship of the urban initiatives and the local state

At this chapter it is going to be discussed the relationship between the local state and the urban initiatives. In more detail, how the local state confronts the actions of the initiators and also how the initiators perceive their actions. DIY approaches can be understood as a form of soft rebellion against the planning status that is characterized to lack creativity, flexibility, imagination and efficiency (Finn, 2014). DIY approaches can be perceived as a critical challenge for urban governance, management and planning. The unorthodox DIY means omit the formal processes and exercise of powers that planners and public officials rely on to ensure values such as consensus, public safety, equity, efficiency, coordination of urban systems and others. Assuming DIY activities continue to proliferate, cities ought to pay attention to these kinds of activities and strategies and stop ignoring and criminalizing them (Finn, 2014).

The local state in many cases rejects the DIY approaches, as it perceives that the city plans that are created by the municipality and the planners are an integrated proposal for the development of the city. These proposals have a specific structure and specific rules on how the human activities will be distributed at the space for instance the zoning of the land uses and the building codes. They perceive that the DIY approaches will fragment the space and will operate as temporal solutions for the emerging urban problems. The methods that the DIY urbanists use for reclaiming their right to the city also states how a permanent or temporary change of land uses can also cause problems within the city, where property ownership plays a key role in the organization (Deslandes, 2013). According to Westbury et al. in Deslandes (2013) in their research 'barriers to entry', the conditions of using a piece of land are set by property owners, groups and governmental administration through building codes and zoning regulations and in many cases DIY urbanism comes opposite to these regulations. The citizens/initiators are obliged to obey the laws that they do not particularly like, as it is a part of living in a democracy. Although despite the illegality of their action, the successful DIY projects actually strengthen the democracy. For example, in the North America the initiators protesting against urban planning regulations which usually serve 'interests disconnected' from those of the inhabitants. So, the participants are entering to a professionalized structure and making it work for them so we could say that they are 'hacking the city' from the inside (Deslandes,2013).

At the context of revivification of the urban areas the initiators modified the use of vacant plot regardless the ownership status and regulation. In most cases the initiators do not have permits for their activities and so they face the municipal officers, as in many cases they are forced to move away otherwise the project will be demolished. This kind of incidents happens, because DIY projects are usually located on someone else's property, either private or public, so they cost to the owners or the taxpayers money, and affect anyone in the surrounding area (Douglas, 2013). An example of rejection of DIY project by the city council is located in Kansas City. In 2015 the residents of a neighborhood in Kansas City occupied a plot that was abandoned for more than a decade, leading to more litter and illegal activity. Neighbors decided in November of 2015 to collaborate by cleaning this piece of land, while also building make-shift ramps that could be used for skating. So, the 'Columbus Park DIY project' was constructed and had a great impact at the block, as it became safer and most active in years. Although the initiators didn't have the proper permits to build the

skate park, so they were informed by the city council to move away and they were threatened with possible demotion (Helmuth, 2015).

From the perspective of the initiators, this utilization of vacant buildings and land has a symbolic and a regulatory relationship with the illegal occupation of property or squatting, this fact has been affiliated with the efforts of activists to reclaim empty property as something useful for the society (Deslandes, 2013). Nevertheless, the normative acceptance of DIY projects depends on the nature of the space used and on the purpose or utility of the action (Pagano, 2013).

The advocates of DIY urbanism as mentioned before are against the professionalized structure of the city. More specifically, about the zoning of land uses they support that the single-functional zoning doctrine creates dead urban space and reduce the liveness of the space. In many cases, the planning regulations forbid the awnings, sidewalk seating and walkable streets (Finn, 2014) and as a result the urban spaces lack of human scale and vividness. So, in order to reverse the situation they held DIY projects that 'break' the rules. A typical example is the 'PARK(ing) Day', which is an annual event, where on-street parking spaces (located in central roads of city) are converted into park-like public spaces. The initiators simply lay down sod, add a bench and tree by declaring the repurposing of the as parklet (Lydon & Carcia, 2015).

The initiators avoid the involvement of the municipal officers and also operate and work against the domination of government and finance capital. The DIY urbanists rely on their own financial resources and they face a barrier regarding to the programming and funding of state–sponsored art and culture-making. Therefore, they operate as a reply the domination of elite and large scale-forms of resourcing in this area, in parallel with an anti-professional approach to urbanism (Deslandes, 2013)

Another argument of the DIY urbanism against to the planning procedures by the authorities is the bureaucracy. The initiatives' participators are fighting against the slowness of the government. They use strategic approaches (such as low cost, experimental temporary) that can be useful for the municipal planners. They are use rational and necessary tactics for the residents in order to accelerate the planning procedures that are characterized by overly bureaucracy and interactably anachronistic system (Finn, 2014).

From the other side in more and more cities, the municipality accepts and embraces the DIY approaches. In many cases the local authorities adopt a more participatory planning approach into their procedures, as they support that a successful and functional city plan must be based on and derived from the ideas, suggestions of citizens. So at the context of corporate governance they invite the different actors and especially the urban initiatives to collaborate in order to increase together the quality of life in the city (eg. Serraos, 2015, Lydon & Carcia, 2015) .

Regarding the acceptance of the DIY projects by the municipality, there are two levels of acceptance; the technically illegal but normative acceptable or even welcomed behavior (Pagano,2013). The first level of acceptance is referred to acts that are technically illegal and accepted by the community, while the stance of municipality is neutral. These acts are affiliated with the amelioration of the aesthetic of the built environment and the beautification of the land. For example the gardening on a roadway median by civic initiatives violates the regulation against defacing public property, although the action does not produce negative reaction, so the laws on violation of public property are not implemented (Pagano,2013).

The second level of acceptance is the cases when the local authorities learn from and successfully engage DIY approaches. The tactical interventions that are illegal but viewed as legitimate and normatively acceptable by the community often legalized. An example of the adopted DIY strategies by the authorities is the 'Build a Better Block' in Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas. The 'Build a Better Block' motivates local activists and property owners to temporarily activate vacant storefronts and public space such as food vendors and sidewalk cafe tables as places to congregate. As a side effect of this project some of the changes proposed are being made permanent by the City of Fort Worth. More specifically this led to the permanent use of formerly underutilized retail space and also the municipality committed to permanently implement complete street improvements (Lydon & Carcia, 2015). Another example is in the City of San Francisco, the PARK(ing) Day inspired the local authorities to allow to residents to apply for converting one or two parking spaces to semi-permanent "parklets" (Lydon & Carcia, 2015).

So, we can see from the abovementioning that the relationship between the initiators and the local authorities is a topic of negotiation. The initiators from the one hand perceive that their actions are a soft rebellion against the traditional planning system as they omit the bureaucracy and act directly. They want to work without the involvement of the municipal officers, without the financial support of the municipality, as they are self-sufficient. From the other hand the reaction of the municipality is binary, the municipality either rejects the DIY approaches or they accept them normatively and engage these approaches.

2.6. Expectations

As it is already mentioned (see chapter 1.2), for the specific research a qualitative approach has been chosen and will be applied in order to get a deeper understanding on how the DIY urbanism was generated in Greece and how it has evolved through the years. Hence, at the theoretical framework were presented the circumstances that triggered globally the DIY urbanism, the context under which the DIY developed and how it has change through the years. Moreover, last but not least it has been presented the stance of the local state towards the urban initiatives and their actions. So, the empirical research has to be based on theoretical assumptions, in order to reflect them back at the chapter of conclusions.

From the theoretical framework it is understood for the first research question that the DIY urbanism was developed under the context of the introduction of the bottom up approach in the planning procedures and the criticism of the top down approach. Moreover the establishment of the neoliberalism in urbanism also suggested the involvement of other actors and the containment of the power of the central state into the planning procedures. Also, the socio-political crisis especially in the South European countries as Greece changed the governing practices. So currently we face the transition from 'government' to 'governance' and the alteration of the notion of citizenship to more performative. But, due to the current incidents that happen to Greece such as the economic and refugee crisis and under the particular circumstances that the Greek cities are developed, there would be also additional factors that contributed to the birth of the DIY urbanism in Greece. These factors will be discovered through the interviews of the urban initiatives and the municipal officers.

Literature review and the examples of DIY projects that have been presented seem to indicate that the goals of the urban initiatives are also societal and tangible. In more

detail, they want to declare their right to change their build environment (eg Douglas, 2013, Iveson, 2013) by performing their civil rights. They desire to ameliorate their urban daily life by taking matters into their own hands. Furthermore, it is expected that building trust between the local residents in order to collaborate is one of their goals also. They want to raise awareness and motivate them to identify the problems of their society.

As far as the last research question about the relationship between the urban initiators and the local authorities the expectations are in a quandary. As the actions of the initiators are normative accepted by the society, in many cases they are rejected by municipality legal impediments. For example the demolition of a DIY skate park the "Little Oasis Crazy Skate" in a deprived area of Margate seafront, England (Webb,2015). The local society welcomed this idea, but the Thanet District Council considered this park as unsafe and bad built and as result they demolished it. On the other hand, the bibliographical research also indicated that the practices of the DIY urbanism are frequently adopted by the state and in many cases the local state supports their actions. For instance, the City Council of San Francisco espouses the strategies of the 'Park(ing) Day' and allowed to the citizens to modify parking spaces into parklets. From the above, it understood that it depends on the stance of the authority to either accept or reject the actions of the initiators. So, the relationship between these actors are under scrutiny and ambivalent. For this reason the interviews of the municipal employees of the Planning Department of Athens and the Department of Civil Society and Decentralization (The "SynAthina' office) that provide a better understanding on this topic. Regarding on the expectations about the stance of the Athenian urban initiatives according to the literature review on this topic, they will perceive their activities as protests towards the local authorities. Moreover, due to the nature of DIY urbanism that bypass the legislated decision-making procedures and they will perceive themselves as rebels and they will not be willing to cooperate in most cases with the local authorities
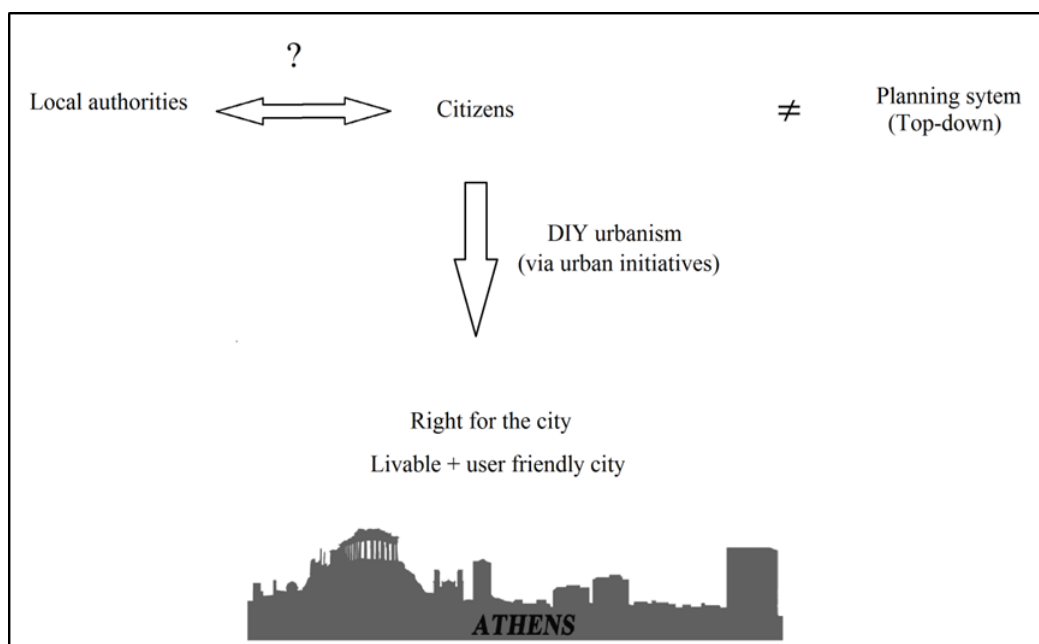

Figure 1. Illustration of the Conceptual model

Credits: author's editing

3. Methodology

The methodological approach proposed for this thesis in order to answer the research questions is summarized to literature review, collection on statistical data and qualitative research. Firstly, in order to answer the research questions, there has been held a literature review at the chapter of 'Theoretical background' in order to introduce the term of DIY urbanism and present which reasons triggered the appearance of DIY urbanism globally. Moreover, it was presented its impact on the societal (mainly) and built environment and the relationship between the local authorities and the urban initiatives and in which extent the municipality supports this kind of urbanism. Moreover, in order to support the arguments of the literature, case studies around the world was presented and this is used as the theoretical base to support the results of the case studies in Greece. The literature basis of this thesis is consisted mainly by new books and new journal articles, even though the concept of DIY urbanism has been around for a long time (since the decades of 1960s' and 1970s'), only in the recent years, the academics have paid attention to the subject. Moreover, secondary sources such as articles of newspaper, websites of urban initiatives and grey literature that studied several case studies around the world. These secondary sources are used in order to support the arguments of the theoretical background.

Because this thesis is focused in Greece, there were also used Greek literature and presentation of policy documents in order to describe the planning system in Greece and which are the weaknesses of the Greek planning procedures that prevent the participation of the citizens and what participatory tools are adopted. Furthermore, there will be attempted to be explained which factors triggered the flourishing of the DIY urbanism in Greece and how important is this kind of urbanism by doing bibliographical research.

The methodology that is proposed is data collection and qualitative methods are applied in order to have a more insight view about the current situation about the DIY urbanism in Athens, Greece. In order to give a broader image for the current situation in Athens there were selected demographical and financial data about the municipality for the better understanding of the problems that are faced. Also geographical data were collected for the municipality and the selected neighborhoods of Athens for the affiliation of the local problems with the goals of the selected urban initiatives.

A field trip was conducted in Athens between 27th of May and 12th of June 2016 for the data collection and the interviews. For the preparation of the field trip there was held a research for the selection of the urban initiatives that are presented. Firstly, there was made a list of urban initiatives based on the recorded groups at the platform 'SynAthina' and groups that were mentioned in scientific papers for their important role in the public realm of Athens. Due to the fact that in this thesis the definition of DIY urbanism is related to the public space, there were selected groups that have as priority the amelioration of urban daily life in Athens and especially the amelioration of built environment. From this list, there were finally chosen the groups that they have done a large number of projects and a variety of activities. Also, it was attempted to select urban initiatives originated from municipal communities that have active civil society (see Map 2). So, the selected urban are the following; the NGO PlaceIdentity, the Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents, the association of Calligas Square's residents, Fotini Kipseli, the Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents and the movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of

Athens. At this point we need to mention that there were invited other urban initiatives, but either they didn't respond to the invitation or they were not available at this period of time to participate in the research.

Then semistructured interviews of the participants of Greek urban initiatives and local authorities were realized. This method was chosen because the interview brought aspects that are not mentioned in the literature review and the data collection and it will help the author to perceive better what the explanations that established the Greek urban initiatives are and to provide more information about the current situation in Athens and their work and their perspective on planning system. The interviewees are 10 members of the selected urban initiatives and also 3 officers of the municipality of Athens ('SynAthina' office and Department of City Planning). Also, during the field trip in Athens visits at the place of the DIY projects were conducted and photographs of several DIY projects were taken in order that the author has a deeper insight what is the impact of the projects at the citizens and identify also the problems that that the locals confront.

Relatively to the questions of the urban initiatives cover the following axes; when and why they started their initiative, what are their goals and how they have changed with the passing of time, what projects they have realized, what is the structure of their group, how they invite the citizens to participate and how many people participate. Moreover, how they decide to do a project, what is the impact of their activities to the built and societal environment. Last but not least their relationship with the municipality of Athens (See Appendix).

For the insurance of recording the view from the both sides and respective questions were asked to the municipal officers of the Department of City Planning and the "SynAthnina" office (Department Civil Society and Municipality Decentralization). The questions for the municipal officers are affiliated with the following: how the Municipality of Athens is promoting the collaborative governance, how they invite the citizens to participate at the decision-making processes. Furthermore, how the municipality support the activities of the urban initiatives (For more details see Appendix). Moreover, data given by the 'SynAthina' office about the Athenian urban initiatives such as their number and what issues their activities cover, which municipal communities have active civil society. The data were also updated on September through communication with the municipal officers of 'SynAthnina'. As it is understood the research questions that were posed at the beginning of the thesis translated into empirical questions in order to match the case studies.

4. The Greek reality

At this chapter it will be used as an introduction for the Greek reality for the purpose of better understanding why the DIY urbanism is developed. Firstly, it will be mentioned the Greek planning system and policies about participatory planning and what kind of planning tools the Greek government and local authorities use in order to motivate the citizens to participate into the decision-making procedure. Also, these practices will be evaluated and the arguments are supported by the interviewees' municipal officers and by reports. As a result the explanations of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece will be reported additionally to the explanations given in chapter 2.3. This was considered necessary to be analyzed at this point as the reasons of the development of DIY urbanism in Greece differ from other European countries.

4.1 The Greek planning system and the policies about participatory planning

As mentioned above this sub-chapter presents the planning system and the participatory planning tools that the Greek government has legislated for the participation of the citizens.

In Greece, from the decade of 1980s onwards there was an attempt for the modernization of the planning system in Greece and in parallel the building of a top - down planning system, starting from the national level (General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development) and ending gradually to the lower levels of planning (level of neighborhood whose borders are determined by the administration officers). This pyramidal structure of planning system was applied for more than forty years and the shortcomings were evident focusing mainly on the inability to the timely completion of the spatial projects due to bureaucracy and lack of financial resources (Serraos, 2015).

However, the recent years in response to the introduction of neoliberalism in Greek urbanism (see chapter 2.3. for the neoliberalism in urban planning) there has been a complete reformation of the structure of planning system and mainly at regional and municipal level. This change began with 'Kallikratis' program (Law 3852/2010). The program is a planning tool established by the government to create networks between the local state, the private sector and the civil society for a better collaboration between the different actors in planning system. This tool although it is imposed by the top layers of governance, it offers the opportunity to the citizens to consult and to participate at the decision-making procedures (Sotiripoulou, 2014). This program for the first time institutionalized the Commissions of Consultation (based on population criteria) at both level of Municipalities and Regions and the Meeting of the residents of the local community. At this point we need to mention that the Greek government formerly had institutionalized the 'Neighborhood Committee' (with the Law 1337/83), which was also a top-down participatory planning tool. Its aim was to activate the local residents for the urban issues in their neighborhood. According to the law the 'Neighborhood Committee' ought to postulate its opinion and its recommendation to the City Council about the urban issues that affects them. This tool although its promising start, it has been inactivated (Samaras, 2005).

To begin with at regional level it has been institutionalized the Regional Consultation Committee according to the article 178 of Law 3852/2010. The committee is composed by 20 representatives from the municipality, chambers and the scientific organizations, associations and institutions, government agencies that have

headquarters at the region and civil society. The role of the Regional Consultation Committee is to propose and recommend about key developmental priorities to the Regional Council, to give its opinion on matters of general regional interest, to examine the region's problems and developmental opportunities and to formulate its opinion on solving problems and taking advantage of those opportunities. The Regional Consultation Committee convenes publicly at least once every three months and delivers its opinion.

At municipal level 'Kallikatis' institutionalized the Municipal Commission Consultation in municipalities with population greater than 10,000 inhabitants. The Municipal Consultation Committee is composed by 25 – 50 elected representatives of local stakeholders, such as local trade and professional associations and organizations municipal officers, representatives of local youth councils, local organizations of employees and civil society. The role of the Municipal Consultation Committee is to give its opinion and to propose to the City Council about developmental programs, strategic plan and business plan of the municipality, to give its opinion on matters of general municipal interest and refer them to the Mayor, to examine the region's problems and developmental opportunities and to formulate its opinion on solving problems and taking advantage of those opportunities. Overall this institution operates consultatively and as an ombudsman of citizens' complaints in order to solve the problems of maladministration by the municipal services.

Another legislated institution for the participation of the citizens at the decision-making procedures is the 'Meeting of the residents of the local community' (article 85 of 'Kallikratis' program). The residents and different stakeholders of community are invited to meet at least once a year and discuss for the priorities and actions of the local development such as social services to the local residents, for the place marketing and branding of the area, for the implementation of cultural, entertainment and sporting programs etc.

Although the above participatory planning tools have been legislated by the government, their implementation (especially the Municipal Commission Consultation) has not realized or it was delayed at the majority of the Greek municipalities. For instance at the municipality of Athens the Municipal Commission Consultation was formed for the first time in 2012 (Sotiripoulou, 2014). According to Voulgaris (personal communication, May 30, 2016) 'Kallikratis' "attempted to introduce and to establish the participation of the citizens into the decision-making procedures, but the role of the citizens is limited as it is advisory". So, the above mentioned planning tools are typically deactivated since the opinion and the proposals of the citizens are not included directly to the decision-making procedures. Moreover, although the "City Councils are open to the public, the citizens do not participate actively due to lack of information such as newspaper and social media" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016). Therefore, we can see that there is a weakness of the planning system to incorporate directly or indirectly the opinion of the burghers about the decision-making procedures. The abovementioned tools give a limited role to the citizens (only advisory) and in many cases are deactivated, so this weakness of the planning system can be perceived as a driving force of the Greek citizens to act directly and create their urban initiatives as an ultimate effort to change their environment.

4.2. The explanations of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece

In the chapter 2.3 at the theoretical framework it was presented the circumstances that generated globally the DIY urbanism, while in this chapter it will be presented which incidents additionally generated this shift in the Greek urbanism. These incidents might differ from North and West European cities because of the specificities of the Greek cities and the current situation. Therefore, the explanations that developed DIY urbanism in Greece will be presented separately at this chapter. We can distingue these factors to the following; the economic and political crisis that is undergoing and the specific development and the layout of the Greek cities.

Economic crisis

Since the economic crisis stroke the European South and especially Greece, the everyday life of the citizens have changed radically and affected every aspect, as the phenomena of poverty, inequality and social exclusion were more evident onwards. This crisis is much more that economic as it brought forward new discourses and spatial configurations. It triggered new synergies between the different actors and stakeholders and restructured the olds. The public space became the experimental space of urban actors and especially of the initiators, as at the context of the economic crisis the welfare cuts, the reduction of the municipal financial resources, and the destruction of the safety nets motivated the citizens to react. Urban movements, grassroots initiatives and neighborhoods networks of solidarity rose in number and they created a public space that is characterized by contentious negotiations and conflicts (Athanassiou et al, 2015).

The worsening of the quality of life and of the public space motivated a great number of the civil society to perform their citizenship practically. This mobilization came from the failure of the central power to prevent the deconstruction of the welfare structures. As a result groups of citizen united and collectively started to provide social public services from providing food and shelter to homeless people, to free medical care and even the maintenance of the public space (Ampatzidou,2016). For instance in Athens after the strike of economic crisis more and more citizens coalesce and realize DIY projects. Observing the Figure 1 we can see that the last 4 years there has been an increase of the number of DIY projects by 78,2% between 2013 and 2016.These urban initiatives use the public space as their base of activities and this space became "the response to the crisis by forming new dynamic geographies" (Ampatzidou, 2016).
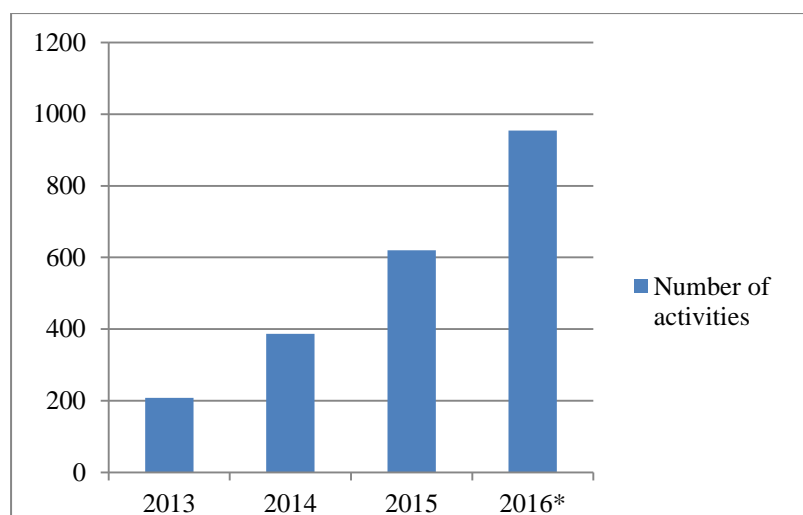
*The data are until 29 September 2016

Figure 2. Number of citizens' activities per year for the period of January 2013 – 29 September 2016 for the Mnunicipality of Athens

Credit: Own editing, data by 'SynAthina' office

The layout of Greek cities

Another reason that explains the development of DIY urbanism in Greece is the layout and the formulation of the open public spaces in Greek cities. The Greek citizens are not satisfied with the current state of their cities and they want to reverse the situation. The city dwellers consider that their urban environment especially in metropolitan areas such as Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra is not friendly anymore and lack of user-friendly urban open space.

The Greek cities and the production of their space are characterized by the fragmentation of the private urban land in small plots that creates restrictions both on the overall physical planning of the space and the implementation of integrated plans for regeneration of an area (Gospodini, 1997: 209). Other characteristics of the Greek cities are the arbitrary off-plan construction in large and medium sized cities and the lack of control of residential developments by the Greek state (Gospodini, 1997:209). As a result the Greek cities were sporadic and highly fragmented and have high density, as they are developed by autonomous and impromptu practices of the individuals under the lack of governmental control (Issaias, 2014).

One practice that defined the Greek cities and contributed to this informal development is the 'Antiparohi' (quid pro quo), which was mainly used by the new (that time) middle class that wanted to live in metropolitan areas like Athens. This practice was popular between the decades of 1950 -1980, when the Greek cities received a massive wave of rural population due to the urbanization and the concentration of economic activities in urban areas. The 'Antiparohi' (quid pro quo) is a deal stricken between the owner of a small plot and the contractor, where small plots were exploited for residential purposes by creating 'Polykatoikia' (see Picture 2) (Moutsopoulos, 2013). 'Polykatikia' is "the small-scale, multi-storey apartment building and ultimately consists of a method of constructing and disposing multiple housing units and apartments from a singular plot". This architectural object has made noticeable his appearance at the urban landscape of Greece. (Issaias, 2014).By this

process the Greek urban horizon resulted to consist of cement-made block of flats and lack of open public spaces.
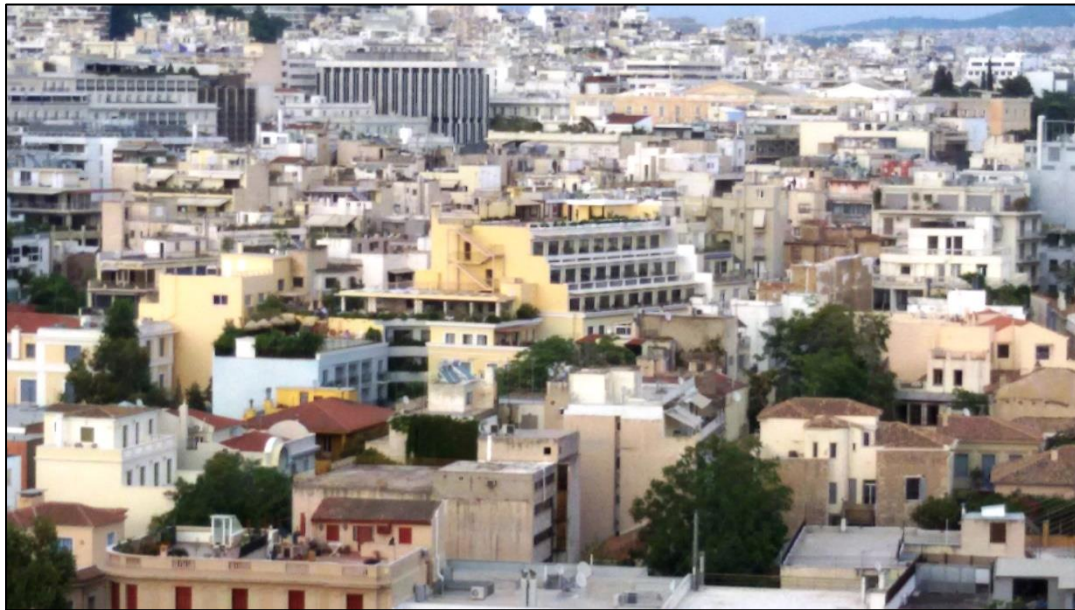
Picture 2. Blocks of flats in Athens

Credit: Sofia Koukoura, 25/08/2016

The above reason created non-spacious cities with high density and city centers with relatively few and of small size open public spaces. So, the problem of lack of public spaces and green areas is not new in the Greek cities, especially in big city as Athens (See Picture 2). The results are extremely negative for the quality of life and the urban environment, as the ratio between green spaces and the residents is disproportionate to the detriment of green areas (Kavoulakos, 2015). For instance Athens has approximately 2.5 sq.m. of green areas per inhabitant, while the average ratio of European cities is 8 sq.m. (Municipality of Athens, 2016). This is not only an urban problem of Athens, but also for other cities such as Thessaloniki (2.73 sq. m. green areas per inhabitant), Patra etc.

This degradation does not originate only by the development of the city, but also by the indifference on the part of citizens and the state for the open space. The indifference for the creation and the maintenance of the public spaces has an impact on the aesthetics and the functionality. Both the aesthetics and the functionality of the space disappoint the citizens, as the lack of cleanliness and the decay of urban furniture create an atmosphere of abandonment of public space. (Koukoura, Tsouka, 2014). Moreover, the fragmentation of public space does not facilitate the movement and the flow of the pedestrian in the Greek cities, as narrow pavements and scattered pieces of urban furniture are barriers to the movement (Koukoura,Tsouka, 2014).

The above issues came to publicity and became political through the action of organizations and collectives schemes just the last two decades (Kavoulakos, 2015). These groups of citizens were motivated by the unattractive image of the Greek cities and they want to declare the right for friendly and functional city that express their current needs.

4.3. Conclusions of the chapter

It has been presented briefly the participatory planning in Greece and additional explanations of the development of DIY urbanism in Greece, so to sum up we can identify three driving forces that boost the coalition of citizens and to create urban initiatives. Firstly, from the presentation of the participatory planning system, we can observe that there is a weakness of the planning system to incorporate the opinion of the citizens about the developmental and planning projects. The participatory tools such as 'Kallikratis' program, although they have been institutionalized by the government, they partially implemented and deactivated. These tools do not give a mandatory character to the role of the citizens, but an advisory and optional. Another driving force is the economic crisis, as the municipal and governmental financial resources are limited and hence the citizens try to provide social public services. Moreover, the crisis we could say that boost the coalition of the citizens into groups and enhance the feeling of unity and self-organization. Last but not least the layout of the Greek cities is a great factor of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece. The arbitrary and unplanned development of the cities in combination with the lack of public space and in parallel the uneven distribution of the green spaces into the urban fabric is another explanation. The city inhabitants want a usable city and they declare their right to a functional city via their interventions.

5. Case Study: Athens and DIY urbanism

5.1. Demographic and Geographical information about Athens

Athens is the city of the case studies and therefore at this chapter it will be given general information for the municipality of Athens such as demographic data and facts about the urban environment. As Athens is the biggest city in Greece, we will notice that the economic crisis and the informal development of Greek cities (that was analyzed at the previous chapter) are applied to this case study also. This chapter will provide briefly information about the current state of city, so it will be used as an introduction for the presentation of the selected urban initiatives, as we can understand better what problems the residents confront, why they would united and what they want to accelerate with their actions.

Athens is the capital of Greece and it is located at the region of Attiki. The population of the region of Athens is 3.089.068 and the population of the Municipality of Athens is 664.046 (according to the census of 2011, Hellenic Statistical Authority). The municipality of Athens is administratively divided into 7 municipal communities (see Map 1). These are the following: 1) Syntagma-Omonoia-Monastiraki, 2)Pagkrati – Neos Kosmos, 3) Petralona-Thisio-Asteroskopio, 4) Kolonos-Votanikos-Sepolia, 5) Kato Patisia-Rizopoulos-Prompona, 6) Aghios Panteleimonas-Kypseli-Platia Amerikis, 7) Ampelokipoi-Polygono-Erythros Stavros.
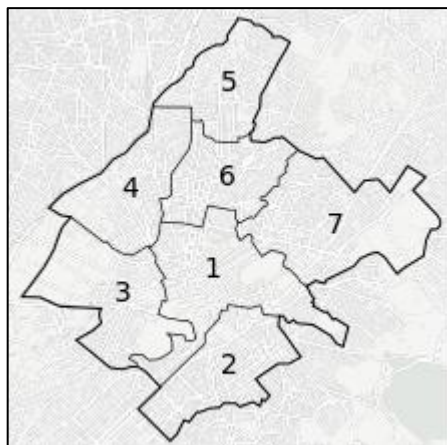
Map 1. The 7 municipal communities of Athens

Source: https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%91%CE%B8%CE%AE%CE%BD%CE%B1

The population of municipality of Athens has been reduced by 18, 68% between the census of 1991 and 2011. This demographic reduction can be explained partly by the movement of the population from the center to the adjoining municipalities and especially to the suburbs of the city. The above trend is most intense for the Greek population, in parallel there is an increase of foreign population at the city center. In more detail, according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2011) the population of 6th municipal community (the area of Aghios Panteleimonas-Kypseli-Platia Amerikis) is 35,25% foreign (it is the highest percent of all Athenian municipal communities) and the second biggest foreign population is observed at the 1st municipal community (the area of Syntagma-Omonoia-Monastiraki) with 27,38 %.

The living conditions of the Athenian population has been affected significantly by the economic crisis, as it has been recorded an increase of the population living below the specified level of poverty (20,6% of the population is living under extreme poverty), high unemployment and a breakdown of social protection networks. Across the municipality, the proportion of non-active population exceeds that of the active. High unemployment, the continued decline in incomes, the expansion of poverty and social exclusion forming a non-friendly living environment for large parts of the population and especially vulnerable groups, elderly and children. The municipality of Athens, private entities and civil society attempt to prevent the further degradation of the life of economically weaker population (Municipality of Athens, 2015). Especially the civil society is actively trying to aid the socially weaker population via the solidarity actions of the Athenian urban initiatives. This can be supported by the data of the period between December 2015 and 29 September 2016, where the priority of the civil society is the solidarity as 42,2% of the total 954 activities that were recorded by the 'SynAthina' platform is about solidarity (see Figure 2).
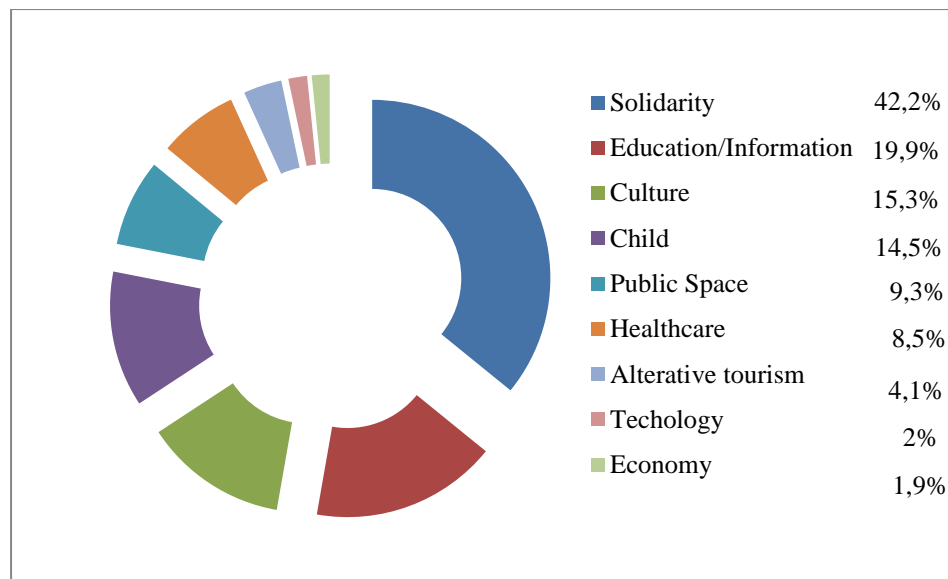
Figure 3: The priority of the city based on the citizens' actions per percentage
per category for the period of December 2015 – 29 September 2016
Credits: Own editing, data by 'SynAthina' Office

From Map 3 it can be also supported that the Athenian civil society is active for all kind of matters such as public space, solidarity, tourism ect. According to the data of SynAthina (for the period of 2013 -2016) the majority (659) of the projects of the urban initiatives are concentrated at the 1st municipal community, especially at the area of Exarchia, Omonia, Monastiraki. This is logical as this area is the center of the municipality and the majority of urban problems are concentrated there such as high unemployment,social enequalities ect. The 3rd municipal community comes second with 50 urban initiatives and 157 projects and the civil society is more active around the area of Akadimia Platonos (see chapter 5.2.5. for more information). The 6th municipal community is the third more active municipal community of the municipality of Athens with 33 urban initiatives and 86 projects of civil society have been recorded by SynAthina office. It ought to be noticed that Kipseli is the most active neighborhood of this municipal community. At this point we need to mention that the projects of Map 3 are from all the categories such as solidarity, healthcare ect (see Figure 2 for the all type of categories).
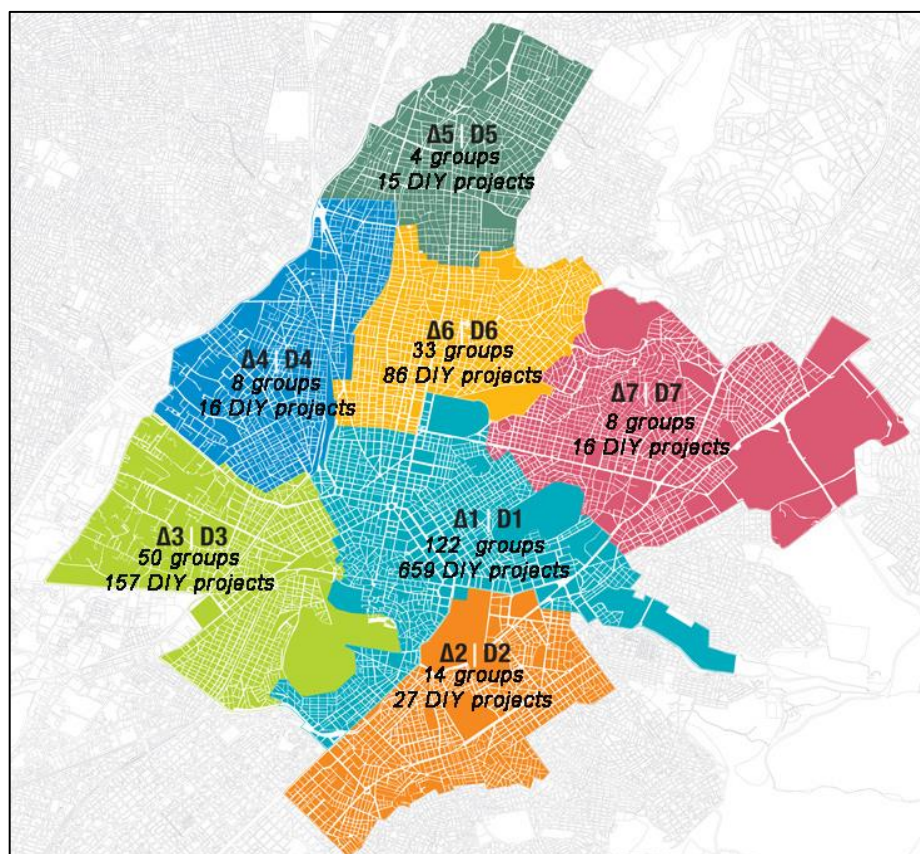
Map 2. The recorded number of urban initiatives and DIY projects

(of all categories) for the period 2013-2016

Credits: Own editing, data by 'SynAthina' Office

Focusing on the characteristics of the urban environment seems that the city is very overcrowded and faces urgent problems. As it was mentioned at Chapter 3.2. Athens was developed with is the 'Antiparohi' system (quid pro quo) and confronts the common problems of the layout of the Greek cites. More specifically, the rapid concentration of population in the municipality of Athens provoked lack of green spaces (only 2,5 sq. meters of green area per inhabitant), high densities (for instance according to the census of 201 the density of the Municipality of Athens is 17,5 residents per square meter), very high coverage rates, high construction rates (97,95% of the buildings at the municipality of Athens are block of flats according to the census of 2011). Additional problems are the lack of private green at back yard of city blocks, low quality construction, lack of parking space areas and traffic congestion.

As it was mentioned above green is insufficient and in parallel unevenly distributed. In highly populated areas, green either completely absent or discontinuous, and in many cases public space is occupied for commercial and recreational uses. As we can see from the map below, the 4th (Kolonos-Votanikos-Sepolia), 5th (Kato Patisia-Rizopoulos-Prompona) and 6th (Aghios Panteleimonas-Kypseli-Platia Amerikis) municipal communities have the lowest percentage of green (in square meters) per resident, respectively 3,2 sq.m per resident, 2,33 and 2,5 square meters of green per resident (see Figure 3) (Municipalty of Athens, 2016).
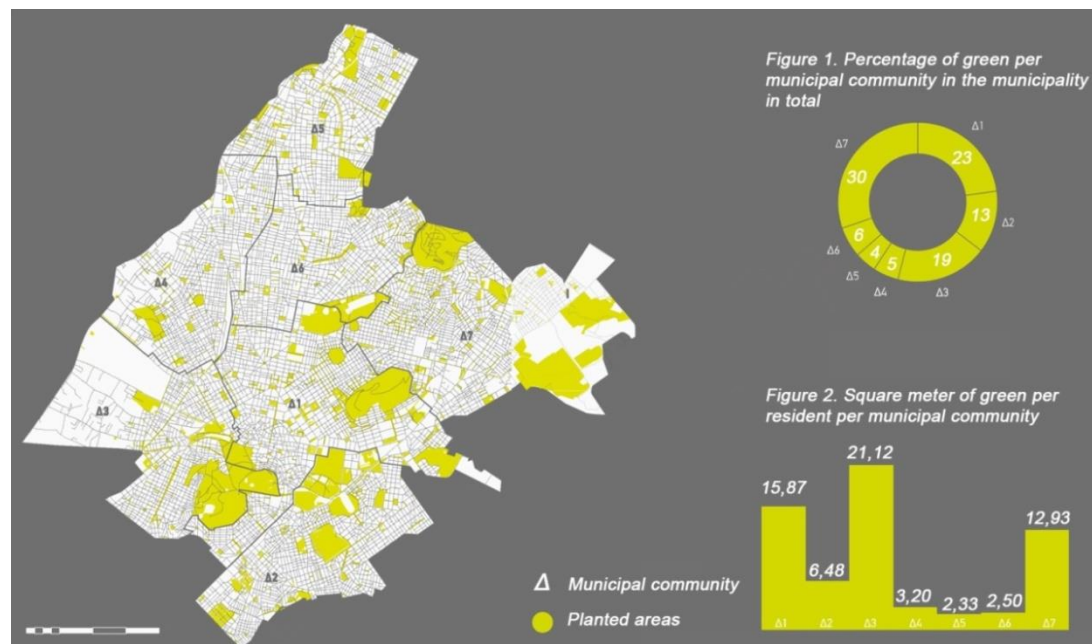
Figure 4: Map of planted areas and figures about the green areas in the municipality of Athens
Credit: Municipality of Athens, 2016

Another urban problem is the existence of a large stock of vacant and abandoned homes and buildings (30,85% of the buildings are vacant) in the entire municipality. Linked to the above fact is the aging building stock whose maintenance is difficult to be done due to the economic crisis. Also another factor for the difficulty of the renewal of the building stock is dated model of residence determined by the informal development of the city by 'Antiparohi' (quid pro quo) system (see Picture 3) (Municipality of Athens, 2015). These problems of the urban fabric are been confronted partially by the Athenian urban community initiatives (it have been recorded in total 250 citizen groups by the platform of 'SynAthina') and as we can see in Figure 2 the 9,3% of the citizens activities for 2016 is about the public space.

Picture 3: The urban landscape of Athens
Credit: Sofia Koukoura, 25/08/2016

5.2. Selected urban initiatives and Do-It-Yourself projects in Athens

This chapter presents the seven selected urban initiatives and their projects in Athens and they are: 5.2.1. Atenistas, 5.2.2. PlaceIsdentity,5.2.3. Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents, 5.2.4. Fotini Kipseli, 5.2.5. Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents, 5.2.6. Association of Calligas Square's residents and 5.2.7. the Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens (See Appendix 3). Furthermore, it will be presented briefly the neighborhoods where the selected urban initiatives take action in order to affiliate the problems and the profile of the neighborhoods with the goals of the urban initiatives. Particularly, it will be presented when and why the selected urban initiatives were formed and what are their goal and if they have changed over the time. Also, it will be mentioned several projects of each group and how the groups organize them and what is their structure in order to understand how they invite the citizens to participate and how they decide to do their projects. Last but not least, it will be examined how the groups perceive the impact of their action into the society.

Map 3.The neighborhoods – the place of action of the selected urban initiatives

Credits: Laboratory of Demographic and Social Analyses, University of Thessaly, authors editing
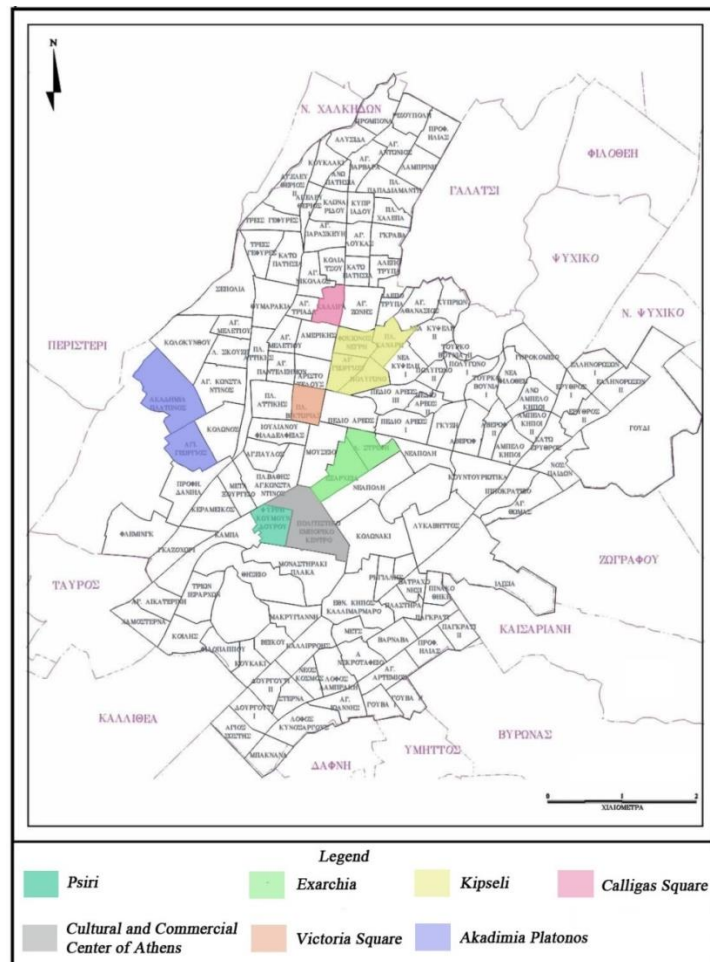
5.2.1.Atenistas

Picture 4. Logo of Atenistas
"Athenian in action"

Credits: https://atenistas.org

The initiative began in 2010 and was inspired by Taso Halkopoulo and Dimitriti Grigopoulo. The inspiration for starting this initiative was the care for the city and according to Papadimitriou (member of Atenistas) "it is not affiliated with the economic crisis, but more with the layout of the city and how the Athenian citizens can change their urban environment via their activities without external factors eg. the municipality".

Atenistas' place of action is the whole city; however "the members attempt to choose areas or districts that need the innervation, for example the district of Kolonos and also the district of Sepolia" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016). The selection of the place of the project is decided based on the call for change from the Athenian citizens and also by the members of Atenistas. The initiators as they circulate into the city, "they identify the 'problematic' places that need to be improved such as abandoned plots (regardless the ownership status). Although, the free time (of the initiators) and the technical issues determine when and where our projects will be held" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016). Hence, the technical issues determine when the projects will be realized, for instance the landscape and the quality of the ground, the ownership status, the availability of materials.

The goals

The main goal of Atenistas is the motivation of the Athenian citizens in order to change the city at neighborhood level and to start interacting with each other. So the aim of the group is expressed to the above three mottos; "We can all together make something big", "If we change minor things, we can ameliorate the urban daily life" and "We can all together make the urban fabric better and to get to familiarized with unknown versions of Athens" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016). Although their goals are not only limited to the amelioration of the city and the comprehension of the city from an alternative aspect, according to Papadimitriou (2016). Their "goals have been enriched and they are flexible to the societal and economic shift of the Greek society. For instance they have realized more solidarity activities especially the recent years" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016), due to the rising poverty percentages and the establishment of the refuges in Athens. Also, another goal is the strengthening of the relationship between the Athenian citizens and they achieve it with various ways such as open walks etc.

Their projects

Atenistas, we could say that it is one of the most active initiatives and this can be proven by the number of their projects that counts 141. The projects are focused into 3 pillars: a) the aesthetics and functionality of the city and in parallel the re-familiarization with the city, b) solidarity, c) culture

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood	Projects
Atenistas	All the neighborhoods of Athens	• 54 DIY projects for public space (ex. Pocket park) • 14 projects about the beautification of the schools' facades • 25 solidarity activities such as collection of clothes for the refugees • 17 alternative guided tours • 31 cultural events (ex. the tango night at "Pelloponisou" stop

Table 1. Projects of Atenistas

Credits: own editing

The first type of projects includes activities such as the coloring of the facades of the schools, the construction of pocket parks, cleaning vacant plots and occasionally for the accomplishment of this kind of projects, the group has collaborate with other local urban initiatives with local urban initiatives in certain projects. Also, the group tries to maintain the DIY projects in good situation, so every two years they evaluate every project and rebuilt it.

Due to the large number of projects, there have been selected three projects for the first type of projects: a) at the Street Perikleous, two blocks down from Syntagma Square (see Picture 8) and b) the Mediterranean garden in Axalian Str (See Picture 9), c) "Candy playground". To begin with, the pedestrian walkaway of Perikleous Str. was abandoned for years with poor hygienic conditions, lack of lighting and occupied by motorcycles as parking. Concerning the project at Perikleious Str. on November 2013 the group worked for 11 hours and painted the wall as a mural of a minimal urban skyline, which operates as a backdrop to different kinds of pallet public benches configurations, consisting of recyclable materials (wooden pallets, old chairs and of course native plants and trees). The group collaborated with artists who gave a different perspective to the boxes of air conditioners in order to create a surreal image and use them as part of the mural. For this project they collaborated also with the local residents and the local entrepreneurs that provided the materials (https://atenistas.org/). Additionally, the group invited the Public Lighting Division of the Municipality of Athens to add two new public lights. So, part of Perikleous street was transformed into an attractive passage and colorful urban space.

Picture 5. The Before and After the intervention of Atenistas at the Perikleous Str. In November 2013

Credit: https://atenistas.org/2014/01/19/peri/

Another project of Atenistas is the Mediterranean garden in Axalian Str. (see Picture 5), a street near to Syntagma square. It is a nice alley, but undervalued because of its use as a parking for motorcycles and the general lack of maintenance. For these reasons the group decided to act by taking consideration the needs of the area and of the local residents. So, on 15 May 2016 working for 6 hours, they built this garden by planting and making handmade signs indicating the kind of used plant. Its goal is to enrich the alley with green based on the idea of a Mediterranean garden (see Picture 6,7) with 13 local plants such as oregano, lavender, sedge, spearmint etc. Also by constructing the flower pots, it is prevented the usage of the area as parking for vehicles (https://atenistas.org/). This project was welcomed by the local residents and the passengers that enjoyed the feeling of garden in the city center.

Picture 6. Perspective of Axalian Str.

Picture 7 & Picture 8: Part of the Mediterranean garden

Credit: Sofia Koukoura, 31/05/2016

The third example is the "Candy playground" near the Intercity Bus Terminal (KTEL). This playground was abandoned by the municipality of Athens and due its former situation was unattractive to the local residents. The reconstruction of this playground has a great importance to the local residents, because the nearest is from the other side of Kifissou Avenue and the parents are not able to pass the avenue with their toddles (see Picture 9.). Hence, this colorful playground became again the meeting place for children.

Picture 9. The Before and After of playground near to KTEL Liosion

Credits: https://atenistas.org/2014/06/02/candypark/

From the above it is understood that the actions of Atenistas attempt to change the urban daily life of the Athenians in two ways. Indeed, as it is mentioned they utilize and ameliorate the non-well maintained public spaces and therefore the citizens can obtain positive experiences for the places. Additionally another impact is that through their actions, the citizens collaborate for the common good by creating emotional attachments with the place.

During the interview with the representative of the group it was mentioned that a good example of emotional attachment with the space via the DIY actions, is the participation of students to the beatification of the facades of their schools (see Picture 10.). This kind of activities is important for the students, as they spend the majority of their time in school and they have the chance to change their environment by participating actively (see Picture 11.). Hence, the children feel more attached to their school since they have participated into its change and they are taught to practice actively their citizenship.

Picture 10. The Before and After the intervention of Atenistas at 61st and 57th elementary school.

Credits: https://atenistas.org/2014/03/05/61%CE%BF57%CE%BF/

Picture 11. The kids enjoying the process of painting

Credits: https://atenistas.org/2014/03/05/61%CE%BF57%CE%BF/

Another example of the attachment to the space is the willingness of the elder people to be responsible for the maintenance of a playground in Petralona, after the intervention of Atenistas. The locals decided to collect money in order to buy new playground equipment. So, in many cases after the intervention of the group, it has been observed a change on the understanding of the locals towards their urban space.

This axis of projects about the built environment includes also alternative guided tours in the city of Athens and their aim is the re-familization of the citizens with the city. During these tours the Athenian citizens can learn more about the history of Athens how the history has been imprinted to the architecture of the city. Until now Atenistas have done tours for instance about the Othmanian era and the era of the Othonas king. These guided tours can also present the history of certain neighborhoods such as the Victoria square district, the Gerani and the Ampolokipoi (which is the most recent guided tour held on 22th of May 2016). Another example of tours is the "Open Walk Athens", during this activity the Athenians have the chance to explore the cultural monuments and landmarks such as worships of different religions, ancient walls hidden inside stores and buildings.

As we presented examples of the first axis of goals, the second category of projects is solidarity. The initiative has done 25 solidarity activities until now. These activities can identified to the collection of food, clothes and various materials of daily use such as donation of school supplies to special schools. The group has motivated many citizens to donate food to NGOs such as "Doctors without borders", the "City of Athens Homeless Shelter" etc. Atenistas through these activities they want to help their fellow citizens, who live above the line of poverty or they are socially weak.

Last but not least the initiative organizes cultural events held at public places, whose goal is to "create positive memories and experiences for the citizens inside the city and also the Athenians have the opportunity to meet with each other" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016) such as the concert of "Lyriki skini" at Varvakios agora, 'the Camerata – Orchestra' at the fruit market of Athens, the film screening in 'Stella' cinema in Kypseli district (it reoperated only for one night), the tango night at 'Pelloponisou' stop ect. Through these projects the use of the public space changes temporally and the Athenians have the opportunity to meet and interact with each other and the cultural events operate as a catalyst to these procedures.

Therefore the initiative is divided into the following three sub-groups that focus on the abovementioned three pillars of their goal:

- o Culture: This group organize cultural events for the creation of positive experiences in the city for the Athenian citizens.

- o Act (the former Green): This sub-group does artistic interventions into the urban fabric and modifies vacant plots into green points by collaborating with the local residents.

- o Ultra: Ultra attempts to provide social aid actions to weaker social groups and it communicates with different stakeholders in order to give publicity to these kinds of problems and resolve them.

"Every group has approximately 20-30 persons and the sub-groups communicate on daily basis mainly through social media and they also meet monthly" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016).

Regarding to the invitation for participation of new members, there are three ways. Firstly, "there is a platform, in which an Athenian citizen can declare his interest for participation and afterwards the group will invite him to meet the group. Otherwise every citizen is welcomed to come and participate in any activity" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 6, 2016). Moreover, the social media (eg.Tweeter and Facebook) and newsletter are used as methods of speeding not only the work of the group, but to motivate the other Athenians to participate..

5.2.2. PlaceIdentity

The initiative was firstly an informal group created by a team of professionals with background such as architecture and political science in 2009 and since the June 2013 it was established as a company called 'Clusters of Place Identity and Citizen Participation - Civil Society Non-profit' and under the distinctive title 'placeIDENTITY.GR'. The motivation for creating the group was the willingness for changing the planning procedures and the active participation of the citizens to the decision-making procedures.

The goals

The goal of PlaceIdentity is to create an open dialogue between the public sector and the individuals and to organize seminars and workshops by calling the citizens to identify the urban problems. The citizens are invited via social media, newsletter and posters etc. PlaceIdentity attempts to change the understanding of how the public decision-making procedures are made. According to interviewee Karantza M. (personal communication), PlaceIdentity wants "the citizens to take part at the open discussion and these procedures to be open to the public. Moreover, the aim of the initiative is that the citizens give their opinion about the architectural studies of the projects that take place at their neighborhood. The activation of citizens for the decision making of the public projects and there is a gap of the law about that". The main concern of PlaceIdentity is the coalition of the different stakeholders to discuss and come to a common conclusion about the production of the space. "When these discussions are made and the citizens participate at the decision-making processes, then the squares and the parks will be used more from the local residents, because they had participated and they will care more about the place" (Karatza, personal communication, May 06, 2016).

Their projects

As it is understood from the above, the projects attempt to include the participation of the citizens into the decision-making processes. According to interviewee Xidia S. (founding member of PlaceIdentity), "these projects cover all the levels of planning from the street level up to national level".

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood *	Projects
PlaceIsdentity	Psiri, Cultural and Commercial Center of Athens	• 'SynOikia' (Street level) • 'Stegi SynAthina' (level of square) • 'Pedio_Agoras' (level of square) • 'Imagine the City' Platform (city level) • 'Politeia 2.0 – Democracy reborn' (national level)

*The neighborhoods, where the projects at Street level and level of square held

Table 2. Projects of PlaceIdentity

Credits: own editing

At street level

At street level, PlaceIdentity has done the project of 'SynOikia' (see Picture 12.) that was held in November of 2012 in Pittaki St. This project took place in Psiri, which is a small neighborhood at the historical center of Athens and it belongs at the 1st municipal community. Psiri as the whole historic center is undergoing a gentrification process (Papaefstathiou, 2004). This former residential area with small industries (of furniture) has been transformed into recreational district, the price of the land are higher due to the private investment, the number of the cafes, bars and clubs are rising (Cattaneo, 2006). It is a low density neighborhood, where the buildings are 1-3 storeys, the streets are narrow and the pedestrian network is not extensive. The open spaces are few such as small squares as Koumoundourou square (Papaefstathiou, 2004).

This street was chosen by the initiative as it operates as the entrance of Psiri and it is lacking of light. The old small industries and workshops with old furniture in the district generated the idea of 'SynOikia' and it was perceived from the group as a challenge for a small-scale attempt of urban regeneration (http://placeidentity.gr/).

Picture 12. The "SynOikia" project

Source: Sofia Koukoura, 30/05/2016

During this project, 200 lamps and chandeliers were given from the local residents in order to create this urban chandelier in Pitttaki Str. The night of the installation of the project thousands of local residents were at the party creating a festive atmosphere. 'SunOikia' was originally proposed for six months and it has been renovated twice. This urban chandelier has now become one of the urban landmarks of the Psiri district.

At the level of Square

At the level of square, the group did two projects; a) the concept of 'SynAthina kiosk', which is a building that hosts the urban initiatives and where they can have open meetings, workshops and small projects, b) the 'Pedio_Agoras' projects.

The latest project is a prototype process of participatory planning for the regeneration of Varvakios square (attached to the Varvakios market) in the Cultural and Commercial Center of Athens (see Picture 13). Varvakios square was selected as a place for intervention due to the deprived profile of the area, whose inhabitants are immigrants of different ethnicities that do not interact with each other (http://placeidentity.gr/).

The purpose of 'Pedio_Agoras' was the exposition of the different approaches for the development of this square. During the project a series of workshops and events was organized for the acquaintanceship of the different stakeholders such as the local entrepreneurs of the market, the local residents and professionals etc. The users of the square were invited to envision a sustainable solution of Varvakios market (it is one of the modern architectural monument of Athens) that faces the urban decay. This open consultation was planned to trigger the interest of the different stakeholder and to create an interaction between them.

Although "the open consultation was realized and feasible solutions came, the implementation stage was stuck due to matters of bureaucracy" (Xidia, personal communication, May 31, 2016). The project of 'Pedio_Agoras' (although it was not

implemented) changed the urban life of the locals indirectly. According to the interviewees for one year (the duration of the project) meetings were arranged with the local entrepreneurs and residents in order to see how the Varvakios market can be used and regenerated. Hence, the essential outcome from this project is the interaction upon the different users of the place, who were obliged to come together and discussed about the space that they use daily.

Picture 13. Perspectives of Varvakios Sq.
Source: Sofia Koukoura, 30/05/2016

At the level of city

At the level of city, Placeidentity created a platform 'Imagine the City'. The 'Imagine The City' platform was designed in 2009 and its purpose is the creation of an open dialogue between citizens, academics, local authorities and artists for the development of the Greek cities (http://placeidentity.gr/). Via this initiative have been staged exhibitions in more than 10 Greek cities, where the different stakeholders can present their proposals for regeneration proposals. A good example of 'Imagine the City' is the temporal transformation of an old, abandoned tobacco warehouse in Volos (Greece) to a temporal gallery that exhibited the works of professionals and students of Architecture and Planning Departments for the future development of Volos.

At the level of country

At the level of country, the team has organized the 'Politeia 2.0: Democracy Reborn' in 2012. The "Politeia 2.0" is an informal platform for opening a public dialogue and creating collaboration between professionals with different background in order to create a new constitution through an informal method. The project during workshops and seminars creatively challenge the Greek institutions and manage the transition of new realm of Democracy, in which the citizens can reconnect with the administration (http://placeidentity.gr/).

5.2.3. Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents

Picture 14. Logo of Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents "I live in Exarcheia, is it a crime?"

Source: http://exarchia.pblogs.gr/

The Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents started in 2006, when the local residents united due to their willingness to remove the antennas of mobile network operator out of their neighborhood (due to harmful exposure of the locals to radiation). This incident was the triggering event for the self-organization of the inhabitants in order to face the urban problems that came up. Hence, this group frequently started to call assemblies (approximately once a week) and gradually it evolved to the Committee initiative of Exarchia residents. "The Committee initiative of Exarchia residents' is an informal group without legal status, in which everyone is equal. The group is not seeking for the initialization of the urban initiative, as everyone is responsible for the occurrences of the neighborhood" (Kostopoulou, personal communication May 31, 2016).

At the beginning of the formation of the group, the participants were approximately 100 persons, although as the time is passing the number reduced. At the current state the average number of the members at the weekly s is 20. There are the 'friends' of the initiative counted to 300 persons and they help in the setting up of an event. Occasionally, the group invites people from neighboring areas to participate at the events. The Committee cooperates with other initiatives such as the Time bank of Mochato and of Syntagma Sq. and squats from other neighborhoods in order to exchange expertise and knowledge. The group for the information of their participants about their future projects uses social media, newsletter and their website.

Information for the Exarchia neighborhood

Before presenting the projects and the goals of the initiative it is helpful to understand the profile of the district and what problems the locals confront. To begin with, Exarchia is a populous neighborhood located at the 1st municipal community of Athens. It expands around the Exarchia Square and it includes the historical building of the Department of Architecture of the National Technical University and the Strefi Hill, which is the singular green area of the district. Exarchia has always been an area of free and creative expression, as its left and anarchist character is profound (Ploumidi, 2015, p.208). The geographical position of Exarchia, its complex urban development, the proximity to educational institutions, its political character, the rich architectural heritage and the familiarization of the space by the locals make Exarchia a unique central neighborhood (Kouka et al., 2013).

The problems of the district are the lack of public space and the accessibility of the space. Due to the quid pro quo as a method of the urban development, reduced number of public and green spaces is formed in the area. The Strefi hill is the main green space of the area where the residents can enjoy themselves at their leisure time. Although, its neglect is obvious by the municipality and its maintenance for cleaning

and care is almost no-existed. That is why the local residents often take the initiative and clean the hill (Kouka et al., 2013).

Another problem is the accessibility of the public space. Due to the centrality of the district (many offices and institutions are located near to the district) the pavements are occupied by parked cars and as a result making the circulation of the pedestrian difficult. The occupation of the pavements and of the pedestrian areas by parked cars and the rising number of the private parking spaces that results from the demolition of older buildings breaks the connectivity of the urban fabric (Kouka et al., 2013). Additionally, the illegal drug trafficking and the poor cleanliness of the area enhance the degraded image of Exarchia (Kouka et al., 2013).

The goals

The goal of the initiative is attract attention to the practice of citizenship as the representative of the initiative mentioned during the interview "we want to change the behavior of the local residents, to awaken and motivate them to take action.". Also, they aim to solve the abovementioned urban problems of the neighborhood and according to the interviewee Kostopoulou M. (personal communication) "We do not exclude the visitors, because we want to have an attractive neighborhood". With the phrase "attractive neighborhood" it is meant a district, where it is friendly for its users and it has spaces for self-expression for the locals and for the visitors. At the goals of the initiative are also included the issues of policing of the neighborhood and against the violence, due to the often violent incidences by far-leftist groups that target police stations and other symbols of authorities. After 2009 when the economic crisis started, the goals of the group were enriched and became more humanistic as the initiators wanted their actions to respond to the new conditions such as solidarity action for helping social weak people and the refuges such as the collecting relief items.

Their projects

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood	Projects
Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents	Exarchia, Hill of Stefi	DIY projects for public space • Navarinou Park • Tsamadou little garden • Cleaning of the Strefi Hill • The campaign "Free Pavements" Solidarity activities • Time Bank of Exarchia • Free courses ex free lessons of Greek language for refugees Cultural events • Neighborhood's Celebration of New Year's Eve etc • Film projections • Photography exhibitions

Table 3. Projects of Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents

Credits: own editing

The projects of initiative could be divided into two categories; the ones that affiliated with the built environment and the anthropocentric, the latest is divided to two sub-categories the solidarity and cultural activities. At this point we need to mention that the cultural events are taken place at the communal space that the initiative has created; therefore they will be presented in parallel with the DIY projects for public space.

The first category includes the construction and the maintenance of public spaces such as the 'Parking Parko' (The Navarinou park), the 'Tsamadou Park', the campaign for free pavements in the neighborhood). The abovementioned projects will be analyzed more intensively bellow. Additionally, the initiative attempts to maintain the Strefi hill, as it is the singular green area of the neighborhood. They organize events for the cleaning the hill from litters and planting trees and flowers and in parallel use the waste from the vegetable street market as fertilizer for the trees.

Navarinou Park

One of the biggest projects of the initiative is the 'Navarinou park' (see Picture 15), an abandoned plot at the junction of Navarinou Str and Zoodohou Pigis Str (1,500 sq. m.) and on March 2009, the initiative decided to exploit it. This piece of land (that was used as a clinic) was purchased in 1980s by the Technical Chamber of Greece for the erection of new offices for the accommodation of its services. This plan did not proceed, while a decade later the Technical Chamber requested to offer this land to the Municipality of Athens and in return to convey the building factor to another property in Maroussi area. This proposal did not implement for urban planning and institutional reasons (https://parkingparko.espivblogs.net). So, the plot maintained its use as an outdoor car park, but the contract of its operation as a parking area was expired and this specific plot remained without use. Hence, this urban initiative decided to manage it and use it as an open public space for self-expression.

Picture 15. The sign of the self-managed Navarinou Park

Source: Sofia Koukoura, 31/05/2016

"This park (see Picture 16) operates as a place of expression and unity for the local residents as they held many events there such as film projections" (Kostopoulou, personal communication, May 31, 2016). At this park is included a durable shell (a container) for storage and for communal space that the residents will use as a bar (for summer) and for assemblies (for the winter) and it was constructed at the context of a

master course of the Department of Architecture of National Technological University of Athens. Furthermore, this park has a playground, an urban garden (where everyone can grow his vegetables) and an elevated hill where the film projection are held (this hill indicates the old use of the place as it is made by the asphalt of the former parking). The initiators and the local residents have a meeting every week for the maintenance of the park and they plant and water the flowers. "This park is under construction as it is considered as a place of continuous changes, as the needs of the residents are changing" (Kostopoulou, personal communication, May 31, 2016).

Picture 16: Different perspectives of Navarinou Park
Source: Sofia Koukoura, 31/05/2016

The small garden in Tsamadou

As it was mentioned above Exarchia is lacking of green public spaces where its inhabitants can relax and interact with each other. For this reason another project of the initiative is the little garden in Tsamadou Str. (see Picture 17, 18) where they transformed an abandoned plot (see Picture 19, 20) into a little garden in March 2008. This piece of land was full of litters and the residents decided to modify its use. Now, it has turned into a versatile open space without exclusive use and friendly to all users, from toddlers to elder people, from Greek people to foreigners and especially refuges. The openness of the space (regardless the ethnicity) can be identified by the written sign on the door of the garden, which is the word "Welcome" in many languages such as English, Greek, Arabic, German etc.

Picture 17. The sign of the small garden in Tsamadou
Source: https://athens.indymedia.org/post/849170/

 Picture 18. Perspective of Tsamadou Str.
Source: Sofia Koukoura, 3/06/2016

As this DIY project operates as an communal space is consisted by the following that
serve the needs of the users: tables and chairs, a bar, trees and a compost bin for
organic fertilizer for the plants (see Picture 21). This garden host many events such as
celebrations for the New Year's Eve, photography exhibitions (see Picture 22), film
projections, the weekly assembly of the neighborhood etc. Therefore this DIY garden
operates as common spaces for communicating and bridging the different users of the
space for instance the Greek people and the refugees. So, the societal ties in the
neighborhood are strengthening as the new comers of the neighborhood are mingling
with the old residents at the space that they have produced.

Picture 19,20. The work in progress at the vacant plot in Tsamadou Str.
Source: https://athens.indymedia.org/post/849170/
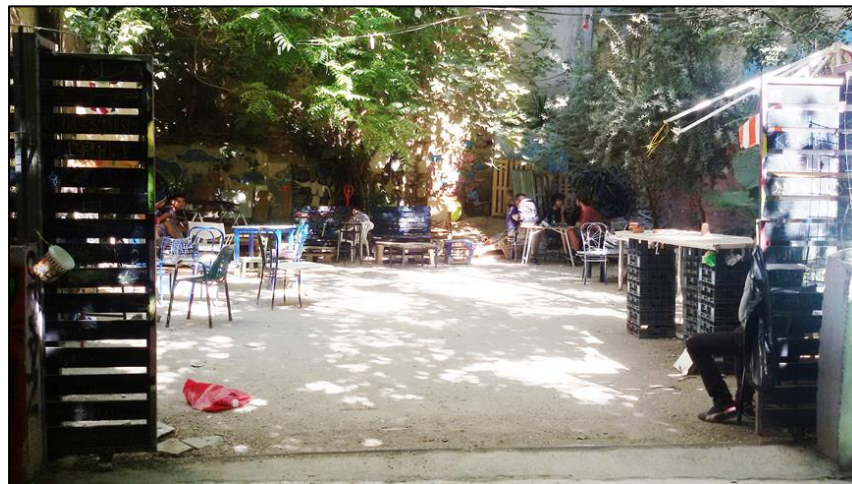
Picture 21. Perspective of the small garden in Tsamadou Str.
Source: Sofia Koukoura, 3/06/2016

Picture 22. Events in the small garden of Tsamadou Str.
Source: http://valiacaldadog.blogspot.nl/2010/03/blog-post_24.html

The campaign 'Free Pavements'

Another ongoing project is the campaign for free pavements. As it is known the pavements of Athens and especially of Exarchia district do not promote the good circulation of the pedestrian. The pavement which is an important public space for the pedestrian is often occupied by parked vehicles and illegal placed tables and chairs by the private initiative (such as taverns, cafes). Moreover, conscienceless citizens with their pets litter the pavement. Hence, the initiative decided to run the campaign for free pavement in order to promote the optimal flow into the public space (see Picture 23).

Picture 23. The poster for the campaign 'Free Pavements'
Source:
http://exarchia.pblogs.gr/

As it was mentioned before after 2009 the goals became more humanistic due to the economic and the refugees' crisis, this fact is reflected also to the added projects of the group. Hence, the second category of activities includes solidarity actions such as 'Collective Cuisine', 'Time bank', free lessons of Greek language for the refugees, or free lessons for the students etc. Another activity of the member is the hospitality of the refugees into squats or into the houses of the members. These humanistic activities are focusing more on how the citizens can collaborate and coexist under the conditions of the economic crisis, when everyone should help his fellow citizen in various ways and have equal opportunities. The common point of the activities is the social coherence, the initiative attempt to strengthen the social ties of the citizens by doing projects that oblige the different users to collaborate.

5.2.4. Fotini Kipseli

Picture 24. Logo of Fotini Kipseli
(Lighten Kipseli)

Source:
http://www.fotinikipseli.gr/

Fotini Kipseli is a recently founded initiative that started its activity on January 2015. The initiative is "a multidisciplinary group of local residents such as architects, graphic designers, artists with no legal status" (Zempelis, personal communication, June 08, 2016). The number of the regular members is up to 5, but in each project this number varies as the group can collaborate with a specific group. For example at the Christmas event they collaborate with 'KETHEA EN DRASI' (that provides counseling, treatment and social rehabilitation services to former users of addictive substances, both presently detained and released from prison). Participants use mainly social media for intercommunication and invitation for new participants. The members meet at regular time intervals and they discuss where they can intervene after considering the call for intervention from local residents.

The founder of the initiative is Kostas Zampelis (a resident of Kipseli) came up with the concept of lightening the public space due to non-sufficiency of the lighting in Kipseli and by extension the Athenian public spaces such as roads, schools, squares etc. Therefore, he conceptualized the idea of improving the lighting of the semi-private public space and especially the entrances of the block of flats. So, "the initiative collaborates with small enterprises in order to get the LED lamps (with reduced energy consumption by 70%) in lower price than the market and then they contact with the manager of the block of flats to lighten up the entrance" (Zempelis, personal communication, June 08, 2016) (see Picture 25.).

Information for Kipseli neighborhood

Kipseli is located at the 6th municipal community. This neighborhood was a residential area with detached houses for upper class, but the profile of the area changed in 1950 when the first block of flats been built. The former detached houses (with variety of architectural styles such as Bauhaus and Art Deco) were demolished and the land owners with the method of 'Antiparohi' (quid pro quo) constructed multi-store block of flats and the working class population started to inhabit the area. At the decade of 1980 the old inhabitants started to leave the district and move to the Athenian suburbs and low class population started to established. After 2000 immigrants from Africa, Asia and more specifically from Iraq, Bangladesh, Philippines and Eastern Europe started to be established (Igipasis, 2012).

This change of the ethnic composition of the population in parallel with the risen percentage of criminality created a feeling of fear and insecurity to the local residents regardless their country origins. Many incidents of burglary, drug trafficking and incidents of violence occurred and as a result the reputation of the neighborhood was worsen. Therefore the local residents became more introvert and this was reflected to the public space, as they fear to circulate to the district (Bartalitas, 2015).

The goals

Picture 25. The Before and After of the lightening an entrance of block of flats.
Source: http://www.fotinikipseli.gr/

As it is understood from the above the residents of Kipseli feel fear and insecurity circulating at the district especially at nighttime, so Fotini Kipseli via its projects aims to increase the feeling of safety and reduce the percentage of criminality. Their goal is supported by the fact that it has been observed the evening lighting at building entrances in residential areas raises the levels of safety of a neighborhood (Projects of Public Space). "The goal of Fotini Kipseli is the amelioration of the lightening of the district. The main concern of the initiative is how the light interacts with the local residents." (Zempelis, personal communication, June 08, 2016). Fotini Kipseli perceives that "the cost of change one lamp is minor and the benefits are multiple. For example the inhabitants of a block of flat needs to pay only 0,5 euro per month for electricity" (Zempelis, personal communication, June 08, 2016)

Their projects

The projects of the initiative are mainly the lightening of the semi-private space of the entrances of the block of flats, albeit with the passage of the time the initiative has upgraded the scale of its projects from the semi-private to a square. For instance on Christmas of 2015 the initiative decorated with lights the water fountain of Fokionos Negri Sq. for 28 days (see Picture 26). According to the interviewee "This project brought more liveliness, the felling of safety and refreshment to the local residents" as it added a color to the nocturnal view of the square.

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood	Projects
Fotini Kipseli	Kipseli	• The lightening of entrances of several block of flats in Kipseli and one in Ampelokipous district • The lightening of Fokionos Negri (Christmas 2015)

| | | | • The lightening of 19th Lyceum |
| | | | • The lightening of neo-Gothic tower in Thiras Str. |

Table 4. Projects of Fotini Kipsli

Credits: own editing

Except the lightening of Fokionos Negri S. on 15th July 2016 the lightening of 19th lyceum of Athens (see Picture 27) and the neo-Gothic Tower of Thiras Str. started in collaboration with the magazine 'Patission Lives' (see Picture 28.). This site was chosen for two reasons the area around is more deprived and dark, so the headmaster of the school kindly asked for the help of the group due to the occurred criminal incidents eg robberies, vandalism of public property. Therefore, the replacement of lamps with collaboration with a municipal electrician was done free of charge. At this point we need to mention that the initiative is organizing more projects at public spaces such as the lightening of parking spaces in Kipseli and also the lightening of 46th elementary school of Athens.

Picture 26. Perspective of the lightening project in Fokionos Negri Sq.
Credits: http://www.fotinikipseli.gr/

Picture 27. The Lightening of 19th Lyceum
Source: http://www.fotinikipseli.gr/
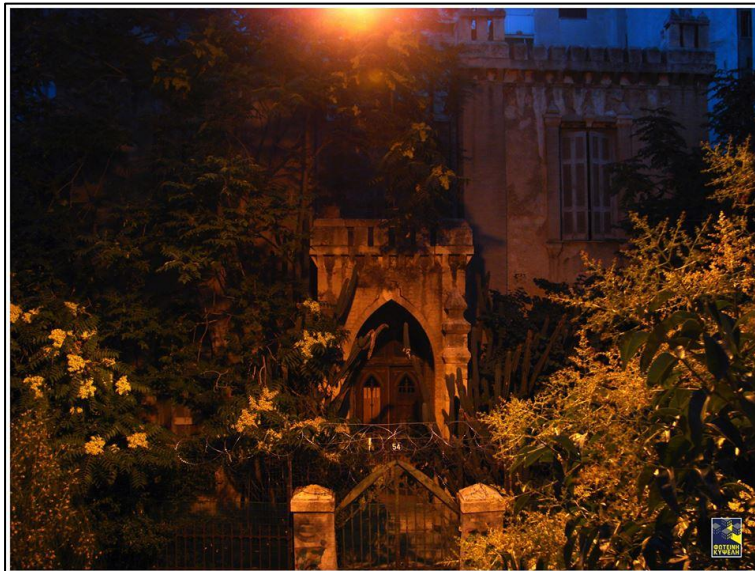
Picture 28. The Lightening of neo-Gothic tower of Thiras Str.
Credits: Source: http://www.fotinikipseli.gr/

5.2.5. The Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents

The Committee of Akadimias Platonos residents started in 2008, when the Prefecture of Attiki decided to build a 9 floors administrative building. The local residents perceived that the construction site of the building was unsuitable for the character of the neighborhood. Therefore, a group of residents was rallied and motivated other residents to react and stop the procedures of construction. The above incident triggered the forming of the unofficial initiative that started to deal mainly with the archaeological site of Plato Academy (see Picture 29). Regarding the members of the group at the beginning was constituted by 20 people and over time the members were reduced to 10 and they collaborate with other initiatives such as a group of local youngsters for the organization of their projects. The group meets weekly in order to discuss the problems of their district and they use all kind of media for instance leaflets, website and social media to communicate and inform the public for their activities.

Picture 29. Sign for the Akadimias Platonos Park " The Park of Akadimia Platonos is not in sale, open, public and free park"
Source: http://www.sadas-pea.gr/akadimia-platonos/

Information for Akadimia Platonos neighborhood and current situation

At this point we have to describe the neighborhood, in order to understand the goals of this informal group of citizens. Akadimia Platonos is a neighborhood located at the 4th municipal community. Its area is 615 acres of which the 395 acres are characterized as Industrial Park and the 131 acres as Archeological Park. It is between the city center and the western suburbs of Athens, although its proximity to the city center it is abstracted. This can be explained by the fact that the avenues and the train lines operate as barrier for the connection of the district with the city center. Its transportation system is problematic (Dimopoulou & Zahos, 2015).

The neighborhood is suffering of urban degradation and heterogeneity (Dimopoulou & Zahos, 2015). Heterogeneity can be identified not only to the societal but also to the built environment. In more detail, the heterogeneity at the buildings can be seen to the contrast of the 'old' and 'new' buildings, the different heights of the buildings (the contrast between the high-rise block of flats and the detached houses). These differences can be identified between the south part of the archaeological site where

the buildings are old and constructed with cheap material and on the contrary north part of the district has multi-story block of flats. Also there are social inequalities at the district; there are low income class groups, different ethnic groups of migrants and gypsies (Isaias et al., 2013).

The core of the neighborhood can be perceived the Archeological site of Akadimia Platonos. Its preservation and the clarification of its limits have been under scrutiny for the local residents, as they protest against the construction of private development nearby the site (Dimopoulou & Zahos, 2015). The citizens tried to revive the site and reclaim its use as a public space.

The goals

As the archeological site of Akadimia Platonos covers a big area of the neighborhood, the initiative is aiming for the revitalization of the Archeological area and also the promotion and the protection of its great historical and cultural value (see Picture 30.). "More specifically the group attempts to modify it into an open public space for the residents of Athens and especially for the locals who are the responsible for its maintenance. The initiative seeks for the regeneration of the wider area in an appropriate manner for its historic character in order to operate as the lever for the rescue of the last unstructured spaces of the center of Athens." (Papachristoudi M., personal communication, June 12, 2016). The group requests for the regeneration of the residential zones of the district by ensuring the provision of the necessary infrastructure such as roads, drainage system and more open public spaces. Another goal of the initiative is the exploitation of the Industrial park (whose area covers half the area of the district) in order to support the small and medium businesses, so the local economy would recover.

Picture 30. The performance at Akadimias Platonos Park
Source: https://akadimia-platonos.com

Nevertheless the goals are not limited to the above, as it is understood that the needs of the society change. Consequently, also the economic crisis and the introduction of refuges affected the goals of the initiative as this fact happened to the above mentioned initiatives.

Their projects

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood	Projects
Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents	Akadimia Platonos	DIY projects for public space • The cleaning and reuse of Akadimia Platonos archeological park • Contributing to the project of "Consolidation of archaeological sites of Athens" Solidarity activities • Free courses ex free lessons of Greek language for refugees Cultural events in the park • ancient theatrical plays, film festivals and historic walking tours etc. that take place at the archeological site

Table 5. Projects of Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents/

Credits: own editing

The projects of this urban initiative can be divided to two categories; the first one includes cultural activities that declare the right of the local residents to use freely the Archeological site as an open public space and the second category include solidarity activities. The main project of the initiative is "the regeneration of the archeological site as a free, open park for all residents of Athens and the stoppage of the downgrading of the place from various large or small interests." (Papachristoudi, personal communication, June 12, 2016).

The group organizes seminars (in cooperation with academics) for the history of the site and the idea of the project 'Consolidation of archeological sites of Athens' arose from one of these meetings. Furthermore, the cultural events such as ancient theatrical plays, film festivals and historic walking tours (during this tours is recounted the history of Athens and the Platonic Academy) are held in the Archeological Park. "For example on May 2016 we organized an open narrative performance about the ancient, medieval and current version of Academy of Plato via historic reports of Socrates, Plato and Aristotelis, lyric poetry, modern poetry performed by the music group of the initiative. From these activities the Park is revived and used again properly. Eight years before the place was dark, dirty and not attractive for the local residents. Today the park is lively, vibrant and is also used by young people and toddlers" (Papachristoudi, personal communication, June 12, 2016). Through the abovementioned projects, the local residents have the opportunity to refamiliarize with the space by experiencing it from a different point of view.

The second category of projects that includes solidarity activities derived from the needs of the locals as the population of the district is mainly low-income families. Hence, the solidarity activities include bazaars for providing clothes and toys,

collective meals for the poor people and the refuges. Moreover they organize yoga lessons, lessons of Italian language and supporting courses for students that cannot afford to pay for the learning. The local residents through these projects they got out of their comfort zone and they communicate with their neighbors and this is important as the district has been characterized as socially heterogeneous and it enhances the societal ties between the local residents. The key phrase of the interview is the following: "The neighborhood became our neighborhood again ..." (Papachristoudi, personal communication, June 12, 2016).

5.2.6. The association of Calligas Square's residents

Picture 31. Logo of The association of Calligas Square's residents

Source:https://sites.google.com/ site/plateiakalliga/home

The association of Calligas Square's residents was formed in 2009 as an answer for high percentage of criminality and the establishment of immigrants from Asian and African countries at the neighborhood. That period of time the lack of policing increased the feeling insecurity and fear at "the local residents who were afraid of circulating at the streets after certain time" (Iliopoulos G., personal communication, June 3, 2016). Hence, a group of residents united and addressed these problems to the responsible offices such as the police department, the municipality of Athens, the ministry of Public Order. As a result this group self-organized in response to the local problems that emerged. The members of this informal group are counted 15, but the number of people that come to the annual meetings is 100. The members have a meeting every two weeks for discussing and identifying the urban problems of their neighborhood.

Information of Calligas Square neighborhood and current situation

The square Calligas located in the quarter of Platia Amerikis at the 6th municipal community of Athens. The district is one of the most high density areas of Athens. It is characterized as a part of the downtown area and it is consisted by different neighborhoods that predated or developed informally at the period of interwar. This area is the buffer zone between Kato Patissia and Kipseli district (Mpalafouta, 2005).

Nowadays this district is one of the deprived areas of Athens, as it is characterized by dense built construction, lack of infrastructure, pollution and bad reputation. The main uses of the neighborhood are residential zone with exception the commercial street of Patission. The area is consisted by high block of flats and they were constructed mainly during the decades of 1960nd 1970 and also there are neoclassical buildings and interwar period buildings (Argyropoulou et al, 2015).

The population of the neighborhood is consisted by different age, ethnicity groups and it is mainly low working class. The composition of the population has change through the years as the Greek population has gradually replaced by immigrants (Mpalafouta,

2005). According to observations of the interviewees the ethnicities of the foreign population originate from African countries such as Algerian and Asian countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan. The local residents identify high percentage of criminality such as drug trafficking, prostitution etc. In 2012 the situation started to change when the policing was enhanced after the demand of local residents.

The goals

It is evident that the main problems of the Calligas Square neighborhood are the ethnic diversity, ethnic segregation and the high percentage of crime, hence "the primary goal of the group was the containment of criminality rates of the neighborhood" (Stamatakis B., personal communication, June 3 2016).After the mobilization of the initiative the feeling of safety was reestablished at the neighborhood as the policing intensified. "The neighborhood is much safer now than 7 years before, after the mobilization of the group" (Iliopoulos, personal communication, June 3 2016). When the initial goal was achieved, additional aims added for example "the proper use of the Calligas Square, interventions in abandon buildings and in general the alteration of the profile of the neighborhood" (Stamatakis, personal communication, June 3 2016). Another aim of the initiative is the amelioration of the infrastructures at the neighborhood, for example "the group has requested 3 years before the installation of a fenced playground into the Calligas Square, because there is a lack of playground in the district and the square would be used properly from the locals (because there was a time when the square was occupied by drug users). The group also did architectural study, but the progress was stacked due to bureaucracy and lack of financial resources" (Iliopoulos, personal communication, June 3 2016).

We could mention that the activity of the initiative can be devised into two time periods. The first period is from 2009 until 2012 and 2012 to present. This division resulted from the economic crisis, until 2012 the impact of the crisis was not so evident to the neighborhood. Thus the goals altered through the years and became more anthropocentric.

Their projects

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood	Projects
Association of Calligas Square's residents	Calligas Square	DIY projects for public space • Intervention at Sampani's tavern and the old cinema Ateene • Beautification of schools' facades • Inventory of the buildings of the period 1830-1940 • The campaign of the "Good neighbor"

		• The cleaning of Calligas Sq. and Saint Andreas Sq.
		• Architectural study of the playground at Calligas Sq.
		• Exhibition of proposals of revivification projects
		Solidarity activities
		• Collection of food and clothing for weak social groups etc.
		Cultural events
		• Theatrical plays ect.

Table 6. Projects of Association of Calligas Squaare's residents

Credits: own editing

Therefore, the projects can be divided into 3 types. The first category of projects affiliates with the urban environment. As one of the goals of the group is the maintenance of the public spaces, the group has reported several times the needs of the neighborhood to the municipal officers and made a list of innervations that are needed to be done (eg the lack of signs, the narrow pavements, and the construction of a playground at Calligas Square etc.). The initiative has also requested for the change of lights for Calligas Sq. and of Byzantine monument of Saint Andreas and also found a sponsorship, but the municipality didn't accept it due to legal matters (There is no law for permitting this kind of action.)." (Iliopoulos, personal communication, June 3 2016). Moreover, the initiative has also cleaned the Calligas Sq, and the Agios Andreas Sq. multiple times and has run a campaign for the cleanliness of the public space (eg. the wastes of the pets). "There have been designed posters and a flyer that included the 'The proper behavior of the good neighbor' and they have been distribute it all over the neighborhood" (Iliopoulos, personal communication, June 3 2016). Moreover, the group gathered 120 signatures for the repairing of the pavements at Efpalinou Street and the local residents were willing to pay for the restoration of the pavements, but due to bureaucracy matters this action did not realized.

Additionally, the initiative does aesthetical interventions and they are the following: In 2011 the cleaning and the painting of two cultural landmarks of the district; the plot of the Sampani's tavern (see Picture 32) (where the art scene of the area was gathered) and the old cinema Ateene (see Picture 33). These two buildings were abandoned and dirty and the group cleaned them and painted them. In 2012, the group collaborated with Atenistas and painted the walls of the 22nd elementary school (see Picture 34.), the 21st and the 165th elementary school. At these projects the students of the schools and their parents participated , so these incidents functioned as a festive event for the children, as their environment transformed from a dull and grey to more playful and colorful.

Picture 32. The Before and After the intervention at the old Sampani's tavern

Source: https://sites.google.com/site/plateiakalliga/DRASEIS/2011/anaplaseis

Picture 33. The Before and After the intervention at Attene cinema

Source: https://sites.google.com/site/plateiakalliga/DRASEIS/2011/anaplaseis

Picture 34. The painting of the walls at the 22nd elementary school

Source: https://sites.google.com/site/plateiakalliga/DRASEIS/2012/chromatizontas-22o

As it was mentioned before the neighborhood of Calligas Square has rich architectural heritage and therefore in 2013 the initiative also cooperated with 'MONUMENTA' (a nonprofit company for the protection and the restoration of historic buildings) for the inventory of buildings of the period 1830-1940 and for the organizing a walking tour at the historical monument of tower of Thiras St. These projects aimed to the familiarization of the locals with the architecture and the history of the neighborhood.

This project became the triggering event for the owner of the neo-Gothic tower of Thiras St. to modify its use to an open cultural center. Another project is the exhibitions of the proposals for revivification projects at the neighborhood. For this project the group collaborated with the 'Flat' (it is a non-profit space for artists) and the students of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens and during this exhibition the visitors had the chance to express directly their thoughts about the proposals.

The second category is the solidarity and charity projects, for example collecting clothes and foods for poor families and the refuges, the registration of poor families into a list in order to simplify the charity work of municipality. Also the group created a leaflet that contained the NGOs and municipal departments at which the poor families can address to and aid them. The third category is about cultural events such as theatrical plays for children at the Calligas Sq. and the annual celebration of 1st of May at Calligas Square where 300 local residents participate at the organization of this event (see Picture 35) The initiative has also organized street events for children for instance street circus in collaboration with 'Circus Dayz – The Circus School of Athens' and painting workshops in collaboration with 'The painters for children' (it is a volunteering group of artists).

The solidarity and cultural events have as a result "to strengthen the social bonding between the local residents and for the boosting of the social cohesion in the neighborhood" (Stamatakis, personal communication, June 3 2016). They also bridge the differences between the immigrants' residents and the Greek local residents, in order to accelerate a harmonious co-existence between the old and new residents. Overall via the activities of the initiative of the local residents came out of their comfort zone and they get to know their neighbors. This is essential for the neighborhood as according the interviewees members, "new friendships were created through the initiative, for example me and Giannis became friends after the formation of the urban initiative" (Stamatakis, personal communication, June 3 2016). They realize that they all have the same problems and they have to be united in order to face them. "The need for change brought us together, so now we feel more attached to the place than before. The residents feel that they have done something important for the area" (Stamatakis, personal communication, June 3 2016).

Picture 35. The annual celebration of 1st of May at Calligas Square (2014)

Source:https://sites.google.com/site/plateiakalliga/DRASEIS/2014/giorte-protomagias

5.2.7. The Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens

Picture 36. The Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens

Source: https://kinisikatoikonektou.wordpress.com/

The triggering event for the formation of the Movement is the 'ecological crime' the cutting of 55 trees at the park at the junction of Patission St. and Kiprou St. In more detail, in 2009 the local residents gathered and protested against the decision of the major to turn the park into a parking area. Municipal officers on January 2009 attempt to demolish the park and cut 55 perennial trees (see Picture 37.). After this incident the local residents organized a group in order to prorogue and (long-term) cancel the procedures for the construction of the parking and they succeeded it. "We achieved the request of cancellation of the building permit at the Administrative Court of Athens. In parallel they revealed the illegalities of the previous municipal administration and the gaps of the technical study" (Adamopoulou M., personal communication, June 12, 2016).

After this activity (see Picture 38) the group with other local residents planted new trees and cleaned the park and formed the "The Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens" as an informal civil group. The Movement has 30 members, although this number varies "depending on the type of the event (anti-racist, ecological, neighborhood problems, cultural etc.), we corporate with other groups or initiatives such city movement Open City, ELME of the 6th municipal community, local schools, solidarity structures, KETHEA ect" (Topalian M., personal communication, June 09, 2016). The members meet monthly and they use the social media, their website, local newspapers and posters for the information of the members and also for the citizens who would like to participate.

The group takes action at the 6th Municipal Community, but mainly at the following districts: at Kipseli district, where they involved particularly with the municipal market of Kipseli and with the park at the junction of Patission St. and Kiprou Str., at Agios Panteleimon district for the interception of racist incidents and the rising influence of the Golden Dawn (far right political party) at the district. Also, "the majority of our activities are done in Victoria Square, because of establishment of the refugees, the fight against delinquency and crime such as trade drugs, prostitution. Moreover the majority of the members is living at this area and know its deeper problems" (Adamopoulou, personal communication, June 12, 2016).

Information for the 6th Municipal Community of Athens

The 6th municipal Community of Athens is composed by the districts of Kipseli, Attikis Square and Agios Panteleimonas district. It is one of most problematic municipal communities of the municipality. In detail, according to the census of 2011 (Hellenic Statistical Authority) the area is intensively socially and ethically heterogeneous as its population is consisted by 35,25 % of foreigners and by 64,75% of Greeks (it is the highest percentage of foreign population comparing to the other

municipal communities). Regarding to urban environment, according to report of 'Project: Athens 2020' this area faces problems such as low percentage of green areas, it only has 6% of the total green areas of the municipality and due to the high density of the population, the ratio of green areas per citizen is only 2,5. Another problem of this municipal community is the vacant and unexploited buildings (36,4 % of the total dwellings is vacant and this percentage is the highest in the municipality).

Since the majority of the projects are done at the neighborhood of Victoria Square (it is subsume at the district of Attikis Square), it will be presented its specific urban problems. The neighborhood of Victoria Square is a typical example of a district that was built after the massive post-war reconstruction of Athens at the decades of 1960 and 1970. In parallel the area has a significant number of neoclassical buildings from the early 20th century (some of them have been declared as listed buildings). The morphology of the built environment is characterized by continuous blocks of buildings with average six floors with penthouse, which, with few exceptions, have stores at the ground floor (Polyzoi, 2014).

As far as the social profile of the district for many years Victoria district was residential zone for middle-class, but this changed with the installation of migrants since the decade of 1990. Hence, the district resulted to have a huge diversity of social, economic groups, social classes and became the place of immigrant communities. Moreover, the last year because of the refugee crisis the square of Victoria became an informal shelter for the refugees and this fact worsened the living conditions at the district. The excessive growth of immigrants' population combined with the unemployment due to crisis condition drove to economic impoverishment and marginalization of the most vulnerable groups, while this lead to delinquent behavior (Polyzoi, 2014).

The goals and the projects

Picture 37. Sign of the protest of the initiate for the cut of the trees "In this square on 26/01/2009 the municipal officers by order of the major of Athens 55 perennial trees "killed"

Credits: Sofia Koukoura, 3/06/2016

Picture 38. The current state of the park at the junction of Patssion and Kiprou Str.

Credits: Sofia Koukoura, 3/06/2016

The goals

The aim of the Movement is the improvement of everyday life in the neighborhoods of the 6th municipal community. "Our goal is to improve the quality of life and everyday life in the area: the cleanliness, the comfortable movement of pedestrians, the improvement of transport (and cycling), the maintenance and the creation of open public spaces and green areas. Moreover, the dissemination of the rare architectural heritage of the 6th municipal community is also goal of the initiative" (Topalian, personal communication, June 09, 2016). The group is aiming also for the artistic creativity in combination with the reuse of open spaces. The goals of the initiative have been evolved through the years as they are not restricted only to matters of urban built environment, but also solidarity especially for the refugees how found shelter at Victoria Sq. "The movement desires an integrated society, where all kind of people, Greek, immigrants and refugees can co-exist peacefully" (Adamopoulou, personal communication, June 12, 2016).

Their projects

Name of the initiative	Neighborhood	Projects
Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens	6th municipal community of Athens (especially in Victoria Square)	DIY projects for public space - The protest of maintenance of the park at the junction Patission and Kiprou and he planting of trees in the park - Inventory of the buildings from the period prior to 1950 and vacant buildings and exhibition of their proposals - The cleaning of Victoria Sq. and Ameriki Sq.

		Solidarity activities
		• Collection of food and clothes for weak social groups
		Cultural events
		• Film projecting
		• Nights of poetry ect
		• Tracing the historical memory of the area

Table 7. Projects of Movement of the inhabitants of the 6ᵗʰ Municipal Community of Athens

Credits: own editing

Similarly to the rest selected urban initiative, the projects of this group is categorized into 3 types of projects (see Table 7). At the first category that is about the urban built environment, the group has focused mainly at the maintenance of squares, the exploitation of dwelling stock and the architectural heritage of the district. More specifically, the Movement has run campaigns for the cleanliness and the maintenance of Victoria Sq. and Amerikis Sq. The biggest achievement of the initiative is the cancelation of the construction of a garage at the junction Patission and Kiprou Str. The local residents reclaimed the park as an open public space and "protested for the maintenance of the Park of Patisssion Str. and Kiprou Str.as an open space and we have cleaned it and planted new trees. It was our biggest fight" (Adamopoulou, personal communication, June 12, 2016). Moreover the group has prorogued the closing of the Trianon and Alkionis cinemas, which are historic cultural landmarks for the area of Victoria Sq. as they have been affiliated with the freedom of speech and creation as artists expressing resistance to the junta.

As it was mentioned above the area has a rich architectural heritage and therefore the initiative has done actions for its prominence. Indeed in 2011 the local residents (and especially the professional architects of the district) chronicled the buildings prior to 1950 (neoclassic, Bauhaus, eclectic style etc.) at the neighborhoods of Agios Panteleimonas and Victoria Sq. The group recorded 376 building (19% was in bad condition and 56% in good condition) and 108 of them have been declared as preserved buildings (https://kinisikatoikonektou.wordpress.com). In parallel the architectural group recorded approximately 100 abandoned and vacant buildings, unused ground floors of shops in relatively good condition. The results of the recording presented at the art scene "Eos" with the title "Empty and full: The dynamics of the city - The case of Ag. Panteleimonas" (see Picture 39). The initiative also presented their ideas about the exploitation of these vacant buildings such as for the accommodation of the homeless people (https://kinisikatoikonektou.wordpress.com).

Picture 39. The poster for the exhibition "Empty and full: The dynamics of the city - The case of Ag. Panteleimonas"

Credits: https://kinisikatoikonektou.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/

The Movement also does activities for the cultural and solidarity stimulation. For the cultural stimulation they have organized a cinema club and evenings of poetry and literature, their aim is to sensitize the citizens for the cultural and the societal crisis. Another cultural project is the 'Tracing the historical memory', which is a series of educative seminars of oral history in order to know the history of the area. This is achieved via the volunteering participation of the inhabitants in the history recording process and the interviewing of old and new residents. Last but not least, the group provides volunteering work by collecting and distributing food and clothes to the refuges that are housed at the indoor gym of Galatsi. The abovementioned activities aim to cope with the ghettoization of specific areas (such as Agios Panteleimonas and Victoria Sq.) as they attempt to puzzle the citizens about the issue of civil equality and bridge the citizens of different ethnicity. Also "The societal ties between the different residents have been enhanced and they have been stronger during our projects. We finally get out of our houses and get to know each other and many friendships have been created through the activities of the initiative" (Adamopoulou, personal communication, June 09, 2016).

5.3. Conclusions from the selected case studies

The formation and the organization of the urban initiatives

By presenting the selected urban initiatives, we understood that the trigger events of their formation were urgent problems that emerged at the neighborhood such as criminality problems, interventions of external factors such as the municipality of Athens and private sector that affected directly the everyday lives of the locals such as the deconstruction of a park or the installation of antennas by mobile network operator. Exceptions are Atenistas and PlaceIdentity, since their motive for the creation of their group is the sentimental attachment with the city as a whole entity and the awareness for the active citizenship. Hence, these groups were created by

active citizens that wanted either to encourage their fellow citizens to participate at the decision-making procedures or to take matters into their own hands.

Another outcome from the interviews was the fact that the interviewees perceived that their starting point is not affiliated with the economic crisis and the refuges, but more about the urban problems of their area such as the lack of public space. For instance the representative of Atenistas mentioned that "the starting point of Atenistas is not affiliated with the economic crisis, but more about the layout of the city and how they can change the current situation of Athens" also according to interviewee Kostopoulou "the Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents was formed in 2006, to wit before the economic crisis!". This fact can be supported also by the observations of the municipal officers of 'SynAthina' office.

These groups were formed initially as small groups of citizens that wanted to protest against the urban problems of their neighborhood and by extension the whole city. The majority of the groups do not have any legal form and their structure is horizontal as every member is equal. Exception is 'PlaceIdentity', which has a legal status of a company in order to facilitate the coordination of their projects. Additionally, since their formation the groups, the number of the initiators varies from 5 to 30. The participants as they believe at the values of self-organization and democracy, they are calling weekly and monthly meetings, where every individual is welcomed to participate. During these meetings they identify the new problems that emerged and they discuss for their future activities. Moreover, the initiators since the formation of their group, they have built a network of fellow groups and artists who are willing to cooperate and support their work.

Another point that needs to be mentioned is that the groups use the social media for their intercommunication and for the invitation of new participants. Furthermore, the initiators for the invitation of new members and to make known their work, they have created their websites and use the conventional methods such as posters and leaflets, but due to environmental reasons this method is limited utilized.

Goals of the urban initiatives

After the presentation of the formation of the groups, it is needed to mention their common goals. It has been observed that common points of their goals are the awakening of the fellow citizens to realize that every individual is responsible for their space and the improvements of their urban everyday life. This amelioration can be expressed through the creation and the beautification of public space, due to the high density and the lack of public spaces of Athens. Additionally, at the context of the improvement of their everyday life, another goal is the optimal social cohesion and the bridging of the differences between the different groups of the space. Therefore, they organize cultural events such as celebrations in public space in order to bridge their differences and come out of their 'cocoon'.

At this point we have to mention that the goals of the initiatives are flexible and they adopt the changes of the society. The economic crisis and the introduction of refugees expanded the range of the activities of the groups. They have added solidarity activities in order to aid the weak social groups through bazaars and collective cuisines, time banks etc. This observation can be supported also by the data provided by the 'SynAthina' office, since "in 2013 (when the "SynAthina" started) the percentage of the projects affiliated with the public space and the city awareness was 60% of the total projects recorded by the office. But, with the passage of time this

percentage has been reduced and the solidarity activities have been flourished and the initial urban initiatives affiliated with public space organize also this kind of projects. This can be explained by the economic crisis and the refugees' crisis" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016). Furthermore, as we observed from Figure 2 (Chapter 5.1.) the percentage of solidarity activities is 42,2% and only 9,3% are related with the public space and the environment. From the above we can understand that as the needs of the society change and in parallel the goals of the initiatives are adjusted to the current state.

Projects of the urban initiatives

The projects align with the abovementioned goals of the initiatives. Therefore, their activities can be categorized into 3 types concerning: a) the urban space, b) the culture and c) the solidarity. Firstly about the urban space, we could notice that the initiatives concern about the amelioration of the urban environment such as the creation of public spaces, pocket parks, urban gardens, the cleaning of the public space. Also included the beautification of facades and campaigns of how a 'good' resident ought to behave. This category of projects includes also activities for the refamiliarization of the residents with the neighborhood. The initiatives often organize historic tours or exhibitions that present the history of the area and more specifically the architecture of the district. The second category is about cultural events such as tango nights, open celebrations at squares or parks. Therefore, the groups repurpose temporally the existed open spaces and aim to bridge the different groups and to interact with each other for example the film screenings are open to everyone and the neighbors can enjoy themselves and have a discussion. The last category is the solidarity activities such as public meals, time bank, collection of clothes and free of charge languages courses for the refuges and for weak social groups.

The results of their actions at the (societal, build) environment

These projects upgrade the urban daily life of the locals with various ways. The initiators use the unused plots of the city and create their communal spaces, where there is lack of public space. At the case of Atenistas they created playgrounds where there is lack and the children have the chance to play at their neighborhood. In Exarchia they created communal spaces where the locals can gather and interact; this is major for them as they obtained and produce their space. The Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents re-appropriate the archeological site by transforming it from an unused and dirty space to an attractive useful communal space for visitors and local residents. Moreover, as it was mentioned at the theoretical framework, the DIY urbanism is using colorful and temporal practices that alter the space to a livelier and more creative. In the selected case studies this is also applied, we can identify this through projects such as the beautifications of the schools' facades, wall murals. This is very important to the Greek cities as they are characterized by the grey and monotonous urban landscape of block of flats (polikatoikies).

Regarding the results of the DIY urbanism on the society, the strengthening of the social ties between the local residents is the most important. In Athens as a metropolitan area, the societal relationships are lacking and are more impersonal and skeptical, but the unofficial community initiatives compel the citizens to collaborate and to rally for finding alternative solutions for their urban problems. Therefore, the local residents via these collective projects are getting familiar with their fellow citizens and they get out of their comfort zone. Another essential impact is the sentimental attachment with the space as they take care their wider environment and

they desire to alter it for the best without waiting the government and the local authorities to change their space.

6. The relationship between the Municipality of Athens and the Athenian urban initiatives

At this chapter it will be presented and analyzed what is the relationship between the municipality of Athens and the urban initiatives. In other words, it is going to be cited how the Municipality of Athens has adopted more collaborative governance and how it involves the civil society into the decision-making procedures. Moreover, it will be presented (through the results of the interviews with the municipal officers) the position of the municipality towards the DIY urbanism in Athens and what measures it has been adopted in order to support them . From the other hand, it is also important to mention how the urban initiatives react and face the municipality. Therefore, after analyzing the interviews of the members of the urban initiatives it will be mentioned their position towards the municipality of Athens. The presentation of the both sides considered the optimal as it is more integrated.

6.1. Perception of the Municipality of Athens

The last years the Municipality of Athens attempts to promote the participation of different stakeholders and especially the citizens into the planning procedures. Therefore it follows more neoliberal governance by establishing a partnership between the local authority, the private sector and the civil society. "The municipality is governed by the philosophy that for a successful and functional city planning, the ideas and the suggestions of the citizens must be heard as they are the active actors of the city. The municipality of Athens promotes the active participation of all actors in the planning and implementations procedures in order to make the city attractive not only for visitors, but for citizens, entrepreneurs and investors" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

Already the municipality has followed a participatory approach of planning by organizing a series of open and continuous consultations with Technical Chambers, educational institutions, international institutes social, organizations, NGOs, urban initiatives and young entrepreneurs in order to form a common strategy for the confrontation of the effects of social degradation and the shrinkage of city's economy, due to the economic crisis. "At the level of implementation, the municipality of Athens has made significant steps at participatory governance" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

When the municipal officers were asked how the municipality is trying to implement the notion of cooperative governance and how the civil society is involved into the decision making procedures, the answer was "from 2013, when the 'SynAthina' office established and the open consultations organized" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

The organized open consultations are public procedures, in which the local stakeholders, especially the citizens and the local urban initiatives are invited to file their proposals through an online platform for the reuse and revivification of municipal property, for instance the use of municipal buildings and flea markets. This

practice has been implemented in various cases such as Kipseli market, 'Theotokopoulou', the 'Serafio' natatorium and the 'Anti-graffiti campaign'.

The Kipseli market (see Picture 40) is a good example according to the interviewees municipal officers. This market stopped to operate in 2003 and was characterized as persevered building. In 2006 the local urban initiatives wanted to reclaim as a communal space, so they cleaned and reused it informatively as a cultural center (Municipality of Athens,2016). So, in 2012 the municipality decided to include the market into a developmental program and after 3 years organized an open consultation in which 200 individuals and groups participated and 470 proposals were presented. So, at the case of Kipseli market "the strategies that were proposed by the initiators are implemented by the municipality" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016)

Picture 40. The municipal market of Kipseli

Credits: http://www.espressonews.gr

Currently there is an open call for all the creative groups and organizations of the city for the management of the place. The proposed management model should align with the results of the consultation. The municipality will cede specific rooms and places of the market to organizations and individuals for 5 years (free of rent and charge) (Karras, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

This model of governance will be tested also in other cases such as the reuse of listed building 'Theotokopoulou' villa and the 'Serafio' natatorium. "These buildings are municipal property and landmarks of the city, so the municipality wants to follow the same participatory model. During these procedures the local residents and the local urban initiatives will be also invited to have an advisory role and express their opinion about their vision for these buildings" (Karras, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

Another collaborative practice with the citizens is the 'Anti-graffiti campaign'. On January 2016, representatives of citizens groups that work on issues for the alteration of the image of the city, professionals and artists gathered at 'SynAtnina' office to discuss and make proposals for the solution of the visual pollution from the uncontrolled tagging in public areas of the city such as Panepistimiou St. Through this

meeting, it was identified the alternative solutions for this visual pollution and found a common understanding about how to improve the image of the city for its residents and visitors. The municipality is currently implementing, with the contribution of the active citizens, an action plan in order to find the optimal solution for tagging. "There were held visits ('door to door') to the local businessmen and residents to inform them about the campaign. The municipality after the removal of the graffiti will invite painters to do murals on specific walls of Panepistimiou Street" (Karras, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

Also it is planned to realize an open competition for the amelioration of the image of the boxes of primary cross-connection point. In this competition individual artists and independent artistic groups will be invited to paint these boxes. Through these practices, the municipality attempt to exploit the creative class of the city for the common good.

So, it is understood that the municipality started to involve more the citizens to the decision-making procedures and ask for their proposals. Therefore, when it comes to DIY urbanism, from the interviews with the municipal officers we see that the municipality is more open to the DIY practices and accept and recognize the role of official and unofficial community initiatives. A key phrase from the interview is "Yes we accept DIY urbanism that is why we established the 'SynAthina' platform and office, because we had observed these activities" (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016)

'SynAthina' is a municipal office of the Department of Civil Society and Decentralization which was created on July of 2013 as an initiative of Amalia Zepou (the vice mayor of the Department). His role is advisory and supporting towards the groups of the citizens. This office support the community initiatives by two ways; firstly with the 'SynAthina' kiosk and platform (see Picture 41), that will be presented

"The purpose of this platform is to collect all the urban initiatives and put their activities into a calendar in order to aid the groups and make them known to the public. Furthermore, via 'SynAthina' the initiatives can present themselves; get in contact with the city administration and potential sponsors, and network with each other" (Karras, personal communication, May 30, 2016). It operates as an observatory by having an overview of the DIY projects and organizing these activities. Through the registration of these activities, the municipality has the capacity to react and support this kind of acts by developing an interactive relationship between the administration and the civil society. "We want to see how the activities of the unofficial initiatives can be organized and can be included into a more collaborative planning model, so how the municipality and the participatory planning tools and laws adopt these sporadic activities of the urban initiatives." (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016).
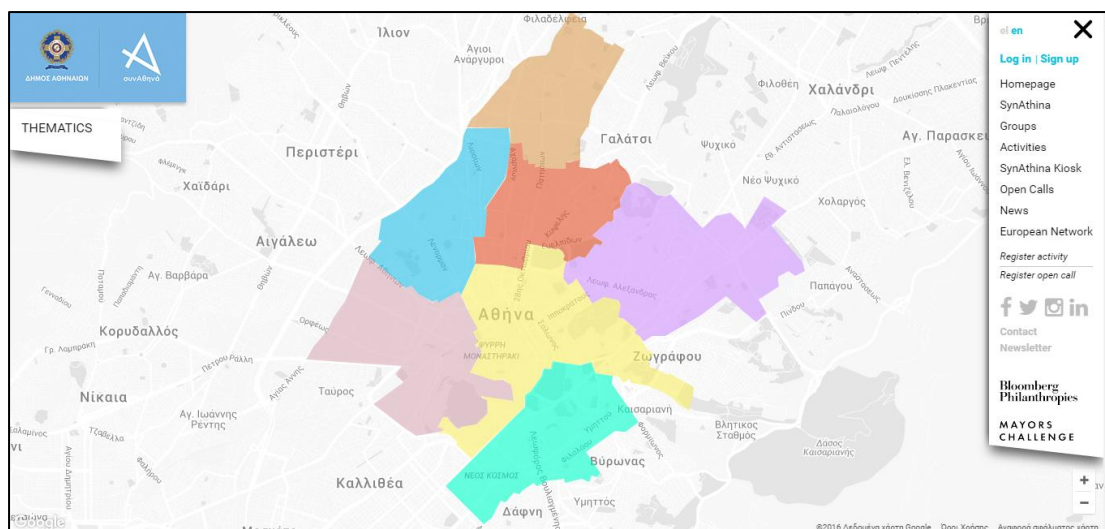
Picture 41. Screenshot of the online platform 'SynAthina'

Credits http://www.synathina.gr/

The 'SynAthina' office also supports the community initiatives by providing a building 'SynAthina kiosk'. This kiosk is at Varvakios square and it was a conception of 'PlaceIdentity' and the municipal office. It is an open kiosk (see Picture 42) to the urban initiatives during the weekdays, where the groups can have a meeting and inform the public about their activities.

Picture 42. The 'SynAthina kiosk' Building in Varvakios Square

Credits: Sofia Koukoura, 30/05/2016

From the above it is understood that 'SynAthina' functions as the intercessor between citizens and the administration of city who both can work together to increase the quality of life in the city and where the Municipality takes on a mediatory role instead of the singular decision maker (Program "Athina:2020", 2016). Moreover, the local authority can exploit the information provided by 'SynAtnina' by bringing forward

the opinion and the needs of the Athenian citizens for the city planning. According to Touri V.(personal communication, June 10, 2016) "the Department of City Planning is willing to cooperate with the 'SynAthina' office". Though this collaboration they want to identify the urban problems of each district and "incorporate the proposals of the local urban initiatives into the amendment of the local city plans" (Touri, personal communication, June 10, 2016). This collaboration will concern mainly the deprived areas, such as Victoria Square neighborhood and Kipseli. Furthermore, the administration of the city can also exploit the knowledge and technology generated by the urban initiatives for the update of the infrastructures and for the facilitation of the regulations.

The municipal officers were also asked how they practically facilitate and aid the work of the groups such as permission issues and financial support. Regarding the permission taking procedures, the responsible municipal departments (eg the Department of Green and Environment) are informed directly from the groups of citizens or from 'SynAthina' office and afterwards in case that the "projects are logical and normatively accepted.", they are permitted. In general, the reaction of the municipality to the DIY projects is neutral as neither it has demolished any DIY project ("No, there is not any case that the municipality demolished a DIY project." (Voulgaris, personal communication, May 30, 2016)) nor they legalize their projects (for example the Navarinou Park has not been institutionalized as a park by the municipality). Moreover, the municipality does not support financially the groups due to lack of financial resources. Although, 'SynAthina' has given a small funding to two initiatives; 'Akaliptos 2.0' (it is an initiative for the amelioration of the back yard of the block) and also the 'Polygarden_City' (It is a participative climate adaptation project that integrates green into Athens built environment by turning buildings and gardens into new hybrid urban space).

6.2. Perception of the urban initiatives

As we understand from the above the municipality of Athens has a positive stance for DIY urbanism, but this is not the case for all the selected case studies. The majority of the selected urban initiatives consider that the municipality does not support them enough and they want to act independently.

According to the interviewees this lack of municipal support can be explained by various reasons; the indifference of the municipality for the neighborhood and the bureaucracy of the public sector. Indeed, the majority of the groups perceived that the municipality is showing indifference for their area and they do not take their requests seriously. For instance, the member of Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents declared that the local authorities do not care for the neighborhood due to its bad reputation. "We perceive that the municipality does not care for Exarchia district, as we have filed complaints and proposals for the neighborhood and they have neglected them" (Kostopoulou personal communication, May 31, 2016). Moreover, the member of Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents claimed that the municipality shows indifference towards the development of the district (such as revivification projects), because it is perceived as a deprived area. "The initiative does not have any support from the municipality. We believe that the local authorities do not care for Akadimia Platonos and they perceive it as deprived. They have declared that it is not worth to realize revivification projects here" (Papachristoudi, personal communication, June 12, 2016). Another example is the Movement of 6th municipal community whose representative claimed that "the municipality has to take measures for the cleanness of

Victoria Sq. area, due to overcrowding of refuges and migrants, but nothing has been done!" (Topalian, personal communication, June 09, 2016).

All the members of initiatives expressed that the Municipality of Athens could be more supportive by shortening the procedures of permission for a project and limit the bureaucracy. This measure would facilitate their activity and their collaboration with the local authorities would be better. In many cases the groups are waiting for months to get permission for their projects and the procedures of the implementation of their demands are often stuck. "For example there are not enough playgrounds in Calligas Sq. district that is why we did an architectural study for the installation of a playground at Calligas square and filed it at the responsible municipal department. The procedure stacked due to bureaucracy and lack of municipal financial resources." (Stamatakis, personal communication, June 03, 2016). Another example of bureaucracy is from PlaceIdentity "'Pedio_Agoras' we gave the conclusions of the project, the planning and the architectural study to the municipality…but this project stuck and did not implemented" (Xidia, personal communication, May 31, 2016). Therefore, in order to skip the time-consuming procedures of the public sector, the groups act directly in many cases.

Another mentioned point about municipality is that although they are registered at the 'SynAthina' platform (or they are willing to participate), they think that the role of 'SynAthina' office is limited due to its character. It operates as mediator between the administration and the initiatives and in most cases 'SynAthina' cannot take decisions and have to address to the responsible municipal department. "The work of SynAtnina is admirable, as it operates as a mediator between the urban initiatives and the local authorities. However, when the municipal officers do not collaborate and support the projects of the initiatives, the role of SynAthina is reduced." (Zempelis, personal communication, June 08, 2016).

On the other hand the groups want to act independently from the local municipality, while they would like the support of municipality. Their beliefs of acting independently and self-organization are reflected back at their legal status. They prefer to maintain the unofficial and informal character of their group, as they believe that with this practice, they enhance their openness to the public without partisan commitments. Exception is PlaceIdentity which has been established as legal entity for the optimal coordination of their activities.

Their independent character is also impressed upon their financial independence, as the members of the group with their own financial resources attempt to realize their projects. They are aware that the municipality cannot and do not offer them funds for their projects due to lack of municipal financial resources. However, when the projects are big, they get material sponsorship from individuals and the private sector that are willing to contribute to their work. For instance 'Fotini Kipseli' collaborates temporally with local enterprises in order to buy the LED lamps in lower prices. Another example of material sponsorship is the donations of small companies to Atenistas, such as tools, plants, soil, brushes etc. Exceptional cases is the project 'Pedio_Agoras' of PlaceIdentity as it was included as one of ten projects of the Actors of Urban Change Network, supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation and the non-governmental organization MitOst.

Another point that indicates the independent and rebellious character is the fact that although the majority request for permission from the municipality, there has been observed cases where they do not take permission for their projects. This depends on

the property status of the space and the profile of the group. For example Atenistas do not always get permission for their projects "it depends…if the place is fenced by the municipality we get permission, otherwise if it is open we do not get" (Papadimitriou, personal communication, June 03, 2016). The 'Committee of Akadimia Platonos residents' as they have declared the archeological site as an open public space, so according to the interviewee "it depends, most of the times we do not get any permission … as our relationship with the municipality is bad… Although for the cultural events we got permission" (Papachristoudi, personal communication, June 12, 2016).

Exceptional case is the 'Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents. This group believes in self-management and self-organization and they identify themselves opposite to the authorities originated from the left political profile of the district. Hence, the group has not asked for any permission from the municipality and they occupied the space in order to create a communal space (eg the Narivou Park and little garden in Tsamadou Str.). A key phrase of the interviewee is the following "The permission is taken by the residents themselves". Also, it needs to be mentioned that its relationship with the local authority is bad and it has come against the municipality many times. For instance, they have protested against its indifference for the maintenance of Strefi hill by putting the collected litters from the hill in front of the major hall. Moreover, the initiative has considered as an 'attack' from the municipality, the interruption of water and electricity supply from the responsible municipal departments at Navarinou Park. After the protestation of the local residents, the electricity and water supply returned.

6.3. Conclusions for the relationship between municipality and selected urban initiatives

As it was apposed the two sides, we can identify the two contradictory positions of the enmeshed actors of the DIY urbanism; the urban initiatives and the local authorities. From the one hand the local authority of Athens seems to establish a collaborative model of governance by conducting open consultations and involving the civil society into the decision-making procedures for the use of municipal property. In parallel, the recent years the local authority has observed the coalition of the Athenian citizens into groups and has identified their presence into the public realm. Therefore, as a response it has been institutionalized the 'SynAthina' office, as a tool of the local authorities in order to have a closer connection and communication with the civil society. We could mention it as a top-down planning tool that lower the governance layers. It operates as an intercessor between the civil society and the administrative municipal departments (see Figure 5). This practice has made the local authority more approachable, as the citizens can communicate and interact directly with the municipality. This institution has bilateral benefits for the two urban actors; the initiators and the authorities. The urban initiatives can consult this office for their work, give them guidelines and promote their activities through the online platform. From the other side the municipality of Athens can supervise the urban initiatives and through this tool the administrative municipal departments can facilitate their work. This can be supported by the intent of the Department of Planning to collaborate with 'SynAthina' in order to record the demands for change at their neighborhoods and the requests of the urban initiatives in order to incorporate them at the local plans of the districts.
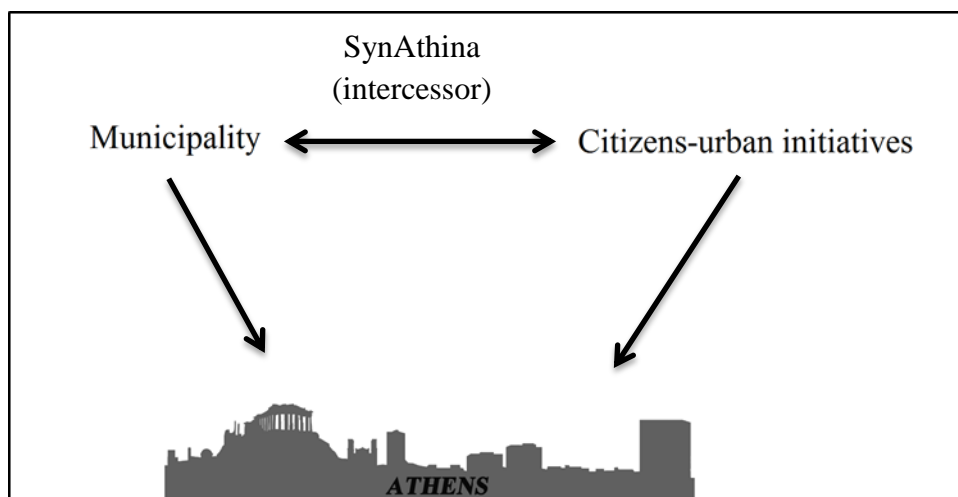
Figure 5. Scheme of the 'SynAthina' role

Credits: own editing

From the other hand, from the interviews it is evident that the community initiatives feel partially neglected by the municipality. In more detail, the groups mentioned that the local authorities ought to be more supportive and facilitate their work by minimizing bureaucracy and especially the time consuming procedures of taking permission. Moreover, they perceive that in some cases the municipality do not take in consideration their requests and do not implement the promised. So, from their side they try to work supplementary and fill the gaps of the public service.

In parallel, they want to act directly to the space and independently from the authorities. They formulate informal groups and they are willing to maintain their unofficial status as a 'protest' to the authority and dissociate themselves from it. Moreover, at the context of directness they sometimes disregard the procedures and work without taking consideration of the permissions – procedures. This fact can be explained by their impatience to the time-consuming procedures and their right to intervene to the city. They believe that their identity of Athenian citizens allow them sometimes to claim their right to change their place and produce a user-friendly and accessible space. Hence they act directly and arbitrarily.

Therefore, we can understand that the relationship between the authorities and the initiatives is negotiable and under scrutiny. Although they have the same purpose; the improvement of the urban environment, we see that there is a gap between them. From the one side the local authorities who intent to organize their work for a more cohesive governance and town planning. From the other side the urban initiatives that attempt to work supplementary to the municipality and practice their citizens promptly with the DIY practices.

7. Conclusions, Recommendations and Reflections

This chapter presents the results of the empirical research and reflects back to the theoretical framework. It concludes the answers to the research questions that were posed at chapter 1. This research is aiming to present how the Do-It-Yourself urbanism is evolving in Greece and more specifically in Athens. The research was structured based on three questions; what are the explanations of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece, what the goals of the urban initiatives are and if they have change with the passage of time. Last but not least what is the relationship between the initiators and the local authorities (the municipality of Athens).

7.1. R.Q. 1: What are the explanations of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece?

As it was presented at the chapter 4 there are three main explanations of the development of Do-It- Yourself urbanism in Greece; the weakness of the Greek planning system, the socioeconomic crisis and the development of the modern Greek cities. These explanations can be partially reflected back to the theoretical framework.

Firstly the criticism of the Greek planning system and its weakness to create participatory planning tools that operates properly and to espouse practically the opinion of the city dwellers for the developmental and planning projects. More precisely, the Greek government has institutionalized top-down participatory planning tools at regional and municipal level through the 'Kallikratis' program. The concept of Regional and Municipal Commission Consultation is the devolution of the governance layers and the creation of communication between the local authorities, the private sector and the civil society. Although this law was legislated in 2010, part of the municipalities has not elected these committees. Also, it has been noticed that the role of the citizens is limited to advisory character. Moreover, the strict hierarchy of the top-down planning system does not leave 'space' for the citizens. Hence, the citizens at the context of their need to be heard, they act directly by creating community initiatives.

The criticism of the Greek planning system can be traced back to the assumptions of chapter 2.1. More specifically, the criticism of top-down approach that is based upon its strict hierarchical character and bureaucracy, has created on the other side bottom-up approaches. These bottom-up approaches use the 'empirical' knowledge of the citizens for the production of space (Fabian & Samson, 2015). As, Sabatier (1986) mentions the top-down approach tends to neglect and exclude other actors in the decision-making procedures and the policy makers are the key actors of the processes. Indeed, in our case the Greek planning system permit minimal and advisory intervention at the decision making procedures.

Another explanation is the economic crisis that plays an important role at reinforcement of the development of DIY urbanism. Through the empirical research it was found for the case of Athens that although the selected urban initiatives do not affiliate their starting point with the economic crisis, the data provided from

'SynAthina' office (as it has an overview of the situation the last 4 years) indicated that economic crisis had a cumulative effect. Indeed, during the ongoing economic crisis more and more civil groups are emerged and the coalition of citizens is more evident. Firstly, as it was pointed out during the interviews with the municipal officers and the initiators, that the municipality is facing financial difficulties and it cannot fund the proposed projects (of the citizens). Hence the citizens attempt to work complementary and find alternative solutions. The case of Calligas square is an example, as the municipality could not fund their projects and they organized event for the financial support of their project. While it has been observed that the community initiatives are multiplied, they have as main goal solidarity by utilizing the urban space as a canvas for their work. This can be traced back at the current situation of the municipality of Athens and the socioeconomic problems that face concerning the percentage of poverty and the evident presence of the refugees (see Chapter 5.1).

This can be detected back to the theoretical framework and assumptions at two points. Firstly, the socio-economical shifts brought forward new discourses and restructured the urban synergies. The citizens as they see that the state cannot prevent the deconstruction of the welfare structures, they united and attempt to act complementary to the state, as they recognize the limited financial resources (Athanassiou et al, 2015). Moreover, as the neo-liberal model is applied in Greece, we see that other urban actors are emerging and collaborate to fill this gap of deconstruction such as the private sector, NGOs, community initiatives ect (Jessop, 2002). Therefore, these initiatives are part of this neoliberal model that seeks for the devolution of the hierarchy of governance and the optimal welfare. Secondly, we can understand indeed the socio-economic changes in Greece brought the citizens out of their comfort zone and forced them to actively participate at the society. This fact verifies the assumption of the performative citizenship. Indeed, the new perception of citizenship is the reason for the Athenian dwellers to act and take the situation into their own hands. The citizens realized that they have shared responsibilities with the local authorities for the production of the urban space (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003).

The additional explanation of the development of the DIY urbanism in Greece is the development and the image of the Greek cities. As it was evident from the empirical research (interviews with the members of urban initiatives) and the literature review the Athenian citizens realized that their urban environment is not appealing for them such as high density, lack of public spaces, monotonous urban landscape. As the data indicates the percentages of green space in Greek cities and especially in Athens are low (2,5 sq. m. of green space per inhabitant), also the public spaces are limited and unequally distributed at the urban fabric. Hence, these facts motivated the citizens to act directly and reverse the situation of their place of living. The citizens attempt to work complementary with the local authorities they take their matters into their own hands and undertake their responsibilities. This is appertained to the theory of governance to community as it was mentioned at the expectations (Chapter 2.6.), within this theory there has been the transition from 'government' to 'governance' and again the alteration of the notion of citizenship. In the case of Athens, as they

understand the urban problems that the city and their neighborhood face, they act direct and they are willing to change that by coalescing into groups.

7.2. R.Q. 2: What are the main goals of urban initiatives in Athens and how they have changed through the years?

As it was revealed from the empirical research the goal of the urban initiatives is the improvement at both built and societal environment. Indeed, through the interviews it was resulted that their main goal is divided into 3 sub-aims: the amelioration of the public space, the boost of social cohesion and the cultural stimulation that is related with the second sub-goal.

They desire to reshape the image of the city through their DIY projects such as coloring the facades of the schools or making a little urban garden at an alley. Additionally, the initiators also aim for the refamiliarization with the city through culture. In particular, the refamiliarization has two purposes, the production of new experiences at the open public spaces, such as hosting a theatrical play at the Calligas square, and the building of trust between the local citizens. They use culture for bridging the differences of the various groups (such as the Greek population with the refuges and migrants) and the local residents started to interact more with each other.

The above goals are aligned with the main goal of Do-It-Yourself urbanism as it presented at the theoretical framework. The assumptions are verified as their goals of the urban initiatives are also societal and tangible (Douglas, 2013). The Athenian urban initiatives attempt to encourage the participation at the commons and the involvement with the urban space. The initiators want to generate through their activities a liveable and user-friendly city that will be more appealing to its users and visitors. They try to enhance the built environment in inexpensive or/and practices user-funded (Finn, 2014).

From the interviews with the initiators and the municipal officers of 'SynAthnina', it was resulted that through the years their goals and their project also headed toward solidarity. More specifically, although their initial goal was the solution of the urban problems, they understood that the living conditions have changed. The percentage of people that are under the poverty line is rising in Athens, so the groups added solidarity activities for aiding their fellow citizens. Therefore, they try to mitigate the social inequalities inside the neighborhood by helping their fellow citizens who face difficulties at the current living conditions.

Regarding their projects the selected urban initiatives achieve their goals by occupying vacant plots and repurposed them as communal spaces or by exploiting small pieces of the urban fabric and make it more functional for its citizens (such as the little garden in Tsamadou Str., the reappropriation of Akadimias Platonos archeological park ect). Moreover, they identify new possibilities for the existing urban space by hosting cultural events. This is aligned with Lefebvre's notion of appropriation, where the citizens have the right of accessing, utilizing and occupying

urban space for the fulfillment of the dwellers' needs. They produce their space in a way that the inhabitants use it to the fullest.

These projects appertain to the key dynamics and characteristics that the various DIY projects share. More specifically, the projects of the Athenian initiatives confirm the characteristics of defamiliarization and refamiliarization, as they identify new possibilities of the urban space (Iveson, 2013). For example the Committee of Akadimia Platonos residents first identified new possibilities for the Archeological site (defamiliarization) and then re-occupied this site as a place for cultural stimulation (refamiliarization). Furthermore, their solidarity projects are characterized by alternative economy and decommodification (Iveson, 2013). For instance to aid and facilitate the economically weaker people, they claim use values over exchange values in urban space such as the time bank, where they can exchange one hour of service. The common practice is the collection of clothes and food for the refugees and the charity bazaars.

It is understood that the urban initiatives especially the ones that focus on neighborhood level, they have a holistic approach at the amelioration of the urban living conditions. They exploit their right to the city for improving their neighborhood integrated and use their local resources for reclaiming their presence into the public realm.

7.3. R.Q. 3: What is the relationship between the municipality of Athens and the urban initiators?

The Athenian community initiatives attempt to criticize the traditional planning processes by proposing tangible solutions to their local problems by avoiding the involvement of the municipal officers. In most cases the beliefs of the urban initiatives are based on self-management and self-organization and with their volunteering work, they reform unexploited open spaces to useful places such as a DIY park (Navarinou Park, Candy Playgrond etc) without the involvement of the municipal officers. They criticize the domination of authorities and the financial capital by using their own resources and material sponsorships by individuals and private sector by proposing alternative solutions for the Athenian society.

The Athenian initiators disapprove the bureaucracy of the public sector and the slowness of the municipal procedures by protesting against it. They sometimes overlook these procedures by acting directly and by not taking permission from the municipality, as they claim that this would be time-consuming. They believe that their solutions are more tangible and apt than the proposed municipal projects, as they have a greater impact at the neighborhood level and as a consequence at the life of the individual.

The above findings agreed with the assumptions that DIY approaches can be understood as a form of soft rebellion against the traditional planning status and as a critical challenge for urban governance (Finn, 2014). The initiators disregard the formal procedures and apply their tangible approaches directly to the city. The initiators are against the professionalized structure of the city and reclaim empty property as something useful for the society (Deslandes, 2013). They avoid the involvement of the local authorities and they operate against the domination of the

government and the financial capital. They rely on their own financial resources and they propose DIY projects as a reply to the domination of the large-scale projects of the 'elite' (Deslandes, 2013). Another argument of the DIY urbanism against the planning procedures that was confirmed is the bureaucracy and the slowness of the mobilization of the decision-making processes (Finn, 2014). They use strategic approaches (such as low cost and usable for all different users group) that can be useful for the planners (Finn, 2014).

From the perspective of the municipality, we could mention that it is aware of their presence as urban actors and they identify their contribution. Therefore, the municipality of Athens tries to establish a cooperative model of governance, within the urban initiatives will be active member of the change. The municipality realizes the normative accepted DIY projects (but technically illegal) and welcomes them (Pagano, 2013). So we could say that it accepts them in two levels; they understand their impact into the society, while staying neutral about the projects. In parallel, the local authority has created tools such as the 'SynAthina' platform through which the groups can exploit it and promote their work to the public. These tools are also useful for the municipality, as it can supervise easily their activities and gives them advice via the organized meetings with the municipal officers of 'SynAthina' office. Hence, the municipality accepts and embraces the DIY approaches and as it has identified the positive interventions of the urban initiatives and is 'obliged' to facilitate their work. It is intended to observe the DIY practices and use them for a more strategic and integrated planning.

It is understood that the relationship between the two actors; municipality and urban initiatives is still remaining a topic of constant negotiation. Although there has been improvements their between relationship the current years, due to their nature and their character of the two actors there is still remaining a gap in-between. The urban initiatives will still disprove the authority as they feel partially detached. But, also the municipality due to its authority is compelled to facilitate the work of groups, but integrate them into a strategic plan.

7. 4. General conclusions

Answering each research question separately, we can understand that the DIY urbanism in Greek has been developed as a response from active citizens to the weaknesses of the top-down approach of the existing planning system. Also, it developed as a response for the urban problems of the Greek cities such as lack of public space and its bad maintenance. Also, economic crisis boost the coalition of the citizens and the feeling of unitary and created new synergies at the public space. The citizens as they create these urban initiatives, they try to work complementary with the local authorities and work at the local level.

Through the case studies it was understood that the urban initiatives declare their presence at the public realm and their right for having a user-friendly city. Their goals are directed primarily at the amelioration of their built environment and then the strengthening of the social ties and the offer to their weaker social fellow citizens. Especially the recent years with the worsening of the living conditions in Greece and especially in Athens, solidarity activities are more evident. The local authorities have

identify the appearance of urban initiatives and especially the municipality of Athens, as it has taken measures and institutionalized tools for the support of these groups and facilitate them. From the other hand the initiatives perceive that the public sector often put barriers for the implantation of their work such as bureaucracy and in some cases act directly. Hence the relationship between the local authorities and the urban initiatives are complex and under scrutiny, as both sides will always view the issue of planning from different perspectives.

7.5. Recommendations and Reflections

<u>Recommendations</u>

Looking back the methodical approach applied and the available data, we need to mention the limitations conducting this research and recommendations for future work. In more detail, the limitations of this research is the invitation of groups that did not answered to the call or they were not willing to participate at the research. For the second research question in order to create a detailed overview for how their goals are changed through years, it would be helpful to also do quantitative research, but detailed data from the 'SynAthina' office were not available for the public due to confidentiality reasons and they did not have detailed data for the DIY projects which were specified for the public space. Also, there is not an official list of the exact number of the urban initiatives that take action at the municipality of Athens. Also, some initiatives as part of their unofficial character do not have website or they are not registered to the platform of 'SynAthina', so it is difficult to track them. Therefore, it not possible to know the exact number of the groups that is why data from 'SynAthina' office were used for indicating the approximate number of the Athenian urban initiatives and the number of their projects and their specialization.

For further discussion and research it is recommended to map the DIY projects that affiliated with the public space in relation to the available public infrastructure and resources that each administrative neighborhood of Athens offers to its inhabitants. For this research it would be needed quantitative data and cartography approaches (e.g. GIS). So, the results of this research would explore the geographical correlation between the DIY urbanism and the character of the projects with the characteristics of the place and in more particular with the deprived areas.

Regarding the third research question about the relationship between the municipality of Athens and the urban initiatives, it was used also interviews. This qualitative approach is suitable for the answering of this question whose answers express the opinion of both sides and quantitative methods cannot be applied. Through the interviews the respondents could express their view toward the opposite urban actor and they could bring out new aspects via the interaction with the researcher. So, the added value of the thesis is the research of the relationship between the initiators and the local authorities, as it can be used as a base for the improvement of their relationship. The remarks of the initiators would help the municipality to understand

what impediments the groups face and reconsider the decision-making procedures and facilitate even more their work such as the reduction of bureaucracy and the better communication between the administrative departments of the municipality.

 Reflections

The motivation for selecting Do-It-Yourself urbanism in Greece as a theme of thesis can be traced to the personal activities and interests of the author and the current publicity of the trend. Firstly, I have involved in projects motivated by the civil society especially in my hometown (Chalkida) for the revivification of the municipal market of Chalkida (which has been listed as an architectural monument and it proposed to be reconstructed). Secondly, it has been observed that Do-It-Yourself urbanism and grassroots communities are drawing the attention of the Greek public more and more. Therefore, it was considered as a challenge for the author to understand the theoretical framework and context of this trend. Also, this topic is relevant with the theories that were taught during the Master program, especially the theories affiliated to public space and its perception from the citizens (Lefebvre's theories about the production of space and right to the city).

For the conduction of this thesis, it was used as a preferred methodology; data collection and qualitative methods such as interviews. The experience gained from this research method was fruitful into two ways for the researcher. Firstly, the interaction with the Athenian citizens was very important, as the author had the chance to communicate with them, identify their problems and understand their local need and how they can be fulfilled. Furthermore, as a planner and urban geographer through the conduction of this thesis was substantial to broader my scientific interests and turn them from technical to more anthropocentric. Moreover, it was important to find the gap between the projects driven from the government and the local authorities and the projects driven from the citizens and their influence to the urban fabric.

Literature

Argyropoulou P., Kallitsi P., Simponias G., (2015), Design interventions in Patissia area: Creates soft mobility and green space networks, Deparment of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, retrieved on 10 July 2016 from https://www.arch.ntua.gr/sites/default/files/project/8162_/k12_argiropoulou_kallitsi_s mponias_poleodomia_2.pdf

Atenistas, List of actions of Atenistas (until now), retrieved on 6 June 2016 from https://atenistas.org/draseis/

Athanassiou E., Kapsali M. & Karagianni M., (2015), Citizen's participation in urban governance in crisis-stricken Thessaloniki (Greece): post-political urban project or emancipatory urban experiments?, Proceedings of RC21 International Conference on "The Ideal City: between myth and reality. Representations, policies, contradictions and challenges for tomorrow's urban life", Italy, Urbino, p. 27-29

Arampatzidou C., (2015), From the bottom and the top: Powering Athens through collectivity and informal initiatives, Uncube magazine no. 43, p. 10-17

Barnard A., (2004), The legacy of the Situationist International: The production of situations of creative resistance, Capital & Class, Sage Journals, 28. (3), p. 103-124

Bartalitas L., (2015), Kipseli: research and cartography of the neighborhood, Neon Community project, retrieved on 23rd August 2016 from https://issuu.com/loukas_bartatilas/docs/neon_community_project_2015_kypseli?utm _source=conversion_success&utm_campaign=Transactional&utm_medium=email

Bela J., (2015), Hacking Public Space With the Designers Who Invented Park(ing) Day, retrieved on 23 February 2016 from https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/hacking-public-space-designers-parking-day

Bendix A., (2015), The Best DIY Urbanism of 2015, retrieved on 11 March 2016 from http://www.citylab.com/design/2015/12/the-best-diy-urbanism-of-2015/422022/

Cattaneo Fylaktou A., (2006), Intra-Urban Mobility and Suburbanisation Influences on the Urban Form, Proceedings of the 23rd Conference on Passive and Low Energy Architecture, Geneva, Switzerland

Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents, We take the neighborhood into our hands, retrieved on 20 June 2016 from http://exarchia.pblogs.gr/

Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents, The park, retrieved on 23 February 2016 from https://akadimia-platonos.com/category/%CF%80%CE%AC%CF%81%CE%BA%CE%BF/

Deslandes A., (2013), Exemplary Amateurism: Thoughts on DIY Urbanism, Cultural Studies Review 19 p. 216–27

Dimopoulou S. & Zahos D., (2015), Redefinition of public space and demands through informal initiatives. Case studies in neighborhoods of Athens, Proceedings of Redefinitions of Space in the Greek crisis, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece, p. 150-166

Douglas G., (2013), Do-It-Yourself Urban Design: The Social Practice of Informal "Improvement" Through Unauthorized Alteration, City & Community 13(3) p. 1 – 21, American Sociological Association

Elwood S. (2002), Neighborhood revitalization through 'collaboration': Assessing the implications of neoliberal urban policy at the grassroots, GeoJournal (58), p. 121–130

Fabian L. & Samson K., (2015), Claiming participation – a comparative analysis of DIY urbanism in Denmark, Journal of Urbanism, Taylor & Francis Group

Finn D., (2014), DIY urbanism: implications for cities, of Urbanism, Taylor & Francis Group, 7 (4), p. 381–398

Fotini Kipseli, retrieved on 15 June 2016 from http://www.fotinikipseli.gr/

Gospodini A. (1997). Σημειώσεις στο μάθημα Αστική Σύνθεση [Notes for the lesson Urban Synthesis] (p. 13, 14), Volos: University of Thessaly Press

Harvey, D., 2008. The right to the city. New Left Review, Volume 53, pp. 23-40.

Hellenic Statistical Authority, The results of the 2011 Population and Housing Census for the Resident, De Jure (registered) population of Greece per region and municipality retrieved on 17 August 2016 from http://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SAM03/-

Helmuth J, (2015), Do-It-Yourself Skate Park in Columbus Park faces possible demolition, retrieved on 22 February 2016 from http://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/do-it-yourself-skate-park-faces-possible-demolition

Hjern B., Hanf K., Porter D. (1978) Local Networks of Manpower Training in the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden, Interorganizational Policy Making: Limits to Coordination and Central Control, London; Sage Journals p. 303 -344

Igipasis P., (2012), Kypseli. A mild reconstruction's proposal having as a core the redefinition of the operation of the underground apartments, School of Civil Engineering, National Technical University of Athens

Iveson K., (2013), Cities within the City: Do-It-Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 37.(3), p. 941–956

Issaias P., (2014), Beyond the informal city: Athens and the possibility of an Urban Common. PhD diss., Technische Universiteit Delft

Issaias D., Karvountzi V., Moraitis K., Serraos K., (2013), Study area-Akadimia Platonos, retrieved on 20 August 2016 from http://synth09-athens.blogspot.gr/2013/01/4.html

Jessop B., (2002), Liberalism, Neolieralism and Urban Governance: A State – Theoretical Perspective, In: Brenner, N. & Theodore, N. (eds): Spaces of neoliberalism: urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe, Blackwell, Oxford

Kavoulakos K., (2015), Public space and movements of the city: scope, content and practices, Athens Social Atlas, retrieved on 3 March 2016 from http://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/%CE%AC%CF%81%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%BF/%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CF%8C%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82-%CF%87%CF%8E%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%BA%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%AE%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%80%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%82/

Kouka S., Magoula K., Spyropoulou E., (2013), Exarchia, Department of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, retrieved on 15 August 2016 from

https://www.arch.ntua.gr/sites/default/files/project/5640_exarheia/kouka_magoula_sp
yropoulou_poleodomia_ii.pdf

Koukoura S. & Tsouka N., (2014), Youth: I want MY space, case of study "Pezoulia",
Volos", Proceedings of conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Design "Past,
Present and Future of Public Space", Department of Architecture, University of
Bologna, Bologna

LaFrombois M.,(2015), Blind spots and pop-up spots: A feminist exploration into the
discourses of do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism, Urban Studies Journal, Sage Journals,
p.1-16

La Plaza Cultural retrieved on 8 July 2016 from http://laplazacultural.com

Lefebvre, H. (1991) The Production of Space, trans. Nicholson-Smith, D. (first
published in 1974 as La production de l'espace) Blackwell, Oxford

Lefebvre H., (1996) The right to the city. In E. Kofman and E. Lebas (eds.), Writings
on cities: Henri Lefebvre, Blackwell, Oxford

Lepofsky J. & Fraser J., (2003) Building Community Citizens: Claiming the Right to
Place-making in the City, Urban Studies 40 (1) p. 127–142, Taylor & Francis Group

Lydon M. & Carcia T., (2015) Tactical Urbanism 2: Short-Term Action, Long Term
Change, The Street Plan Collaborative Inc.

Mould Oli, (2014), Tactical Urbanism: The New Vernacular of the Creative City,
Geography Compass, p.529–539

Moutsopoulos T., (2010), Maladies of the skin: The rise and fall of the architectural
façade, Patsavos, Zavoleas Y. (Editors), Surface: Digital Materiality and the New
Relations between Depth and Surface, (2013), p. 137, Futura publications, Athens

Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens, Recording
and recommendations for the use of dilapidated buildings, retrieved on 9 July 2016 on
https://kinisikatoikonektou.wordpress.com/%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1
%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AE-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-
%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%84%CE%AC%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF
%82-%CF%87%CF%81%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CE%BD-
%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84/

Mpalafouta K. (2005), Two squares in Patisia, a study of the public space in one
neighborhood, Geographies, no. 9, p. 134-138, Harokopio University

Municipality of Athens, (2016), Open call for proposals for the utilization of
municipal market of Kipseli, retrieved on 10 June 2016 from
http://www.cityofathens.gr/sites/default/files/DAK_Anoixti_Prosklisi.pdf

Municipality of Athens, (2016), The Strategic plan of the operational program of
2015-2019 of Municipality of Athens, retrieved on 17 August 2016 from
https://home.asda.gr/PdfFiles/Epixeirisiaka/EpixeirisiakoEgaleo2015_DD.pdf

Municipality of Athens (2016), Project: Athens 2020, retrieved on 20 March 2016
from http://developathens.gr/athina2020/images/keimeno_diavoulefsis.pdf

Not Bored Journal, Review of Henri Lefebvre's The Production of Space (1974)
retrieved on 12 March 2016 from http://www.notbored.org/space.html

Pagano C. (2013) DIY Urbanism: Property and Process in Grassroots City Building, Marquette Law Review, 2 (97) p. 335

Papaefstathiou V., (2004), Aristofanous and Sarri Str. from the collective work "A walk at the streets of Athens, issues of urban planning", Department of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens

PlaceIdentity, Activities retrieved on 10 June 2016 from http://placeidentity.gr/en/category/activities/

Ploumidi et al, (2015), Reconceptualization and stake at the planning of commons in Athens of today, Proceedings of Redefinitions of Space in the Greek crisis, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece, p. 215

Polyzoi V., (2014), Familiarization with the space of Victoria Square and the current spatio-social challenges, Department of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, Athens

Project for Public Spaces, Lightening use & Design, retrieved in 3 August 2016 from http://www.pps.org/reference/streetlights/

Purcell M., (2002) Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant, GeoJournal (58) p. 99–108, Kluwer Academic Publishers

Quicke J., (1992) Individualism and Citizenship: some problems and Possibilities, International Studies in Sociology of Education, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2 (2), p. 147-163

Raco, M. & Flint J. (2001) Communities, places and institutional relations: assessing the role of area-based community representation in local governance, Political Geography, 20, p. 585–612

Rosa M. & Weiland U., (2013), Handmade Urbanism: Mumbai, São Paulo, Istanbul, Mexico City, Cape Town: From Community Initiatives to Participatory Models, Jovis Verlag Gmbh, Berlin, p. 136, 138

Sabatier P., (1986), Top down and bottom up approaches to implementation research; a critical analysis and suggested synthesis', Journal of public policy 6(1), p. 21-48

Sadler S., (1991) The Situationist City, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts;p. 1,5, 117, 120)

Samaras G. (2005), The Sustainable spatial planning in Greece against a backdrop of European reality. The Italian example, Pre-Conference events, Techical Chamber of Greece, Larissa.

Serraos K., (2015). Πολεοδομικός σχεδιασμός στην Ελλάδα σε αλλαγή πλεύσης. Προς μια πολύπλευρη bottom up πορεία; [Urban planning in Greece in change. Towards a multifaceted bottom up process?], retrieved on 21 January 2016 from http://www.citybranding.gr/2016/01/bottom-up.html

Somarakis G. & Stratigea A. (2015) Η συμμετοχική προσέγγιση στο χωροταξικό σχεδιασμό και η συμβολή των Τεχνολογιών Πληροφόρησης και Επικοινωνίας [The participatory approach to planning and the contribution of Information and Communication Technologies], retrieved on 21 January 2016 from http://www.citybranding.gr/2016/01/blog-post_20.html

Sotiropoulou V., (2014), Bridging the relationship of citizen and municipality, Municipality of Athens, retrieved on 6 June 2016 from

https://www.cityofathens.gr/symparastatis/sites/www.cityofathens.gr.symparastatis/fil
es/%20[%CE%99%CE%94%CE%A1%CE%A5%CE%9C%CE%91%20%CE%9A%
CE%91%CE%A4%CE%91%CE%9A%CE%9F%CE%A5%CE%96%CE%97%CE%
9D%CE%9F%CE%A5]_0.pdf

Taylor M., (2007), Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and
Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces, Urban Studies, Routledge Taylor and Francis
Group 44 (2), p. 297–317

Topalidis G., (2012), Σημμετοχή των νέων στα τοπικά συμβούλια νεων και σην
αυτοδιοίκηση [Youth participation in local councils and the local authority],
Deparament of International and European Studies, University of Macedonia

Tsoukia E., (2012), Σχεδιασμός με τακτικές και μαστορέματα [Tactical Urbanism],
School of Architecture, National Technical School of Athens, Athens

Vatavali, F. & Kalatzopoulou, M., (2013), Space deregulation and the planning that it
fits, retrieved on 27 May 2016 from
https://oikotrives.wordpress.com/2013/01/27/aporythmisi-xorou/

Webb O., (2015), A DIY Skate Park in England Was Demolished by Local Killjoys,
retrieved on 15 March 2016 from http://www.vice.com/read/margate-skate-park-
demolition-388

Xydia S., Karatza M., Veletzas O., Kikidou M., Mpartatilas L., Patelida M.,
Somarakis G., Voulgaris S., Georgiadis P., (2015), MANUAL_CITIZENS:
Participatory Planning of public spaces. Retrieved on 10 March 2016 from
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7_GMKo0epxJazY0OTRXQ3l2bGM/view

Participatory Public Area Design

Laws

Act No. 3852/2010 of 8 June 2010, New Architecture of Local Government and
Decentralized Administration – Kallikratis program, Articles 76, 86, 17

Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview questionnaire for urban initiatives

What are the goals of your initiative?

- When did you start your initiative and what triggered this concept?
- What are the goals of your initiative and have they changed through the years? If yes, what are the reasons that provoked this change?
- What kind of projects do you do? What kind of character they have ex. Aesthetic (Beautification of facades of buildings) or Operational (eg. Community garden)?

What is the structure of your initiative?
- What is the structure of your organization?
- How do you invite the citizens to participate into your projects? For example via online platforms or social media?
- How many people participate in your initiative? And which age group participates more?
- How do you make your decisions to start a project? Eg. How do you identify
- the urban problem?
- Where are the majority of your projects located? For example at the city center? At deprived neighborhoods? (This question is more for the initiatives that affiliate with the urban fabric of Athens as a whole such as PlaceIdentity, Atenistas)

What is the impact of your actions at the (societal, build) environment?

- How do you think these projects have changed the urban daily life of the local residents?
- Do you think that through your activities the ties between the residents are stronger?
- Do you feel more attached to your place after the participation to the initiative?
- Are you projects sustainable and do you maintain them after your innervation?

What is your relation with the municipality?

- Do you have financial support from the government, private sector or you are self-sufficient?
- Do you get permission for your projects by the local authorities?
- Does the municipality support you with any way?
- Are you registered into the SyunAthina platform? If no, would you like to participate?
- Have you come into conflict with the municipality? If yes can you give an example?

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questionnaire for municipal officers

- Do you think that the planning system in Greece promotes the participation of citizens into the decision-making procedures or it follows a more top-down approach?
- Do you think that the municipality of Athens promotes the collaborative governance?
- Do you invite the Athenian citizens to participate in open city councils for example via the social media?
- Do you accept the notion of DIY urbanism, as it is driven mainly by the citizens and not from the local state?
- Have you established any platform, which can facilitate and support the actions of the initiatives?
  - For example the "SynAthina platform" can you provide us some information about the platform?
  - Why did you create this platform and when?
  - How do you believe that this platform help the urban initiatives?
- Do you give permission to the urban initiatives to change the use of the private or public owned vacant plots?
- Have you ever demolished any DIY project like a makeshift skate park, that you considered as an illegal activity?
- Have you legalized any Athenian DIY project?
- Do you support financially these initiatives?
- Have you established any strategy that was applied by the initiators?

Appendix 3: Table of information about the interviewees urban initiatives in Athens

Name of the initiatives	Neighborhood	Projects	Respondent	Date
Atenistas	All the neighborhoods of Athens	• 54 DIY projects for public space (ex. Pocket park) • 14 projects about the beautification of the schools' facades • 25 solidarity activities such as collection of clothes for the refugees 17 alternative guided tours 31 cultural events (ex. the tango night at "Pelloponisou" stop	Nantia Papadimitriou	3/6/2016
PlaceIsdentity	Psiri, Cultural and Commercial Center of Athens	• 'SynOikia' (Street level) • 'Stegi SynAthina' (level of square) • 'Pedio_Agoras' (level of square) • 'Imagine the City' Platform (city level)	Mary Karatza, Stefania Xidia	31/5/2016

		• 'Politeia 2.0 – Democracy reborn' (national level)		
Committee initiative of Exarchia's residents	Exarchia, Hill of Stefi	DIY projects for public space • Navarinou Park • Tsamadou little garden • Cleaning of the Strefi Hill • The campaign "Free Pavements" Solidarity activities • Time Bank of Exarchia • Free courses ex free lessons of Greek language for refugees Cultural events • Neighborhood's Celebration of New Year's Eve etc • Film projections • Photography exhibitions	Maria Kostopoulou	31/5/2016
Fotini Kipseli	Kipseli	• The lightening of entrances of several block of flats in Kipseli and one in Ampelokipous district • The lightening of Fokionos Negri (Christmas 2015) • The lightening of 19th Lyceum • The lightening of neo-Gothic tower in Thiras Str.	Kostas Zempilis	8/6/2016
Committee of Akanimias Platonos residents	Akadimia Platonos, Saint George	DIY projects for public space • The cleaning and reuse of Akadimia Platonos archeological park • Contributing to the project of "Consolidation of archaeological sites of Athens" Solidarity activities • Free courses ex free lessons of Greek language for refugees Cultural events in the park • ancient theatrical plays, film festivals and historic walking tours etc. that take place at the archeological site	Matina Papachristoudi	12/6/2016
Association of Calligas Square's residents	Calligas Square	DIY projects for public space • Intervention at Sampani's tavern and the old cinema Ateene	Babis Stamatakis, Giannis Iliopoulos	3/6/2016

		• Beautification of schools' facades • Inventory of the buildings of the period 1830-1940 • The campaign of the "Good neighbor" • The cleaning of Calligas Sq. and Saint Andreas Sq. • Architectural study of the playground at Calligas Sq. • Exhibition of proposals of revivification projects Solidarity activities • Collection of food and clothing for weak social groups etc. Cultural events • Theatrical plays ect.		
Movement of the inhabitants of the 6th Municipal Community of Athens	6th municipal community of Athens (especially in Victoria Square)	DIY projects for public space • The protest of maintenance of the park at the junction Patission and Kiprou and he planting of trees in the park • Inventory of the buildings from the period prior to 1950 and vacant buildings and exhibition of their proposals • The cleaning of Victoria Sq. and Ameriki Sq. • Solidarity activities • Collection of food and clothes for weak social groups • Cultural events • Film projecting • Nights of poetry ect • Tracing the historical memory of the area	Maria Adamopoulou	12/6/2016 9/6/2016

Credit: Author's editing

Appendix 4: Table of information about the interviewee municipal officers

Municipal Department	Position in the Department	Respondent	Date
Department of Civil Society and Decentralization ("SynAthina" office)	Officer	Stelios Voulgaris	30-05-16
Department of Civil Society and Decentralization ("SynAthina" office)	Officer	Christos Karras	30-05-16
Department of Planning	The director	Vagia Touri	10-06-16

Credit: Author's editing