Citizen Participation and Self-Organization in Urban Regeneration in Greece

An analysis of the inclusion and implementation of participatory and self-organization practices in urban regeneration in Greece

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Master's Thesis for the Spatial Planning (Planologie) programme
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October 2018
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Date
October 2018

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Summary

The central residential areas in the two biggest cities of Greece, Athens and Thessaloniki, provided housing solutions for the wave of urbanization that followed the Second World War. These central areas, designed with an old layout meant for small buildings, became very densely built-up and populated. In the following decades the desire for better living conditions and the accentuation of quality of life problems led to a steady abandonment of these areas by their residents leading to progressive dilapidation. The recent economic crisis and the long-term demographic changes in Greece have brought a dramatic reduction in new residential units and a refocus in the existing areas.

Urban regeneration on a wide scale has not been part of the Greek urban planning tradition. The new environment of crisis has brought changes to the priorities of the society and the government. A focus on the urban environment and the emergence of an increasingly active civil society are leading to new paradigms of urban regeneration.

This research thesis examines the concepts of participatory urban planning and citizen self-organization with a focus on urban regeneration. After defining these terms using international and Greek literature it determined the factors that are necessary for such practices to be successfully implemented.

The qualitative analysis that follows was based on interviews and literature, academic or not, as well as policy documents, to determine to what degree the necessary elements exist in Greece. Participatory urban regeneration has seen a substantial scale of implementation internationally, but in Greece only small attempts have taken place. The analysis of the data collected shows that not all necessary elements can be found in the Greek environment, based on the existing evidence. At the same time however the concept is taking some momentum and there are indications that suggest it will become an important element of planning in the future.

In the end of this thesis observations regarding the difficulties encountered during the research are presented, as well as suggestions for further research and practical recommendations.
Preface

This research thesis represents the final step of a longer than expected period of doing a master’s in the Netherlands. Before coming to the Netherlands my background in Spatial Planning was completely Greek, and as the Greek planning tradition stems from the field of architecture, its character is quite different than what my studies in the Netherlands involved. This master’s thesis required from me to learn how to do design a research and analysis of qualitative data, something that Dutch students learn early on in their Bachelor’s, but for which I was not necessarily well prepared.

The subject of the thesis came from the requirement to come up with a research proposal as part of the Advanced Research Methods course, which for me meant that a subject for Greece would make it easy to write. The issue of urban regeneration is one that I think is gaining and should gain a lot more attention in Greece. Citizen participation and self-organization in planning is a subject that is also gaining importance. I believe that the combination of these two aspects of planning will enter the spotlight of research and planning practice in Greece in the future.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Ir. Ary Samsura for providing constant guidance during the long process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank the people that gave some of their time to answer the questions in my interviews. Hopefully something useful has come out of this process that can inform future researchers or anyone else interested in reading this thesis.

Christos Mitsios,
Nijmegen, October 2018
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1 Introduction

The subject that this master thesis researches is the implementation of participatory practices in urban planning in Greece and in particular in urban regeneration. Part of the participatory practices is also citizen self-organization, which may or may not be taking place in collaboration with the public administration. In the more developed western countries urban regeneration has a long history, while citizens’ active involvement has been increasingly pursued in the more recent decades. This has led to these processes reaching a level of maturity while in Greece they still remain in their infancy (Aravantinos et al, 1997). Neither the society nor the public administration have experience in working together closely, in an organized manner with co-deciding powers. However the natural replacement of generations brings changes in mentalities and the economic crisis that hit Greece in the last decade has also had deep consequences in the cities and their population, including the reduction of public budgets, the reduction of real estate development, the worsening of social problems and the emergence of new attitudes in society (Vitopoulou et al, 2015). This introduction chapter will provide a background of the situation, describe the problem and the research questions and explain the overall structure of this thesis.

1.1. Background

Greece in the aftermath of the Second World War experienced rapid urbanization. On the one hand the natural population growth and on the other hand the internal migration of rural population to the cities caused a great demand for mostly low-cost urban housing. The Greek state’s tradition in urban planning and the enforcement of the urban planning laws and regulations, as well as state-initiated housing development, has always been weak. Development of housing was typically initiated by small size private developers collaborating with landowners, who possessed typically small plots of urban land.

Development of housing happened both outside city limits, with the generally justified anticipation that under social pressure the developed areas would be retroactively formally included in the city limits, as well as inside the old city centers where the old building stock was being replaced with newer one. In either case the science of urban planning was hardly understood and respected by the responsible authorities except for its most basic principles, while the principal consideration was maximization of property value (Aravantinos et al, 1997).
High densities, elementary layout, narrow streets, very limited green areas and public space in general and a complete failure to anticipate the need for road capacity and parking space have created a great number of urban neighborhoods that provide a low quality of life to their residents. Added to these factors, the economic conditions of the time were not conducive for high-quality construction, resulting in additional problems connected to the buildings' condition. While the principal need for housing in the cities was being covered, progressively in an example of the "tragedy of the commons" the bad urban quality was increasingly being felt and recognized after the first two post-war decades by the same population that had benefited from the provision of cheap housing.

The problem was understood by all groups affected but it received limited attention until recently as the constant economic and demographic growth of Greece together with the generous expansion of cities' limits, the provision of urban land and the construction of new housing in new areas, were leading the inhabitants of poorly planned older inner city neighborhoods to relocate in suburban areas. At the same time the old central neighborhoods were progressively abandoned to dilapidation and use by lower social strata, such as foreign immigrants who came in large numbers in the 1990s.

The ongoing economic crisis however that has struck Greece since 2008 brought an abrupt end to this model. Construction plummeted to as low as 31% of its 2010 value during 2013-2014, and slowly recovered to 52% in 2016 (Greek Statistical Service, 2017). At the same time the economic crisis has considerably reduced the residents’ and owners’ incomes leading to reduced expenditure for maintenance and occasionally abandonment of dilapidated buildings. Demographic decline and pessimistic predictions regarding economic growth do not leave much room for the previous model of expansive (in area) development to return. However the problem of poorly designed neighborhoods remains. Widely understood and recognized, it had been ignored due to the constant greenfield development. For the decades to come the challenge faced by the local governments, planners and the residents will be to progressively regenerate the large number of existing poorly designed and maintained urban residential areas. This process has many obstacles to overcome such as funding, fragmentation of property, legislative limitations and institutional responsibility, as well as possible negative effects such as gentrification and social resistance.

In this environment a new approach has been emerging in which citizen participation in public affairs is increasing. Citizen influence in the decision-making processes has always existed but it primarily had an informal form which led to a lot of distortions. Political affiliations or simply individual interests were the factors that dominated the relationship between the citizens and the local government. The emergence however of civil society groups, the number of which constantly
increases by the day, as well as the social upheaval and the straining of the relations between the society and the government caused by the crisis of the last decade, push towards a redefinition of the roles of the citizens and the public bodies. As is seen in the data collected as part of this research, local governments in the bigger Greek cities have officially started to adopt more inclusive decision-making processes in a variety of fields, such as budgeting and tackling problems of the urban environment. At the same time there is also a momentum from the opposite direction, namely citizen initiatives that happen outside of the frameworks designed by the public sector.

1.2. Problem Statement

The problem that this thesis is called to investigate is the implementation of new alternative approaches for urban renewal of densely built and populated residential areas in the two bigger cities in Greece (Athens and Thessaloniki) at a time when public and private budgets are reduced. At the same time there is a lack of tradition of centrally organized renewal projects in residential areas and the effects of the economic crisis affecting Greece has led to a change in lifestyle choices such as a return of population to central residential areas. The problem of low living standards, while recognized for a long time was ignored because until a decade ago, in a growing economy with availability of cheap loans, the interest of the population was to move towards suburban areas. Similarly city plans were focusing on providing new areas for the expansion of city limits while revising standards for construction within the built-up areas to lower densities than previously, without there being however any tool of implementing change other than on paper. The lowering of the levels of permitted construction volumes has for a long time limited the incentives to replace existing building stock and in conjunction with the economic crisis and the lowering of property values replacement of the existing old building stock has all but stopped.

Internationally problems of urban decay and regeneration have been around for a long time, often quite complex, and have been faced with many solutions of varying nature and content, from mild to radical. Compared to the world Greece is a rather inexperienced state when it comes to confronting such problems. Among other practices in the last decades attempts have been made to effect urban regeneration with mild practices that involve the population of the affected areas in participatory processes. Greece has also had some experience with such processes, although
the results were mixed. Society is changing however and nearly three decades later the question remains whether participatory planning has solutions to offer to this problem.

The issue researched in this thesis is whether in the context of the Greek crisis-stricken environment, practices of citizen participation and self-organization in urban planning, centered on the residents, with or without substantial participation by the public sector, can be implemented in an effort to solve this problem.

1.3. Research aim and questions

The basis of this research thesis is the combination of the need of urban regeneration for the problematic big urban centers in Greece, with new practices of participatory planning and self-organization, which have been gaining momentum in planning and governance practice internationally and in Greece.

The objective of this research is to discover whether the practices of participation and self-organization in urban regeneration in residential areas can be implemented effectively. Effectiveness in this regard is measured by the success of the process itself.

Thus the overarching research question is:

Are the necessary elements for successful implementation of participatory practices and self-organization in urban regeneration found in Greece?

This main question is broken down into a number of sub-questions that can lead to the eventual answer to this question:

- “What is urban regeneration in the Greek context? What are its main constituent elements?”
- “How does participatory planning and self-organization relate to urban regeneration? In what elements of urban regeneration are such practices relevant?”

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2 For example in the late 1980s and early 1990s the municipality of Thiva attempted a participatory mild regeneration process with the active involvement of the inhabitants of a problematic district of the town which had originally been established as a refugee settlement in the 1920. The project showed some modest results but ended due to lack of funding. For more information see Loukopoulos, Polyzos, Pyrgiotis, & Tounta (1990) and Grigoriadis (2011).
• “What are the elements that determine success in participatory and self-organization processes?”

• “Are these elements to be found in Greece? Where is there sufficient presence and where is there lack? What are possible solutions?”

In order to answer these questions the structure of this thesis is thus:

Following this introductory chapter a literature review is presented. The literature review initially handles the issues of defining the terms of participatory planning and self-organization in urban planning. Although these terms may appear simple, the review shows that there are varying degrees of participation. On the one had the degree in which the simple citizens have influence on planning can vary from simple token participation without any influence in the decisions made (which can be seen as being incorrectly called participation) to complete control of a project by the citizens. Moreover, participation cannot be seen as being a purely one-dimensional quantity. There are different methods of participation that exist in parallel, while also participation can happen at different times in a project (White, 1996; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Moreover, in a collaborative process it is often the case that the different stakeholders that are called to work together have different interests and objectives, and expectations from the process. These ideas are elaborated in the first part of the literature review. The review then focuses on urban regeneration in Greece and the problems that exist, and examines the situation in Greece regarding citizen participation in urban planning and regeneration. The history and form of the Greek cities have created particular recognizable types of problematic areas, and the particular Greek legislation, policies and administrative culture translate into a particular framework surrounding urban regeneration and citizen participation. Following the elaboration on these concepts, comes the review over the factors of success in participatory urban regeneration, based on a number of projects that have taken place outside Greece. These factors lead to the operationalization of the theory examined in the review and the elaboration of conditions and indicators that will be used to answer the research questions. The methodology used and the necessary data are explained in the third chapter. The research is based on the collection and analysis of qualitative data from three main sources in order to ensure triangulation of the findings and thus increase the validity and reliability of the results. The sources are literature of different types, policy documents and legislation, and interviews conducted with stakeholders in the process. The fourth chapter includes the analysis of the data collected and the last chapter the conclusions and suggestions based on the findings of the analysis.
1.4. Scientific and societal relevance

The scientific relevance of this work is connected to the existing literature on participatory planning and self-organization in planning in Greece. Although participatory planning and self-organization in planning have been examined in Greek literature in the past, often connected to political ideologies, implementation of such practices has been very limited and the traditional approach has been dismissive. In the more recent years such practices have been gaining popularity, although they remain limited, and receive growing attention and scrutiny in literature. This research project adds observations in the question of whether participation and self-organization in urban planning is and can be successfully implemented in Greece in the current economic and social environment. It comes moreover to fill a gap in existing literature which focuses on participatory planning for public space, by researching the implementation of such practices in private and shared-ownership spaces, while it also includes self-organization which tends to be ignored in literature.

This thesis can stimulate further research by peers working on the subject and deepen the knowledge on it, as well as provide a point of reference for researchers involved in different but related work. Greece provides a more extreme case of austerity and stagnation, these attributes however are by no means limited to there. The social and institutional characteristics of Greece may be unique, as in every country, but have similarities with others as well. As such the findings of this research thesis can be used for cases in different countries as well.

The societal relevance of this work is found on the fact that it wants to provide directions for solving real issues that afflict the Greek cities, affecting negatively the quality of life for a great many people. A large percentage of the Greek population lives in urban areas that do not conform to the urban planning standards set by the planning legislation. Many areas violate even older legislation which prescribed lower standards, as they were initially designed and built illegally. The economic situation which has deprived households of much of their disposable income and the concomitant changes in the prices of certain commodities (notably fuel, both for transport and heating, which has more than doubled in price, as well as the price of subsidized public services, such as public transport) have reversed the trend of population moving outward from the old central urban areas, and has “trapped”, with no immediately foreseeable change, the financially weaker strata of society in these poor urban environments. The older “dream” of urban households of abandoning their residence in a poorly built old district and moving to a newer better built one has collapsed, and the indifference with which society viewed the prospect of regenerating the vast urban areas built in the decades after the Second World War in favor of building ever new suburbs is bound to change. As such the societal relevance of this research is to
be found in that it examines an existing important social problem as well as a subject that will gain a lot more attention by the public in the future.
2 Literature review

In this section I will examine the existing literature regarding the subjects of participation and self-organization in urban planning both in general as well as specifically for Greece, discover the gap in literature, examine a number of cases where participatory and self-organization principles relevant to this research have been implemented, and reach to some conclusions based on the findings.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework within which this research thesis operates are the concepts of participatory planning, focused on self-organization in planning, and its relation to urban regeneration. These concepts need to be defined and the literature over them examined, a process necessary to create a clear framework from which to operationalize the concepts into the research methodology.

2.1.1 Defining participation and self-organization in governance

Participatory or collaborative governance is a term that has been gaining traction in the recent decades (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Ansell & Gash (2007) define collaborative governance as “A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets.” (2008: 544). Gustafson & Hertting (2016) summarize the benefits of participatory governance as the inclusion of increased political interest, knowledge and empowerment among the citizens, increased inclusion of affected and marginalized participants, interests and discourses, better responsiveness on the part of the politicians and administrators, and greater collective capacity and expertize to act on complex policy problems. They further determine three basic notions of participation: that of the interest-based logic, in which “participants may articulate self- or group interests, more or less in confrontation with other interests” (2016: 539); that of deliberative and integrative logic, which unlike the interest-based logic “focuses more on the formation of common understandings and the mutually acceptable, and less on the articulation of self- or group interests”
“Self-organization” as a term can have two distinct meanings. The one meaning is that of “a reality that evolves more or less autonomously, non-linearly and spontaneously as a consequence of the interconnectedness and changeable nature of underlying processes” (Raws, 2016, p. 340). This approach is connected to complexity theories and is applied in a variety of fields, including those of chemistry, biology and sociology. In terms of spatial development this approach sees self-organization as the spontaneous reaction of actors based on their individual interests which over time produce changing patterns on a wide spatial scale. The main elements of this approach to self-organization in urban development are that “the actions of the actors evolve without central coordination or external control into collective results”; that “the actions of the actors are based on their individual intentions”, which they may adjust following interaction with the other actors, but “a collective intent is missing”; that the independent actions of the actors “on a lower scale gives rise to spontaneously emerging reconfiguration on a system level”; and finally that “the emergence of a change on a system level is very hard, if not impossible, to predict” (Raws, 2016, pp. 342-343).

A different understanding of self-organization is often applied to urban development, and that is of a network of actors taking action independently from the government. Such initiatives often have a “rebellious” character towards the government, and are driven by collective intent which often results in agreements among the participants on how to proceed. Raws proposes the use of the term self-governance to describe this type of action (2016: 341). The characteristics of self-governance in urban development, as opposed to self-organization, are: the existence of some form of internal coordination, which can be based on a participatory decision-making process or on informal exchange of views; the existence of a collective intent; the transformation of the urban configuration is the result of deliberative action rather than a spontaneous reconfiguration of the system; and finally that the transformation of the systems is to some degree predictable (Raws, 2016, pp. 344-345).

Within the overall context of participatory governance and urban development further aspects exist such as co-creation or co-production. Co-creation as a subset of participation has as a main difference that co-creation requires practical outcomes (Prager, 2016). Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers (2015a) in their systematic review over co-creation point out that there is an overlap with terms such as public participation, collaborative governance and community involvement. According to them co-creation is something more specific than a “broad concept of participation, which could also refer to passive involvement”. They demarcate the concept of co-creation as referring “to the active involvement of end-users in various stages of the production process” (2015:1335). A definition provided by the “Leading Cities” group is that co-creation is “the active
flow of information and ideas among five sectors of society: government, academia, business, non-profits and citizens - the Quintuple Helix - which allows for participation, engagement, and empowerment in, developing policy, creating programs, improving services, and tackling systemic change with each dimension of society represented from the beginning” (Leading Cities, 2014, p.2).

Bekkers et al (2014) connect self-organization with co-creation in social innovation, noting that self-organizing communities are increasingly seen as alternatives for public services. Citizens are seen as co-creators of new public services, although they observe that the roles of the government is not obsolete. Ramaswamy notes that “the primary forces driving this shift to co-creation of value through human experiences […] were information and communications technologies that propelled an unprecedented shift in people’s capacity to be informed, networked, and empowered” (2011: 195). There is not one definition of co-creation in the public sector. Voorberg et al in their review of literature over co-creation observe that when definitions exist, in their core is the citizen as a valuable partner in public service delivery. Some literature simply stresses the involvement of citizens, other stresses the creation of sustainable relations between citizens and the government, while other the joint responsibility of citizens and professionals in public service delivery. They also observe that some definitions treat co-creation itself as a value (2015a: 1340).

The European Commission notes that “[…]solutions must be found, in a time of major budgetary constraints, to deliver better services making more effective use of available resources [while] the traditional ways in which the market, the public and the civil sector have provided answers to social demands are no longer sufficient” (2011: 30). Reflecting Voorberg’s et al observation that co-creation is seen itself as a virtue, it adds that “social innovation adds an extra capital dimension to sustain the European social fabric, the social capital, which is seen as both a means and an end, as a fundamental source of value and an increasingly relevant beneficiary of that value. Social innovation also mobilises each citizen to become an active part of the innovation process” (European Commission, 2011, p.30).

The Leading Cities (2014) identify nine characteristics that they consider as defining co-creation processes, adding that different opinions exist as to whether all nine of those are necessary or only some, for a process to be called co-creative. The nine characteristics are (Leading Cities, 2014, p.3):

- **Systemic**: extends across the entire value-chain, “from generation, selection, incubation, and eventually, even to marketing the new product or service”.

- **Innovative and Productive**: intended to generate new products and models of service delivery.

- **Collaborative**: transforms citizens from ‘passive audiences’ to ‘active players.’ In this sense, the relationship can be conceived of as a partnership.
• Diverse: involves many stakeholders and includes such actors as non-governmental organizations/civil society, business, and academics.

• Hierarchy-flattening: the distinction between consumers and producers, users and designers, bureaucrats and citizens is blurred or transcended. Co-creation shares power between government and citizens and other stakeholders rather than traditional structured or pre-determined programs, initiatives, projects, or campaigns into which people are asked to “plug in” and participate.

• Bi- or multi-directional: Information and ideas flow among stakeholders. The process is neither top-down nor bottom-up. All stakeholders learn and gain value from co-creative processes and outcomes.

• Repeated and intense: The frequency, duration and volume of information exchanged in interactions between stakeholders is greatly increased using co-creative techniques.

• Mutually beneficial: a learning process, in which stakeholders learn from one another and participants assist others in a hope of improving their community in the long-term.

• Trusted and Transparent: Trust is a key component of public participation and co-creation. Trust comprises an important criterion for government – a trusted central authority allows open and equal opportunity of participation.

In trying to identify the objectives of co-creation Voorberg et al found out that over half of the literature reviewed failed to mention any specific objective. As they observe there is the “implicit assumption that involvement of citizens is a virtue in itself, like democracy and transparency”, while a number of studies identified the purpose of co-creation/co-production to simply be the involvement of citizens (2015a:1341). Among the rest of the objectives they identify are gaining more effectiveness, gaining more efficiency and gaining customer satisfaction. They also identified in their review the reported outcomes of co-creation processes with citizens. They note that most studies they reviewed were not focused on analysing specific results of co-creation processes, but rather looked at influential factors in the co-creation processes as well as the different types of co-creation processes. From those studies reviewed that actually examined specific results, they found out that the majority (some 59%) report a difference (increase or decrease) in effectiveness, followed by 25% reporting an increase of citizen involvement and the rest including outcomes such as gaining efficiency, gaining customer satisfaction, strengthening social cohesion and democratizing public services. Quite importantly they note that due to the small number of studies which reported on outcomes they cannot conclude whether co-creation can be considered beneficial (2015a:1345). They observe that in literature co-creation is often seen as a virtue in itself that does not need further legitimization, however if they “use a rational, functional or goal-oriented approach, the outcomes can be somewhat disappointing” (2015a: 1348-1349).
2.1.2 Degrees of true participation and self-organization

The ways that participation in planning can occur are many and the degree in which the participants can actually influence the outcome of the process can vary greatly.

In her influential paper Arnstein (1969), based on her experiences of citizen participation in urban planning in the USA, pointed out that citizen “participation without power redistribution is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless” (1969: 216). Based on this perception of power distribution, she described a ladder of eight rungs of citizen participation in planning showing that participation has many gradations. The eight rungs were summarised in three bigger groups: Nonparticipation, Degrees of tokenism and Degrees of citizen power (1969: 216-217).

The first group, consisting of the rungs of “manipulation” and “therapy”, is not real participation in any way, although it has been presented as such in some cases. The second one, consisting of the rungs of “informing”, “consultation” and “placation” all describe token participation, or the citizens “participating in participation” as Arnstein puts it (1969: 219). Only at the rung of placation, where a small number of citizens are included in the decision making process does an actual if limited level of influence exist. The group where real citizen participation exists is that of the rungs of “partnership”, “delegated power” and “citizen control”, which vary on the degree of citizen power. These rungs will be explained in some detail as they form the theoretical basis of how participation is meant in this research thesis. The rung of “partnership” is the rung where “power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses. After the groundrules have been established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subject to unilateral change.” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 221). This definition is important in order to understand where real participation in urban regeneration starts. The rung of “delegated power” is the rung where citizens have a “dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 222). Examples can be the citizens having the majority in policy boards, having accountability of the program to them or the option of a veto if differences of opinion cannot be resolved through negotiation (1969: 222). The last rung in Arnstein’s ladder of participation is
that of "citizen control". Arnstein describes it as "that degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them". Her example of "a neighborhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds" is indicative (1969: 223).

Arnstein's ladder, which still carries a lot of influence in theoretical as well as practical approaches to participation, has not been without criticism. Tritter & McCallum (2006) writing from the perspective of participation in the health sector identify three main problems with Arnstein's ladder: that there are missing rungs, the existence of possible "snakes" which Arnstein omits, and the existence of multiple ladders. The missing rungs according to them come from the fact that Arnstein did not take into account the differences in methods of involvement, categories of users and outcomes. The "snakes" in Arnstein's ladder are the dangers of applying Arnstein's ladder uncritically which may in fact cause practices belonging to one of Arnstein's higher rungs give users less actual involvement than rungs below. They identify in particular "the impact of the model on users and voluntary organisations, its potential to limit sustainability and promote decisions based on 'the tyranny of the majority'" (2006: 162). The "tyranny of the majority" in this case refers to the fact that direct citizen control risks producing services that reflect the weight and volume of opinion, limiting the space for people for dissenting views and disadvantaging some (Tritter & McCallum, 2006, p.163). The multiple ladders according to Tritter & McCallum come from Arnstein's one-dimensional definition of user involvement, based on user's power to act in formal decision-making processes. They note that "[I]nvolvement may be a governance mechanism, a method of releasing or enhancing social capital, or a feature of service delivery" (2006: 163). They propose that a user involvement model should have multiple ladders, depending on the types of involvement and the categories of users, with possibly different numbers of rungs and bridges between ladders producing horizontal integration: a "scaffold model".

Pretty (1995), writing over participatory learning for sustainable agriculture proposed his own typology of participation consisting of seven types. These are presented in the table below along with their explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Characteristics of each type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Manipulative</td>
<td>Participation is simply a pretence, with &quot;people's&quot; representatives on official boards, but who are unelected and have no power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Passive participation
People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.

3. Participation by consultation
People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.

4. Participation for material incentives
People participate by contributing resources, for example, labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labor, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.

5. Functional participation
Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be coopted to serve external goals.

6. Interactive participation
People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

7. Self-mobilization
People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems, They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Table 2: Pretty's typology of participation (adapted from Pretty, 1995, p. 1252)
Pretty notes that although the term “participation” can be used for all of the types in his typology, the achievements of types 1 to 4 are likely to produce no positive lasting effect on people’s lives (1995: 1253). The term participation is used even when it does not lead to action, and it is possible to say that these manipulative forms of participation should actually not be seen as such.

Juxtaposing Arnstein’s and Pretty’s typologies Cornwall (2008) notes that both “describe a spectrum defined by a shift from control by authorities to control by the people or citizens. Yet, the end-points are rather different. Citizen control goes much further than self-mobilization. For, as Pretty notes, ‘self-initiated mobilisation may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power’. Indeed, local self-mobilization may be actively promoted by the state and international agencies as part of efficiency goals that are entirely consistent with a neoliberal approach to development. What Pretty’s typology helps make clear is that the motivations of those who adopt and practise participatory approaches is an important factor – if by no means the only one – in shaping interventions. And what Arnstein’s reminds us is that participation is ultimately about power and control.” (2008: 271)

Despite the simplifications of Arnstein’s ladder and Pretty’s typology, they provide a good benchmark on which to base the definition required for this thesis of what indeed is true participation. From their analysis it becomes clear that participation should be approached critically and that a lot of forms of instituted participation should not be called as such.

A different typology related to participation is proposed by White (1996), which unlike Arnstein’s and Pretty’s typologies which look at the distribution of power as the determining feature of the different rungs, looks at the different interests of the stakeholders. The table below, as processed by Cornwall explains White’s typology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>What &quot;participation&quot; means to the implementing agency</th>
<th>What &quot;participation&quot; means for those on the receiving end</th>
<th>What &quot;participation&quot; is for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>Legitimation - to show they are doing something</td>
<td>Inclusion - to retain some access to potential benefits</td>
<td>Display</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further White suggests three steps that need to be taken to address the “non-politics” of participation. First, to answer the question who is involved in a participatory process, how, and on whose terms. Second the interests represented in the catch-all term “participation” need to be analysed –something for which the typology proposed by White offers a framework. Third, it needs to be recognised that participation and non-participation reflects power relations. Non-participation or participation in other peoples’ terms reproduces subordination. White concludes that since in participation the “voiceless” gain a voice there will inevitably be some conflict. The absence of conflict in supposedly participatory processes should raise suspicions (White, 1996, pp. 14-15).

2.1.3 Participation and self-organisation in urban planning

The concepts of participation and self-organization have been gaining ground in a number of fields. Very often they are mentioned with other names such as co-creation, which itself is a subset of participation. For the purpose of this literature review the term participatory planning is
functioning as an umbrella which includes co-creation, collaborative planning and self-organization.

Eizenberg (2018) proposes that self-organization in urban planning has three manifestations: self-organization by the disenfranchised for basic rights, self-organization by the ordinary for community interests, and self-organization by the powerful for economic gains. This differentiation is important in order to recognize that the stakeholders in a self-organization process do not have the same interests. Boonstra & Boelens (2011) observe that "participation is always based on the idea of a conflict between the powerful and the powerless, in which the powerful determines the procedures along which the powerless shall participate." (2011: 106). They further note that "Although new methods, such as co-production or citizen initiatives, may appear to be seeking going beyond and reconcile the conflicts between the powerful and powerless, the concept still allocates government a leading and deciding role." (2011: 107). For them the modern civil society is "highly empowered, elusive and individually fragmented, as well as increasingly organized along temporary, changing and multiple interrelations" (2011: 108) requiring a change in the concepts of governance and the realization that the governmental spatial planning agencies are neither the only nor the most important actors of planning in space. They contrast the concepts of participation, in which governmental bodies set the goals and the citizens can have influence on them, and self-organization, which stands for the citizens’ own "motives, networks, communities, processes and objectives", which are "at least initially independent of government policies and detached from participatory planning procedures" (2011: 109). By examining a number of cases of citizen-led initiatives they conclude that government-led participation is obsolete and that "community-based self-organization may be the next step in the process of embedded spatial planning" (2011: 117).

There are many possible methods that are being implemented in order to have citizen participation in the urban planning process. Some indicative methods are (Siolas et al, 2015, pp. 227-236):

Planning for Real/PFR: a process developed and patented by the Neighborhood Investment Fund in Telford, England. In this process a 3D model (physical or electronic) of the planning area is created and the participants can register their views in writing, either by using pre-made cards (some 300 of them being available in the system) or writing from scratch and then placing them on the model. Subsequently opinions are grouped in general categories and an action plan is created and handed over to the responsible authorities.

Electronic maps, in general, which allow the public to explore the area and make suggestions in text and potentially in form.
Electronic voting: a process that can aggregate the opinions of many people in an accurate and immediate manner. The public is called to respond to multiple-choice questions and the process can be utilized in several stages of the planning process.

21st century town meetings: a process that was developed as an update of the “New England meetings” held for centuries in the US in which all registered voters of a community could voice their opinions on matters of governance and budgets and had a vote in the process. The 21st century meetings appeared in the mid-1990s and have been utilized for projects such as the redevelopment of the destroyed twin towers area, the redevelopment of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina and others. Participants are divided into groups of 10 to 12 people headed by an independent facilitator while the discussion is transcribed by a scribe on a laptop. The organizers have access to the information produced and can call in real time the participants to vote on patterns that the organizers discern. This process allows a large number of participants to directly participate in the decision process, potentially as many as 5,000.

Citizens’ jury: a group of non-specialists, formed in the same way as court juries, receives the necessary information and get to decide on matters of public interest. Indicatively a citizens jury of 37 was formed in 2014 in Australia to decide on matters of coexistence of cars and bicycles on the road after being presented with information from experts as well as formal and informal discussion from social media.

E-petitions: a process in which through the use of technology anyone can make their opinion known on the internet and have others comment and potentially express their support eponymously by signing the petition.

Charrettes: charrettes are intensive workshops which involve participants from all fields, including residents with the intention to come up with solutions to planning issues. Facilities and tools are provided so that the participants can design their ideas and eventually all documents are collected and processed. Charrettes can have one session or more.

Deliberative polling: this process intends to discover the public opinion on a certain matter when the public is well informed. By comparison, conventional polling represents the public’s opinion based on superficial knowledge. In deliberative polling a random group of citizens are chosen and are provided with information and material on a certain subject. Initially a reference poll is taken to record their opinion before the process. Subsequently they gather, possibly for a weekend, and engage in dialogue among themselves and with experts over the subject. After this they take the poll again and the change of opinions is recorded statistically. This sample of people, typically between 200 and 600, represent the wider society, and the changes in their opinions represent the changes in society’s opinions if they could be exposed to the same amount of information. The
process may be televised as well in order for the rest of the public to be able to see the information provided and the course of the dialogue. In 2007 a pan-european deliberative polling process took place, called “tomorrow's Europe”, where 362 citizens from all EU were gathered for a weekend in the European Parliament’s building in Brussels to discuss matters of social and economic nature as well as of foreign policy.

Open government-public open consultation: Electronic public consultation as implemented in Greece already is organized in four phases: initially the relevant ministry together with the innovation unit of the EKDDA (National Center of Public Administration and Self-Government) prepare the material that will be posted online for the consultation. In the next phase the consultation is open to the public for them to comment. The discussion is moderated (meaning that the comments have to be approved before becoming visible) and personnel from the relevant ministry actively participate by answering to comments and providing additional material. In the third phase, after the deadline for the public consultation expires, conclusions are made and a report over the consultation is written. Last, the law including the report on the consultation are published.

Blogs and public consultation: Internet blogs can provide a platform for open consultation. Some Greek municipalities have created blogs where measures are proposed and then the public can comment on them. Similarly, as per the requirement of the law for an urban study to go through public consultation, the internet has been used. The draft of the urban study is uploaded and then within a given deadline the public can submit their comments.

2.1.4 Citizen participation in urban planning in Greece

A review over citizen participation in spatial planning in Greece needs to include the steps taken in legislation, and thus where participation has actually been sought by the authorities, as well as the academic literature touching upon the subject.

Citizen participation in urban planning in Greece began already from the first town plans that were drafted after Greece became an independent state in the 1830s (Siolas et al, 2015, p. 226). With the decree of 1923 consultation with the citizens became part of the drafting process of town plans. A draft of the town plan would be in open display in the town hall for 15 days while a general invitation would be made by various means for anyone interested to submit in writing any objections they may have. At the scale of general city planning citizen consultation was introduced with the law 1337/1983 without specifying the way it would be done (it would be left to the municipality to decide). This process did not contribute much as it was seen as a standard
procedure technically required by the law, with the public services being indifferent to them (Siolas et al, 2015, p. 226). Law 1337/1983 also introduced public consultation as part of urban regeneration studies. Law 2508/1997 brought comprehensive participation of citizens in urban regeneration projects, requiring from the project planners to produce evidence of the agreement of the residents and the results of participatory processes.

The methods of citizens’ participation in urban planning as presented by Siolas et al (2015), who use the terms “participatory or collaborative planning” (2015: 225) are indicative of the way Greek professional planners and academics perceive participation of citizens in planning. Placing them on the participation ladders described at the beginning of this literature review (ie Arnstein’s (1969) and Pretty’s (1995)) it is observable that they do not reach they higher rungs of “true” participation although some give real influence to citizens. Stratigea (2015) in her comprehensive review of theories and methods of participatory planning examines in great depth the international literature over participation thus introducing to the Greek language a comprehensive overview of the subject. Stratigea’s approach covers all typologies of participation as identified in literature, thus covering a wide spectrum of definitions of participation. However her focus is on the processes themselves and does not relate them to spatial planning, nor to exclusively citizen participation.

Vitopoulou et al (2015) make an interesting examination of resilience and sustainability of Greek cities, in which they include observations from interviews they conducted with scientists who had some involvement in alternative practices. They observe that any reallocation of jurisdictions happens within the government and they cannot be called governance as it is understood in international literature (2015: 340). They also note that inclusion of society appears to be completely missing from planning processes and that “planning culture” takes a long time to change, despite the heavy impact of the economic crisis in Greece. Civil society in Greece and political clientelism and unionism, it self heavily politicized, act as the informal way that brings citizens in though with the government. This may give voice to groups that otherwise would have none, but also opens the way for power abuses. In general, in their research Vitopoulou et al discover that it was a widely prevalent opinion among the interviewed that there are obstacles in the implementation of true citizen participation practices in Greece due to the citizens’ attitude (individualism, suspiciousness and ignorance) as well as the professional planners’ themselves who don’t support participatory processes. Only at the level of local government it appears that in the last years there is an expressed interest for increased citizen participation, but that is related to the need for legitimizing decisions, as well the desire of local government to show “work” (Vitopoulou et al, 2015, pp. 290-296).
It can be summarized that in Greek literature and urban planning practice, true participatory processes are not widely discussed and understood, and despite their inclusion in legislation they have not been activated or have only nominally been implemented.

2.1.5 Defining urban regeneration

A definition for urban regeneration can be found in Greek legislation: it is an intervention in an area that includes a number of directions, measures and interventions and processes of planning, economic, housing and special architectural character with the aim of improving the quality of life of the residents, improving the built environment as well as protecting and promoting cultural, historic, morphological and aesthetic elements of the area (paraphrased from article 8, law 2508/1997).

The term "urban regeneration" can mean several things but generally it is grouped into two general types: radical and mild (Aravantinos, 1997, pp. 371-372). A radical regeneration of an urban area is the demolition of the existing building stock with some possible exceptions (for example a historic building) and a subsequent complete reconstruction. A mild regeneration is the partial modernization and partial demolition -with or without replacement- of the existing building stock (Aravantinos, 2011; Loukopoulos et al, 1990, p. 18). Radical urban regeneration was the dominant practice in Europe in the decades after the Second World War, partly also due to the damage that these areas had suffered during the war. Mild urban regeneration began to be more widely implemented after the 1970s, with the main reason behind this being the attempt to avoid some of the negative results that had been observed by previous radical renewals: notably financial aspects, as governments became more frugal as well as social aspects as radical regeneration often had a negative effect on weaker social groups such as minorities and poor strata.

Generally speaking the problems that characterize areas in need of urban renewal can be grouped in four categories (Karavia, 2006)

- Problems with the building stock: problems related to the age and the unsuitability of the building stock in the area.
- Problems with the population: problems typically related to social and economic status of the population.
- Land-use related problems: problems related to land-use clashes, land-uses that deprive the area and also the lack of public space.
• Problems related to the lack of protection to cultural and historic characteristics of an area, typically referring to areas with a rich identity which however are being dilapidated

2.1.6 Typologies of problematic areas in Greece

The way that the Greek urban built environment has been developed has created certain characteristics such as fragmentation of land ownership, a wide prevalence of self-housing even among the poorer classes and a limited role of public institutions in housing development. These characteristics are important factors that affect the implementation of urban regeneration and renewal policies in Greek cities. The main characteristics of what is understood as problematic areas in Greek cities can be summarized as such (Loukopoulos et al, 1990, pp. 18-21):

• Limited public space compared to private space
• High degree of exploitation (high building volumes, high densities, high percentage of land coverage)
• Insufficient internal road network and traffic problems
• Insufficient parking space
• Insufficient social infrastructure
• Mixing of housing with incompatible land uses
• Lack of green spaces, poor environmental conditions, pollution
• Insufficient protection of historic areas and buildings
• Poor structural state of buildings and lack of technical equipment in them

Although the term "problematic areas" is in common use the type of areas to which people refer when using it can often vary considerably. In Greek cities a number of different types of problematic areas can be identified. Combining Kosmaki’s et al typology (1992:10) with Loukopoulos’ et at (1990: 21) these types are:

1. "Islands" of slums and dangerous areas due to proximity to sources of pollution or other forms of danger.

2. Areas of informal (illegal) development without infrastructure or layout. This type of unorganized unplanned development at the edges of cities was prolific in the previous decades in Greece and remains to a lesser extent an active practice today.
3. Areas with old and worn-out buildings which have not been maintained and renovated due to lack of private financial interest. Such areas can be the settlements constructed in the interwar years to house the war refugees, areas of social housing constructed in the post-war years by the state, dilapidated central areas or areas adjacent to industries.

4. Densely built central areas, with a mix of uses and great concentration of residential and commercial units, built around the old city centres. These areas were developed mostly post-war. In 1990 and 1992 (when Kosmaki et al and Loukopoulos et al were completing their research works) these areas still had a relatively well maintained and new stock of buildings although in the decades since then this situation has changed.

5. Areas of vacation houses which often are illegally and densely developed.

Although this research thesis does not focus on a specific area, it is necessary to limit the scope into a relatively homogenous subject. As such the focus of this research thesis will be the central and semi-central urban areas that fall in the third and fourth category. The first refers to specialized cases while the second and fifth are a different type of problem altogether. These two types (3 and 4) of areas will be described more analytically.

The areas with poorly maintained building stock can be distinguished in two main categories: first, those that were built by the public sector to provide housing solutions to certain segments of the population and second, areas that have been dilapidated for various reasons. In the first category principal examples are the refugee settlements that were constructed by Greek state or international organizations to house the refugees of the war period 1912-1922 and the social housing after the Second World War. These housing projects could have a variety forms such as provision of financial assistance in order for the beneficiary to privately buy or construct their home or the state company construct housing units and then provide them to the beneficiaries. More relevant for this research study are the areas where the state companies built residences in an organized manner. Indicatively, the main refugee-housing institution (EAP - Commission for the Rehabilitation of Refugees, financed by the League of Nations) had some 552,000 beneficiaries and constructed some 50,396 residential units (Lifo, 2016). The main post-war social housing company (OEK - Organization for Workers’ Housing) in the period from 1954 (its creation) to 2012 (its disbandment) assisted some 700,000 beneficiaries while it constructed some 49,190 residences (Mageiridi & Ramfou, 2016, p. 91). OEK was active until 2012 and developed housing until fairly recently. As such any further reference to settlements developed by it in this research study will focus to older ones constructed during the first couple of decades of its existence. The positive characteristics of this type of settlement are the limited exploitation (mainly limited building volume), the social cohesion and similar lifestyle of their inhabitants and often their
location (when referring to cities), as they tend to be adjacent to central areas. Their negative aspects include the age of the buildings in many cases and the overall low quality of them, such as small apartments and lack of technical infrastructure, public space and social infrastructure. DEPOS, a state owned company responsible for urban development in cooperation with the municipalities, made plans for reconstructing the refugee settlements with the aim of retaining the existing residents in these areas but these plans mostly did not come to fruition. The main obstacles were the fragmentation of ownership and the fact that many of the owner-residents did not in fact possess a legal title of ownership (Loukopoulos et al, 1990, p. 22).

Central residential areas in the major Greek cities are characterized by post-war development of apartment blocks of several storeys (typically from 5 to 8) on an existing urban network with old layouts designed around the beginning of the 20th century, with standards that became obsolete by the second half of the century. These layouts had narrow streets and dimensionally small blocks. The existing low buildings from the beginning of the century were replaced post-war by the profitable multi-storey apartment blocks via an extremely prolific quid-pro-quo system (called antiparochi in Greek), where the owner of a plot of urban land would agree with a contractor to redevelop their property and be compensated with a number of apartments in the new building to be built instead of a payment. The provisions by the planning regulations allowed for a plot coverage of 70-80% and heights of over 5 storeys. The building style was continuous and typically without a front garden. This has created closed blocks in which an open space is located in the interior. Given the fragmented way these blocks were developed the shape of the buildings and the shape of this internal open area are irregular while the area’s ownership is also fragmented among the surrounding plots. Thus these open spaces which were supposed to provide the residents with private green spaces are badly underutilized and difficult to exploit. The population density of these areas can vary from 500 to 1000 residents per Ha. These areas are predominantly residential with services (commercial, entertainment and others) and occasionally small craft uses found at the ground and basement level (Kosmaki et al, 1992, pp.13). The advantages of these areas are the easy access to the cities’ center and the services there as well as the availability of many services at the local level. The disadvantages however, which progressively over the decades began to be much more felt, have to do with air and noise pollution, problematic traffic and lack of parking spaces, lack of open and green spaces, shortage of public services, clash of some uses and the fragmentation of society due to the anonymity produced by this type of housing and the function of the roads as corridors for motorized transport that break the neighborhood’s continuity (Kosmaki et al, 1992, p. 14).
2.1.7 Urban regeneration practice in Greece

Urban regeneration in Greece had a delayed arrival. While in Europe and the rest of the world it has been a practice with many decades of implementation in Greece it is a relatively new entry to legislation and with limited implementation. The Greek planning legislation has included urban regeneration in its provisions for several decades but these have not used in a significant scale and remain unclear. The first mentions in Greek legislation for urban regeneration appeared in the 1970s with a couple of pieces of legislation (decree 1003/1971, law 947/1979). The important law 1337/1983 which provided a basis for subsequent urban planning legislation in Greece introduced intervention zones for the purpose of urban regeneration such as zones of special subsidies and incentives. It also introduced the “neighborhood planning committee” which could make suggestions to the local authorities on matter of urban planning (article 30, law 1337/1983).

Law 1577/1985 which established new building regulations introduced the “active city block” with the purposes of establishing a common design for the entire block rather than individual designs for each plot as is common in Greece. Also the renewal of city blocks in order to improve the quality of life of the residents such as by joining the fragmented open space in the blocks’ interior and opening access to it from outside and providing spaces for common activities. This law also had the stipulation that with a ministerial decree subjects relating to the forming of a residents’ council of the block (such as division of votes, the necessary majority for the taking of decisions, the way of implementing decisions and the appointment of a manager etc) would be regulated. The initiative to make a city block “active” could be taken either by the local authorities or by the residents’ council (articles 12-13, law 1577/1985). However these articles required decrees and other actions from the government that were never taken (Aravantinos, 2011).

Law 2508/1997 replaced law 1337/1983 (which was initially passed as an “interim” law) and among others it introduced a complete set of regulations regarding urban regeneration. Until that point regulations regarding urban regenerations had been fragmented and without cohesion. Law 2508/1997 brought into legislation a definition and prerequisites for an area to be liable for regeneration, as well as the technical and financial tools to implement it. Relevant to the subject of this research thesis is that among others it included as prerequisites the need for the approval of a regeneration project:

- to include a systematic survey of the housing, social and economic characteristics of the area’s residents
- an estimate on the financial need, possible subsidies and overall cost-effectiveness analyses
a systematic and verified report over the opinions of the residents and the results of participatory processes, after they had been informed over the details of the proposed project.

Law 2508/1997 still largely defines regulations regarding urban regeneration, as subsequent planning laws focused on changing different aspects of the Greek planning system. Despite the detailed nature in which this law presented regulations for urban regeneration they have not been implemented in the time since then (Melissas, 2011; Aravantinos, 2011). Melissas (2011) summarizes the reasons why the law 2508/1997 has failed to produce significant results as such:

- General town plans often focused on the expansion of city limits and paid limited attention to possible areas in need of regeneration.
- The financial instruments provided by the law focused exclusively on public organizations and had no provisions for joint public-private or exclusively private sector financing.
- The processes of forming a managing body responsible for a regeneration project were inflexible and complicated, and thus ineffective and time consuming.
- Areas designated by city plans as areas slated for regeneration have not been regenerated due to the lack of a framework of standards.
- The law remained partly inactive because the administration has not passed some required regulatory acts.

The spatial planning Law 2742/1999 introduced the Plans of Integrated Urban Interventions (SOAP in Greek). The SOAP are intended to be used for promoting integrated urban planning strategies for areas that present serious and complex problems of development lag, social and economic cohesion, environmental degradation and quality of life. The aim of such plans is acting within the frames of overarching spatial and regulatory planning to provide an improvement in infrastructure and basic social services, combat unemployment, integrate functions and social groups into the urban fabric and combat social discrimination, harmonious structuring of land uses, prudent management of the urban ecosystem, exploitation of new technologies, development of modes of transport friendly towards the environment, preservation and promotion of the urban cultural heritage as well as the general social, economic, environmental and cultural revitalization of cities and urban areas with negative characteristics. The plans are also accompanied by an action plan where the necessary regulative, financial and managerial arrangements, measures and programmes, phases and executive and financial bodies as well as possible actions for informing, training and socially and economically reintegrating the population are specified (§1, article 12, law 2742/1999).
The process of initiating a SOAP can begin at all levels of government from local to central. In any case the proposal needs to be made public to the citizen and non-governmental organizations of the affected area and their opinions need to be systematically recorded through participatory processes. This is a responsibility of the local municipality (§3-7, article 12, law 2742/1999). The SOAP is a new tool that is only now starting to be implemented. Athens has adopted the first SOAP for a part of its center where problems exist and Thessaloniki has included in its new General City Plan, being still in the process of adoption (as of 2018), provisions for slating areas of the old center for SOAP plans. A description of the SOAP of Athens and its measures allows for an understanding of the reality of the course of urban regeneration is taking in Greece, as it is seen as a pilot project to be emulated in the future.

The SOAP of Athens began with the initiative of the municipality of Athens and the Organization for the Regulatory Plan of Athens based on the realization that the center of Athens is in “major crisis” (Municipality of Athens and the Organization of the Regulatory Plan of Athens [MAORPA], 2013, p.17). The crisis as observed by MAORPA has many dimensions, beyond the urban planning one. The central aim of the SOAP of Athens is to "redefine the center of Athens as a center of an international and sustainable metropolis", with sustainability defined as “the triangle of competitiveness - social cohesion - protection of the urban environment" (MAORPA, 2013, p.21). The SOAP of Athens has a conventional span of seven years, between 2014 and 2020, to coincide with the European programming period and its funds, from which the SOAP hopes to finance part of its actions. MAORPA observe that the problems of the city center are not the result of the economic crisis that hit Greece, because they existed before it. However the economic crisis exacerbates the crisis of the center by putting pressures on economic activity, on employment and by conjunction the social climate, and by reducing the availability of public funds that could be directed towards measures to fight the crisis (2013: 24). Additional general factors that exacerbate the urban crisis are illegal immigration, which although not in all areas, but clearly in some, has caused a "ghettoization", and the public administration in Greece which is characterized by inconsistency in implementing measures, ineffectiveness and lack of strong political will and direction (MAORPA, 2013, p. 24-25). The specific aims of the plan are (MAORPA, 2013, p.28):

- Support of the economic base
- Recovery of the social and cultural cohesion - reoccupation
- Restoration of safety and legality
- Recovery and improvement of the public space
- Improvement of environmental conditions and urban function
• Reinforcement of the identity and the image of the city

• Improvement of the mechanisms of governance, planning and participation

The last aim is important in relation to this research thesis and shows the direction where things are going in Greece as there is an increasing importance placed on the civil society. These seven aims are to be achieved through 18 axes of action and 62 actions, with each action belonging potentially to more than one axis. The actions cover diverse subjects such as promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation, combating criminality, handling the issue of prostitution, works to support people with disabilities, recycling of water in public buildings etc. Relevant to the subject of this thesis are actions related to the structured environment, such as actions for abandoned buildings, interventions in the building stock and retirement of buildings, combating high densities and securing public space, and activating inactive financial tools stipulated in legislation regarding urban planning and development. As far as citizen participation is concerned, despite it being mentioned in one of the seven aims, no particular focus is put in any of the actions, other than the attempt, with the initiative of the public sector, to mobilize private capital so as to make interventions on the existing building stock.

The proposed new General City Plan of the municipality of Thessaloniki, still in the adoption process as of 2018, takes inspiration of the SOAP of Athens to propose the adoption of several SOAP for Thessaloniki’s old center. It recognizes that areas in the city center show signs of a degraded urban environment owing to the deteriorating condition of the building stock, changes to the land uses, inflow of foreign immigrants etc. It considers that deprived areas or areas in the process of getting deprived cover a large part of the city, not only in the center but elsewhere too. The problems identified are (Municipality of Thessaloniki, 2015, p.154):

• The ageing of the building stock

• The way and the urban planning standards with which the city was originally built

• The quality of public spaces

• The change of the economic and social status of its inhabitants

• The clear danger of further deterioration

The proposed plan envisages two types of SOAP, referring to two different types of problematic areas. The first type has as its focus economic development and the increase of competitiveness while the second focuses on improving the daily life of the residents by appropriately handling the building stock and the public space (Municipality of Thessaloniki, 2015, p.155).
This second area slated for a SOAP shows the characteristics that were described earlier in this thesis of residential areas developed around the central urban core on an existing old layout but with new buildings of the first two post-war decades (1950's-1960's). The proposed General City Plan notes that the very high population densities and the building volumes create an “asphyxiating environment” characterized by narrow streets and multi-storey buildings with insufficient sunlight and ventilation. There is a “great lack” of public and green spaces as well as a great shortage of parking space causing illegal parking to create traffic blockages. There are underutilized narrow streets and unconnected pedestrian paths. The building stock is largely old. The old population has been leaving the area for years and is replaced by immigrants and lower social classes causing the degradation and marginalization of the area (Municipality of Thessaloniki, 2015, p.159). Although the General City Plan detects these problematic areas and proposes the adoption of SOAP plans it does not delve further into the necessary actions, other than repeating the generalizations in the text of the law.

2.1.8 Conclusions from the review

The main concluding points that derive from this chapter relate to the correct understanding of what real citizen participation in urban regeneration is, the different approaches to participation and the various terminology that is used to refer to similar or different things, and ultimately the elements that define participation and possible processes. As observed from the review there is very limited experience in Greece with participatory urban planning. The subject is discussed in Greek language literature based on foreign experiences. In western and northern European countries community-led urban development has become both a common and an accepted new model of spatial planning. Similarly there is rich academic literature researching these examples. In Greece this model has hardly been applied, and while the subject of participation has been receiving increasing attention in Greece, it still typically seen as a government-led process, with varying but generally limited degrees of citizen influence.

2.2 Operationalisation of theoretical concepts

To answer the research questions set for this research project a number of variables need to be determined. These variables will be researched through a number of indicators. The indicators are identified based on the literature that was examined before, and are the factors that can determine a successful true participatory process in planning. An overview of some research
projects that have attempted to answer the questions of what are the conditions for the emergence and successful implementation of participatory and self-organization processes can provide a basis from which indicators for this research can be defined.

2.2.1 Factors of success in participatory processes in planning

As has already been mentioned in this thesis, oftentimes the objectives of a participatory process are vague and cannot be interpreted through a rational, functional or goal-oriented approach. Indeed, as already mentioned citizen participation is seen as a virtue itself, and as such the definition of success in research does not focus on measurable results but perceptions of success. Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, defined successful co-creation, itself a subset of participation, as “the extent in which involved stakeholders perceive that co-creation arrangements between citizens and public organizations successfully have been established” adding that “successful co-creation must be understood in the successful creation of a co-creative process” (2014: 8). They analyzed two cases of successful implementations of co-creation processes and checked to what extent certain conditions, or variables, were fulfilled. They further categorised these variables based on the degree to which they were necessary or sufficient for affirming causal interference. These variables were derived from the literature on co-creation/co-production, and are similar to the influential factors that were presented previously. The variables and their definitions used were (2014: 24-25)

- the existence of a risk-averse administrative culture, defined as "the extent in which the administrative culture can be characterized as risk-averse towards the incorporation of citizens as partners in public service delivery"; the indicators were:
  1. the extent in which the respondents characterized the administrative context as risk-averse
  2. the extent in which the respondents reported on a tradition of co-creation between citizens and public organisations
  3. the extent in which in policy documents had been reported on the risks of citizen participation in general and co-creation specifically

- the stimulating involvement of public officials, defined as "the extent in which involved public officials show supportive behaviour towards co-creation initiatives"; the indicators were:
1. the extent in which the respondents characterized the attitudes of public officials towards public co-creation

2. the extent in which public officials were affiliated in order to stimulate co-creation

- the existence of clear incentives, defined as "the extent in which it has been clarified why co-creation is beneficial or important and what it will yield for individual actors"; the indicators were:
  1. the extent in which the respondents indicated that it had been clarified to what the co-creation initiative or project would contribute
  2. the extent in which the respondents reported on clear incentives for them to participate in the co-creation initiative
  3. the extent in which it had been concretized in policy documents why co-creation is important

- the adaptation of organisational structures and procedures of public organisations, defined as "the extent in which public organizations have adapted their organizational structures, systems, routines and facilities to connect with citizens"; the indicators were:
  1. the extent in which the respondents indicated that public organisation made adaptations to better connect to the co-creation initiative
  2. the extent in which respondents indicated that the facilities of the public organisation or municipality fitted the co-creation initiative
  3. the extent in which policy documents had reported on adapted public organisation in favour of co-creation

- the willingness of citizens, defined as "the extent in which citizens are willing to co-create for a greater cause"; the indicators were:
  1. the extent in which the respondents indicated that participating actors were willing to co-create
  2. the extent in which the respondents indicated that non-participating actors were willing to co-create
  3. the reasons why the respondents were willing to co-create
and the existence of social capital, defined as “the extent in which social structures both between and within groups in the community are present”; the indicators were:

1. the extent in which the respondents indicated that social structures were present between citizens which could act as fertile ground to build co-creation
2. the extent in which the respondents indicated that social structures were present within the neighbourhoods
3. the extent in which policy documents referred to social structures as breeding ground for co-creation

In a similar research project Nederhand, Bekkers & Voorberg (2016) researched the factors that lead to successful processes of self-organization in public administration. Nederhand et al identified in literature six factors that shape the content, course and outcomes of self-organization processes, and are necessary for success. Namely (2016: 1065-1066 & 1083-1084):

- the existence of a trigger that will generate interaction
- the presence of social capital in a neighbourhood, meaning the existence of trust and networks within the neighbourhood
- the necessary interplay of ideas, information and experiences, and the focus that is needed to exchange them, as well as the development of a clear goal
- the "physical and virtual locus of the self-organization process", meaning the necessary infrastructure to enhance communication and exchange of information necessary for self-organisation processes
- the existence of links with the external environment
- the adaptation of systems and procedures

Van Meerker, Boonstra & Edelenboos (2011) made a two-case comparative research over self-organization in urban regeneration. They researched two urban-regeneration projects in the UK with the research question: “in what ways do self-organizing processes evolve in urban regeneration projects, and which conditions facilitate these processes?” (2011: 2). They divided self-organization into two categories, autopoietic and dissipative, and attempted to see how their
interplay can lead to a vigorous urban regeneration process. They operationalized "vigorous" self-organization with the indicators (2011: 6):

- co-production through:
  - a) joint problem-definition
  - b) joint solution finding
- ongoing interaction through
  - a) the presence of mutual communication and understanding
  - b) the absence of high-level conflict

They conclude that in establishing "vigorous" urban regeneration processes four conditions are required (2011: 20-21):

1) the existence of strong initiating conditions, meaning a trigger that will lead local stakeholder towards self-organization. In both cases they examined there was a central problem recognized by the local stakeholders which was in their interest and scope to solve

2) the existence of key individuals that operate as connecting actors between the different spheres (public, private and/or civic)

3) the mutual adaptation of identities, meaning in the cases they studied the changing of the roles (for instance the local authority took a facilitating rather than an initiating or determining role), or the development of new ways of working with the stakeholders.

4) Using general legislation to meet local needs, as they existed in the two case-studies

The case of Alma Gare in France

A case of an iconic instance of participatory urban regeneration will be examined. This case, which inspired a similar project in Greece, can provide further indications regarding the factors that determine success in participatory urban regeneration.

Alma-Gare is a district of the city of Roubaix in northern France near Lille. Roubaix had developed as an industrial city focused on textiles in the late 19th century but after the Second World War its industry declined. Accordingly the town saw dramatic growth in population in the second half of the 19th century -from 8,000 at the beginning of the century to 125,000 at the end- but its population has since then stagnated with an overall negative trend. It was around 109,000 in the
mid-70s and has since then dropped to 96,000. Alma Gare in the 1960s was a very poor district characterized by particularly high unemployment, a large immigrant population and a high median age. Forty-five percent of its approximately 5,000 inhabitants were either unemployed or retired and almost half the population was foreign born (Schuman, 1985, p. 19).

A particular physical characteristic of the built environment and a result of the city's history are the "courées", namely the houses constructed on the inside of the city blocks as a second row behind the frontal row of houses. This form of housing was developed in order to satisfy the high demand during the phase of rapid population growth in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This type of housing typically offered minimal amenities, such as shared access to water and sanitation.

In 1963 the neighborhood was slated for regeneration and the plan of the government was to completely demolish the courées as it had done in other similar projects. It took about a decade after 1963 for the public funds to be found and allocated for the project. In the meantime the residents, knowing of the plans of the government and the effects that similar projects had, were alarmed by the prospect of gentrification of their neighborhood and their replacement by a new class of white collar workers from the expanding service sector, as well as the dissolution of their social fabric by moving into impersonal large blocks.

The first organizing activity by the residents was to demand from the private landowners to provide building repairs already in 1962, and some 60 families attended that meeting. The basis of this organization was not a political party or a labour union but rather the "catholic left" (Schuman, 1985, p.8). The nature of the courées which had their residents sharing facilities as well as the bills further promoted social cohesion. Subsequently in 1974 the residents founded the Atelier Populaire d’Urbanisme (APU) which had as an objective to push for a renovation that would protect its inhabitants and preserve the existing social life. The APU would meet for the next years every Wednesday to discuss the issues of the neighborhood. This "Wednesday meeting" carried particular importance (Delfini, 2016). The initial activities of the APU focused on combating the authorities such as striking against rent prices and water stoppages. The influence that these actions had was significant as they typically brought results. Another important step was the creation by the French ministry of Equipment (later reorganized as the Ministry of Housing and Planning) of the Plan Construction agency in 1971. This agency had as an objective to stimulate innovation in land development. In 1976 it signed a contract with a group of architects, planners and sociologists (named ABAC) to create together with the APU a program for the revitalization of Alma-Gare. The result was a map and a strategy published in 1977, which focused in keeping the existing population in the neighborhood, maintaining the layout and some of the building stock but demolishing the courées and providing in the freed up space new housing,
facilities and services. The project would be implemented incrementally with small improvements each time (Schuman, 1985, pp. 8-9).

At the same time the election of a new municipal leadership in 1977 took place. The municipality of Roubaix had consistently been electing socialist mayors since 1912, a result of the dominance of the working-class population. Generally the socialist policies were more accepting of consultation with the people which made them a good candidate for a participatory process in planning, but the incumbent leadership was more conventional, preferring the radical renewal projects and focusing on providing housing for the now growing white-collar class of service-sector employees. In 1977 the mayor Victor Provo who had been in office since 1942 was replaced by Pierre Prouvost. This change brought also a change of the attitude of the municipality towards the Alma-Gare project. Whereas the previous leadership had been more authoritarian the new one was more accepting of the new alternative proposed by the residents. The fact that the APU-ABAC partnership had already drafted a plan while the municipality had none of its own was a crucial factor for the municipality to accept to adopt the programme (Hatzfeld, 1986). A Working Group (Groupe de Travail) was established that would bring all the parties together, while it would also be financed by the municipality. The Working Group would sometimes meet in the neighborhood rather than the town hall, a sign of the change in the balance of influence between the municipality and the residents (Hatzfeld, 1986, p. 385). The result was that in 1979 the first phase of the programme which included the construction of 380 housing units plus community service and facilities commenced construction (Schuman, 1985, p. 11).

However the momentum that the initiative had in the 1970s was progressively lost in the 1980s. The main reasons was the progressive failure of the various cooperatives that had been established as part of the initiative, financing difficulties of the APU, inability of the APU to address issues such as racism which took particularly large dimensions, a general devolution of the neighborhood’s social life such as crime and prostitution and the increasing detachment of the APU from the neighborhood’s society. Characteristically, the Wednesday meetings stopped in 1983 (Delfini, 2016).

To summarise the case of the Alma Gare experiment had some significant elements that led to its relative success: the existence of social capital and relatively strong social cohesion; the existence of a trigger (namely the slating of the neighborhood for radical renewal which led to the residents’ reaction and the bottom-up initiative of creating the APU); a local government which either due to its lack of a rather readily available alternative plan or due to ideological reasons was accepting of the process; the institutional environment such as the ABAC which played an essential role into turning the residents’ initiative into a viable alternative plan. Despite the existence of these elements which made this noteworthy participatory process possible, it eventually ended.
Significant obstacles, coming either form objective organizational reasons or from more subjective societal, killed the initiative.

2.2.2 Defining variables for research

The overview of these research projects along with the conclusions drawn from the literature review provide the basis for the operationalization of the theoretical concepts for this research. This operationalization is based on the factors for successful implementation of co-creation or self-organization which were explored in these previous research, as well as on the conclusions drawn from the review over the Alma Gare project. In this exploration a number of patterns were discovered. These patterns form the variables that will be used in this research project to answer the research questions. Each variable will be explored through one or more indicators, with the indicators being derived from the literature. The indicators have the form of questions that are quantified in terms of the extent in which they are valid.

The table below shows the key terms and concepts that appeared in the review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compatibility of public organizations with respect to co-creation/co-production (Voorberg et al, 2015a)</th>
<th>Trust in the process (Voorberg et al, 2015a)</th>
<th>Interplay of ideas, information and experiences (Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</th>
<th>The level of social capital (Voorberg, Bekkers &amp; Tummers, 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of public officials and politicians (Voorberg et al, 2015a)</td>
<td>Joint problem-definition (Meerkerk, Boonstra &amp; Edelenboos, 2011)</td>
<td>Clear goal (Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</td>
<td>Alma Gare: APU and the renovation of the neighborhood -&gt; focus of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative culture (Voorberg et al, 2015a)</td>
<td>Joint solution finding (Meerkerk, Boonstra &amp; Edelenboos, 2011)</td>
<td>Physical and virtual locus (Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</td>
<td>Alma Gare: municipal change in 1977 -&gt; change of attitude by the government towards the residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear incentive to use co-creation (Voorberg et al, 2015a)</td>
<td>The presence of mutual communication and understanding (Meerkerk, Boonstra &amp; Edelenboos, 2011)</td>
<td>Links with the external environment (Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</td>
<td>Alma Gare: ABAC -&gt; external institutional framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Alma Gare: Working</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal willingness of the individual citizen to participate</td>
<td>Voorberg et al. (2015a)</td>
<td>Group; meetings in the municipality and the neighborhood - infrastructure; framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of ownership and perceived ability of citizens to participate</td>
<td>(Voorberg et al. 2015a)</td>
<td>Alma Gare: shared amenities; the &quot;catholic left&quot; - social capital; social cohesion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existence of social capital</td>
<td>(Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</td>
<td>plan from the government to demolish the courées; fears of gentrification - triggering event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the presence of clear incentives</td>
<td>(Voorberg, Bekkers &amp; Tummers, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the extent in which citizens are willing to co-create</td>
<td>(Voorberg, Bekkers &amp; Tummers, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the absence of high-level conflict</td>
<td>Meerker, Boonstra &amp; Edelenboos, 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>adaptation of systems and procedures</td>
<td>Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>the absence of social capital</td>
<td>(Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presence of social capital</td>
<td>(Nederhand, Bekkers &amp; Voorberg, 2016)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4: Key terms and concepts that were distilled from the literature review over successful co-creation and self-organization</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first pattern discerned from the table above is the present situation regarding citizen participation in the public administration. This consists of three main elements: a) the overall administrative culture, b) the legal framework and c) the attitude of the politicians and public officials (as seen in Voorberg et al (2015a) and in the Alma Gare project, where the change of the mayors brought about also a change in the attitude towards the citizens’ proposal and allowed the process to take off). The indicators to be used to research this variable are a) the existence of policies and intentions to implement self-organization in planning, or a recognition of its importance is formally expressed and b) the existence of laws that allow or put immovable obstacles to the processes of participatory planning and self-organization. These two questions cover the three elements mentioned before.

Another variable is the existence of effective channels of communication and of exchanging of opinions between the government and the citizens as well as among the citizens themselves. This can be derived in the literature from the concepts of joint problem definition and joint solution finding (Meerker, Boonstra & Edelenboos, 2011), the necessity of the presence of mutual communication and understanding (Meerker, Boonstra & Edelenboos, 2011) and the interplay of ideas, information and experiences (Nederhand, Bekkers & Voorberg, 2016). The third major actor, namely the experts or professionals have communication with the other actors and the planning procedures of the government have de facto included them in traditional planning processes, although the extent in which this has happened needs also to be researched. Thus, the indicators to answer this variable are a) the existence of a tradition of communication and collaboration between the government and the citizens exists already and the extent of the influence of the experts and b) whether there is a tradition of self-organization already present among the citizens.
The third variable is the conditions that exist on the actors’ side. The existence of social capital is a factor mentioned repeatedly in literature (Voorberg et al, 2015a; Nederhand, Bekkers & Voorberg, 2016; Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2014) and is also evident in the case of Alma Gare, where the citizen initiative was based on an existing significant level of social capital created by the shared lifestyle of the inhabitants and the influence that the “catholic left” had on them. Added to the level of social capital is the willingness of the citizens to collaborate and their belief that they can contribute to the process, as well as the sense of ownership and their trust in the process. These are some additional obvious factors of a successful and effective implementation of participatory processes. Agreement over the objectives of the process -that is defining the problems and the solutions to be sought- is another essential factor of success. The indicators to answer this variable are a) the existence of social structures and networks of contact and cooperation among the actors b) the existence of willingness by the actors to participate in the process and c) the existence of trust among the actors.

Furthermore, a fourth variable is the existence of a clear incentive to use participatory practices, which as discovered by Voorberg et al (2015a) is important at least on the side of public officials. The incentive to use participatory processes is connected to the belief in the effectiveness of and the existence of trust in the process. The belief in the effectiveness of this alternative form of urban planning processes acts as the necessary incentive for all sides to participate. The support expressed by any of the actors also works as an incentive that mobilizes the interest of the other actors. As such the indicator for this variable is the existence of a belief in the effectiveness of the process and a clear support for it is expressed.

The infrastructure of the process, namely the physical location for holding meetings and possibly an electronic platform on which the process will operate, and also the provision of an operating framework (as for instance the Working Group in the case of Alma Gare) is another, mostly government-borne, element of success, forming the fifth variable. Added to this is the readiness of the government to adapt its decision making process to include true participation by the citizens. The indicators for this variable are a) the existence of willingness from the government to accept the risks of self-organization and the extent in which it is willing to accept an equal status with the other actors in the decision-making process and b) the existence of willingness and ability by the government to design the institutional setting by providing structure of positions and relationships of the actors as well the rules of the game, the necessary resources, such as relevant information, legal support, knowledge, finances and a meeting place.

The sixth variable is the existence of a triggering event (Nederhand, Bekkers & Voorberg, 2016). The triggering event is connected to the existence of a clear purpose for the process. The clear focus, that is the existence of clear goal or objective for the process, is also mentioned by
Nederhand, Bekkers & Voorberg (2016). To these two the observations from the study of the case of Alma Gare can be added. In that particular case the focus of the self-organizing initiative undertaken by the inhabitants was the regeneration of their neighborhood, and the triggering event was the plan of the government to implement a radical renewal, as it had done in other similar cases. This plan caused the reaction of the residents and provided a clear objective to their initiative, namely the drafting and proposing of an alternative plan that would not upset the lifestyle and composition of the community. The indicators for this variable are a) the existence of a sense of belonging and an interest for the urban renewal project in a spatial unit (which could be a block, a street or a whole neighborhood) and b) the existence of a common understanding of the problems, the solutions and the objectives of the process is expressed. The sense of belonging is a necessary condition to mobilize the citizens to act towards an objective, thus also a necessary precondition for a trigger to exist. The common understanding of the problems and their solutions forms the second leg of the trigger, namely that there is agreement of what constitutes a problem worth solving. Additionally the common understanding of the problem, the solutions and the objectives of the process provide the frame for a clear focus.

The diagram below shows in a schematic form the conceptual framework on which this research thesis is based. It summarizes the steps taken so far to form the research approach. Initially, participation in planning had to be defined, and in particular what constitutes real participation, rather than symbolic. Secondly success or effectiveness of a participatory process had to be defined. Thirdly, the factors that lead to a successful true participatory process. From this exploration the conditions of successful participation were defined, as well as the important actors in the process. The degree to which the external environment and the actors of a participatory process in urban regeneration in Greece fulfill the conditions or variables of a successful true participatory process will provide the answer to the research question of whether the necessary elements for a successful true participation in urban regeneration are to found in Greece.
What is “true” participation in urban planning

What is a successful participatory process

What are the factors of success in a participatory process

Conditions or variables of a successful true participatory process:
- Overall administrative culture, political attitudes and legal framework
- Communication among actors
- Existence of trust in the process
- Adaptation of practices
- Social capital and willingness to work together
- Triggering event and clear focus

External environment:
- Built environment
- Legislation
- Economy

Actors in a participatory planning process:
- Citizens
- Public sector
- Professionals and private sector

Successful participatory process
3 Methodology

3.1 Research strategy

The strategy of this research project is to answer the research question by answering the four sub-questions that were defined in the beginning of this text. The three first sub-questions namely: “What is urban regeneration in the Greek context? What are its main constituent elements?”, “How does participatory planning and self-organization relate to urban regeneration? In what elements of urban regeneration are such practices relevant?”, and “What are the elements that determine success in participatory and self-organization processes?” were answered through the literature review and the exploration of the theoretical framework. The last and most significant research sub-question, namely: “Are these elements to be found in Greece? Where is there sufficient presence and where is there lack? What are possible solutions?” is answered through an exploratory research based on qualitative data analysis.

The first step of this research methodology was presented in the previous chapter. A number of conditions or variables were identified through the literature review and for each of them a number of indicators which help determine whether the variables are fulfilled or not. The indicators are answered through the analysis of data of qualitative nature.

3.1.1 Necessary data

The data necessary for this research belong to three main categories, to allow a triangular approach for researching the subject. Triangulating by using different sources of information maximizes the understanding of a research question (Clifford et al, 2010, p.8) and allows for confirming results (Clifford et al, 2010, p.441). The type and sources of data were determined by the subject matter and the operationalization of the research. The sources needed to be relevant to the subject and to have reliable data to offer. As the subject refers to an activity –urban regeneration- which typically has heavy involvement of the public sector, the public sector represented through its officials as well as its documents, including the overall legislation, were a necessary source of data. Policy documents and documents of legislation provide a very significant type of data. Legislation, although liable to changes, provides a strict framework within which the planning system operates. Researching legislation touching upon planning and regeneration as well as citizen participation in planning or in self-organization provides answers as to whether there are provisions facilitating such developments, or possibly provisions placing significant
obstacles to the realisation of such practices, even if other factors contribute. Policy documents are also very important as they indicate the perception of the government bodies of various levels regarding the current state of affairs as well as their intentions for the short and medium term future.

Another necessary source of data are all the stakeholders or actors involved in participatory process or a process of citizen self-organization. These actors can express their opinion either in direct interviews or in other types of sources, such as literature. Literature in this way can included research done regarding the opinions over participatory planning and self-organization, press articles on participatory planning efforts and reactions to them, and ultimately also reports or papers produced based on the experiences from some attempts of participatory planning. A number of efforts of participatory planning processes and self-organization with some relevance to urban regeneration have taken place. These cases, examined through any source was available provide data based on experience. Another type of data is academic literature and the references it makes to self-organization in planning and participatory planning in Greece. Academic literature, based on research done and the experience that the authors have, provides some evidence towards answering the indicators. Additionally, as part of the academic literature examined, there was a Greek case where a regeneration project in a dilapidated neighbourhood was implemented with the use of a participation process with the citizens as co-implementers, in an attempt to directly emulate the Alma-Gare project in France.

The table below summarizes the variables with their indicators and the sources of data which correspond to each indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Principal sources of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall administrative culture, political attitudes and legal framework</td>
<td>The existence of laws that allow or put immovable obstacles to the processes of participatory planning and self-organization</td>
<td>Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication among actors</td>
<td>The existence of a tradition of communication and coordination</td>
<td>Interviews with all actors; academic and other literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
between the government and the citizens and the extent of the influence of the experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existence of trust in the process</th>
<th>The existence of belief in the effectiveness and support for the process by the actors</th>
<th>Policy documents; interviews with all actors; academic and other literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adaptation of practices</td>
<td>The existence of willingness from the government to accept the risks of self-organization and the extent in which the government is willing to accept an equal status with the other actors in the decision-making process.</td>
<td>Policy documents; interviews with public officials; opinions founded in other sources (literature or interviews)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social capital and willingness to work together</td>
<td>The existence of willingness to participate by the actors involved in the process</td>
<td>Policy documents; interviews with all actors; opinions found in other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triggering event and clear focus</td>
<td>The existence of trust among the actors</td>
<td>Interviews with all actors; opinions found in other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The existence of a sense of belonging and an interest for the urban renewal project in a spatial unit (e.g. block, street or neighborhood)</td>
<td>Interviews with residents; opinions found in other sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The existence of a clear common understanding of the problems, the solutions and the objectives of the process

Policy documents; interviews with all actors;

| Table 5 Table showing the variables, the indicators and the sources of data |

3.1.2 Data collection and data presentation

The collection method of the data was mainly the use of the internet to access openly available material and the conducting of interviews by the physical presence of the author or over email. The focus of this research is regeneration through participatory and self-organization practices in the residential areas of the inner areas of the Greek bigger cities. The research looks primarily to Athens and Thessaloniki. These two metropolitan areas have populations of about 3.7 and 1 million inhabitants respectively with their city-centers governed by their eponymous municipalities, namely the municipality of Athens and the municipality of Thessaloniki. These two areas display a sufficient number of common characteristics as far as the subject of this thesis goes. Namely large residential areas with apartment buildings built in a dense layout primarily during the first two post-war decades. These areas used to have very high population densities which however have dropped due to a progressive abandonment of them by the old population and an overall population drop. Moreover they are characterized to some degree by dilapidation, loss of their value and replacement of the old population by large numbers of newly arrived immigrants. Both municipalities have included urban regeneration as a goal in their strategies and express openly a support for more participatory processes in planning and initiatives by the citizens. For practical reasons, due to the author of this thesis coming from Thessaloniki, a greater focus was placed on Thessaloniki during the collection of interviews.

The collection method of policy texts and legislation was via the internet. The municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki provide online access to a number of their documents, which include policy documents such as strategic plans for the city’s development in the future. The documents examined as part of this research project include strategic documents at the level of metropolitan urban areas as well as the level of municipality, and operational plans that have been either already initiated (in the case of Athens) or are at the stage of proposal (Thessaloniki). These documents provide data that relate immediately to the subject as they identify problems and solutions to be implemented in the future. The Greek legislation is also available online. All Greek laws can be found on the internet site of the National Printing House (www.et.gr).
A summary table of these documents is provided:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law 1337/1983</td>
<td>Expansion of city plans, residential development and relevant regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 1577/1985</td>
<td>General Building Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 2508/1997</td>
<td>Sustainable Residential Development of the cities and settlements of the country and other regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 2742/1999</td>
<td>Spatial planning and sustainable development and other regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 3852/2010</td>
<td>New architecture of local and decentralized administration - Kallikratis program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 4067/2012</td>
<td>New Building Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 4269/2014</td>
<td>Spatial and urban planning reform – Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 4495/2017</td>
<td>Control and protection of the Built Environment and other provisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy documents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry for an integrated urban intervention in the center of Athens, Complete proposal and action plan (2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study for the amendment of the General City Plan of the Municipality of Thessaloniki (2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessaloniki - Preliminary Resilience Assessment (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessaloniki 2030, Strategy for urban resilience (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Athens, Redefining the city: Athens Resilience strategy for 2030 (2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Free and semi-structured interviews were also conducted as part of the data collection process. The focus in this process was to collect indicative and relevant data by interviewing people that either have something at stake in the regeneration of the type of residential areas explained earlier in his thesis, or have an informed opinion based on their capacity and position. The amount and type of interviews was dictated and constrained by time and financial limitations, as it
required travelling to Greece and aligning schedules. Particularly hard was talking to the local
government. Getting in contact with elected officials, both in the municipalities and the municipal
communities proved to be very difficult. The author of this thesis sought communication with
certain directorates in the municipality of Athens as well as Thessaloniki. An answer from Athens
was not received. By physically visiting the offices of a municipal community (subdivision of the
municipality’s area, occasionally translated as “borough”) and the offices of the central
municipality itself I failed to locate any official or professional of relevance as they were either
absent or busy. It was with difficulty and considerable delay that I was able to receive short
answers to seven questions I sent by email from an elected official (vice-mayor of administrative
reform and civil society). These answers, which largely agree with the patterns observed in other
data, provide a very important “internal” perspective of the subject.

Furthermore three residents were interviewed, all of whom have some additional capacities. One
is an owner of an apartment and a former manager of an apartment building thus having
immediate experience with dealing with multiple residents and owners over issues of building
maintenance and collective financing. Another is a resident that rents and a lawyer with some
professional experience over property disputes. The third is an academic researcher and resident,
who has actively participated from its beginning to a citizens’ neighborhood initiative that has
been going on for five years already and remains alive. The initiative initially revolved around
organizing cultural events at the neighborhood level in order to do “community building” and later
expanded to further activities, including the reuse of an unused plot of urban land as a “pocket”
park, that was designed through workshops with interested citizens. The initiative was conceived
and run from the bottom without involvement of the government. The experiences of the initiative
in regards to mobilizing the local residents and the turbulent relationship with the local authority
provide very important data for answering the research questions of this thesis. Ultimately an
architecture bureau which has involved itself in combination with other researchers and
professionals into organizing workshops of participatory planning with the purpose of unifying
the internal open spaces of the city blocks in Greek cities provided written answers to a
questionnaire sent to them by email.

List of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relevant capacity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgios Antoniadis</td>
<td>Resident and lawyer</td>
<td>12-3-2018</td>
<td>Live interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iliana Panagopoulou</td>
<td>Apartment owner, former apartment building administrator</td>
<td>14-3-2018</td>
<td>Live interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgios Chatzinakos</td>
<td>Resident, researcher and initiator of self-organization citizen initiative</td>
<td>13-3-2018</td>
<td>Live interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikolaos Fotiou</td>
<td>Vice Mayor of Thessaloniki for &quot;Administrative Reform and Civil Society&quot;</td>
<td>4-4-2018</td>
<td>Answered to questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.22 Architects</td>
<td>Architecture bureau with experience in organizing participatory urban design workshops</td>
<td>20-6-2018</td>
<td>Answered to questionnaire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 List of interviews done for this research project

Besides these sources of data another source has been comments on the internet. An initiative to implement the legislation provisioning the unification of the open interior space inside the city blocks, which is divided among the surrounding plots and largely unused, failed to take-off. Although it has not been possible to have a meaningful communication with the initiators (except for a very brief one) the comments that random citizens placed on the news pieces announcing the initiative give a very good source of spontaneous reactions and description of the beliefs of the readers. In a similar manner I discussed briefly the subject over a general forum, receiving a few comments from there as well. Finally, some initiatives for participatory planning, usually for public space (ie squares or pedestrian streets) have published some reports of the outcomes of their workshops.

Case studies

A number of cases where some form of a participatory process or self-organization in urban planning were examined and analyzed as part of this research thesis. These cases were examined as part of the data collection process, as they include information from attempts to participatory planning that were actually implemented. Not all of these cases can be considered to be urban regeneration projects, and the degree of their success varies, from fairly successful to complete failure. The factors that led to these outcomes provide clues for answering the research questions of this thesis. These cases are presented below.

Svolou street
The Svolou street initiative is an initiative that emerged from the residents of the neighborhood of Svolou street, in the center of Thessaloniki. Svolou street is a street in the eastern part of the city center. It is close to the commercial center but is itself primarily a residential area, although visited by many people. The initiative emerged in 2013 from a small number (10) of local residents, who attempted to emulate a practice in Spain, where people of a neighborhood gather in the streets and have dinner together. This is called the “Spring’s dinner” (although not strictly carried out in spring, but also in summer). The activities of the initiative have mostly been cultural, although the aim is not to create a festival but to build a community spirit. The initiative emerged from citizens, often with professional capacities, and consists only of citizens, without participation from public bodies due to the reluctance of the initiators to include them. In the years that the initiative has been active it has had to attempt to mobilize the locals as much as possible while it also had to come into agreement, or conflict, with public bodies such as the municipality and the traffic authorities (themselves not subordinated to the municipality) for appropriating public space and particularly the streets, during the Spring’s dinner. The stance of the municipality over the years changed, and from uncooperativeness, if not hostility, it transformed into acceptance and to some extent –possibly increasing– cooperativeness. Although the activities of the initiative are mostly cultural, such as the Spring’s dinner and a “memory bank” where stories that the locals know regarding the neighborhood are recorded, the initiative decided also to adopt an idea from a couple of university students for the creation of a pocket park. The pocket part is an intervention that can also be seen as a (modest) intervention in urban planning, bordering on the regeneration given that it tries to exploit an urban gap, which is a plot of land in the neighborhood that was unused. That plot belongs to two public bodies: a small part belongs to the municipality of Thessaloniki and the bigger part to the Organization of School Buildings (now merged into the Building Infrastructure Association, both public bodies located in the Greek capital Athens, answering to the central government) and for decades has been unexploited and left to become an area for trash disposal and drug use. The decision of the initiative was to transform the plot into a pocket park while also including the users (ie the residents) in its design process by running design workshops. This activity brought the initiative to conflict with the public authorities. Although the municipality of Thessaloniki had no particular plan of its own, the principal owner (the School Buildings Organization) objected the transformation of its property into a park, despite the apparent lack of any specific plan from the Organization to use the land. Eventually a middle ground was found in that the municipality will lease the land for 99 years. The municipality then agreed to change the approved land use of the plot into a park, but wanted to use its own architect to design the park, as in the standard practice. It took several meetings and an organized effort from the initiative which drafted plans of professional quality, both for the design and the budgeting, for the municipality to relent and accept the decisions of the
initiative, although it still left the funding to the initiative. As mentioned by Chatzinakos, financing the park was “the red line” of the municipality (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

The initiative has seen a lot of change in the people that make it up, as old members depart and new come in, as well as its size, as the initial group of 10 has now been expanded to several dozens. The initiative also went through internal conflicts such as the reluctance of some mostly older members to support the attempt to run a collaborative design workshop for the pocket park, due to a lack of faith in the concept of collaborative planning, as well as crises regarding the viability of the initiative itself, as the first years saw little active participation of the local residents and an uneven workload for the few members of the initiative. Eventually, while the initiative came close to be stopped, it pulled through the challenge, principally by successfully expanding its base and remains active today. According to Chatzinakos “a lot has been accomplished... many things have been done” (Chatzinakos, 2018, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

Varvakeios

The project “Pedio Agora” (also seen called in English in the documents of the project as “Domain_Agora” and “AthensUrbanAgora”) was a project within the framework of the “Actors of Urban Change” network, supported by the Robert Bosch institution and the MitOst organization (The Domain_Agora). This was a network of model projects in different cities of Europe for urban regeneration through citizen participation. The aim of the project was to develop a process based on “civic participation and the creation of cross-sector partnerships in order to jointly make decisions concerning urban regeneration studies” (The Domain_Agora). In Athens the focus of the “Pedio Agora” project was the Varvakeios Market square in the center of Athens. The coordinating team of 10 professionals organized a series of workshops inviting interested stakeholders namely: “residents, employees, visitors, representatives of the authorities, scientists and experts with knowledge upon relative disciplines” (The Domain_Agora). The project was conceived and accepted by the organizing committee at the end of 2013 (International Meetings: Berlin, 2013). Over the period from March 2014 to May 2015 the project team was active with organizing working meetings and workshops following a planned process to reach the projected end result. The first step was the recording and analysis of the situation while three workshops representing the steps of appraisal, vision and proposal were planned. Although usually citizens participate in the fourth step (proposal) it was the intention of the organizing team to include them in all of them. The first Experts’ Workshop with the title “What has happened with participatory planning in Greece?” took place in October 2014. The people that were invited were people with prior experience in attempts of participatory planning and they came from the academic and research world, the public administration, the organized Civil Society and the field of urban movements.
(Harvest Report, 2014a, p.3). The process of the workshop was first for the experts to create a collective mind map with the question “What are the challenges faced by attempts of participatory urban planning?”. The mind map had in the end its individual pieces of information grouped in 17 thematic units. Subsequently the experts used a voting process to determine which three were the most important. The three thematic units voted as the most important were the “sustainability of the processes”, “legal and regulatory limitations” and “sensitization of the citizens and new perception”. The experts were then divided into three focus groups in which they came up with a) the prospects of development, b) the tools and means and c) the risks, that need to be taken into account. In the end of the workshop all experts discussed their findings. The result of the workshop was a report that forms an important piece of the analysis for this research thesis as it includes the concentrated opinions of many people with experience in participatory planning.

The first Citizen workshop with the title “We discuss the future of Varvakeios Square” was held in December 2014. After presenting the process to the participants, they were asked to form groups and discuss two questions: imagining that it the year 2020 and the renewal of the square is finished “what would be the attributes of the square as you would want it?”. The second question was “what are the problems that have been solved and what are the positive elements that have been promoted in the square?”. The problems and the positive elements that came out of this process were then grouped into 12 thematic units and a report written (Harvest Report, 2014b). In the second citizen workshop titled “Ideas and proposals for Varvakeios Square” held in April 2015, the outcomes of the first workshop plus additional information collected through interviews and questionnaires were utilized to define 13 main concerns for which the participants were to think of solutions. Following the “Open Space” process the 6 main themes were defined which were developed by the participants divided into tables of discussion into 6 proposals. A weighted voting process followed and 3 proposals were picked as more preferred by the participants. All proposals were further elaborated by teams of experts and shared with the municipal services. 40 people participated in the workshop representing people working or owning shops in the area, residents of the area, visitors and representatives of the Municipality of Athens (Harvest Report, 2015).

As part of the project a Stakeholder mapping & analysis was done, published June 2015. The analysis tried to map the stakeholders and discover the degree of their connection to the square (functional, economic and sentimental) as well as their opinion of its condition and their opinion of who is responsible for deciding for the Square. Of interest to this research thesis is that the participants overwhelmingly believed that the municipality is currently responsible, but also of interest is the fact that when asked of who they think should be responsible they also overwhelmingly opined for the municipality, but with an increased participation from the shop
owners and the residents (Stakeholder mapping & analysis, 2015, p. 7). Similarly a large part of the interviewees claimed that they would devote time to participate in the creation of proposals for a regeneration of the Varvakeios Square (Stakeholder mapping & analysis, 2015, p.8).

The coordinators of the project ultimately also produced a guide, based on their experiences with the project, which had been the initial objective of the whole effort. The guide, called "Citizens Manual: Participatory Planning of Public Spaces" describes the process which was followed during the project and is intended for anyone involved or interested in urban planning aspects (Citizens’ Manual, 2015, p.5).

**Akalyptos SKG**

The Akalyptos SKG project is a research project conceived by a couple of architects in Thessaloniki (A. Papadopoulou and V. Tsakalidou of 40.22.Architects bureau) who sought to showcase the potential of the open spaces in the interior of city blocks in the old city center. These spaces are hidden and isolated from each other and generally underexploited. Beginning from May 2014 the initial couple of architects formed a wider team of architects and other academics and professionals to devise a mechanism that would activate the city and the residents about these spaces, with an aim on two dimensions: the recovery of human contact among the residents and the upgrading of the communal green spaces (A. Papadopoulou, V. Tsakalidou, E. Disli, personal communication, 20 June 2018). The bureau has organized three international workshops as part of the Akalyptos SKG project. One in the framework of the Ecoweek international event, another in collaboration with COST Action TU1306 and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, with the title: Enhancements - Mediated Urban Landscapes and one lastly within the framework of the 15th Venice Biennale of Architecture titled: 'Reporting from the front'. Each of these workshops had as a case study the internal open space of a building block of Thessaloniki’s city center. The latter in particular involved an intensive workshop of experimental design and construction, titled "Open space_a hybrid hortus conclusus". It was held in September 2016 in the campus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki over the course of 5 days and involved 40 students of architecture. The purpose of that workshop was to explore and implement an interactive platform for meeting, sharing, discussing and playing in an extensive open-air living room that would function as the central reference point of Akalyptos SKG. The product of the workshop was installed and "enthusiastically inaugurated by both the participants and the residents of the building block" (A. Papadopoulou, V. Tsakalidou, E. Disli, personal communication, 20 June 2018).

**Akalyptos 2.0**
Akalyptos 2.0 was an attempt to mobilize the residents of the municipality of Athens to unite their “back yard” namely the internal open spaces of the city blocks. The action was supported by the Municipality of Athens. It was part of the activities of the international network Urbego (which involves young urban professionals such as architects, planners and sociologists (Urbergo, 2015)) and the “Micromega architecture & strategies” bureau in Athens. The action called residents to participate with their city block with a deadline in late 2015 and a projected collaborative workshop in February 2016 (synAthina, 2015). Despite receiving fairly wide publicity (see Panagiotopoulou (2015); Mpratsiakou (2015); Kyriazis (2015); Enallaktiki Drasi (2015)) the effort never took off and the workshop never took place (Akalyptos 2.0, personal communication, 19 April 2018). The failure of this project to take off provides to the analysis also further useful data regarding the status of participatory planning in Greece.

3.1.3 Data analysis

The analysis of the data was done by codifying the information into useful data that could be used to answer the indicators. The indicators were defined and presented in the previous chapters. The degree to which they are fulfilled determines the answer to the research questions. Using the ATLAS.ti software and its capabilities it was possible to manage the volume of data and analyze it. The data was entered in the program and then was codified generally based on the indicators as codes while some further patterns began to emerge. By analyzing the data it was possible to identify to which degree the indicators are fulfilled and where there are still shortcomings.

3.2 Validity and reliability of the research

The validity and reliability of the research is based on the triangular approach which means that the bias of any certain source of data is reduced. The amount of material analyzed was based on the constrains of time as well as accessibility to interviewees. To assure the reliability and validity of the research careful choices of the material was necessary.

The research did not have a specific area of focus but for practical reasons the interviews were done in the municipality of Thessaloniki. The municipality of Thessaloniki is the second most populous in Greece, after the municipality of Athens. Much like Athens, Thessaloniki is a large city whose central areas are administered by large municipalities and are inhabited by a diverse population. There are also no particular attributes regarding its administration, its culture and its
history of urban development that set Thessaloniki apart from the rest of the country. Thus the results obtained from these interviews with residents, professionals and the local government can be seen to be generally representative of all Greek large urban municipalities.

The validity and reliability of the documents analyzed is based on their direct relevance with the research question. The documents included current documents of strategy of the two aforementioned major municipalities (Athens and Thessaloniki) as well as reports on participatory workshops done in these two cities. The documents are publicly available can be accessed by the reader. The interviews conducted either live or over email were transcribed and translated into English, and made available to the University, thus ensuring their validity.
4 Analysis

The analysis of the data collected was done with the assistance of the Atlas.ti program. The data was entered in the program and then was codified based on the indicators that were defined beforehand based on the literature review, while some further patterns began to emerge. By analyzing the data it was possible to identify to what degree the indicators are fulfilled and where there are still shortcomings. The analysis will be presented on an indicator by indicator basis as they were presented in the previous chapter.

4.1 Analysis of the variables

4.1.1 Variable: Overall administrative culture, political attitudes and legal framework

4.1.1.1 Indicator: The existence of policies and intentions to implement self-organization in planning, or expressed formal recognition of its significance

Analyzing the policies that are in place produces a picture where it appears that participatory planning and to a lesser extent citizen self-organization are centrally supported by the various bodies of government. Already since the 1980’s there have been provisions in the Greek legislation regarding citizen participation at the neighborhood level, although these provisions have never actually been activated. However, at least in name Greek official bodies have consistently supported citizen involvement in the processes of urban planning. Both big great Greek cities that have been the focus of this research, Athens and Thessaloniki, are part of the 100 Resilient Cities network, and in this process their municipalities have drafted strategic plans for 2030. Part of the strategies of resilience of the program is citizen participation.

The municipality of Athens in its “Resilience Strategy for 2030” has as one of their core objectives to “Develop synergies with city stakeholders and enhance participation”. Furthermore, included among its goals, is the goal to “Foster collaboration and engagement” (City of Athens, 2017, p. 71). Additionally the municipality of Athens created in July 2013 the “synAthina” platform which attempts "to establish a permanent and effective link between its services and the Athenian NGOs as well as the informal grassroots groups. This is a platform where citizen groups can connect with each other and suggest activities that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for the
The synAthina program, together with other activities, provided direct support to attempts of participatory practices in planning, such as the Varvakeios Square project (explained above) and the failed Akalyptos 2.0 project. In the “Resilience Strategy for 2030” the City of Athens repeatedly includes as a value which guides its goals the development of synergies with city stakeholders and the enhancement of participation. As part of this value the City of Athens includes in its strategy for 2030 goals such as the co-creation (City of Athens, 2017, p.100) and “rejuvenation” of public space (City of Athens, 2017, p. 107) and the creation of a “public space co-development framework” with the aim among others to “foster collaborations around public space maintenance and co-creation, and to catalyze participatory activities in the city” (City of Athens, 2017, p. 109).

In Thessaloniki, according to the claims of the public official of the municipality of Thessaloniki who was interviewed, as well as according to the policy documents analyzed, it appears that citizen participation in planning is desired, however when interviewing citizens a general disbelief was expressed. The experience of the Svolou Street neighborhood initiative suggests that the municipality was initially completely unwilling to cooperate with them and the only initial positive signs were connected to the election period. The refusal of the initiative to include political personalities in its activities effectively precluded any good faith from the municipality, despite the ruling party in the municipality sharing similar ideologies with the initiative (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018). In contrast to this reality both in the interview with the elected official of the municipality of Thessaloniki as well in the strategic policy documents for the future couple of decades in Thessaloniki a general belief and acceptance of the necessity and the benefits of participatory planning is clearly expressed. As the strategy for a resilient Thessaloniki mentions “One of the main priorities of the City’s Administration and the Mayor himself is to create new pathways and methods of collaborations and deliberations with the citizens and the various actors of the city. The city’s goal is to enhance active citizen participation, empower self-organizing and support new forms of collective action to address issues of public concern.” (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b, p. 28). Towards that direction one of the Thessaloniki 2030 strategic plan’s goals is “Goal 2; Co-create an inclusive city that invests in its human talent” (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b, p. 58). Among its actions the city clearly describes the intention to increase the role of citizens: “The City Council is obliged to take into consideration the priorities suggested by the city’s Boroughs2. Currently, this policy is partially implemented in some of the Municipalities of the Metropolitan Area but the overall process is deemed ineffective. To streamline this process and

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2 The authors of that document decided to use the term “Borough” in the English language version for the same administrative unit I called in this thesis the “municipal community”. “Municipal community” is the literal translation of the Greek term.
assist the creation and approval of the City's Development Plan, the city will create a meeting calendar and specific agenda, in collaboration with the Boroughs' Directors and in line with local and national timeframes and requirements. Boroughs' deliberation meetings, are expected to empower citizens and encourage them to get involved in the co-creation of their urban environment.” (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b, p. 61)

This indicator was looking for the existence of formal recognition of the significance of participatory and self-organization processes in planning as well as the existence of policies to facilitate such processes. As a conclusion it can be said that this indicator is fulfilled.

4.1.1.2 Indicator: The existence of laws that allow or put immovable obstacles to the processes of participatory planning and self-organization

Research into this indicator is based on the actual pieces of legislation that touch upon the subject of spatial planning and public administration in general. The Greek legislation touching upon urban regeneration has been already presented in this thesis in previous chapters. The main legal provisions that are relevant to this indicator are the provisions regarding citizen associations at the neighborhood level, citizen participation in decision making and provisions regarding urban regeneration.

The existing provisions regarding urban regeneration have been already explained. In summary form, a holistic framework regarding regeneration was established with the urban planning law of 1997 which remains valid today. This framework provides provisions for urban regeneration at various degrees of radicality and at various scales, beginning from the city block as the smallest. Further additional details regarding urban regeneration come from the spatial planning laws of 1999 which established the Plans of Integrated Urban Interventions (SOAP in Greek) and the general building regulation, the last form of which dates to 2012. The general building regulation of 2012 (passed as law 4067 of 2012) dropped the previously existing provision for the unified design of city blocks as single units (the so called “active city block”) but maintains the provisions for the unification of the open spaces in the interior of the block. It its article 10 titled “Incentives for the environmental upgrading and the improvement of the quality of life in densely built and urban areas” the law includes a number of incentives for the changing of the urban fabric. The incentives have the nature of increasing the permitted height of structures in exchange for leaving more space open, removing buildings and giving up areas to public use. Although the law defines specific ways of action which limit the ability of the inhabitants of a city block to freely redesign their area as they please, it still allows for a variety of actions to be taken to improve the situation.
More relevant to this indicator are the provisions regarding the role of citizens in the formation of the built environment. Law 3852 of 2010 which defined a new architecture for local administration includes in its provisions the existence of a residents' assembly which will convene at least once per year under the auspices of the local municipal community (or “borough” as occasionally translated), with the aim to suggest to the local authorities actions that need to be taken for any issue affecting the community (Law 3852/2010, article 85). The same law includes the provision for the creation of municipal consultation committees, in which the members serve a maximum term of 2.5 years. The committee consists of between 25 and 50 members. The members of this committee according to the law can belong to a variety of civil society groups including simple private individuals without any further association. This committee has only a consultation character, and exists in parallel with any citizen consultation that the municipality may undertake electronically. The committee opines on a variety of matters that affect the area of the municipality, and convenes at least every three months (law 3852/2010, article 76). The building regulation of 2012, as part of its provisions for the unification of the interior area of city blocks refers to the owners’ assembly of the block, which has to convene to vote for the unification of these spaces as well as other measures that need to be taken to ensure accessibility (Law 4067/2012, article 10).

According to the current civil code, Greek citizens can create non-profit organizations with a minimum of 20 persons as initiators (Civil Code, article 78). The association is automatically dissolved if its members drop below 10 (Civil Code, article 104). These provisions should be contrasted to Svolou Street neighborhood initiative, which began with 10 members and has no formal legal status. Chatzinakos in the interview that he gave as part of this research, contrasted the Greek requirement for 20 members to form an association to that of Spain where the same number is 3, and where the role of citizen associations is much greater than in Greece. According to Chatzinakos "Barcelona has achieved this multi-partiality in decision-making through neighborhood associations in essence, because the city is essentially run through these associations. [...] [A] neighbourhood association creates [a "spatial orientation point" in the neighborhood which] on the one hand serves as a point of orientation where someone can express themselves, and on the other hand this space can act as a catalyst in finding the real needs and desires of the inhabitants in order to solve collective problems. [...] This is missing. Missing... Greece is missing these reference points." (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018). Chatzinakos claims that this Greek deficit in citizen activity is attributed to both cultural reasons (as opposed for instance to the people of Barcelona) and due to shortcomings of the legal framework. The initiators of the Akalyptos SKG project in Thessaloniki also add that the possibilities participatory planning that the law gives are not widely known in the general population (A. Papadopoulou, V. Tsakalidou, E. Disli, personal communication, 20 June 2018).
As a conclusion Greek legislation can be said to have several provisions facilitating participatory processes in planning and urban regeneration, but at the same time it is characterized by vagueness and many provisions have not been activated. Citizen self-organization at a small scale is facilitated, notably in the case of the provisions for the residents of a city block organizing themselves and designing their block in a single study. This provision however never became a general practice, as for example clearly shown by the failure of the Akalyptos 2.0 project in Athens. Chatzinakos’ observations also add to the impression that while the institutional framework does not block or pose any definite obstacles to self-organization and increased participation in urban regeneration, it also does not provide provisions that are conducive.

Thus for this indicator it can be said that, with caveats, there are no immovable obstacles to a process of self-organization.

4.1.2 Variable: Communication among actors

4.1.2.1 Indicator: The existence of a tradition of communication and coordination between the government and the citizens and the extent of the influence of the experts

The main attribute of the relationship between the governmental institutions and the citizens in Greece, at least as far as urban development goes, has historically been that of a lack of an organized civil society and at the same time the existence of a system of clientelism (Vitopoulou et al., 2015, p. 290). The same source adds the observation that Greek citizens have a limited awareness of their own rights and obligations and their role is limited to expressing their demands and expect that they are satisfied. “[T]he state and the political parties [have a dominant role while there is a] lack of informing and of intermediary institutions that promote the consultation and the participation of the different social groups in the planning procedures. (…) Thus, while the demands of the citizens seem to be satisfied through informal procedures, substantive involvement of the community and the participation of the different interests in the formal procedures remain limited” (2014: 290). It can be argued that the dominance of informality in the relationship between the government and the citizens has allowed pressure groups and actors that would institutionally not be part of the planning procedures to participate and exercise influence. In the same time however this creates abuse of power and an unequal treatment of those involved (Vitopoulou et al., 2015, p. 291).

The citizens interviewed believed that the municipality, when it comes to projects of urban regeneration, does not work according to the objective needs of the community but with the aim
to benefit private interests with which it has a connection (Panagopoulou, personal communication, 14 March 2018). Similarly there were references to a tradition of clientelism and briberies (Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018). Chatzinakos, as part of the Svolou street initiative, noted that people over 50 do not believe that Greece is a clientelistic state, something that keeps him “very worried” (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018). The experts’ report that was produced at the first stages of the Varvakeios square project in Athens similarly noted that despite the existence of institutions such as the municipals consultation committees, these have not produced results thus far, and among others there are issues of democratic representation of the civil society, over the irregularity of meetings and the non-binding nature of these (Harvest Report, 2014a, p.14).

As far as the influence of the professionals in general goes, the research showed that the citizens interviewed expressed their trust in their scientific capacities. At the same time however, the role of urban planners in the planning processes is seen as one where they are dependent on their employer, and thus they have to conform to their expectations. Tasopoulou in her research among professional urban planners observed that the majority of them believed that the plans reflected the ideas of their employer and in the initial stages, and in part, the personal views of the urban planner (Tasopoulou, 2015, p. 104). Planners are under heavy pressure from many sides and often are unwilling to react to it. In her question over who the most powerful actor in the planning process is, Tasopoulou discovered divergent opinions: the municipality or the local community can on occasion be the most powerful actor, or on the other hand as some respondents said, the informal transactions and corruption, or whoever represents the clientelistic interests (Tasopoulou, 2015, p. 104).

Communication between the local public administration and the citizenry exists, but it is generally not based on a solid and clear-cut framework. However, the fact that communication exists, even if in a distorted and not rational form, means that this indicator is fulfilled.

4.1.2.2 Indicator: The existence of a tradition of self-organization among the citizens

The analysis of the data collected regarding this indicator was quite conclusive. There was an almost unequivocal agreement in all sources that there is a lack of tradition of self-organization. The data clearly shows that there is a lack of a collective mentality in Greek society and individualism prevails. Even facets of collective action such as politically inspired participation in public affairs is often an attempt to promote private interests. Vitopoulou et al note “the intense interest for the political life is not consistent with the effectively limited participation in the public
sphere and the limited collaborative action. What is taking place is an individualistic activity—in the effort to satisfy individual interests—which is expressed through clientelistic networks” (2015: 295).

The only positive quotations were the a quotation by a respondent pertaining to the political "self"-organization of students as well as the case of the new and rather unique neighborhood initiative on Svolou Street in Thessaloniki. However, even in these two cases, the respondent who mentioned his active participation in student political self-organization admitted to this being his only participation to communal activities (Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018), while the respondent referring to the neighborhood initiative mentioned his initial disbelief regarding the possibilities of success of the initiative as well as the problems of disinterest by the residents faced during the initial years of the effort. More than that, some of the older and more experienced initiators of that neighborhood initiative had at some point openly expressed the belief that participatory planning has never worked, nor will ever work in Greece (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

On a more positive note Chatzinakos referred to the existence of the "new urban movements" which indicate a degree of emerging self-organization. In the same vein the Preliminary Resilience Assessment for Thessaloniki notes that “Thessaloniki is a fairly collaborative city, people more and more are willing to volunteer and work together”, considering that “community participation” is an area at which the city excels (City of Thessaloniki, 2016a, p.34). It also notes that “more than 150 actions and initiatives of the civil society were mapped across the city. The majority of them began in the recent years. The reason of their creation is on the one hand that they form an answer to the economic and social crisis that the city is facing and on the other hand as a result of the change of mentality of the citizens and the local administration towards more participatory approaches in facing the problems of the city” (City of Thessaloniki, 2016c, p.33)

At the same time there are a few references to existing non-governmental organizations such as characteristically religious organizations (the Churches of various denominations) which have also acted as local self-organizing agents (more discussion in the indicator about social capital). The efforts of the neighborhood initiative also apparently succeeded into mobilizing residents suggesting that there is a dormant potential. While there may not be a tradition of self-organization, there are indications that there is potential for it to develop.

At any rate it should be noted that there is a very strong belief among a great number of respondents, if not literally all of them, that there is a lack of communication and a reaching of accordance among the residents. Thus it can be surmised that this indicator is not fulfilled.
4.1.3 Variable: Existence of trust in the process

4.1.3.1 Indicator: The existence of belief in the effectiveness and support for the process by the actors

Despite the lack of a tradition in participatory processes and processes of self-organization, the data shows mixed results when it comes to the extent in which the potential actors believed in the effectiveness of such processes. There is generally a considerable degree of support, even if there is also a skepticism expressed. There was a general support and belief in increased cooperation between the local administration and the citizens in all sources, whether expressed by the public official interviewed, mentioned in the policy documents, in academic literature or expressed by citizens themselves. There is a strong belief that a participatory process would increase the responsiveness of the local government and generally improve the effectiveness of tackling problems related to the quality of life in the cities.

The interviewed citizens believed that a process of citizen self-organization would be useful in detecting and exposing problems in the urban environment that conventional top-down approaches wouldn’t. Whether there was a belief that this would lead to an actual improvement over the existing situation was less clear (for example Panagopoulou, personal communication, 14 March 2018 and Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018). Nonetheless, according to Vitopoulou et al “it can be said that the purpose of participation is not always the upturning and indeed in some cases the complete upturning, but the enriching, the improvement, the increase of the potential benefit for the various social groups.” (2015: 300).

In her research based on interviews with professional urban planners, urban planners who were members of the administration and academics Tasopoulou (2013 & 2015, quoted in Vitopoulou et al, 2015, p. 296) observed that the Greek urban planners themselves are not supporters of participatory planning. This is connected “to the possibility of an arising of complications to the normal flow of each project, an increase of their labor costs, the doubt over the substantive content of these processes and the belief that the scientifically correct would be of a secondary importance, the inability to effectively control the multiplicity and complexity of the involved interests and reactions, the inability on the side of the citizens of comprehending the objectives and the content of each plan.” (Vitopoulou et al, 2015, p. 296). A form of this attitude can also be seen in the case of the Svolou’s Street initiative in Thessaloniki. There, according to Chatzinakos, the older members of the initiative were unconvinced of the usefulness of a participatory workshop for the design of the pocket park in their neighborhood. A senior member of the initiative with a professional and academic background in spatial and urban planning openly contested the purpose of organizing it. Chatzinakos recalled “[he] said, with nerve, that participatory planning is not working, it is
something that will never work in Greece, and there is no reason to do [the participatory workshop].” (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

A general hesitation and skepticism was expressed when it came to the government having to lower its status and accept a certain degree of equality with the other actors, notably the citizens. Related also to the lack of trust and a tradition in such processes, some of the citizens and the public official alike, as well the policy documents, envision the participatory processes to be a form of consultation, in which ultimately the final word belongs to the municipality. The reasons expressed, whether coming from the public administration or the citizens, were similar. Namely the lack of competence from the citizens’ side to know how to properly follow a participatory process and their ability to set realistic demands.

This argument, namely the belief that the citizens themselves are not really capable of constructively participating in a participatory planning process is expressed repeatedly. The citizens interviewed seemed to generally believe that citizens as a whole are fundamentally incapable of communicating effectively. Antoniadis when interviewed related his experience in which the residents of his multi-story building had no communication, and the fact that he as a lawyer was aware of many cases of petty disputes over issues of co-owners in multi-story buildings. He also noted that the institution of the building manager, elected among the owners/residents of the building’s apartments is increasingly being replaced by the faceless building management companies, indicating the inability of the residents of a building to come to accordance. Thus he also expressed a lack of confidence in the ability of a larger self-organization or a different sort of participatory process in urban regeneration to work. At the same time he recognized what he thought would be the benefits of increased participation of the residents: “if [self-organization] could somehow work and find the right people to mobilize the citizens it could have very good results, because there are areas in which the municipality is indifferent and [citizens’ self-organization] could (...) first locate the problems and mobilize the municipality where needed and secondly they could try to solve some problems by themselves without having to reach to the local government. If it could work it would be very positive because there are gaps, but it is very difficult.” (Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018).

The experts’ report of the Varvakeios square project in Athens notes on the subject that during the examination of the possible challenges the project could face, “futility” came up, as there is “institutional exclusion” and “lack of faith from the people that they can change anything” (Harvest Report, 2014a, p.7). However in the same report it was found that the “common resultant [of the research] was that despite the risks and the objective difficulties, such an attempt at participatory planning would provide in the long term multiple benefits to the city of Athens, both at the spatial level as well as –especially- as the level of the society” (Harvest Report, 2014a, p. 19).
The public official interviewed, namely the Vice Mayor of for Administrative Reform and Civil Society of Thessaloniki, expressed the opinion that “the main obstacles [to a true participatory planning process] are the lack of the relevant culture (...) the widespread distrust of citizens towards the authorities of any level (due to repeated disillusionment about the "promises" of the administrators), the ignorance of the consultative procedures, the frequent maximalization of the demands / claims and shortcomings in the relevant regulatory framework (centralized, non-participatory budget option, lack of decisive responsibilities in municipal communities, etc.)” (Fotiou, personal communication, 4 April 2018).

Vitopoulou et al (2015) note that there is an increased interest from the side of the political authorities to develop participatory processes, but “the sense that dominates is that the reasons that lead to this increased activation are not substantive but related to the need to show to the electorate that work is done and for the non-substantive legitimization of the decisions. The cases are not few where during the processes it is decided to “hide” certain “sensitive” aspects, in order to avoid conflict” (2015: 296). Tasopoulou in her research among professional urban planners observed that “despite their general distrust towards participatory processes as well as their inherent reluctance to participate in them, urban planners have a relatively common opinion on what their role would be in these processes: informational, explanatory, partially educational.” (2015: 102)

This observation should be compared to the “ladders” of participation described in the literature review. It becomes obvious that the idea that many of the actors have of what participation would be, is in fact not true participation. It should also be noted however that despite the skepticisms and the lack of faith in their fellow citizens’ abilities, there was a unanimous willingness by the interviewed citizens to participate in such processes, as well as a belief that there are benefits to be gained out of them. As a conclusion it can be said that this indicator is fulfilled.

4.1.4 Variable: Adaptation of practices

4.1.4.1 Indicator: The existence of willingness from the government to accept the risks of self-organization and the extent in which the government is willing to accept an equal status with the other actors in the decision-making process.

The analysis of the data in order to evaluate this indicator produced fairly clear results. On the one hand the official strategic documents may support the idea of increased citizen participation in the decision making processes, such as the Thessaloniki 2030 strategy which includes the claim that “In line with Article 41 of the New Urban Agenda (Quito 2016), Thessaloniki is aiming to pursue
a more participatory governance model by adopting processes that will allow meaningful and inclusive civic participation in decision-making, planning and followup processes for citizens.” (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b, p. 65). On the other hand the citizens and professionals who expressed opinions through interviews or through the after-action report of the Varvakeios square project for participatory planning in Athens in all cases expressed directly or indirectly the belief that the local administration is not willing to accept an equal status with the common citizens. This was expressed either directly or indirectly by stating that the consultation processes that exist in Greek legislation are only implemented in a token manner. Very interestingly the public official of the municipality of Thessaloniki interviewed expressed a similar opinion, arguing that at all levels of government there is a resistance to decentralization and acceptance of a division of power with lower forms of government, going down to the level of municipal departments (the communities or “boroughs”) which have “almost no decision-making competences and several advisory, which however are frequently not taken into account” (Fotiou, personal communication, 4 April 2018).

The single break in this pattern is the experience of the Svolou’s street neighborhood initiative in Thessaloniki, which while having started with no support and occasionally in open conflict with the municipality, reached eventually a stage where the municipality not only accepted the activities of the initiative but adopted its plans for the “pocket park” as well. This was the result of the work done by the initiative, which paid special attention to producing a technically and financially sound plan. As such, while initially the municipality appointed its own architect to design the park, it accepted eventually the plan that the initiative had prepared. This should be compared also with the developments in the case of Alma-Gare (mentioned earlier in this thesis), where the culminating point for the municipality to accept the alternative regeneration process was the existence of an already processed plan by the citizens’ initiative.

Thus it can be surmised that Greek municipalities will strongly resist losing some of their power and accepting an equal status with the civil society, but are willing to accept professionally made and sound ideas prepared by non-municipal bodies. The indicator cannot be considered to be fulfilled as there are strong caveats to the claimed support towards citizen empowerment and the readiness of all levels of government to accept a substantive increase of the influence of the civil society in the decision making process in public affairs.
4.1.4.2 Indicator: The existence of willingness and ability by the government to design the institutional setting by providing structure of positions and relationships of the actors as well the rules of the game, the necessary resources, such as relevant information, legal support, knowledge, finances and a meeting place

The data for this indicator has provided mixed results. The municipality of Athens, as part of its synAthina action, offers a space, free of charge and available all days and all hours, specifically for civil society activities. Although the enclosed surface of this space is small, and the place is based on an open-space theater-like architecture to accommodate a larger amount of people, it remains a clear proof of the readiness of the municipality of Athens to provide a necessary resource, the location, for the use of the citizen initiatives. The municipality of Athens was also behind the two cases studies used in this research thesis, namely the Varvakeios project and the failed Akalyptos 2.0, both of which operated within the synAthina action.

The policy documents regarding "Sustainable Thessaloniki" indicate a clear intention by the municipality of Thessaloniki to not only accept participatory practices but also to design and facilitate them. Quoted from the document (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b, p. 62):

“[actions part of objective A:]

Action 03: Initiate participatory budgeting in Boroughs

In collaboration with the Borough’s Council, the City will initiate a step-by-step process for establishing Participatory Budgeting in Boroughs. The project aims to put budget decisions directly in the hands of those directly affected: the local residents. A year-long process including neighborhood assemblies will include the following steps: inform the community; develop, exchange and debate ideas; collaborate to turn ideas into proposals; evaluate and vote on the best projects which will receive funding.

[...]

Action 04: Create a portfolio of methods for Boroughs to enable community-led projects

Under current legislation, a portion of the City budget is allocated to each Borough to finance activities such as campaigns, events and neighborhood projects. Boroughs must declare beforehand where and how the budget will be spent. Unfortunately, due to lacking resources, the money is not always spent most effectively. To tackle this, a portfolio of new methods and staff training sessions will be set up to help Borough staff design and deliver innovative services that will enable and facilitate community-led projects.

[...]

[actions part of objective B:]
Action 01: Leverage existing municipal assets and venues, converting them into flexible multi-use spaces to facilitate local community meetings and events

On the other hand the experiences of the Svolou’s neighborhood initiative suggest that the municipality, when confronted with self-organizing initiatives by the citizens is rather unwilling to cooperate. Still, it should be noted, that after a few years of opposing the initiative the stance of the municipality began to change, and although the municipality is not involved in the framework of operation of the initiative is has begun to provide resources. Such resources are a place in the municipal-owned central public library for the initiative to meet [note: the initiative’s meetings are open to anyone to attend] as well as some limited material resources for the realization of the “pocket park”. At the same time however it was made clear by the municipality that the overall financing of the “pocket park” project was the initiative’s responsibility. As Chatzinakos noted “that’s the red line” [for the municipality] (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018). It also needs to be noted that it is unclear whether the municipality’s yielding should be attributed to a genuine change of stance or to an opportunistic recognition of the initiative’s potential to influence local elections, especially considering the nominal ideological affinity of the current municipal administration with such practices.

As a result of this analysis, it becomes obvious that the data do not paint a clear picture as to whether this indicator can be considered fulfilled or not. Although the municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki expressly support and want to facilitate participatory processes, the tangible resources provided are rather limited. However, as seen by the small facility provided by the municipality of Athens, as well the eventual yielding of the municipality of Thessaloniki which provided a space within the municipal library, it can surmised that there is the willingness to provide resources. Together with the expressed intention to support such processes, it can be expected that the provision of a better organized framework and resources will increase in the future. As a result this indicator can be seen as fulfilled.

4.1.5 Variable: Social capital and willingness to work together

4.1.5.1 Indicator: The existence of social structures and networks of contact and cooperation among the relevant actors

The analysis of the data shows that generally there is a weak “social capital” as the residents of a neighborhood generally do not communicate or cooperate. This may have to be attributed to the
attributes of urban areas and the lifestyles of the inhabitants. A characteristic of an urban environment is the diversity and the mobility of the population. There is a general discernible pattern where residents of the same neighborhood do not know each other. Traditional old networks such as the local parish are weakened, and there is no foreseeable reemergence for them due to changes in lifestyle and beliefs. To some extent, as already mentioned, even basic networks such as a building's residents' assembly, technically provided for by the law, have been largely abandoned. A respondent noted that for the several years that he has been living in an apartment building in the center of Thessaloniki there had never been a residents’ assembly (Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018). For the municipality of Athens, which due to its central role not only in the metropolitan area of wider Athens but also in Greece as a whole sees more traffic of incoming and outgoing residents, the “deterioration of social fabric, phenomena of social exclusion, lack of social cohesion” (City of Athens, 2017, p.27) is seen as one of the threats that the city is facing. As such it can be surmised that social capital in Greek urban neighborhoods is indeed weak today.

On the other hand the experiences of Svolou’s neighborhood initiative in the center of Thessaloniki suggest that social capital can be developed, and there is no insurmountable obstacle against this. As the initiative’s experience showed even with their mild interventions a community feeling was clearly developed and progressively more and more residents and local shops participated in the initiative or provided some support. Moreover, and against their initial expectations, the part of the neighborhood for which they had the least expectations showed clear signs of cultural mix in which different social groups such as old people, immigrants and youth came in communication. Chatzinakos, noted “if I look back in time, for the four or five years that we exist, I’ve really seen things [happening]. A lot has been accomplished ... many things have been done” (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

To this it could be added that at a wider level there are many active groups of citizens and the trend is increasing. These groups do not focus at the neighborhood level but rather at the city level, or indeed beyond, but indicate that there is a desire for the common people to unite for a common cause. Interestingly the “Sustainable Thessaloniki” strategy document states that in their analysis that Thessaloniki scores highly in collaborative conscience and that residents are increasingly willing to participate in volunteer activities. It also notes that there is a change being noted in the mentality of the residents as well as the local administration owing to the economic and social crisis (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b).

As a conclusion it can be said that although in an urban setting with diverse groups of people social capital is weak and there is limited contact and cooperation, it exists, and the common needs and experiences lead the citizens to be accepting of collective action. Thus this indicator can be seen
as fulfilled.

4.1.5.2 Indicator: The existence of willingness to participate by the actors involved in the process

The actors involved in a process of participatory urban regeneration begin from different starting points. Whereas the local administration already has many competences the citizens have very few if any. As such the analysis showed a very clear pattern in which the citizens expressed disbelief in the willingness of the local administration to hear their voices but at the same time also a clear willingness to participate in a process if there would be some form of guarantee or clear expectation that their voices were to be actually taken into account.

Besides this factor, an opinion was also repeatedly expressed, in which there's a belief that the Greek resident is interested only in what belongs to him or her, and is largely indifferent to anything public, even if it is in a small scale (such as the open space in the interior of a city block). Indifference to a participatory planning process by the simple resident was spontaneously expressed in a number of occasions in the data collected. Similarly, although opinions were divided, there appears to be a belief that even residents with very connected interests, such as the tenants and owners of the apartments of a typical urban apartment building often cannot or do not want to communicate and work together to handle simple problems. Only dire necessity, such as technical problems inside a building, forces the residents to face issues collectively. The result of this mentality is the apparent progressive abandonment of the institution of the building manager, where a tenant would be elected by the majority of tenants as the manager of the whole building, and the resorting to faceless companies who take over the task to administer apartment buildings. This was expressed in a couple of interviews with residents, although their attitude was different. In the one case there was a belief that residents are not really interested in participating in administering their building, let alone their neighborhood (Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018), while the other expressed a belief that the interest still exists and can be further developed if the appropriate processes are there (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

Besides cultural reasons, a very tangible reason for citizens' disinterest was also expressed: the shortage of financial resources. The dilapidated status of the neighborhoods in examination is owed to a good extent to the inability of either the public administration or the residents themselves to finance projects for improvement. One source of data quite clearly expressed the belief that the provisions in Greek law of unifying the fragmented internal open space in city blocks can only work in affluent areas, as the simple cost of the technical modifications in the buildings would make them prohibitive or at least very unattractive for the mass of the Greek urban population.
The participation of professionals can be divided in two categories. Those who have not an immediate stake in the area and those who are appointed by the local authority (ie the municipality). The data collected suggests that in the first category there is a general belief that the professionals must have a financial motive to be interested, and combined with the code about trust among the actors, there are going to be some trust issues from the citizen side. It can generally be argued that the professionals have a willingness to participate, although it is also clear that some sort of incentive has to exist. Generally however they are the more cooperative actor.

From the side of the local public administration it appears that verbally there is willingness to adopt such practices. This was expressed clearly in the interview with the elected public official and is also expressed clearly in the policy documents analyzed. Both municipalities that are the focus of this research, the municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki, have included in their policies the promotion of increased citizen involvement in aspects of governance and participatory actions (for example City of Thessaloniki, 2016a; City of Athens, 2017).

Overall, despite the doubts regarding the effectiveness of participatory processes, all actors express a willingness to participate in such efforts. As a result this indicator can be seen as being fulfilled.

4.1.5.3 Indicator: The existence of trust among the actors

This indicator induced the most quotations when coding the data on Atlas.ti, an indication of its importance. It should also be noted that a very strong pattern emerged in the analysis as in almost all interviews and documents, the belief was expressed that trust is lacking in Greek society. Trust in this case can be split in three prominent relationships that emerge from the analysis: trust among the citizens, trust from the citizens towards the professionals and trust between the local administration and the citizens.

As far as the first relationship is concerned, strong skepticism was expressed. This can also be connected to the lack of tradition in self-organization in Greece. A few clear patterns emerge: there are experiences of inability and/or unwillingness of residents living together to agree over issues. Additionally there is a lack of a “culture of trust” as mentioned in one case (Panagopoulou, personal communication, 14 March 2018). Antoniadis, with his capacity as a lawyer in Thessaloniki, noted in the interview that "in Greece, I'll not say the half, but in a very substantial number of apartment buildings, usually the owners are at courts with each other. [...] Problems come up from insubstantial things that lead them directly to the courts. In such a climate it would be very hard for the residents of multiple buildings, or a larger area, to collaborate with each other"
Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018). Antoniadis was also clear that he didn’t believe there is trust among the citizens, and that he himself had no trust to his fellow citizens (Antoniadis, personal communication, 12 March 2018). On the other hand Panagopoulou, speaking based on her experiences as the manager of an apartment building in the center of Thessaloniki, noted that although things were not perfect, there was sufficient accordance among the residents of the building (Panagopoulou, personal communication, 14 March 2018). Chatzinakos also expressed, when asked, the belief that there is a lack of trust among the citizens, adding that trust is something that needs to be built. He noted as an example the case of a storeowner who initially called the initiative a “camorra”, and who eventually started to actively participate in the financial support of it (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018). The initiators of the Akalyptos 2.0 project in Athens, when giving an interview at the beginning of their effort (which ultimately failed), detected the “lack of trust, indifference, suspiciousness” as some of the factors limiting of what can be achieved (Kyriazis, 2015).

There is also a political mistrust: for instance the members of Svolou’s neighborhood initiative expressed an unwillingness to cooperate with other citizens they deem as belonging to the “extreme right wing”, while fractures within the initiative emerged over the extend of its proposed collaboration with institutions found in the area, notably the Evangelical Church. Certain members of the initiative expressed the belief that the Evangelical Church must have ulterior motives if they are willing to provide help (in that case a place for the initiative to meet). Thus it appears clearly that despite coexisting in the same, rather narrow space of Svolou’s neighborhood’s notional limits, there was a lack of trust between the two organizations. In a similar manner, despite the work and progress that the initiative has achieved, the interviewee described the approach to be that of an experiment, not least because there is still a lack of full faith in the ultimate success of the effort. As an example, the interviewee mentioned that on the first workshop made visiting the area of the “pocket park”, an olive tree was symbolically planted. By the night of the same day, the tree had been stolen (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

The second relationship described above, namely the trust between the citizens and the professionals, is characterized by the suspicion from the part of the citizens towards the financial motives of the professionals. From the analysis of the data two main patterns were observed:

- The belief that the professionals have the technical knowledge to advise and guide wisely a process of regeneration with the citizens. This was generally expressed in the interviews. Indirectly, the strife and effort of Svolou’s neighborhood initiative to present a technically and scientifically sound face should also be seen as a recognition of the significance of the role that professionals have to play in such a process.
• the mistrust and apprehension from the side of the citizens towards the professionals when they believe that they are connected to the municipality: this usually is connected to the belief that the municipalities are corrupted and not acting to the best interest of the municipal population, but possibly rather to serve the financial interests of people and companies they have connections with. This was openly expressed by two citizens interviewed, and indirectly mentioned by the third who mentioned his belief of the existence of prevalent clientelism, as well as clearly mentioned in the after action report of the Varvakeios square collaborative workshop in Athens, in which the desire was expressed by the participants that the professionals involved in the process be financially independent or volunteers, in order to guarantee transparency.

From the side of the professionals, Tasopoulou in her research among urban planning professionals observed that there was apprehension from their side towards organized groups that participate in open consultations as "[the urban planners] have doubts about the institutional status [of the organized groups] and the interests they appear to represent. They think that even their interventions have as an aim the promotion and satisfaction of individual interests through collective institutions. " (Tasopoulou, 2015, p.102).

The third relationship, that of trust between the local administration and the citizens, is quite more clearly expressed. The citizens, as mentioned above as well, largely distrust the local administration on two accounts: they believe that the local administration is corrupt and they believe that the local administration will not necessarily follow through with its promises. The first claim is quite prevalent and has been more connected to the larger municipalities as there is a belief that in smaller municipalities personal relationships and an increased intimacy between the citizenry and the local administration precludes to some degree corruption (or at least version of it that is harmful for the citizens). The second account was quite interestingly expressed by the public official, who justified such attitudes of distrust from the citizens by arguing that indeed it has been a common occurrence that the "promises" of the authorities have proved to be false (Fotiou, personal communication, 4 April 2018). Chatzinakos, working as an appointed researcher by the municipality of Thessaloniki in a part of western Thessaloniki, observed that "I located a broad trend of distrust and non-confidence towards the Municipality" (Chatzinakos, 2016a, p. 6).

Distrust exists also from the side of the local administration towards the citizens. As the public official noted "My own experience is that local government, in general, is very unlikely to trust the inhabitants and their organizations, because, as I said earlier, (a) there is no such culture in Greece yet, neither in the elected nor in the services, (b) the citizens are not trained to "receive" such "power" (c) in many cases the local associations (or the groups of citizens who intervene ) are strongly
politicized / divided along party lines, and their objectives are maximalist and of more central political character rather than local.” (Fotiou, personal communication, 4 April 2018).

Thus this distrust has to be connected to the lack of a tradition of this sort which affects all parties involved: the citizens, the professionals in the municipality, and the elected political personnel. The strong politicization in the society, which leads to a focus on “central” ideological points than more local and tangible issues as mentioned by Fotiou, is also a recurring theme in the analysis. This was seen also by Chatzinakos interviewed as part of the Svolou Street neighborhood initiative, who also based on his capacity as an academic researcher, but also on his experiences from Greek society, contrasted negatively the Spanish (the theoretical model which the initiative was trying to copy) with the Greek society, noting that whereas cooperation between different political ideologies was common in Spain when it came to tackling common local issues, shared by all groups of society, such a prospect appears distant in Greek society (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018).

The authors of the Athens Resilience strategy for 2030 also identified mistrust as one of Athens resilience challenges noting: “During 2016, the Greek Ombudsman issued a report analyzing the widely spread feeling of mistrust between citizens and public services. This is only a small aspect of the large phenomenon of mistrust that Athenians have towards all levels of government, administrative or elected. This is the outcome of centuries of political partisanship and mismanagement of resources, corruption and clientelism, lack of transparency and accountability. Unfortunately mistrust, pervasive and insidious, keeps undermining a lot of worthy effort.” (City of Athens, 2017, p.15).

Based on the evidence presented above it can be concluded that this indicator is not fulfilled. Although as Chatzinakos noted trust can be built progressively, at this moment, it is widely recognized that it does not exist in sufficient levels. Trust is a major challenge for attempts at participatory planning in Greece to succeed.

4.1.6 Variable: Triggering event and clear focus

4.1.6.1 Indicator: The existence of a sense of belonging and an interest for the urban renewal project in a spatial unit (e.g. block, street or neighborhood)

The data analysis on this indicator suggests that while in some cases a sense of belonging of the residents to the neighborhood they are residing was expressed, it was generally weak and with caveats. The main factors affecting this sense can be summarized as such:

• the urban environment has certain characteristics that alienate people from their
neighborhood, such as a large population, and fairly different social groups living together, such as immigrants, old people and students

- an unclear but significant percentage of the residents of the urban areas under study are living there temporarily, renting for a few years, and with the prospect to move eventually
- the lack of a tradition of contact among the residents leads to the neighborhood being understood through its utilitarian aspects (meaning the shops and services available in close range of one’s residence) and not through social contact.

For example Chatzinakos, despite being part of the initiators of the Svolou Street neighborhood initiative in the center of Thessaloniki and resident of the area, mentioned in the interview that he felt that “his” neighborhood to be a different area (nearby), the one he spent most time socializing, rather than the area his residence was in (Chatzinakos, personal communication, 13 March 2018). Reinforcing this attitude, during his research in a different area, in the western part of the municipality of Thessaloniki, he noted that “most of the interviewees reported attachment to an area significantly smaller to the one considered by the municipality as a neighborhood. In this regard locals’ behaviours and their subjective neighbourhoods do not appear to correspond with official neighbourhood boundaries. [...] it is profound that the locals perceive micro-environments depending on their place of residence, work and memory. Their individual experiences shape their capacities to consider in broader detail what constitutes their neighbourhood.” (Chatzinakos, 2016, p. 6).

In a similar vein there is a clear pattern in the data where it is expressed that the Greeks are not interested in things not private. The Resilient Thessaloniki 2030 document notes regarding public spaces that “the sight of marginalized public spaces is common in Thessaloniki, as in most cases there is an apparent lack of a sense of “belonging”. Residents and passers-by are indifferent to maintaining the quality of public space (...)” (City of Thessaloniki, 2016b, p. 80). Two somewhat divergent attitudes were expressed: the belief that Greeks are not interested in investing in things that are not strictly theirs, and that they would be interested to work for common areas if they felt them to be theirs in some way. To this the initiatives revolving around public space should be contrasted, although the involvement and investment of money in them by the participants is limited. The municipality of Athens has included the enhancement of belonging through a number of actions, such as promoting the city’s identity and promoting new types of belonging (City of Athens, 2017).

As far as interest in regeneration goes, this has to be connected to the effect that the perceived problems in the area have on the participants. The problems as described by the public official interviewed were “dense construction, poor quality of the street layout and the construction of buildings, lack of sufficient free public spaces, lack of green, severe problems with traffic and parking
spaces” (Fotiou, personal communication, 4 April 2018). There is a general agreement over this issues in the other interviews as well, although the stress they put is not equal. In this sense the desire to improve the parking situation and the importance of this problem was stressed enough times in the interviews to consider it to be an important factor that unifies the interests of a neighborhood, even if its residents do not necessarily feel a strong attachment to it in other ways. The municipalities have clear intentions to support regeneration. The SOAP of Athens has a number of actions in its operational plan to effect traditional regeneration as well as attempt to activate the citizens (MOARPA, 2013), while the resilient strategy for 2030 includes in its actions the enhancement of green infrastructure and the creation of a fund to promote the energy upgrading of buildings (City of Athens, 2017). The new General City Plan for Thessaloniki, as has previously been mentioned, proposes the adoption of several SOAP plans for the central areas of the municipality taking inspiration by the SOAP for the center of Athens (Municipality of Thessaloniki, 2015).

Even though it appears that the urban character of the study area is not conducive for the creation of a feeling of belonging it can be said that in general there is at least a utilitarian connection of the residents to their neighborhood. They feel and identify the problems in a similar manner. As a conclusion it can be said that this indicator is fulfilled.

4.1.6.2 Indicator: The existence of a clear common understanding of the problems, the solutions and the objectives of the process.

As mentioned already in the previous paragraph when examining the sense of belonging and the desire of residents to support regeneration projects in their area, the most unifying factor is the problems that they identify and which affect their lives. In this sense there is a general agreement in some of the basic problems not only among the people interviewed but also in literature as mentioned in an earlier chapter in this thesis: principally lack of parking spaces, lack of public open spaces or poor exploitation of those that exist, poor maintenance of roads, sidewalks and parks and a generally poor quality of the housing stock. Other problems mentioned in single occasions were the lack of sense of safety and the inability to build bike lanes due to lack of space. The fact that the main problems can be found in the literature and were spontaneously mentioned by citizens and the public official interviewed alike suggests that there is a strong agreement in the perception of what the problems are, even if they are prioritized differently by the different individuals.

Similarly, the way that the two focus areas, the residential areas covered by the municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki were developed is similar, and thus also similar is the relevance of
provisions such as the unification of internal open spaces of the city blocks. The two projects Akalyptos SKG in Thessaloniki and Akalyptos 2.0 in Athens focus around the same idea. As far as solutions go, only general claims were made with an understanding that a lot of the problems are derived from things like the layout of the urban fabric which are very difficult to change fundamentally. Thus solutions can only be incremental and of small scale. This indicator can be seen as fulfilled.
4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Results

A summary form of the analysis' results regarding the variables and their indicators is presented below. As it can be seen of the five variables only two are fully fulfilled, namely 1) the overall administrative culture, the political attitudes and the legal framework, all of which if not supportive, are at least not obstructing participatory processes in urban regeneration and 2) the triggering event and a clear focus, which in the context of urban regeneration means that all actors recognize the existence of the problem and agree over the necessity of solving it. The other three variables provided mixed results, as some of the indicators were not fulfilled. The variable of communication among actors fails at that there is no tradition of self-organization among the citizens. The variable of the adaptation of practices fails in that the government is generally believed to be unwilling to accept an equal status with the other actors in the decision making processes of urban regeneration. The third variable that fails is that of the existence of social capital and the willingness to work together, which fails in that there is clear mistrust among the actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Fulfilled or not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall administrative culture,</td>
<td>The existence of policies and intentions to implement self-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>political</td>
<td>organization in urban planning, or expressed formal recognition of its</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitudes and legal</td>
<td>significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>framework</td>
<td>The existence of laws that allow or put immovable obstacles to the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>processes of participatory planning and self-organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>The existence of a tradition of communication and coordination between</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among actors</td>
<td>the government and the citizens and the extent of the influence of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The existence of a tradition of self-organization among the citizens</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of trust in the process</td>
<td>The existence of belief in the effectiveness and support for the process</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by the actors</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The existence of willingness from the government to accept the risks of self-organization and the extent in which the government is willing to accept an equal status with the other actors in the decision-making process.  

The existence of willingness and ability by the government to design the institutional setting by providing structure of positions and relationships of the actors as well the rules of the game, the necessary resources, such as relevant information, legal support, knowledge, finances and a meeting place.

The existence of social structures and networks of contact and cooperation among the relevant actors.

The existence of willingness to participate by the actors involved in the process.

The existence of trust among the actors.

The existence of a sense of belonging and an interest for the urban renewal project in a spatial unit (e.g. block, street or neighborhood).

The existence of a clear common understanding of the problems, the solutions and the objectives of the process.

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### Table 8 Summary of the findings per indicator

More than just discovering the obstacles, the analysis described above provides indications for potential solutions to the issues identified. Although it appears that there are numerous obstacles and shortcomings in the indicators for the successful adoption and implementation of participatory practices in planning in Greece, these are generally not insurmountable and the successful utilization of participatory processes and even more radical forms of self-organization in urban regeneration appear possible. The biggest obstacles are the lack of a tradition in this direction and a general suspicion from all sides, as no one, particularly the citizens themselves but also the government as well, trust the good-will and the ability of the other sides to contribute.

The general observation to be made is that there is a common recognition of the existence of the problem of dilapidation in many parts of the Greek city centers, as well as the problem of a problematic initial design. Thus it can be said that there is a common understanding among the actors of what the problem is, and although it is unclear in the data, it can be surmised that there is no fundamental disagreement over the potential solutions. The way that solutions can be
reached is unclear and it can be generally said that so far only a few steps towards this direction have been made. It has not been a high priority for Greece, centrally and locally, to regenerate its cities. Despite the theoretical interest in participatory practices as it is found in legislation and other texts, little has been accomplished in practice.

The trigger that is necessary to initiate the process is missing, in the sense that there is no particular fact that pushes for a spontaneous self-organization. On the other hand there are initiatives, whether private or supported by the municipalities as well, that attempt to gather interested citizens for a more participatory governance, although all these projects have no binding nature. As observed in the analysis, a hard obstacle for the implementation of true participation in Greece is the status and balance of power between the citizenry and the formal bodies of government. As observed in the literature review, true participation without a redistribution of power cannot exist, and a redistribution of power requires conflict to happen. The example of Svolou's neighborhood initiative, itself a modest and unambitious effort, shows the signs of conflict, as well as the eventual change of stance of the municipality, based on the persistence of the initiative. This is an indication of the process that needs to happen before true power in the decision-making processes is given to the citizens. Thus, although the formal political bodies (namely mainly the municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki) formally support participatory planning and include it in their strategic plans, true participation will require citizen-borne initiatives and challenging of power in order to occur. This is one important finding from these research.

Another important issue that emerges from the analysis of the data is the issue of trust. There is an extreme consistency in the data when it comes to the belief that there is a shortage of trust principally among the citizens and between the citizens and all government bodies. This obstacle is hard to pass, in the sense that it is a deeply culturally ingrained attribute of Greek society. Trust between the local government and the citizenry can be improved as long as the quality of governance is also improving. Moreover, the redistribution of power towards lower bodies, such as the distribution of decision-making competencies from the municipalities to the municipal communities, can help. As part of the responses gained it was noted that municipalities with smaller populations have a greater cohesion. By increasing the power of the municipal communities in the bigger municipalities of Greece, it is also potentially possible to increase the trust between them and the citizens. It was noted in the data collected for the analysis that decentralization and reinforcement of the lower levels of public administration is part of the policies of the two big municipalities that were the focus of this research. It is thus a matter of time to see if the obstacle of mistrust will be progressively lifted, making the collaboration between the public administration and the common citizens closer and more substantial.
The difficulties in communication and agreement among the citizens themselves point to another issue. There is a lack of tradition in self-organization and generally horizontal collaboration, without looking towards the local government institutions for solutions. It is hard to expect a dramatic change in this aspect. However, as pointed out by the findings of Svolou’s neighborhood initiative, it is possible through activities that bring people together to create a community feeling, as well as bring people of quite different backgrounds to talk to each other. As long as citizen initiatives are supported and bring tangible and observable results, it can be expected that attitudes will change.

On more practical notes the problems that emerge are: the necessary know-how, the funding and the infrastructure. The two municipalities have clearly shown in their policy documents that they are willing to provide facilities and a framework for participatory practices, which means that progressively know-how will be accumulated and a number of professionals, at least, will be experienced enough to help streamline the processes. Funding remains a problem, as both the private and the municipal budgets have taken severe hits by the economic crisis in Greece. This issue cannot be solved easily and will remain an impediment to the implementation of any substantial urban regeneration project, participatory or not.

4.2.2 Reflection to theory

The literature review showed a number of theoretical approaches to what real participation is. Arnstein’s famous ladder of citizen participation identified eight rungs of participation. The research in this thesis showed clearly that Arnstein’s comment back in 1969 that a lot of practices that promoted by the public bodies as participation either a “nonparticipation” or simply degrees of toke participation, is valid for Greece. While a lot of participatory actions were promoted, their results were not binding, and thus the participant actors did not have more than token power. Using Pretty’s (1995) typology it can be said participation in Greece is seen as ranging from the type of Participation by Consultation in the more traditional approach of urban planning, up to Functional Participation in the current approaches in the policies of the municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki. This type can be seen in participatory design workshops, such as that of Varvakeios square, where the end result of the whole process was a proposal, eventually worked on and finalized by professionals and taken into consideration by the municipality of Athens. The type of “Interactive Participation” does not really exist in practice, although the policy claims for participatory budgeting in the local boroughs is indication for a future move towards this direction. The final type defined by Pretty, that of self-mobilization, is what has been generally called in this thesis self-organization. The Svolou street initiative belongs to this type, but it
remains a small-scale action, which enjoys a limited degree of acceptance by the authorities. It remains however a very interesting experiment, and has already exposed attitudes, as well as changes. When examining White’s (1996) typology, which is based on the interests in participation, it becomes harder to determine which form best describes the Greek approaches. The declared intentions, such as sustainability, leverage and empowerment, do not necessarily match white’s typology of “what participation is for”. Boonstra’s & Boelens’ observation that “participation is always based on the idea of a conflict between the powerful and the powerless, in which the powerful determines the procedures along which the powerless shall participate.” (2011: 106), is certainly true for the approach that the Greek municipalities take on participation. Although the municipalities support increased inclusion of citizens, they also clearly expect to determine the procedures through which this will happen. Putting the case of Svolou’s street initiative in Eizenberg’s (2018) typology of the three manifestations of self-organization in urban planning, it appears to belong in the second type, that of “self-organization by the ordinary for community interests”.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Research questions

At the beginning of this research thesis a main research question and four sub-questions were put forth. The main question was “Are the necessary elements for successful implementation of participatory practices and self-organization in urban regeneration found in Greece?”, itself broken into the sub-questions:

- What is urban regeneration in the Greek context? What are its main constituent elements?
- How does participatory planning and self-organization relate to urban regeneration? In what elements of urban regeneration are such practices relevant?
- What are the elements that determine success in participatory and self-organization processes?
- Are these elements to be found in Greece? Where is there sufficient presence and where is there lack? What are possible solutions?

The first three sub-questions were answered through the literature review. A summary of the findings will be presented. The first sub-question: “What is urban regeneration in the Greek context? What are its main constituent elements?” was answered by giving an overview of the Greek legislation regarding urban regeneration, including a definition of what urban regeneration is. Greek legislation and in particular law 2508/1997, the provisions of which in regards to urban regeneration remain active today, defines four levels of regeneration in terms of radicalness, and provides a number of tools for implementing it. The second research sub-question is more general. Participatory planning and self-organization in relation to urban planning have been studied and implemented for a number of decades in the world in general, although in Greece they remain in their infancy. Urban regeneration is a sub-set of urban planning. Citizen participation and citizen self-organization in urban planning provide what the European Commission calls “better services making more effective use of available resources” (2011: 30). Also, Zhang & de Roo note that “Self-organisation emphasises a mechanism through which complex systems generate their own state of being while continuously evolving to find an optimum fit with their environment” (2016: 253). As seen in the literature review self-organization can have different meanings, meaning either that it is the result of the actions of individuals seeking their own interest or the result of a collective bottom-up process which operates outside the formal procedures (Raws, 2016).
Success in participatory and self-organization processes, as seen in the literature review, is hard to define. For many researchers, success is defined as the implementation of the process itself, rather than the measurement of any tangible results that come out of such processes (Voorberg et al, 2015a). The overview that was done in the second half of the second chapter, where a number of research projects and the case of Alma-Gare were examined, in order to produce some measurements and indicators of success of participatory and self-organization processes in urban planning, showed that the focus was in the existence of factors different than measurable and tangible effects of urban regeneration. Van Meerker, Boonstra & Etelenboos (2011) focused their research on the factors generating a “vigorou" self-organization process in urban regeneration, while Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers defined successful co-creation, itself a subset of participation, as “the extent in which involved stakeholders perceive that co-creation arrangements between citizens and public organizations successfully have been established" adding that “successful co-creation must be understood in the successful creation of a co-creative process" (2014: 8). Ultimately the distillation of a number of research projects regarding citizen participation and self-organization in urban regeneration projects produced the indicators used of this research thesis as they are found at the end of the second chapter.

The active field work of this thesis revolved around the fourth sub-question, namely whether the identified factors of success of participatory processes in urban regeneration can be found in Greece. This required active visits to Greece and communication with other means, such as notably by email, in order to collect the necessary data. Additional data were gathered from existing written sources such as academic and non-academic literature, legislation and policy documents. The results of this research was presented at the end of the previous chapter. It can be summarized in that not all elements that determine success in participatory and self-organization processes to be found in Greece. Some further suggestion will be presented below.

5.2 The problems of the research

The problems that this research thesis met can be divided in two parts. On the one hand there were objective limitations that affected the researcher such as the inability to spend much time in Greece. This meant that interviews had to be limited in number and planned ahead. Unfortunately it turned out that particularly public officials were hard to find. Even with the use of other means such as the telephone this researcher could only communicate with the secretaries of elected public officials and ultimately only one was willing to respond to a number of question, themselves sent to the secretary. To a certain extent this reflects a behaviour of non-interest non-cooperation.
of public officials with the common citizens they are supposed to represent. The limited number of interviews certainly causes problems with generalizability of the conclusions, and a bigger and more diverse sample of opinions would increase the strength of the findings.

Other limitations were to the available literature and practical experience with participatory planning. Whereas there are many international examples were various methods of participation in urban regeneration projects were used and a lot of academic literature written on them, there is relatively little in Greece. Available examples are even more limited if one imposes limitations on the methods of participation and the typologies of areas, trying to focus on more specific subjects. Additionally, even if some examples are relevant, literature on them may be hard to obtain or non-existent.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Scientific

The scientific recommendations that come out of this research thesis are related on the one hand to the need to research the subject of participatory urban regeneration and self-organization in a Greek context and provide definitions and explanations which will be a guide for a better understanding of these concepts, and on the other hand to the need to research the results of the existing attempts at participatory planning or self-organization. A systematic research of several projects can provide significant insight into the factors that affect the success or failure of such projects in Greece. I consider the example of the unification of the open spaces in the interior of city blocks which has existed for decades but has failed to take-off as a generalized practice to be a good subject for research. There have been attempts, but there is no systematic recording and comparison of them to produce insights. Further research into this and similar subjects can provide answers to the problems and reasons for success or failure.

Other fields for scientific research are research in the society to find attitudes towards subjects such as governance, the built environment, their perceived relation to their neighbourhood both as a location and as a social unit and others. Chatzinakos’ (2016) research for the municipality of Thessaloniki in its western part showed that the way the residents perceive their neighbourhood does not agree with the borders that the municipality defines. These aspects are important in order for a background understanding to be formed of the society and its relation to urban regeneration.
5.3.2 Practical

Practical recommendations that come out from the experience of conducting this research work have to do with planning of the research and especially of interviews with public officials, as they are hard to get in contact with. Other professionals related to the planning field are easier to locate but also not always available. The researcher that wants in the future to expand on the subject should make the effort to plan ahead and include a large and diverse number of public officials.

Practical recommendations for the implementation of participatory processes for urban regeneration can be that knowledge of the existing legislation and available tools need to be better known. It became apparent in the research that there is not a wide understanding and knowledge of the tools that are available. As such a mobilization of the relevant actors for the implementation of urban regeneration with their active involvement in the process, if not the bottom-up initiation of it by them, is hard to happen.
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## Appendix

**Atlas.ti coding:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grounded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief in the effectiveness</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common understanding of the problem and same goals</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals of regeneration</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation, provisions and obstacles</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other obstacles</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and intentions to implement self-organization in planning, or formal recognition of its importance</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems in the area</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging and interest in regeneration</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks and contact among the actors</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition of self-organization and collaboration between government and citizens</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust among the actors</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness by public officials to participate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness by the government to accept equal status</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness by the government to accept the risks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness by the government to provide necessary resources</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness of actors to participate</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness of the government to provide framework</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>