



UPLIFT – Urban PoLicy Innovation to address  
inequality with and for Future generaTions

## Deliverable 1.2

# Inequality concepts and theories in the post-crisis Europe

*Summary of the literature review*

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# 1 Executive Summary

UPLIFT project aims to understand the underlying processes of the reproduction of urban social inequalities and the responses given in this situation in terms of possible public policy interventions to the inequality trap. The success of an intervention is based on identifying and understanding the drivers of inequalities and their interdependencies. UPLIFT has recognized the significance of the position of adolescents and young adults in terms of their opportunities and constraints and aims to provide a comprehensive empirical analysis of the broader structural, institutional and local, context-specific developments. *This report sums up key social science concepts, theories, and debates related to inequality supporting the scientific design of UPLIFT.*

UPLIFT project concerns social and economic developments in Europe in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and it focuses on the dynamics in functional urban regions of different sizes and different national contexts.

The Introduction (Chapter 3) explains the structure of the literature review. UPLIFT takes a broad theoretical approach, which, among others, touches on two major standing debates in the social sciences. Firstly, how different levels of the analysis (macro, meso, and micro) are interconnected, and secondly, the dilemma of the primacy of the structure or agency. In the Introduction section, it is pointed out that the crisis caused by Covid-19 would weigh more heavily on young people and precarious and low-income social groups than previous crises.

The starting point of our approach is the conceptual framework of inequality (Chapter 4), which addresses several important issues for the UPLIFT project. First, we have to incorporate three different scales of inequalities into our analysis: 1) global inequality; 2) inequality between regions/nation-states and functional urban areas; 2) inequality within regions/nations and functional urban areas; putting the territorial scope to Europe. Second, we have to balance our focus between the measures of inequality and poverty. The UPLIFT project has put the focus on the measures of inequality and its interconnection with poverty; however, it allows introspection of its measures as well. Third, we have to differentiate between the inequality of opportunities and inequality of outcomes. Fourth, inequalities have become a central element of recent political debates, discussed partly in the context of development (economic growth) and partly in the context of the relationship between inequalities and populism. UPLIFT project assumes that glaring inequalities are detrimental to the development of society, but it is a question of how interventions reduce inequalities affected by economic growth. Therefore, we gave a short summary of the literature on the trade-off between equity and economic efficiency. Recent political analyses highlight the link between economic (and territorial) inequality and the growth of populism and we shortly touch upon this literature, as it could be important for the political future of Europe.

Among the factors influencing social inequalities at the macro level, we have paid the most attention to the processes related to the economic systems, with globalization being the

overarching concept (Chapter 5). In the literature review, after the summary of the relevant development theories, we focused on the theories and research that sought to explain how different stages of economic development affect social and territorial inequalities (Chapter 5.1.). UPLIFT concentrates on European countries, where a vast amount of literature on the problem has emerged, which is reflected in the analysis of convergence and divergence processes among member states and regions (Chapter 5.2). Special attention was given to the issue of “vulnerable regions” (such as shrinking cities, weak market cities, or “areas left behind”). The project proposal had the assumption that one of the most important elements of social inequality in Europe is the location. Thus, we were looking for relevant typologies explaining the inequalities related to the position of the region in terms of economic and social opportunities. One of the tasks of WP1 is to set up a framework explaining the differences between the 16 cities. The research will test the hypotheses of stable systems of the regional economic and social position of cities explained by structural factors. The other challenge of UPLIFT project is to understand the changes in the social structure, which is partly connected to global economic trends. We summarized the literature on the “emergence of the precariat” (provided in Chapter 5.3), and specific factors influencing the position of the youth.

Moving from the global level to the member state or regional level, UPLIFT took a stand on the “soft-globalization” approach, which emphasizes that beyond the global trends national states and regions have a room of manoeuvring in economical, societal and political terms (Chapter 6). The economic advantages and disadvantages of globalization are not evenly distributed among the various actors; the distribution of costs and benefits is asymmetric between sectors and factors of production. We suppose that coping strategies of the national governments and regions would modify these trends, which is well-demonstrated by the different versions of the welfare regimes theories (Chapter 6.1). In our understanding, the logic of the welfare regimes may differ across the sectors. Consequently, the literature on how the public policy in different domains (labour, housing, education, etc.) may modify the framework of understanding inequality would be crucial for the WP2’s case studies (Chapter 6.2). The vast literature on urban territorial inequalities was summarized in Chapter 6.3. We hoped that we could use the urban regime theories for our urban typology, but the literature review showed that the urban governance approach is a better fit for the aim of our research.

At the third level of analysis of the UPLIFT project, it examines the role of individual decisions and actions. (Chapter 7) Here, as well, we started from the assumption that individuals have room for manoeuvring, even if their options are severely limited by structural conditions. The typical positions that individuals may choose are the products of earlier interactions between structural factors, institutions and individuals. We have overviewed three theoretical approaches that we considered relevant for our approach already in the proposal. In the review of the capability approach, we emphasized the importance of the opportunity and relative freedom of the individual to choose (Chapter 7.1). The life-course framework demonstrates the interconnection of the choices made, on the one side, in different stages of the life course, and on the other side, different domains (Chapter 7.2). Finally, we have surveyed the literature

on intergenerational transmission of social positions as factors relevant to conserve social inequalities (Chapter 7.3).

The literature review covers the main theoretical approaches for work packages 1, 2, and 3 and serves as a starting point for their work. Work package 4 strongly relies on the theoretical and empirical results of work packages 1, 2 and 3, thus those results will constitute the bases for work package 4.

The role of the literature review was to help to formulate the theoretical framework of the different work packages. In the course of the project, we will confront our research results to the body of the literature in order to reach a theoretically based framework.

## 2 List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full word
<b>AROP</b>	At Risk of Poverty
<b>AROPE</b>	At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion
<b>CA</b>	The Capability Approach
<b>CRITEVENTS</b>	Critical Life Events and the Dynamics of Inequality: Risk, Vulnerability, and Cumulative Disadvantage
<b>DEMHOW</b>	Demographic Change and Housing Wealth
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EPL</b>	Employment Protection Legislation
<b>EPSR</b>	European Pillar of Social Rights
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EURO-HEALTHY</b>	Shaping EUROpean policies to promote HEALTH equitY
<b>EU-SILC</b>	The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
<b>FJH</b>	Featherman, Lancaster Jones and Hauser
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GFC</b>	Great Financial Crisis
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HRB</b>	Health-Related Behaviour
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Office
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>LIP</b>	Improving the Evidence Base for Understanding the Links between Inequalities and Poverty
<b>MTO</b>	Moving To Opportunity
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Employment, Education or Training

<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NHS</b>	United Kingdom National Health Service
<b>NUTS</b>	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>SCIRN</b>	The Shrinking Cities International Research Network
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEP</b>	Socioeconomic Position
<b>SPAREX</b>	The Spatialization and Racialization of Social Exclusion: the social and cultural formation of 'gypsy ghettos' in Romania in a European context
<b>STYLE</b>	Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe
<b>UK</b>	The United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UPLIFT</b>	Urban PoLicy Innovation to address inequality with and for Future generaTions
<b>US</b>	The United States
<b>WILCO</b>	Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in Favour of Cohesion
<b>WP</b>	Work Package

### 3 Introduction

'In the age of Covid-19, the rubble of economic collapse will fall on those who suffered the most from the last crash: the young, the precarious, the low-paid' (Owen Jones. The Guardian 9 April, 2020).

'Covid-19 is painfully exposing the existing and persisting health inequalities in our societies. This pandemic will have the heaviest impact on the lives of people living in deprivation or facing difficult socio-economic circumstances' (EuroHealthNet: What covid-19 is teaching us about inequality, [www.eurohealthnet.eu](http://www.eurohealthnet.eu), accessed April 14, 2020).

Citations with similar messages could be provided in abundance from almost all countries affected by the current pandemic. In countries having substantial shares of ethnic and racial minorities, statistics on the number of cases affected and of deaths shows substantial over-representation of minority residents. As these are often living geographically clustered particular minority-dense neighbourhoods are typically severely struck by infections: 'The virus map of the New York boroughs turns redder along precisely the same lines as it would if the relative shade of crimson counted not infection and death but income brackets and middle-school ratings' (Zadie Smith, The American exception, In: The New Yorker April 10, 2020).

Currently, the understanding is that the reasons are over-crowded housing, more often intergenerational cohabitation, poor socioeconomic conditions, inefficient institutional response, worse health and other indicators of relative poverty (Pareek et al., 2020). According to the 2018 EU-SILC survey, 26.2 percent of the European population with an income below 60 % of median equivalized income lived in over-crowded dwellings (EU-SILC survey, 2018). Over-crowding by age, sex and poverty status – total population). Demanding social distancing as to slow infection spreading is difficult under these circumstances. Likewise, working from home is impossible if you work in much of the private service sector, not to mention the economic effects of becoming unemployed if you work on a temporary contract and are paid on a day-by-day or week-by-week basis. Like other crises in the past, all key dimensions of inequality addressed in earlier research, such as income, employment, education and health, will be severely affected by the unfolding crisis. As stated in the EU economic forecast report of May 6, 2020: 'Given the severity of this unprecedented worldwide shock, it is now quite clear that the EU has entered the deepest economic recession in its history' (European Commission, Institutional Paper 125: 13)

UPLIFT project was launched with the purpose to systematically carry out research on the 2008 financial crisis and its effects on inequality. More specifically the idea is, by means of a comparative European design, to study such effects in selected urban regions and to focus on urban policies launched to counteract the effects of assumed rising levels of inequality, in particular for the young. Without doubt, the Covid-19 pandemic will complicate project matters but, if anything, it will also provide further arguments for our focus on inequality. We will start this literature overview with discussing the key concept of inequality and how that is

understood in earlier research and then continue with an attempt to cover some of the theoretical contributions that might help us in subsequent empirical research to be carried out in forthcoming work packages.

The London School of Economics has recently concluded a comprehensive effort to summarize and develop our understanding of inequality related issues. Their project 'Understanding the Links between Inequalities and Poverty' (LIP) is a timely contribution which will be used in the next section for discussing some of the key conceptual issues.

The UPLIFT project focuses on the reproduction of social inequalities and the possible public policy interventions to the inequality trap. Successful intervention depends on understanding the drivers of inequalities and their dependencies. WP1 and WP2 concentrate on drivers at the macro- and meso-level, while WP3 moves to the individual (micro) level.

The UPLIFT proposal decided to use 'capability and life course analysis' approaches and intergenerational mobility at the micro-level analysis with special attention to the globalization trends and the changes of urban structures at the European level. The theoretical background of UPLIFT faces the three typical challenges of social science research: (1) The economical, societal, and spatial consequences of globalization; (2) To connect the macro-level factors with micro factors; (3) To place the reproduction of inequality in the structure and agency debate.

The role of the macro- and micro-levels in the social theory is one of the most debated issues in the literature (Pawlak, 2018). UPLIFT starts from the macro-level processes (WP1), moves to meso-level (WP2) and the micro-level (WP3). The analyses, however, cannot be separated following this logic. The solution of the macro-micro dichotomy is to focus on the interactions between the levels. There are problems that can be explained mainly with macro factors and, on the other hand, there are problems where the micro variable plays a more important role in the explanation. However, researchers see the difficulties in establishing the macro-micro linkages from the conceptual level to rigorous, empirically-based dynamic analyses (Mayer, 2005): "We will see that the balance of the micro-macro factors may vary in the research on the same issue".

Macro-level dimensions are not necessarily structural variables, which is why the agency-structure dilemma is a separate issue. To bridge the gap between the macro-micro levels is a challenging issue. The attempt to understand the initialization of the life course patterns offers a good example of that (Kohli, 2005; Lavy, 2005). UPLIFT will move in this direction.

The 'agency and structure' debate is an important dividing line among the different approaches. Agency refers to the relative autonomy of the individuals in their actions under the constraints of the structural factors. Thus, one question is how the structure narrows the room for manoeuvre of the individuals, and the other question is how the individual actions change the structure. The emphasis is on the interplay between agency and structure, a relation that is changing in time depending on context variables (economy, politics, etc.).

Approaches of life course research vary depending on how much emphasis they devote to the agency aspect, and how much they stress the structural dimensions. The first group of researchers emphasizes the social constraints and opportunities of life events and tend to neglect the role of the individual decisions (Mayer, 1986; Blossfeld, 1987). While the other group of researchers put more stress on the effect of the individual decision on the outcome.

UPLIFT tries to integrate the two approaches and go beyond the theoretical debate over the relative merits of agency versus structure. A capability approach, which tries to balance the interplay between the social structure and individual behaviour, is a good example of the integration of the agency and structure approach.

This report sums up key social science concepts, theories and debates related to inequality. The UPLIFT project concerns social and economic developments in Europe in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and it focuses on the dynamics in urban functional regions of different size and in different national contexts. UPLIFT sees the conditions and experiences of adolescents and young adults as particularly important and aims at framing and understanding their opportunities, constraints and lived experiences by providing empirical accounts of broader structural and institutional developments, as well as local, context-specific developments.

The UPLIFT project focuses on the reproduction of social inequalities and the possible public policy interventions to the inequality trap. Successful intervention depends on understanding the drivers of inequalities and their dependencies. WP1 and WP2 concentrate on drivers at the macro- and meso-level, while WP3 moves to the individual (micro) level. This project logic has informed and helped structure our work with the literature overview.

After presenting some introductory points of departure in the present Chapter 3, in Chapter 4 we turn to the concepts of inequality and poverty, the distinction between opportunities and outcomes, and the wider issues of economic growth and democracy. Macro-level developments connected to globalization and its structural dynamics are then discussed in Chapter 5. Some key notions such as neoliberalism, liquid society, regional disparities and precariat are discussed and are also related to outcomes for the young in the labour market, in housing and in education.

Chapter 6 turns to the meso-level and discusses theories that engage with understanding more specific drivers of inequality and of how inequality is reproduced. Welfare regime theories, theories on institutional change, the role of place, and the normative notion of 'just cities' are all relevant in this context. The reproduction of inequality via segregation and the spatial sorting of life chances conceptualized as geography of opportunity provide vehicles for bridging the meso and micro levels of analyses.

In Chapter 7 we turn to literature focusing on individual level analyses of inequality. Here the capability approach and the concept of the life course provide key contributions to how opportunities and outcomes for individuals can be studied and theorized. However, in order to understand the reproduction of inequality and to identify possible interventions that could

open up for social mobility, the literature on which factors constraint and enable intergenerational mobility also provides an important resource for the UPLIFT project.

As it was briefly discussed in the introduction, the COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge that further highlights the need for social scientists and policymakers to engage with a wide array of inequality-related issues. Although UPLIFT has its primary focus on developments and challenges following the 2008 financial crisis, we hope to be able to also contribute to the empirical analysis of the unfolding Corona crisis.

## 4 Conceptual introduction

### 4.1 Inequality and poverty

In a recently published discussion paper, one of the LIP researchers, Irene Bucelli, provides a summary of different positions regarding our longstanding normative concerns over inequality and poverty. 'Why should we care about poverty? Why should we care about inequality? Do our reasons for caring about one contrast with our reason for caring about the other?' (Bucelli, 2017).

Bucelli identifies a rich tradition in philosophy arguing for a focus on inequality because inequality constitutes *injustice*. Following the political philosopher Rawls (1971), a just society affirms and secures basic rights and liberties for all. The perspective stresses equality of opportunity but also that, in order to mitigate injustice in opportunities and outcomes, social and economic interventions should always benefit the worst-off, a theme central to the 'just cities' discourse (see section 6.3.2). The opportunity and outcome aspects will be elaborated on in the next session.

The issue of social justice typically tends to put emphasis on asymmetrical relationships of social power leading not only to unequal distribution of resources such as income and wealth but also exclusion and discrimination. Redistribution in order to achieve better social equality is important, but possession of material resources is not the only important aspect, as social injustices in other aspects of life could also relate to gender, race or disability.

Those giving more priority to poverty can, according to Bucelli, root arguments in either of three traditions: 'sufficiency views' (not all need to have the same but all should have enough), 'humanitarian approaches' (avoid suffering), or 'a human rights approach' (freedom from poverty can be considered as a fundamental human right).

Although drawing upon different traditions and moral arguments all three care less about (relative) inequality and focus on alleviating suffering connected to absolute poverty. What distinguishes the occurrence of severe poverty today from earlier times is that it is 'not forced on us by natural contingencies of soil, seeds, or climate. Rather, its persistence is driven by the ways that economic interactions are structured' (Pogge, 2007: 3, cited in Bucelli, 2017).

Bucelli continues by providing three sets of arguments for caring about both inequality and poverty, and these are: (1) human dignity; (2) deprivation and capabilities; and (3) instrumental reasons. The first argument states that the overlapping concern with poverty and inequality originates from a commitment to respect human dignity. The so-called capabilities approach (see section 7.1), advanced by Sen (1995) and Nussbaum (2006), argues that poverty and inequality are both barriers to people's capabilities to function in ways that is elemental to human life in society. They both constrain people and their potential. Finally, the instrumental reasons concern the fact that both poverty and inequality have secondary consequences, for instance on social cohesion and political conflict. The instrumental argument has a clear

empirical aspect, i.e. that if inequality and poverty are found to worsen particular opportunities and/or social outcomes, then one might argue that they should be mitigated or abolished.

Many, including the OECD and the IMF, argue for policies that counteract inequality because inequality hampers economic growth (Cingano, 2014; Dabla-Norris et al., 2015; Ostry et al., 2014). Besides this instrumental argument, inequality might also in itself sustain and increase poverty, so even if reducing the level of inequality might guide interventions one needs to recognize the mechanisms through which inequality contributes to poverty. The overall conclusion of Bucelli's work is that there are plenty of reasons to bother about both inequality and poverty.

So far, a couple of important distinctions have been touched upon: the one between relative and absolute poverty and the one between inequality in opportunity and in social outcomes, respectively.

The distinction between relative and absolute poverty has led researchers to develop a range of measurements to study social developments within and across nation states. Yang (2017) provides a clarifying definition of this distinction: 'As an absolute concept, poverty refers to a level of resources that does not change as the general living standard changes over time, whereas this level does change with the general living standard in the understanding of poverty as a relative concept' (Yang 2018: 1). Yang continues: 'Contrary to the concept of poverty, inequality is by definition a relative concept' (ibid), such as the European Union's use of household income being above or below the threshold of 60 percent of median income.

Attempts to operationalize poverty – often by using thresholds – go back to works published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, where, in particular, Rowntree (1902) developed the notion of absolute poverty. This is typically defined as the existence of persistent hunger and starvation, threatening the survival of individuals and groups of people. Most studies follow Rowntree's proposal and apply a basic consumption threshold to identify poverty, and this can be derived by, for instance, calculating the cost of buying essential calories, i.e. using nutrition data.

The study of poverty contains two stages. First identifying who is poor and then aggregating this to groups of poor individuals to get a sense of the relative prevalence of poverty in a population. Yang (2017: 2) discusses this in terms of population-level poverty or vertical inequality. In contrast, horizontal inequality focuses on differences across sub-groups of a population (such as ethnic categories, household groups, socio-spatial categories etc.).

In a similar fashion, Østby (2013) defines vertical inequality as being inter-individual and horizontal as inequality between groups. Both these notions are of relevance for the UPLIFT project but the primary focus is on the opportunities and outcomes for the young in specific national and urban regional contexts, i.e. the predominant focus in several work packages will be on the horizontal dimension where an age-defined sub-group of the population in different urban regions will be analysed.

Yang's paper on the relationship between poverty and inequality focuses on concepts and measurement and she provides a comprehensive overview of existing measures and metrics and their advantages and disadvantages. For the UPLIFT project, her presentation of available indices and metrics (relating to income poverty, material deprivation, low work intensity, etc.) in the EU data is of particular relevance, and so is her presentation of definitions of poverty lines, budget standards approaches, relative income approach and objective/subjective poverty lines. Precisely this approach has been outlined in the WP1 work plan, where our preferred choice of metrics is described.

Both Bucelli and Yang were part of the London School of Economics' LIP project (Understanding the Links between Inequalities and Poverty; see [http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/new/research/Inequalities and Poverty.asp](http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/new/research/Inequalities%20and%20Poverty.asp)) and many scholars beside these two have contributed with important papers on inequality.

Eleni Karagiannaki (2017) studied the empirical relationships between income poverty and income inequality in rich and middle-income countries. Her more detailed case studies focused on the UK, US, Sweden and Denmark, tracking developments over many decades (1960s (UK), 1970s (Sweden) to 2014).

Yang and Vizard (2017) studied the issue of *multidimensional poverty* and income inequality in the EU using a country grouping inspired by Esping-Andersen's welfare regime categorization (see sections 6.1 and 6.2). Among several interesting model results, they find a significant positive relationship among EU countries between levels of income inequality (as measured by Gini and by income percentile ratios) and levels of multidimensional deprivation (as measured by material deprivation and a range of individual co-variates).

A third paper by Lin Yang (2018) addresses the issue of constraint mechanisms and reviews the evidence of how the welfare state can shape the relationship between economic inequality and poverty through the channels of taxes, transfers, and public good provision. In yet another contribution by Yang (2018), the issue of housing costs in relation to poverty and inequality is studied using data from the UK. The project's overview report (Hills et al., 2019) contains results from these and several other papers and offers a comprehensive summary of concepts, debates, measurements, and empirical studies on poverty and inequality.

Although the LIP project provides very valuable conceptual overviews and analyses, UPLIFT will put a stronger focus on the spatial aspects of inequality. Such theoretical contributions focus on different scales (Smith, 1984), with some scholars focusing on uneven global developments, others on within-country regional disparities, and yet others on intra-urban segregation dynamics. As noted by Rodríguez-Pose (2018), the worries about inequality before the outbreak of populism (for instance manifested in the Brexit vote and in the election of Trump in the US) were primarily about *interpersonal inequality*, recently analysed by Piketty (2014) as growing economic polarization of society with concentrated wealth at the top of the income distribution. The following political debate neglected the type of territorial inequality (e.g., 'flyover states' in the US and 'places that don't matter' across the world) that has been

exploited by populists (see Gordon, 2018). Territorial inequality as a form of horizontal inequality is certainly not a new phenomenon and it has attracted research interest since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Friedmann and Weaver, 1978), but in particular the 2008 financial crisis triggered scholars to emphasize spatial polarization and peripheralization as multidimensional processes (see Lang et al., 2015, who offer an account of such processes in contemporary Eastern European countries). The issues of territorial inequality will be further discussed later in this literature review – not least in relation to urban segregation – but it is yet another aspect of horizontal inequality, i.e. that groups within a country and within regions face very different opportunities and experience different outcomes.

## 4.2 Opportunity and outcomes

The distinction between opportunities and outcomes includes a notion of time (implying causality) where inequality in opportunity is assumed to lead to inequality in outcomes. This can be illustrated at the level of individuals where people are born into less or more privileged families, who reside in worse- or better-served neighbourhoods, communities and countries, which will affect everything from basic socialization processes to educational achievements and future incomes, housing standards and health. The idea here is not that inequality in opportunities in any mechanical or deterministic way always produces inequality in outcomes, only that such patterns are very visible in aggregate. The risk of ending up poor is much higher if you grow up in a poor family. Or, as stated by Lin Yang (2018: 6): 'Outcomes and opportunities are, however, highly interdependent. It is unlikely that equal outcomes can be achieved without equal opportunities'. Very often inequalities in different areas overlap between each other giving origin to the notion of multiple inequalities – see for instance Stewart (2002).

As has been touched upon above the distinction between inequality in opportunity versus inequality in outcomes is a crucial one, and it introduces dynamics into our frame of understanding inequality. In particular, economic inequality tends to be measured in a static way, i.e. displaying measures on a situation for a particular year (such as the Gini coefficient and how it differs across countries). Often, such measures can certainly be repeated for different points in time in order to reveal structural change in income distributions. This is, however, not generating an understanding of as to why change might occur. The opportunity-outcome distinction does focus more strongly on the causal mechanisms, hypothesizing that if people do not have the same opportunity then it is likely that outcomes will also be unequal. However, equality in opportunity is often suggested as a more sensible alternative to the idea of overcoming inequalities in outcomes altogether, as focusing exclusively on inequality in outcomes denies the importance of individual responsibility and choice, as well as overlooking the diversity of preferences and tastes.

The opportunity-outcome line of thought focuses on both a single individual's life and individuals in a multigenerational sense. In the latter, it is hypothesized that inequality is reproduced over generations as children are provided with different amounts and quality of

resources by parents and other caregivers. Neighbourhoods (via neighbourhood effects) and education typically have key roles in this transmission of opportunity process (Coleman et al., 1966; Owen, 2017; see also sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4). It is, for instance, well-documented how children of highly-educated parents often live clustered in middle-class neighbourhoods while children with less-educated parents live elsewhere. The former children more often go on to higher education. A higher level of education has systematic positive effects on future income, housing conditions and health status. These relationships will be discussed further in subsequent sections of this report.

As will be discussed further, inequality levels vary geographically and, in the context of the opportunity-outcome discussion, one particular geographic variation has received much attention: variations across nation states. A widely used categorization by Esping-Andersen (1990) focuses on models of welfare states and how social safety nets are financed, their coverage and to what extent they are able to support people who become unemployed, sick or old. In his widely cited book *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, he lays out three main types of welfare states characterizing capitalist societies at the time: The Liberal (such as the U.S.A), The Corporate-Statist (such as Germany), and The Social-Democratic (such as Sweden). The models have been criticized and developed, for instance by launching models that also include Southern European countries (Ferrera, 1996; Rhodes, 1996) and Central and Eastern European and South-East Asian countries (Arts and Gelissen, 2002), but the notion that different countries provide their residents with rather different social and institutional arrangements, which in turn affect the opportunity structure, is still valid.

One way of seeing the role of the welfare state is its capacity to reduce inequality in opportunities caused by market mechanisms. By providing childcare, education, housing, and social insurances, family-based differences in opportunities can be mitigated. Universal and low-cost childcare will, for instance, enable parents with fewer resources to access early pedagogical training for their children. High-quality tax-financed education, which include a free lunch in some welfare states, throughout the school system will also make children's opportunities less dependent on parents' economic resources (see Burger, 2019, for a literature overview and an empirical comparative European analysis). In some European countries higher education is also free. Albeit reduced during recent decades, many European countries offer housing subsidies, sometimes in the form of public/social housing, sometimes in the form of production (rent) subsidies or consumption subsidies (housing allowances), enabling many households to live in better housing than they could otherwise afford (Scanlon, Whitehead and Arrigoitia, 2014; for a recent overview, see [www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1155/affordable-housing-in-europe-how-do-the-various-member-states-do-it](http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1155/affordable-housing-in-europe-how-do-the-various-member-states-do-it)). As pointed out in a recent European commission social policy report (Baeten et al., 2018), most European countries offer accessible and publicly-available healthcare, which offers a more equal health service compared to countries such as the US, where private and typically expensive health insurances are more common features leaving many poor families without service.

Regardless of how we choose to categorize the present-day European countries, their welfare state ambitions still vary, and their ability (and political ambition) to level out within-country variations in opportunities differs. And such opportunity-related differences will likely result in differences in outcomes, not least in times of crisis.

### **4.3 Inequality, economic growth and democracy**

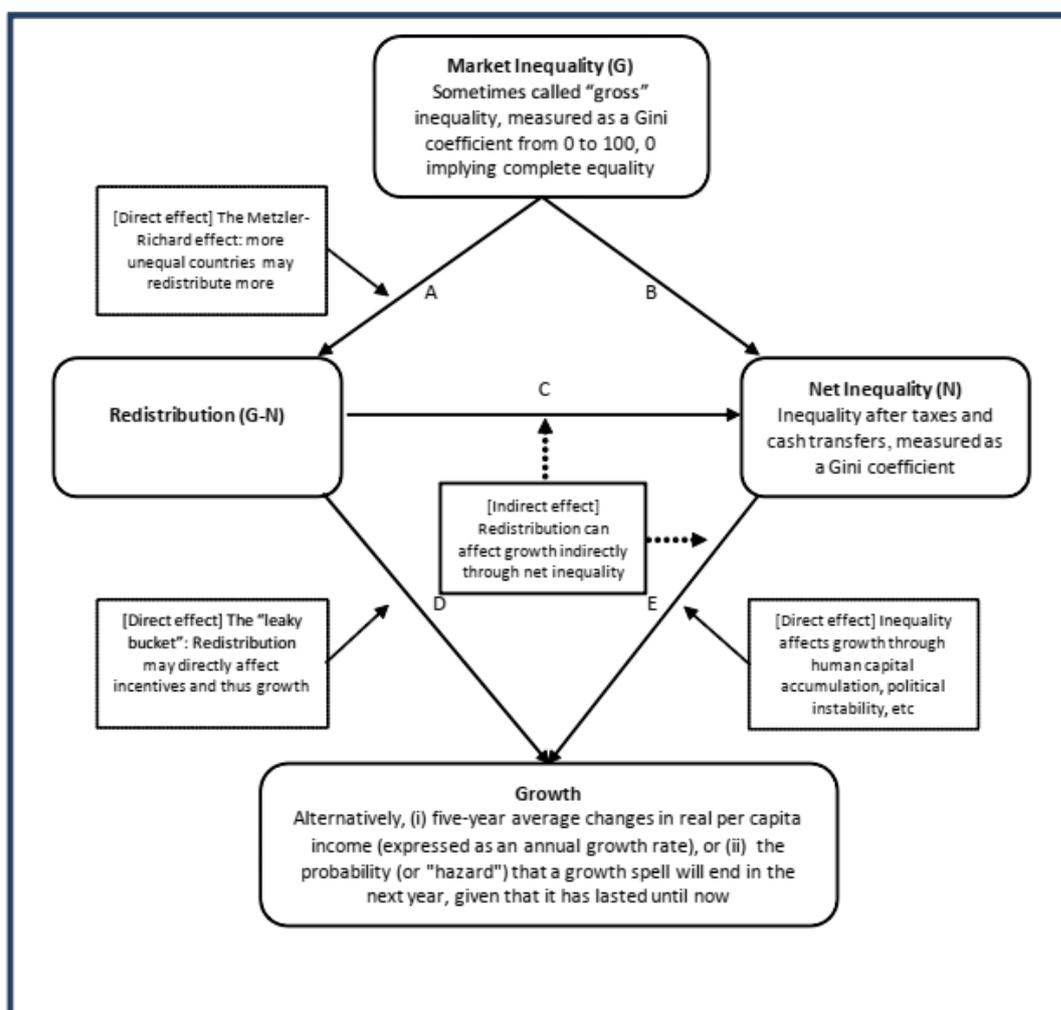
An important research question in economics is the relationship between income inequality and economic growth. According to Okun's (1975) theory, there is a trade-off between economic growth and inequality. Inequality has an incentive effect on labour performance and investment, and income redistribution disables this driver and thus reduces economic growth. Okun himself did not dispute the need for economic policy interventions to reduce inequalities but argued that efficiency leaks can be very different depending on the method of intervention. Efficiency 'leaks' are determined by factors such as poor government policies, the administrative costs of the programs, the effect of income support on the willingness to work and the relationship between the tax system and the savings/investments. A simplified version of this trade-off theory was widespread and provoked serious controversies.

The IMF study (Ostry et al., 2014) gives an overview of the equity-efficiency trade-off debate, bringing the effect of the redistribution into context. In theory, the redistribution through correcting the market inequality leads to net inequality, and these factors influence economic growth in a complex way. The study gives an interpretation of the interconnections among the factors, summarized in Figure 1.

On the relationship between market inequality and redistribution (line A on the figure), Meltzer and Richard's (1981) study argues that the greater the market inequalities, the stronger the redistribution will be. There are political and economic reasons for this, as political power is more balanced in democracies than economic power. In the case of an autocratic political system, the relationship between equality and redistribution is influenced by more complex factors.

Redistribution influences growth through different channels. The direct effect could be negative because of the efficiency leakage and the deadweight cost caused by regulation (D line).

Figure 1. Interrelationships between inequality, redistribution, and growth (Ostry et al., 2014: 9).



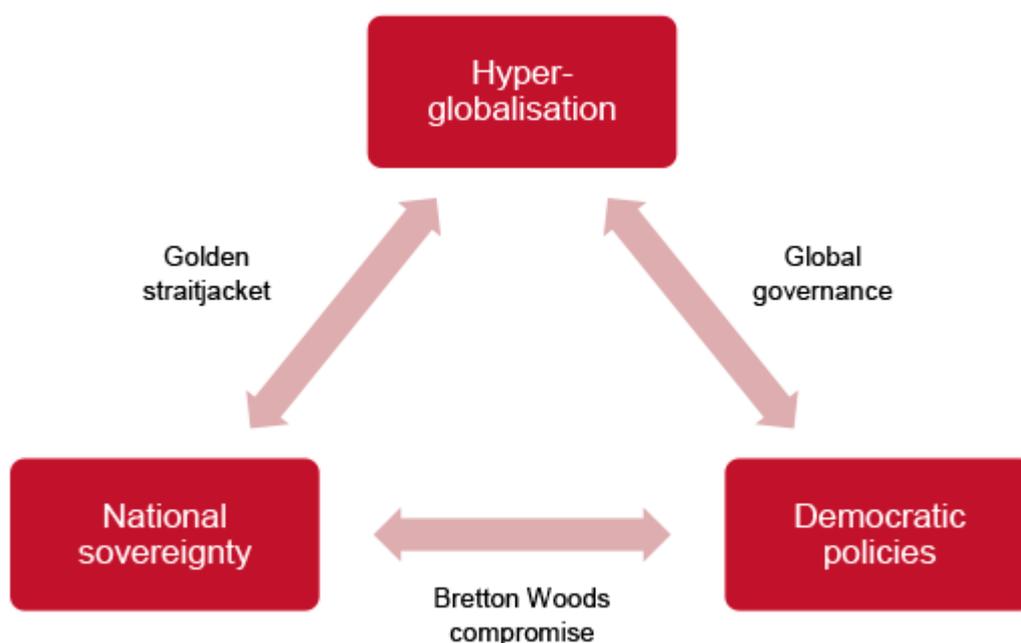
However, decreasing market inequality redistribution may have both negative and positive effects (line E). It may influence the behaviour of the different economic players, which could result in fewer incentives for work, investments, etc. Interestingly, 'redistribution can influence behaviour in ways that may change labour supply and market wages and thus market inequality as well [...] and takes from the rich and gives to the poor is likely to reduce the labour supply of both the rich (who are taxed more) and the poor (insofar as they receive means-tested benefits that reduce incentives to work). Whatever effects this has on market incomes, they are likely to be roughly offsetting insofar as they affect both groups in the same direction' (Ostry, 2014: 11). Redistribution resulting in the improvement of human capital will have a positive effect on growth (Perotti, 1996; Galor and Moav, 2004). The ultimate impact of inequality on economic growth depends on the relative strength of the positive and negative effects.

The conclusion of the literature on growth, inequality and redistribution is that these interconnections are complex, the directions of causal relations are not self-evident, the relationships are not linear, the effects work through multiple channels and the scarcity of proper data constrains the generalization of the empirical studies.

Political scientists strongly hold the view that there is a link between economic inequality and the growth of populism in developed countries. However, only a few studies are known that could prove causal relationships with empirical data. One of them is Autor et al (2016), which showed that the Republican Party in the US performed well in 2016 (compared to 2000) in areas where the economy was more exposed to competition from Chinese imports (loss of industrial jobs, the decline in employment and increase in inequality).

There is a more general explanation of the political consequences of inequality. Inequality is partly a consequence of globalization. As Rodrik (2011) articulated in his famous trilemma, it is impossible to achieve economic hyperglobalization, national sovereignty and democracy at the same time, as only two of them can be achieved simultaneously. In different historical periods, the choice fell on different sides of the triangle (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The political trilemma of the world economy (Rodrik, 2011: 139).



However, after the Great Financial Crisis (GFC), the poles of the trilemma (hyperglobalization, national sovereignty and democratic policies) seem to crack on their own. Populist

governments are increasingly opposed to globalization, whether we look at Trump's China policy or the changed balance of power within Europe.<sup>1</sup>

The research in WP3 of the UPLIFT project will test the influence of populism on households' strategies in different life domains.

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<sup>1</sup> Andreas Ortega: The demolition of Rodrik's trilemma <https://blog.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/the-demolition-of-rodriks-trilemma/>

## 5 Globalization and inequalities (Macro-level)

### 5.1 Theoretical background and globalization

#### 5.1.1 Globalization

Globalization is certainly quite a vague term but refers to ‘the trend for people, firms and governments around the world to become increasingly dependent on and integrated with each other’<sup>2</sup>. It contributes to economic growth (through the market processes) but also to the increase of inequalities, both among the various regions and within them. There are different development theories explaining global trends: the World System theory (Wallerstein, 1974), the modernization theory (Rostow, 1971) and the dependency theory (Baran, 1957). While globalization may narrow the room to manoeuvre for nation states, they keep a relative autonomy in their strategy of adaptation. UPLIFT acknowledges that, within nation states, urban functional areas may also have different development trajectories. There are two types of factors explaining the deviations from the main trends: one type is related to the locational context (geographical and physical differences) and the other type is related to the institutional development (path-dependence). UPLIFT is very much interested in the variations in responses by urban regions (Urban Functional Areas) to globalization. The literature on regions ‘left behind’ has become very important especially since the 2008 GFC, as have the issues of shrinking cities or weak market cities.

The first wave of globalization began in the 1870s and lasted until the First World War and was driven by significant technological developments such as transnational railways (Epstein, 2005). The developed technological infrastructure created the opportunity for transport commodities on a much larger scale than ever before (World Bank, 2002). The global markets and technical improvements that happened at this time led to substantial industrial concentration. Capitalism was uncoordinated due to the dominance of classical economic thinking based on the ‘invisible hand’ by Adam Smith. According to Hunt and Lautzenheiser (2011), this meant two major issues: (1) the costs of the completely unregulated free market have increased; and (2) the market became more anarchic due to large corporations which reduced their flexibility and adjustability. Another important factor that also contributed to the Great Depression was the power imbalance between capitalists and national governments in favour of capitalists (Hunt and Lautzenheiser, 2011: 399).

From the World Wars until the 1980s, the second wave of globalization took place, which includes such underlying processes as the revolution of mass production, which created consumer societies, the wider usage of electricity and the spread of the automobile. According to Bucur (2013), the economy and finances were organized on a national level up until the mid-1970s, an era referred to as ‘Fordism’. This period has been sometimes been called the ‘golden age of capitalism’, in which Fordist production systems gave rise to the conception of

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z/g#node-21529929>

'standard work', with stable, long-term employment contracts that included benefits and featured regular, predictable working hours. Moreover, standard employment relations included statutory constraints on hiring and firing and regulations against arbitrary dismissal, the right to collective representation, minimum wages, nonwage benefits, and pensions. Schömann (2014) confirms that the period between 1960 and 1980 was the height of labour regulation in Europe, considering the introduction of relevant legislation, collective bargaining or case law on workers' rights. The last two decades of the century, according to Schömann, were mainly characterized by stagnation in this matter until the large deregulation waves carried out during the 2000s under the umbrella of the European Union.

The third wave of globalization, which is still referred to as the 'new wave of globalization' by the World Bank (2002), started around the 1980s and lasted until the turn of the millennium. The World Bank report (2002) claimed that an unprecedented global economic integration began in the '80s. In addition, a large number of developing countries 'joined' global markets, and those countries that could not enter into global markets became marginalized. Furthermore, flow of capital and international migration became substantial (World Bank, 2002: 31). According to Hunter (2017) and Hart (2015), this also meant that multinational corporations became less dependent on the national and local environment. While the mobility of capital and goods has been gradually deregulated across the world to enable the intensification of global markets benefiting large corporations and investors, the mobility of people and measures to protect local markets remained strongly restricted (Reich, 1991; Sassen, 2007). In both respects, the active cooperation of national governments is a requisite for the advancement of neoliberalism. Sassen (2007: 14-15) stresses that contemporary globalization should not be perceived as being located above nations or as neutralizing nations. Instead, the national level retains much of its pre-eminence in the definition of authority, market dynamics and identity.

Present-day societies are living at the time of the fourth wave of globalization, which is identified with the increased significance of China. This is sometimes referred to as 'China-centric production globalization', on the basis that, by the 2000s, major US tech companies such as Apple and Dell had more employees producing products in China compared to the number of employees in the US. Other important processes that have been shaping the interrelations between countries around the world are cross-border financial transactions, and the institutional and legal liberalization of national financial systems and cross border capital movements, dividing the world into creditors and debtors (Hunter, 2017).

As a consequence of a radical change in the US and some industrialized countries' monetary policy, a new financial system started to be applied, which has meant that financial markets have become the most prominent force of the global economy (Bucur, 2013). The financial globalization began during the second wave of globalization due to the abandonment of fixed exchange rates and the oil price hike (Hunter, 2017). Epstein (2005) argues that three major processes have been transforming the globe: neoliberalism, globalization and financialization. Epstein claims that transactions between economies have risen and thus the significance of international financial transactions has also increased. Epstein defines financialization (based

on Krippner, 2004) as the *'increasing role of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions in the operation of the domestic and international economies'* (Epstein, 2005: 3; Palley, 2007). Epstein (2005: 12) identifies several problems created by financialization namely:

- speculative and excessively liquid financial flows that create debt-laden balance sheets;
- overly short-term perspectives;
- volatility and mispricing of important asset prices, including exchange rates; and
- subsequent misallocation of resources and unstable economic growth.

### 5.1.2 Economic theories in the twentieth century

Before the 1930s Great Depression, the most prominent economic thinking was the 'neoclassical' school. It was considered to be the continuity of classical economics and was started by, among others, Alfred Marshall. Neoclassical economics inherited its basis from classical economics, namely that markets are perfect and led by the 'invisible hand', as Adam Smith has described it. Marshall's important contribution to the neoclassical thought was the supply-demand theory that fundamentally formulates markets. Furthermore, Marshall promoted marginal utility theory, which posits that people desire to maximize their profit, minimize their expenses and maximize utility in the meantime. Thus, this era is usually referred as the 'Marginal Revolution'. Until the First World War, economies of countries were tightly linked to each other by using a common monetary system, the Gold standard (Eichengreen and Temin, 2010; Crafts and Fearon, 2010). Some argued that, however, the gold standard can be a solution to the need for a more stable financial system in terms of fixed exchange rates, but this was an error (Eichengreen and Temin, 2010). *'Inflation during the war also put strain on the gold standard. Prices in the 1920s were higher than before in relation to the value of gold reserves. This created a deflationary bias that aggravated the pressure for deficit countries to reduce prices (Johnson 1998, Mundell, 2000)'* (Eichengreen and Temin, 2010: 5). The issue of the gold standard heavily appeared in John Maynard Keynes's thinking. Keynes had realized that the gold standard had a great influence on the Great Depression, with regard to the harmful issue of deflation. (Vines, 2003; Eichengreen and Temin, 2010).

The Keynesian model had been created only after the 1930s Great Depression, after realizing the significance of the economic catastrophe and the worldwide mass unemployment which followed. The Great Depression demonstrated that the previous economic thinking on markets did not work perfectly in terms of stability as the neoclassical school had believed. This called for the need to regulate markets in order to mitigate the possibility of a future financial, banking, economic or political crisis (Crafts and Fearon, 2010). Keynes argued that the combination of two approaches, the reduction in interest rates (monetary policy) and government investment in infrastructure (fiscal policy), could have been a solution for preventing the crisis (Dymond, 2015: 35). In Keynesian economics, the 'General Theory' believed that the economic output is strongly influenced by the aggregate demand (total spending in the economy) in the short run, especially during recessions. In the Keynesian view, aggregate demand does not necessarily equal the productive capacity of the economy, but it

is influenced by a host of factors and sometimes behaves erratically, affecting production, employment and inflation. Problems such as unemployment are not a product of laziness, but the result of a structural inadequacy in the economic system. Because there is no guarantee that the goods that individuals produce will be met with demand, unemployment is a natural consequence (Dymond, 2015).

After the economic crisis of the mid-1970s (the 'oil shocks'), several interrelated economic and social transformations provided the background for the modification of the nature of employment relations. Increased globalization led to more intense competition between firms, which induced employers to reduce labour costs by replacing full-time workers with more flexible temporary or short-term workers. Increased financialization of the economy has prioritized the interests of the shareholders over the interests of stakeholders, including workers (Hewison, 2016). The long-term shift in employment out of manufacturing and into services also contributed to the declining importance of standard employment, as atypical work increased, especially in sectors such as retail and hospitality. Another powerful force has been change in technology. New technologies have reduced the transaction costs of monitoring partner firms and employees, which increased the attractiveness of subcontracting (Thelen, 2019). The digital revolution also gave rise to the 'gig economy', where workers receive one-off payments to perform individual tasks instead of being employed on the basis of an employment contract. At the same time, the declining power of unions has undermined the organizational protection of workers, while protection against unemployment has declined because governments have implemented policies of fiscal austerity and welfare state reorganization.

The decline of 'standard work' and the increasing importance of non-standard work in developed countries has been described by many researchers and the consequences of these changes have also been hotly debated (Kalleberg, 2000). During these debates emerged the terms 'precarious work' and 'precariat', which researchers have used to emphasize the increased experience of insecurity in the labour market and the group of people for whom this experience is salient. This will be discussed further in section 5.3.1.

The concept and implementation of neoliberalism have been examined by scholars in various disciplines. Multiple meanings, complexities and ambiguities are documented in the existing literature. Far from being exhaustive, our aim here is to identify the main characteristics of neoliberalism and gather relevant contributions about the effects of neoliberal policy-making on the specific areas of social life that will be addressed in the following stages of the UPLIFT project – employment, education, housing and healthcare.

The origins of neoliberalism go back to the decades after World War II, when efforts were expended by some intellectuals and politicians to develop an economic model based on the principles of free markets and individual choice, very much inspired by the theoretical elaborations of authors such as Hayek (1944) and Friedman (1962).

The extent to which practical neoliberal agendas intend markets to be 'free' or individuals to 'choose' remains under discussion. While neoliberalism revives ideas from earlier periods in history, especially from the works of John Locke and Adam Smith, it is best understood as a response to developments occurring in Western Europe and North America between the 1930s and the 1960s; in particular the adoption of Keynesian economic policies, the expansion and consolidation of the Welfare State and the advancement of workers' rights (Kovács, 2005; Sassen, 2007; Castles, 2010).

Tracing the historical trajectory of economic policy over the second half of the 20th century, Crouch (2011) shows that consistent demand management policies during the 1950s and 1960s were followed by the rampant rise of inflation – Keynesianism's 'Achilles heel' – and two possible scenarios for policy-makers in the face of a massive crisis in the 1970s. The first scenario consisted in a strategic adjustment of the economic model, the second consisted in accepting its collapse and replacement.

The latter scenario prevailed, Crouch argues, underscoring a key change in the position of actors. In particular, a power decline of the working class and a power increase of the financial elite. In this process, governments are ascribed a paradoxical position: they must not hinder capital flows, yet legal instruments are required to guarantee capital flows. This should be operationalized, namely by making sure that 'no hindrances are placed in the way of employers who wish to exclude unions among their workforces', since union action is perceived as leading only to 'short-term inefficiency and long-term unemployment' (Crouch, 2011: 18).

According to Harvey (2005: 2), 'neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade'. Policies typically advocated by the neoliberal ideology include reducing the State's participation in the economy, expanding the private sector, deregulating the financial system and contracting welfare spending (Anderson, 1995). In this model of society, laissez-faire markets coexist with a minimal state, which nonetheless plays a key role in protecting private property, maintaining order and providing basic assistance to the poorest (Bockman, 2013).

The economic and cultural assumptions of neoliberalism gained particular momentum after 1973, when the advanced capitalist world fell into a long and deep recession, combining for the first time low growth rates with high rates of inflation. For the proponents of neoliberalism, the crisis was rooted in the excessive and harmful power of the workers' movement (in particular, trade unions), which had eroded the bases of capitalist accumulation with its demanding pressures on wages and its pressure on the State to increase social spending (Anderson, 1995). The policy response should thus consist of reducing labour costs and cutting taxes on higher incomes and profits to boost economic activity.

In the seminal experience of Chile, the neoliberal agenda was implemented under the dictatorial regime of Pinochet. In 1980s, the governments led by Margaret Thatcher in the UK and by Ronald Reagan in the US adopted a wide range of measures that provided the basis

for the new world order envisaged in neoliberal thought. This included the contraction of money issuance, the increase of interest rates, the reduction of taxes on high incomes, the elimination of restrictions on financial flows and the privatization of large industries (Anderson, 1995). Cuts in social spending and massive unemployment levels had to be accepted as social solidarity was deemed less important than individual responsibility (Harvey, 2005).

It is important to remember that neoliberalism did more than change economies and power relations. In either conscious or unconscious manners, it also changed individual and collective behaviours, values and identities. Over the years, neoliberalism became a hegemonic ideology within Western societies and the promotion of values based on so-called individual competition and individual merit was crucial to make the persistence or even aggravation of inequalities acceptable (Harvey, 2005). This is apparent in the four areas of society to which our attention now turns, all of them exposing the efforts of neoliberal policy-making to erode basic rights and instead favour commodification, privatization and returns on investment.

With regards to employment, the adoption of flexible labour market policies – construed as a solution to labour legislation that was considered too rigid and bureaucratic – contributed to the expansion of precarious jobs and the decline of industrial relations (Fourcade and Healy, 2007; Crouch, 2011; Piore, 2011; Gallie, 2013). Risk and uncertainty became structural elements in the labour market and work lost the centrality it had in the mid-twentieth century in shaping individual identities and expectations (Beck, 2000).

With a greater or lesser degree of coherence and articulation, national governments set out to reform public services, industrial relations and labour law, even if differences in pace, content and scope can be observed across countries. For instance, Schömann's (2014) analysis shows that employment protection changed before the 2008 crisis in some countries (e.g., France and Germany), at the beginning of the crisis in others (e.g., Italy and Spain) and later under bail-out programmes in some others (e.g., Greece and Portugal). One of the touchstones of this concerted movement has been the assault on the principle of solidaristic wage formation policy, which favours the national and sectoral level over the company level to counteract the market tendency toward wage differentiation, as well as to promote consumption and stabilize growth trends. On the contrary, wage restraint became the norm since the early 2000s, and the impulse for labour cost reduction has swelled since the first signs of economic recession.

Neoliberalist theory defends the elimination of barriers to hiring and firing workers, as well as a preference for rewarding them on an individual rather than collective basis. This may jeopardize job quality, organizational stability and informal workplace relationships and behaviours without discernible benefits for organizational growth or productivity (Cappelli, 1999; Crowley and Hodson, 2014).

Blanton and Peksen (2016) understand the weakening of labour rights as one of the human costs of neoliberalism. They find a consistently negative relationship between workers' rights and neoliberal policies as they examine the linkages between core workers' rights recognized by the International Labour Organization (collective bargaining, freedom of association,

acceptable work conditions and prohibitions of child and forced labour) and five distinct policy areas associated with economic liberalization (freedom to trade, business regulation, sound money, government size, and protection of property rights). Blanton and Peksen (2016) conclude that states need to take active steps to ensure that the 'embedded liberalism' consensus is not supplanted by neoliberalism and that efforts should be made to achieve a more equitable balance between the interests of labour rights and economic competitiveness.

Education is another area on which neoliberal models have produced strong impacts throughout the last decades. In particular, they oppose the extensive funding of public education and the idea that knowledge and education are valuable to the state and the society, enhancing participation, social cohesion and economic development (Davies and Bansel, 2017)

Sims (2017) refers the thinking of authors like Paulo Freire and Noam Chomsky to frame education as a way of individual development at various levels against a notion of the individual as a passive actor limited to working, reproducing cultural norms and consuming goods. The values cultivated by the neoliberal logic are based on meritocracy (belief that success is a unique and exclusive result of personal effort) and the importance of entrepreneurship for children at school.

Neoliberal educational policies also influence the approaches and methods used by teachers, leading to individualization, competition and exclusion processes (Hedegaard-Soerensen and Grumloese, 2020). The aim of schooling has become, Giroux (2015: 15) suggests, to create employable graduates through a 'pedagogy of ignorance whose hidden curriculum is the teaching of political and intellectual conformity'. The objective, Pucci (2015) argues, is to provide employers with the employees they want: employees who will do the job and only the job, not ask questions, and show respect for their authority (Pucci, 2015). Schools are encouraged to follow an enterprise culture and compete among themselves, drawing away from the principles of education associated with the welfare state (Rustin, 2016: 155-156 cit. in van der Walt, 2017).

Concerning the effects of neoliberal policies on housing, Sendi (2011) proposes a distinction between affordability and accessibility. Affordability is a market concept related to capacity to pay. Something is affordable for the individual who can pay for it. If one can pay for a certain good, then they gain access to that good. On the contrary, those who cannot afford to pay for a certain good cannot gain access to it. If that good is housing, that means that those who cannot afford to pay cannot gain access to housing, which has thus become a market commodity.

On the other hand, accessibility underscores housing as a right for every individual. The full guarantee of the right to housing can only be realized through the implementation of measures that guarantee access to adequate housing for all, including a universal system similar to universal healthcare systems implemented in several countries in Europe. This is also necessary to eliminate various forms of prejudice and stigma that affect vulnerable groups in housing. Only through the reintroduction of welfare state policies can such measures be

implemented, rejecting the 'market-will-fix-it' ideology that has, so far, provided the basis for the neoliberal understanding of housing provision (Sendi, 2011).

Last, a healthcare system can be defined as a set of institutional responses, programmes and activities that a society constructs to satisfy the health needs of its population. It should aim for the promotion, protection and restoration of the health of a population or community. Each country builds its health system according to particular concepts, principles and values.

As an institutional response that a nation develops to deal with the health of its inhabitants, it is therefore a political answer, a 'social construction'. As such, it responds to the dominant political-ideological concepts within each State, particularly in relation to the conceptualization of health and to the role of the State in guaranteeing and providing it (Feo, 2008).

Like education, health has become a mechanism for profit and private investment, opening up the possibility that large amounts of money which were previously regulated by the State can now be managed by finance capitalists (Feo, 2008). Neoliberal market-based values, such as individual choice, competition, consumerism, economic liberalization, efficiency, privatization and profit maximization go on to shape and prioritize particular ideas that are propagated in how and where the state operates, including in health policies, with a negative impact on health and health equity (Viens, 2019).

Health is conceived as a particular kind of economic good under the neoliberalist vision and as a commodity governed by market principles. By doing so, the neoliberalist vision ensures that health services are structured in a way that maximizes its instrumental value by producing more efficient and innovative care when compared to how health services are structured under a welfare state system.

Under the values of neoliberalism, the focus of responsibility for health is transferred to the individual. In this sense, health is envisioned similar to a good that is thought to be better structured under market conditions, where individuals are free to choose the quantity and type of health coverage desired (Viens, 2019).

In all the areas covered in this literature review, the risks and vulnerabilities of neoliberal economic models became especially apparent with the financial crisis of 2008. The response of governments in Western Europe and North America, however, did not bring about restrictions on capital accumulation but rather a reduction of employment rights (Supiot, 2010).

In the case of the European Union, some authors argue that the European social model was the adjustment variable of the Economic and Monetary Union through competitive wage depreciation and deregulation of social legislation (Degryse, 2012; Pochet and Degryse, 2013). On the one hand, the intensification of economic policy coordination (European Semester and Euro-Plus Pact) and the implementation of procedures for imposing financial sanctions (Six Pact) reduced the decision-making autonomy of member states, raising concerns about a new European interventionism (Callan et al., 2011; Schulten and Müller, 2013). On the other hand,

action and discourse based on 'politics of exception' enabled right-wing governments to impose neoliberal measures that had not been possible to introduce before, including substantial changes in labour law and obstacles to collective bargaining (Ferreira, 2012). Organized labour faced additional risks of demonization by policymakers, employers and even workers themselves under a neoliberal response to economic downturns, with corporatist or sectorial claims being instrumentally condemned as opposing the public interest.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic again questions the capacity of countries to ensure social protection for all, especially with respect to healthcare and employment. A very recent report by the ILO (2020) shows how lockdown measures are aggravating poverty and vulnerabilities, underscoring the disadvantage of workers in the informal economy, who are highly exposed to both the risk of losing their income and the risk of infection. Many of these women and men are confronted with the terrible dilemma of 'dying from hunger or from the virus'.

Neoliberal economics has been highly debated, especially since the 2008 economic crisis. Numerous articles have been published concerning the apparent failure of neoliberal economics, such as in *The Guardian*<sup>3</sup> (Comaroff, 2011). Furthermore, large international institutions, such as the IMF, have criticized neoliberalism, arguing that some neoliberal policies, instead of mitigating, have increased inequality (Ostry et al., 2016). They suggest rethinking pre-distributional policies such as education in terms of supporting their contribution to alleviating inequality of opportunity.

### **5.1.3 The societal consequences of globalization: liquid society**

The basis of social order has been changing due to global tendencies referred to as globalization. Different variants of social theories have been applied to describing the globalization process itself, which reflect the relation of social theory to different conceptualizations of Modernity (e.g., 'Postmodernity' (Lash, 1990); 'Late modernity'/'Reflexive Modernization' (Beck, Lash and Giddens, 1994); and 'Second Modernity' (Beck, 2014)) and the leading force that characterizes societies the most ('Risk society' (Beck, 1994); 'Consumer society' (Bauman, 2007); 'Information society'/'Network Society' (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998); and 'Liquid society' (Bauman, 2012)).

This section discusses the social theory of liquid society and its potential use for the UPLIFT project with the help of some of the most influential scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>th</sup> centuries: Zygmunt Bauman, Manuel Castells, Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu and Ulrich Beck.

First, we provide a short discussion on globalization, highlighting the understanding of it by relevant theoreticians. Second, the focus is put on the meaning of the terms 'liquidity' and 'liquid society', including a description of the three main domains that are examined in UPLIFT: employment, housing, and education. After discussing the main processes of these domains,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/18/neoliberalism-the-idea-that-changed-the-world> or <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/nov/14/the-fatal-flaw-of-neoliberalism-its-bad-economics> [accessed 14.06.2020]

the review finally focuses on trends of inequalities and the lower class of the society (precariat and poor, the main focus of UPLIFT) in the liquid society.

Social theories in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot leave out from their analysis the process of globalization. Globalization is everywhere, not only influencing the economy, markets, communications and nation-states, but also localities, cities, villages and most individuals. 'We are all being globalized', as Bauman (2005a: 1) states. In almost every dimension of life, globalization can be identified; e.g., products or food not originating from local producers and farmers or the ability to immediately obtain information about the other side of the world through the internet. This process was supported by the rapid technological revolution in terms of communications (e.g. internet), that has made links between people and groups of people from all around the globe possible (Giddens, 2002; Elliott, 2007).

Bauman (2012) claims that the authority of the nation-state has not completely disappeared during the 'solid phase of modernity'. The freedom of state-politics has, however, decreased due to the above-mentioned processes of globalization. In the meantime, if a nation refuses to be part of the global forces, it poses either an economical or a political threat to the people of such a nation (Bauman, 2012). Bauman (2005c) refers to the '1995 report of the World Labour Organization published in Geneva' that claims that the authority of local economics has also decreased.

'Globalization has reduced economic autonomy of states: mobility of capitals trimmed their influence on the rates of interest and exchange, flexibility of multinational companies eroded the chances of controlling the volume of geographical distribution of investments, and the global mobility of technical and specialist labour made progressive taxation of incomes and wealth, and so the maintenance of public services, more difficult' (Bauman, 2005c: 68).

Due to globalization processes, Bauman argues that during liquid modernity, compared to solid modernity, the framing function (the structuring of societies) of time and space has changed. In solid modernity space was more dominant. Time has become more dominant in liquid modernity (Bauman 2012). Nevertheless, liquidity implies the decreasing importance of space, but localities are also gaining importance in meantime; a process which Bauman calls '*glocalization*' (Bauman, 2013: 1). As Bauman (2007) indicates: 'Our dependencies are now truly global, our actions however are, as before, local' (Bauman, 2007: 8). Thus, globalization brings unpredictable risks that are also affecting localities and individuals. Bauman claims that localities, including large cities, are left more or less alone in tackling globally-produced problems and in trying to mitigate the risks of global consequences (Bauman, 2013).

Manuel Castells (1999) describes a process similar to the one that Bauman (2013) calls '*glocalization*', but instead uses the terms 'space of flows' and 'space of localities'. The two concepts differ on the characteristic of human relations. Space of flows means networks of infrastructures, nodes and hubs, and the agencies that control the flows (Castells 1999: 295-296). Space of flows can also be looked at as a place that has been created by 'imagined totalities' instead of actual physical interactions (Bauman, 2013). 'Space of places' are created by real personal encounters and confrontations such as a neighbourhood. According to Castells (1999), the differentiation between the two types of space is significant in terms of

inequalities. Being involved in the space of flows seems to be beneficial compared to being dependent on local networks (the 'space of places'), as the latter means a great lack of access to the most recent information and mindsets that raise the life chances of individuals.

According to Beck (1992), however, while risks have always posed a threat to society, nowadays they are less predictable and, thus, they are more difficult to prevent. Risks, as consequences of globalization (e.g., climate change, pandemics, economic/financial system crises), have a visible impact on households. This means an additional factor in terms of the insecurity people experience in everyday life, such as increasing housing-affordability problems (Inchauste et al., 2018), that further increases the likelihood of weakening existential and ontological<sup>4</sup> safety for people.

In one of his articles on education in liquid modernity, Bauman (2009) posits that liquid life has created 'life politics' in the meaning of compulsory individual freedom and the responsibility for every decision and choice. Bauman argues that a balance between freedom and security is unlikely and, if one of the two, is missing it leads to a sort of instability (Bauman, 2009). The consequence of the previously discussed processes affects individual freedom and the experience of safety in the world (Bauman, 2008; Giddens, 2002). In Bauman's understanding, freedom is not only the freedom of choice, but also a never-ending identification process that seems to problematize the identities<sup>5</sup> of individuals (Bauman, 2008). Bauman argues that individuals are living with an ambient fear originating from uncertainty and instability (Best, 2016). Bauman (2006) theorizes that this ambient fear comes from a feeling of insecurity and vulnerability. Physical well-being, possession, security of livelihood and position in the social hierarchy constitutes the subjects of ambient fear. In liquid modern time, fear of the consequences of globalization means an additional fear that people have to face (Bauman, 2006).

What comes from the previously discussed freedom is another consequence that seems to have originated from globalization: the ownership of a clear image of the future. As Bauman states: 'Most importantly, unlike our ancestors, we don't have a clear image of a 'destination' towards which we seem to be moving – which needs to be a model of global society, a global economy, global politics, a global jurisdiction' (Bauman, 2012: Foreword to the 2012 Edition). This also requires the ability of accommodating the most important characteristic of liquid modernity described by Bauman: 'until further notice' (Bauman, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2007, 2012).

Summarizing the importance of globalization with regards to localities in liquid society, one can say that the risks of the consequences of globalization are affecting societies' everyday lives, jeopardizing further the existential and ontological well-being of households (Giddens, 1991).

Bauman was among those who, earlier in his life, believed the term postmodernity was applicable to the present-day society (Elliott, 2007: 46). However, after first claiming a radical

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<sup>4</sup> Term is used by Giddens (1991).

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion on (hybrid) identity in liquid modernity see prominent studies of Ricoeur's discussion on *l'ipséité* or of Sartre's lifelong identity project (Bauman 2005b).

disengagement from the modern era, he later turned more in the direction of believing that societies are still modern and argued that they have never been more modern than now (Baumann, 1988). Modernity had, however, reached a new phase.

Bauman emphasizes a dialogue between solidity and liquidity rather than a dichotomous relationship. Obviously, there are some main characteristics that sharply distinguish them: 'liquids, unlike solids, cannot easily hold their shape'; 'Fluids, so to speak, neither fix space nor bind time'; and 'In a sense, solids cancel time; for liquids, on the contrary, it is mostly time that matters' (Baumann, 2012: Foreword to the First edition). According to Bauman (2012), liquidity, in the context of wider societies, means that the order of integration that links people, groups, cities and nations together is constantly changing. This constant change is the only permanent pointer to find life paths: 'change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty' (Baumann, 2012: Foreword to the 2012 Edition). The nature of liquidity also includes the lack of control of the future, meaning being unable to exploit the opportunities of the future (Baumann, 2012: Foreword to the 2012 Edition).

Bauman describes labour in liquid modernity in comparison with solid modernity. In solid modernity (Bauman also uses the expression 'heavy capitalism'), capital and labour were interdependent or coexistent. The place was fixed both for capital and for labour. The unemployed served as a 'reserve army of labour' kept well and ready for work at any time by the welfare state. According to the model introduced by Henry Ford, the norm was that workers finished their work life at the same workplace where they started. Job contracts were long-term, building on the assumption that all experience gained at one place was beneficial for future productivity. It was a mutual interest for both employers and employees, which meant a sort of security for both actors. In comparison with Fordism, in the era of liquid modernity, short-term contracts have replaced the long-term mentality. According to an estimation referred to by Bauman (2012), a young American with an average educational background is now expected to change jobs eleven times during his or her 'working' life. Also, Bauman (2012) thinks stability and routine have been replaced by flexibility, meaning that the idea of a job for life has been replaced by a contract 'until further notice' In other words: '*Working life is saturated with uncertainty*' (Bauman, 2012: 155). Another interesting change between solid and liquid forms of societies is the way unemployment is understood and explained with the change of the norm of work ethic. While in solid modernity the unemployed were the backup force of the job market, kept ready to join the workforce at any time by the welfare state, in liquid modernity, unemployment has turned into an individual lack of responsibility (Bauman, 2012). However, for some people and firms, short-term contracts and flexibility are an advantage but, in every case, it brings insecurity.

The housing situation during liquid modernity is tightly linked to the function of the welfare state, which has become less generous. Thus, the unemployed have fewer opportunities to find affordable housing in tight housing markets, causing homelessness, youth loitering and drug epidemics (Elliott, 2007). Many reports and articles document growing difficulties

regarding housing affordability, in particular affecting many in the younger generation (Inchauste et al., 2018; World Bank, 2018<sup>6</sup>; Housing Europe 2019<sup>7</sup>).

While education systems are supposed to open up social mobility pathways, they can instead reproduce inequalities between people and societies (Bourdieu, 1990). Lifelong education means a need for updating the 'state-of-art' in liquid modernity (Bauman, 2009: 162). Liquidity, in terms of education, means to be open to new information in order to keep up with society, which raises new questions for educational systems. Moreover, Bauman anticipates that the promise of institutionalized education and parents who say 'What you have once learnt no one can take away' has been outdated. The key characteristic of a liquid society comes back to the idea that long-term commitments are not beneficial anymore (Bauman, 2009).

According to Castells (1998), inequalities and exclusion of people are on the rise in the world (Castells, 1998: Preface to the 2010 Edition: XXIV). Drivers of social inequality have been changing due to the above-mentioned processes and new life experiences (Castells, 1999). The structure of societies has been changing, creating a thin layer of a very rich upper-class who are able to profit the most of globalization and receive the most amount of income on a global scale. In the meantime, a fairly wide middle-class has been split as a result of the changes in the job market and in housing arrangements. Some parts of the middle-class have drifted downwards forming a new working class (Bauman, 2005a). There is already a vast literature on this new 'precariat' class (Standing, 2018).<sup>8</sup> However, precariousness is not a new phenomenon. Seemingly, insufficient emphasis has been put not only on understanding the process that creates a new group of households that are potentially endangered for being in need, but also on solutions. The successful response to crisis situations that endanger the precariat depends on their individual efforts (household strategies) and 'structural protection' (the welfare regime) (Bauman, 2012). Referring back to the distinction between being global and local, Bauman (2005a) claims that, arguably, the latter is a pure sign of social deprivation and degradation. Translating Bauman's idea, one might say that, being local means being deprived of goods, possibilities that the future might hold, and of the freedom to move and, thus, being socially mobile.

At the same time, being connected with the new world order is not equally possible in all locations. In terms of the job market for the last few decades, the rights of employees have weakened with the declining membership of trade unions, decreasing lengths of contracts and flexibility of scheduling, all aiming to improve the efficiency of production. The continuous job-seeking leaves individuals in an insecure position (Giddens, 2002). Also, the education that gradually became accessible to a wider public did not solve the inequality problem. Rather, as

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<sup>6</sup> EU Faces Affordable Housing Crisis Excluding Young People From Top-Quality Job Opportunities (November 8, 2018) <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/11/08/eu-faces-affordable-housing-crisis-excluding-young-people-from-top-quality-job-opportunities-says-world-bank> referring to this Report: <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/507021541611553122/Living-Leaving-web.pdf> (accessed: 15 June 2020)

<sup>7</sup> The State Of Housing in the EU 2019. <http://www.housingeurope.eu/file/860/download> (accessed: 15 June 2020)

<sup>8</sup> Please find a detailed description on precariat in Section 5.3.1.

claimed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), schools and modern education is reproducing inequalities.

Bauman emphasizes that youth is the most affected age cohort in terms of insecurity due to their relatively stable and secure childhood, to which Bauman uses the expression of 'growing up under the umbrella of well-being'. What Bauman meant is that the young generation has not become resilient to difficult life situations because of the lack of bad experiences (Bauman, 2009). This focuses the emphasis for most sociologists on the fact that inequalities originate not only from hard factors such as income, wealth and so forth, but also skills such as how to handle insecurity (Beck, 1992: 98).

Guy Standing's (2019) notion of the instable middle-class and the ideas about the precariat can be traced back to Bauman's theory on liquid modernity. Bauman (2005b; and Elliott, 2007) sees liquid life as a precarious life due to the continuous pressure of constant uncertainty. In Bauman's meaning, insecurity does not only come from the above-discussed as instability of work, housing and access to education, but also a never-ending life politics of the possibility of being left behind.

According to Bauman, the transformation from solid to liquid societies have changed the nature of poverty; the 'New Poor' emerged. The expression of poverty rather reflects the unequal access to a happy life (Bauman, 2005c). From the perspective of a consumer society, poverty also means lacking freedom of choice. Obviously, this does not only depend on the wealth, income and assets of an individual, but also on poor peoples' rationality and what is available to them. In liquid modernity, being poor seems to be the responsibility of the individual (e.g., being lazy or feckless) rather than the result of structural characteristics (Best, 2016).

Summarizing the main characteristics of liquid society based on the brief description of Bauman's work, there are three main conclusions that can be drawn: (1) everything (e.g., a working contract, education and so forth) needs to be kept 'until further notice'; (2) due to a reduction in commitment in most domains of life, uncertainty is growing; and (3) the individual is considered the responsible for their own actions and the problems caused on the macro-level need to be solved individually. This altogether leads to the question of what if people lack the resources, either material (wealth, income), information or skills to successfully navigate liquid modernity? In the next part of this short review, we discuss inequality and who are considered to be the most disadvantaged segment of today's societies.

The theoretical framework of liquid society can raise relevant issues and questions for UPLIFT. Judging on the significance of the theory of liquid society, we could say that, since social order has been changing due to globalization, people need to find security (existential and ontological) in this continuously changing social environment. The question is: for whom is this sort of security is available? One does not only need wealth, income, secure housing or a decent level of education, but also needs to be free, flexible, open to new information, learn constantly and keep doors as open as possible. However, accessing such characteristics – 'required abilities for achieving a happy life' – in present-day societies raises the importance

of using the capability or life-course approach. We need a co-creation policy-making process for achieving a more successful empowerment of the younger generation. UPLIFT aims to create an interaction model between individual (or household) strategies and the welfare system for providing a real, sustainable solution and further protection for those households whose life situation is below a humanly acceptable level.

## 5.2 Consequences on changing horizontal structures

This part of the literature review touches upon research on the spatial dimension of social inequalities. The relationship between regional and social inequality is far from linear<sup>9</sup> (Arbaci, 2007). The correlation between the spatial and social dimensions of inequality is not as clear as most researchers claim, and the nature of their relationship is changing over time.

In the interpretation of neoliberal economics, territorial differences can only occur in a transitional period because capital moves to underdeveloped areas to maximize returns, while labour moves to more developed areas. As a result, regional disparities are reduced: development leads to a balanced territorial development model (Solow, 1956). According to Myrdal (1957), self-regulatory market mechanisms may just exacerbate territorial differences. There are several backwash effects on spatial development that slow down the development of peripheries. Linked to Myrdal's theory, Hirschman (1958) argued that, in the early stages of growth, differences between regions increase as a result of polarization effects, and then, as a counterbalance, these differences decrease. According to Williamson's theory (1965), in low-developed countries, regional disparities are smaller, which increase during the stage of economic growth and then, at a higher level of development, regional disparities fall back to the previous level.

Krugman's (1991) approach to examining the spatial effects of economic development focuses on the balance between centripetal and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces that increase spatial concentration include factors such as market size, cooperative and functional relationships between firms, the relationship between the skill level of the workforce and the population density of the area, external economies of scale and so on. Centrifugal forces that reduce spatial concentration include the geographic rigidity of labour, the difference between land prices and housing prices and the emergence of additional costs due to congestion. Thus, the new economic geography does not take an a priori position on economic growth and territorial inequalities; the nature of economic development determines territorial effects.

The literature review is, in this part, structured according to the spatial scale. We deal separately with the research at the national and regional levels, in functional urban areas (the city and its environs) and from the perspective of the territorial inequalities within cities. It is clear to us that this division is artificial; there are overlaps, but most analyses can be separated according to these lines.

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<sup>9</sup> Martin (2005) emphasizes that, in theory, small regional differences could be associated with significant social inequalities, whether measured by a simple income indicator or a broader welfare indicator.

### 5.2.1 Regional development: convergence and divergence

The trends of regional inequality have changed in the last decades. As The Economist points out:

'Economic theory suggests that regional inequalities should diminish as poorer (and cheaper) places attract investment and grow faster than richer ones. The 20<sup>th</sup> century bore that theory out: income gaps narrowed across American states and European regions. No longer. Affluent places are now pulling away from poorer ones. This geographical divergence has dramatic consequences. A child born in the bottom 20% in wealthy San Francisco has twice as much chance as a similar child in Detroit of ending up in the top 20% as an adult. Boys born in London's Chelsea can expect to live nearly nine years longer than those born in Blackpool. Opportunities are limited for those stuck in the wrong place, and the wider economy suffers. If all its citizens had lived in places of high productivity over the past 50 years, America's economy could have grown twice as fast as it did. Divergence is the result of big forces.'<sup>10</sup>

Roses and Wolf (2018), analysing data from 173 European regions (NUTS 2) between 1990 and 2010, argued that regional social inequalities followed a very similar trend to individual inequalities. Regional inequalities decreased until the 1980s, when this trend stopped and inequalities remained constant or increased slightly. Territorial concentration and the distribution of regional incomes, similar to individual incomes, follow a U-shaped distribution.

Recent research based on the per capita GDP of European states supports the convergence hypothesis, while differences between regions are increasing (Martin, 2005; Alcidi et al., 2018). Important question are what patterns European countries follow and what factors might explain these patterns of development. For example, the GDP per capita of countries in the Central and Eastern European region grew faster than the EU average, but, if we compare each region with the average of their own country, we find that the differences are widening. Typically, capital regions are those that are growing faster than average (Roses and Wolf, 2018).

Globalization (see also 4.1.1) is largely responsible for the development of territorial inequalities within individual countries, and the mechanisms that create them have been integrated into globalization processes (see also 3.3). The consequence of globalization is that workers in poor economies will be richer, while in rich countries they will become poorer. These consequences will vary from area to area, but some areas will inevitably do better and others worse. Residents of underdeveloped areas could rightly feel that the deterioration of their situation was caused by globalization and they could easily be influenced by the political forces that promise to stop globalization, and thereby reduce the gap between richer and poorer areas. In the American literature, Wilkinson (2019) argues that there is a clear dividing line

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<sup>10</sup> The Economist The right way to help declining places 21 Oct 2017

between densely-diverse mixed-ethnic areas and sparsely-populated, predominantly white areas. Populist politics builds on this distinction.

In recent years, human geography research has also noticed a link between populist politics and the persistence of territorial inequalities. Rodriguez-Pose (2018) found that persistent poverty, economic decline and lack of opportunities in degraded and backward areas increased dissatisfaction among those living there. Society has tended to label these areas as being without a future, as the conditions for economic growth are based on agglomeration economies. The political revolt of the population of so-called abandoned areas (ballot-box revolution) is forcing regional policy actors to reconsider their strategy to reduce territorial inequalities. There is a need for a place-sensitive development policy that focuses on underdeveloped areas 'tapping into untapped potential', providing an opportunity for people living in underdeveloped areas to catch up. However, others (e.g., Gordon, 2018) consider the relationship between persistent territorial inequalities and the strengthening of populist political forces to be a very simplistic theory. Political geography and economic geography are not necessarily compatible.

### **5.2.2 Growing regional disparities, shrinking cities, weak cities, 'regions left behind'**

Researchers give different definitions for shrinking cities, but they usually classify urban areas as 'shrinking' where the population is declining, traditional economic sectors are disappearing, vacancy rates are rising and the birth rate is declining. Demographic change is often seen as a key indicator of urban 'growth' or 'decline'.

Researchers have developed different typologies concerning the analysis of the demographic changes of European cities:

- Wiechmann and Wolff (2013) followed the SCIRN definition and classified European cities with declining populations into four categories: continuously declining, episodically declining, temporarily declining and non-declining.
- Kabisch et al. (2012) identified five types based on demographic changes in European cities between 1991 and 2008: extreme growth, moderate growth, resurgence, moderate decline and continuous decline.
- In their study, Turok and Mykhnenko (2007) were able to distinguish nine urban growth trajectories by analysing the demographic trends of European cities over a longer period, 1960–2005: continuous decline, long-term decline, medium-term decline, recent decline, growth set-back, recent resurgence, medium-term resurgence, long-term resurgence and continuous growth.

An important question in research is what factors and mechanisms lead to urban population decline. The analyses highlighted the following factors:

- Transformation of industrial structure, depletion of resources (e.g., mining) and spatial relocation of production (Bartholomae et al., 2017);

- Changing demographic trends, declining birth rate and aging (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2016); and
- Institutional changes resulting in political and social changes within the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe (Turok and Mykhnenko, 2007).

Suburbanization trends imply rearrangement within the larger urban area. Sometimes, the analyses also discuss this process as part of the problem of shrinking cities, but in our analysis, this process is discussed under spatial inequalities within urban areas (neighbourhood effects; see 5.3.3 and 5.3.4).

One of the factors behind the shrinking city phenomenon is the weak economic background. A study by Furdell and Wolman (2006) showed that cities in economic difficulty are very different, both in terms of causes and consequences. They developed a typology that groups cities based on different aspects of economic difficulties and their impact on urban residents. It measures these two aspects using eight indicators and, based on this, they consider urban areas to be economically disadvantaged or 'weak market' cities that fall in the lower third of the distribution of these indicators.

The emergence of cities with declining populations is closely linked to globalization and far-reaching socio-economic changes. An important question is the assessment of the effect on the processes of the 2008 economic crisis and the current COVID-19 crisis. In the literature, this is raised by the extent to which cities can withstand the negative effects of the crisis. Martin (2011) presented the response of the regional economy to the recession in four interrelated stages: (a) resistance (the vulnerability of regions to disturbances); (b) recovery (rate of return to pre-shock state); (c) change of direction (direction and extent of structural and functional change); and (d) renewal (return to the pre-crisis trend).

There is no generally accepted method in the literature to operationalize and empirically measure economic resilience. It is generally considered to be a 'resilient economy', whose economic performance returns or exceeds the pre-shock growth trajectory in the short term. Several researchers point out that the responses of urban areas to an economic crisis can be interpreted in the context of regional and national economies. Typical indicators are local GDP, employment, output, etc. (Martin et al., 2016; Webber et al., 2018).

A more important question for the UPLIFT project is what explains why urban areas can withstand the crisis with varying degrees of success. The contemporary literature highlights the following factors: industrial structure, fiscal relations between levels of government, local institutional capacity, technological innovation, labour force composition, human capital and economic openness.

One of the explanations for the territorial disparities between urban areas is skill-based technological change. Giannone (2019) showed that between 1940 and 1980, the wage gap between poorer and richer cities in the US narrowed by about 1.4% per year. After 1980, however, this trend was interrupted and the wages of highly-skilled (or college-educated) workers began to diverge and leading cities pulled away from poorer cities.

The house price difference among urban areas is a very important indicator of the divergence/convergence process. There is a huge literature studying the geographical effect of financialization (Aalbers, 2016). Differences in house prices contribute to maintaining the differences between cities.

Differences in labour productivity between cities can be explained by agglomeration economics. Analysing data from US cities, Glaeser and Ressenager (2009) showed that this relationship can only be detected within more densely populated metropolitan areas, with no such relationship within less densely populated areas. This fact points out that urban density plays an important role in disseminating knowledge and technological innovations while creating more favourable conditions for businesses.

Territorial differences are also related to the structural change of the urban economy. Moretti (2012) showed that as long as a traditional manufacturing job generates 1.6 new jobs (i.e. a multiplier), in a metropolitan environment and a highly-skilled economic sector, a new job can create 4-5 other jobs in the service sector.

Urban typologies are based on the Urban Audit database and attempt to set up statistically different types using more or less similar methods. Most often, the method of cluster analysis is used, which defines groups based on the statistical analysis of the selected indicators. This approach is 'data-driven', i.e. the scale, duration and reliability of the available data strongly influence the outcome. A relatively recent analysis, for example, focused on environmental protection and urban sustainability based on a cluster analysis of 41 indicators. The Urban Audit database and the Copernicus Urban Atlas were their main sources of data. They both cover the same number of cities and the same areas. In 2006, Urban Audit and Urban Atlas included 321 Larger Urban Zones from EU-27; in 2012, 695 Functional Urban Areas (most of EU-28 cities over 50,000 inhabitants) are covered (Gregor et al., 2018). Similarly, Aksoy et al. (2016) use the Urban Audit database to set up a typology focusing on environmental aspects. They define 10 types based on cluster analysis. Giffinger and Gudrun (2010) developed a typology, which positioned the cities from the 'smart city' perspective. Páthy (2017) focuses only on cities in Central and Eastern Europe and constructs a typology to explain the changing spatial structure and regional inequalities of the region.

The Urban Audit report also developed a typology based on the size, economic structure and performance of the city and factors of competitiveness. One disadvantage of the typology is that the data often did not refer to the Functional Urban Area, but only to the central city. For this reason, typologies should be used as a complementary analytical tool for a better understanding of urban society and the economy.

A study by Clark and Moonen (2013) analysed and placed European cities in the global economy. Some of the conclusions could be important for UPLIFT's WP2, with a possible contribution to a typology:

- There are two truly global cities in Europe with a genuine scale, quality and experience to function as all-round global hubs – London and Paris;

- The 'blue banana' arc of successful economic development in Western Europe, first identified in 1989, is still visible today, but different cities within the arc are emerging;
- Cities in Central Europe are also emerging onto the global scene but at different paces, and with varied success; and
- Cities to the south and east of Europe have lost much of the impetus gained in the last economic cycle and are experiencing the negative effects that globalization can bring (Clark and Moonen, 2013: 3).

### 5.2.3 Urban typologies in regards to inequalities

In creating an urban typology with regards to urban inequalities there are two major considerations to make:

- Inequality is interpreted as a difference between the social groups in the best and the worst position either in relative terms (%) or absolute terms (nominal difference).<sup>11</sup> However, what is even more important for UPLIFT is the share of people who live under conditions that are not acceptable according to European norms (this multidimensional character of poverty was already set in policy documents, such as the European Economic Community's Council of Ministers declaration in 1975, further extended in 1981). Many researchers have analysed the relationship between inequality and poverty (see section 4.1) and found a correlation between the two at the national level. However, this does not necessarily mean that the correlation exists at the urban level as well.<sup>12</sup>
- Inequality and lack of access to opportunities and services have several dimensions. The most commonly analysed dimension is income inequality. There are, however, many other aspects such as wealth, access to housing, education, healthcare, democratic participation, etc. Nations and urban areas may have favourable indicators regarding some of the dimensions of inequality while lagging in other aspects (OECD, 2017).

Creating urban typologies based on the causal relationship between different dimensions of inequality/poverty and the economic/social position of a city can generate very different results. The researchers of UPLIFT have already attempted to formulate a hypothesis according to which urban areas may face different types of difficulties concerning social inequality/deprivation according to their different economic background (measured by population dynamics or local GDP) and applying different national redistribution systems (measured by the difference in income distribution before and after social transfers (according

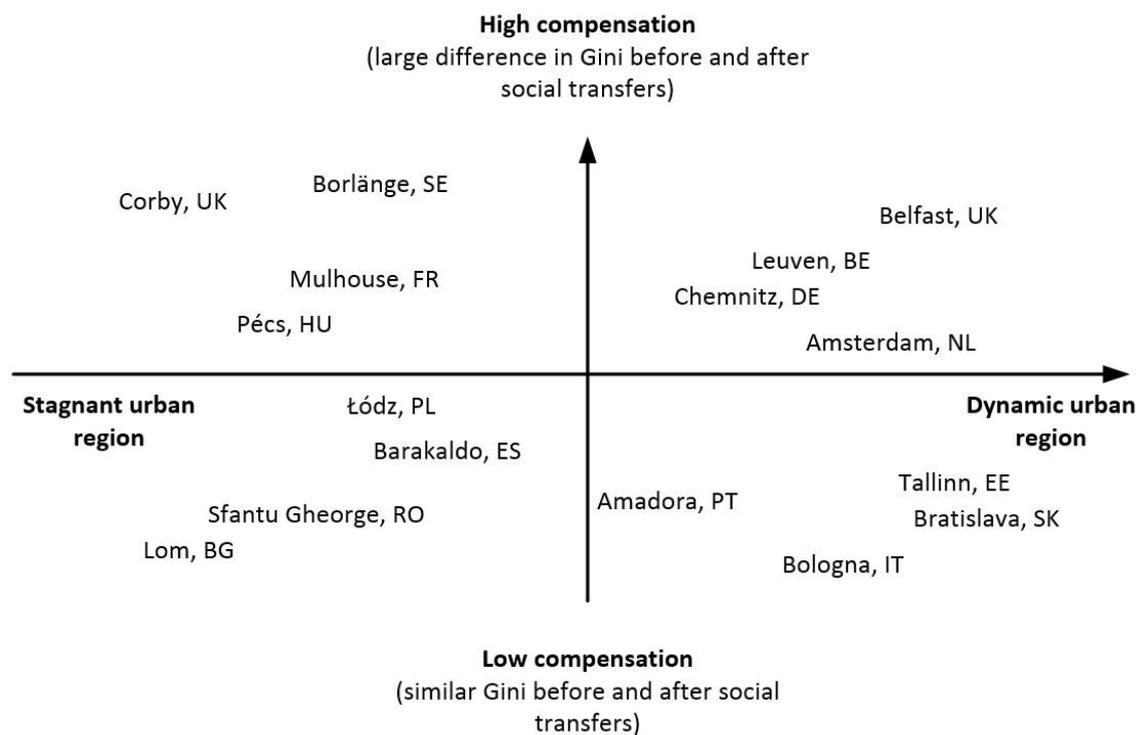
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<sup>11</sup> For a good overview on the varieties of statistical indicators, see Rohwerder (2016).

<sup>12</sup> 'While Gini inequality is important in terms of its positive cross-sectional relationship with material deprivation and multidimensional poverty across countries, this relationship significantly weakens when looking at changes within countries over time' (Yang 2017: 43).

to the Gini index, see Figure 3)). The current literature review is the first step to validate the applicability of this classification attempt.

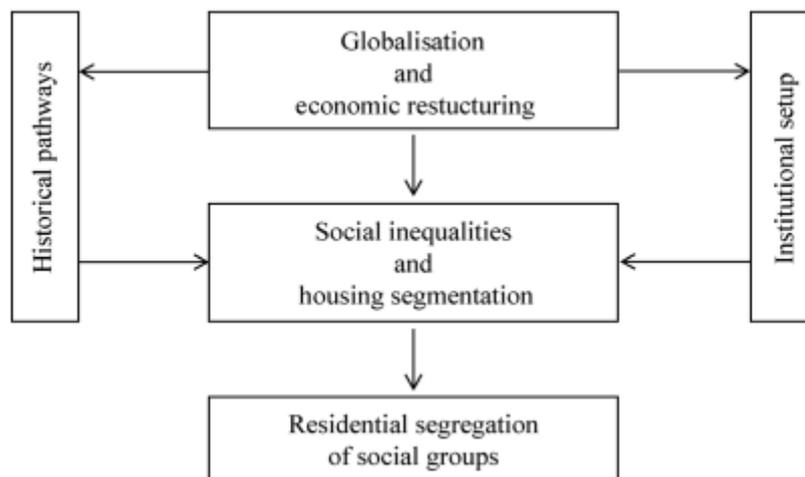
Figure 3. Proposal for an urban typology at the application phase of UPLIFT.



Source: Application of UPLIFT, page 17

The elaboration of urban typologies is a common yet crucial research phase in most research projects dealing with the analysis of socio-economic processes in a wider geographic context. Tammaru et al. (2016) correlated the degree of segregation at the city level with the 'structural position' of cities, which was described by four basic universal structural factors. These are social inequalities, global city status, the welfare system and the housing system (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The conceptual model explaining segregation (Tammaru et al., 2016).



Based on this model, the authors predicted the expected level of socioeconomic segregation and then compared it with actual data. They concluded that there is no simple correlation between the main factors influencing segregation and the actual levels of segregation. As we have seen at the national or regional level, the relationship between social inequalities and levels of territorial segregation is not linear. Territorial segregation is linked to local housing systems through complex causal relationships. For example, Kemeny's (1995) housing regime typology does not explain the differences. The impact of housing privatization on territorial processes is not one-dimensional either.

There is a frequently-analysed relationship between income inequality and the economic position of a city. Researchers analysing regions in 15 OECD countries concluded that 'the main findings show that inequality and economic growth are negatively associated, especially when differences between continents are accounted for. This negative relationship has been particularly evident since the start of the economic crisis, suggesting that more inclusive societies might help regional resilience to economic shocks. Moreover, the study found that the link between inequality and growth is affected by urban size. Inequalities are, on average, higher in larger cities. And, for the period under analysis, the negative link between inequality and growth becomes larger in magnitude with city size (OECD, 2014: 5).

This analysis highlighted that the time scale is important: the negative causal relationship between income inequality and economic growth was much less relevant before and well after the financial crisis but was prevalent at the time of the crisis. 'By considering European and North American regions separately, it emerges more clearly that after the crisis more unequal regions grew relatively slower' (OECD, 2014: 13). One possible explanation is connected to the mobility factor. Larger metropolitan areas (where in general income inequality tends to be higher) are attracting the highly-educated people who generate demand for services provided by lower-educated and lower-income workers. The GDP growth in these cities is mostly caused

by sectors where growth in GDP does not come with growth in employment; that is why growth is not able to counterbalance inequalities.

There may be an assumption that cities and metropolitan areas in Europe are places of intense social inequality mainly based on their abilities to attract a highly-qualified labour force and low qualified workers as service providers. In order to make this statement much more precise, two important distinctions have to be made:

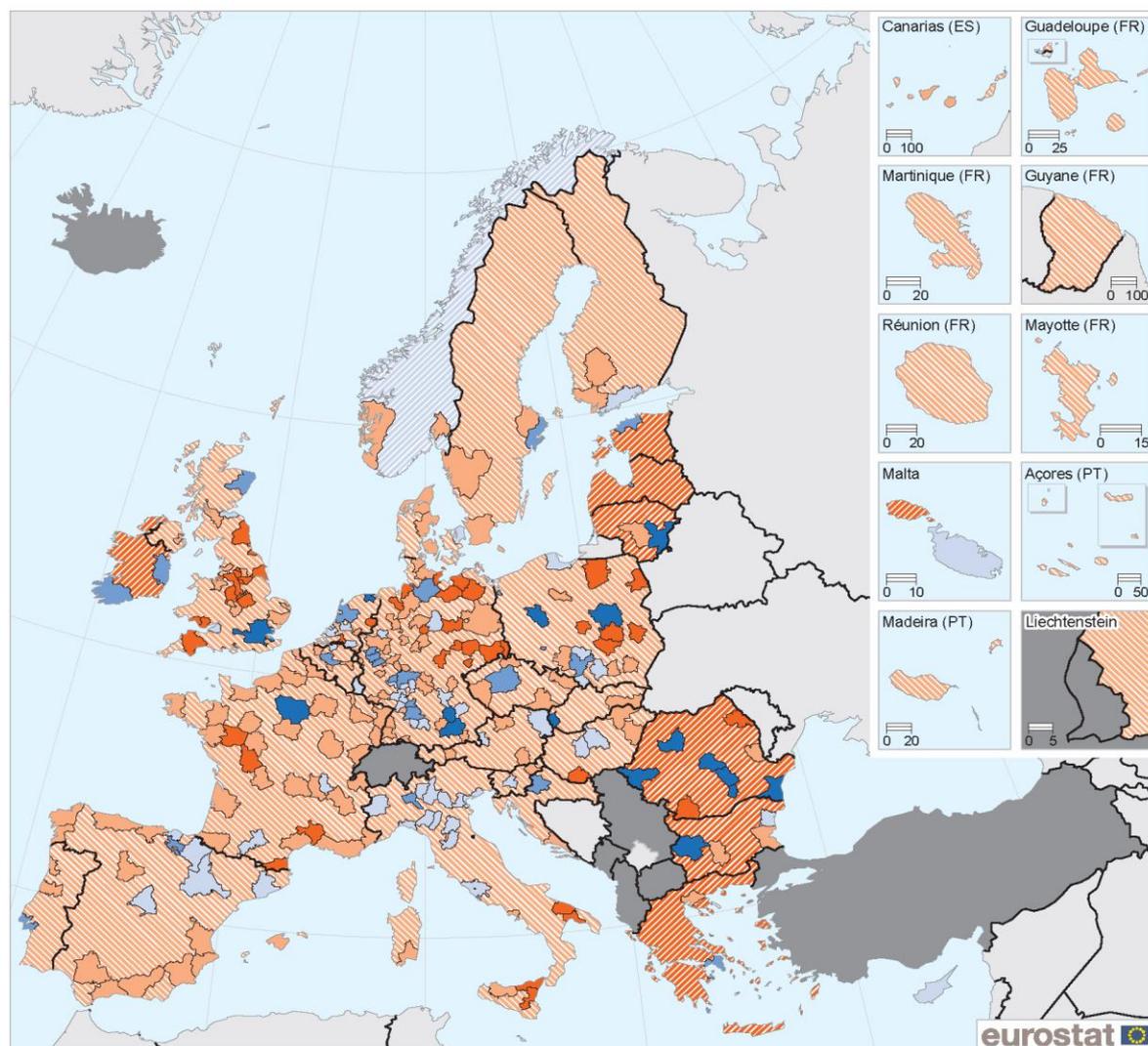
- Cities, even metropolitan areas, in Europe have very different positions. Some of them are engines of jobs and growth while others lag behind and this position is not directly related to their size.
- While major urban areas in general have a higher level of inequality and material deprivation than rural areas in most old member states of the European Union, it is the opposite in most of the new member states. 'Recent statistics show that poverty and social exclusion are concentrated in different types of areas across the EU. In less-developed Member States, these issues tend to be more prevalent in rural areas, while in more developed countries, they typically are more of a problem in cities. Furthermore, the gap between urban and rural poverty and social exclusion also varies from country to country; for example, it is considerable in Bulgaria and Romania, but almost negligible in Sweden and Finland' (Nabielek, 2016: 16).

With the help of data on the level of development, we can illustrate these regional trends. The above two aspects are combined into one map by Eurostat showing that in some of the member states (e.g., Baltics or Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) the major metropolitan areas (NUTS3 level urban areas over 250,000 inhabitants) stand out from their rural hinterland, while in the other member states, there is a great variety of economic positions of a metropolitan area, with both outstanding and underperforming results (Figure 5).

Figure 5. GDP per person employed relative to the national average

**GDP per person employed relative to the national average, by metropolitan and aggregates of non-metropolitan regions, 2016**

(based on data in EUR per person employed; national average = 100)



(based on data in EUR per person employed; national average = 100)

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat  
 Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 05/2018

**Metropolitan regions**

- < 85
- 85 - < 100
- 100 - < 115
- 115 - < 130
- ≥ 130
- Data not available

**Non-metropolitan regions**

- < 85
- 85 - < 100
- 100 - < 115
- 115 - < 130
- ≥ 130

0 200 400 600 800 km

Note: Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Norway, 2015. Ireland: 2014.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: met\_10r\_3gdp, met\_10r\_3emp, nama\_10r\_3gdp, nama\_10r\_3empers, nama\_10\_gdp and nama\_10\_pe)

Source: Eurostat 2018

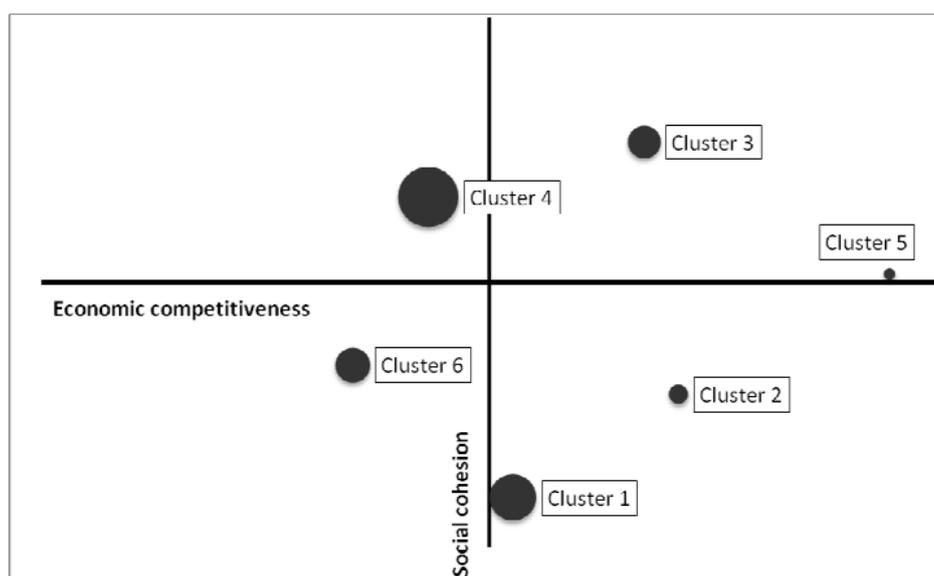
It is important to map the different position of urban areas in Europe, but the major issue remains whether there is a causal relationship between the economic position of these urban areas and the level of social inequality/deprivation they experience (EC, 2017).

As one of the studies by the European Investment Bank highlights, households' disposable income in larger metropolitan areas tends to be higher than those living in smaller metropolitan areas, but income inequality also increases with the size of metropolitan areas. When income, jobs and health are considered together, differences in overall living standards in different places within a country are starker than those in terms of income only, showing that different well-being outcomes amplify the concentration of prosperity or exclusion in regions (Boulant, 2016). 'In this context, an interesting point is that, since capital and larger cities are usually the most productive part of the national economy they belong to, the urban policy becomes the most salient tool for the governance of the nexus between competitiveness and inequality' (Bubbico and Freytag, 2018: 22).

Inequality and deprivation have several dimensions and, while income inequality may be closely linked to city size and economic dynamism, a more complex set of dimensions concerning social cohesion breaks this simple correlation. Ranci and his colleagues created a complex indicator of economic competitiveness (GDP/capita, patents, GDP/R&D, scientific employment, GDP in financial services, flight passengers) and analysed its correlation with indicators of social cohesion (e.g., employment level, female employment, participation in higher education). They found that 'competitiveness and social cohesion can be either opposed or complementary, depending on the specific urban conditions under which their relations take place' (Ranci, 2014). The researchers found that competitiveness, globalization, and innovation have a strong correlation with the employment dimensions of social cohesion (e.g., participation rate, activity rate). However, it is not the case between other indicators of equity and globalization or innovation. The research has proven that there is still a close causal relationship between economic prosperity and job markets, but, under the new social risk models, these job opportunities do not necessarily lead to higher social equity.

Even if a simple correlation between competitiveness and social cohesion could not be proven, the researchers created 6 clusters from 108 European cities (based on the equity index, labour market exclusion, globalization index, innovation index and GDP per capita) (Figure 6). In these clusters, the cities had similar values in the same dimensions and the researchers were able to develop a complex profile (e.g., second-tier global cities, innovative synergetic cities, in-locked equal cities, global synergetic cities, depressed cities). In some of these profiles, high scores on competitiveness go hand in hand with strong social cohesion, while in others the case is the opposite. The clusters do not follow the usual East/West/South divide, however, in some groups, some regions are overrepresented.

Figure 6. Clustering of European cities in competitiveness and social cohesion dimensions



Source: Ranci (2014)

From the provisional model drafted in the application of UPLIFT, we used a simple typology based on clusters of economic competitiveness on the one hand, and social cohesion on the other. This clustering calls to our attention the fact that the main reason why certain clusters are placed in different quarters of the diagram is connected to the characteristics of the national welfare. 'If the idea of a general European social model dominated in an age of economic growth and social advance, nowadays a more fragmented and diversified picture is prevalent. This fact gives urban policies a crucial role in shaping the way in which economic development and social cohesion are locally framed' (Ranci, 2014).

## 5.3 Consequences on the changing structure of society

### 5.3.1 Precarious work and precariat

#### 5.3.1.1 Definitions of precarious work

Various terminologies have been used to describe the decline of standard work. Researchers speak about increasing atypical, irregular or nonstandard work, contingent employment or flexible work (see Kalleberg, 2009; Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013). Categories of nonstandard work include temporary work; that is those working on temporary contracts or those hired through temporary employment agencies. Other types of nonstandard work include contract work (independent contractors and self-employed persons who do not have any employees); irregular and casual employment; informal work; short-term work; and involuntary part-time work.

Scholars have recognized, however, that these and related terms are insufficient to characterize the complexities of the changing nature of work. The term 'precarious work' has been proposed in the literature to account for the increased uncertainty experienced by workers

that accompanied the changes to the labour market. Although different definitions have been proposed, all of them refer to the fact that, in these new work arrangements, more and more economic risks are shifted from employers and governments onto the shoulders of the workers themselves.

The concept of 'precarity' already appeared in the 1960s in French sociology (Barbier, 2011), but since the 1970s it has crystallized an important concern. Bourdieu (1998) saw 'précarité' as the root of problematic social issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Insecurity and risk have emerged as a central issue in the work of Giddens (1991) as well as Beck (1992), who describes the creation of a 'risk society' and a 'new political economy of insecurity'. In this macro-sociological literature, insecurity is not only caused by employment characteristics, but also, for example, an insecure housing situation and the risk of poverty.

More precise accounts of precarity of work can be found in the economic sociology literature, e.g., in the work of Kalleberg (2009) and Kalleberg and Vallas (2018), who define precarious work as employment that is uncertain, unpredictable and risky from the point of view of the worker. In these work arrangements, employees bear the risks of work and receive limited social benefits and statutory protections. In this definition, thus, the focus is on the job insecurity aspect (Quinlan et al., 2001; Kalleberg, 2011), which is connected to the attributes of the job and the institutional context. In a different strand of the literature, the definition of precarious work is more closely connected to income insecurity, thus the ability to secure sufficient income (Rodgers and Rodgers, 1989; Barbier, 2011).

Olsthoorn (2014) combines these two approaches of job and income insecurity. According to him, 'threatening insecurity' is the central component of the definition of precarious work. This exists when vulnerable individuals (doing low-wage work and having no earnings outside the job) occupy insecure jobs with unsupportive entitlements. Thus, while Kalleberg's definition focuses on the features of the job and the institutional context, Olsthoorn (2014) also adds a component which characterizes the individual. According to his argument, uncertain jobs and the absence of institutional protection will only have a threatening effect on the well-being of the individual if they are in low wage employment and have no additional options for earning income. For high wage earners or those who have ample opportunities for supplementing their wage income and who work in insecure jobs by choice, job loss is a less threatening prospect.

In the definition put forward by the ILO (2012), precarious work is described by specific contractual arrangements, such as the limited duration of the contract or the specific nature of the employment relationship (including, for example, bogus self-employment, subcontracting and agency contracts), and also by precarious work conditions, which include low wages, poor protection from termination of employment, lack of access to social protection and benefits usually associated with full-time standard employment and limited access to workers' rights.

Standing's (2011) definition of precarious work also has insecurity of labour at its core, although his definition includes a wider set of uncertainties compared to the earlier definitions. He defines precarious workers as those who lack seven forms of labour related security: labour market security, employment security, job security, work security, skill reproduction security, representations security and income security. According to his definition, precarity also applies to the situation of those civil servants (with guaranteed employment security) who are subject to human resource management systems which require them to change jobs and workplaces every few years (job insecurity).

### **5.3.1.2 Measurement issues: how to study precarious work**

Although many studies use indicators of non-standard work (e.g., temporary contracts) to describe the level and trends of precarious work, these heterogeneous forms of nonstandard work do not necessarily coincide with precarious work (Olsthoorn, 2014; Ballafkih, 2017; Hewison, 2018). Even if precarious work is defined as insecure and unprotected work, these attributes might characterize jobs with permanent contracts as well. Nonstandard work is not necessarily coupled with insufficient income, which is also a constitutive element in certain definitions of precarity. Non-tandard employment is not necessarily a good indicator of precarity in international comparisons either, as countries are different in the extent to which these temporary contracts are covered by employment protection legislation (Thelen, 2019). Precarious work cannot be equated with informal work either, although the absence of state regulation can certainly lead to precarious labour conditions. In large parts of the Global South, a situation of 'informal but not precarious' has existed, whereby workers relied on informal non-wage income as an alternative source of sustenance and bargaining power (Pang, 2018).

Authors and international organizations acknowledge the difficulty in proposing a widely agreed measure of precarious employment. The difficulty in measuring precarity lies in its multidimensional character as the deepest forms of precarity involve exposure to a multitude of risks (Kiersztyn, 2018; Thelen, 2019). Some studies (e.g., Kalleberg, 2011) use several indicators in addition to temporary contracts, such as the declining attachment to employers, the weakening of internal labour markets, increasing rates of involuntary job-loss, the spread of long-term unemployment and the increase in perceived job insecurity, but most of these studies fail to systematically combine these elements in one multidimensional indicator of precarious work. One proposition of a multidimensional indicator of precarious work, Olsthoorn (2014), combines an indicator of income insecurity (defined as having a low wage, low supplementary income and few benefit entitlements) with an indicator of job insecurity (defined as working on a non-permanent contract and having a long expected duration of unemployment). The summary indicator thus captures precarious employment as insecurity regarding the job and whether it can provide sufficient income.

In order to measure the experience of job insecurity, subjective indicators have also been used in addition to the objective indicators discussed above (Kiersztyn, 2018). These studies underline that the subjective experience of job insecurity does not necessarily coincide with the nature of employment contracts; individuals working with temporary contracts might

experience low job insecurity while others might experience a high level of job insecurity despite working in permanent contracts. Origo and Pagani (2009) also show that the subjective experience of insecurity is a more important predictor of outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction); employees with temporary contract perceiving low job insecurity have similar job satisfaction levels compared to employees in stable permanent jobs.

### **5.3.1.3 Consequences of precarious work**

The social impacts of the increased prevalence of precarious work have also been a topic of intense research in the social sciences during the past decades. Here, we first focus on distributional consequences of precarious work, then demographic and health consequences will be described, and finally we discuss precarization in other life domains. The political implications of increasing precarity will be discussed in the next section.

Precarious work has been shown to be associated with higher levels of poverty and social exclusion. The importance of this relationship has prompted some researchers to incorporate low wage and income insecurity in the very definition of precarious work (Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013; Rodgers, 1989), as has been discussed earlier. But even if precarious work is conceptualized as job insecurity, the effect on poverty is clear. It has been shown, for example, that those in nonstandard work (temporary contracts, involuntary part-time employment or self-employment) have higher degrees of in-work poverty compared to those with standard full-time or permanent contracts in EU countries (see e.g., Eurofound, 2017).

Another aspect of the important distributional implications is that specific social groups have been affected more strongly by the increase in precarious work than others.

Precarious work was found to be stratified along gender, migrant status and race. Temporary work or part-time work was popular among women under the male breadwinner model and, even today, women tend to have higher levels of precarious work (EIGE, 2017), although, more recently, job stability seems to be rising among women, while job instability has been rising for men (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2018). Migrants have been also documented to make up a large part of the precariat (Standing, 2011; Banki, 2013; Jørgensen, 2016), as this is a group with problematic integration in the labour market and social rights and entitlement to benefits tend to be restricted for migrants compared to citizens, which reinforces insecurity (see Römer, 2017; Schmitt and Teney, 2019). In the United States, precarious work also varies according to racial lines: African Americans have been more exposed to labour market uncertainties and job precarity (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2018). Although precarious work has been more important for these groups, and generally more for the low-skilled segment of the labour force, authors also underline that non-standard work and job insecurity also affects high-skilled parts of the labour force, which overall results in a heterogeneous composition of the those working in precarious jobs.

Another important cleavage here is the one according to age: precarious work has been repeatedly shown to be more prevalent among the young (e.g., Medgyesi, 2018). In the case of the young, one crucial question is whether precarious work is a stepping-stone to more

stable employment (e.g., De Graaf-Zijl, 2011) or whether the young in these jobs are more likely to experience difficult integration in the labour market throughout their working careers. Some of the literature (e.g., Chung et al., 2012) argues that transition rates from temporary work to stable employment are low and decreasing, thereby creating a persistent disadvantage for the young. This is especially pronounced in more segmented (dual) labour markets, where jobs for the 'insiders' (those with full-time, permanent contracts) are more protected and are inaccessible to 'outsiders', who remain in precarious jobs or unemployment. Högberg et al. (2019) show that stricter employment protection legislation (EPL) is associated with lower rates of transition from temporary to permanent employment, while partial deregulation – when EPL for temporary contracts is weaker – is associated with higher transition rates.

An important implication of the increased prevalence of precarious work among the young is the delay of transition to adulthood. The inability to gain a solid foothold in the labour market is especially important when we consider transitions such as moving out of the parental home and establishing a household. Precarious work, periods of unemployment and unpredictable (often low) incomes, are main drivers behind not leaving the parental home or returning to the parental nest (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Mills et al., 2005). In countries like Spain or Italy, where labour market dualization is pronounced and precarious employment among the young and youth unemployment are important, the typical age for leaving the parental home is much higher compared to Northern or Western European countries. Lim (2018) discusses how precarious work leads to the delay of marriage among men in Japan. Insecure labour market position has also been demonstrated to contribute to the postponement of childbearing (Mills et al., 2011; Bobek et al., 2018).

The adverse consequences of precarious work on health have also been described in the literature. Various possible channels might link precarious work to health outcomes: precarious work might involve physically demanding or dangerous work that increases health and safety risks. A second potential link involves the stress that comes from employment insecurity, the tendency for precarious workers to hold multiple jobs, working irregular or long hours and limited legal protections. The literature shows (see Benach et al., 2014) that workers in precarious employment may face greater demands or have lower control over the work process, which are factors that have been demonstrated to lead to higher levels of stress, higher levels of dissatisfaction and more adverse health outcomes compared to workers in more secure work environments. In addition, precarious work can have psychological effects that might affect mental health, such as feelings of meaninglessness and the inability to construct a rational life-plan. According to Standing, 'to be precariatized is to be subject to pressures and experiences that lead to a precariat existence, of living in the present, without a secure identity or sense of development achieved through work and lifestyle' (Standing, 2011: 16).

The literature also warns that precarity is not necessarily limited to the world of work, but can penetrate other life domains as well. Scholars have expanded the understanding of the term to include a lack of security in other areas, including housing. For example, Beer et al. (2015) describe how precarious work and precarious housing interact in shaping vulnerabilities faced

by lone mothers in Australia. Precarious housing has been defined in various ways in the literature, but one constitutive element here – similar to the case of precarious work – is insecurity. Insecurity is most often measured as living in private rental housing as, in many homeownership-dominated housing markets, renting is typically short-term, is associated with the expectations of future moves and the inability to control the time of moving (Beer et al., 2015; Bates et al., 2019; McKee et al., 2019). Frequent moving is not only costly but also disruptive to one’s social networks and is sometimes emotionally difficult as well. In these studies, home ownership is generally regarded as a secure type of housing, although it might also go together with insecurity, in case of very high mortgage payments or old housing with high maintenance costs, for example (Pendall et al., 2012). In many cases, indicators of insecurity are combined with indicators of housing affordability and substandard quality (overcrowding, lack of basic amenities, etc.) into one indicator of housing precariousness.

Understood in this more general sense, precarity does not only include the condition of precarious workers but it is a more general existential state: the condition of being vulnerable to exploitation because of a lack of security (Banki, 2013; Jörgenson, 2016). Needless to say, the adverse effects of precarization (e.g., stress and health problems) might be even more pronounced if precarity is not confined to the world of work but extended to other life domains as well.

### **5.3.1.4 Political implications: how likely is collective action among the precariat?**

Increasing precarization in work and other life domains has generated political responses, such as the EuroMayday protests, the Occupy movement, the Indignados movement in Spain or the gilet-jaunes in France. The increasing support for nationalist parties on the right-wing of the political spectrum or the popular vote for Brexit in the UK are also manifestations of the increasing discontent. Still, the question prevails whether precarious labour can be considered a ‘class’ in the sense of having a distinct structural position in modern capitalism that could potentially be represented by a single political party.

According to Standing’s (2011) argument, the precariat does constitute a separate class from the traditional working class because it differs in terms of relations of production, relations of distribution and relations to the state. In terms of relations of production, the precariat consists of people with insecure jobs combined with periods of unemployment, while the working class enjoys stable, full-time work. In terms of relations of distribution, the precariat is characterized by the lack of income sources other than their wage, while the standard of living of the working class is also supported by benefits received from the company and government. In terms of relations to the state, the precariat lacks many of the rights provided to citizens in the core working class and the salariat<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> According to Standing there are also other distinctive features which demarcate it from the working class: the collapse of occupational identity; lack of control over time; detachment from labour; low social mobility; over-qualification; uncertainty; poverty and poverty traps. These however are not taken into account in the Standing’s theory of social class formation.

Other authors contest the idea that the precariat can be considered as a separate social class. Neilson and Rossiter (2008) argue, for example, that, historically, precarious work seems to be the norm and that it is the standard Fordist work which should be regarded as an exception. Consequently, precarity is not an exceptional condition that can motivate social antagonism, especially in countries where the welfare state has been less developed. Seymour (2012) criticizes the concept because it lacks specificity (many individuals lack some of seven forms of labour security outlined by the author) and points out that insecurity has long been at the core of capital-labour relations. Breman (2013) also argues that the precariat is not a new or distinctive class and shares much with the proletariat. This latter point is forcefully argued by Wright (2016), who claims that the material interests of the precariat and the traditional working class are similar when one considers interests related to the social system adopted (capitalism vs socialism) or the specific type of capitalism adopted (e.g., liberal vs coordinated or social democratic). Although he acknowledges that the interests of the groups can be different at the level of specific regulations (e.g., employment protection legislation), this is only sufficient to define the precariat as a segment of the working class rather than a distinct social class<sup>14</sup>.

Several authors (Frase, 2013; Wright, 2016) point out that the precariat is unlikely to form a social class also because of the heterogeneity of the group. Standing (2011) describes three main subgroups within the precariat: the marginalized members of the working class, groups with the least secure rights (migrants, Roma, ethnic minorities, etc.) and those with higher levels of education, who found themselves in precarious jobs despite having been promised a career in stable employment. The different subjective experiences of deprivation of these groups generate serious divisions that undermine the capacity of the precariat to act collectively as a class. This is the reason why Standing refers to the precariat as a class-in-the-making rather than a class-for-itself as it does not yet act as a unified collective actor (Standing, 2011).

Following Neilson and Rossiter (2008), Jörgenson (2016) argues that, even if the precariat does not constitute a social class, precarity might become a point of departure for creating a common social space in which struggles are articulated and where new political identities are formed. Others, like Frase (2013), remain sceptical about such a possibility, precisely because of the internal heterogeneity of the group.

### **5.3.1.5 Relevance for the project**

The concept of the precariousness is important for the UPLIFT project, as it expresses the experience of insecurity that many young citizens in the EU share in different domains of life,

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<sup>14</sup> Despite these criticisms of the view that the precariat can be considered a separate class, some studies of social stratification do include such class in their class schema, e.g., the influential study of the British class structure by Savage et al. (2013) claims that the precariat makes up 15% of the population in the UK, although their definition is based on having a consistently low level of economic, social and cultural capital rather than some measure of insecurity (see also Albert et al., 2017).

such as employment or housing. The increase in precariousness is the consequence of macro-societal changes like globalization, financialization and technological change, but the economic crisis of 2008 has exacerbated this process as well. Precarious work and precarious housing are not only relevant for the poorest segment of society, but also an experience that is increasingly shared by groups of the middle-class as well. Although the experience of insecurity is very important for the well-being of European societies, it is a challenging task to measure it in different domains of life. The difficulties arise because insecurity is likely to affect several dimensions of the domain in question (e.g., employment and housing) and it is difficult to capture with standard indicators.

### **5.3.2 Young people affected by these trends and the Great Financial Crisis**

The 2008 economic and financial crisis confronted governments with slowing economic growth, caused many countries to enter recession and has limited the fiscal space for redistribution. Although the crisis did not cause the trend towards rising inequalities, it did aggravate it (Morelli and Atkinson, 2015; Van Lancker and Van den Heede, 2019). Young people were critically hit by the crisis and they suffered disproportionately during the recession: youth unemployment increased more than overall unemployment (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). As emphasized by Green, 'intergenerational inequality could be reaching a critical point [...]. Today's young people look set to be the first generation since the children of the Edwardian era with poorer life chances than their parents across a range of life domains. [...] The gap between the old and the young grows consistently in all areas, except education' (Green, 2017: 121).

In developed economies, the crisis impacted youth mainly in terms of unemployment and the social hazards associated with joblessness and prolonged inactivity (ILO, 2010). The economic crisis brought along the largest ever cohort of unemployed youth: between 2007 and 2009, youth unemployment increased by 7.8 million at the global level (ILO, 2010). In the European Union, the employment rate of those aged 18-24 declined over the period 2007-2011 in all Member States apart from Germany (Ward et al., 2012). The impacts of the crisis over young adults' lives have been studied over the past decade, concluding that youth was hit the hardest in terms of unemployment (e.g., O'Higgins, 2014), and was most affected by deteriorating labour market conditions (Sironi, 2018). Thus, in the following overview, the main emphasis is on employment, but the other main domains covered in UPLIFT – housing, education, and healthcare – are also briefly discussed.

#### **5.3.2.1 Employment**

The labour market is the field with evident immediate impacts. Within the context of the crisis, unemployment increased rapidly in most OECD countries and youth unemployment increased even more rapidly as the recession deepened. Additionally, other indicators, such as part-time working, working-time preferences and increased migration suggest that younger age groups are more supply-constrained than other age groups by reduced levels of labour demand during the recession (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). Likewise, rates of young people not in

employment, education or training (NEET) peaked. The NEET rate in the EU stood at 11% of 15–24-year-olds and 17% of 25–29-year-olds in 2008; by 2011 these rates had increased to 13% and 20% respectively (Eurofund, 2012). There is huge variation in these rates between Member States, with rates varying from below 7% (Luxembourg and the Netherlands) to above 17% (Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy and Spain) (ibid.). NEETs are a very heterogeneous population: usually a majority are conventionally unemployed, some are sick or disabled, but some, who are not considered a vulnerable group, are simply taking time out to do other activities, such as art, music, self-directed learning or even travelling (ibid.). However, all these groups have one thing in common – they are not accumulating human capital through formal channels (ibid.). Spending time as NEET may lead to severe social disadvantages, such as disaffection, insecure and poor future employment, youth offending and mental and physical health problems (ibid.).

Overall, the crisis in 2008 had a dramatic effect on the labour market, worsening the conditions in highly-developed economies through the dramatic increase in youth unemployment, greater precariousness and the polarization of the employment structure, with a decline in 'middle-level jobs' and an increasing share of professional, technical and managerial jobs alongside those in more elementary jobs (Grotti et al., 2019). Young people are particularly at risk of the negative consequences of these changes to the labour market (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Scholars have identified five distinctive characteristics of the youth labour market situation in Europe during the crisis period, such as increased labour market flexibility, skills mismatches, new patterns of migration and family legacies, as well as an increasing role for EU policy (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

Regarding the socio-economic consequences of insecure employment (see also 4.3.1), Rokicka and Kłobuszewska (2016) found that young individuals face a higher risk of experiencing negative socio-economic consequences than those in mid-life, even though there exist large differences between European countries. The young unemployed are severely hit by socio-economic disadvantages such as income poverty, material deprivation and subjective experience of financial difficulties. Moreover, socio-economic disadvantage is more widespread among lower-educated youth, youth with an immigrant background and youth living outside the parental home. Young people who experienced unemployment at age 18–29 are more likely in to be in poverty, material deprivation and to live in a household with financial difficulties four years later (Hofäcker; 2017). Long-term analyses have shown that current labour market uncertainties and the unpredictability of future employment prospects often keep young people from actually making savings for their old age, despite being well aware of the need for additional savings to ensure a decent living standard in their old age (Hofäcker et al., 2017). The young tend to have a greater risk of working on nonstandard contracts with more limited contractual security and a higher risk of losing their jobs than the comparable adult population. A study carried out by Burrows (2013) about the employment experiences of young people aged between 15 and 24 emphasizes the importance of expectations and how these may change over time in a society. In particular, young people show 'horizons of choice' constrained by individual experiences in the labour market, lived by

themselves or people they know. They accept precarious employment without a critical perspective as long as this is perceived – accurately or not – as improving their future job prospects.

Kłobuszewska et al. (2017) argue that institutional factors matter for the economic situation of young unemployed and temporary workers in Europe. Expenditure on active and passive labour market policies is able to decrease the negative impact of unemployment on the financial situation of youth. Welfare and educational systems also affect the outcomes of the recession. The impact of the recession on youth's economic conditions is limited in generous welfare states (e.g., Norway) and in countries with a strong vocational education system (e.g., Germany) (Sironi, 2018). On the other hand, the damages of the crisis are more visible in less generous welfare systems (e.g., the US and UK) and where family support has a central role (e.g., Spain) (ibid.).

Vegetti et al. (2019) looked at the impact of the crisis on latent and early entrepreneurship, as well as on the link between the two. The study combines individual and country-level data from 25 EU member states from 2006 to 2012 and shows that the high-level unemployment generated by the economic crisis has produced a 'refugee effect', by pushing into entrepreneurship individuals who are not interested in such a career choice. Similar results were found by Mühlböck et al. (2017) using data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor for 17 European countries. Results show that a significant proportion of new entrepreneurs have started a business despite a negative perception of entrepreneurship, as well as a lack of confidence in their own business skills. The proportion of this sort of 'desperate' entrepreneur has increased during the economic crisis, especially in the countries hit most hard by the economic downturn and rising unemployment. Authors find that the primary motivation for these people in turning to entrepreneurship is the lack of other options to enter the labour market during the economic crisis.

Results of an EU project called STYLE also show that gender gaps open up early in working careers and that young women and different ethnic groups are often at a disadvantage; although the nature of this disadvantage varies both by gender and ethnicity (Zuccotti and O'Reilly, 2019). Policies should pay attention to the fact that young people are not a homogeneous group, thus implementations must incorporate the notion of diversity.

Within the context of youth unemployment in the EU, it is crucial to mention that all EU countries have committed to the implementation of a Youth Guarantee in a Council Recommendation of April 2013. Through it, Member States committed to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of: (1) employment; (2) continued education; (3) apprenticeship; or (4) traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

More than 5 million young people across Europe have registered in Youth Guarantee schemes each year since 2014, and more than 3.5 million young people registered accepted an offer of employment, continued education, a traineeship or an apprenticeship.

European officials deem the Youth Guarantee to have improved young people's labour market performance significantly. Eurostat data points out that youth unemployment has decreased from a peak of 24% in 2013 to 14% in 2019 (2.3 million fewer young unemployed in the EU) and that the share of 15- to 24-year-olds NEET has fallen from 13.2% in 2012 to 10.3% in 2018 (1.8 million fewer young NEET).

### **5.3.2.2 Housing**

Inequality in housing increased during and after the crisis and the social implications of barriers in access to affordable housing for a growing proportion of the population, especially for vulnerable groups including young people, should be seriously addressed within the EU policy process (Baptista and Marlier, 2019). The topic that is probably most studied in connection to the effects of the crisis on young people's housing is emancipation. During 2007 to 2011, there has been an increase in the share of youths living with their parents in France, Hungary and Denmark. However, in Southern European countries there has been no change in this pattern (Aassve et al., 2013). In Southern Europe, late emancipation has been a structural trend and clearly distinct from the rest of European countries (Mínguez, 2016). However, the evidence of young people (aged 15-24) delaying the start of independent life away from the family home during the crisis (2008-2011) is especially present in countries hit hardest by the recession (Ireland, Spain, the three Baltic States and, to a lesser extent, Greece) (Ward et al., 2012). Living with one's parents reduces housing costs and it is also a form of insurance against unemployment risk (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011).

### **5.3.2.3 Education**

The crisis seems to have struck the young horizontally. Even if starting from a lower base, the unemployment rate of young people with tertiary education attainment has increased more substantially than those of young people with primary or secondary attainment. The poverty rate and the in-work poverty rate show similar trends, leading to the finding that holding a university degree was no longer a guarantee of immunity regarding the risk of poverty (Rodrigues et al., 2016). However, youngsters with the lowest levels of education and skills are of particular concern, especially when they belong to racial and ethnic minorities (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). During a recession, those with higher skills or older people with more experience take low-level skills jobs that were previously held by young people (ibid.).

Another issue is the expansion of tertiary education across many EU states, creating the potential for mismatches in skills and 'over-education', because of the oversupply of graduates relative to the capacity and/or requirements of the economy. Trends in over-education have followed a cyclical pattern during the recession period reflecting the decline in available job opportunities during the crisis. Also contributing to this trend, the prevalence of working students is an unintended consequence of the increase in higher education participation, though this might have a positive effect through providing work experience (Beblavý et al., 2017). Research suggests that the probability of mismatch can be reduced by students having higher vocational components to their programmes, more project-based work and work

placements. Therefore, policies influenced by practical learning approaches, which promote greater links between employers and educational institutions as well as investment in career support services in universities and similar institutions, are needed. For example, work placements in higher education with the potential to develop into permanent posts and the provision of job-placement assistance have undeniable positive effects. Moreover, educational systems with more developed vocational pathways and university career offices can compensate youth vulnerability due to labour market flexibility.

#### **5.3.2.4 Healthcare**

Economic recessions and consecutive unemployment, income decline and unmanageable debts are associated with many negative health outcomes for all age groups, such as poor mental well-being, increased rates of common mental disorders, substance-related disorders and suicidal behaviours (Frasquilho et al., 2016). Youth unemployment appears to be strongly associated with alcohol and drug use disorders (Thern et al., 2017). It has been found that currently-unemployed people are less healthy than full-time employees and that there are also enduring effects from spells of unemployment while young (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). Spells of unemployment while young continue to lower happiness more than two decades later and the longer the spell of unemployment, the lower the happiness and increased risk of depression when older (ibid.). A study of the Swedish context found that, although youth unemployment was associated with an increased risk of getting a mental diagnosis during a long-term follow up, it found that this result did not depend on the overall national rates of unemployment (Thern et al., 2017). Thus, it seems that, for youth, being unemployed during an economic recession does not have extra negative effects compared to being unemployed during an economic boom period. However, youth unemployment, irrespective of national employment levels, leads to serious negative consequences. On the other hand, studies have shown that entering labour markets during a recession can have permanent effects on the generation of youth affected, and fears have been expressed regarding a possible crisis legacy of a 'lost generation' made up of young people who detach themselves from the labour market altogether (ILO, 2010).

## 6 Drivers of inequality (Meso-level)

### 6.1 Welfare regime theories

The UPLIFT project has selected 16 functional urban regions for more in-depth studies of inequalities and policy responses. These cases differ along two key dimensions, i.e. whether they show economic and population growth or not over recent decades and whether they are situated in less or more favourable welfare state settings (see Figure 3 in section 5.2.3). The latter aspect raises in turn two theoretically important questions which both benefit from a literature overview of the concept of welfare regimes, mentioned in the conceptual introduction (section 4.2). One is the well-researched issue of national welfare regimes, the other is the issue of whether one can identify within-country variations in welfare regimes, i.e. is it relevant to talk about local welfare regimes? We discuss both aspects below.

#### 6.1.1 National welfare regimes

Esping-Anderson's seminal work 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' (1990) utilised deductive techniques applied to the social policy history of 18 OECD states to arrive at an ideal-type typology of welfare states. However, the provision of welfare in addition to market-led, civil-society produced or family-centred provision has a long history (see for example Ştefan (2015)) and the differences between different arrangements had been systematized before, in particular by Titmuss (1963). Titmuss categorized some welfare states as 'residual' (focused on a safety-net if and when residents faced market failure) and others as 'institutional' (a more comprehensive system based on social rights). So, although by no means the first scholar to approach the subject of classifying welfare states, Esping-Andersen's work has triggered a huge body of research over the last 30 years.

As pointed out by Isakjee (2017), the contribution of Esping-Andersen 'goes beyond the mere construction of a typology to seek to explain how and why welfare regimes are formed' (ibid: 6). Among other things and as noted by Isakjee, Esping-Andersen argues that – contrary to the conventional understanding – welfare state retrenchment is not linked to tax revolts or complaints about too much spending – anti-welfare state sentiments are actually weak where spending is highest. Instead, the systems themselves, he argues, are the result of historical reforms and political movements that help constructing new social categories and modes of political behaviour, lending strong support to more generous welfare systems.

Esping-Andersen's basic typology, the liberal, conservative-corporatist, and the social-democratic regime, had the following characteristics:

1. Liberal regimes of welfare tend towards lower levels of state intervention, leaving market-forces to establish a level of social security, to which the state made modest reallocations. Such systems include the U.S., the UK and Australia.

2. Conservative or 'conservative-corporatist regimes such as France, Italy and Germany would provide relatively more generous benefits based upon principles of insurance contributions.
3. Social-democratic regimes, such as Sweden, Denmark and Norway, would exist at the most market- interventionist end of the scale, guaranteeing universal benefits at more generous levels.

Although appreciative, Korpi and Palme (2003) find the model basically descriptive: 'The great merit and appeal ... is that it captures some significant characteristics of welfare states, and, moreover, by placing political labels on the models, it hints at the political origins of the different policy configurations. This typology is hence useful for global descriptive purposes'. However, the 'great advantage of this typology becomes problematic insofar as it mixes causes, mediating variables, and outcomes' (ibid.: 430-1.). As Korpi and Palme declared some years earlier (1998), in order to make the model better theorized they suggested welfare-state institutional structures as mediating variables forming a basis for a typology. They thereby ended up with five models, defined in terms of three separate aspects of institutional differences: criteria for benefit eligibility, principles for benefit levels, and forms of program governance: *the targeted model* (minimum benefits after a test of need), *the voluntary state-supported model* (voluntary funds, where eligibility depends on membership and often with low benefit levels), *the state corporatist model* (involves compulsory membership for economically active and has joint governance by representatives for employers and employees), *the basic security model* (universalistic with flat-rate benefits on relatively low levels), *the encompassing model* (combines earnings-relatedness with universalism). For a recent test and support of the Korpi and Palme typology, see Jacques and Noel (2018) who also sum up the debate and critique.

Like most typologies, the Esping-Andersen attempt has been criticized and new models were also soon launched as to include countries that were not studied by Esping-Andersen. Liebfried (1993) and Ferrera (1993) both argued that Mediterranean states (primarily Portugal, Spain and Greece) should constitute a separate regime, having limited social security and based in part on clientelism and a traditional family or community-oriented focus. Ebbinghaus (2012) points out that the break-up of the Soviet Union and the post-socialist transitions had not occurred at the time Esping-Andersen prepared his book and are not represented well by the tripartite model. When Esping-Andersen updated his analysis in 1999, he, as pointed out by Ebbinghaus, in fact reduced the number of case study states from 18 to 16 (including Spain but excluding 'hybrid cases' such as Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland, post-Soviet states, as well as EU-accession countries and Asian tiger economies).

Competing classifications of capitalist economies have been launched by for instance Hall and Soskice (2001) focusing more on industrial relations, corporate governance, inter-firm relations, vocational training and the characteristics of employee relations. While they saw two basic forms, labelled 'liberal market economy' and 'coordinate market economy' respectively, they acknowledged the existence of hybrid countries. Amable (2005) proposed a regime

categorization based on product markets, labour markets, financial systems, social protection and education systems, and ended up with five types: *market-based economies* (UK), *social democratic economies* (Sweden), *Asian capitalism*, *continental European capitalism* (Germany) and *South European capitalism* (Portugal).

Other types of criticism of Esping-Andersen's original work have focused more on the key welfare and decommodification aspects that were never covered by his classification attempt, such as housing (Arbaci, 2007) and healthcare provision (Bambra, 2007), but also on the overall issue of how gender relations were handled in Esping-Andersen's work (Kolberg, 1991; Korpi, 2000; van der Velde et al., 2010).

The concept of national welfare regimes is undoubtedly relevant for the UPLIFT project as we recognize the key importance of opportunities framing and forming the lives of people. The level of welfare support provided to families and individuals has clear implication for variations in social outcomes. Or, as put by Van Kersbergen (2016: 11.) ....'welfare state models, in short, differ substantially in how much they are committed to spend, but what matters most for social outcomes, such as social protection and inequality, is on what specific social purposes that money is spent, how the programmes are organized, taxed and financed and how transfer- or service-oriented they are'.

When approaching variations in welfare delivery across nation states in empirical work, many scholars tend to apply relatively simple measures, such as social expenditures as percentage of GDP as a way of estimating the generosity of systems. Such a measure varies greatly across the EU with above 30% in France and below 15% in Estonia (Schruggs et al., 2014). The redistributive effects (comparing income before and after taxes and transfers) sometimes co-vary with generosity but as pointed out by Kersbergen (ibid), this is not always the case. Referring to Adema et al. (2014), he notes that '...the cross-national differences in the welfare states' redistributive effects are large, varying from a decline in inequality of 20% to 30% in the liberal welfare states to 45% to 47% in Ireland, Slovenia, Finland, Belgium and Hungary. Interestingly enough, the countries with the lowest income inequality, namely the social democratic welfare states of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, are not among the countries with the top redistributive tax-benefit systems. This, first of all, reflects the fact that these countries have relatively equal market income distributions in the first place. In addition, the picture is somewhat distorted because the redistributive impact of the Nordic countries' extensive social services financed via taxation are not taken into account'.

The inspiration from the welfare regime idea will influence the UPLIFT project, in particular in the two first work packages aiming to map inequality and analyze developments over time. As emphasized by Kersbergen, the 2008 financial crisis has very much affected welfare generosity as well as the redistributive effects of different national systems, and this highlights the fact that 'welfare regimes', although sometimes stable over longer time periods, do change and that empirical research has to be based on facts and not on pre-existing classifications.

### 6.1.2 Local welfare regimes and the UPLIFT project

Without doubt, the welfare regime concept was never intended to be used for other aspects and geographical scales than those related to the capacity of nation states to institutionalize laws and regulations. Its focus has been on the social history of countries and on how poverty and inequalities develop and can be mitigated in different national contexts. However, voices have recently been heard that critique the traditional welfare regime theory by stating that ‘it takes no account of local differentials in relation to decommodification and social stratification’ (Isakjee 2015: 12). Mingioni and Oberti (2003) argue that local contexts can involve multiple actors delivering services from a range of formal and informal actors. Spatial variations in the provision of welfare are to be expected, provision is not uniform across states. It may be no coincidence that Isakjee (2017) raises the question of local welfare regimes, as his primary focus in the referred paper is on healthcare, and he is a geographer. As he puts it: ‘These arguments are not new: even in those states renowned for welfare uniformity such as the UK, the delivery agents of welfare (when it is not in the form of pure economic capital) has always been prone to vary depending on a range of social and spatial factors. In other contexts, a lack of state incentives for medical professionals to set up services in particular areas may also result in uneven health access. Although the UK health service is performed by the NHS, other countries can have health funding arranged by local or regional actors, leading to even more variation in accessibility and quality of services.

The regime concept (see also section 6.3.1), particularly as applied in political science, is related to governance. Kevin Ward provides the following definition: ‘The concept of regime is often preceded by a spatial adjective—international, national, or urban, for example—that refers to the area over which it has jurisdiction and can be used to refer to all manner of substantive remits over which it has control—development, environment, labour, trade, and so on. A more-detailed definition documents the means through which an institution forms. The emphasis is on the principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which the expectations of individual actors (normally governments) converge and are institutionalized’ (Ward, article in Britannica; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/regime> ).

Following this definition and applying the concept of local welfare regime on UPLIFT’s functional urban regions may run into two problems. One is that a functional urban region very seldom is governed by a single government but rather comprises a range of local authorities that have their own agendas and often compete with each other. This horizontal political fragmentation is often more pronounced in bigger cities than in smaller ones and it is more visible in cities having a high level of residential segregation (where elected governments have different political constituencies). Political fragmentation within functional urban regions can make it difficult to identify or apply the concept of ‘local welfare regimes’.

The second problem is related to the complexity of welfare delivery and its vertical multi-governance character. While some key components are derived and institutionalized at the national level, other components might be regional and yet other local. It is probably wise to approach the existence of local and regional variations in welfare sector-by-sector or domain-

by-domain as systems as well as service delivery vary by type of welfare service and arrangement. While industrial relations, unemployment compensation levels, pension rights and child and sickness benefits are likely to be similar across any one country, healthcare, education, care of children and the elderly, and youth policies can be expected to vary more. However, as will be more discussed in the next section (6.2), housing is another key welfare component that could very well fit better into the notion of local welfare regimes.

The welfare regime issue is directly related to UPLIFT's interest in understanding individual's opportunities and the potential for social mobility and for policy development aimed at reducing inequalities. The final section of the report brings the discussion of intergenerational mobility into the frame of the regime issue and we there provide references to recent empirical research on the matter (see section 7.3.4).

## **6.2 Changes in institutional structures**

This section of the literature review is focused on institutional structures and the interconnections between opportunities and outcomes. Given the purposes of the UPLIFT project, we begin by addressing income distribution and poverty. Afterwards, our attention turns to institutional structures in four domains: education, employment, housing and health. We are especially interested in drivers of inequality operating in these domains, i.e. factors or mechanisms that cause or contribute to inequalities. Our discussion covers drivers toward polarisation as well as public policies or other initiatives that help reduce polarisation. While national welfare systems are especially important in this respect, it is also relevant to question how actors at the local level are able to intervene. We conclude the section with a summary on the particular position of the youth since the eruption of the financial crisis in 2008.

### **6.2.1 Income distribution and poverty**

The last decades in Europe have been characterised by social, economic and technological developments, but also by inequalities. Measuring income inequality in 38 countries of Europe from 1980 to 2017, Blanchet et al. (2019) find an overall rise of inequality, concluding that the population in the top 1% bracket of income captured about as much growth of wealth as the bottom 50%. Top earners captured an increasing share of national income in all 38 countries except one (Belgium); and, despite some improvement of the bottom income groups since 2000, the majority of the countries (Norway and Spain are the only exceptions) failed to meet the target of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: to ensure that the income of the bottom 40% of the population grows faster than the average.

While poverty rates are especially high in Southern and Western Europe, they have remained stable or risen in a majority of European countries between 1980 and 2017 – France is a notable exception (Blanchet et al., 2019). In addition, the same study does not find a clear pattern of convergence in average income levels *between* countries: the income differences between the countries of Northern, Western, Southern and Eastern Europe – the four clusters of countries identified by the authors, from wealthiest to poorest – remained stable between 1980 and 2017. The authors also confirm that such income inequalities are reduced significantly by

national fiscal systems. Interestingly, taxes and transfers in Europe are estimated to reduce inequality only by 20%, comparing to 40% in the US, which nevertheless remains more unequal than Europe due to much larger pre-tax income inequalities.

Sharp inequalities in income distribution are also exposed by Mauritti et al. (2016), based on data from the European Social Survey 2012. A considerable part of those inequalities are explained and reproduced through the unequal distribution of educational resources, in which the authors find an overall vertical divide between the propertied, managerial and professional classes, on one hand, and the base wage earners and independent workers, on the other. Mauritti et al. (2016: 89) argue that more attention should be paid to analysing Europe as a whole, as the typical country-level analysis fails to grasp the full dimension of inequalities: they defend 'the heuristic potential of placing the intersections of distributional inequalities (of economic and educational resources) with categorical inequalities (between nation states and social classes) at the heart of this analysis'.

Examining inequality and unemployment, Monfort et al. (2018) corroborate that the economic integration process of the European Union has not led to convergence among member-states so far: instead, inequality remains high both within and between countries. Observing that the pursuit of so-called structural reforms and deregulation policies are likely to bring Europe closer to the Anglo-Saxon model and its high inequality levels, the authors argue that 'the absolute redistribution attained through public action plays a pivotal role that should be further understood, and exploited in terms of economic policy' (Monfort et al., 2018: 720).

According to Antonucci and Varriale (2019), inequalities on the basis of nationality, class, race and gender make EU citizens unequally positioned to access the promises of the 'meritocracy narrative', which has been disseminated in the last decades and shaped the patterns and meanings of intra-European migration. The authors show that economic inequality is entwined with the Brexit process, that is, with people's identities and senses of belonging to political communities.

Based on research in twenty cities of Europe, the project WILCO – Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in Favour of Cohesion uncovered persisting or rising inequalities, a loss of social cohesion and failing policies of integration in the years of the post-2008 economic crisis. The final report of the project highlights that 'local welfare systems are at the forefront of the struggle to address this challenge – and they are far from winning' (Brandsen, 2014: 2). The impacts of the crisis are described as strongly unequal, with population groups such as migrants and young population suffering a disproportionate share of the impacts. In a landscape of rising housing prices, insufficient childcare and youth unemployment, 'many social innovations are short-lived and remain small in scope' (Brandsen, 2014: 13)

Official indicators show that the risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in the EU increased between 2009 and 2012, associated with the economic crisis and the austerity policy responses, and decreased since 2013 (Eurostat 2019). According to the same report, there were 85.3 million people, or 16.9% of the EU population, living at risk of poverty (AROP) after social

transfers by 2017 – the target of the Europe 2020 strategy concerning poverty reduction was still very far from being accomplished. The analysis of the Eurostat (2019) is important for two additional reasons. First, three indicators are identified as relevant to assess poverty and social exclusion: monetary poverty, severe material deprivation and very low work intensity. Second, disadvantage in these indicators is found disproportionately among people with specific sociodemographic characteristics: women, young people, people with disabilities, single parents, migrants, and people with lower educational attainment as well as their children (i.e. people with at most lower secondary educational attainment compared to those with tertiary education and their children).

Policy-makers at the EU level have expressed their concern with this problem, in particular when the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) was proclaimed in 2017, but materialisation still falls short of the rhetoric about a more inclusive and sustainable economic model (EAPN, 2020a). The European Anti-Poverty Network alerts that concrete measures or targets are still lacking, in particular concerning investment in adequate welfare states to ensure social protection, quality jobs and quality services in worrisome areas such as housing and health (EAPN, 2020a). The COVID19 pandemic has brought additional limitations in the access of people in situations of poverty to basic rights of housing, health, social services and employment (EAPN, 2020b).

With regard to the capacity of the welfare system to redistribute resources and reduce inequalities, Esping-Andersen's (1990) argument is that such capacity varies according to the regime of welfare capitalism in the country, as different regimes entail different extents to which goods and services are decommodified, i.e. excluded from market dynamics. Hence the author distinguished between the social democratic regime (in Scandinavian countries), the conservative-corporatist regime (France, Germany, Italy) and the liberal regime (US, UK, Australia), ranging from greater to lesser decommodification.

As discussed above (section 6.1) a wide variety of works by Esping-Andersen and many other scholars went on to develop and improve this analysis, expanding it to cover other countries (namely in Eastern and Southern Europe), the impact of welfare system reforms undertaken in the last decades, the importance of gender and ethnicity, or the differentials in relation to decommodification and social stratification (Isakjee, 2017).

In one of his more recent studies, Esping-Andersen (2015) examines the conditions under which welfare state policies contribute to an equalization of the opportunity structure, finding a clear equalizing effect only in Scandinavian countries and limited to bottom-up equalisation. That is, intergenerational mobility in these countries was circumscribed to an upward movement of children of the working class and implied no significant change for the children of the affluent classes. According to the author, this happened primarily as a consequence of policies for the democratization of the education system and women's emancipation.

As we shall see below, the patterns of intergenerational social mobility are considerably different across countries, and Scandinavian countries seem to be more often the exception

than the rule. Also important to keep in mind is the distinction between welfare regime (a concept used to describe the national systems and their differences with respect to principles of operation, decommodification, access to benefits, etc.) and local or urban welfare systems (an approach enabling researchers and policy-makers to account for the relevance of formal and informal institutions and dynamics at the local level, which certainly must be considered when addressing inequality and poverty).

The following sections dwell on four specific domains. In all of them, we identify particular forms of inequality that structurally – though not deterministically – affect individual outcomes, including the transmission of advantages and disadvantages from parents to children. While these domains are discussed separately for the sake of clarity, they are interwoven in many ways. For instance, educational outcomes are expected to impact on employment opportunities, but the possibilities of further education for workers are also likely to vary across jobs and skill levels.

### **6.2.2 Education**

Education has long been recognised as a basic human right and the importance of equal access to education has been emphasised repeatedly in international conventions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 state that education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit and individual capability (United Nations, 2017a, 2017b). The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes a binding obligation on governments to work towards fulfilling the right to education ‘progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity’ (United Nations, 1989, Article 28). The right to equal opportunity for education is also enshrined in most countries’ national laws and constitutions. Access to education and learning outcomes should not be affected by circumstances outside of the control of individuals, such as gender, birthplace, ethnicity, religion, language, income, wealth or disability (UNESCO, 2018).

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education 2030 Framework for Action in 2015, equity has been placed at the heart of the international development agenda. In the domain of education, SDG 4 calls on all UN Member States to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ (United Nations, 2015). Several targets under SDG 4 aim for equal outcomes for all population groups. Target 4.5 commits all UN Member States to addressing all forms of exclusion and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes, from early childhood to old age.

Education, training and life-long learning are addressed by the very first Principle of the EPSR, which states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market. This means that access to education should be effective for everyone. It should be provided through a balanced

geographical distribution of educational facilities and professionals of the different levels of education. Costs should not prevent people from using education services.

Furthermore, EC's Joint Employment Report 2020 acknowledges that 'fighting educational inequalities is fundamental to give every student the chance to participate actively in the economy and the society and to better integrate pupils with a migrant background or specific needs in mainstream education' (EC, 2019: 77.). However, as emphasised by the EC, school education does not always play in full its role to promote equity and social fairness and gaps in education add to societal inequality rather than curbing it, thus concluding that access to high quality education and training is key to a more resilient and equal society (EC, 2017).

Policy-makers are aware that income inequalities in many societies determine the individuals' access to educational opportunities, thus acting upon the links between these two dimensions may be essential to equalise educational opportunities. Providing means-tested support to (or even abolishing) school fees and other costs such as those with meals, books, etc. is one way, as it is trying and focussing on reducing income inequalities upstream, e.g. through redistributive taxation.

Many scholars have attempted to assess whether education actually mitigates or reproduces inequalities. Particular attention has been paid to how different educational systems foster or otherwise constrain intergenerational social mobility, that is, the movement of an individual to a social class different than their parents'.

Seminal studies in the US and in France suggested that the primary factor determining educational attainment was the social background of students: beyond individual capabilities, children of highly educated professionals tended to succeed at school and graduate while those of illiterate factory workers tended to early dropout (Coleman, 1966; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). Coleman (1966) explains this mostly on the basis of rational choice, as the expectations of economic returns are much higher for students of wealthy classes, while Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) put their emphasis on the observation that educational systems have been appropriated by the dominant classes, with contents, routines and language becoming increasingly inaccessible to the children of the working class as they attempt to move up the educational ladder.

More recently, Robertson (2016) also stresses the role played by education in furthering rather than ameliorating inequalities and contests the idea that investment in education is an adequate form of tackling the concentration of capital amongst a small elite.

Examining studies on the role of the family in class reproduction, Crompton (2006) concludes that the family retains a major role in the transmission of both economic and cultural resources. Opposing the modern theories of individualisation, the work of Crompton suggests that factors such as material deprivation, normative/cultural practices at the family level and identities can all be important to understand the persistence of inequalities that sometimes manifest at school.

Based on data from the European Social Survey 2008, Abrantes and Abrantes (2014) find high rates of upward social mobility in Europe over the last decades, with 59.2% of the total active population belonging to a class higher than their father's, 26.7% to the same, and only 14.1% to a lower one. Education is shown by the authors to have a positive effect on social mobility, especially for women.

Two other important observations are made by Abrantes and Abrantes (2014). First, most of the upward social mobility corresponds to changes in the class structure: in particular, the shrinking of the industrial sector and the expansion of the service sector led to the children of industrial workers being mostly employed in the service sector, often in low-skill and low-paid jobs with little career prospects; this is nonetheless interpreted as upward mobility according to the class typologies followed in the scholarship. Second, some educational systems are more efficient than others in stimulating intergenerational social mobility. In particular, Scandinavian countries present more mobility, whereas those in Southern Europe are more reproductive both in the link between family background and educational attainment (like countries of Eastern Europe) and the link between educational attainment and occupation (like the UK and Ireland).

Empirical data also demonstrates that more equal learning outcomes and better average learning outcomes tend to coexist, which suggests that not only the quality of the system but also equity may be positively affected by proper sound interventions (Pfeffer, 2015). Thus, ensuring that good quality affordable education is available within a reasonable distance and covering all students is paramount to trying to overcome inequality in opportunities. Failure in tackling it will certainly increase the likeliness of inequality in outcomes.

Lavrijsen and Nicaise (2015) examine data from the 2009 ad hoc module of the Labour Force Survey and conclude that the social distribution of school dropout risk depends on two factors: the design of the educational system (tracking age, extent of vocational education, etc.) and the socioeconomic context (poverty rate, unemployment patterns, etc.). Drawing on data from the European Social Survey 2012, Martins et al. (2016) corroborate the relevance of educational policies and emphasise that such policies have undergone considerable changes in many countries over the last decades, in particular toward expansion. The design of the educational structure, as well as the daily operation of schools, can be important factors to assess how inequalities are reproduced or mitigated.

Penalties imposed on the basis of ethnicity should also be considered. Research by Garaz and Torotcoi (2017) in Eastern and South-eastern Europe shows that Roma students are not only under-represented in higher education, but they are also under-represented in particular fields of study, in particular engineering, manufacturing and construction, while being over-represented in humanities and arts. Vertical differentiation, expressed in the access to higher education, coexists therefore with horizontal differentiation between fields of study leading to disadvantages in employability upon graduation.

### 6.2.3 Labour market

Principle 4 of the EPSR promotes an active support to employment, emphasising everyone's right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. This includes the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification. It also states that young people have the right to continued education, an apprentice- or traineeship or a job offer of good standing within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education and that the unemployed have the right to personalised, continuous and consistent support.

Additionally, principle 5 addresses secure and adaptable employment, underlining that workers have the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, and access to social protection and training regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship. It also highlights that the transition towards open-ended forms of employment shall be fostered and that, in accordance with legislation and collective agreements, the necessary flexibility for employers to adapt swiftly to changes in the economic context shall be ensured. Furthermore, it notes that entrepreneurship, self-employment and innovative forms of work that ensure quality working conditions shall be fostered. Occupational mobility shall be facilitated and employment relationships that lead to precarious working conditions shall be prevented, including by prohibiting abuse of atypical contracts.

The Joint Employment Report 2020 emphasises that 'when entrenched, labour market segmentation may result in higher inequalities, lower social cohesion and lower rates of economic growth, as it is associated with weaker aggregate demand, lower productivity, human capital development and social mobility (...) Labour market segmentation, as measured by the share of temporary employees, affects several Member States' (EC, 2019: 89).

The unequal distribution of labour market opportunities – across countries, regions, age brackets, more or less skilled workers, etc. – affects not only access to employment *per se*, but also the type of job obtained, contractual arrangement, work schedule, salary, social security entitlements and fringe benefits, among other things. It goes beyond the sphere of employment into unemployment as some groups are, for instance, more vulnerable to entering unemployment and/or to remaining in unemployment and becoming long-term unemployed.

Equitable societies with large middle classes are not the natural outcome of market forces. Equity, rather, is created by society, by the institutions – the laws, policies and practices – that govern the society, its economy and, in particular, its labour market. Building just societies means designing institutions that support the creation of quality jobs with decent wages and working conditions, as well as enacting policies to support those who cannot work or who are unable to find work (Berg, 2015: 1).

Research over the last decades has uncovered factors that contribute to or counter inequality in employment. One of them is the very transformation of the economic structure, as it can entail changes in the distribution of benefits and risks. Esping-Andersen et al. (1993) observe

that the large expansion of the service sector between the 1960s and the 1980s in all industrialised countries led to the emergence of a 'post-industrial proletariat', composed disproportionately of young persons, women and migrants, as these could be recruited at lower costs for low-skilled service occupations. The welfare state, the industrial relations system and the educational system are identified by the authors as factors underlying employment structuration, explaining for instance why the 'post-industrial proletariat' is smaller in countries such as Germany and larger in others such as the US.

Drawing on ethnographic research in Greece and Spain, Vetta and Palomera (2020) show how financial and rent-extraction logics penetrate production and affect class relations and struggles. The authors examine the trajectories of two small construction family-firms and conclude that the penetration of credit in this particular production structure has reproduced and intensified deep inequalities, with subcontracting chains contributing to channel profit upwards while risk and exploitation is transferred downwards, thereby reinforcing the pre-existing exploitation not only of employers over workers but also of larger firms over smaller ones. Vetta and Palomera (2020) argue that such material transformations are relevant to understand capital accumulation as well as developments in ideological and moral conceptions of the world, including class identities and social reproduction.

Lifelong learning opportunities, and on-the-job training in particular, are also relevant factors to keep in mind. According to an international report by Brunello et al. (2007), training – resulting from the initiative of either the worker or the employer – is much less likely to happen to well defined groups of workers: those with low qualifications, those in low-skilled jobs, those with temporary and short-term contracts, those who are older than 40, those who work in small firms, and those who live in rural areas. This brings Brunello et al. (2007: 281) to conclude that 'with the caution required by the quality of the data at hand, our results suggest that workplace-provided training in Europe, rather than offsetting the differences associated to initial circumstances, increases such differences'.

For a long time now, younger workers have been overexposed to the downsides of flexible labour markets, in particular precarious employment, often associated with low wages, little career prospects and difficulties in exercising workers' rights (Corral and Isusi, 2013; Demaret, 2013).

According to a comprehensive report by the Eurofound (2015), the unemployment level among young people rose sharply after the onset of the economic crisis in 2008, including a significant increase in long-term unemployed youth in Europe, and those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) were then identified as the group at highest risk of social exclusion, with severe consequences not only for the individuals concerned but for the economy and society as a whole. The same report signalled the lack of public investment in social inclusion through employment, but it also pointed out some promising initiatives in several countries. These consisted of community-based measures with a focus on civic participation and community development, personalised training and life skills programmes, awareness-raising and advocacy measures with the aim of tackling structural barriers to youth

inclusion, and training and capacity building for professionals working with socially excluded young people.

Based on empirical research in the UK, Heyes et al. (2018) confirm that workers in casual employment are more likely to be young, non-White and employed in an elementary occupation. The authors identify several types of uncertainty experienced by these workers in their daily lives: uncertain working time, uncertain personal lives, uncertain income, and uncertain unpaid working time (e.g. travel times between different places where work is performed, as in the case of homecare workers). The analysis of survey data by Heyes et al. (2018) demonstrates that perceived low employment security and working weekends are associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression, especially because of the stress caused by permanent availability, which weakens job quality considerably.

Penalties are not gender-neutral. In fact, the increasing participation of women in paid employment over the latest decades is closely entwined with the growing introduction of corporate flexibility strategies and young women are more likely than young men to take up precarious work in the service industry (Esping-Andersen, 1993; Warhurst and Nickson, 2001; Casaca, 2013). In this perspective, Perrons et al. (2005) argue that there is a paradox between the public policies for gender equality introduced by countries in Europe and the adoption of a neoliberal agenda that contributes to reinforce gender asymmetries in the labour market, even if – or precisely because – it is announced as a pure pursuit of productivity and competitiveness based on supposedly gender-blind merit assessments.

Migrants and their children are another category of workers especially affected by labour exploitation. One of the most classical studies on the incorporation of immigrants in segmented labour markets, conducted by Piore (1979), suggests that newcomers, who have less support networks and experience less social control, tend to follow more pragmatic and individualised considerations regarding employment, making them more likely to enter low quality and low status employment. Therefore, they often find themselves performing jobs that will hardly provide them the skills or capitals required to move up within a severely compartmentalised economy (Piore and Sabel, 1984). Other authors focus on institutional arrangements or the imperfect match between supply and demand of competences in destination countries (Borjas and Crisp, 2005; Reyneri and Fullin, 2011).

Structuralist approaches, however, ascribe the vulnerability of migrant workers to a systemic mechanism to reduce labour costs, insofar as employers expect them to accept poorer working conditions and stay away from trade unions (Esping-Andersen, 1993; Castles and Miller, 2003). The world-system theory points out the multiple logics of inequality linking the position of migrants in class structure to the reduction of constraints to the circulation of capital and trade (Sassen, 2007).

It can be argued that all of these forms of discrimination in recruitment, contractual arrangements or wages – among other aspects of employment – might be offset by trade unions covering an extensive share of workers. However, collective action by workers is

confronted with substantial difficulties in a context of rising unemployment, a large service industry, global flows and competition, and labour market deregulation (Rigby et al., 1999; Supiot, 2010). In addition, trade unions must define their own priorities and strategies, and some workers may find themselves in a position of disadvantage compared to others. As written by Hyman (2001: 170-1.): 'often the type of solidarity underlying twentieth-century trade unionism reflected and replicated on the one hand the discipline and standardization imposed by 'Fordist' mass production, on the other the patterns of differentiation within the working class between those who were central to this production process and those who were more marginal. [...] within companies and sectors, collective bargaining priorities were normally set by 'core' employees (male, white, with a stable place in the internal labour market); within national labour movements, priorities were imposed by the large unions of manual workers such as miners and engineers'.

Based on case studies from France, Germany, the UK and the US, Simms et al. (2018) identify innovative organizing approaches that contribute to young precarious workers joining trade unions: targeted campaigns, coalition building, membership activism, and training activities. The authors find that organizing success is influenced by bargaining structures, occupational identity, labour market conditions, and support by union leaders and members. Also important is that unions combine existing structures with new approaches and take into consideration not only traditional issues, such as wages, but also other issues that are important to young precarious workers such as skills training, demands for minimum working hours, and specific support in insecure employment situations.

#### **6.2.4 Housing**

Principle 19 of the EPSR addresses housing, highlighting that access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need and that vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction.

Housing is typically one of the largest and very often the main component of a household's expenditure. Thus, it is hardly surprising that it is one of the dimensions where income inequality reflects the most. Among poor households, housing expenditure and its weight in the overall budget has been reaching ever higher levels. As a consequence, housing costs tend, very often, to be a heavy burden and leading to arrears in paying housing related bills and/or to being unable of paying for basic housing amenities and to overcrowding (e.g. Abbé Pierre Foundation/FEANTSA, 2019). Furthermore, their homes are often not environmentally sustainable, which adds to the long-term quality and cost issues.

Not only lower income individuals and households tend to have less funds to allocate to housing but they also tend to have less access to financing. Thus, poor individuals and households face restrained choices. They cannot afford better homes/better locations and thus tend to live in areas that, in turn, accentuate inequalities. The differentiated housing options that are available to different groups of population have played a role for the growing economic segregation in many European cities and regions (Musterd, et al., 2015).

Segregation may also result in uneven socio-economic development that, in turn, can have long-term effects that lead to various negative life outcomes for low-income individuals. Poor neighbourhoods tend to underprovide basic services – e.g. public transportation, education and health services, thus exacerbating income-based spatial segregation (CEB, 2017).

Children in households living in 'better' neighbourhoods tend to see higher levels of educational attainment, lower levels of bad behaviour, and to earn more in adulthood (Chetty and Hendren, 2015). Additionally, intergenerational transfer of wealth through the transfer of homeownership can be one of the ways in which wealth inequality in a society builds up over time (Boehm and Schlottmann, 2002; Xiao Di and Yang, 2002).

The interwoven processes of spatialization and racialization of social exclusion are helpful to understand inequalities in housing, as well as inequalities in other domains (employment and education, for instance). Based on ethnographic research in five cities of Romania, the SPAREX project underscores the conditions of generalized poverty and social and territorial disparities produced by post-socialist neoliberal economic restructuring, their distinct effects on different social categories and territories, and the inter- and intra-ethnic relations leading to an unequal distribution of resources, excluding in particular underprivileged Roma persons (Vincze and Rat, 2013).

Although they existed previously, housing inequalities increased with the 2008 financial crisis, as expressed namely in the widening of the discrepancy in the affordability of housing between lower and middle-income homeowners/renters (Dewilde and De Decker, 2016). The eased access to finance registered before the crisis, through easier access to mortgage debts, reduced interest rates, increased market competitiveness, etc., is believed to have increased inequalities (CEB, 2017).

Governments deal with housing inequality in different ways, depending on political and social positioning but also influenced by (and influencing) the variety of housing market models. Different policy approaches have also influenced segregation in European cities. Spatial segregation has been more intense in contexts where market-based dual housing models have been more marked. On the contrary, it has been generally less intense in contexts of tenure-neutral housing where the influence of the market is less evident (Musterd, et al., 2015).

If it is true that housing solutions should contribute to overcoming spatial inequalities, it is also true that addressing housing inequality requires a two-sided approach where investment and policy change should be activated simultaneously. Investment needs to be put forward in order to promote the provision of affordable quality housing. However, while physical infrastructure may be improved through increased investment, promoting mixing among different income groups and ensuring an adequate provision of basic services requires going beyond funding allocation. Notably, it demands policies incentivising upper income households to move into and stay in lower-income territorial contexts while simultaneously keeping the social mix balanced by curbing gentrification.

Gregory (2016) examines housing policy in the UK and in the US, deconstructing interpretations based on the assumptions that homeownership creates virtuous and independent citizens or materializes some ideals of solidarity and interdependence. Instead, the interconnection of the homeownership ideology and welfare retrenchment is uncovered by the author, who concludes with two propositions for a policy framework in which homeownership could play a positive role with respect to equality. First, a policy of social and economic mix within neighbourhoods, as the vicinity of affluent owners and lower-income renters is likely to reduce stigma and promote social cohesion; and second, the adoption or extension of innovative measures such as shared ownership schemes.

In a similar vein, Elsinga (2017) writes that the dream of housing markets and home ownership as equalizers, strongly promoted in Europe since the 1980s, is not corroborated by reality. Stressing that market dynamics foster rather than reduce inequalities, the author argues that policies should contemplate the need of housing for all, affordability in growing areas, the interests of both middle-income and low-income groups, a national framework for local solutions and an adequate legal framework for private rental housing.

Hoekstra (forthcoming) proposes a new form of international comparative research on housing. Building on the observation that dynamics at the local level and at the global level became especially relevant to determine both housing policies and housing outcomes, the author develops a framework in which cities or regions – rather than countries as in typical housing research – are the primary unit of analysis. Local housing regimes are defined by Hoekstra as the configuration of actors that is responsible for the provision, regulation, allocation, and consumption of housing in a particular administrative entity (a city or a region), therefore including community, market and state actors. This analytical framework shall help us uncover the critical factors that reinforce or reduce housing inequalities in the empirical contexts of our study.

### **6.2.5 Health**

With a view to implementing UN-SDGs Goal 3 – ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages –, target 3.8 pleads for the achievement of universal healthcare coverage, including financial risk protection for all.

The right to timely access to affordable, preventive and curative care of good quality is one of the key principles of the EPSR. This means that access to healthcare should be effective for each person: it should be provided when people need it, through a balanced geographical distribution of healthcare facilities, professionals and policies to reduce waiting times. Costs should not prevent people from receiving the healthcare they need.

Reducing health inequalities, both in order to achieve social cohesion and to break the vicious circle of poor health contributing to poverty and social exclusion, has been advocated in key European Commission documents (including the Social Investment Package and the Annual Growth Surveys). Member States' health systems have received increasing attention in the

European Semester process, including through the Country-Specific Recommendations and the Commission's Country Reports.

Health systems face the challenge of ageing populations and increasing demand. Against this background, ensuring universal and timely access to high quality healthcare, whilst also guaranteeing the financial sustainability of health systems, is a challenge which requires increased efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health systems.

According to EC's Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems, access to healthcare includes the following dimensions: a) population coverage; b) affordability of healthcare (cost-sharing); c) basket of care; and d) availability of healthcare (distance, waiting times) (EC, 2014). These dimensions are interlinked. The lack or limitation of public healthcare coverage may result in higher costs and affordability problems for some groups. Likewise, some types of coverage (e.g. occupational health insurance schemes) may result in disproportionate access in favour of these better-off (Baeten et. al, 2018).

People on a low income tend to have more difficulties accessing healthcare. Additionally, characteristics more often associated with low income such as poorer literacy can also, at least to some extent, generate inequalities in access to healthcare. Thus, in order to tackle inequalities in access to healthcare it should be borne in mind the need to address not only the design and functioning of the health system but also the way it interacts with individuals' characteristics, as well as way the health system is affected by other public policies such as those related to income protection, education, employment, etc. (EXPH, 2016).

Based on a comprehensive view over the evolution of inequalities in the previous decades, Therborn (2012) points out the contrast between advances in 'existential equality' (referring to freedom and social participation) and a persistent or even increasing 'vital inequality' (inequality of health and death), as expressed for instance in the striking differences of health expectancy between countries and between social classes within the same country. The author observes that such inequalities are produced by specific mechanisms, of which he highlights and illustrates four:

- Distantiation – some people running ahead while others fall behind;
- Exclusion – the existence of barriers making it difficult or impossible for certain groups to access a good life;
- Hierarchization – organising society as a ladder with those on top and others below;
- Exploitation – the rich and privileged obtaining their rewards from the toil and subjection of the poor and disadvantaged.

A recent publication by the OECD (2019) corroborates that health inequality persists in many OECD countries, underscoring not only the value of health in itself but also its consequences on the chances of succeeding in education and in the labour market. The reverse effect is mentioned in the same report too, in particular as a policy advice: labour market, education, housing and social policies benefiting the more disadvantaged groups can contribute to reducing inequalities in health. This international report by the OECD (2019) identifies

inequalities in health behaviour (less educated people are more likely to be overweight and to smoke), in perceptions of health (less educated people report poorer health situations), and in access to healthcare (people with low income are less likely to see a doctor while access to preventive services is systematically concentrated among the better off). In addition to the promotion of healthy lifestyles and health literacy, the report includes a recommendation for policy-makers to strengthen primary care and reconfigure service delivery models to ensure that recommended preventive services are also delivered to population groups with lower socio-economic status.

According to Alvarenga et al. (2019), health inequalities have been consistently reported across and within European countries and continue to pose major challenges to policy-making. In their EURO-HEALTHY project, they draw on consultation with experts to identify 36 drivers affecting the evolution of health inequalities, organising them according to 6 types of drivers: political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal.

Alexiadou (2020) mentions that, over the last decade, several countries in Europe have adopted laws establishing healthcare reforms oriented toward cost-containment and privatisation to curtail financial deficits. The author alerts that socioeconomic health inequalities increased dramatically during the same period and a growing number of individuals face difficulties to access decisive healthcare, in particular those in the lowest income brackets and those from ethnic minorities. Alexiadou (2020) concludes by arguing that healthcare reforms should be designed and implemented not in isolation from, but in consistency with, human rights requirements.

## **6.3 The role of place**

### **6.3.1 Urban regimes and changing governance structures**

Urban regime theory (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1986; Elkin, 1987; Stone, 1989 and 1993) is a political economy conceptualization born in the US context. It is primarily interested in the urban politics of production and in the importance of agency in decision-making, as factors that shape what Logan and Molotch (1987) call the 'political economy of place'. It explores public-private cooperation in city governance and defines an urban regime as a system of civic cooperation based on mutual self-interest. It can be considered as an empirically grounded theoretical tool for the analysis of how growth and development coalitions are built and function. Urban regime analysis highlights the importance of formal and informal networks of cooperation among public and private actors who are committed to a shared economic development agenda.

#### **6.3.1.1 Concepts, actors, relations and motivations**

The origin of urban regime theory can be found in the long-standing debate about community power and who ruled American cities. The debate saw political pluralists on one side – who understood power as distributed among multiple interest groups, with democratically elected representatives taking the lead in shaping city politics (Dahl, 1961) – and elite theorists on the

opposite side – who claimed that, since power is highly stratified, city politics is controlled by the interests of the economic elites (Hunter, 1953). Urban regime theory goes beyond the pluralist-elitist debate and is concerned with the politics of production and the relationship between public and private interest. Indeed, regime theorists believe that the socio-economic, political and institutional context influences the form a regime takes (Stone, 1989 and 1993).

Regimes are necessary collaborative arrangements in a context in which power is fragmented. Both local government and business possess some of the resources necessary to govern. Governments hold legitimacy and policy-making power, while business controls the capital that generates revenues, financing, and ultimately jobs. However, no group alone is able to exercise comprehensive control in a complex world, and it is only in cooperation that their resources become sufficient to govern. Drawing from the work of Stone (1989 and 1993) and of other scholars (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Dowding, 2001) the key features of an urban regime can be summarised as following:

- 1) A regime is 'an informal yet relatively stable group with access to institutional resources that enable it to have a sustained role in making governing decisions' (Stone, 1989: 4). Collaboration is achieved not only through formal institutions but also through informal networks.
- 2) Regimes bridge the divide between public control of governmental authority and private control of economic resources; thus, they are cross-sectoral and cross-institutional. Collaboration is based on the need to bring together fragmented resources in order to accomplish the desired objectives.
- 3) The participation of business and public-sector actors is required. Other types of actors, such as non-governmental organizations, non-profit institutions, neighbourhood associations and so on, can also be part of the coalition, but their presence is not essential in order to have a regime.
- 4) Distinctive (and rather long-lived) policy agendas can be identified. Their objectives are influenced by which actors take part in the governing coalition, the nature of their relationship, and the resources they bring to the coalition.
- 5) Regime participants may not completely agree over beliefs and values, but selective incentives and the opportunity to achieve some of their aims produce consensus over shared policy objectives, and the allocation of resources appropriate to the policy agenda.
- 6) Regimes are relatively stable and long-lasting arrangements that can span a number of administrations. A change in political leadership does not mean a change of urban regime.

Since regimes cannot be assumed to exist in all cities (see DeLeon, 1992; Orr and Stoker 1994), identifying such features allows to have concrete indicators of urban regimes when analysing different governance arrangements in different contexts.

With regard to internal dynamics of coalition building, while not all the members of the coalition have the same wants – and they do not necessarily agree over beliefs, values, or ideological stances – they cooperate by allocating resources in order to achieve the objectives

of a negotiated agenda that benefits all members to different extents (Ward, 1996). These objectives usually take the form of relatively manageable tasks – Stone calls them small opportunities – rather than a large ideological vision.

Fundamental to secure participation in the governing coalition and to generally overcome problems of collective action is the distribution of selective incentives to member of the coalition. Stone (1993) highlights how the selective incentives do not necessarily need to be material, such as contracts, jobs or specific facilities, but they can also be purposive, like the possibility to achieve a particular aim. This often happens with non-governmental coalition participants that are part of the non-profit sector, or with neighbourhood associations, or institutional actors interested in civil rights for example, which might attach a cultural or ideological value to such possibility, thus to the participation in the regime (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001).

Clearly, the motivations that drive different actors to take part in coalitions are not exclusively economic. With respect to this, Logan and Molotch (1987) do indeed stress the importance of economic gains, especially for business actors. Cox and Mair (1991) developed the concept of 'local dependence' to explain business involvement in development regimes. They argue that certain business interests are tied to a particular place for a range of reasons dependent on the features of the locality itself. These businesses are place-bound in that they see their locality as a crucial sphere of activity and actively seek to improve it. Place-bound capital is seen as a key player in growth coalitions exactly because it benefits from the development process and from the increased demand generated by economic growth. Other groups can also get involved if they believe their circumstances – economic, but also social or reputational – will improve through local growth. Public actors, on the other hand, mostly seek an improved capacity to act, which can only be achieved through cooperation and consensus; these, in turn, can best be created and maintained by taking part in a coalition with different actors (Stone, 1993; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). Other actors, notably NGOs and local communities, might enter coalitions to pursue objectives that would otherwise be overlooked, such as maintaining social cohesion or avoiding social exclusion (Le Galès, 1998).

Two main criticisms have been moved to urban regime theory. First of all, issues of ethnocentrism and difficult comparative application have been raised, with urban regime theory criticized as an abstraction of US political economy, thus intrinsically unable to conceptualize urban governance in other parts of the world (Di Gaetano and Klemanski, 1993; Harding, 1991). However, it has to be noted that in the last decades the differences between the US and Europe have grown smaller (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994; Ward, 1996; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Pierre, 2014). Indeed, the declining role of nation states, the rise of neoliberalism and increased financial constraints for public authorities in Europe have brought about an unbalanced distribution of economic resources and discretionary power between private and public sectors. As a result, also in Europe public-private agreements are now necessary to achieve any major (and increasingly also minor) urban project, thus effectively weakening the ethnocentricity criticism (DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1993; Pierre, 1999; DiGaetano and Strom, 2003). Indeed, in recent years urban regime theory has seen a renaissance as a theoretical approach to analyse European urban governance (Gullberg and

Kaiser, 2004; Holman, 2007; Pinson, 2010; LedyaeV et al., 2014; Blanco, 2015, D'Albergo and Moini, 2015; Ravazzi and Belligni, 2016; Lambelet, 2017; Lamour, 2017).

Secondly, regime theory has been accused of neglecting structural factors such as the power relationship between the local and the global and the influence of higher political and institutional levels (Cox, 1993; McLeod and Goodwin, 1999; Ward, 1996). However, while this criticism applies well to the earlier formulations of the theory, it seems out of place with regard to more recent approaches and understandings. Indeed, many scholars have focused on how to expand the focus of regime theory in order to include the broader power relationships between the local and the global, which were neglected in Stone's original formulation (1989, 1993). Already Stoker and Mossberger (1994), Harding (1994, 1997) and Ward (1996) point out how regimes are not confined to the strictly local environment, but they exist within a broader regional and national one, both in spatial and institutional terms. Moreover, several scholars have integrated regime theory with other theoretical approaches – namely regulation theory – thus effectively overcoming the localist character of earlier formulations and allowing the regime framework to reach a position of synthesis in the structure and agency debate<sup>15</sup> (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Hankins, 2015; Lauria, 1997 and 1999; Jessop, 1997; Jessop et al., 1999; Painter, 1997). Stone himself has reconsidered his original work several times to respond to criticism (Stone, 2001, 2005 and 2013), clarifying the relationship between the agency of local actors and the structural dynamics of higher levels.

Therefore, urban regime theory can still be an extremely useful analytical tool because it combines empirical character – which allows for a fine-grained analysis of local processes – and theoretical broad outlook – which allows the integration of structural dynamics such as capital accumulation, globalization, and financialization.

### **6.3.1.2 Urban regimes and inequality**

The specific 'social ecologies' (Molotch and Vicari, 1988) among local entrepreneurs, national and international capital, political and institutional actors, and the perception of public opinion influence the formation and the type of regime, which in turn have real consequences for how cities develop and people live, as they affect patterns of urban inequality, access to opportunities and material deprivation. This can be discussed from three main points of view.

First of all, the interaction between local agency and structural forces determines structural inequalities and the possibility and constraints for tackling them. Externally imposed economic and ideological structures, such as neoliberalism and globalization, influence the behaviour of local actors. Neoliberalism promotes a strong bias towards the perpetuation of inequality, as it favours short-term efficiency over equality. Under these terms, governance arrangements might award special prominence to powerful private actors, such as business, and exclude the wellbeing of weaker ones, such as minorities or low-income groups, from policy consideration (Stone, 2002). Moreover, globalization weakens the ties of companies with specific places (see

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<sup>15</sup> Debate over what exerts more influence over urban politics, whether it is structural factors – macroscale socio-economic dynamics – or human agency – the decisions made by local actors. For a deeper discussion of structure and agency see Jessop, 1997; Ward, 1996; Cox, 1993.

Pierre, 2014), in turn weakening the contractual power of labour and local governments in the face of global capital, thus exacerbating dynamics of precarity.

Secondly, the interaction among different levels of government determines the degree of autonomy of cities and their room for action in specific policy areas. Stoker and Mossberger (1994) point out how regimes are not confined to the strictly local environment, but they exist within a broader regional or national one, both in spatial and institutional terms. Regime boundaries do not necessarily coincide with municipal boundaries. Indeed, access to non-local resources can improve the capacity of local coalitions; while non-local forces can limit or influence the direction of regimes (Harding, 1994). For these reasons, regime analysis needs to be framed within governmental and political hierarchy. Keating (1991: 66) states that 'the wider political context is critical in determining the terms of the relationship. The central state can be oppressive, or it can be a resource allowing localities to escape other forms of dependence. (...) This, in turn, depends on the weight of local elites in the national political system and their ability to forge coalitions to extract resources on their own terms'. It appears clear that the way local elites manage their relationship with higher levels of government and the wider political environment is crucial to the success of a coalition. While cities must operate within the constraints established by larger political and market forces, they can also transform themselves by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by that very context.

Finally, the power relations at the local level among governmental and non-governmental actors, the way in which they negotiate their respective interests, as well as the type of actors and the amount and type of resources they can mobilize determine the nature and the agenda of the urban regime. There is in the literature a vast collection of regime typologies (see Clark, 2001 for an overview). While they all differ in the account of the empirical cases, they all substantially fall under three main typologies (Clark, 2001; Stone, 2002; Blanco, 2015): maintenance, development or progressive regimes. Maintenance regimes focus on the routine administration of city government and therefore need fewer resources from non-governmental actors. The goal of development regimes is to increase economic growth and expansion, which requires significant resources. As a result, they usually involve a coalition between local political and economic elites. In progressive regimes the strategy of economic development tends to be one of redistribution, and it focuses on measures such as environmental protection, affordable housing, inclusive labour policies, anti-poverty programs, neighbourhood revitalization in economically depressed areas, investment in job training and education, involvement of community groups and citizen participation.

According to the type of regime issues of urban inequality are higher or lower in the agenda. However, not all regimes are equally likely to occur (Stone, 1993). Indeed, the 'iron law' of regime theory is that in order for governing arrangements to be viable, the governing coalition 'must be able to mobilize resources commensurate with its main policy agenda' (Stoker, 1998: 61.; Stone, 1993: 21.). Resources thus shape feasibility, and it is easiest to build an agenda around purposes that have urgency to actors who are resource rich. Each participant's capacity to mobilize resources determines its relative importance in the internal hierarchy of the coalition.

The type of resource changes according to the nature of the actor and to the coalition's agenda: it can be money, expertise, democratic support, land, law or other resources relevant to the policy agenda (Lambelet, 2017). It is therefore easy to understand why development regimes are more likely to occur than any other type<sup>16</sup>. Businesses see economic development as a top priority and can mobilize money and expertise, while local governments are very concerned with local economic growth and employment opportunities; thus, they are willing to promote cooperation with businesses on these grounds and to mobilize their regulatory power. Progressive regimes on the other hand, are more difficult to find as their agenda revolves around 'wicked issues'. Indeed, tackling social exclusion and environmental problems holds promise of results only over the long run; thus, it is difficult to make them a priority in the agenda of coalitions, as these issues are not usually attractive to powerful actors. This is especially true of social exclusion and socio-economic inequalities, as the disadvantaged populations that experience these issues most directly do not have many resources to mobilize (Stone, 2002 and 2005).

However, it is important to note that these problems can be made attractive to powerful and resource rich actors. Political factions, NGOs and communities interested in increasing the relative importance of 'wicked issues' on the coalition's agenda can do so by framing them as congruent with the goal of promoting a favourable climate for business and economic growth (Stone, 2002). Discourse is indeed a powerful tool for regime maintenance and agenda-setting (Jonas and Wilson, 1999; Lamour, 2017), as is the mobilization of democratic support – one of the resources that 'weaker' actors can leverage (Jones-Correa and Wong, 2014; Blanco, 2015). As Stone affirms (2002 p 10.): 'In order to be attractive as a place for investment, a city needs to score well on liveability, and such problems as environmental deterioration and concentrations of poverty detract from liveability. Moreover, disaffected youth and an inadequately educated workforce are not attractors of business investment, and they do nothing to anchor existing businesses in the area. Ignoring these issues has consequences, even if indirect'. Thus, if these issues can be framed as social investment, this increases the likelihood that both local governments and business sectors would have a stake in putting them on the strategic agenda of the coalition. While city-wide progressive regimes are infrequent due to their inherent nature, progressive coalitions can be built in at least some particular policy areas (Jones-Correa and Wong, 2014; Blanco, 2015). Moreover, they can act as a counterweight to development regimes or they can press maintenance regimes for change. This is easier in places where neighbourhood organizations and citizen activism are part of the city's permanent institutional landscape, as citizen participation structures are likely to mitigate calls for unrestricted growth (Jones-Correa and Wong, 2014). In order to address the problems of social exclusion it is necessary to enhance social participation of disadvantaged groups and communities to decision making. How this can be done is a matter

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<sup>16</sup> In this respect, the role of context in shaping regimes is especially clear. While since the 'neoliberal turn' of the late 1970s/'80s, progressive regimes are more difficult to develop and be sustained, it has to be noted that, prior to that, political and economic contexts were more favourable to regimes with more progressive agendas e.g., development of welfare regimes, mass construction of housing.

of debate, but it is important that socioeconomically vulnerable groups are put in a position to contribute to the locality's strategic agenda and take part in its governing coalition (Stone, 2002).

### 6.3.2 Just cities

In the latest decades, a variety of expectations have been placed upon cities, underpinning significant efforts to make them inclusive, healthy, resilient, green, sustainable, and smart, among other things (Griffin et al., 2015). The ambitious dimension of these goals is apparent when we remember that cities went through many diverse transformations over time, leading to configurations that were to a large extent unplanned.

One major source of transformation dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when massive migration flows from rural to urban areas began to take shape, disembedding a large portion of people from their original communities and family networks as they responded to the labour needs resulting from an increasing capital investment in industrialisation (Dubert and Gourdon, 2017).

Much has changed since then, but inequalities, poverty and public health – to mention only some of the issues associated with industrial cities since the outset – remain a matter of concern. Sassen (2007) shows that contemporary cities have a dual nature, with particular segments of people and production incorporated in the global networks of the modern and technological economy while other segments are excluded from it.

Old inequalities based on class, ethnicity and gender coexist with new impulses for discrimination and segregation associated with neoliberal policy-making, experienced first-hand by residents in neighbourhoods characterised by exclusion and stigma (Wacquant, 2008).

This is certainly a complex phenomenon, as a wide range of factors – including socio-economic patterns, discrimination, access to housing, social networks and institutional frameworks, among others – contribute to explain and reproduce urban poverty and social exclusion (Reardon and Dymén, 2015).

The connections between the organisation of urban space and social justice have been paid attention by social scientists for a long time. French sociologist Lefèbvre (1968) defended the liberation of cities from the overbearing logics of capitalism in economic and social relations, arguing that the urban space was increasingly commercialised and based on an exchange value that excluded all those without the capacity to engage in such exchange. According to Lefèbvre, cities should count on the participation of all residents in the decisions that directly affected their lives and in the creation of new urban spaces, regardless of their national citizenship (Deneulin, 2014).

Contrary to what was common up until the 1960s, in the definition of Lefèbvre space is constituted by social relations rather than defined by its demographic, physical and territorial characteristics. Thus it ceases to be only a container for buildings, people and production and becomes a means of relations of production and reproduction, contributing to inequality and

to the emergence of injustice (Fainstein, 2014). Lefèbvre was concerned that the objective of urban planners was slowly becoming the accumulation of capital, thus subjecting the urban space to the logic of profit. This would lead to a neglect of people and their livelihoods, as well as of their opportunities for political participation and cultural fruition (Deneulin, 2014).

John Rawls also develops a theory of justice in his important book of 1971, *Theory of Justice*, where he argued that the allocation of assets in a society should be governed by the '*principle of difference*', in which policies that benefit the situation of the most wealthy when 'doing it is an advantage for the less fortunate' (Rawls, 1971, cit. in Fainstein, 2014). Rawls emphasised the values of freedom and equality and defended that everyone had an equal right to basic freedoms (Marcuse et al., 2009).

David Harvey, author of *Social Justice and the City* (1973), also explores the relationship between space, social justice and urbanism. For Harvey, the question to be taken into account is how spatial relations reinforce injustice based on unequal power relations originating from the interaction between the State, economic property and residents. Harvey argues that justice requires a transformation, in the first instance, of the processes that gave rise to urban inequality, i.e., the asymmetries of economic and political power anchored in the practices of capital accumulation.

During the 1990s, the issue of justice gained further prominence in the discussion of urban planning. Iris Marion Young, in her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990), addresses in particular the issue of justice within the city. According to this author, the definition of justice is based on the absence of forms of domination such as exploitation, marginalization, impotence, imperialism and violence (Fainstein, 2014).

Fainstein's conception of a just city differs from the others in that it does not only criticize the existing system but also presents planners and policy-makers with a set of strategies and policies that may be deployed to achieve fairer results. To this end, the author presents three components that must be guaranteed for the existence of a fair city: diversity, equity and democracy (Fainstein, 2010).

Diversity implies social inclusion and a serious concern for the lives and values of all residents. The operationalization of diversity involves urban policies ensuring that people are not obliged to change places against their will, the existence of ample spaces that allow the interaction between people, zoning is inclusive, the boundaries between districts remain permeable, providing widely accessible and varied public space and mixed land uses.

Equity means that the distribution of material and nonmaterial benefits derived from public policy should not favour those in a privileged position at the start. It requires affordable housing and transport, minimal displacement of populations, and instruments of economic development to support small businesses, among other things. Finally, with regard to democracy, Fainstein warns that democratic processes alone will not necessarily lead to fair results.

For Fainstein, policies to support democracy include the participation of representatives in decision-making processes and consultation with the local population regarding areas that are going to be the subject of restructuring (Fainstein, 2010 in Steil and Connolly, 2017). However, *'if the aim is justice, the purpose of inclusion in decision-making is to have interests fairly represented, not to value participation in and of itself. This further value may well underlie a vision of the good city, but it is not necessary for my definition of the just city'* (Fainstein, 2014).

While these three principles are required in just cities, Fainstein (2014) further observes that sometimes there may be tension and contradictions between them, as well as between the different parties involved, possibly leading to trade-off situations. In this sense, when planning, the possibility potential and inevitable tensions between the different principles must be taken into account, together with the effort made to put justice components into practice. Fainstein further considers that, should the situation arise, equity should prevail as she considers the concept to play a more central and fundamental role with regard to the concept of the just city than democracy and diversity.

In mitigating problems and supporting solutions, a major role is played by institutions at several levels of governance: governments, municipalities, schools and NGOs, among others. Based on an empirical study in Stockholm, Reardon and Dymén (2015) underscore the positive difference that can result when local actors shift from a traditional paradigm of 'integration' into a solid intercultural strategy favouring people's participation, inter-ethnic dialogue and cultural activities.

The importance of studying and understanding urban problems to tackle them in an efficient manners seems consensual today. Achieving a just city requires an effort to realise the transformative potential of urban theory and cannot do without a detailed examination of everyday life, so that coherent frameworks for action and deliberation can be implemented (Marcuse et al., 2009).

The participation of residents in matters that directly affect them is still a major challenge. In this sense, the right to the city (slogan coined by Lefebvre in 1968 in his book *Le Droit à la ville*) presupposes more than the mere fulfilment of human rights in the city, which includes the right to live in a dignified environment, with access to public services, infrastructure, employment and education opportunities: it also includes the residents' right to shape the city in a certain way (Deneulin, 2014).

Justin Steil and James Connolly (2017) state that the attention given to justice as a criterion for evaluating urban policies is now more important than ever, given that inequality between countries continues to increase, evictions and displacements multiply, and poverty becomes increasingly concentrated. *'The Just City framework seeks to answer what definitions of justice should prevail and what qualities comprise a just city'* (Steil and Connolly, 2017). It seeks to put cities on the path of structural change in order to ensure that greater equity, greater democracy and an appreciation of difference exists in urban environments. They state that

even if it is not possible to reach the fair city, with a planning process based on these values, it is possible to achieve a more just one (Steil and Connolly, 2017).

A just city presupposes that all people can exercise their rights and have their fundamental freedoms guaranteed regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, religion and economic condition, among other factors. To do this, it is necessary to create conditions of individual well-being, based on principles such as dignity, equity and social justice, with special attention to those in situations of vulnerability such as people with disabilities, migrants, homeless people or people in a situation of poverty. Public authorities have a decisive role in guaranteeing these rights. The defined public interest is collectively prioritised in order to guarantee a socially fair and environmentally balanced use of the territory (Griffin et al., 2015).

In a just city, residents participate in decision-making moments at the highest level of formulation and implementation at the level of public policies, as well as in planning, formulation of public budget and control of urban processes. This may include, for example, the participatory budget, audits to citizens, neighbourhood and community commissions, public hearings or participatory decision-making councils (Griffin et al., 2015).

In this regard, the need for 'decentralization in relation to the principle of subsidiarity' was mentioned. This principle is based on the fact that matters and political decisions related to a given territory must be dealt with by the local authority, not by the central authority. According to Fainstein (2014), local policies may or may not improve people's lives, especially decisions regarding housing or transport, for example, which may affect peoples' quality of life. The way in which these decisions correspond or not to the needs of the most disadvantaged people is the result of local political pressures and the ways in which problems are framed. However, there are still barriers between people and decisions made, which are reinforced by government policies and programs. 'The hope underlying the discussion of the just city is that it can change the rhetoric around urban policy from a single-minded focus on competitiveness to a discourse about justice' (Fainstein, 2014).

A just city must encourage and support the social production of habitat, as well as the development of solidarity in economic activities, through the recovery and reinforcement of residents' productive capacity, namely of low-income and marginalised sectors. Social coexistence through recovery is to be reinforced, expanding the improvement of public spaces and preventing spaces from being abandoned or privatised as often envisaged by neoliberal policies (Griffin et al., 2015).

While not strictly associated with the debate on just cities, two additional contributions from the literature may be of interest to the following stages of the project. One pertains to the concept of global cities developed by Sassen (2007), especially the idea that global cities assume a particular position in the new transnational geography as they are a strategic setting for new forms and scales of inequality, as well as a strategic setting for political action by both privileged and underprivileged groups.

Concerning empirical research, Sassen stresses the benefits of qualitative methods to identify the daily work and politics involved in the production and maintenance of the city. The details of particular places can be relevant as they allow us 'to recover the concrete, localized processes through which globalization takes shape and to argue that much of the multiculturalism in large cities is as much a part of globalization as is international finance. [...] Thus, the empirical details of these social forms are also a window into the features of the current globalization phase' (Sassen, 2007: 98-9.).

The second note we would like to add refers in particular to the connection between ethnic diversity in cities and racism. A study about attitudes to immigration in the United Kingdom discusses the hypotheses of ethnic diversity inducing either positive views on diversity (contact theory) or negative views on diversity (threat theory), as well as the potential effects of daily local dynamics and residential segregation (Kaufmann and Harris, 2015; see also Andersson et al 2017.).

In this regard, it should be mentioned the concept of social capital, Robert Putnam's approach, which states that the 'core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value' (Putnam, 2000). Social capital is understood as social ties, connections, networks, and norms from which individuals and collectives benefit, while being both a private and a public good. As this author mentions, 'where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, neighbourhoods, and even nations prosper' (Putnam, 2000).

In this approach, Putnam also distinguishes between two types of social capital, bridging and bonding. Bridging social capital is related to relationships amongst people across a cleavage that typically divides society such as race, class, religion. Occuring when members of one group connect with members of other groups to seek access or support or to gain information, it is a 'bridge' between communities, villages, groups, or organizations.

Bonding social capital is described as bonds and connections within a group, community, village characterized by high levels of similarity such as demographic characteristics, attitudes or resources. Within a village, it is expected, that people feel a sense of belonging. It is described as the strong relationships that develop between people of similar background and interests, homogenous groups, usually including family and friends, who provide material and emotional support, and are more inward-looking and protective.

Putnam also refers to bonding social capital as having negative effects for society on the whole but potentially having positive effects for the members belonging to this closed social group or network. Conversely, bridging social capital, making contacts between different groups or networks is positive. However, bonding and bridging are not 'either-or' categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but rather 'more-or-less' dimensions along which it is possible compare different forms of social capital (Putnam, 2000). In different situations, many groups or individuals simultaneously bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others.

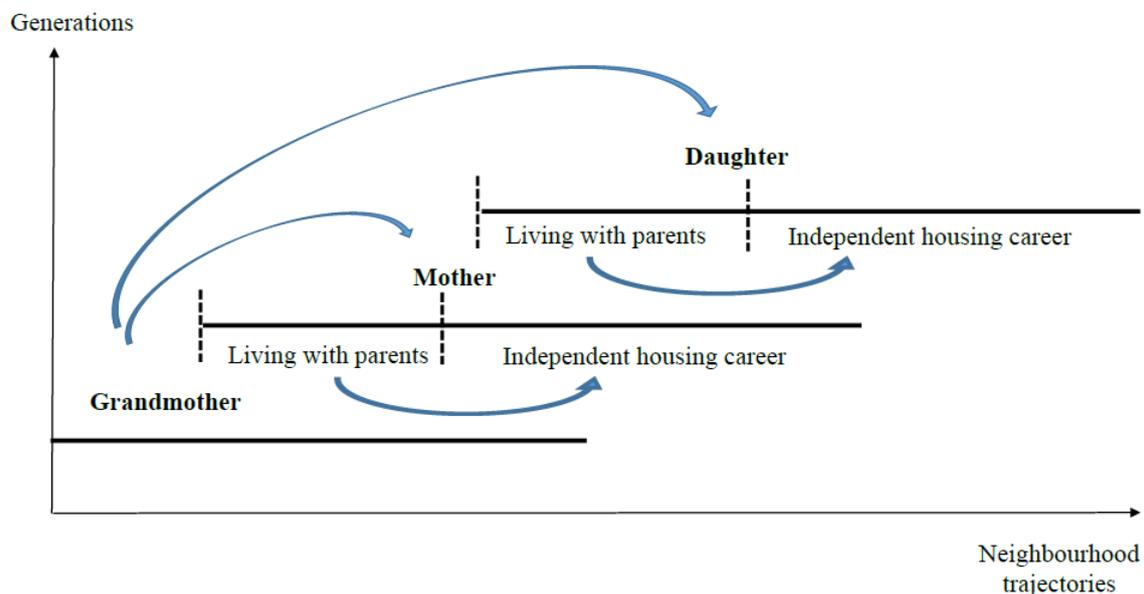
Considering that equality is central in the scholarly debate about just cities and significant numbers of ethnic minorities individuals reside in at least some of the functional urban areas under, it will be interesting to examine how discourse, behaviours and experiences on the ground relate to positive or negative views on diversity.

### **6.3.3 Vicious circles of segregation**

Segregation is an ongoing issue in urban areas in Europe. This is most often perceived in terms of residential segregation, whereby people with different sociodemographic characteristics, such as ethnicity, age and socioeconomic status, become spatially concentrated in different areas of the city. As proximity is a factor in what school children attend, to what workplaces people are willing to commute and in what leisure activities people participate, residential segregation can result in segregation in education, the labour market and leisure activities. Since all these examples of segregation can affect young people, they will each be discussed in this section.

A key process in maintaining poverty, inequality and segregation is the intergenerational transmission of context. An individual tends to inherit the income level, labour market position and socioeconomic status of both their parents and the neighbourhood in which they grow up (Hedman et al., 2015; van Ham et al., 2014; Sharkey, 2008; Vartanian et al., 2007; see Figure 7). This has significant implications when the concentration of poverty and affluence are considered. Individuals who grow up in low-income households in a poverty-concentrated neighbourhood are much more likely to live in a poverty-concentrated neighbourhood than those that grow up in more mixed-income neighbourhoods (Toft, 2017; van Ham et al., 2014; Sharkey, 2008). Similarly, at the other end of the wealth scale, individuals who grow up in a high-income household in an affluent neighbourhood are more likely to live in such a neighbourhood later in life than those who grew up in a more mixed-income neighbourhood. Both poverty and affluence are perpetuated between each generation, resulting in 'vicious circles of segregation' (Nieuwenhuis et al., 2020; van Ham et al., 2017; see Figure 8).

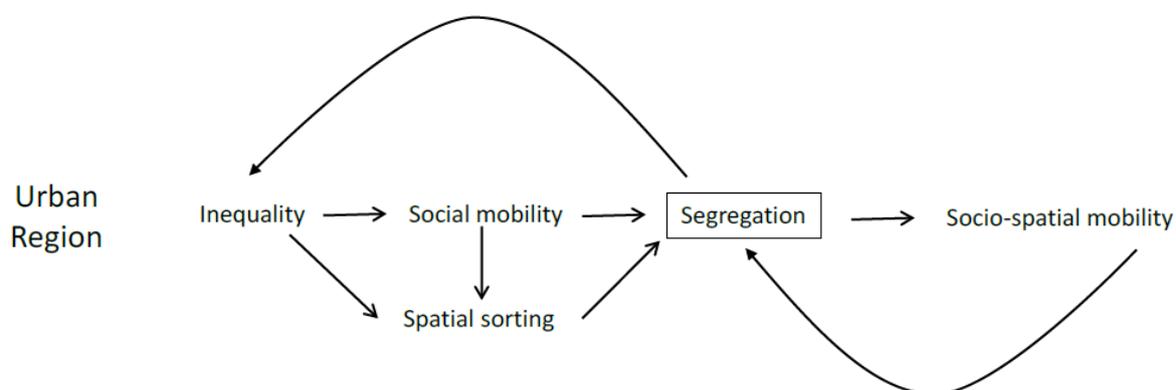
Figure 7. Intergenerational transmission of segregation. Source: Hedman et al. (2017).



As well as income, occupation and socioeconomic status, the vicious circles of segregation also act to maintain and reinforce ethnic segregation. An individual whose parents lived in a minority-ethnicity-concentrated neighbourhood is more likely to reside in a minority-ethnicity-concentrated neighbourhood when they are older (Sharkey, 2008; Dawkins, 2005). Hence, ethnic as well as socioeconomic segregation can perpetuate across generations.

Furthermore, socioeconomic and ethnic segregation interact within the vicious circles of segregation. This has resulted in the formation of neighbourhoods with high concentrations of both poverty and minority ethnicities (Costa and de Valk, 2018; Lichter et al., 2012; Massey and Fisher, 2000; Massey, 1990). For individuals who grew up in a poverty-concentrated neighbourhood, those with minority ethnicity backgrounds were more likely to move into a poverty concentrated neighbourhood when they stopped living with their parents compared to the general population (van Ham et al., 2014). Also, they tended to spend a greater proportion of their neighbourhood history in neighbourhoods where poverty was concentrated. It appears that poor minority ethnicity individuals living in poverty- and minority-ethnicity-concentrated districts are especially disadvantaged due to the combination of reduced mobility from socioeconomic segregation and reduced mobility from ethnic segregation (Aldén et al., 2015; Bolt and van Kempen, 2010; Bolt et al., 2008).

Figure 8. Vicious circles of segregation at the urban region level. Source: van Ham et al. (2018).



There are several important factors that sustain the vicious circle of segregation. Furthermore, each of these factors operates in both spatial and temporal dimensions, meaning that their influence changes depending on the particular location in space and time. This has led to analysing people’s experiences of segregation and poverty over their life course rather than at specific points in time (for further information, see Section 7.2). As a result, trajectories of segregation and poverty can be identified. When both time and space are considered, a person’s life can be conceived as consisting of several ‘domains’ (van Ham and Tammaru, 2016). These domains are the particular contexts a person experiences at a particular place at a particular time. Examples of domains are the home, the neighbourhood (see more about neighbourhoods and neighbourhood effects in 5.3.4), schools and other places of education, workplaces, leisure activities, places of worship and travel. An individual builds relationships in each domain forming complex social networks. These social networks can provide opportunities for employment and housing and can influence decisions and outcomes through the norms and expectations of those in the networks. Domains can also interact with each other. For example, the neighbourhood frequently interacts with the school or education domains as school allocation is often based on catchment areas. The school or education domains affect the workplace domain as the qualifications, skills and knowledge obtained in education are a significant factor in determining where someone works later in life. As a result, characteristics of the neighbourhood domain, such as segregation, can be replicated in other domains, such as the student composition of a school or the employees at a workplace. An individual could potentially encounter high levels of segregation across many or all of the domains they experience, reinforcing the vicious circles of segregation. On the other hand, an individual may live in a segregated neighbourhood but attend other domains that are integrated, which may potentially diversify social networks, broaden opportunities and mitigate the vicious circles.

Education domains such as schools have been shown to mediate the effect of the vicious circles of segregation. One way in which schools can influence the vicious circles in a positive

way is through the composition of the student body. Students from minority-ethnicity-concentration neighbourhoods who attend schools with a majority of students from a majority-ethnicity background have been found to be more likely to live in majority-ethnicity neighbourhoods later in life than those who attend schools with most students from minority-ethnicity backgrounds (Goldsmith, 2016, 2010; Wells and Crain, 1994; Braddock, 1980). It has been suggested that this may be because those students who attend majority-ethnicity schools achieve higher attainment and obtain employment that enables them to afford to live in more desirable, more integrated neighbourhoods or that the integrated student body may mean they are more comfortable interacting in majority population settings. This in turn may reduce psychological barriers to moving to majority-ethnicity districts and diversify their social networks, increasing their access to employment and housing opportunities. In addition to school composition, access to educational opportunities can affect the vicious circles of segregation. Socioeconomic status can impact on school attainment, as parents from high-income and high-socioeconomic status households can invest greater resources into their children's education, for example, by employing private tutoring or enrolling in elite, fee-paying private schools (Erikson, 2016; Schmidt et al., 2015; Aakvik et al., 2005). Also, the student composition component interacts, as schools that have students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds or are located in affluent neighbourhoods tend to draw in more resources and attract the best teachers. These additional resources mean that children living in the most affluent neighbourhoods tend to achieve higher educational attainment. Their grades tend to be better and they are more likely to attend higher education.

Education policies can mediate the impact of the school or education domains, as well as the influence of the neighbourhood domain on the education domains. Widening access to high-quality education to students from all backgrounds can reduce the neighbourhood effect on future outcomes, as students from low-income households and neighbourhoods receive comparatively higher resources and the disparity in resources invested in education between the most and least wealthy is reduced (Rodríguez-Pose and Tselios, 2009). Tracking or streaming policies, whereby students are assessed and allocated to different educational tracks or streams, can also affect the school domain's role in the vicious circles of segregation (van de Werfhorst, 2018; Felouzis and Charmillot, 2013; van Houtte and Stevens, 2009). Tracking and streaming policies usually sort students into academic and vocational tracks, with different careers and opportunities associated with each one. The timing at which tracking begins is important. The earlier the divergence into different tracks, the more pronounced the differences in associated outcomes. Furthermore, segregation interacts with tracking programmes. In countries where early separation of students into different educational tracks occurs, such as Germany, the negative effects of segregation are significantly higher than in countries with more open educational systems (Baysu and de Valk, 2012). As school composition influences the probability a minority-ethnicity student will live in a more integrated neighbourhood later in life, policies regarding the allocation of school places are important. For example, the use of catchment areas can affect the student composition of a school (Bernelius and Vilkkama, 2019; Oberti and Savina, 2019). Small catchment areas increase

the likelihood the student body of a school will be similar to the neighbourhood composition, which, if segregation is present, can reinforce that segregation. The use of academic selection, tracking and entrance exams affects school composition, as the elite, selective schools tend to acquire students from high-socioeconomic backgrounds, as those households are able devote more resources to preparing for academic tests, such as private tutoring, increasing their chances of obtaining a place.

Housing policies have a significant role in the vicious circles of segregation. Since space is a key component of segregation, where people choose to live and how housing is allocated strongly influence segregation. The typology of housing is important, as different households at different stages in their life courses require different housing types and people from different backgrounds have different preferences (Abramsson, 2008; Lee et al., 2007; Clark and Huang, 2003). For example, the housing needs of a single young professional differ to those of a young family, which in turn are different to those of a retired couple. How different housing types are distributed throughout a city affects where different people choose to live. One city may have a city centre that primarily contains apartments and suburbs that contain single-family houses and other suburbs with many more bungalows. Here, it would be expected that young professionals would tend to live in the city centre, while young families and the retired would occupy the suburbs. Another city may have a more even spread of housing types, with fewer clusters of people with similar sociodemographic profiles. Housing typologies also affect affordability. Larger properties in the most desirable locations will attract the highest property prices, while smaller properties in the least desirable neighbourhoods will be the least expensive. Hence, policies on what sort of housing goes where have a significant impact on where particular people live, which can reinforce or mitigate the vicious circles of segregation.

Similarly, housing tenure policies have a great effect on where people choose to live (Andersen et al., 2016; van Ham and Manley, 2009; Arbaçi, 2007; Burrows, 1999). As well as different types and locations of properties, people with different incomes can afford different tenures. Low-income households tend to occupy housing in the social-rented sector; housing that is either owned by the government, a municipality or a housing association and rented out at below the market rate. High-income households, especially families and those retired, may prefer the owner-occupied sector. Younger households, especially single-person households, have a tendency to enter the private-rented sector, as they are usually less settled in terms of employment and family. Two-person households are more likely to own a house than single-person households as they are usually dual-income households and, therefore, have more financial resources available. The quantity and location of different-tenured housing affects where people live. For example, the construction of large, social or public housing estates often results in the concentration of poverty and minority ethnicities in such estates, as the poorest cannot afford to live anywhere else and minority ethnicity households are disproportionately more likely to be poor. Similarly, neighbourhoods with large numbers of privately rented properties can undergo processes such as 'studentification' or gentrification. Meanwhile, a city with an even distribution of tenures may have lower levels of segregation. Decisions regarding

where different-tenured housing is constructed, therefore, can have a large impact on where different people are able to live. Another policy that can affect people's housing choices is public choice letting in social housing. This is where those on social housing waiting lists are given choice over where they live. However, this has led to those with the most urgent housing needs and, therefore, least ability to decline a property to wait for a better one living in the worst-quality social housing, while those with less urgent needs can afford to wait for a higher-quality dwelling in a more desirable area (Manley and van Ham, 2011). The result is that the poorest households become concentrated in the neighbourhoods with the worst-quality social housing, a process known as 'residualisation' (Burrows, 1999). Policies that enable tenants to purchase social houses, such as the 'Right to Buy' policy enacted in the United Kingdom (UK), can achieve similar residualisation and segregation effects, as such policies deplete the social housing stock since the highest quality social houses are usually preferred for purchase (Andersson and Turner, 2014; Pearce and Vine, 2014). Furthermore, if there is a high enough reduction in the social housing stock, some low-income households are forced to enter the private rental market, where they are only able to afford the cheapest, lowest-quality properties. Hence, the poorest again become concentrated in neighbourhoods with the worst housing. As has been demonstrated, the vicious circles of segregation can be influenced by housing tenure policies.

Workplaces and the labour market frequently exhibit segregation. Different sociodemographic groups have been found to cluster in particular industrial sectors and at different levels in the labour market. Different industrial sectors and niches can be segmented according to ethnicity, socioeconomic background, level of education, gender and migration status. For example, many sectors are significantly segmented according to gender (Hegewisch and Hartmann, 2014; Kreimer, 2004) and ethnicity (Catney and Sabater, 2015; Lindemann, 2011). Immigrant workers also tend to work in segmented industries, as they usually enter the labour market at a lower level relative to natives (Simón et al., 2014; Åslund and Skans, 2010) and have higher rates of exclusion from the labour market (Fullin, 2011; Kogan, 2011). The workplace can, however, also mediate residential segregation as workplaces can be less segregated than neighbourhoods. For example, Hall et al. (2019) found that workplaces tended to be less ethnically segregated than neighbourhoods and Pendakur et al. (2015) found no link between immigrant or co-ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood and the probability of working in an ethnically-segregated workplace. Also, exposure to the native population at work was found to be more significant than exposure in the neighbourhood for predicting immigrant earnings (Tammaru et al., 2010). The labour market allows people to convert educational attainment into an improvement in socioeconomic status and, therefore, neighbourhood environment. Labour market success can provide a way to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of context and, therefore, the vicious circles of segregation.

Segregation also manifests in the leisure domain. Different sociodemographic groups have tendencies to participate in different leisure activities. This can be the result of income and time constraints (Spinney and Millward, 2010) or social class perceptions (Bourdieu, 1984). Furthermore, some sociodemographic groups participate in the same activities but form their

own clubs and organisations in which to meet and undertake the activity. The result is that activity patterns differ substantially between different groups in terms of both time and space (Silm and Ahas, 2014; Wang and Chai, 2012). Even when activity patterns during leisure time are similar between ethnicities, interaction is infrequent as they choose to visit different activity sites (Kukk et al., 2018; Kamenik et al., 2015). Residential segregation has a strong influence over segregation in leisure activities, as many people choose to participate in activities close to their home (Kukk et al., 2018). Leisure activities can also provide opportunities for individuals to interact and socialise with people from outside their neighbourhood and workplace networks. However, this is difficult as many people choose to take part in leisure activities with individuals and groups from those established social networks.

#### 6.3.4 Geography of opportunity

As inequality levels vary geographically, space can be considered a key dimension of socioeconomic inequality. There is a long tradition of research on how geographic inequalities reflect and contribute to inequalities across individuals (e.g. Galster and Sharkey, 2017; Wilson, 1987). In the centre of this tradition are neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood effects is a sub-concept under *contextual effects*, i.e. the idea that social opportunities and outcomes are influenced by the country, region and neighbourhood one live in. Most systematic research has focused on the role of neighbourhood and neighbours but there are important contributions also addressing regional contextual differences (see for instance Fielding (1992)). The literature on neighbourhood effects argues that the neighbourhoods where people live to some extent determine their outcomes in various spheres of life (e.g., employment, education, and income) over and above their individual characteristics and family background (which of course also affect life opportunities).

As noted above, neighbourhoods are positioned within a larger opportunity structure, where other geographical scales also affect and shape individuals' lives. The notion of *geography of opportunity* was first introduced by Galster and Killen (1995), but in the latest overview, Galster and Sharkey (2017) described it as the *spatial opportunity structure*. Elements of the spatial opportunity structure that influence individuals' socioeconomic status are: labour, housing, and financial markets; criminal justice, education, health, transportation, and social service systems; the natural and built environments; public and private institutional resources and services; social networks; forces of socialization and social control; and local political systems (Galster and Sharkey, 2017: 7). The geographical levels at which these elements operate depend on the constitutional and legislative setting of a specific country and place. Galster and Sharkey (2017) bring out at least three spatial scales: *on neighbourhood level* variations in safety, natural environment, social control, peer groups, social networks, institutions, and job accessibility operate; *across local political jurisdictions* operate education, health, recreation and safety programs; and *on metropolitan level* specific housing and labour market conditions affect individuals' opportunities in life. Besides these three, there is also the national level, at which laws, policies, and regulations are determined that affect local decisions and individual outcomes (see the discussion of Esping Andersen (1990) in 5.1.1). Moreover, higher supra-

national level (i.e. EU) policies and global processes and structures (e.g., capitalism, global inequality, and international migration flows) affect laws, patterns, and processes at lower spatial scales, all the way to the neighbourhood level (Musterd, 2005).

Galster (2012) has grouped the various ways the residential neighbourhood could affect people's lives into four broad categories: *social-interactive*, *environmental*, *geographical*, and *institutional mechanisms*. The first category refers to social processes in the neighbourhood. For example, socialization effects relate to the social learning of certain skills and behaviours through following role models and other social exemplars. Another important social-interactive mechanism is social networks, because information, knowledge, and resources are transmitted through them. The social-interactive mechanisms are considered to be at the core of the neighbourhood effects argument (van Ham et al., 2012), because social isolation in concentrations of disadvantage could cut people off from resources and information (the positive role models and valuable contacts, i.e. bridging social capital) that could improve their situations and increase their life opportunities (Wilson 1987). Galster's second category is environmental mechanisms, which include physical surroundings, exposure to violence, and toxins. The mechanisms in the third category – geographical mechanisms – might produce specific local outcomes because of a neighbourhood's location and position relative to larger political and economic forces through, for example, spatial mismatch (some neighbourhoods might have poor access to suitable job opportunities) and proximity to public services. The fourth category is institutional mechanisms, including stigmatization, access to and quality of local services, and market actors (e.g., presence of liquor stores, fast food restaurants, or fresh food markets could encourage or discourage certain behaviours). Negative images or reputations of a neighbourhood (i.e., stigmatization) can have negative impacts on all spheres of its residents' lives (see, e.g., Wacquant, 2008).

Neighbourhood effects has a long tradition in American academia (Bayer et al., 2008; Chetty et al., 2018; Sharkey, 2008; Wilson, 1987, etc.) but it has also reached European researchers during the last decades (Andersson et al., 2019; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Damm, 2009; Damm and Dustmann, 2014; Edin et al., 2003; Galster et al., 2014; Musterd et al., 2012, 2019; van Ham et al., 2014, etc.). Neighbourhood effects seem to be smaller in Europe than in the U.S.A., which is to be expected since European countries have more developed welfare policies, social security systems, governmental transfers of resources, and municipal support, etc. (Urban, 2009).

Recently, researchers have started to emphasize how space acts not only as a foundation of inequality but also plays a vital role in reproducing *intergenerational inequality* (see more under 6.3). Those who have a better starting point in life can situate themselves in a better opportunity structure and by that continue enhancing their prospects but also provide their offspring with improved chances (Galster and Sharkey, 2017). On the other hand, those who have lower status are typically stuck geographically in less prosperous neighbourhoods and locations (Andersson and Bråmån, 2004; Krysan and Crowder, 2017) and socioeconomically (OECD, 2018), and the lack of opportunities is passed on to their children (Christophers, 2018;

Hochstenbach, 2018). The spatial dimensions play an important role in intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantage, i.e. in intergenerational mobility. For example, the socioeconomic composition of children's neighbourhood is strongly related to the status of their later neighbourhoods (van Ham et al., 2014). Disadvantage based on neighbourhood experiences is inherited and persistent, but for some groups, e.g. ethnic minorities, the disadvantage is more persistent than for others (van Ham et al., 2014).

The idea that variation across neighbourhoods can lead to inequality of opportunities and outcomes for individuals has guided various policies in both the U.S. and Europe. Different social mixing policies have been launched as 'means to breaking up concentrations of poverty and providing neighbourhoods with a middle-class voice' (Bridge et al., 2014: 1133). There have been different means to reach the policy goal of social mix. In the U.S. HOPE IV programme demolished mass housing, dispersed its residents, and built mixed-tenure neighbourhoods where middle-class residents were supposed to resettle. The evidence of outcomes of this programme are at best inconclusive (Manley et al., 2012). Similar examples to achieve social mix through housing mix have also taken place in Europe: e.g. in the Netherlands (van Kempen and Bolt, 2009), in Sweden (Holmqvist and Bergsten, 2009), in France (Rose et al., 2013) and the UK (Rose et al., 2013). Researcher have found that the process of creating more socially mixed neighbourhoods is unlikely to create more opportunities in life for the original residents and only change the composition of the neighbourhood through displacement of its original residents (Manley et al., 2012).

A slightly different example of social mix policies is the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) experiment in the U.S. MTO randomly allocated vouchers to voluntary applicants living in high-poverty neighbourhoods and individuals that were assigned to the experimental group used their vouchers to move to a low-poverty neighbourhood (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Overall, no impact of the MTO is found on adults' economic outcomes, although recently, Chetty et al. (2016) found that for children who moved to a lower-poverty neighbourhood when they were young as a result of the MTO experiment significantly improved their long-term economic outcomes as adults.

Although the emphasis of the discourse is very often on the negative effects of spatial patterns, neighbourhood effects are not necessarily negative and do not exist only in poor neighbourhoods; it is also effective in neighbourhoods with higher or even elite socio-economic status (Musterd and Andersson, 2005). Moreover, concentrations of poverty are not always areas without social, economic or even infrastructural opportunities (Musterd and Murie, 2006). Some researchers have called for reconsidering low-opportunity communities as not only places of inequality but also places of possibility, thus, calling for the usage of a concept *opportunity in geography* (Green, 2015). In Europe, not all areas considered concentrations of poor people and excluded spaces are isolated, abandoned, and without commercial and public infrastructure (Musterd and Murie, 2006). There are neighbourhoods in Europe considered as having concentrations of relative poverty that at the same time are also full of activity and characterized by strong social networks, connected to main

infrastructure, linked to economic centres by public transport, and have good-quality housing (Musterd and Murie 2006).

## 7 Individual level analysis (Micro-level)

### 7.1 Capability approach

#### 7.1.1 Introduction

The Capability Approach (CA) emerged in the 1980s as a new comprehensive multidimensional approach for interpreting and measuring human development, poverty, inequality and well-being. It was a reaction to the strong dominance of welfare economics and utilitarian approaches in poverty and inequality research. The CA argues that these traditional approaches towards poverty and inequality have focused too much on resources (income, wealth) and utility (desire-fulfilment, satisfaction) as indicators of human well-being. According to the CA, such a perspective is incomplete and potentially misleading (Kimhur, 2020). CA scholars argue that individual well-being is dependent on a complex interplay between various factors: objective and subjective, societal and individual, economic and non-economic. In UPLIFT, and particular in the work packages 3 and 4 where individuals constitute the unit of analysis, these interplays have an important role. According to the CA, government policies (social policies, education policies, employment policies) should primarily have an empowering role. They should try to safe-guard and strengthen the capability set of people so that these people can make their own choices and live a meaningful and fulfilled life (Alkire, 2002). Since its introduction, the CA has had a considerable impact on both policy-making and academic research, first in the Global South but increasingly also in the Global North

#### 7.1.2 Basic concepts of the capability approach

The economist-philosopher and Nobel prize laureate Amartya Sen (1985, 1999, 2005) is generally seen as the founding father of the CA. Nevertheless, the approach has been embraced by a great number of other scholars as well (e.g. Nussbaum, 2003, Alkire, 2002, Robeyns, 2006). Different scholars sometimes give a somewhat different interpretation to the various elements of the CA framework (Kimhur, 2020: 4). Therefore, it makes sense to see the CA as a broad theoretical and analytical framework rather than as a specific theory. A schematic overview of this framework is provided in Figure 1.

Of key importance in the CA are the so-called capabilities that a person has. These capabilities are defined as the 'real freedoms to lead the kind of life people have reason to value' (Sen, 1999). The so-called capability set of a person refers to the alternative combinations of so-called functionings that are feasible for this person to achieve. In this respect, functionings can be defined as the 'various things a person may value being or doing' (Kimhur, 2020: 4). Examples of functionings are: being nourished, being employed, having children, being healthy, being happy, being well-housed, having self-respect and being able to take part in the life of the community (Sen, 1999: 75). Capabilities and functionings are closely linked. The functionings show what people actually are (beings) or do (doings), whereas the capabilities refer to the ability to achieve these beings or doings.

Having capabilities implies that a person has the freedom to achieve valuable functionings as an active agent, and not because he/she is coerced to do so (Kimhur, 2020: 4). Therefore, capabilities should be seen as real rights, real freedoms and real opportunities. Which functionings people eventually choose from their capability set depends on their individual preferences. In the CA framework, these preferences constitute the link between the capabilities and the chosen functionings.

The capabilities that people enjoy are strongly dependent on both individual and contextual (structural) factors. First of all, and on an individual level, the so-called resources are of importance. Resources refer to the material aids (income, goods, services) that a person can mobilize in order to live the life that he/she wants to live. Together with the formal legal rights (e.g. the rights enshrined in the constitution) that people enjoy, resources constitute the formal freedoms that people have. The formal freedoms are largely dependent on the context in which a person lives: level of economic development, degree of inequality, availability of constitutional rights (democracy or not?).

Before they feed into the capability set, the formal freedoms are moderated by so-called conversion factors. Conversion factors refers to the fact that different individuals have different abilities to convert material aids and formal rights into valuable opportunities (Kimhur, 2020: 4). Personal and group specific characteristics may result in remarkable interpersonal and intergroup variations in the conversion of resources into the freedom to achieve alternative lives. Individuals do neither have the same need for resources, nor have the same abilities to convert resources into real freedoms (Volkert and Schneider, 2012: 398).

Conversion factors refer to personal characteristics as well as to social circumstances. On a personal level, individual features such as sex, intelligence, social skills and level of (financial) literacy determine to what extent people are able to transform their resources and formal rights into valuable opportunities. For instance, one may expect that a healthy person has more capabilities than a sick or disabled person who is constrained by its health situation (Volkert and Schneider, 2012: 398).

On a social level, social norms and social practices (real rights as opposed to the formal rights that are seen as part of the resources) are relevant conversion factors. Examples of social conversion factors are social norms, discriminating practices, gender roles, societal hierarchies and power relations (Volkert and Schneider, 2012: 398). Just as the personal conversion factors, social conversion factors work out differently for (different groups of) people. For example, gender inequality may be a limiting conversion factor for women, whereas discrimination may limit the conversion possibilities for ethnic minorities. On top of the individual and social conversion factors, Robeyns (2005) considers environmental/geographical factors such as climate or geographic location as a third type of conversion factors.

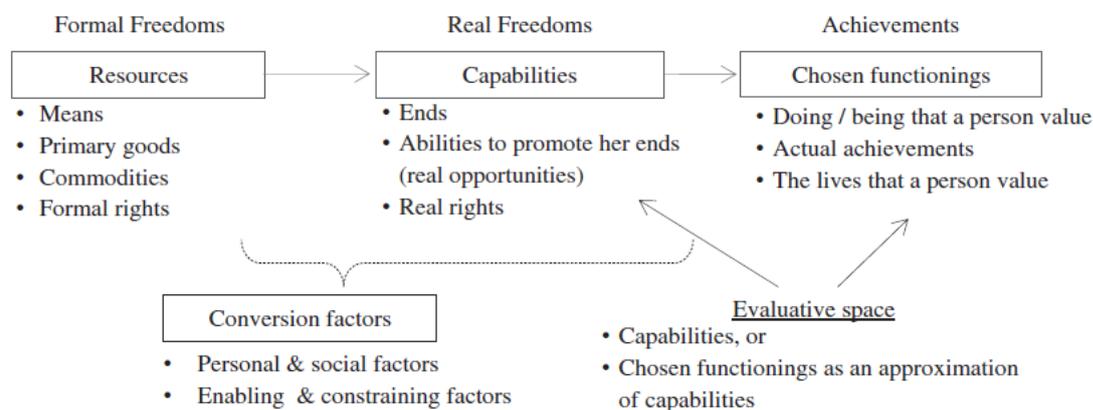
Figure 9 shows how the various concepts discussed above are related to each other. By referring to the concept of an evaluative space, the figure also clearly shows that the CA is a

normative and evaluative approach. The capability set that people have can be seen as a metric of social justice (Kimhur, 2020: 6). In policy terms, this implies that a 'just' social policy should aim to expand the capabilities that people have, and to limit the inequality in capability sets between people. In practice, this would mean that people should have access to sufficient resources, they should have the freedom to make their own choices, and they should not be impeded by negative conversion factors. The extent to which these conditions are met determines the extent to which people are able to live a meaningful and fulfilled life (Alkire, 2002). Thus, in the CA, an individual's capability set functions as a proxy for an individual's quality of life. Following this line of reasoning, poverty can be seen as capability deprivation, whereas vulnerable or deprived people can be seen as people without sufficient capabilities.

In practice, the CA has already had a significant influence on the measurement of human development and the evaluation of social policies. For example, the Human Development Reports of the United Nations, which are strongly influenced by the CA (Kimhur, 2020), include national data on a wide array of topics related to various dimensions of human life. Some of the indicators in these reports directly refer to capabilities. For example, the indicator 'life expectancy at birth' relates to the capability to have a long and healthy life (although at an aggregate rather than at an individual level). Other UN indicators refer to functionings (again at an aggregate level), for example the mean number of years that people spend at school. Taken together, the various indicators provide a rather comprehensive picture of the state of human development and well-being in the various countries of the world. Moreover, in order to better enable international comparisons, the UN has integrated various human development indicators into the so-called Human Development Index (HDI).

It is important to note that the CA not only serves as an evaluation instrument for policy makers. It also offers a very valuable research framework for academic researchers. After all, by investigating how resources are converted into capabilities, thereby unravelling relevant conversion factors, structural causes of inequity and injustice may come to the light (Kimhur, 2020). In the CA, socio-economic vulnerability tends to be seen as the result of a specific combination of lack of resources, constraining conversion factors and (a resulting) lack of free choice (Hearne and Murphy, 2019).

Figure 9. A conceptual diagram of the CA framework



Source: Kimhur, 2020, based on Sen (1999)

### Defining capabilities

The capabilities and the capability set occupy a central position in the CA. Nevertheless, it is far from crystal clear what they encompass. In fact, there has been quite some discussion on how the capability set should be defined and determined. Sen argues that capabilities are context and purpose specific and should be developed on the basis of democratic processes and public reasoning (Kimhur, 2020: 12). In connection with this, many scholars argue that the 'list of things people have reason to value' should reflect people's values and priorities, and therefore it should be effectively drawn from deliberative and participative processes (Crocker, 2006). Building upon these ideas, Alkire (2007) and Robeyns (2007) have identified methods and procedures for the capability identification.

On the other hand, Nussbaum (2011), who is another leading scholar of the CA, asserts that a set of universal capabilities can be discerned. Nussbaum's list of central capabilities (see table 1) refers to fundamental human rights or entitlements that are needed for a minimum level of social justice, and a life worthy of human dignity. They encompass a number of fundamental freedoms that determine what people actually are and are able to be (Hearne and Murphy, 2019). According to Nussbaum (2011), these central capabilities are apolitical and therefore applicable to all types of democratic societies. Indeed, Nussbaum's central capabilities can be considered as minimum requirements for a free and just society.

Table 1. Nussbaum's ten central capabilities

Domain	When (month)
Life	Able to live a full human life of normal length
Bodily health	Able to enjoy bodily health, including adequate nourishment and capacity for reproduction
Bodily Integrity	Able to move freely and safely from place to place
Sense, imagination and thought	Able to make full use of the senses to experience, think, reason, imagine and create
Emotion	Able to experience attachment to people, things and experiences and to express feelings of love, longing, grieving and justifiable anger
Practical reasoning	Able to conceive of the good life and to engage in critical reflection
Affiliation	Able to live with others in mutual respect, understanding the position and worth of 'others', and establishing the basis of self-respect and non-discrimination
Other species	Having respect for animals and plants
Play	Ability to laugh and to enjoy playful and recreational activity
Environmental control	Able to engage with the processes and choices that affect our political and material lives, including rights of political participation, property holding and employment

Source: Hearne and Murphy, 2019, based on the work of Nussbaum

### 7.1.3 The added value of the capability approach

Figure 1 clearly illustrates that the CA is comprehensive, multi-dimensional and normative approach. It takes into account the complex relationships between resources, social context, individual conditions, individual preferences and actual choice behaviour. A central position within the framework is occupied by the so-called capability set, which can be seen as an indicator for individual well-being. Through its comprehensive and multidimensional nature, the CA allows for a sharper and more precise interpretation and measurement of well-being and poverty than more traditional methods.

First of all, approaches that focus on income only (so-called resource-based approaches), ignore the influence of the conversion factors (Kimhur, 2020). This can be problematic because people with similar resources may actually possess very different conversion factors. For example, in terms of housing resources, unemployed young people and university students may look very similar. Both groups may be housed in small, and perhaps overcrowded and substandard accommodation. However, as far as the effects of the housing resources on capabilities are concerned, the two groups are actually very different. For the unemployed young people, who may be at home most of the day, the low-quality accommodation may result in feelings of depression or anxiety. Such feelings may transform into impeding personal conversion factors that can negatively influence the capabilities and life chances of the group concerned. After all, finding a job or achieving other valuable functionings is difficult if one is in a depressed state. For the students, who will spend much less time at home and are likely to have better career prospects, such negative conversion will probably be absent (or are at least less prevalent). For most of the people in the latter group, the low quality of the accommodation will be perceived as a temporary inconvenience that does not have a real impact on their capability set, and that will be left soon after the studies are completed<sup>17</sup>. Thus, due to different conversion factors, the same resource is converted into different capabilities by different target groups.

A second concept that is often used in research on poverty and well-being is satisfaction, for example life or housing satisfaction. The idea of such satisfaction oriented (or utility focused) research is that the more satisfied people are, the less deprived they will be. The CA nuances this type of reasoning. Although the CA admits that satisfaction can be an important functioning, it states that one should not isolate this functioning from the structural conditions in which it is generated. People can state that they are happy and still be in a very vulnerable, capability-deprived situation (In this respect, Sen mentions the example of 'happy slaves'). Indeed, in satisfaction-oriented research, satisfaction often refers to a temporary condition of 'well-feeling' (and not necessarily well-being). When measuring satisfaction, adaptive behaviour and cognitive dissonance reduction often play a role. The latter observation is particularly pertinent for vulnerable people. Such people tend to adjust their desires to what is seemingly feasible for them. As a result of this, the satisfaction measured among them often suggests a too rosy picture of the state they are actually in (Sen, 1999; Kimhur, 2020).

The bottom-line of the above discussion is that resources and satisfaction clearly matter in the CA, but that these concepts should not be studied in isolation from the other relevant CA concepts. Having sufficient resources should be seen as a means to well-being and human flourishing rather than as an end on its own. In a similar vein, satisfaction is a very relevant functioning, but it should always be interpreted in the broader context within which it was measured.

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<sup>17</sup> This is an imaginary example that seems probable but that is not underpinned by empirical research.

#### 7.1.4 Application of the Capability Approach: research methods

In Section 7.1.2 we have discussed how the capability set can be defined and determined. Once this step is taken, the next question is how to measure the capabilities. It is impossible to give an easy answer to this question. The literature on the CA is vast and the approach has already been applied in dozens or perhaps hundreds of research projects. In this Section, we briefly review some of the literature in which the CA has been applied to the target group of young people. As far as this is concerned, we mainly focus on the overview chapter of Chiappero-Martinetti et al. (2015), that was published in a volume on capability friendly youth policy (Otto, 2015). Chiappero-Martinetti et al. (2015) rightly state the richness and comprehensiveness of the CA make it difficult to put the framework into practice:

*'Indeed, the complex, multidimensional and context dependent nature of this approach, the lack of specificity as to how these dimensions should be selected and assessed, the absence of a rigorous formalisation, a definite metric, and a specific algorithm or index for measuring, ranking, and comparing interpersonal conditions can limit the practical application of this approach' (Chiappero-Martinetti et al. , 2015: 116).*

However, these authors also observe that, despite the complexity, there already is a large and growing body of literature on empirical CA applications. Within this literature, the following four types of approaches can be discerned (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 118-120).

##### 1. *Multi-variate analysis of secondary databases*

Quite a lot of CA applications are based on an analysis of secondary databases such as household panels. By selecting and processing suitable variables from such databases, the researchers concerned try to capture the main concepts of the CA, such as capabilities, functionings and conversion factors. However, these attempts are often bounded by data availability since most secondary databases were not explicitly designed with the CA in mind. In Otto (2015), several examples on how to apply the CA to international comparative databases such as EU-SILC are provided.

##### 2. *Using scaling techniques and aggregative strategies*

Scaling and aggregation techniques can be used to construct composite indicators that may serve a proxy for the capabilities that people have. The best-known example of such a composite indicator the Human Development Index of the UN, although there are also various examples of capability oriented multidimensional poverty indices. This approach has two main advantages: it is easy to interpret and it allows for international comparisons. A serious drawback is that the choices that are made when constructing the composite index are to some extent arbitrarily. Moreover, it is impossible to capture the richness of the CA in just one or a few indicators.

### 3. *Using non-standard methods of analysis*

Various attempts have been made to use non-standard methods such as fuzzy methodology or partial ranking when applying the CA. The idea is that such methods are better able to capture the richness and complexity of the CA than more standard quantitative methods. However, this work is still pretty much in its infancy.

### 4. *Qualitative analysis*

Qualitative research techniques such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and ethnographic research are extensively used by capability scholars. Qualitative research can be applied to develop and agree on capability lists through deliberative consultations, to investigate the role of social and cultural norms in shaping preferences and choices, and to evaluate how participatory methods themselves can impact on people's capabilities (Chiappero-Martinetti, 2015: 119). Qualitative research fits particularly well within the CA because it puts people's views, opinions, values and priorities at the centre of analysis. However, this type of research also has several limitations. First of all, qualitative research is expensive and time-consuming. Second, comparability and generalizability may be difficult to achieve, particularly if different research contexts and various researchers are involved.

#### *Measuring capabilities or functionings?*

A long running discussion in CA research revolves around the question whether one should measure capabilities, functionings or both. According to the CA principles, one would ideally like to measure the capabilities (being free to do something) rather than the functionings (doing something), if one adequately wants to assess individual well-being. However, in practice this is sometimes complicated. This is due to the fact that quantitative indicators of capabilities are often scarce, whereas qualitative research that intends to measure capabilities can be very time consuming (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 118). Consequently, researchers that apply the CA regularly use functionings (e.g. being in employment, current tenure status, level of education, feelings of safety, housing satisfaction etc.) rather than capabilities to measure the well-being of people. After all, quantitative databases tend to have a large amount of information on such 'beings' or 'doings' (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015).

Although in the CA, capabilities and functionings are closely related (see Figure 1), they do not have an unambiguous connection. Their relationship is bounded by the freedom of choice (the real freedoms) that people have. For example, someone can stay at home (a functioning) as a deliberate choice (for example to dedicate time to hobbies) but also forcefully (as a result of unemployment). In this example, the achieved functioning is the same (namely staying at home), but the capability set is more extensive and developed in the first case than in the second case. In general, one could state that the more real freedoms a person has, the more complex and heterogeneous the relationship between capabilities and functionings will be. For people with limited real freedoms, the functionings can be expected to provide a fairly adequate representation of the capability set. However, if the capability set gets more extensive, functionings will more and more diverge between people as a result of different preferences and different choice behaviour. In order to get a good insight into this complexity,

it is often most adequate to analyse functionings together with capabilities (Volkert and Schneider, 2012: 400).

## 7.2 Life-course analysis

### 7.2.1 Life course analysis and reproduction of social inequalities

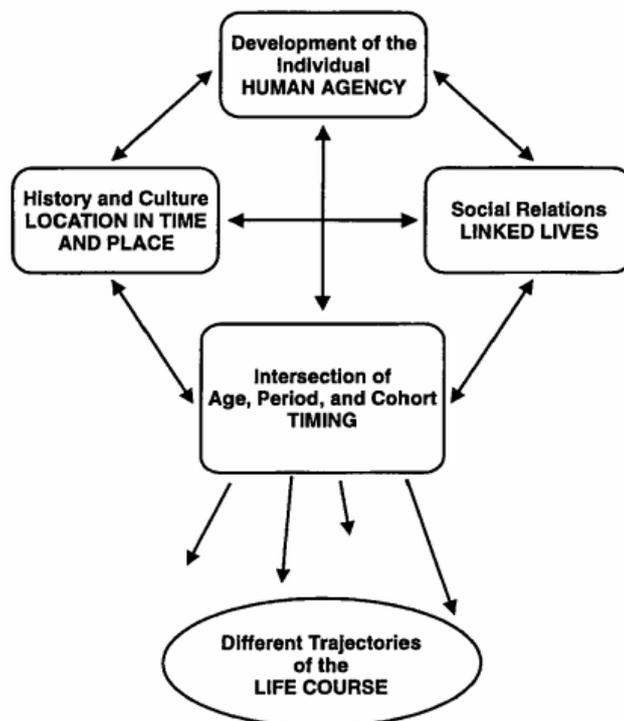
The UPLIFT project, in addition to the capability approach, decided to use the 'life course analysis' approach at the micro-level. The life course perspective is a new way to conceptualize an individual's life in the context of life events, turning points, and pathways, all of which are embedded in social institutions (Elder, 1985). The 'classic' life course analysis dates back to the study of Polish immigration to America (Thomas et al., 1996, first published in 1920), which defined life course as a sociological issue for the first time. However, life course research has become very popular only since the 1970s, when Elder (1974) published his study *Children of the Great Depression*, which examined adolescent and adult life patterns of children and the different adaptations made by their families in Berkeley and Oakland. Since the 1970s there has been a huge expansion of life course research summarized in Macmillan, 2005; Mortimer and Shanahan, 2003, Claudine et al., 2015.

#### 7.2.1.1 The 'theory' of the life course approach

The concept of the life course approach is based on the principle that 'individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstance' (Elder, 2003: 2636). An important caveat of this approach is that the relation between the individual behaviour and the context variables (socioeconomic position) is changing in time. The balance between the role of individual decisions and the structural effects is a research question, not given a priori. The life course approach crosses the boundaries of different social research areas and is typically a multi-disciplinary inquiry.

There has been an attempt to develop the life course approach into a theory (Elder, 1999, 2003; Giel, 2001). According to these endeavours, the life course theory has four main dimensions (Giel and Elder, 1998; Wethington and Johnson-Askew, 2009): 1. History and geographical context (cultural background); 2. Social integration (linked lives); 3. Individual goal attainment (human agency); 4. Strategic adaptation (timing of lives). The model is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Four key elements of the life course paradigm (Giel and Elder, 1998: 11).



Based on empirical work, different types of models were developed in the literature. The three basic models are the following (Gilman and McCormick, 2010; Burton-Jeangros et al., 2015): Critical period; accumulation and pathways model. These models were used typically in health research, but their use can be expanded to other fields (namely to our inequality problems). UPLIFT WP3 focuses on household strategies coping with the hardships caused by the crises (both the GFC in 2008 and the recent COVID-19). However, the pathways method seems the most relevant approach in combination with the capability approach.

The first model focuses on the life course span which is a reaction to a critical event or period. The research is looking for the dependencies between the critical event and the response to it. The huge literature on coping strategies (responses to critical exposures) follows this logic. The second model supposes that life events have cumulative effects, that is, the effect of socioeconomic positions and life course events accumulate over time. The pathway model posits that the effects of life events follow a specific pattern and cannot be described as a cumulative or onetime effect. According to this model, the different factors are interdependent, like family background, educational achievements, job market and housing market position, lifestyle, etc. 'Life course models are not mutually exclusive—a combination of models might be applied to any given problem—but the public health and public policy implications of each model often differ' (Gilman and McCormick, 2010: 1).

The attempt to build a theory based on the life course perspective was not accepted by its critics, as many researchers do not accept the life course approach as formal theory, but

rather as an approach which integrates multiple disciplines (George, 2003; Mayer, 2009; Wethington, 2005). The UPLIFT project adopts the sociological interpretation of the life course analysis, where the main research issue is the reproduction of inequality, thus the life course perspective is more a methodological means to analyse the inequality trap. As George (2003: 673) argued, the future of life course research depends on the 'integration of life course principles with the total range of theoretical and substantive themes' in the social sciences.

### **7.2.1.2 Terms, directions of research**

Integral to the life course perspective are two main concepts: trajectories and transitions. A trajectory is a pathway over the life course, which involves long-term patterns of events, such as employment or family history. A transition, in contrast, involves the short-term events, or turning points, that make up specific life changes, such as marriage, divorce, or parenthood (Elder, 1985; Thornberry, 1997; Wethington, 2005).

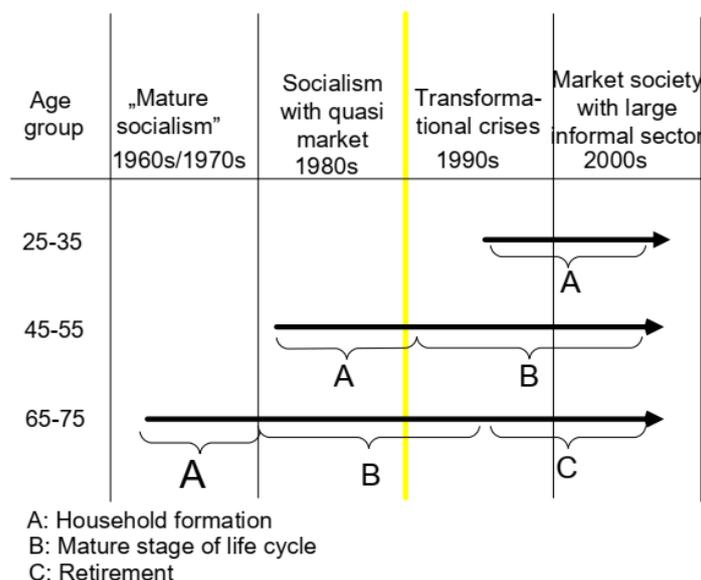
The term life course has different meanings (Alwin, 2012): (a) life course as time or age, (b) life course as life stages, (c) life course as events, transitions, and trajectories, (d) life course as life-span human development, and (e) life course as early life influences (and their accumulation) on later adult outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

'Age' refers to the outcomes of aging specific to individuals, but unrelated to the period or birth cohort to which an individual belongs. 'Period' refers to the effect caused by external factors that equally affect all age groups at a given time. 'Cohort' refers to the common experiences of a given cohort. The differentiation of the age, period, and cohort effect is a key feature of the life course approach. However, the separation of the cohort effect from the age effect is not a simple task. In the DEMHOW EU research project, we used a simple model of the life course interview studying the relation between the period effects (social and political regimes) and cohort effects, illustrated with figure 11 (Hegedüs and Szemző, 2010).

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<sup>18</sup> Alwin (2012) proposed an integrated approach called „*age stratification–life course*’ framework that includes historical and biographical time, incorporating *within-person change* (i.e., human development and/or aging), *life cycle stages*, and *life course events, transitions, and trajectories* across the entire *life span*.

Figure 11. Political regimes (period) and the cohorts (Hegedüs and Szemző, 2010).



Life course analysis has become very popular in the last three-four decades. One of the most successful areas is health research, as there is clear evidence that early life socioeconomic conditions (social class, lifestyle, neighbourhood social environment) influence the risk of different diseases in adulthood (Burton-Jeangros, 2015).

### 7.2.1.3 Quantitative and qualitative methods

Quantitative methods dominate the literature, which is well demonstrated by the event history or sequence analysis (Wu, 2003; Blanchard et al., 2014, Mikolai, 2010). This research focuses on the interdependencies between certain life events (or properties of the events) and socioeconomic variables of certain life stages.

The huge longitudinal dataset makes it possible to test more complicated models. These studies follow the same groups throughout their life course making it possible to study how education, income, employment, family relations, and health position are interrelated and how they influence the outcomes of the later stage of the life course (one of the most famous datasets is the British Cohort database).

WP3 in the UPLIFT project follows the sociological approach of life course analysis (Cockerham, 2014; Baizan et al., 2002).

## 7.2.2 Inequalities in life course perspectives

### 7.2.2.1 Life-course: interaction between life domains

For the UPLIFT project, the most interesting literature is on the reproduction of inequality in the life course. The question is how different types of inequalities (income, wealth, health,

housing, etc.) are connected to certain life stages (events, trajectories, etc.) and how the different life domains reinforce each other through the life course. There are several research projects, which aim to examine these relations.

In the *European Sociological Review*, a special issue was published which covered many topics of inequality over the Life Course<sup>19</sup>. The CRITEVENTS<sup>20</sup> (Critical Life Events and the Dynamics of Inequality: Risk, Vulnerability, and Cumulative Disadvantage) project, which focuses on the impact of two critical life events - job loss and union dissolution – in the life trajectories of adults and their children.

A typical approach of inequality studies is to examine the interdependencies among the different life domains like family background, education, employment, housing, and health in producing different life opportunities.

For example, one area is the effect of the neighbourhood on the life chances of the individuals. The life course element of the approach is the assumption that the effects of neighbourhoods (their nature and strengths) differ at different life stages (Lanen, 2018; Vuijst, 2016).

Another example is the housing position and social inequalities. Social inequalities influence directly housing market opportunities and chances of the families, but the families' housing market position affects the labour market strategy, the education of the children, the health conditions, pension strategy, etc. Thus, social inequality does not only lead to inequalities in housing, but housing inequality contributes to social inequality as well.<sup>21</sup> Housing (as a life domain) affects the position in other life domains in various ways at certain life stages.

The paper of Mawditt et al. (2017) demonstrates that logic clearly: The adulthood health-related behaviour (HRB) is influenced both by the pre-adolescent socioeconomic position and the adulthood socioeconomic position. The design of the path model takes into consideration the direct effect and the indirect effect (see Figure 12).

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<sup>19</sup> *European Sociological Review*, Volume 35, Issue 5, October 2019.  
[https://academic.oup.com/esr/pages/inequality\\_over\\_the\\_life\\_course\\_virtual\\_issue](https://academic.oup.com/esr/pages/inequality_over_the_life_course_virtual_issue)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.norface.net/project/critevents/>

<sup>21</sup> Social Inequality and Housing over the Life Course: Good Choices or Lucky Outcomes?  
<https://www.oslomet.no/en/research/research-projects/social-inequality-and-housing>

Figure 12. The path model estimating the total effect pre-adolescent SEP and adulthood SEP on HRB

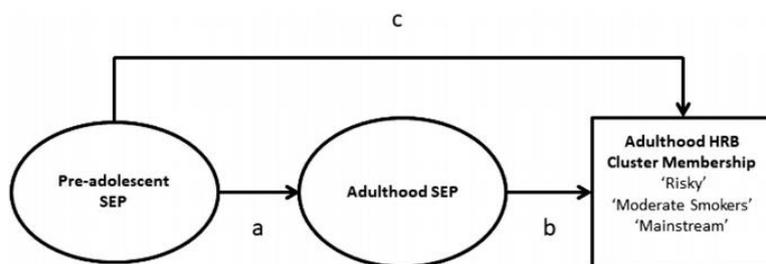
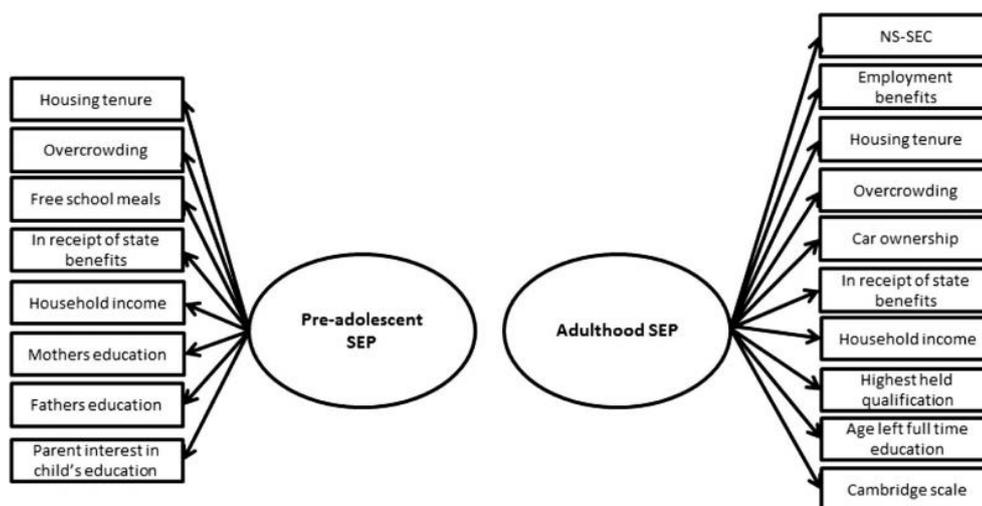


Fig. 1. The path model estimating the total effect, indirect and direct paths between pre-adolescent SEP and adult HRB cluster membership in the NCDS and BCS70. Path  $a \times b$  = indirect path between pre-adolescent SEP and adulthood HRB cluster membership. Path  $c$  = direct path between pre-adolescent SEP and HRB cluster membership. Path  $ab + \text{path } c$  = total effect of pre-adolescent SEP on HRB cluster membership. Ovals represent the latent variables. Rectangles represent the observed variables.

Source: Mawditt et al, 2017: 69).

The two SEP variables are determined by different sets of latent indicators (See Figure 13).

Figure 13. The relationship between the indicator variable and the pre-adolescent SEP/adulthood SEP



Source: Mawditt et al., 2017: 73)

The studies focusing on the interrelationship among the life domains in the life course perspective typically narrow their research to a specific social group like migrants, people with disabilities, young people with criminal records, or age groups like adolescents and pensioners (Wingens et al., 2011; Buchnam 2017).

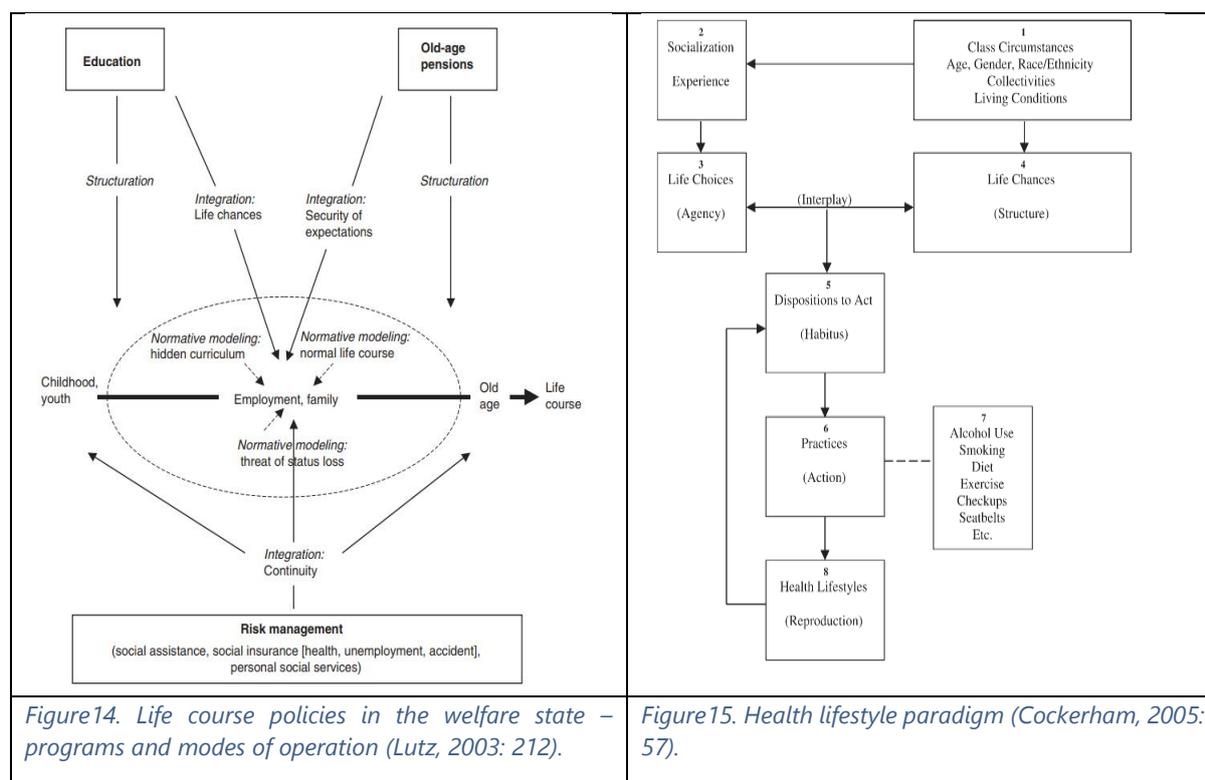
As it was mentioned in 6.1 of the literature review, the capability approach can be conceived as a combination of individual behaviour and the context dimensions (Miquel and Lopez, 2011; Hitlin and Kiskpatrich, 2015; Coast, 2019).

### 7.2.2.2 Conceptualization of the contexts

Studying the interplay of the different life domains in the life course perspective, the role of the contextual dimensions becomes crucial. One of the advantages of this approach is that it goes beyond the static, cross-sectional, 'decontextualized' research design and moves toward causal models with strong time and contextual dimensions. Leong's (2014) study on the integration of immigrants stresses the importance of the contextual factors (rules and norms related to the labour market, healthcare system, cultural background, etc.) in the narratives explaining the integration process.

The integration of the institutional regulations (in different life domains) and the individual behaviour into a life course pattern is a difficult task, which requires an innovative combination of the macro and micro research designs. An example of the inclusion of context factors is Lutz's (2003) chapter in the Handbook of Life Course on the role of the state and its policies in the life course of individuals. The context factors are 'particular policies and programs, like old-age pensions, education and labour force regulation' (Lutz, 2003: 2005), which he calls life course policies. The role of the contextual factors is conceptualized through three 'modes of the welfare state': structuration, integration and normative modelling which is shown in a model covering three core fields of the welfare state (education, old-age care and risk management) (Figure 14). Structuration refers to the basic definitions, roles and status under the three core fields. 'The social policy systems establish connections between the different phases and stages of life and hence integrate the life course' (Lutz, 2003: 211). The third model is 'normative modelling', a hidden or implicit policy agenda shaping the individual life course.

In this example, the contextual factors are independent 'variables' explaining the individual life courses; that is, the individual behaviour does not influence the context. However, the structures are changing as well, partly as a reaction to individual behaviour. Thus, the interplay between the individual action and the institutional regulations is not static but dynamic, as it is indicated in the paper of Cockerham (2005) (Figure 15).



### 7.2.2.3 Institutionalization of the life-course

The life course trajectories are the results of the contextual factors and individual behaviour, which can lead to the crystallization of certain life course patterns (Kohli, 2007; Mayer 2001, 2005, 2009). The researchers were interested in how the institutional arrangement shapes individual life courses. The typology of life course trajectories is based on the concept of the ideal-typical model institutionalized through social-economic regimes (macrostructures):

‘Two ideal-typical models have often been used to depict the post-war changes in the life course in western societies. The first is characterized by highly standardized and linear biographies, as a result of stable, well-paid jobs for males, stable and quasi universal marriage with childbearing soon after, and women foregoing their working careers after marriage to become housewives. This model has been termed *fordist* (Myles, 1990) or *bourgeois-family* (Roussel, 1989). The second model, sometimes called *post-industrial* or *post-modern*, implies a shift to a situation marked by discontinuity in life patterns and by greater heterogeneous experiences among individuals. A tentative list of the second model’s features would include: precariousness of employment and income, couples earning two incomes, increasing individualization, and late and unstable families and households’ (Baizan et al., 2002: 192).

In the 1990s, the welfare regime theories raised the issue of whether life course patterns are institutionalized according to the alternative regimes.

### 7.2.3 Life-course inequality and public policy interventions

The life course perspective contributes to understanding the reproduction of inequalities and helps to design public policy interventions to break the inequality trap. The public policies directed towards different vulnerable groups aim to intervene in the vicious circle of the reproduction of the inequality trap. The success of the program depends on the ability of the intervention to break the causal chain resulting in inequality and allow individuals to escape from the trap(s).

One example is Sherraden's (2010) analysis of financial capability, which concludes that efficient intervention has to take into consideration the specific circumstances of the target group. Financial education is not enough for a good policy; the institutions have to design a product tailored to the needs and opportunities of the target group.

In the UPLIFT approach, the individuals face a specific structure of the 'positions' in the different domains. The positions are crystalized, embodied relations of the agencies (individuals, local organizations, and their representatives) and structures (local organizations and national interventions). We are interested in the social effect of the position on the reproduction of inequalities.

For the individuals (in different stages of their life-course), the structure of the positions in different life-domains is given, however, the interpretation of the positions depends on the individuals and their context (norms, etc.). WP3 aims to understand how individual decisions lead to the inequality trap using the three theoretical approaches:

- In the capability approach: the position can be interpreted as a series of the functioning (a bundle of functioning); where the individual chooses from the positions according to their preference influenced by their background. The social, economic characteristics of the position will affect the probability of the reproduction (production) of inequality.
- In the life course perspective: WP3 will try to understand interconnections between different decisions (in this sense, between the positions of the domains covered).
- In the intergenerational perspective: We try to understand how the parent's position influences the individual's decisions.

## 7.3 Intergenerational mobility

### 7.3.1 Conceptualising intergenerational mobility

Intergenerational mobility is the ability of an individual to move status position in relation to the position of their parents according to a particular status metric. Previous research on intergenerational mobility has tended to focus on mobility based on income (OECD, 2018; Corak, 2013) or social class (Bukodi et al., 2020; Breen and Luijkx, 2004), although studies have also considered educational qualifications (Plewis and Bartley, 2014), wealth (Clark and Cummins, 2014) and housing tenure (Lyons and Simister, 2000).

When discussing intergenerational mobility, it is important to distinguish between absolute mobility and relative mobility. Absolute mobility refers to an individual's position compared directly with that of their parents. Relative mobility, also referred to as social fluidity, compares an individual's actual position in relation to their expected position, accounting for underlying social and economic trends. Absolute mobility shows intergenerational mobility in relation to an individual's parents, while relative mobility demonstrates intergenerational mobility in relation to their peers. The importance of the distinction between absolute and relative mobility is underlined in the case when an individual occupies a higher income or class position than their parents, suggesting positive intergenerational mobility, but whose peers have progressed to even higher income or class positions, which indicates that, in relative terms, the individual has experienced poor intergenerational mobility.

### **7.3.2 Theoretical approaches and empirical studies concerning intergenerational mobility**

One of the most influential theories seeking to explain or describe long-term trends in social mobility is the 'industrialisation thesis'. This posits that increasing industrialisation and technological progress facilitates improved social or intergenerational mobility (Ganzeboom et al., 1989; Treiman, 1970; Lipset and Zetterberg, 1959). The reasoning behind the industrialisation thesis is that, as sectors and employment areas become more and more industrialised, the acquisition of skills and knowledge would take on increasing significance in the sorting of different individuals into different occupations. Therefore, the means of skill and knowledge acquisition, education, would become an increasingly important factor in determining the income or the social class of an individual. To maximise efficiency and productivity gains from industrialisation and better technology, governments would seek to expand education to satisfy the rising demand for labour with specific skills and knowledge. The industrialisation thesis predicts that this expansion in education would mediate the impact of an individual's class origins on their educational and occupational outcomes, thereby increasing social mobility. Several studies have shown a general positive trend in mobility in support of the industrialisation thesis (Maas and van Leeuwen, 2016; Yaish and Andersen, 2012; Breen and Luijkx, 2004; Ganzeboom et al., 1989).

Featherman, Lancaster Jones and Hauser (1975), however, argued that the industrialisation thesis focused on absolute intergenerational mobility, rather than relative intergenerational mobility and that, while absolute mobility may be increasing with industrialisation, relative rates were not. This resulted in the authors proposing their own hypothesis, the FJH-hypothesis, which stated that, in all societies with a market economy and a nuclear family system, the level and pattern of relative rates of mobility will effectively be the same. Subsequent research, however, has revealed significant variations in relative rates of intergenerational mobility between countries, resulting in qualifications being added to the FJH-hypothesis. Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) proposed changing the idea of a basic similarity in relative mobility with a 'core pattern' about which some variation according to national context could occur. Erikson and Goldthorpe also suggested that such variation could

result from policies implemented by a state to modify social mobility processes. Bukodi et al. (2020) have gone further and proposed an updated version of the FJH-hypothesis which argues that, in all societies with a capitalist market economy, a nuclear family system and a liberal democratic government, there is a political limit to which relative intergenerational class mobility rates can be equalised (Bukodi et al., 2020: 967-968). Furthermore, Bukodi et al. found that European countries can be divided in high- and low-fluidity categories and that the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Hungary, have become some of the most unequal countries in terms of relative mobility.

It can be argued that both the industrialisation thesis and the FJH-hypothesis fail to capture the full complexity of intergenerational mobility processes. The main weakness of the industrialisation thesis, the focus on absolute intergenerational mobility, is further undermined when social class trends in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are considered. Breen and Lujckx (2004) observed a convergence in absolute intergenerational mobility, which supports the industrialisation thesis. However, they point out that this convergence is primarily due to changes in class structures across the countries they studied. They recorded declines in the proportions of populations in lower social classes such as the agricultural sectors and expansions in the higher professional and management categories. Such a result is unsurprising according to the industrialisation thesis, as technological improvements should reduce labour requirements in agricultural and low-skilled manual sectors and increase employment in higher-skilled service industries. The result is that, due to these structural changes, an individual could expect to improve their class position relative to their parents. However, this does not necessarily mean they have improved their position relative to their peers. Individuals whose social class has improved may still have a relatively lower status compared with more established members of the class, as additional social barriers and hierarchies may exist within the broad social class categories. Hence, to properly ascertain intergenerational mobility trends, relative intergenerational mobility must be considered.

As well as the distinction between relative and absolute mobility, the analysis of intergenerational mobility must consider the concepts of 'sticky floors' and 'sticky ceilings'. These are where individuals or households who occupy the bottom and top positions, respectively, in terms of social class or income are much less likely to move out from those positions compared to those occupying the middle positions (OECD, 2018; McKnight, 2015; Reeves and Howard, 2013). This 'stickiness' at the top and bottom is due to the fact those with the highest incomes and greatest wealth are able to invest their superior resources into the education and welfare of their children and, thus, pass on their privileged position in society to the next generation, while the poorest are unable to provide or access the same quality of education, housing or healthcare and, thus, are unable to escape the bottom of the social and income ladder. Comparatively high levels of mobility across the middle income and social class positions may mask relative immobility at the top and bottom.

Furthermore, the nature of work among lower social classes or the bottom end of the labour market has changed. Following the decline in employment in agriculture, mining and

manufacturing sectors, there has been an expansion in 'precarious work'; work that is uncertain and unpredictable in nature (see Section 5.3.1). This is exemplified by the rise of zero-hour contracts and the classification of workers as self-employed contractors rather than employees. In some ways this could be conceived as a 're-informalising' of work at the lower end of the labour market. This increased precariousness is highly likely to have knock-on effects in terms of social mobility. Unpredictable work and limited employment benefits result in substantial variations in income, making it more difficult to invest resources in things that can facilitate social mobility, such as education and housing. Precarious work can also increase the risk of downward social mobility, as workers are more vulnerable to significant reductions in hours and are not compensated if they are unable work due to injury or illness.

### **7.3.3 Space, intergenerational mobility and the intergenerational transmission of context**

A significant factor in intergenerational social mobility is segregation. This is because social class divisions almost always have spatial dimensions. Occupants of higher social positions tend to have greater financial resources and, therefore, can more afford property situated in the most desirable locations. Hence, the most socioeconomically-advantaged tend to cluster in the same neighbourhoods, as do the least-advantaged. Furthermore, access to education is often determined by geography through catchment areas, resulting in the best schools being located in the wealthiest districts. The upshot of this is the existence of the intergenerational transmission of context: the characteristics and environment an individual experience can be passed onto their children (Hedman et al., 2015; van Ham et al., 2014; Sharkey, 2008; Vartanian et al., 2007). Individuals who grow up in a poor family are more likely to experience poverty during their working life than those who grow up in a more affluent family. Context is transmitted at the neighbourhood level as well as the family level, with those growing up in neighbourhoods with high poverty levels being more likely to live in neighbourhoods with similarly high poverty levels later in life than someone who grew up in a low-poverty neighbourhood. Ethnic segregation can also be transmitted, with a minority-ethnicity individual who grew up in mainly minority-ethnicity neighbourhood more likely to live in a mainly minority-ethnicity neighbourhood later in life than a minority-ethnicity individual who grew up in a primarily majority-ethnicity neighbourhood.

Education can be also transmitted intergenerationally. Research indicates that the educational attainment of an individual is significantly affected by the educational attainment of their parents (Burger, 2016; Tverborgvik et al., 2013; Fessler et al., 2012). Furthermore, an individual's educational attainment is also influenced by the school context. Those residing in the most deprived neighbourhoods tend to achieve a lower educational level (Nieuwenhuis and Hooimeijer, 2016; Wodtke et al., 2012) as school composition often mirrors that of the neighbourhood (Sykes and Musterd, 2011; Kauppinen, 2008). As a result, diversifying student bodies at schools may reduce educational inequalities. In addition, widening access to education can reduce the effects of family and neighbourhood context and, therefore, the likelihood that context is transmitted to the next generation, improving social mobility

outcomes (De Vuijst et al., 2017; Jerrim and Macmillan, 2015; Breen, 2010; Breen and Luijkx, 2004).

As with education and neighbourhood context, wealth can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Individuals who grow up in affluent families tend to possess a similar level of affluence in their later life (Black et al., 2015). Sometimes this is acquired due to advantages in the educational system and the labour market, but it is often inherited through direct or indirect transfers of wealth, such as gifts, the payment of tuition fees or providing deposits or collateral for property purchases. Such transfers are often made in lieu of support from the welfare state (Isengard et al., 2018). In particular, wealth is often transferred between generations in the form of property (Albertini et al., 2018; Helderma and Mulder, 2007). Hence, the offspring of affluent households usually possess far more material resources, whether capital or property, than those of less affluent households, enabling them to convert the resources into better educational outcomes, a better position in the labour market and a greater income.

Another aspect that can result in different rates of intergenerational transmission of context is housing policy. Countries that have pursued public-choice policies in social housing or have overseen the residualisation of the public housing stock have tended to see higher levels of intergenerational transmission of context (Andersson and Kährik, 2016; Manley and van Ham, 2011; van Ham and Manley, 2009). Furthermore, housing tenure can be passed from one generation to another, with children of renters more likely to rent than the children of homeowners and vice versa (Coulter, 2018; Helderma and Mulder, 2007).

In addition to material resources or circumstances such as poverty, wealth and property, values can be transmitted between family generations. These include attitudes regarding gender roles, religion and politics (Glass et al., 1986), cultural capital (Kraaykamp and van Eijck, 2010), work values (Cemalcilar et al., 2019) and even risk attitudes (Necker and Voskort, 2010).

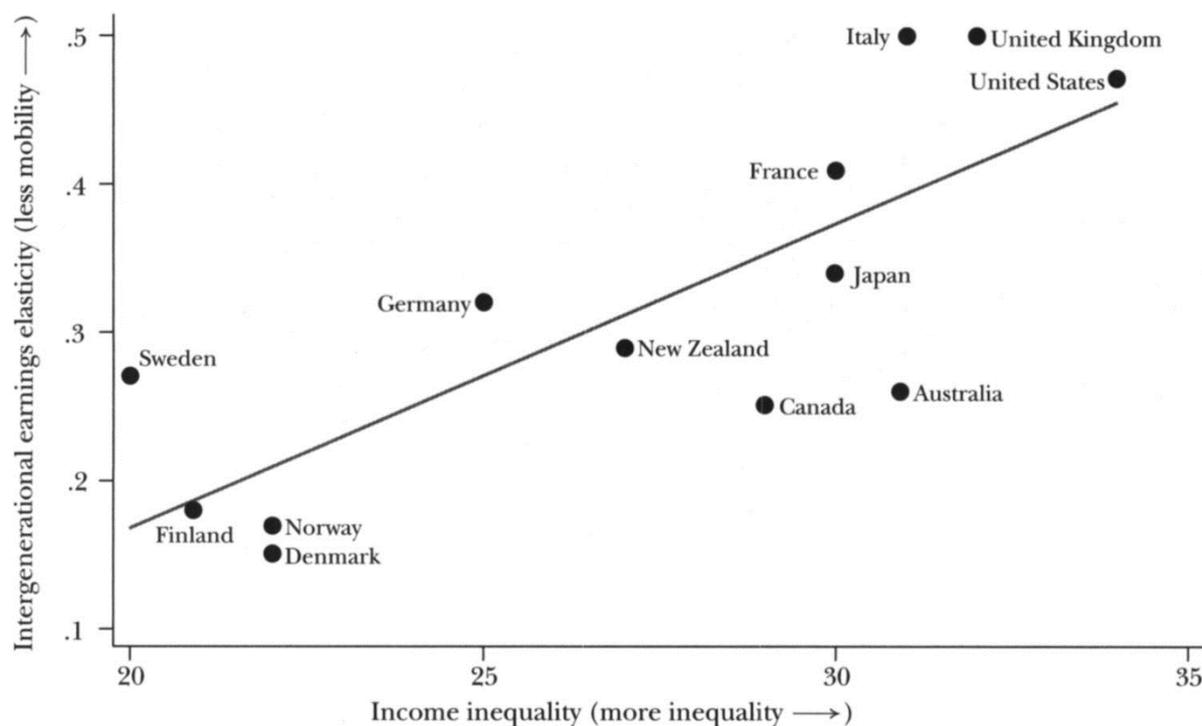
#### **7.3.4 Income inequality and intergenerational mobility**

There has been much debate regarding the significance of income inequality with regards to intergenerational mobility, particularly whether higher levels of income inequality result in lower rates of intergenerational mobility. This relationship is frequently referred to as the 'Great Gatsby Curve' (Corak, 2013; Krueger, 2012; see Figure 16). Hertel and Groh-Samberg (2019), in a study of the relationship between income inequality and class mobility in 39 countries, found that the larger the resource distance between classes, the lower the likelihood of moving between them. Meanwhile, Musterd and Ostendorf (1998) concluded that levels of socioeconomic segregation increased as income inequality increased. This is supported by Durlauf and Seshadri (2018), who considered segregation to be the 'mediating variable that converts inequality into lower mobility' (Durlauf and Seshadri, 2018: 387) However, Bukodi et al. (2020) were unable to find a connection between income inequality and social fluidity, and Yaish and Andersen (2012) found that, when gross domestic product per capita, migration

rates and historic government ideology (democratic or communist) were also considered, income inequality was not significant.

One issue is that neither of the latter studies accounted for some of the factors discussed previously. Neither examined access to education or inequality in educational attainment, housing policies or welfare regimes, factors that are known to affect intergenerational mobility and may play a mitigating or exacerbating role in the relationship between income inequality and intergenerational mobility. Additionally, while both Bukodi et al. and Yaish and Andersen differentiate between countries' respective economic and political backgrounds, e.g., established liberal democracies and former socialist, communist and Soviet states, they do not examine in detail the resulting significant contextual differences. Nieuwenhuis et al. (2020) explain Estonia's high socio-spatial mobility compared with Sweden, the Netherlands and England and Wales in relation to its socialist Soviet past. The transition from a socialist to a liberal capitalist economy resulted in a shift in income inequality in Estonia from very low to very high. When this newly emerged high income inequality interacted with the low socioeconomic segregation that existed in the Soviet period, it precipitated the rapid movement of high-income households and individuals into particular highly-desirable neighbourhoods and low-income households and individuals into the least desirable places. Hence, it can be understood how high social mobility can exist alongside high income inequality. Nieuwenhuis et al. predict that, now that Estonia's liberal capitalist economy has matured and social segregation and stratification have developed, Estonia's socio-spatial mobility will increasingly mirror that of England and Wales: high income inequality, high socio-spatial segregation and low socio-spatial mobility.

Figure 16. The 'Great Gatsby Curve', or the relationship between income inequality and intergenerational earnings elasticity.



Source: Corak (2013).

Both income inequality and intergenerational mobility are influenced by the type of welfare regime present in a country. Progressive taxation policies and redistributive transfers can reduce stratification observed in absolute incomes. Beller and Hout (2006) found that socialist and social democratic welfare regimes tended to result in a weaker relationship between social origins and destinations than liberal, corporatist or mixed regimes. They also concluded that countries with more educated labour forces usually had weaker origin-destination associations and that the education effect was stronger in liberal welfare regimes than in socialist or social democratic ones. Esping-Andersen (2015) similarly found an equalising effect of social democratic welfare regimes when comparing Scandinavia to France, Italy and Spain.

UPLIFT will in subsequent work packages close in on the issues of inequalities at national, regional and urban levels and in WP 3 the perspectives established in this last chapter – the capability and the life course approaches as well as the intergeneration mobility issue – will inform our research.

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