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# Socio-cultural Learning of Youth in Mobile Societies

LITERATURE AND PRACTICES REVIEW



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## 1. Introduction

Youth mobility is a social phenomenon that appears with intensity in Europe nowadays. The massive flow of refugee and migrant populations, especially of youth, to Europe brings to the foreground the complex and intricate issue of inclusion, and consequently the crucial issue of addressing the growing social phenomena of violent radicalization and racism mainly of young people. In this context, education is one of the main tools of including moving youth populations and managing and reducing the increasing racism.

Moreover, the changing patterns of current youth employment, the experience of fragmented, flexible, and temporary work mostly for young people in many economies produced a young precariat worldwide. The rates of young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs) are still very high in the majority of the European countries.

Effective education of displaced, disadvantaged, and marginalized young populations should be based on informal and non formal learning models that add to formal education and stand on the values of mutual acceptance and understanding, intercultural sensitivity, solidarity, cooperativeness, and on the right to cultural and linguistic diversity. All these values and rights coalesce with the principles of intercultural education, as well as with the contemporary youth studies.

The focus of SLYMS is on disadvantaged young people's mobile transitions in liquid and changeable social environments with different spatial and geographical potential. Exploring the differences as well as the similarities between countries and localities and how young people experience and deal with their own situation, culture, work and education lie at the heart of this project.

This review includes activities listed in Output 1: *Literature and practices Review*

The objective of this output is the investigation of the relevant literature in the fields of youth studies and especially sociology of youth, and education.

The contents of this review can be summarized as follows:

- Youth mobility and transnational mobile transitions.
- Youth from vulnerable social settings: Young precariat, NEET, Refugees, Migrants.

- Informal and non formal learning
- Youth work: Recognition and accreditation
- Socio-cultural Events and youth participation: skills and competences development, empowerment, resilience and inclusion

The review is expected to present the state of art of this specific field. It aims to highlight the significance of this research area; guide the research design and data interpretation noting any limitations or deficiencies or interesting gaps that need to be filled in; and introduce relevant terminology and provide definitions to clarify how terms are to be used. The review will be used in order to influence policy makers, counselors, NGOs, Youth workers (professional and volunteers), teachers, and trainers involved in typical and non-typical education. Also it will help to the development of a framework for training courses and skills certification. Moreover, ethnographic research and semi-structured interviews will be based on this specific theoretical review.

More specifically chapter 2 concerns the current research on youth on the move, and challenges traditional notions of transition, suggesting a more flexible, non-linear, reversible and multilayered definition of this concept. Also, migration studies are critically questioned, and incorporated in the new conceptual framework of transnational mobile transitions. Chapter 3 illustrates the current precarious conditions of the majority of young people, and critically presents the contemporary scientific discussion about the current situation and the prospects of young people today. Youth from vulnerable social settings, such as NEETs, Refugees and Migrants are at the core of young precariat. Chapter 4 regards young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs) and their current status in Europe. Informal and non-formal learning is the focus of chapter 5, where its potential for the social inclusion of marginalized young people is presented. Chapter 6 highlights the importance of youth work and presents the benefits of the recognition and accreditation processes. The last chapter 7 contains the presentation of the dynamics and potential of the Socio-cultural Events as informal and non-formal learning pathways, which play a vital role for youth participation and youth empowerment.

## 2. Youth Mobile Transitions and Transnational Youth Mobility

According to Skrbis, Woodward, and Bean (2014, 617), mobility of young people, as an option of their life plans, is nowadays more expected than in any other generation of youth before. Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018) advocate, that given the heightened importance of youth mobility that is clarified by the youth studies field today, a research framework that sheds light in the mutually constitutive nature of transition and mobility in many young people's lives is of vital importance.

Mobility seems for young people to be the main route that will lead them to better or different transition outcomes (Cairns, 2014, 6) and it is highly significant in contemporary transition regimes (Wyn, 2015). This includes both social groups of a) marginalized precarious youth, young people not in education, employment and training (NEET), migrating 'out of poverty' or war, and b) privileged elite youth, with each group fulfilling different needs, like economic security and upward social mobility for the first group, and economic and cultural gains for the second (Robertson, Harris and Baldassar, 2018).

Following Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018), mobile transitions ought to be perceived as a conceptual dynamic framework that demonstrates the various economic, social, cultural and civic effects of youth mobility and also provides an understanding of the complex ways in which youth move nowadays. More specifically, Jeffrey and McDowell (2004) emphasize the ways that young people's capacities are different regarding ethnicity, gender and sexuality, class, race, and migration status. In addition to this, Robertson and his colleagues (2018) prefer to use the term 'transnational mobility' rather than migration, as they claim it captures better the multiplicity of youth mobile transitions' experiences, such as work, leisure, study, volunteering and education mobility, along with traditional migration pathways of young people. These mobility types that have appeared lately are included in 'transnational youth mobility', and they are especially important to young people as they are connected to extend migration and continuous mobility trajectories (Cohen, 2011; Robertson, 2013).

Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018) in their recent research differentiate 'mobile transitions' from traditional ideas of youth transition, claiming that young people's transnational movements cannot be explained through linear or homogenous concepts

of youth transition (see also Skelton 2002; Biggart and Walther 2006; Wyn and Dwyer, 1999). According to Wyn and Dwyer (1999), these dated models of transition to adulthood are no longer appropriate to explain youth experiences, due to the specific social and economic conditions of late modernity, which lead young people to 'invent' their own future as traditional structures cannot support them anymore (see Wyn, 2015). Samers (2010) and also Harney and Baldassar (2007) add that migration processes should include various geographic trajectories, modifying forms of status and continuous movement across space and time.

The non linear process of youth transitions is evident in the work of Pechtelidis and Kyriakis (2018). In particular, they examine a group of young trainees (18-25 years old) who, faced with the risk of unemployment and underemployment, they have chosen strategically returning to the official educational process through participation in the Public Institutes of Professional Studies Training. Through autobiographical reflections of the young trainees the authors are investigating a) why they have chosen to enhance their qualifications and professional knowledge, as a crisis management strategy; b) the meaning that those young trainees give to the concept of education and how they evaluate their return in it; and c) the consequences of the crisis in the choice of specific cognitive objects. The young trainees seem to be aware of the domination of the culture of individualization, and they do not evaluate it negatively, although it is well known from other studies that this culture is generally contested by many young people (Pechtelidis, 2016). Almost all of the young people of the study (Pechtelidis and Kyriakis, 2018) are mainly concerned about self-realization and self-choise issues, and also issues related to family, personal identity etc., rather than issues that emphasize an 'emancipatory politics' aiming at the reducing of social inequality and oppression.

The current changing patterns of work, study, and living conditions show a new social, economic and political situation that not only changes the transition time (e.g. from school to work), but also shifts the center of gravity of education (e.g. from cultural to certification) processes), and transforms the 'adult' status available and the opportunities offered to young people (Wyn and Woodman, 2006).

A very important generational difference is observed nowadays concerning youth transitions in adult life where agency and individual choice have gained increasing importance (Wyn and Dwyer, 1999). However, although the value of individualism or individual achievements is greatly enhanced and promoted by school and mass media, in fact individuals they remain powerless (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). The paradoxical combination of the promotion of the value of individual responsibility on the one hand and the lack of control of the conditions surrounding young people on the other, results in an increase of the sense of risk and uncertainty for young people. This feeling of frustration and anxiety has penetrated all aspects of life and personal identity is fragile and under constant redefinition (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007, 9).

Moreno and Urraco (2018) argue that youth transitions are different in their manifestations, although they may have a similar generational basis. Therefore they introduce an intergenerational theoretical view designed to understand the variety of forms of the new 'youth status'. They re-examine and re-articulate the notions of generation and transition in order to challenge the notions of the linearity of the transitions and a smooth sequence of generations, which contrast with the reality of transitional blockage experienced by many young people today.

Moreover, Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018) have detected specific gaps in knowledge on youth migration pathways. In particular, there are numerous studies in youth research that focus on mobility regarding education and employment (Naafs and White, 2012; Minza, 2012; Punch, 2002; Ansell, 2004; Honwana, 2014; Batan, 2010), but not on its implications concerning other main dimensions of youth transitions, such as pathways of partnership in social, familial and civic life (Heinz, 2009; Cuervo and Wyn, 2014; Woodman and Wyn, 2014).

There is a tendency in youth studies to analyze transitions of young people emphasizing only their desire and aim to improve their economic situation (Farrugia, 2014; see Cairns, 2014). As Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018), in a highly competitive global economy, political and economic processes compel young people to a linear gathering of multiple social goods (such as education, housing and employment security), which is commonly seen as core or natural part of youth transition to adulthood.



This is evident in Pechtelidis current work (2015) where he critically analyzes printed newspaper articles regarding young people and their transitions from family to education and from education to the labor market, as well as their future role in society at a time of deep recession, precariousness and risk. In particular, he is concerned with the construction of "youth", "youth transition" and "risk" in the Greek press, as well as the relations of this discourse with other discourses, such as scientific and political. The main objective of the research is the critical approach to the relationships between these discourses and their consequences in the control and governance of young people towards defined ethico-political and economic goals. While the dominant rhetoric about youth at risk and youth as a risk has shifted lately, the mobile transition notion remains linear, accumulative and narrow, according to the author.

Robertson and his research team (2018) challenge this narrow definition of mobile transition, which neglects other more 'humanistic' dimensions of mobility. Adding to this, they argue that mobility should not be limited to a conventional pathway that young people take to ensure or improve their educational or work career. Pechtelidis (2016) for example examines the case of a collectivity of students at the University of Thessaly in crisis-ridden Greece as an alternative small-scale form of political and cultural action. The young members of the collectivity value the momentum, the 'here' and the 'now' following a non-conventional logic and ethics. The author claims that the collectivity is a form of heterotopia that is a specific social and cultural space, which somehow reflects and at the same time distorts, unsettles or inverts other spaces.

Nilan and Feixa (2006) argue that different cultural norms are entering into new spaces, creating 'hybrid' and 'plural' cultures of youth. Young people play an active role in such processes of transforming local norms, which bound family hierarchies and life trajectories. They build transnational cultures and networks (Veale and Donà, 2014; Parker and Nilan, 2013).

Focusing on the spaces and processes in between the institutional indicators of transition (Wyn, 2015; Hall, Coffey, and Lashua, 2009) can shed light upon young people's efforts for belonging, engagement and making a life (Robertson et al. 2018). In particular, Sanna Aaltonen (2013) focuses on significant transitions that take place

outside the traditional transitional points and before the endpoint of compulsory education. She seeks to contribute to the understanding of young people's attempts to take control of their complicated life situations in the fields of family life, peer relations, and education.

Adulthood is traditionally represented as a finish line, accomplished with shifts from education to employment, from family of birth to a new family creation, considered all to be 'successful', except for the extensive socio-economic shifts which can no longer support this rigged life pattern (Robertson, Harris and Baldassar, 2018). Jeffrey (2010) claims that the global media tend to represent the status of adulthood as a 'successful' end point, speaking in terms of education, employment, life style and types of consumption of middle-class. Moreover, in many cultures, adulthood is framed by patterns of interdependence rather than autonomy (Jeffrey, 2010; Parker and Nilan, 2013; Parkes et al. 2015).

Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018) argue that definitions of youth transitions as 'successful' or 'failed' do not clarify the status of 'adulthood'. From this point of view, they introduce a *mobile transitions* conceptual framework, which combines a variety of economic, social and civic achievements, practices and opportunities that are important to youth in order to construct their own life stories/biographies. Therefore, the above-mentioned framework provides the opportunity to avoid strict categorizations of youth transitions to adulthood as 'failed' or 'successful', and move beyond them in more complex ways (Robertson, Harris and Baldassar, 2018). In the current youth studies, adulthood is not considered anymore as a 'destination' or an end point but an ongoing, evolving process that contains young people's 'continuing movement' (Hall, Coffey, and Lashua, 2009, 556). The focus is now more on young people's 'continuing movement (through life, today) rather than any point of orientation or destination' (Hall, Coffey and Lashua, 2009, 556).

According to Dolby and Rizvi (2008, 1), 'the movement itself constitutes a new space of identification, of belonging', therefore, it is very important to understand what it means for young people. Illenya Camozzi (2016) explores the experiences and life plans of young people of foreign origins temporarily living in Milan during their transition to adulthood. Camozzi highlights the ways the young interviewees relate to the time-space of contemporary cities and their life planning. The young people of the

study demonstrate ability to deal with the uncertainty, which characterize late modernity and transition to adulthood through the performance of a cosmopolitan outlook. Their embodied cosmopolitan culture that contains extreme mobility, transnationalism, and a global sense of belonging is a copying mechanism in constructing a life plan and an antidote to uncertainty.

Furthermore, Thomson and Holland (2015) reflect on the idea of the ‘critical moment’ as a tool for understanding young people’s narratives of transition. They conducted a qualitative longitudinal study in five contrasting locations of the UK and develop an analytic focus on biographical ‘critical moments’ to explore and compare youth narratives over time and across cases to explore the complex process of growing into adulthood; and also to capture the importance of timing in life events and their consequences. Wyn (2015) argues that the traditional research about youth transitions to adulthood tends to neglect young people’s relationships to other people and space, which play a major part in managing increasingly fluid, unstable and mobile lives.

Robertson, Harris and Baldassar (2018), ideally propose a combination between mobility (as non-linear, reversible and multi-directional) and transition. This coupling can enable the development of critical orientation and the conceptual ‘layering’ of the meaning of transition, which demonstrated by Skelton (2002) and others (Wyn and Dwyer, 1999; Hall, Coffey, and Lashua, 2009; Woodman and Bennett 2015) in the recent past. The *mobile transitions* framework brings those two fields together, in order to move away from traditional ideas of transition and build a more global research orientation towards ‘transnational youth mobility studies’.

Moreover, it enables an understanding of the different kinds of mobility and inequalities of youth mobility and transitions. For instance, mobility of first and second-generation young migrants, particularly Muslims, are often perceived as a security threat in the countries where they settle, due to islamophobia and racism in general (Maira, 2009; Mandaville, 2009). However, in the same contexts, the ‘voluntourist’ mobilities of privileged non-migrant youth do not receive such a critique and they are not positioned as a threat. Furthermore, young female domestic workers are often represented as ‘good’ mobile subjects while sex workers as ‘bad’ (Agustin, 2005). Different forms of youth mobility are discursively shaped in

different ways, as either productive or failure to their transitions and broadly to society.

Moreover, unlike ‘transnational migration’, the notion of ‘transnational mobilities’ demonstrates a more comparative and contrapuntal approach (Robertson, Harris and Baldassar, 2018). It should be mentioned that migration youth studies are divided in two main research fields: 1) *migration and development*, studying poor rural young people who are connected with a ‘culture of migration’ (Massey et al. 1993), in which migration seems the only way for them to build a future; and 2) *transnational migration studies*, where mobility is seen through the lens of the transnational movements of diasporic youth, and the focus is on the formation of hybrid identities by young people of diaspora, and their efforts for social inclusion in the host country (e.g. Alba and Waters, 2011) and keeping bonds to their parental homeland (e.g. Conway and Potter, 2009).

While these research areas tend to address questions of youth connection, place and belonging, they often perceive young people’s mobility as a problem. In specific they often discuss how negative economic, social and political effects result in ‘brain drain’, migration, ambiguities of belonging, social exclusion, exploitation and young people’s involvement to anti-social political groups. However, some recent studies about communities of diaspora explore economic and cultural transnational exchanges (Baldassar and Pyke, 2014) and contributions to homeland development (De Haas, 2010; Hugo 2009).

It is important to focus on the ways transnational activity ‘shapes possibilities for youth to access and manage forms of economic, social and civic connection and security associated with adulthood’ (Robertson, Harris and Baldassar, 2018).

According to Robertson et al (2018), migration studies (re)produce a rather fixed typologies of migrants, such as ‘second generation,’ ‘temporary’, ‘return’, and a fixed sense of their motivations (e.g. ‘labour migration’, ‘lifestyle migration’). Hence they fail to capture the different statuses, motivations, intentions and outcomes for youth mobility. The variety of trajectories challenges both the fixed migrant ‘type’ and the linear and spatially fixed perceptions of how transitions occur (e.g. from education to work, family of origin to marriage/family formation, and the family home to independent living)

To sum up, we adopt the *mobile transitions* framework, which brings together migration studies and youth studies. This conceptual framework addresses the multiplicities of youth mobilities and transitions and critically challenges the ‘normative, teleological assumptions of life stage models’ (Jeffrey, 2010, 498) by paying attention to the variety of youth transitions. Transitions are not seen as linear pathways to the endpoint of adulthood, rather, ‘as a variety of continuous and overlapping processes of transformation and change to identity, opportunity and relationships, enacted through the mundane practices of making a life and imagining a future that shape young people’s meaning-making around their life trajectories. Understanding transitions as ‘mobile’, both spatially and conceptually, as well as multiple, allows us to see destinations, including adulthood itself, as contingent rather than predetermined (Robertson et al 2018).

### **3. Young Precariat**

Since the 1980s, young people in the developed world have been affected by the increasing unemployment and underemployment. The long-standing assumption and expectation for full-time employment for young people have begun to dissolve. Moreover, many governments built policies to ensure youth will receive ‘more appropriate’ education (Bessant, Farthing, and Watts, 2017; Macdonald, 2016). However, the prevailed argument that more education is the key to jobs and well-being has become increasingly problematic in most OECD member-states (Brown, Lauder, and Ashton, 2011), due to the increasing numbers of young people experiencing difficulty in securing employment.

Giddens (1991), Beck (1992), and many others explained the current critical situation as a major structural change, which characterized by risk. According to that theoretical approach, in late modernity, traditional, predictable life patterns enabling transitions from ‘adolescence’ to ‘adulthood’ (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997) are eroded. They claim that we live in ‘risk societies’, which generate new subjectivities and ‘choice biographies’.

Other writers argue for a ‘structural’ approach (Furlong and Cartmel, 2006). Roberts (2010) says that social class still influences social mobility. Also Platt (2011) while admits that ethnicity and geography shape social mobility, being working-class or

middle-class was a more critical factor (see also Shildrick et al. 2012; Macdonald, 2016).

Guy Standing (2011) introduced 'precariat' as a 'new class' to catch the meaning of the changing patterns of current youth employment. He focused on the experience of fragmented, flexible, and temporary work in many economies which now implicates young people at large part. Standing characteristically says: 'youths have always entered the labour force in precarious positions, expecting to have to prove themselves and learn'. However: 'today's youth are not offered a reasonable bargain' (2011, 65).

Standing stressed the role of neoliberal policy-makers, who do everything to increase competitiveness, and to allow market logics and ethics to permeate all aspects of life (Standing, 2011, 1). The dominant neoliberal model is promotes the labour market flexibility, which means that risk and insecurity are transferred to workers and their families. The result is the creation of a global precariat, consisting of millions of insecure people worldwide (Standing, 2011). Insecurity is the 'necessary price for retaining investment and jobs', according to neoliberal policy makers (Standing, 2011, 6).

The 'precariat' is located in the bottom half of what Standing identifies as a seven-class system (Standing, 2014, 12–15). At the top are the elite ('a tiny number of absurdly rich global citizens lording it over the universe with their billions of dollars, able to influence governments everywhere'). Underneath is the 'salarariat', (workers in large corporations and government administration, who are still enjoying full-time employment, pensions and holidays). Followed by a smaller group of skilled 'proficians' (consultants and specialists). Then are the remnants of the old working class. At the bottom of all of them lies the 'precariat', which is the lowest class of all (the unemployed, 'socially ill misfits living off the dregs of society').

According to Standing (2011), the core characteristic of the precariat is the absence of security regarding full-employment, protection from arbitrary dismissal, the prospect to develop a career, protection from accidents and illness, the ability to have on-the-job training, access to a stable adequate income, and access to a representative voice in unions. For Standing, security, protection and stability for wage-workers, especially youth, have been seriously eroded, due to corporate capitalism the

globalised labour market, and neoliberal governments promoting a deregulatory agenda and subsequently more 'flexible' labour markets. Precisely, he says 'precariousness has been stretched while family solidarity is weaker; the family is more fragile and the older generation cannot foresee inter-generational reciprocity' (Standing, 2011, 66). Under these circumstances, education has been commercialised and commodified. Standing argues that 'commodified educational systems are being restructured to stream youth into the flexible labour system, based on a privileged elite, a small technical working class and a growing precariat'; and he also adds: 'courses are made easier, so that pass rates can be maximised' (Standing, 2011, 71). Moreover, he argues that although the young precariat vary according to their socio-cultural and economic origins and backgrounds, most young people no longer follow their parents' life patterns and footsteps. They try to build their 'human capital', and they carry substantial education debt. Furthermore they are unable to follow careers in fields related to their qualifications (Standing, 2011, 2013, 2014).

Andy Furlong (2015a, 26), who follows Standing, argues that young people are part of a 'globalised precariat', a new and 'dangerous class', characterized by anxiety, anomie, anger and alienation that emerged from the 2008 recession. However, Furlong stressed that this is not an occasional deviation from the norm, but a long-term feature of 'the economy in the late modernity'.

However, Judith Bessant (2018) argued that Standing's argument about the emergence of a new class – the 'precariat' – is problematic, because he did not consider time or history (Breman, 2013). In particular, Bessant says that 'history is overlooked by Standing who focuses exclusively on the post-1945 period'. Also, for Breman (2013, 135), Standing's claim that the experience of the prevailed temporary, flexible and fragmented work in the contemporary economy 'somehow constitutes a new class with interests radically distinct from, even antagonistic to those of full-time or unionized workers is a nonsense'. Bessant (2018) argues that 'Standing dismisses evidence the majority of people in precarious employment identify as 'working class' as 'identity confusion'.

Furthermore, according to Bessant (2018), another problem with Standing's account of 'precariat' is that it is not a homogeneous group. Young precariat is not a coherent socio-economically disadvantaged group. Bessant emphasizes the need to engage

with the issue of precarity in a more complex way, since ‘various social identities like race, gender, sexuality, and class overlap and contribute to the certain kinds of continuing oppression and discrimination experienced by a person’. For young people, ‘age’ is one of many identities; age is articulated with other identity markers and does not necessarily mean disadvantage or marginalisation. For instance, some young people avoid some negative effects of precarious work, because they have family support. Moreover, precarious employment for some young people ‘is magnified by the absence of economic and social resources or capitals associated with ‘working-class’ life, while middle-class young people are likely to enjoy the advantages of high incomes, and family support and networks, and so mitigate some or all precarious work conditions’ (Bessant, 2018). Additionally, van der Linden (2008, 34) claims ‘it is important to identify historically and currently the co-existence of various intermediate positions, of ‘grey areas’, between wage labour and other forms of work exploitation’.

On the whole, we identify the current precarious conditions for the majority of young people worldwide, however we do not perceive precariat as a ‘new’ or emerging global class different from ‘working-class’ or the ‘proletariat’. Major part of the young precariat is the young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).

## **4. Young People not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)**

### **4.1 What is NEET?**

The term NEET is used to describe a vulnerable social group that includes young people (15-29) Not in Education, Employment, and Training. This often implies that NEET are not involved in social process and quite often they deal with social exclusion and marginalization (Maguire, 2015; Thompson et al., 2014). The NEET acronym was first used in the UK in the late 80s in order to identify youth as the age cohort of 15-24 that were not integrated in employment and education, since the people in this group were at risk of being marginalized (Eurofound, 2012; Uchida and Norasakkunkit, 2015).



After several years, in 1999, the term NEET became a novel in political discourses in United Kingdom, focusing on people under 18 who were not in education and labor force (Furlong, 2006). Initially, this term was used more to mitigate former non-politically correct and incriminating terms (Furlong, 2006). Those non-appropriate terms that were used before, they undervalued people and social groups because it was believed that those who are not in work labour were mental or/and physically inadequate.

One term that seems to be close to the term 'NEET' is 'disemployed'. Disemployed means 'out of work', especially on the grounds of lack of skill, training, or education, rather than because work is unavailable. Nevertheless, in general, NEET prefer to be called as unemployed rather than other terms (Papadakis et al. 2016).

There are many reasons to put someone into the category of NEET. Quintano (2018) and her team tried to distinguish the term 'NEET' from the terms 'unemployed' and 'inactive'. In particular, those who are considered as unemployed are job seekers, while inactive are those who are not looking for job, nevertheless inactive are involved in some form of education and training. NEET constitute a combination of the above terms because they are not looking for job and they don't take any kind of educational classes or training courses. According to Bessant et al. (2017), NEET are those who are in downward spiral and they have experienced spiritual and practical inaction.

Many researchers support that there are several reasons for a young person to be classified as a 'NEET' (Mascherini and Ledermaier, 2016). Not only the term 'NEET' does concern long-term inactive or unemployed people, but also it is a dynamic term, which allows young people to be in and out of it (Vancea and Utzet, 2018). Specifically, NEETs are not a homogeneous group. It is controversial and ambivalent term, which has been criticized in the literature for its validity. Görlich and Katznelson (2015) consider that the term is an oversimplification of the precarious situation which many young people are experiencing concerning their personal, social and educational risks.

## 4.2 Description of NEETs

The image of NEETs is shaped by mixed and heterogeneous elements (Kotroyannos et al., 2015). Below we present the main factors, economic, cultural, family, educational/vocational and social, that makes someone NEET, according to the current relevant literature.

### A) Economic factors

The vast majority of NEETs are characterized by low economic capital. People who are enlisted here are either underprivileged or they have low family income, as well as, they face the risk of social exclusion and marginalization. Usually NEET do not have equal access to public wealth and no equal opportunities in education, training and employment (Eurofound, 2012). The fact that they are not in position to cover their basic needs and make their living, make them insecure and precarious (Mascherini and Ledermaier, 2016). It is worth to mention that economic factors are usually combined with the following factors.

### B) Cultural factors

A significant number of immigrants and refugees belong to NEETs (Pullman and Finnie, 2018). Their different cultural, language and probably religious background usually couple with their low economic condition making their life even more difficult and precarious (Gökşen, and Öker, 2017; Quintano, 2018; Papadakis, 2016). Many times, this combination operates as an obstacle for youths either to integrate into educational system or to enter labor market. Moreover, nationalist movements and far right parties are risen in Europe over the last decade, which they enhance racist and xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants and refugees. All those reasons above push immigrants and refugees closer to the margins (Fotopoulos et al., 2016).

### C) Family factors

The influence of family in young people's trajectory is not only important from an economic and cultural aspect, but also from a way of life. It goes without saying that parent's lifestyle and preferences operate as an indicator for their children's life.

According to Eurofound's official data (2012), if a young person experience traumatic way of dissolving family, the possibilities to become a NEET can reach 30%. Moreover, long-term parents' unemployment has negative consequences to young

people, leading them away from labor and education (Eurofound, 2012). This situation enables precarity for young people, because they do not receive any financial support from their family and are less inclined to participate in public life (Furlong, 2006).

#### D) Educational/ vocational factors

It is important to mention that young people who have not accomplished all the stages of education or they have not acquired enough education and training to make their living are described as 'low skilled' (Roberts, 2011). 'Low skilled' youth can easily fall under exploitation, because they are vulnerable and they urgently need money to survive (Fotopoulos et al., 2016). Often, low skilled youth are susceptible to unreported employment and therefore they are unprotected and inadequate to claim their labor rights and access to health services (Shildrick, 2010).

#### E) Social factors

This category is the broader one, because it contains 4 different factors in one general umbrella term. Thus, the social factors that fall into this category are: spatial planning, disability, gender and personal choices of career.

Concerning spatial planning, young people living in semi-rural or rural areas are easier to be socially excluded (Simoës, 2017). This is due to fewer opportunities for them to access jobs in an urban center. This limitation appears to be reinforced further by the research finding. Particularly living in a region with high rates of NEETs increases the possibilities for a young to become NEET (Everington et al., 2018). Previous studies also show the influence of residency to young people's academic performance, social capital and their subsequent participation in labor market (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Svensson 2006). This is, above all, the case of working class youth, who express that there is no future for them in smaller cities and rural municipalities (Johansson 2003; Svensson 2006).

The second reason concerns young people with disabilities. In particular, people with physical disabilities or behavioral problems are 40% more likely to adopt NEETs characteristics (Eurofound, 2012). Many young people with disabilities experience exclusion, isolation, and abuse as well as lack of educational and economic opportunities (Corcoran, 2016). The situation can be even worse when a welfare state

does not take care of the provision and motivation of people with disabilities for work rehabilitation. It is often common for people with disabilities to receive allowances that are interrupted when they find a job. This situation puts people with disabilities in a vicious cycle of unemployment and is placing them on the margins of society (Coppola and Di Laurea 2016).

Another case concerns the possibilities of someone to be a NEET is gender. Specifically, young women who have a teenage (early) pregnancy; as a consequence, they take up a mother duties and responsibilities without completing their studies it is more possible to fall in category of NEETs. In general, parental and other care responsibilities make young people prone to NEET state (Alfieri et al., 2015).

One more reason has to do with young people who have dropped out of school and they have not planned what to do or they have completed their studies, however, they remain inactive for a certain time (Vancea and Utzet, 2018). Among those, there are people with high economic capital that they choose not to work or to study for a short or a long time since they have the choice to decide about it. Some researches propose the term 'false NEET'. This term is essential in order to disclose that many young people have enough characteristics of NEET, but they have no economic difficulties. For this kind of youngsters is more preferable the term 'idles' (Quintano et al., 2018).

Another way to emphasize the economic factor is the terms 'outsiders' (non-possessors) and 'insiders' (possessors) (Sergi et al., 2016). Insiders are those who have economic capital and outsiders are those who have not. Despite the fact that many insiders may be inactive and unemployed, they could not be described as 'real' NEETs, because they do not experience any kind of social exclusion and marginalization. The participation of (young) people in society it is upon to their economic capital.

Ultimately, there are several factors that lead a young person to acquire NEET features. The most of the times, these factors may be more than one. The economic factor seems to be associated with most of the factors, since the vast majority of NEETs are in an unfavorable economic situation. Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that economic class inequality is the main reason that leads young people closer to marginalization (Mawn et al., 2017).

### 4.3 Labor market and NEETs

Nowadays, many European countries have been affected by the financial crisis; hence the unemployment rates have been increased. These facts have brought changes in young people life regarding to their access labor marker. In this chapter it is important to describe the ‘unemployed’ phenomenon within the framework of youth studies.

The living conditions and the life plan of vulnerable youth is based on the effectiveness of the welfare system (Quintano et al., 2018). If the welfare system of one country does not favor young people and do not provide services for them, then they would not hesitate to migrate to another country. Except this, high unemployment rates, poverty and low standard of living, result in a precarious NEET status (Balan, 2016).

Within this framework, NEETs belong to a particular vulnerable social group, because they undergo a social and educational exclusion. In other words, the state of being NEET is linked to the wider pathology of a society which is in alarming situation, before the dead end. Undoubtedly, NEETs constitute a category which they has not conceive their whole self-image and the situation that they are into.

O'Really and her team (2015) report 5 characteristics that form today's unemployment in the EU. Initially, they think that young people's trajectories are directly affected by the precariousness and uncertainty that has emerged in the modern labor market. Secondly, employers are required to have specific skills that are acquired through training processes and prior vocational experience. The paradox here is that there is no clear connection between education and skills required by the labor market, this makes difficult for someone to find their first vocational experience or a stable job. Thirdly, many countries within E.U. are facing high poverty and an unstable economic situation (Balan, 2016), as a result many young people migrate to other countries. This mobility of population within E.U. does not help to the general problem of unemployment (Balan, 2016). Fourthly, there are new forms of polarization issue related to choice of young people to follow the profession of their parents. Finally, the EU is presented within an expanded role in the framing of national policies regarding young people.

These requirements operate from macro level to micro level by leading trajectories, which young people would follow. These trajectories are related to stable and long-

term job and the reduction of precarity into the labor market. The above is also supported by OECD (2014). More specifically, young people enter the labor market, even if they have typical qualifications and they are high educated, they would face problems in finding stable employment and that's why they are forced to live in a precarious condition.

This situation becomes even more difficult when there are people without the typical qualifications, such as young people on the move (Eurofound, 2012). According to UN calculations (The World Youth Report, 2013) the proportion of immigrants worldwide is estimated 232 million, of which 75 million are young people (15-29). That is to say that a significant proportion of immigrants are young people.

The majority of youth immigrants find low-skilled jobs with a low wage (Balan, 2016; Ramos, 2017). In addition, often this work may be unreported. Young immigrants who are moving from East to West countries are into a more unfavorable position. These young people usually leave the country of their origin for several reasons. Many a time, they try to avoid the tragic economic situation of their country, however, they confront with a different condition in the host country. Put simply, even if they have complete higher education in the country of their origin, the requirements of the labor market in the West are different. The consequences of this phenomenon on youth immigrants create difficulties for them to adapt on demands of labour market.

It remains an urgent requirement to re-energize youth employment policies, as there is an emerging generation of adolescents and young adults across Europe who are experiencing high levels of disaffection, disempowerment and disillusion. Therefore, their citizenship is being reconstituted due to a wide range of cumulative effects.

One of the key features of these initiatives should be the focus on labour market flexibility and targeting young people's exclusion through the development of correspondence between labour markets and young people's skills. Thus according to Lahusen et al (2013) the focus of European Union policy has been on developing the adaptability of young people to meet the needs of the labour market.

#### 4.4 The Greek context

Nowadays, many EU countries are affected by economic crisis coupled with job insecurity. According to later Eurostat's statistics (2017), the amount of NEETs in the E.U. was 17.2%, while Greece has the second higher percentage (28.8%) in the ranking after Italy (29.5%). The amount of NEETs in 2013 in Greece was 27%. This indicates that the proportion is in upward spiral (Eurostat, 2017).

Recently, two research projects have been conducted in Greece that illuminates the case of the Greek NEETs. Both projects were conducted by Papadakis and his research team (2013). Their purpose was to map the state of play, not only does investigate NEETs but also to show the social impact of this harmful condition upon young people in Greece.

Specifically the first one (2013) was entitled 'Neets1: The barometer of absences. Detection, Classification and Empirical Training of policy proposals to combat a new form of socially vulnerable: NEETs'. The main objectives were to develop a complex NEETs index at national level, to map and address NEETs as a new vulnerable social category and also to develop empirically grounded youth policy proposals to tackle the social exclusion of NEET as well as to provide multilevel and sustainable social inclusion.

The second one (Papadakis et al. 2016), has the title 'Neets2: Intervention for the social inclusion of young people not in education, employment of training'<sup>1</sup>. This survey outlines the psychological profile of NEETs and identifies the impact of the economic crisis on their daily lives.

Some of the findings of the above research projects come to agreement with the general literature about NEETs. First and foremost, the economic crisis in Greece has increased youth unemployment and the phenomenon of mental illnesses (Fotopoulos et al., 2016; Eurostat, 2016). NEETs in Greece are inclined to low self-confidence, limited social contacts and social deprivation in a greater level than their peers who are studying or working (Fotopoulos et al., 2016).

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<sup>1</sup>Research and Comprehensive Intervention for the social inclusion of a major socially vulnerable group : Psychological profile/ psychopathology, skills' profile, needs assessment and programmes' development for training-reskilling and psychological support towards the re-inclusion of young people not in education, employment of training.

Moreover, long-term unemployed young people are insecure and most of them do not conceive the situation they are into (Fotopoulos et al., 2016). They have difficulties to understand that cultural, social and economic barriers brought them in their tragic vocational trajectories (Fotopoulos et al., 2016). Last but not least, NEETs have lack of trust in the institutions, less involvement and interest in politics, limited social participation and interaction and reduced productivity (Eurofound 2012; Fotopoulos et al., 2016).

The findings of the project (Fotopoulos et al., 2016) shed light in many issues with which Sociology of Education deals, such as intergenerational transmission of poverty, that is, the smaller is the family income, the greater is the risk for a young people to acquire NEETs characteristic. Especially, no other factor seems to be as strong as the family income.

As far as it is concerned, there are both positive and negative impacts of family on youngsters. In particular, the mission of family is to encourage NEET in psychological and financial support. Unfortunately, this strategy lead NEET to accept their passive condition and they do not have real incentive to raise money for themselves (Drakaki et al., 2014; Fotopoulos et al., 2016; Kotroyannos et al., 2016; Papadakis, et al. 2016).

#### **4.5 Education and Reskilling**

Concerning everyday life, there are certain measures, which can be taken to alleviate this precarious situation. The most well-known measure is to involve young people in job-oriented education or training programs. Many researches have shown that if the gap between school curricula and the labor market is reduced, young people would obtain more opportunities to participate in social welfare (Papadakis, 2016; Vancea and Utzet, 2018). Therefore, school and training programs should target more in vocational preparation. Mawn and her team (2017) use the term ‘intervention’ instead of education/training. The aim of interventions is to support young people in their well-being, self-confidence, attitudes and perception in a short period (less than six months).

Many educational programs promote youth employment. The target of these programs (3-6 months) is not only do young people acquire working experience, but also to



contribute to the development of their skills. In particular, many respondents said initially that they would find it hard to return back to education. However, NEETs tend to accept job-oriented education because it is relative to their professional rehabilitation (Fotopoulos et al., 2016). In the last few years, job-oriented education and training constitutes the prevailing international trend towards modularized training with an emphasis in job-related skills (Fotopoulos et al., 2016).

According to the results of 'NEETS2' project, 93% of NEETs would return to education and training as long as there a guarantee that this education/training is connected with the labour market, as well as, they would acquire job-related skills. Some other studies have highlighted the importance of multi-component interventions combining placements and basic skills with the involvement of local employers and accredited courses, respectively (Vancea and Utzet, 2018). Thus, alongside vocational training, educational programs would be useful since they focus on acquiring knowledge, enhancing soft skills, acquiring digital skills, and finally improving organizational practices that are considered as basic skills from the European Agenda.

This kind of learning is deemed necessary for the re-education of young people, because the whole process gives extra incentives to learners and turning the learning process as an everyday pleasure. Furthermore, this kind of training is friendlier to someone who has been involved in educational processes for a long time (Souto-Otero, 2013). The more preferable term to describe this kind of education is re-skilling, because young people prepare themselves for a new beginning in the labor market.

Finally, education for reskilling would be valuable for the empowerment of vulnerable social groups. A clear example of this might be the engagement of young immigrants and refugees in the economy and society, as well. This kind of training has a result to young people, especially if the educational program is long-term (Quintano et al. 2018).

## **5. Informal and Non Formal Learning**

Although there is no standard definition for learning we can say that learning is a transformative process in which people acquiring new, or modifying existing, knowledge and skills and ultimately influence their attitudes. The lack of a precise

definition is due to the fact that it is put to multiple uses, is used to describe a product, a process, or a function (Smith, 1982). Additionally, learning indicates the process, but often it also determines the result. For example, according to Bigge (1990) learning is directly related to the constant change in the person's behaviour, which is the result of experience and action. This personal development refers to the improvement of one's own competencies and encompasses all learning on all the possible areas we as individuals can learn. According to the ASK model (Bakarman, 2011) the competencies can be divided into categories outlined what we are, what we can do, and what we know. The attitudes, skills and knowledge are the three letters of the ASK model. Knowledge (K) is the mental part of competencies and refers to the things you know. It is something that can be written on a piece of paper, such as theories, sequences and dependencies. Skills (S), are something you can do if you want it – by yourself or by using something. Attitudes (A), are the deepest levels of competencies, that are based on the way you are and on the way you behave. Your attitudes are the things you do naturally, your opinions, how you see and perceive things. They encompass your unconscious patterns of actions and your values. The Competency-based learning is learner-focused and works naturally with independent study and with the instructor in the role of facilitator. Learners often find different individual skills more difficult than others. This learning method allows a student to learn those individual skills they find challenging at their own pace, practising and refining as much as they like. Then move rapidly to other skills to which they are more adept.

Learning is a lifelong endeavour; it does not stop when we are leaving the school (Dave, 1973). There are many people in the world never had the opportunity to attend school, but this does not mean that they do not learn. Learning can take place anytime, anywhere throughout the life span.

Every person learns in his own unique way. Learning has a personal and individual character. Differences are due to our experiences, habits and personal innate ability to learn. We all have our own way of acquiring new information - this is called a learning style. Learning style influences the way someone understands information and solves problems. By understanding individual learning style, we can build tolerance of the various ways in which human beings acquire and retain knowledge.

This can help us to respect that there are various ways of learning and that each of these ways is important and valid.

Conceptual knowledge cannot be abstracted from the situations in which it is learned and used. In any other practice inevitably limits the effectiveness of it. Brown et al (1989), argue that knowledge is situated, being in part a product of the activity, context, and culture in which it is developed and used. Situated learning is a process of interaction and relationship around a specific domain and which occurs within a social, cultural, and historical context, resulting in spontaneous learning.

It true that learning and development occur over time across multiple settings both in- and out-of-school. Learning activities that occur through processes not structured or sponsored by a school and often flies under the official radar are described as informal learning. It can happen intentionally or inadvertently, and no one takes attendance, for there are no classes. No one assigns grades, for success in life and work is the measure of its effectiveness. What is accomplished in school, courses, classrooms, and workshops we call it formal learning. It's official, it's usually scheduled, and it teaches a curriculum.

Given the diversity of learning settings, informal learning includes all the related activities outside of the regular education system. Compared with formal learning at school, in the informal learning environment, students have more autonomy in choosing activities and exploring different possibilities based on their own interests while learning knowledge and skills at their own pace. As some researchers have pointed out, learning from informal sources can be very effective in improving learning and motivating students. In addition, suggested that it is critical to make connections between informal and formal learning because they can be complimentary to one another.

Formal learning, involves a set course, set times and progress reports. It lets us know exactly how well we're doing and maps out the next stages for us. Through informal learning we learn by our experiences, getting immersed in a particular culture and using creative activities rather than a curriculum. Although there's nothing new about informal learning, it's the way we picked up knowledge before school classrooms and textbooks ever existed, but it's important that we find ways to incorporate it into our studies whenever possible. It's also a great way of renewing enthusiasm and finding

extra motivation to get into a subject when more formal means are proving dull and repetitive.

In the middle between formal and informal learning there is non-formal learning, as an organised, systematic educational activity that takes place outside the formal system in order to provide selected types of learning to specific groups of the population, adults and children. It concerns all those programs which provided by organisations operating outside the official educational system of a state, e.g. by ministries or unions, chambers, etc. or by primary organizations such as trade unions, church and other educational institutions.

However powerful informal learning may be, there is a difficulty when it comes to utilizing it. Informal learning activities are mostly implicit, ad hoc, spontaneous, and invisible to others. As such, this problem presents an interesting challenge to find ways to capture and analyse traces of informal learning in social events.

There is general agreement that Education and training have a crucial role to play in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe and its citizens today and, in the years, ahead. Efficient investment in human capital through all types of learning systems is an essential component of Europe's strategy to deliver the high levels of sustainable, knowledge-based growth and jobs that lie at the heart of the Lisbon strategy, at the same time as promoting personal fulfilment, social cohesion and active citizenship.

Competence-oriented education is regarded as advantageous in a time when the knowledge base of our societies is developing at an immense speed and when the skills required need to be transferred to and developed in many different societal contexts, including those unforeseen in the future. Moving to a competence-oriented approach in education, training and learning represents a paradigm shift. It impacts not only on the structure of curricula, but also changes the organisation of learning. Implementing competence-oriented education, training and learning requires often cross-curricular approaches, a greater emphasis on interactive learning and teaching styles, combining formal with non-formal and informal learning, more collaboration with non-education stakeholders and local community, a new role of the teacher, trainer and educator in guiding learning processes as well as new approaches to assessment.

Socially disadvantaged groups with less or poor education are particularly vulnerable. Traditional formal Education and training systems are poorly suited to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups, as witnessed by the large number of children leaving school too early. Furthermore, many education and training systems do not provide young people with the basic skills needed to escape poverty and unemployment, even when they continue to receive formal education.

In the context of a social inclusion agenda, a minimal interpretation has been that it is sufficient for these groups to receive some basic education that is relevant to their lives, enabling them to participate in social, economic and political affairs. Moreover, in an Inclusion and diversity agenda it is vital to equip young people and youth workers with the necessary competences to successfully manage and support diversity.

## **6. Recognition and Accreditation on Youth Work**

### **6.1 Competences acquired through Youth work**

Youth work is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of social, cultural, educational or political nature by, with and for young people, which holds social, political and economic values. Youth work is a practice in which young people interact with each other and with members of society, encouraging them to become active within their community by taking responsibilities. It has a social nature, which involves relation with authorities and those who hold power in the communities. It is happening inside economic systems and is directly related to various resources, such as labour, capital, land and their use or consumptions. It offers a space for young people to be confronted with new and unfamiliar experiences, which gives to Youth work a remarkable personal value.

Youth work constitutes an educational practice on the life-long learning path of young people that happens outside a formal institutional context termed as ‘non-formal education’. Within Youth work young people are involved in a structured programme of activities on a voluntary basis with defined learning objectives, set in cooperation between them and the programme designer. They gain knowledge, build up skills for their personal development and social interaction and develop certain attitudes

towards them as well as in interacting with others. The combination of this knowledge, these skills and the attitudes, constitutes competences.

Youth work activities also provide many ‘informal learning’ opportunities, as young people learn while simply being active, being a volunteer or just being with their peers. They learn informally in daily life and leisure time just as they learn informally in school, at work and in family life, just learning by doing; it is typically not structured and not intentional and does not lead to certification. It provides specific learning opportunities, in particular of social, cultural and personal nature, often called ‘soft’ skills (EU-CoEY Youth Partnership, 2011).

From our point of view, youth participation includes the following elements: (1) social or citizen participation is without doubt one of the dimensions in which youth build their world of group relationships and define their image of social reality; (2) young people construct and develop their participation in specific physical, social and virtual settings of interaction whose ecology either promotes or hinders the youth’s activities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979); (3) we assume that youth community participation is a part of a learning process which culminates in the full exercise of citizen participation; and (4) in the development of this learning process the school setting and the neighborhood ecosystem represent the interactions and interrelations between individuals and their contexts and between contexts. In short, these are key settings and actors for developing the participatory competences that young people need to guarantee their ability to exercise their right of citizen participation.

From the standpoint of this collective dimension we see young people’s community participation as ranging from their participation in organized groups, either pro-social or political, to all activities which go beyond their school syllabus or curriculum strictly speaking and which take place in public arenas such as squares, community centers and sports facilities (Díaz, Martínez and Cumsille, 2003); such as for example experiences of voluntary work in Service Learning, amongst others.

All learning in the youth field enables young people to acquire essential skills and competences and contributes to their personal development, to social inclusion and to active citizenship, thereby improving their employment prospects. Participation in activities in the youth field and non-formal education/learning contributes in various ways to the acquisition of the 8 key competences as identified by the European

Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical and scientific competence; digital competence; social and civic competences; learning to learn; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression (EU Commission Staff Working Document, 2018).

The value to be attached to those competences young people develop through learning outside a formal context (non-formal and informal learning), as well as the recognition that they legitimately deserve both in society and economic life are issues of great importance.

## **6.2 Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the youth field**

In general, recognition of non-formal and informal learning is about acquiring new competences under the framework of lifelong learning. As it is explained in A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning - lifelong learning comprises *all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective* (Commission of The European Communities, Commission Staff Working Paper, 2000). And, lifelong learning is 'no longer just one aspect of education and training' but there is clear political will for it to be 'the guiding principle for provision and participation across the full continuum of learning contexts'.

In the youth field, recognition of non-formal and informal learning is about recognising the work and learning achievements of young people and those active in youth work and youth organisations. Resolution of Council of Ministers on recognition in the European youth field directly states that the work and achievements of young people *should be given due consideration by employers, formal education and civil society in general* (Council of the European Union, Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, 2006). Greatest benefits however are envisaged for marginalised and underprivileged youth to whom non-formal and informal learning may be the only accessible educational setting.

Depending on who recognises learning and for what purposes, recognition of non-formal and informal education/learning is distinguished in four different types (Markovic and Ünal, 2011):

- *Formal* recognition: it is an official status for different aspects of youth work and non-formal education/learning. It means the ‘validation’ of learning outcomes and the ‘certification’ of a learning process and/or these outcomes by issuing certificates or diplomas which formally recognise the achievements of an individual;
- *Political* recognition: it refers to the recognition of non-formal and informal education/learning in legislation and/or its inclusion in political strategies, and the involvement of non-formal and informal learning providers in these strategies;
- *Social* recognition: it is a process that leads to a better understanding and a more positive regard of what we are doing by others, it brings more visibility and more investment to our activities. It means that social players acknowledge the value of competences acquired in non-formal and informal settings and the work done within these activities, including the value of the organizations providing this work;
- *Self*-recognition: it means the assessment by the individual of learning outcomes and the ability to use these learning outcomes in other fields.

The point of recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes is to ensure their *visibility* so that non-formal and informal learning to be made known, even legitimised, thereby ascribing value to those outcomes and to any corresponding qualifications.

### **6.3 Stages of recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes**

The process of recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes contains four stages (CEDEFOP, 2015):

1. *Identification* of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. It is undertaken with a view to assessing those outcomes and it may involve self-assessment or third-party assessment.
2. *Production of evidence* of non-formal and informal learning outcomes on the basis of reference documents. Predefined standard must be introduced so participants can have the necessary frame of reference to document their



outcomes correctly or to analyse them so that the process of validation/certification can genuinely be one of building up knowledge, skills and competences through an understanding of those outcomes.

3. *Validation* of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. This is an essential stage aimed at verifying that the documents produced or any other form of assessment (simulation, real situation, written tests, etc.) have value in relation to a given standard.
4. *Certification* of non-formal and informal learning outcomes, where participants receive an official document attesting to the veracity, validity and authenticity of these outcomes.

The above mentioned stages assume that standards have been devised for granting social recognition to the qualification. Definition of standards is of crucial importance for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes (West, 2007). If they are poorly defined or not widely accepted, it is unlikely that the qualification awarded will be useful to its holder, because it is not socially recognised. If standards have been defined by interests with no social or technical legitimacy, this would also deprive the qualification of any social value.

#### **6.4 Benefits of recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes**

Recognition of competencies that people have acquired through non-formal and informal learning focuses directly on learning outcomes and generates gains for individuals, employers and the labour market, providers of learning or certification, trade unions and workers' associations, as well as for governments (Werquin, 2010).

For *individuals*, recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes generates economic, educational and social benefits. Individuals save time and thus money which are broadly related through the decrease in the direct costs of formal learning and the opportunity costs arising from the potential loss of resources for individuals during the period in which they are engaged in it. By making different modes of non-formal and informal learning outcomes visible, individuals secure potential benefits on the labour market and return to short and effective training periods of lifelong learning in a formal context, ensuring for them a specific qualification or certification with immediate currency on the labour market. The process of recognising non-

formal and informal learning is an excellent learning process in itself that can teach individuals about themselves and help them to navigate better both the system of lifelong learning and the labour market. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning is a reliable way of obtaining credits, legitimising personal experience and opening up avenues other than the customary paths to learning and qualifications.

For *employers*, the benefits to be derived from the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes are mainly economic. Employees with knowledge, skills and competences derived from the world of work require reduced in the length training, which entails saving on the cost of their necessary learning/training in a formal context. Enhancing the visibility of all the knowledge, skills and competences of their workers or potential applicants for recruitment will help employers to match them better with the jobs or tasks to be performed and increase their productivity. Additionally, employers can satisfy regulatory requirements for quality assurance, especially in sectors in which a proportion of the workforce is expected to have specific certified qualifications.

For *providers of learning or certification*, recognition brings them closer to the labour market and makes them more familiar with its expectations and needs. For *trade unions* and other *workers' associations* recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes gives them the opportunity to become involved in defining new employment profiles and offers to their members the possibility to achieve a particular level of qualification and thus to claim the associated benefits.

Finally, for *governments*, recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes will enhance democracy and access to enlightened citizenship. It will improve equity among citizens and will effectively integrate members of disadvantaged groups such as indigenous people and migrants, while at the same time will help to rebalance equity between generations (older workers who had limited access to higher education and the corresponding qualifications). Public action mechanisms will be improved. Goal-oriented public policies can be drawn up and implemented directly or indirectly, establishing formal incentives for achieving their aims.

## 6.5 Obstacles and challenges in recognition

Some of the main obstacles in recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes are (Popa, 2011):

- assessment and accreditation procedures on non-formal and informal learning outcomes are still poorly developed, in contrast with formal education, where procedures and standards for assessing and validating performance have been in place for a long time and their social recognition is high. This is due to the fact that non-formal and informal learning recognition has been developed generally as an alternative way of obtaining qualifications needed on the labour market, which the formal system is unable to deliver.
- learners' participation depends on motivational factors, which in turn rely on social perceptions of usefulness or relevance. Additionally, learners with a poor record in formal education may be unwilling to take another chance with non-formal and informal learning due to fear of failure. Also, the procedure of accreditation itself based in written reports of self assessment where they must describe their own experiences of non formal education could put them in the same failure situation that they lived on formal education context due illiteracy and numeracy. Non-formal and informal learning has to deal with the perception that learning is supposed to take place in a formal setting and that alternative learning platforms may imply a compromise in quality. Communication strategies can greatly influence learners' participation particularly in the case of learners at risk of social or professional exclusion.
- resources needed to run the non-formal and informal learning recognition system and deliver results (recognized competences, accredited qualifications) are comparable with, or sometimes higher than those required for formal education, due to the individualized, contextual and tactic nature of non-formal and informal learning and of evaluating its outcomes. Mechanisms for credit transfer or transfer of competences across sectors (non-formal/informal/formal or academic/professional) could help in bridging this gap.
- Non-formal and informal learning developments require constant resources and coordination of efforts between policy makers and stakeholders at national

and European level. Although European initiatives ensure a broad convergence on key issues, national policy-making remains essential in integrating these issues in specific context. Adaptation of multiannual documents and peer-pressure can ensure consistency of political action. According to Bjornavald (2000), *A number of political and institutional preconditions have to be met to attribute some actual value to the assessments in question. This can be done partly through political decisions securing the legal basis for initiatives but should be supplemented by a process where questions of 'ownership' and 'control' as well as 'usefulness' must be clarified.*

## **6.6 European Policies and Practices in the Field of Recognition**

The establishment of the European Union's YOUTH programme in 2000 and the activities of the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport at the end of the 1990's resulted in calls for better recognition of youth work and non-formal education/learning at a European level, (e.g. the CoE Parliamentary assembly recommendation and the EU's White Paper on Youth).

At the same time, in 2000 the Lisbon Council of the European Union set a most ambitious strategic vision for Europe, to become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy in the world, achieving economic growth, better jobs and greater social cohesion. For the policy makers it was clear that the existing formal education systems, normally too slow to respond to the dynamic changes in life and technology, would not be enough to bring Europe closer to that 'knowledge based society'. This was the first time that European policies acknowledged that learning takes place in a variety of contexts, including formal, non-formal and informal, and should be valued.

This path was followed by several initiatives in the field of education, in particular in the area of Vocational Education and Training (VET). This saw the validation of informal and non-formal education/learning as one of the main tools for bridging gaps in the labour market and helping people get their qualifications in diverse ways (ECVET, 2016). The enhanced cooperation among European countries in this field, led to the adoption of Common European principles for the validation of informal and non-formal education/learning in 2004 and later in more concrete guidelines in 2008.

The other interesting process in the bigger picture was, 'the shift towards learning outcomes', which changed the perspective in education and put the focus on competences acquired.

In parallel, the debate on the recognition of non-formal education/learning in the youth field continued and links with the wider lifelong learning agenda were sought and clearly established. Thanks to the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, the position of the youth sector was formulated in the 'Pathways' paper in 2004. The paper called for better social recognition of non-formal education/learning and youth work, having in mind that they should not be regarded as a sub-category of education. It stressed them as a means to prepare young people for both knowledge based society and civil society. The Pathways paper recognized the need to establish closer links with other stakeholders, (formal education, employers, social sector, etc.), and to develop concrete tools for recognition in the youth sector. This process resulted in the development of the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers in 2006 and the introduction of the Youthpass as part of the Youth in Action Programme from 2007 onwards. Both instruments gave more focus to the competences of youth workers and young people. Following the developments in the 'bigger picture' Youthpass built on and imported the European framework of 8 Key Competences in its self-assessment part, thus bringing closer the learning outcomes from the youth field to other educational arenas and other stakeholders (Hadžibegović, 2012).

One of the future developments on the recognition of non-formal and informal education/learning will be for better transparency of qualifications and competences in the European labour market. This should result in the opening up of the current Europass system for non-formal education/learning experiences, in the form of a newly developed European Skills Passport in 2012.

In the youth field, calls for better recognition were followed up in the 1st European Youth Work Convention in Ghent in 2010; leading to the Council Resolution on youth work in November 2010, where the important role that non-formal learning plays in youth work by complementing formal education settings was confirmed.

As part of the new developments, the EU-CoE youth partnership published a new paper, Pathways 2.0, initiating the debate on future actions and paths of recognition in

the youth field (EU-CoE youth partnership, 2011). The general plan for these actions was laid down during the Symposium on the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning, in November 2011.

In 2013 the Youth Guarantee program is created by the European Council recommendation targeting young people recognizing that they have been hit particularly hard during the crisis. The program was designed to in order to provide for Youth NEET several appropriate supportive measures in the field of Education, Vocational Education Training and Employment.

In the new EU2020 strategy, Youth on the Move is expected to support the engagement of young people in society through all levels of education and youth policy, including learning opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities (EU Commission, 2010). This includes strengthening the structures for volunteering and youth participation, and supporting the acquisition of key skills through non-formal educational activities as a supplement to formal learning or as an incentive to reintegrate back into the formal education system.

Otherwise, some associations of youth workers organize some projects and events to make youth work more visible and to fight for its recognition. One example was the project Be Youth Worker Today (BYWT), celebrated in Barcelona in 2015 with the participation of 12 countries of the European Union ([www.beyouthworkertoday.net](http://www.beyouthworkertoday.net)).

## **6.7 Conclusions**

Although a wide variety of policies and practices have been developed, recognition processes of non-formal and informal learning remain marginal, small-scale and even precarious. The challenges for policy makers are to find ways to raise the profile of recognition, simplify recognition processes, give them greater validity, and find the right balance between benefits and costs to both individuals and to society at large.

Clear communication and information about the benefits of recognition and the processes involved by career guidance and counseling services will help those who are unaware that they have acquired competences through non-formal and informal learning pathways or that those outcomes have potential value. Effective communication with employers and unions could also help to promote the acceptability of qualifications obtained through non-traditional routes.

Working solutions for future development on non-formal and informal learning outcomes recognition in the youth field comprise a combination of elements in varying proportions. Highlighting good practices that can be transferred to other contexts, by ringing the results of projects financed in LLP or Youth in Action to the attention of decision-makers and experts would certainly facilitate convergence on policy developments. Developing synergies with assessment and accreditation procedures in the formal system will ensure compatibility and facilitate transparency of qualifications and cost-effectiveness. Networking, peer pressure and support of initiatives in the context of European programmes at national/transnational and international level. The ‘open method of coordination’ approach, based on voluntary participation based on common objectives, cross-comparison and peer-pressure, may prove to be more effective in the long run than uniform application of common rules. Being part of a ‘community of practice’ in which participants share results, identify common difficulties and transfer tried-and-tested solutions to new contexts, will enhance decision-makers and experts’ motivation and willingness to develop non-formal and informal learning outcomes recognition strategies.

## **7. Social Events, Festivals and Youth**

In this research, we were also interested in organizing a literature review on sociocultural events such as festivals, in order to better understand the ethics, organisation and methodology behind such local and trans-local social initiatives. Furthermore, our aim is to discern the intellectual, psychological and political conditions that permit a transformation, specifically through the volunteering of young people, on the model of resources exploitation.

Our macroscopic vision is to discern the non-formal and informal processes that take place during social events. We consider that these processes are beneficial for the transformation of attitudes, the enrichment of knowledge, and the emergence of intercultural skills.

In this sense, we have been able to map the theoretical categories and methodological aspects by which researchers and field contractors have analysed the phenomenon of festivals. This review is a brief presentation of theories from multiple countries, as well as the first critical review which frames our experience in the field, compares our

sociocultural context, and presents if necessary, the theoretical model of acting at the Multilingual Festivals of Thessaloniki, Kozani and Larisa.

In particular, the issues that we have addressed are the following:

- Festival, celebrations, events or sociocultural action; theoretical goals and priorities
- Human and sociocultural capital in the transformational era of social and solidarity-based economies and according to specific conditions, individual and collective attitudes, and cognitive routes of the collective initiatives.
- Resilience of cities and public events.

In addition, we will try to understand the concept of festivals in the way they perceive both the organizers and the communities that host them. Moreover, the extent to which festivals, celebrations or socio-cultural events are part of the human and sociocultural capital and how they transform the resilience of the community. Moreover, because of their unifying character, the events all have direct and indirect effects on the society and more particularly on the immediate community where they take place. The volunteering of young people is particularly of interest – *example* (FEQ, 2013).

There is a dual dimension when it comes to cultural events: an economic and a social one. Often, the former, due to its perspective of economic gains, is overshadowing the latter. In the case of the social dimension, the gains such as human and cultural experience are often not measurable and are usually undervalued. However, it is crucial to be in a position to evaluate the social impact of festivals, what effects these events might have and in which extent any local community, always in relation to its members and visitors would benefit from them.

As scientific partners of the project, we chose the term “Celebration” instead of the term “Festival”. We primarily wanted to declare the sanctuary of an event and its sociocultural significance for the community. By celebrating plurilingualism, we choose to celebrate a symbolic aspect of festivals. According to Marcel Mauss (Encyclopaedia Universalis, 1993), this follows the fact that celebrations constitute ‘a complete social act’ from ancient times having focussed on the symbolic character of a thing (a fact, a man, a God, of God, a cosmic phenomenon).



Many actions of a community condemn character. Therefore, it seems that the celebration time allows us to feel the emergence of a sense of belonging within an increasingly multicultural society, by 'working' at the same time on emotional and social functions.

According to Falassi (1987, 2), festivals are a sacred or profane time of celebration marked by special observances, maintaining that the social functions of a festival are closely related to community values. Farber (1983) investigated festivals and public celebrations and concluded that much could be learned about a community's symbolic, economic, political and social life. Falassi (1987) then added to Farber's notions of symbolism by commenting that both the social and symbolic meanings were closely linked to a series of overt values that the local community see as essential to its ideology, worldview, social identity, history, and its physical survival, all of which the festivals celebrate (Jerpson and Clarke, 2008).

Salamone (2000) considers that 'Even if each celebration / festival / event has its own unique character the common point from which it rises and ends is human. There are practices since man began to live in societies and these practices seem to have four basic features: (1) performance of cultural symbols, (2) entertainment, (3) undertaking in a public place, and (4) community participation' (Salamone, 2000).

Falassi (1987) considers that festival (latin *Festivitas* – Waterman, 1998) is a social phenomenon that exists in almost all human societies but is expressed differently, although Putnam (Putnam, 2000) reminds us the fact that different social groups come close to it and social barriers are overcome.

We do know that the festival can be organized around a particular cultural product or it is the concentration of different participatory activities (Richards, 2007).

It is a way in which the individual can safely be himself while he coexists with different types of cultures, personalities and stages of evolution (Remington, 2003).

We recognize that widespread definitions of festivals all support the idea that local community is paramount when it comes to the success of a festival. For instance, Goldblatt (1997) argues that a festival's essential aspect is the enhanced concept of a community. In addition, according to Dunstan (1994), festivals and other cultural events can provide a sense of continuity and a common purpose to community's

traditions and values. This point is supported by relevant research as it is suggested that festivals can function as community forums of cultural development (Getz, 1997).

Additional studies (Dunstan, 1994; Frisby et al, 1989; Getz, 1991; 1997) also argue that cultural events might play a fundamental role in community building, multi-ethnic coexistence and make the existent historical and cultural context more inclusive. Dugas and Schweitzer (1997), though consider that the development of a community with high levels of homogeneity is a long-term process that needs hard work.

Communities are usually abundant with culture at such an extent that sometimes these two concepts are being thought of as one, leading to the development of various local and popular cultures, with the inclusive culture standing out from the rest.

According to some definitions that are based on previous research we could share some definitions based on the general idea that a community festival as a themed and inclusive community event or series of events which have been created as the result of an inclusive community planning process to celebrate the particular way of life of people and groups in the local community with emphasis on particular space and time.

According to Chatzinakos (2016) we could then mention the following definition among others:

*A community festival as a themed and inclusive community event or series of events which have been created as the result of an inclusive community planning process to celebrate the particular way of life of people and groups in the local community with emphasis on particular space and time.*

*Festivals can be seen as prime manifestations of the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) as they entertain, educate, hold aesthetic value and provide the platform for escapism.*

Once again Chatzinakos (2016) propose to summarize the previous references, we do considering that in relation to where a festival originates, two key models of festivals are identified according to the literature and thus because it seems that there are significant differences between community festivals and events. An elite organizes

the first ones and they have a linear upward course, while the events can become a creative oasis that springs from under the inhabitants and the collaboration of community members, especially in neighborhood contexts.

One of the most relevant areas based in a Community Festivals (CBF) when we think about a local event is take in consideration the local population and his participation (Huang, Li, and Cai, 2010). This will affect also how the people will see the Festival. If the local people fell attractive for the festival and the participation between them and his social media around (friends, family), participates, this will attract more people and reach a higher number of participants.

At the same time, we should pay attention too, to the rural area that frequently assist to the event and involve the second higher part of the market area in the Festival. This area that can be considerate the first area of the commerce in this Festival is the one that we will call the repeat visitors. They will come more for emotional and enjoying that the urban part mentioned before, moved for the corporeal part of the event. (Huang, Li, and Cai, 2010).

‘Well-being’ is important in a symbolic and social way festivals therefore had the opportunity to periodically renew the life stream of a community and give sanctions to its institutions and possibly in some cases prove their value to the local population. In other words, ‘the majority of studies proclaim that festivals: can create or reinforce or challenge local or regional cultural identity, the community well-being, the local values and the self-define into their culture’ (Falassi, 1987).

Adams and Golbard (2001) consider that people “turn to their culture to self-define and mobilize; to assert their local values; and to present them to visitors in a positive sharing of values”.

### **7.1 Framework of evaluators’ criteria and indicators**

Having said that, there is a belief that the best way to promote multiculturalism and its values is to organize a festival, which would be managed and communicated in the most effective manner. According to De Bres and Davis (2001), festivals have the potential to break stereotypes related to local identities, while Hall (1992) argues that such events can empower communities and thus create or enhance regional identities;

this is considered to be of high importance for a minor community's festivals, given that it could strengthen and spread its cultural principles towards other communities.

'We do know that the generic reasons of non-profit and government entities for staging a festival are eight: recreation/socialization, culture/education, tourism, internal revenue generation, natural resources, agriculture, external revenue generation, and community pride/spirit' (Mayfield and Crompton, 1995).

Getz argues for festival policy with a broad policy scope hinged on the following goals and parameters:

- i) Mineralization of negative economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts.
- ii) Generation of greater economic benefits for local people and enhancement of the well-being of host communities.
- iii) Improvement in the working conditions of the festival environment and initiatives to generate further employment.
- iv) Inclusion of local people in decision making with respect to festival development.
- v) Support for diversity and contribution to conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
- vi) Creation of enjoyable experiences by enabling visitors to connect meaningfully with residents.
- vii) Provision of access for physically challenged people.
- viii) Being culturally sensitive, encouraging respect between event-goers and hosts, building local pride and confidence.

A different framework of criteria for evaluating the festivals arrives from further away. It is derived from a standardized model from Quebec.

According to the *Festivals and Events of Quebec 2013*, there is a standardized model that looks at the social, as well as the individual and environmental effects of festivals that are determined as:

*An activity or a set of activities of animation taking place around a central theme and according to a programming having a limited duration.*

According to the latest research data on festivals and their impact on individual and public level, we recognize three levels (Quebec, 2013):

- 1- Based on the individual
- 2- Based on the activities and identity empowerment.
- 3- Based on the community.

These are the main review categories of a festival.

To be able to understand how the festival type and model can affect our everyday lives, we will outline twelve (12) criteria from The MEPS survey on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). We can understand the way in which events operate between the areas of Social Inclusion, Economy and Dynamics in everyday life.

We could be based on the twelve (12) criteria relevant to the social impacts of the events and tourism, and present in many tools as *sustainable development and social responsibility*:

1. Responsible management
2. Participatory governance
3. Development of volunteer and salaried staff
4. Quality of life of surrounding populations
5. Development and quality of life of visitors
6. Social participation at the event
7. Commitment of the event to his community
8. Accessibility
9. Enhancing the socio-cultural identity of the community
10. Promotion of cultural diversity
11. Development of creativity and innovation capacity
12. Responsible consumption

## 7.2 Multi, pluri and inter cultural events in the modern societies

As the festivals play a role in the social cohesion and seem to be rather an inclusive procedure for the diversity and the plurality, the mobility and the local identity, the multicultural festival seems to get more and more importance. More specific, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in intercultural cities and their characteristics. More and more European cities are not ethnically homogeneous and they host people from other countries, communities that have different culture or they speak other languages too. Organizations all over Europe promote the advantages of multi/intercultural cities for the citizens as well as the economic growth.

Many intercultural cities are considered to be successful at many levels because of the social mixing and the benefits of people living together with a different cultural background. However, studies have reported that ‘most of the people do not go out of their way to seek out people and experiences that are different, and there are social models that encourage and exacerbate the tendency to aversion’ and ‘if we want an intercultural city, we cannot leave it to chance’ (Landry and Wood, 2008).

At this point, there is a rising question:

The question persists: how do we bring communities together and which is the best way to help them get to know with each other?

Social events are exactly what intercultural cities need in order to promote members of minority communities to present their culture and aspects of their lifestyle. The outcomes of these events are really important for the participants. These social events are not usually organized only for communities that differ. They are organized for all the communities, which live at the city and the members discover the complexity of their society through activities (dancing, cooking, language lessons etc) and developing and social skills.

It is necessary to point out that there are numerous and different social events that may take place at intercultural cities. Festivals are social events that according to Coldblatt (1997, cited in Arcodia and Whitford, 2006) have a key characteristic and it ‘is the sense of community and celebration engendered by an occasion, which is a public and freely accessed social gathering involving a variety of media such as arts and craft, performances and demonstrations’. Furthermore, they may create various

impacts such as economic, environmental and social- political impacts (Arcodia and Whitford, 2006).

Social events, such as Festivals, really help minority group members and citizens to develop their social skills and find out a common place of expressing their cultural characteristics. Over the last decade many stakeholders all over the world and more specifically in Europe have tried to find this 'place' in order to interact and face various challenges.

A well-known notable example is the nonprofit organization '100 resilient cities', which is established by the Rockefeller Foundation. The definition of resilience according to the above-mentioned nonprofit organization is 'the capacity of individual communities, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow, no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. (...) City resilience is about making a city better in both good times and bad, for the benefit of all its citizens, particularly the poor and the vulnerable'.<sup>2</sup>

Greece has engaged the program of 100 resilient cities and Thessaloniki (the second largest town in Greece) is one of them. When a city engages the project, there are some goals, which should be accomplished, objectives and actions that benefit the citizens. One of the basic goals is the co-creation of an inclusive city and more specifically investing in its community members in order to develop skills (education, training, career) throughout 'social labs' and making it friendlier to new people.<sup>3</sup>

Thessaloniki has been characterized for its intercultural identity by the time of its foundation. The geographical location of the city and the advantage of having one of the most important ports assisted in its economical growth. Many people preferred visiting the town or decided to live there.

These are only some of the reasons why Thessaloniki has been hosting people from different regions or countries, which speak other languages than Greek and have other religions. This is the reason that we organize by 2013 the sociocultural festival of languages and this why we look to identify the multicultural festival as well.

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.100resilientcities.org/100RC-FAQ/#/\\_/](http://www.100resilientcities.org/100RC-FAQ/#/_/) (Last accessed: 11/08/2018)

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from Resilient Thessaloniki. A Strategy for 2030 (Last accessed: 11/08/2018, <http://www.100resilientcities.org/strategies/thessaloniki/>)

McClinchey (2008) defines a multicultural festival as a place for public celebration showcasing the ethnic culture of local communities resettled due to migration. However, this definition appears to focus on their showcase nature without adequately considering their meanings. In contrast, Duffy (2005) defined multicultural festivals more specifically as places for on-going dialogue and negotiation within communities, as individuals as well as groups attempt to define meaningful concepts of identity and belonging along with notions of exclusion.

That said, while Duffy's definition of multicultural festival covers a range of meanings, such meanings could be more varied still. Based on a combination of McClinchey's and Duffy's definitions of multicultural festivals therefore, such festivals can best be defined as public, multicultural themed celebrations at which multi-ethnic people—including both ethnic minorities and members of the dominant population—have an extraordinary as well as mutually beneficial experience. (Lee, Arcodia and Lee, 2012).

What is the relation between Festivals and Youth if not the Skills development, the empowerment and the development of the sociocultural capital?

According to Chatzinakos' review a remark that is not negligible is that the presence of young people and children in events reveals an educational character, but also ensures their continuity. Although the mobility of youth for working reasons seeking a better quality of life is an ordinary characteristic of today's Europe, the experience of participation and the nostalgia for communities is reviving; it is not only a feeling coming from the 'old years'. In other words, for the new generations the sense of the ambiguity of events is stronger, because everydayness is dramatically personalized. (Chatzinakos, 2014).

The most direct link between regional events and festivals and community capacity is that of increased skill development. Participation in the planning and running of the event or participation in an event or participation itself with actions at the event seems to be non-formal and informal learning. The organization of a Celebration was seen as providing opportunities to learn new skills and enhance existing skills. One particular area of skills development highlighted in some cases that Moscardo finds is that of leadership.



Three aspects of leadership were noted in the case studies analyzed. The first was the importance of having a local champion to lead the event planning or organizing committee), the second aspect was the opportunity for event organizers to learn general leadership skills that could be used in other areas, while the third highlighted the opportunities that events gave to young residents to develop leadership skills. (Moscardo, 2007)

The term Eventful City that we meet in literature (Richards and Palmer, 2010) has to do with a reversal of existing rules, which, according to Chatzinakos, creates a high level of communication, social trust and autonomous community governance. This kind of city is capable of using a program of events that will support sustainable long-term policies and will improve the quality of life for all. The relationships and networks that will be created are the core of social capital (Moscardo, 2007).

Social capital is related to the social cohesion and equality, the union of different experiences, voices, etc., by collective participation in festivals capable of constructing the concept of community. A multicultural society encourages greater participation in festivals celebrating the richness of diversity and multilingualism.

Arcodia and Whitfield propose three ways in which an event facilitates the development of social capital:

- building community resources – such resources include: skills and knowledge, social links between community groups, networks, volunteer groups, and so on.
- social cohesiveness – events provide the opportunity for community members to unite, for diverse ethnic groups to share experiences and world views, and to give voice to a common social purpose.
- celebration – collective participation in a celebratory event may generate a sense of community spirit, togetherness and goodwill.

Festivals and their extensions, we dare to say, interact and eventually knead ferment and co-shape with the community and culture. This re-establishes a healthy network of relationships within society. (Arcodia and Witford, 2007).

The term community has various interpretations and meanings, starting perhaps from the political society of Aristotle, passing from the Ottoman community, the milieu

and reaching up to today's (cultural) association. According to Aristotle the City, is a Political society, a kind of a community, a kind of social co-existence. Etymologically the word (in the Greek language) 'koinonia' (=community) <koinono (verb) means to participate in something, together with somebody else.

According to Zaimakis (2002) as cited in Chatzinakos (2014) community is:

-A delimited social construct, which is located between the primary forms of social organization (family, kinship, friends) and larger abstract entities such as the state.

-It is a set of individuals experiencing the sense of belonging to a distinct social and cultural construct.

-Constitutes a model of social relations organized around various ties as origin, cultural identity and interests.

-It is a symbolic unity, which is composed by symbols and values allowing its members to form a collective consciousness.

Derrett's (2003) argument is based on her research on community festivals and their sense of place, in which she states that with the right orientation festivals may have the capacity to empower both collective and local identities, a point which is supported by additional research done regarding festivals (Boyle, 1997; Davila, 1997; Smith, 1993; Waterman, 1998).

Moreover, Derrett (2003) argues that such perceptions of place identity should be fundamental parts of a festival demonstrating both an extrovert and an introvert nature, when it comes to visitors and locals respectively. This viewpoint is supported by Jepson and Clarke (2011), who suggest that community events and festivals fabricate all the preconditions that would make a community more welcoming towards outsiders and more homogeneous for locals.

### **7.3 A functional factor is emerged: the place as symbol and social sign**

In which place is such a celebration more appropriate? In what extend and what does space or place mean by itself and how much in combination with a celebration? Festivals emerge from the congruence of three major elements; the destination (place) in which they are held, the people who reside in that location (and within the region),

and the visitors who are attracted to the festival. All of these are underpinned by the physical landscape in which they collaborate. (Derrett, 2003)

The place itself can create a sense of community that in turn influences the way of how this community is celebrating and by extension its prosperity. (Derrett, 2003) Prosperity according to Derrett is expressed under the following seven concepts: conviviality, prosperity, liveability, equity, vitality, sustainability and viability.

Other scholars argue that it is more efficient to have a unity of space where different cultures can coexist (Sawh, 2007) and others believe that the site should be changed every time so as not to drive the population into targeting. The space should not remain the same for a long time. (Tuan, 1980). People are linked to specific places, and migrants in particular need to connect with new places. The festivals can be this place or neighbourhood, or some other places imagined or remembered. (McClinchey, 1999).

#### **7.4 Critical thinking**

Throughout the era of cultural hybridity, subjects as social constructs abstain from national, political, cultural purity and come closer to the process of producing a hybrid culture (Bhabha, 1995). In today's post-industrial societies, there is a greater tolerance for change and diversity, and it is easier to break the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviours. (Sharpley and Stone, 2011)

Festivals are at the heart of shaping and expressing this kind of culture. Also, various artistic performances within festivals can show ways through which subjectivity and identity are spatial processes. Intercultural and hybrid forms created within the festivals offer participants opportunities to find *self* through authentic practices and remodel or reorient themselves into different contexts through hybrid practices (Duffy, 2005).

In this procedure, other times they allow different cultures to exist as a mosaic and others create an alliance of cultures and characteristics (Sawh, 2007).

In the annual Monographs of the Festivals that we have already submitted to the Municipalities where the Multilingual Festival took place, we argue that Multilingual Festivals are grid processes that promote the coexistence, co-education and inclusion

of people, groups, and peoples under the umbrella of this mosaic. In Thessaloniki, urban neighbourhoods according to Chatzinakos (2014) can become live workshops and urban ecosystems. This cannot be achieved without the existence of continuous procedures. The living population, the world alone is one who can build a place. This dynamic that starts from below in combination with the new tools offered by technology and digital communication networks can build a community that is constantly being supported by celebrations and festivals. Thessaloniki belongs to the resilient cities and for this reason, we consider Multilingualism Festivals as the functional factor of resilience, as the objectives, strategies and means of its organization model, are based on the same reference framework as the theory of resilient cities. Besides, the posts of the municipality of Thessaloniki<sup>4</sup> in order to inform the actors, display the main objective of the Festival, which Argyro MOUNTZIDOU (2016) describes as the endeavor of a city to project the idea of pluralism and continuity of a society that although in transition, actively participates in the movement of cooperation, the awakening of the Person to Man, solidarity and social interaction inside and outside its 'walls'. Locally, the Festival of the Multilingualism attempts to highlight multiculturalism and multilingualism in Thessaloniki, to help in understanding all and together the rich potential generated by the meeting of cultures, creating acquaintance and cooperation opportunities, making Thessaloniki a polymorphic workshop of art production, discourse and common actions, in collaboration with institutions, organizations and institutes abroad. Above all, the Festival of Multilingualism promotes, encourages and highlights the languages of Thessaloniki and the countries taking part, the active multilingualism of our communities in the Balkans and elsewhere, most remote, proving the important role of languages in culture production and contributing in the cosmopolitan image of Thessaloniki, as the only multilingual city (*poliglotis polis*) in Europe.

As we have already mentioned, the term urban resilience describes the city as a system that recovers, adapts and evolves into a dialogue with its environment, is reflected and is constantly planned, with its protagonists, especially in the crisis condition, able to develop reflexes around the environment continuous pressures. *Thessaloniki.gr* public space becomes a forum for dialogue and development under the orchestration of a network of festivals and events.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://langtrips.wordpress.com/2016/04/>

Returning to the annual programs of the events and the organisation of the Celebration the Festival of Multilingualism appears as a microcosm. As mentioned before, 'The main objective of the Festival is to promote the idea of pluralism and the continuity as an experience of a society, and as a practice in a world in transition and in an intermediate space between subjects, languages and cultures. The Celebration is people not in cumulative participation but in proliferation cooperation. They are actively involved in the movement of the social and solidarity economy, as it is developed in today's literature and is supported in part and locally in the sense of managing common intangible resources.

Based on the principles of the resilience cities as well as on the transformation from the bottom up and in the sense of the social economy, Thessaloniki experiences the models of social economy by changing the attitude, enriching knowledge and developing resilient skills, such as the intercultural skills, communicational skills and cooperation's ones. Social economy is a set of such determinations that is pervaded by crucial ethical values like priority of labor over the economical capital, care for the community through the distribution of surplus, decision-making through democratic processes under the rule 'one man, one vote', and caring about the needs of the environment. However, the most significant feature is that people are connected through local, national and international networks, building identities that are based on and simultaneously cultivate solidarity.

The solidarity state of these networks can counterbalance the nationalist tensions that have emerged in an era of crisis. Furthermore, the rapidly growing social economy is part and parcel of the eco-social transition taking place recently in European societies, a major driver being, but not only, the economic crises. The Commission recommends the Member States' Governments to include the promotion of Social Economy Enterprises and Social Innovation as a specific investment priority in their new national programs.

Social economy is a significant framework for building resilient European societies. Social economy structures and initiatives underlined by the principles of equality, direct democracy and social cohesion can cultivate connected identities. Thus, the degree to which EU policies contribute to building a European identity can be examined through the degree to which and the ways in which EU policies connect to,

enhance or strengthen social economy. For all these reasons, the Festival of Multilingualism in various Greek cities and with the participation of institutions, organizations, school networks, academic institutions, communities, cultural associations, consulates and embassies, NGOs and mainly citizens, is a kind of laboratory for the development of resilient societies. The model we use to organize the Festival is based upon non-formal and informal education, on the strategies and theories of multilingualism and inter-culturalism, psychology, sociology and social anthropology and sociolinguistics, which are used to empower people, kindness, pluralism, innovation, cohesion and cooperation. Besides, the model that is developed and supported by annual training and education is innovative in its conception and deeply empirical and democratic. It is a model of innovative training with basic characteristics of research, critical thinking and action (Moumtzidou, 2016).

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