CULTIVATING THE VISION OF EUTOPIA

- a synthesis of value-oriented pedagogies inspired by a Greece-based Outdoor pedagogical project and its praxis aiming to enlighten the way towards Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

This master’s thesis delves into the inner dimension of Sustainability, aspiring to highlight the vitality of Human Values (HV) in creating durable societal change. Its purpose is to identify particular (individual and communal) values that can be vital in transformations, as well as to underline the role of Education in reinforcing them. Guiding questions for the research were the following: i) what sorts of character qualities are beneficial to be stimulated in individuals through pedagogical practices to facilitate Sustainability changes, and ii) how Education for Sustainability can contribute to achieving that mission? To answer the questions, both theoretical literature and a pedagogical application were examined. Firstly, through reviewing relevant texts focused on Human Values (HV), Environmental Ethics (EE) and Sustainability Ethics (SE). Secondly, a two–week ethnographical based research in “Arillas” outdoor pedagogical project on Corfu - Greece, to explore their pedagogical ethos and praxis. Aiming to frame a holistic view of the project’s pedagogical approaches, the ethnographic research was conducted with field–observations, dialogues, a video–stimulated recall with the teacher and official document investigation. Based on the ethnographic findings and the theory of Human Values developed by Shalom S. Schwartz, this study synthesizes and proposes the value framework of Eutopia¹, consisted by three core egoistic, altruistic and biospheric values: Autenērgeia, Synērgia and Symbiosis.

Keywords: Eutopia, Education for Sustainability, Value-based pedagogy, Sustainability Values, inner transformations for Sustainability, the inner dimension of Sustainability, Sustainability Ethics, the values of Eutopia

¹ Definition of the concept will be described in introduction and literature review.
To those who have dedicated their lives to making the world a better place.
1 INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt, that eco-social conditions of 21\textsuperscript{st} century’s human environments (irrespective of geographic location) require a critical examination of their systemic functioning. An examination that could benefit to be extended beyond humanity’s relationship with Earth, all living creatures, and human interaction itself. According to the Living Planet Report\textsuperscript{2}, Humanity is living through climate and biodiversity crisis, causing to threat future generations, all species and our planet. – But this problem is not recent. UNESCO\textsuperscript{3} responds to the issue since 1987\textsuperscript{4}, promoting the concept of Sustainability, as an attempt to highlight the necessity of focusing our attention on radical transformations, regarding our actions, behaviours, political choices and educational practices. In Reimagining our futures together, UNESCO (2021) characterized our current lifestyle on the planet as unsustainable and addressed the concept of Sustainability, as the only way of navigating through the crisis, and as a common vision of all, highlighting the importance of educational adaptations and curricula that “enable re-learning how we are interconnected with a living, damaged planet” (p.66).

As the issue of our unsustainable living on the planet becomes more and more complex, it is challenging for us scientists to analyse its components, comprehend aspects of its functionality and detect its root causes. We explore the problem, with the intention to link parts that are interrelated, willing to contribute to the most urgent issue of 21\textsuperscript{st} century with proposals and solutions, in a problem that changes unpredictably into new concepts and causes.

Attempting to highlight fundamental factors of the issue of Sustainability, this study dares to investigate deeper, by focusing on significant parts of the current state of Humanity’s societal challenge, to (hopefully) offer useful insights that could enrich the current scientific discussion.

All the aforementioned problematizations, have driven my attention on investigating the elements of Sustainability that are considered vital in the changing process. Building upon the insights of O’Brien (2018), this study takes its starting point from the following statement: in

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Living planet report 2022 - “Building a nature-positive society” is introduced by WWF.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} UNESCO (=United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization) is a specialized agency of United Nations aiming to promote world peace and security.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission refers to Sustainability in their report “Our Common Future” defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.
\end{itemize}
order to foster Sustainability changes, we need to emphasize in *three spheres of transformation* (p.155-156): “external transformations”, which are referred to as i) “practical changes, such as behaviors and practical responses” (i.e., “*the practical sphere of transformation*”); ii) “political systems, structures and policies” (i.e., “*the political sphere of transformation*”); and iii) “internal transformations” that pertain to individual changes in “values, beliefs and worldviews” (i.e., “*the personal sphere of transformation*”).

During my master studies in Outdoor and Sustainability Education, I was constantly trying to identify the particular behavioral factors (or human character traits) that have caused unsustainability. This intuition encouraged me to explore further the necessity of *internal transformations* - and specifically, value changes when fostering sustainability, a puzzle that was completed by the fact that, indeed, *values play pivotal role in driving human action* (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). And I ask: since human action is related to unsustainability and values are related to human action – what about the relation of values and unsustainability? Is there a relation between the two? And if yes, can we then cause sustainability-oriented behavioral changes if we foster particular values? Continuing in this path, my tendency to investigate further on value transformations brought me to emphasize to the question: which are the particular key-values we need to cultivate in individuals to encourage sustainability changes?

It is now evident that values are located at the core of Sustainability transformations (Fischer et al., 2012). Values are acting as catalysts, as the vehicle through which external shifts can be encouraged. To put it as it is, behind every socio-political decision, lie individuals with their own character traits, qualities, beliefs and worldviews. However, while there exists extensive research on individual and universal Human Values (Horlings, 2015; Leiserowitz et al., 2006; Robinson, 1990; Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Stern et al., 1998), limited research is found specifically about the values of Sustainability and the qualities

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5 Although internal transformations are related to values, beliefs and worldviews, I have chosen values as the focus of this study, because they act as factors of beliefs, worldviews and behaviors.

6 Conclusion drawn following the method of Aristotelian syllogism: Aristotle introduced logical reasoning as the method to arrive at a conclusion. E.g., (adapted from Wikipedia): All human beings are mortal. Socrates is a human being. Therefore, Socrates is mortal (A=B, B=C therefore A=C).

7 During the study (as well as in the literature) human values are described as qualities and/or character traits.
required to be nurtured in individuals towards promoting societal changes, as well as the role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in this goal\(^8\), due to their current emergence as areas of research. Therefore, this study attempts to delve into the existing landscape of HV, to explore the unknown territory of the ethical dimension of Sustainability and to enrich the current efforts with practical pedagogical insights inspired by values-thinking.

1.1 DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF EUTOPÍA\(^9\) (AND ITS RELATION TO UTOPIA)

The concept of Eutopía, Εὐτοπία\(^10\) is comprised by the ancient Greek words εὖ, εὖ\(^11\), which means well; and τόπος, τόπος, which means place. Etymologically, Eutopia means the good place\(^12\)/the place of well-being. On the other hand, Utopia\(^13\), is related to the – ideal – place of well-being, that is in the realm of fantasy, thus, cannot be achieved in reality.

Lewis Mumford (1922), describes principles of ideal societies in his book History of utopias and relates the concept of Utopia to thinkers who envisioned and portrayed human communities, socially organized in a well-functioning\(^14\) way. Utopias, even if they are imaginary, describe realistically how we can structure human societies. For example, Plato’s Republic (380 B.C.) and More’s Utopia (1551), picture ideal societies though locate them on Earth – Plato in the city of Athens and More in an island community – but what about Eutopia?

Mumford (ibid.) determines Eutopia, as the practical application of Utopia and places it in our everyday lives - in here and now, as the only way of inhabiting Earth:

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“It is time to bring our utopian idola and our
everyday world into contact (...) Our choice is not
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\(^8\) UNESCO (2014; 2018) addresses ESD as the key-instrument towards sustainability shift and the attention has been given in the particular values that need to be encouraged in individuals which are named as key-competencies.

\(^9\) It is significant to differentiate the concept from Utopia and prevent the risk of misunderstanding a vision that cannot be achieved (referring to the etymology of Utopia).

\(^10\) pronounced αɛftopia.

\(^11\) pronounced æf.

\(^12\) The definition was found online: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Eutopia

\(^13\) οὐ (ou, “not”) + τόπος (tópos, “place, region”) = non-place/ a place of imagination (etymology found in https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/utopia)

\(^14\) I will try to define this in the section of literature review.
between eutopia and the world as it is, but between eutopia and nothing (..)”

(p.169)

From all the aforementioned it becomes obvious that Eutopia is the practical implementation of an idealized well-functioning place – the question then refers to: what we actually mean by a well-functioning place in 21st century? Sustainability holds great potential to answering the question, since the term is equally referred to the place of well-being (Robinson, 1990). However, looking at the relation between Eutopia and Sustainability, there is not research for linking the two concepts together, even if both approach human environments with the aim to improve them.

Let me now propose how I approach the concept of Eutopia in link with Sustainability: Eutopia is located everywhere, in here and now – as Mumford (1922) suggested, and it is related to any community of a village, city or island (and so on), that functions in such way to promote the well-being of its citizens. On the other end, I have characterized it as a vision, because it hasn’t been applied in reality yet (at least in mainstream human societies), but still, it is an Utopia. Sustainability, on the other hand, is a significant element of how Eutopian places function. Eutopia functions in a sustainable way, meaning that is making sure its “development meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Report, 1987, p.16 chapter 27). However, since Sustainability is as well a multi-dimensional term, a further investigation of the term and how it is related to Eutopia will be pursued during the study, to answer what actually Eutopia is consisted with and how it functions in praxis.

1.2 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Responding to Thomas E. Hill’s (2017) call for clarifying the specific character traits which are necessary to be nurtured in individuals to encourage sustainability transformations15, the aim of this thesis is to synthesize and propose the value framework of Eutopia, through investigating the particular values which are crucial to be fostered (at individual and collective level) to encourage transformation processes. In order to approach the aim of this study, empirical

15 I use the word “transformation” with the lens of Sustainability: transform unsustainable inhabiting of the planet to sustainable through changes on social structures, policies, energy consumption methods etc.
material was explored in a dyadic manner: firstly, through reviewing relevant literature referred to the values of sustainability (or equivalent) and secondly, through exploring the values promoted in the practice of an outdoor and Sustainability-based pedagogical project in Corfu – Greece, to integrate its pedagogical approaches in the creation of the framework. The value framework of Eutopia aims to be the foundation upon which Sustainability-oriented curricula can be built, or as a pedagogical toolkit for Educators to work towards.

The guided question of this research then is specified by the following:

What values are essential to be nurtured in individuals through pedagogical practices as a means to promote Eutopia?

To navigate during the study, the question was broken down in the two following questions:

1. What values are detected in the literature review process?
2. What values are detected in the pedagogical praxis of Corfu’s project and how are they nurtured in individuals (through the project’s praxis)?

At this point, it is important to clarify the concept of ‘‘pedagogical project’’: the recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in the emergence of pedagogical projects in Greece. The movement is nurtured by the need to adopt an alternative and democratic educational philosophy, with a focus on Sustainable Development and societal impact. These initiatives are referred to as ‘‘projects’’ because they represent goals, principles, strategies, methods and concerted efforts to propose an alternative approach of the Greek educational system and of the society at large with the potential to influence and bring about positive change. A pedagogical project serves as guiding framework for educators, ensuring coherence and consistency in educational practices, while it provides a shared understanding of the educational objectives, to foster a collaborative and purposeful learning environment. Being actively involved in the network of Education for Sustainable Development in Greece, I have decided to follow a new emerged pedagogical project, to explore its pedagogical practices and resonate its approaches to the value framework of Eutopia.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

To approach the question of this study, it is beneficial to explore the wider context of Sustainability vis-a-vis to theoretical frameworks relevant to HV and ESD. To begin with, the purpose of the first sections is to discuss the vision of Eutopia, as a concept related to Sustainability. Afterwards, the role of Education, as an instrument for shaping the society, as well as its catalytic influence in Sustainability changes, is considered important to explore. Elements of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), its pedagogies and methodologies, are as well highlighted. Finally, the last sections are investigating concepts and scientific problematizations emphasized in the relation of Sustainability and Human Values (HV).

2.1 EUTÓPIA AS A VISION WEAVED TO SUSTAINABILITY

Lewis Mumford (1922) in the book *history of utopias* he determines the concept of Eutopia as the Utopia in praxis. In the book, Mumford (ibid.) analyzes one of the most well-known utopian stories: More’s (1551) socio-political satire, *Utopia*, which I believe we should take as an example to further explore and comprehend what can Eutopia mean16. More (ibid.) places his utopia in an island-based community and structures its social functionality in a different way of living than the mainstream narrative, encompassing principles regarding social life, economical systems and political frameworks. He describes that in Utopia there is not private property, with the goods being stored in warehouses accessible to everyone. Every citizen of *Utopia* can take goods from the warehouses according to their needs, without having to pay or give anything in exchange:

“every father goes and takes whatever he or his family stand in need of, without either paying for it or leaving anything in exchange. There is no reason for giving denial to any person, since there is such plenty of everything among them; and there is no danger of a man's asking for more than he needs; they have no inducements to do this, since they are sure they shall always be supplied (...) once a year undertakes to examine the production of each region, and those regions that suffer from a scarcity of goods are supplied out of the surplus of other regions, so that indeed the whole island is, as it were, one family”.

Mumford (1922, p.43)

16 Considering that the two concepts are related: Utopia - the non-place; Eutopia - the good-place/implementation of Utopia
We can easily see that More’s utopian society, prioritizes its citizen’s well-being by structuring its social functionalities focusing on cultivating quality of life and social justice for all. Of course, More’s work holds great potential in determining how Eutopias can function in praxis, but to analyze extensively his work we need to dedicate a thesis.

Nonetheless, except Mumford (1922), Eutopia, as a neologism concept (Alvarez Manilla, 2022) it’s not widely investigated in recent literature. That is why I believe it can be beneficial to determine its principles through weaving the concept vis-a-vis to elements of Sustainability, since both are linked to places of well-being.

Let’s begin by emphasizing our attention to Social Sustainability (SocSus). SocSus has been described by Barron and Gauntlett, (cited in de Fine Licht Karl, 2019) as:

“social sustainability occurs when formal and informal processes, systems, structures and relationships actively support the capacity of future generations to create healthy and livable communities. Social sustainable communities are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic and provide a good quality of life”.

(p.22)

The aforementioned definition, encompasses the notion of establishing viable and harmonious relationships between humans and nature, as well as within the society itself, and it pertains to the functioning of a social system. It signifies the characteristic of societies, functioning well enough to continue thriving, while upholding values of peace, equality and justice. A human-created world, where every individual can experience a quality–of–life, as active members of the community. The key principles of SocSus include fulfilling of basic individuals and community needs; promoting equal economic opportunities; and fostering participatory (democratic) governance processes, that engage each individual in decision-making, in shaping social organizations and potentially, transforming them (UNESCO, 2014).

In the same course, I dare to associate Eutopias with social and individual autonomy introduced by Castoriadis, (1984). The concept of autonomy - and its antithesis, heteronomy -, was central in Cornelius Castoriadis’s philosophical thought (Marshall & Camus, 2017). He believed that the characteristic of contemporary societies is heteronomy and antagonism - social situations that need to be subverted from the public into autonomy (Castoriadis 1984). In heteronomous
societies, their nomoi (i.e., laws) have their origin in a source outside society, which means that have been determined by this ‘other’ (in Greek: heteros), (Klooger, 2009). But one may wonder: who is that “other”? Castoriadis points out that this is not the main focus. However, the important issue is to consider that members of the societies are excluded from the opportunity to reconstruct their institutions. Heteronomy as the opposite of autonomy, is referred to lack of freedom and lack of reflection. It is connected to hierarchy, conformity, and ideological veiling. In contrary, according to Castoriadis, autonomy refers to the state in which someone is the ‘‘author of its own laws’’ (ibid, p.18). His political thought, even if written many decades ago, it describes the contemporary social situation in a global scale.

So far, we explored that Eutopías are the places of well-being that prioritize social sustainability to provide a quality-of-life to its citizens. The characteristics of Eutopian societies are autonomy, fulfillment of basic individuals and community needs; promoting equal economic opportunities; and fostering participatory (democratic) governance processes, that engage each individual in decision-making. We now need to explore what Eutopia means for the human world of 21st century under the shade of climate crisis by asking: what does Eutopia mean for today’s world?

Great Transition Initiative (GTI) network proposes (among other) two desired future scenarios. GTI is an international network of scholars aiming to the critical “exploration of concepts, strategies, and visions for a transition to a future of enriched lives, human solidarity, and a resilient biosphere”, “by fostering a broad network of thinkers and doers, it aims to contribute to a new praxis for global transformation”.

GTI proposes Eco-Communalism and New Paradigm (Raskin et al., 2002) as two Sustainability-focused scenarios of our global future. As GTI has addressed, Eco-Communalism is referred to as:

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17 This is a topic that needs a whole thesis to be explored - I will keep it short.
18 The future global scenarios can be found online: https://greattransition.org/explore/scenarios
19 Further information for the scenarios by Great Transition Initiative (2023): https://greattransition.org/about/aims-and-background
20 Images can be found: https://greattransition.org/eco-communalism & https://greattransition.org/new-paradigm
“the green vision of bio-regionalism, localism, face-to-face democracy, small technology, and economic autarky. The emergence of a patchwork of self-sustaining communities from our increasingly interdependent world, although a strong current in some environmental and anarchist subcultures seems implausible, except in recovery from collapse”;

And New Paradigm, to:

“The New Sustainability Paradigm, the variant embraced by GTI, sees globalization not only as a threat but also as an opportunity to construct a planetary civilization rather than rely on the incremental forms of Conventional Worlds or retreat into localism. It envisions the ascendance of new categories of consciousness—global citizenship, humanity-as-whole, the wider web of life, and the well-being of future generations—alongside democratic institutions of global governance”.

The scenarios, integrate the principles of SocSus, autonomy (freedom to construct our laws and social functionality), direct democracy (participation in decision-making), and economic autarchy (self-sufficiency). They are referred to as self-sustaining communities, where people, economies and environments are in the center (Raskin et al., 2002).

New Paradigm future scenario, approaches globalization and technological development as an opportunity to adapt in eco-social challenges, through re-directing how human society
functions and organizes in relation to Nature. The image (see image 2, ‘‘New paradigm’’), shows a human society, functioning in such way, to meet its everyday needs, benefited by renewable energy sources and a human environment as being part with Nature - than being apart from Nature. On the other hand, Eco-communalism scenario, approaches the issue in community–based social organization. Communal gardens, watermills and windmills, solar panels, bicycle transportation etc., can ensure that a smaller society of a village/community functions well enough to thrive through the ages.

In a nutshell and after all the aforementioned, I ask again: what is Eutopia? - daring to propose a definition of the concept: Eutopia is every human-society that prioritizes to structure its functionality around creating a sustainable and just living for human and non-human world, encompassing the fulfillment of basic individuals and community needs, equal economic opportunities and participatory governance processes in shaping a society that benefits all its members and the environment.

2.2 IS EDUCATION A POLITICAL PRAXIS?

Approaching the issue from the perspective of educational sciences, a fundamental question arises, attempting to investigate the role of Education within the vision of Eutopia: what’s the role of Education within this vision? Inherently intertwined with political praxis, Education serves as a dynamic process, through which, we can critically reflect the socio-political structures and organizations, particularly in terms of how it shapes the preparation and development of future generations (Loucas, 2022). It is a means to foster a deeper understanding of the world’s complexities, providing us a space for introspection and contemplation, while enabling us to comprehend the broader implications of societal organization and the values that underpin, to encourage active engagement in shaping a more equitable and just society. By recognizing Education as a political praxis, we embrace its transformative potentiality to challenge existing power dynamics and contribute to positive societal change.

However, in order to open up for transformations through Education, it is crucial to firstly recognize that the current role of formal Education, is far from the aforementioned points. Within social–political systems (Loucas, 2022), Education is the tool to perpetuate social unsustainability and serves as the mechanism for reproducing existing unsustainable systemic functionalities, which have led to the situation we are in today. From early childhood, individuals are nurtured in educational processes which are forcing students to follow fixed, outdated pedagogical ideologies that excepts them to be static (sitting on a chair), passive
(lectures) and discouraged to develop any possible expression of imaginative thinking and creativity. Educational institutions primarily prioritize academic achievements, intellectual stimuli and promote individualistic mindsets through competitive strategies, such as standardized examinations used for quantitative evaluation. The dominant model of Education, is based in traditional authoritarian structures, where knowledge is approached as fragmented (including the division of individual subjects, students into grades, etc.), teacher–centered methodology, as well as reduced learning to sterile memorization devoid of any emotional connection with knowledge. It is evident that conventional approaches to educate and prepare people for life have failed to solve our personal, social, national and international problems.

Without critical reflection on the ends of Education, we will become “more effective vandals of the Earth” (Orr, 2004, p. 5). It is crucial, to redetermine the purpose of Education, and its role in society. While education serves as the instrument, through which we prepare the future citizens of our society, we must question, whether we are educating individuals to become active citizens and agents of change (UNESCO, 2018), or servants of the dominant unsustainable organizational system.

2.3 IS EDUCATION A CATALYST FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE?

Within the vision of Eutopia, Education is considered as the catalytic tool for achieving Sustainability changes (UNESCO 1996; 2018a; 2014). A statement that was supported by Castoriadis (since Sustainability was a newly emerged field, he was referring to democracies). As he believed, there can be no democracy without a democratic paideia 21 (Castoriadis, 1984) because a democratic change can only be embedded in our societies through Education and learning. So, how are we going to cause sustainability transformations if we don’t, firstly transform our educational systems?

Since 1992, United Nations (2012; 2017) envision progressive educational approaches with transformative societal effects and place Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as the key instrument to achieve changes. With the rise of enormous global eco–social challenges, we need to re-think Education’s role on fostering the knowledge, values, skills and attitudes needed for empowering individuals to contribute on sustainable and peaceful living. To achieve this aim, we need educational systems that respond to this urgent need, by framing suitable

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21 Originates from the archaic Greek pais, παις, and it means education or “rearing a child” .
“learning objectives and learning contents, introducing pedagogies that empower learners, and urging their institutions to include sustainability principles in their management structures” (UNESCO, 2017, p.1).

2.3.1 THE ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As UNESCO has addressed, “ESD is about shaping a better tomorrow” (2014, p.8). ESD aims to integrate its principles into Education and to foster in individuals the competencies of critical, systemic and futures thinking, as well as to encourage them to reflect on their own actions for promoting Sustainability (United Nations, 2012). The key for the cultivation of sustainable societies, are future generations which will be called “sustainability citizens” (Wals, 2015). Sustainability citizens, need to have key competencies, that will encourage them to engage responsibly in organizing the society. In line with this claim, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), focuses on fostering Sustainability competencies, that will support individuals to act in complex situations, to participate in socio–political processes, and to influence their societies towards sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017). ESD aims for a holistic and transformational pedagogy developed in interactive and student–centered learning environments. It asks for a minds–on and hands–on, action–oriented pedagogy, which supports self–directed learning, active participation and collaboration, problem–orientation, inter– and transdisciplinarity (UNESCO, 2017; Eilam & Trop, 2010).

In order to comprehend what ESD means in praxis we need to explore its elements. Thus, the following sections are dedicated in determining two vital principles of ESD, holistic and transformative learning.

2.3.1.1 HOLISTIC LEARNING

Holistic pedagogy (HP) is one of the embedded key–pedagogical approaches in ESD and it is a recognizable field of study and practice since early 1980s (Miller, 2004). As a pedagogical approach continuously on the making (Scott, 1996), integrates various philosophical orientations, worldviews and practices (Mahmoudi et al., 2012). This pedagogical approach has developed as a response to the conventional dominant educational practices and it seeks to
engage the whole child in the learning process with a balanced development of its physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and aesthetic aspects (Loucas, 2022).

Loucas, (2022) describes Holistic pedagogy as a dynamic, non–static, perpetual space–time consisted of interconnected entities which according to the changes they face, the wholeness is influenced. Here, something critical is introduced both for Holistic Pedagogy and ESD: the fluidity of holistic pedagogy implies that we are not referring to a well–fixed, delimited approach on Education but analogous – as Loucas addresses –, to the changes on the entities (meaning social, cultural, economic, environmental, etc.), new principles and strategies are added.

Moreover, Holistic pedagogy contributes on transforming power relations and social injustices. The role of the teacher is approached as a friend, a mentor, a facilitator, a mediator, a companion and not as a person of authority who leads and controls the pedagogical processes (Scott, 1996). It aims to challenge the present approach of conventional Education that sees knowledge as fragmentated, focused on separation and testing, and approaches learning process with inclusivity. Classes are structured in mixed–ability and mixed–age characteristics, without predetermined lesson time and breaks. Knowledge is seen as timeless that is developed through life experience.

Additionally, the school in HP (and thus, in ESD) is seen as a community embedded in a whole i.e., the community of the village/town, and the wider community of humanity. It is emphasized that each individual will explore its full potential, through being an active member of all the interrelated parts of the world. The students are positioned as both teachers and learners and are encouraged to be active, participatory, responsible, well–grounded, and self–aware members of the society (Kumar, 2023).

In HP, meaningfulness is promoted as an important factor in the learning process (Nava, 2001). It proposes that individuals learn when the experience of learning is important to them. Education should be a journey for both the teacher and the student, where they co–exist, co–explore and co–learn. Holistic Pedagogy seeks to nurture a pedagogical environment which promotes the natural unfolding of the child and supports them through exploring their human

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22 Internal and external aspects of children by encouraging them to explore their inner-self as well as relationships with other individuals and natural environments.
potentiality, while including all aspects of human experience, with the idea that educational experiences foster a less materialistic and a more spiritual worldview. The school’s community functions as the support to allow children unfold their own natural patterns. This pedagogy, recognizes the uniqueness of every being with its own personality, needs, abilities, desires, talents and dreams. This means embracing personal differences and encouraging respect of diversity (Mahmoudi et al., 2012).

Learning through experience is as well one of the main characteristics of Holistic pedagogy. Children are engaged as whole human beings in the learning processes in an active, multisensory way. Knowledge and wisdom are approached in a dynamic interaction with the world, which through human beings experiencing how life functions in relation to the society, the planet and the cosmos.

Holistic pedagogy proposes that Education should be based on democratic values by encouraging children to participate actively in the decision–making of their school community and the rest of society. It seeks to promote freedom, participatory democracy and global citizenship. A holistic school takes student’s voices into account and allows them to change their community according to their needs. The vision of Holistic pedagogy is in parallelization with what Education for Sustainability aspires to accomplish. Attempting to influence the foundations of Education, both approaches seek transformation by nurturing the continuous thriving of individuals and societies. Undoubtedly, Holistic pedagogy is the education for 21st century (Nava, 2001), directed towards cultivating human beings with a global consciousness, a vision of peace, love, and intelligence (ibid).

2.3.1.2 TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

Even if ESD, has been described as transformational (UNESCO, 2018, p. 40), that aims to nurture individual and societal sustainability changes, not many studies have examined the relation of those two concepts. Schnitzler (2019), believes that a bridge between the practices of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Transformational or Transformative Learning (TL) is a very valuable approach. In the context of sustainable development, where there is a call for individuals to transform themselves and the society they live in (UNESCO, 2014), the concept of transformative learning takes immediate attention.
The definition of transformative learning is inter alia defined by O’ Sullivan, (2003):

“Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of power relation in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy”.

(O’ Sullivan, 2003, p. 327)

The central principle in transformational learning is perspective transformation. Its aim is the qualitative shift in meaning–making through which individuals question their interpretations, beliefs, points of view, and habits of mind (Sterling, 2011), which are constructed according to cultural, economic, social, psychological and educational backgrounds and lead individuals to specific assumptions and judgements about the world (Mezirow, 1997). This process of the self–reconstruction, is conducted through critical reflection - the key concept in transformational learning practices (ibid.). Individuals need to think deeply about their experiences, the inner and the outer world, learn to be aware of their own and other’s assumptions and learn how to contest and redefine them.

In parallelization with the concepts of transformational learning, UNESCO (2014; 2018) points out that individuals need to learn how to understand the complex world they live in; how to deal with future uncertainties; be empowered to explore new ideas and approaches; form their own opinions and suggestions; raise their voice; contribute to transforming structures and claim for creating the future sustainable societies. For ESD, transformational learning is valuable, because it aims to stimulate an expanded and receptive consciousness – an open, participatory mind, through which individuals frame a multi–dimensional view about the world and construct their own meanings. They are transformed, as Mezirow (1997) described it, to autonomous thinkers.

In order for future generations to re–examine established socio–political systems, norms, social constructs and functionalities and re–construct a society, we need to explore practical applications of pedagogical approaches that enrich the aims and goals of the educational field
of ESD. ESD aspires to introduce learning processes that foster the transformation of unsustainable mindsets and the contribution in shifting the dominant paradigm towards Sustainability. Although Transformative pedagogical applications, were not linked to the big challenges of societal change and sustainability, but emerged from Adult Education and Mezirow (1978), its approaches are valuable for ESD because the role of metamorphosis is centric to both of the fields. In the field of ESD, applications of transformational learning practices are not widely investigated and a further analysis and implementation of key methodologies in transformative pedagogical processes would be beneficial for Sustainability.

2.4 EXPLORING THE INNER DIMENSION OF SUSTAINABILITY

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis focuses on the elements of Sustainability, that can be catalytic in causing transformations. It is undeniable that the issue of unsustainability, is a societal challenge, which requires to cultivate individual and social behavioral changes (Fischer et al., 2012; Horlings, 2015; O’Brien, 2018). This thesis focuses on individual internal transformations (that can be social as well in a long–run), the personal sphere of transformation, as Karen O’Brien (2018, p.156) has introduced, or the inner dimension of Sustainability, as Horlings, (2015, p.165) named it. In the following section, the focus is on discussing the role that values play in Sustainability transition processes.

Towards cultivating societal change for Sustainability, focus on large–scale transformations are required. Karen O’Brien (2018) proposed three interrelated and interacting spheres of transformation (illustrated in Figure 1), that all have to be taken seriously, if we want to achieve the paradigm shift. According to her analysis, the three transformational spheres are: the practical, political and the personal. The political and the practical sphere, are referred to the outer dimensions of Sustainability, which are the systems, structures, actions, interventions and

Figure 1: Three spheres of Transformations (adapted from O’Brien, 2018)
strategies we adopt to address the societal challenge. On the other hand, the personal sphere, it represents the inner dimension of Sustainability, the inside–out (Ives et al., 2020) transformations, which are referred to as individual and shared beliefs, values and worldviews that generate human behaviours and practices. The three spheres are concentric and interconnected (O’Brien, 2018), because the challenge has to be addressed both individually and systemically, by addressing shifts in people’s perceptions and assumptions about the world, as well as in rules, regulations, institutions and forms of social organization and governance.

Not much attention is given in the necessity of internal transformations compared with the focus that is given on external changes. It is crucial to comprehend that behind all the political decisions, global policies, norms and regulations, are individual human beings, and it would be beneficial for the societal challenge, if we focused on influencing how people think and act before focusing on influencing the decisions they take.

2.4.1 HUMAN VALUES

Moreover, the inner dimension of Sustainability, is related to the esoteric world of individuals and their values. Schwartz & Bilsky (1987) defined values as:

“a (1) belief (2) pertaining to desirable end states or modes of conduct, that (3) transcends specific situations, (4) guides selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and events, and (5) is ordered by importance relative to other values to form a system of value priorities”.

(p.551)

In a later study, Schwartz (1994) highlights that values serve as ‘‘guiding principles in the life of a person’’ (p.21). According to the aforementioned, Human values are described as central factors in generating individual behaviour and choices, as the driving forces of decision-making regarding the self, each other and the environment.

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23 An additional description of values is defined by Horlings (2015): “what people consider as important, to principles, priorities, processes of sense-making and value systems” (p.164).
Great Transition scenario (Raskin et al., 2002), specifically asserts value changes as a major tool and requirement for attaining a sustainable world, while Fischer et al., (2012) placed (personal and social) values, as the priority of transformations towards Sustainability. Particularly, as illustrated in Figure 2, personal and communal values and beliefs, are located at the basis in the pyramid of priorities for the transition process. He (ibid., p. 154) has stated: ‘‘a pyramid of priorities for societal change. Changes that can be easily and rapidly implemented (at the top of the pyramid) are less profound than those that are more difficult to implement (at the bottom of the pyramid (...))’’.

![Figure 2: Personal and communal values at the basis of societal change (adapted from Fischer et al., 2012).](image)

Nevertheless, first of all, we need to determine the categories that human values are consisted from. The most important theory of Human values is created by the social psychologist and cross–cultural researcher Shalom H. Schwartz and his team. According to their research (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), values are linked with everyday decisions taken by individuals. He attempted to identify a set of basic values that can be recognized globally in societies and defined a theory based on the approach of universality, which means that individuals share a common ground of values regardless their cultural, economic, geographical context etc. He theorized that basic values are organized into a system that underlines and can help to explain individual decision making, attitudes, and behavior.
(Schwartz et al., 2012). They suggested three universal requirements that derive different types of values: (1) “needs of individuals as biological organisms”, (2) “requisites of coordinated social interaction”, and (3) “requirements for the smooth functioning and survival of groups” (1994, p. 21).

Figure 3
Structure of Basic Human Values (adapted from Schwartz et al., 1994)

From those three universal requirements, they identified ten value types defined in terms of their motivational goals: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security - as illustrated in Figure 3.

Every value type is consisted by sub-categories referring to the motivational goal they express. For instance, the value of stimulation is divided in three sub-categories daring, variation in life and excitement in life. Table 1 describes the ten value-types and determines their sub-categories in terms of its conceptual definitions.
Table 1
Basic Human Values and its conceptual definitions in terms of motivational goals (own design adapted from Schwartz (2012) and Common Cause Foundation) 24 (CC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-DIRECTION</th>
<th>TRADITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Freedom - Freedom of action and thought</td>
<td>• Accepting My Portion in Life - Submitting to life's circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Choosing Own Goals - Selecting own purposes</td>
<td>• Moderate - Avoiding extremes of feeling &amp; action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Privacy - The right to have a private sphere</td>
<td>• Respect for Tradition - Preservation of time honoured customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creativity - Uniqueness, imagination</td>
<td>• Detachment - From worldly concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curious - Interested in everything, exploring</td>
<td>• Devout - Holding to religious faith and belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self Respect - Belief in one's own worth</td>
<td>• Humble - Modest, self-effacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independent - Self-reliant, self sufficient</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STIMULATION</th>
<th>CONFORMITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A Varied Life - Filled with challenge, novelty and change</td>
<td>• Obedient - Dutiful, meeting obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An Exciting Life - Stimulating experiences</td>
<td>• Politeness - Courtesy, good manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Daring - Seeking adventure, risk</td>
<td>• Self Discipline - Self-restraint, resistance to temptation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEDONISM</th>
<th>BENEVOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pleasure - Gratification of desires</td>
<td>• A Spiritual Life - Emphasis on spiritual not material matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoying Life - Enjoying food, sex, leisure, etc.</td>
<td>• Loyal - Faithful to my friends, group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-Indulgent - Doing pleasant things</td>
<td>• Meaning in Life - A purpose in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Responsible - Dependable, reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Forgiving - Willing to pardon others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Helpful - Working for the welfare of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Honest - Genuine, sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• True Friendship - Close, supportive friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mature Love - Close, supportive friends</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT</th>
<th>UNIVERSALISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Intelligent - Logical, thinking</td>
<td>• Inner Harmony - At peace with myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ambitious - Hard working, aspiring</td>
<td>• A World at Peace - Free of war and conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capable - Competent, effective, efficient</td>
<td>• A World of Beauty - Beauty of nature and the arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Successful - Achieving goals</td>
<td>• Broadminded - Tolerant of different ideas and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Influential - Having an impact on people and events</td>
<td>• Protecting the Environment - Preserving nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POWER</th>
<th>BENEVOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Authority - The right to lead or command</td>
<td>• Equality - Equal opportunity for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preserving My Public Image - Protecting my 'face'</td>
<td>• Wisdom - A mature understanding of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Power - Control over others, dominance</td>
<td>• Social Justice - Correcting injustice, care for the weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Recognition - Respect, approval by others</td>
<td>• Unity with Nature - Fitting into nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wealth - Material possessions, money</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECURITY</th>
<th>UNIVERSALISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National Security - Protection of my nation from enemies</td>
<td>• Inner Harmony - At peace with myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clean - Neat, tidy</td>
<td>• A World at Peace - Free of war and conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reciprocation of Favourites - Avoidance of indebtedness</td>
<td>• A World of Beauty - Beauty of nature and the arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family Security - Safety for loved ones</td>
<td>• Broadminded - Tolerant of different ideas and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of Belonging - Feeling that others care about me</td>
<td>• Protecting the Environment - Preserving nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Order - Stability of society</td>
<td>• Equality - Equal opportunity for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Healthy - Not being sick physically or mentally</td>
<td>• Wisdom - A mature understanding of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 Non-profit company that works in the intersection of culture change and human values. You can find more: https://commoncausefoundation.org
The importance that we place on every value influences our actions, behaviour and choices. Consciously but most of the time unconsciously, we act in a certain way because of our values. For example, our impulse to help a stranger and offer them our seat in the bus is influenced by our Benevolence values such as Helpful, while out hesitancy to help someone arises from Security values such as Health.

With the purpose to categorize the theory of Basic Human Values, DeGroot and Steg (2007) divided them into three broad clusters of values: egoistic (i.e., self-focused), biospheric (i.e., environmentally focused) and altruistic (i.e., social focused). Looking at the values-map from a Sustainability standpoint, the ultimate question arises: which values are vital for Sustainability? Corner et al., (2014) highlights the significant role of biospheric and altruistic values and states: “people who endorse self-transcendent values and who exhibit high levels of altruism are more likely to engage in sustainable behavior” (p. 413). Biospheric and altruistic values are equivalent to Schwartz’s benevolence and universalism encompassing values such as Unity with Nature and Responsible while egoistic are related to Self-direction, Power, Stimulation, Hedonism and Achievement.

It then becomes clear, that people who prioritize values such as A World at Peace; A World of Beauty; Broadminded; Protecting the Environment; Equality; Wisdom; Social Justice will possibly express Sustainability behaviors and engage themselves in environmental issues than those who prioritize values as Authority and Wealth.

Aiming to support the landscape of Sustainability values, Cuomo (2021) confirms Respect for Nature as a key-value, while Hartman (2021) introduces the importance of Cooperativeness defined as “cooperation to generate positive relationships that enhance public good” (p. 162). Creativity and open-mindedness are highlighted as well by Wright (2021). All the three values appear to agree with the three broad clusters of egoistic, altruistic and biospheric categories and the theory of Basic Human Values. Respect for Nature and open-mindedness can be integrated to Universalism, Cooperativeness to Benevolence, and creativity to Self-direction.

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25 A broad category for the values of Universalism and Benevolence (Schwartz, 1994)
3 METHODOLOGY

In this section, the method employed in this study is described, presenting the choices made for approaching the research question, as well as information about the sample, data collection methods, the analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 CHOICE OF STUDY DESIGN AND METHOD

Since the topic of study is encompassed in the new emerged field of Sustainability ethics, with limited information and data, the choice was based on elements of exploratory qualitative research. The primary purpose of the study, was to explore and obtain a deeper understanding of the research problem and to generate insights that can be further examined in future research. Exploratory research design, proposes a nested approach, where different data gathering tools are conducted (such as interviews, observations etc.), to generate and explore the research problem in a multidimensional way.

The aim of this study, was to synthesize empirical knowledge about the ethical dimension of Sustainability based on the theoretical framework and the data collected during my Ethnographic-based study in “Arillas” pedagogical project. Therefore, the methodology was created to frame a holistic view. Firstly, to base the core values of Eutopia on the findings during literature review and secondly, to investigate how “Arillas” pedagogical project integrates values in its action and what particular values they promote.

3.1.1 ETHNOGRAPHY

Conducting Ethnographic research, means that the researcher lives with the participants, and observes their every–day activities in detail (Fetterman, 2009). Since the goal of this Ethnographic study was to frame a holistic description of the project’s pedagogical ethos and praxis to integrate its approaches in the value framework of Eutopia, I adopted multiple Ethnographic methodologies: field observations, dialogues, video-stimulation recall and official document review. The philosophy that acted as the guide for my research, was the approach of embodied research methodology (Thanem & Knights, 2019). According to this philosophy, the researcher is diving into the Ethnographic research experience with all his/her senses. This philosophy approaches research, not only as an intellectual process, but also as a physical, spiritual, social and emotional (ibid.).
During the research, I lived with the pedagogue of the project and I had the opportunity to follow her action and portray a holistic view of her life, as a pedagogue and as a person. That enriched my perspective on how she embodies and integrates values in her pedagogical action and behaviour. During the Ethnographic study, I was engaged in the school’s daily activities and with the rest of ‘‘Arillas’’ learning community, i.e., the second pedagogue, the parents, the visitors, the friends (i.e., people who support the project).

The guiding questions of the research during the two weeks were: what was the motivation of ‘‘Arillas’’ pedagogical project to begin their action? How do they perceive Education and which values do they integrate in their action?

The focus was on the pedagogical activities and particularly, on perspectives, behaviours and interactions. Thus, all the methodology is chosen to enrich the data with different views, to create a whole image of how and why the project contributes towards Sustainability.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE

The participants were the members (i.e., students, teachers, parents and supporters) of ‘‘Arillas’’ pedagogical project, a learning community based in Corfu, Greece. The project, was established in 2022, by parents willing to step out from the public educational system and create an independent school focused on Democratic, Outdoor and Sustainability Education. It is a multicultural learning community with members from different nationalities and cultural, educational, economic and social backgrounds, ten students (3 to 6 years old) and two teachers.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The purpose of the data collection is to synthesize the value framework of Eutopia through weaving together empirical sources and exploring their relation:

1. Field notes in the form of observations, statements made by the participants and personal reflections taken by the researcher during the two–week ethnography;
2. Video–recordings to use the material for the video–stimulation interview;
3. Video–stimulation interview with the pedagogue, where the video–recordings were used as a stimulus to spark an interview in a form of discussion, between the researcher and the pedagogue;
4. Dialogues with the members (i.e., teachers, parents, friends, supporters and other members of the community) to gather personal insights, perspectives and reflections.
5. Official documents of the project.

3.3.1.1 FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND FIELD NOTES

Observations were applied as a tool to explore teacher–student, student–student (inter)actions, study the pedagogical project in their natural environment and generate a deep comprehension of their context. The observations were naturalistic and unstructured, aiming to capture the natural flow of the pedagogical activities (Williamson, 2018). When conducting observations, there are several approaches a researcher can follow in qualitative inquiry. Spradley & Maanen (1980), promoted the view that flexibility in roles is necessary in participant observation, and place the researcher in an observation continuum (see Figure 4). Aligning with this approach, this study followed the moderate participation technique, where the researcher “seeks a balance between being an insider and an outsider, between observation and participation” (Williamson, 2018, p. 414). My role as an observer, was dynamic and flexible, naturally changing from non–participation to participation, but always aiming to collect as much data as possible.

Figure 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spradley’s participation categories</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-participation (no involvement)</td>
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</table>

Non-participation: Researcher has no involvement with the people or activities studied. Spradley gave examples of ethnographic studies of television programs but modern examples could involve technologies such as video-taping. An example of this type of observation is included below.

Passive participation: Researcher is present but does not participate or interact to any great extent.

Moderate participation: Researcher seeks a balance between being an insider and outsider, between participation and observation.

Active participation: Researcher seeks to do what other people are doing, not merely to gain acceptance, but to more fully learn the cultural rules of behaviour.

Complete participation: The researcher studies a situation in which they are already ordinary participants (Spradley, 1980, pp. 58-62).

The study started out with a broad approach of just being in the space and feeling it, which gradually narrowed on the specific directions, as the research progressed. As a researcher, I naturally changed from role to role (see Figure 7), depending on the needs and group dynamics. For instance, if a student invited me for free play, the answer was positive and offered opportunities to zoom in the observations in a student’s perspective. A balance between being
an insider and an outsider observer was in the center of the focus, and most of the time, I was only an outsider observer (passive participation). The observations were focused in participant’s bodily conduct (i.e., how they move in space, how they behave and interact with each other). The most important guideline for the observations was to explore the pedagogical praxis and document everything that appears interesting. Following the path of Thanem & Knights (2019), the study followed the approach where researcher’s role may fluctuate according to the context and the situation. They suggest that researchers should be present in a multisensory way, and allow their senses to open up. Thus, the observations were focused in participant’s bodily experience, posture, sounds, auras, aesthesis etc.

Inspired by embodied–based research methodology (Thanem & Knights, 2019), the observations were focused on investigating and describing bodily movements and actions, facial expressions, gestures, and appearances of the participants. Particularly, the following questions led field observations and guided me on observing and recording the (inter)actions:

- How do I make sense of the pedagogical environment?
- How participants move and behave?
- How do participants interact with each other?
- What values are embodied in the person’s behaviour and interactions?
- What is the role of the teacher in the pedagogical praxis?
- How does she encourage values?

Furthermore, field notes were recorded during observations. Again, a flexible approach was adapted (Bryman et al., 2007), where the researcher is changing recording strategies naturally. The system followed was changing according to the dynamic between “mental notes” and “full field notes” (ibid., p. 444), and the recordings were written both in English and Greek. Mental notes are useful when it is inappropriate to be seen taking notes – thus, the notes were taken in the end of the day. In such cases, I was following the “Jotted notes” (or scratch notes) technique, where thoughts, ideas
and observations are recorded in small pieces of paper until they can be written on the main notebook. The main note taking technique was full field notes, which are detailed analytic notes, taken on site or written down the same day, and were used as the main data source. The notes were focused on the pedagogical praxis and the wider context of the community. My impressions, ideas, interpretations and feelings were recorded as well. Image 3 represents an example of notes taken during my ethnographic study in “Arillas” pedagogical project.

3.3.1.2 VIDEO-STIMULATION DISCUSSION

To zoom in and collect personal insights of the project’s pedagogue (Radisic & Bucal, 2016), a video–stimulation recall (VSR) was conducted by interviewing the teacher in the form of a discussion. Parts of the pedagogical flow were filmed and the footages were used to stimulate a conversation between the researcher (me) and the teacher. The video–recordings were used for three reasons: for the researcher to re–visit the material during the analysis of the interview; as the tool to have access in recordings and be able to go back and analyze deeper the observations; and for the video–stimulation recall with the pedagogue.

Video–stimulation recall is a tool through which the researcher can enrich the data with exploring decision–making and in–depth understanding of teacher’s beliefs. It is a collaborative information creation, that extends understanding of the concepts explored, and allows the participant(s) to analyze the activities in detail and construct shared understanding with the researcher. The VSR interview was recorded and transcribed.

The video-recordings were used as a stimulus to start a reflection dialogue with the pedagogue and create insights from her own perspectives and experiences. Our dialogue was conducted as a semi–structured and unstructured interview (01:14:46 length), where there was free space to discuss and embrace the natural flow of the conversation, although the researcher had constantly the research questions on mind. Inspired by Nguyen et al., (2013) the following questions were asked while conducting the video–stimulation recall:

- what happened there?
- why did you do that?
- what were you thinking?
- what was going on at that moment?
The purpose of the video–stimulation recall, is to spark a discussion between the researcher and the participant. In this study, it was used as the instrument to deeply interview the teacher’s experience and explore aspects that can’t be reached from the researcher’s perspective. It is a great tool that allowed the teacher to observe her own teaching and learning processes (Radisic & Baucal, 2016) and helped her to recall her own thoughts. Thus, the researcher can explore what the teacher feels, thinks and why she made the decisions she made. VSR is a stimulus material when we want to explore behaviours and the driving forces of those behaviours, to access deeper layers of behavioral expressions and investigate pedagogical decision–making. It, finally, holds great potential for raising discrepancies between our impressions during observations and participant’s explanations of those observations.

3.3.1.3 DIALOGUES

Dialogue as a method for empirical research has been applied extensively in research (Delong, 2020). In this study, data were collected through dialogues between me and the participants (one to one conversation, group discussions – where the researcher was observing them talking to each other), to gather their personal insights and perspectives about perspectives, opinions, thoughts, ideas, school policies, visions, missions etc. During the two weeks of the study, the researcher was naturally asking questions and discussing with the participants regarding their motivation to create a school, positions on Education and educational systems, personal experiences with school, values, visions, their future goals etc. The researcher discussed with most of the parents, the pedagogues and members of the community. To generate personal and truthful insights, the discussions were unstructured and not recorded, to keep them unofficial in the context of an everyday conversation. The researcher wanted to interact with them naturally and in a form of informal discussion, ask questions and receive raw answers. Extensive notes were taken after the dialogues. During the two weeks of Ethnographic research, discussions were conducted every day with the participants to frame a multi–dimensional and holistic view of their positions.

As Socrates was the master of dialogue, his guidelines addressed by Wortel & Verweij (2008), were followed during the study:

1. Take your time: a dialogue is a form of slow thinking aimed at depth;
2. Listen carefully and ask questions;
3. Put yourself into the other’s place and see the world through your correspondent;
4. Each participant’s contribution is based upon what he or she has experienced, and to a lesser extent upon what he or she has read or heard;
5. Be gentle: give people time to think;
6. Be sensitive: listen to what is said and how it is said.

(p.59–60)

3.3.1.4 OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS
Lastly, during and after the ethnographic study in the field, copies of the official documents were investigated that represent the vision, mission and official statements of the pedagogical project. They have been shared to me in a form of a physical document (on–site) and online document via email (after the study).

3.4 ANALYSIS
This section describes the thesis’s analysis methodology, i.e., thematic synthesis, as well as the concept of rhizomatic thought which has served as a significant inspiration for the analysis process.

3.4.1 THINKING LIKE A RHIZOME
The analysis is inspired by the concept of rhizomatic thought. It is a concept introduced by the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book "A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia”, (Deleuze et al., 1980). It presents an alternative model of thinking and understanding the world that opposes traditional hierarchical and centralized structures.

The term "rhizome" from (ancient Greek ῥίζωμα, rhízoma) refers to a type of plant structure characterized by its horizontal and interconnected root system. As the two theorists have addressed: “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other” (ibid., p.7). The rhizome emerges by pulling its multiform shoots out of the Earth without a predetermined point of growth and in multiple directions. Unlike a tree, where the shoots grow upwards and there is a clear, predetermined path and communication between its parts (underground and above ground), the parts of the rhizome proceed in parallel, with no hierarchical priority assigned. Deleuze and Guattari use this botanical metaphor to illustrate their concept of thinking and knowledge formation, as an antihierarchical, interconnected complex system, where knowledge, ideas, and connections spread horizontally rather than vertically.

In the case of the analysis, the concept of rhizome is applied in the following ways:
1. Non–linear analysis: rhizomatic thought challenges linear and reductionist approaches to analysis. Instead of breaking down phenomena into isolated parts, researchers can adopt a non–linear analysis that explores the interconnectedness and multiplicity of factors. This involves considering the relationships, feedback loops, and emergent properties that arise from complex systems;

2. Multi–perspectival analysis: rhizomatic thought emphasizes the importance of multiple perspectives. In analysis, this means considering various viewpoints, interpretations, and voices. The researcher was engaged with diverse stakeholders, seeking out alternative narratives, and incorporated multiple perspectives to gain an in–depth understanding of the phenomenon under analysis;

3. Mapping and visualization: similar to research, mapping can be a useful tool in analysis as well. The researcher created visual representations that capture the connections, relationships, and flows within the analyzed phenomenon. This helps in identifying patterns, overlaps, and gaps, and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complex web of interactions;

4. Network analysis: rhizomatic thought highlights the importance of networks and connections. The researcher applied network analysis techniques to explore and understand the relationships between elements within the analyzed phenomenon. This involved examining networks of actors, ideas, resources, or any other relevant factors, to uncover structural patterns and dynamics.

3.4.2 SYNTHEIZING PEDAGOGIES

Since, the Ethnographic data gathered through multiple sources and the aim of the study is to synthesize the value framework of Eutopia, the method of thematic synthesis is the most suitable. Thematic synthesis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying and organizing recurring themes or patterns within the data (Bryman et al., 2007). It is commonly used in thematic analysis, which aims to uncover and understand the underlying themes or concepts present in qualitative data. Thematic synthesis involves identifying and organizing recurring themes or patterns within the data, such as symbols, values, norms, beliefs, behaviors and social interactions. It involves coding and categorizing data based on key–concepts or themes that emerge from the analysis. The method of thematic synthesis allows researchers to develop a comprehensive and coherent understanding of the underlying structures, dynamics, or meanings present in the data.
The Ethnographic analysis, was guided by Fetterman’s guidebook (2009), which represents that Ethnographic analysis includes a lot of detailed description presented in narrative form. What is included in the description, will depend on what kind of research questions the researcher is trying to answer (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The coding was axial, which means that the researcher continually modified and reshaped emerging conceptual frameworks from which data were synthesized and organized.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Taking the ethical standards of the Swedish Research Council (2017) into account, a document was sent to the participants to inform them about the details of the study and considerations concerning their rights and (physical and intellectual) well-being. The document consisted:

- a description of the study and its goals;
- a description of the method of data collection;
- the assurance of the anonymization of all the data concerning the participants;
- the right for the participants to withdraw from the study at any point;
- the right for the participants to erase the transcript of the interview;
- the right for the participant to consult the final results of the study.

By signing the document, the participant and the researcher agreed to those conditions. During the Ethnographic study, the researcher observed the participants during the activities and took notes, and recorded them for the purpose of video-stimulation recall. For all the aforementioned, participants were verbally clarifying their consent for each of the data collection method. During the observations, the researcher was careful about taking notes only for the matter concerning the research and not interfering with the lesson or bringing discomfort to the participants, carefully choosing the position of the observations.

From the researcher's and analyst point of view, there are some points, I needed to consider regarding the quality of data, the analysis, problems of the research approach like honesty, objectivity, openness and respect for intellectual property, as well as, social responsibility:

1. Quality of the data

The researcher needed to take into account and ensure that the data is accurate, relevant, and reliable, by using reputable sources and validate data for accuracy before incorporating it into
research, while addressing any data biases that might be present in my dataset to prevent biased results.

2. Analysis
The researcher tried to employ robust and appropriate analytical methods that align with my research goals and questions while documenting my analytical processes thoroughly, making it possible for others to replicate and verify the results.

3. Honesty and Objectivity:
The researcher has put all efforts to be honest about research methodologies, data sources, and limitations, while striving for objectivity in analysis process and interpretation. Allowing personal biases to influence my findings, was avoided as much as possible.

4. Openness and Transparency:
The researcher shared the research process, methodologies, and data openly with the community, whenever possible and pre-arranged my research design and questions to minimize the risk of biased reporting of results.

5. Respect for Intellectual Property:
The researcher hoped to properly attributed sources and respected copyright and intellectual property rights when using other researcher’s work or data. For the primary data collected, the researcher ensured having the necessary permissions to use it for research purposes.

6. Social Responsibility:
The researcher has considered the potential societal impact of the research, willing my findings to have positive consequences for individuals or communities, while striving to maximize benefits for human society by engaging in ethical research that contributes positively to society and respects human rights.

7. Inclusivity and Diversity:
The researcher ensured that the research is inclusive and representative of diverse populations while avoiding to reinforce stereotypes or biases in research and analysis.
4 FINDINGS
In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented divided in two sub-sections, *Eutopía as praxis* and”’Arillas”’ pedagogical project. The first sub-section, *Eutopía as praxis*, describes data collected from dialogues with the teacher, the parents and the wider community of Arillas. Its aim is to highlight the ethical background of the participants as individuals but also, as a community. The second sub-section, “Arillas pedagogical project”, describes results from field observations (taken from field–notes), the video-stimulation discussion (with the teacher), and official documents. Its aim is to highlight the values that Arillas project prioritizes in its pedagogical praxis.

4.1 EUTÓPIA AS PRAXIS
LEARNING THROUGH V Í O MA

This chapter is named “Eutopia as praxis” because its intention is to show the practical sphere of the vision of Eutopia (i.e., practical application and/or praxis). People with diverse cultural, national, social (and so on) backgrounds, gathered in the island of Corfu to implement their Sustainability vision in here and now, making it a mission of their lives.

The teacher from “Arillas” pedagogical project, believes that values cannot be forced in a person. Particularly, she described:

“We cannot say, now I am teaching about solidarity in a form of a lecture, we need to be - to embody solidarity. And then, learning emerges”.

She approaches pedagogy, as a learning process stimulated through *v i o m a*\(^\text{26}\) by allowing students to grow in their natural potential and learn through their experience, actions and interactions:

- Teacher: “I am there to encourage and enhance the pedagogical environment, and to offer support when the child asks for it”.
- Researcher: “How do you materialize this value in your pedagogical action?”
- Teacher: “I observe from a distance, and they know I am here, if they need me”.

\(^{26}\) Her own words. The Greek word for embodied experience. In that case - *being* solidarity.
She believes, that all the didactical experiences emerge organically through experience and the pedagogue “as a mediator, is called to hold the space for children to self-regulate and explore their own solutions with trust in them–selves and to each other”\textsuperscript{27}.

\subsection{4.1.1 ARILLAS PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT – GREECE}

The pedagogical project of “Arillas”, is a communal school (or “learning hub” as the teacher calls it) based in Corfu and started its activity in August 2022. The idea of this project emerged out of the common need of ten families to create a “different school” for their children based in freedom and communal life. Coming from a variety of cultural, social, economic and educational backgrounds, ten families gathered in Corfu from different parts of Europe with a common motivation to co–create a school. A shared point observed during our dialogues was their need to ensure that their children will grow happy, close to nature and engaging freely with creativity.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Researcher: “so why not in a conventional school?”}
\item \textbf{Parent: “because conventional schools are like gambling, you can’t be sure which teacher you are going to get, and how they will behave towards children. Through making a school, I can be sure that my child will grow in a safe environment”}.
\end{itemize}

The school is located outside of the village, in a big field surrounded by olive trees, flowers and herbs. There are certain spaces in the field (platforms, stairs etc.), where Ionian Sea is visible. The school’s buildings are made by recycled wood and materials found locally such as bamboo, rocks and ropes. The architect aimed to intervene as little as possible in the natural processes of nature and found ways to benefit from them. Thus, water is collected from the rain (considering that it is often raining in Corfu) and every construction creates a sense of harmonious co–existence, where nature and human are in balance. The pedagogical materials are made of natural materials such as wood, fabric, recycled paper etc. Lastly, there are two compost stations in the field.

The organization characteristics of the school is self–organization and self–management with antihierarchical/horizontal elements, which means that the members are responsible to both decide and materialize the decisions\textsuperscript{28}. Particularly, the teacher stated (in one of our dialogues)

\textsuperscript{27} Her own words during our discussions.

\textsuperscript{28} Data collected from official articles as well as assemblies and discussions I was present.
about their organizational characteristics: “we live in the same dream where we co-create, co-decide, co-achieve our shared vision and mission”.

As they have mentioned during our dialogues, the way they organize their learning community is their suggestion for how society could be organized:

“a suggestion of how we envision a democratic-based social organization”, I heard some of the members stating.

There are two decision circles: the core circle which is consisted by the two pedagogues and two parents. The core circle is responsible for all the decisions of the school. The rest of the parents were committed to trust the core circle. Every made decision is transmitted to the general circle where all parents and the pedagogues are participating. Moreover, the community uses social media for internal communication, introspection and reflection. The pedagogical framework of the school and official statements where all co–created by the members in sociocratic methods29.

Currently the school has seven students in the ages of 2.5 to 5. As mentioned before, all students are coming from different national and cultural backgrounds such as Greece, Germany, Italy, England, Russia and Holland. During daily activities intercultural interaction flows were observed, where students were communicating in several languages depending on the condition, such as Greek, English, German, Italian, Russian. Non-verbal communication and body language was often used both from students and the pedagogues. Moreover, an interesting observation, was how students changed languages depending on with whom they were communicating with. For instance, there was a student who spoke both Greek and German. With the Greek students she communicated in Greek and with German students she communicated in German. All changes were conducted organically, unforced, genuinely.

Their vision is described in the following statement30:

[... ] a visionary democratic school we are creating on the picturesque island of Corfu, [... ] our mission is to revolutionize education by providing a nurturing and

29 a governance method that promotes psychosocial well-being in the organization. It draws upon consent rather than voting during assemblies.

30 Addressed in their official pedagogical framework, can be found online: https://www.boschettodemocraticschoolcorfu.com/about
empowering environment where students are at the forefront of their own learning journey. Inspired by the principles of democracy, [...] dedicated to cultivating a vibrant community where every voice is heard, valued, and respected. We believe that students should have an active role in shaping their education, and that by engaging in democratic processes, they develop essential skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and decision-making. Situated amidst the stunning landscapes of Corfu, we offer a unique educational experience that harnesses the island's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Our school embraces the idea that learning extends far beyond the confines of a classroom, and we strive to create an environment where students can explore, discover, and connect with the world around them. At our school, students are encouraged to follow their passions and interests, as they play a pivotal role in co-creating their curriculum. Through personalized learning plans, we empower students to delve deep into subjects that inspire them, fostering a sense of curiosity and a lifelong love for learning.

Our dedicated team of educators will act as guides, facilitators, and mentors, providing support and guidance to students as they navigate their educational journey. By fostering a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere, we promote a sense of belonging and encourage students to become active participants in their own education.

Central to our philosophy is the belief that democracy should be practiced at all levels of the school community. Students have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, shaping school policies, and organizing events. Through regular assemblies, democratic discussions, and student-led initiatives, we foster an environment that values diverse perspectives, encourages dialogue, and nurtures a sense of responsibility and civic engagement.

Beyond academic pursuits, we offer a wide range of enriching experiences. From outdoor education that explores Corfu's natural wonders, to cultural exchanges and community service projects, students develop a holistic understanding of the world and their place within it. We aim to inspire a sense of social and environmental consciousness, fostering future leaders who are committed to making a positive impact on their communities and the planet [...]

Their pedagogical framework is inspired by Democratic and Holistic Education and thought, as well as Outdoor and Sustainability influences. The school is not following any certain methodology or system but creates a spectrum of educational tools and different approaches, depending on the need of the students, centering in one aim that determines their action: to
grow in freedom. Their philosophical and practical aims are inspired by democratic and holistic learning, autonomy, commitment to the community and trust through communal symbiosis.

4.1.1.1 THE COMMUNITY OF ARILLAS

The following findings are generated from dialogues with the members of the community. Even if the members of “Arillas” learning community are coming from different cultural, educational, social (and so on) backgrounds, their answers during our discussion shared common ground to each other.

The people of Arillas are connected “with the air, the water, the fire, the sky, the soil, their being as humans and their natural energy flows”\(^\text{31}\). They are engaged with herbs and their medical properties, the universe and the planets, the Earth and its energetic activity, all in relation to their bodily experience, as well as they organize rituals to celebrate natural elements.

During my days hosted in the community, I was invited in one of their woman circles, where they gathered around the fire to celebrate Walpurgisnacht (a tradition coming from Germany). This ritual was made to give gratitude to their ancestors, open the portals for angel spirits, share their feelings/thoughts and put wishes in the fire. At the beginning, one of the members, faced sequentially the North, the South, the West, and the East and said, “I call the spirits of the North (the South, etc.), I call them in our fire, I thank the spirits, for their strength and support they give to us”. The circle, continued for several hours, and every member could offer different kinds of things to the fire, as a gift to the spirits (such as herbs, nuts, food and wine).

The people of “Arillas” community, believe in the symbolic strength of the herbs. During a dialogue between the teacher and a parent, the teacher mentioned an important meeting she had with the major of the island, to establish a collaboration for the support of the school. That day, in order to make sure her meeting will go well, she followed a ritual with the essential oil of the plant bay leaf (i.e., Laurus nobilis). As she has described, that plant used to be the symbol of victory since ancient Greek ages. According to her description, when she arrived in the major’s house, she saw that it was decorated as well with bay leaves. “Sign of victory”, she said. All of the members of the community are resonating with the symbolic and natural healing properties of plants and that seemed to be transmitted to children. One other day, I observed a student

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\(^{31}\) Data collected during our dialogues.
asking to drink Aloe vera (a plant connected with pain soothing), because she wasn’t feeling well. Or another example of a parent, bringing self-picked sage to the teacher, for her to cleanse the pedagogical space.

4.1.1.2 THE TEACHER

As she has described, she is not preferring the word teacher but more the word mediator. The teacher of ‘‘Arillas’’ project, appears as a deeply spiritual person. For her, spirituality serves as the driving force for her pedagogical behaviour. ‘‘I facilitate the pedagogical praxis as a ritual, as something holy’’, she once described to me. I was observing her every morning, meditating to ‘‘cleanse her–self and to prepare her being for the pedagogical ritual’’ while cleansing the pedagogical environment with the Ionian breeze and with burning sage, to prepare the space for children. She said that through this ritual, the pedagogical environment ‘‘is becoming tabula rasa ready to be colored with children’s energies’’. During our dialogues, I asked about her individual values and how she integrates them in her pedagogical action, she answered: ‘‘I embody the values of how I experience the world, and how I feel my body and the space and my presence in it’’.

She believes that everything is an opportunity for learning. For instance, I observed an interaction between her and a student. One morning, a student wasn’t willing to come indoors and join the team. The teacher immediately reacted, ‘‘do you want to go and feed the cats?’’, an invitation that enlightens a value described in her own words, ‘‘I try to act for and through love and care, and to embrace the challenges as an opportunity to learn something’’.

4.2 THE VALUES OF ‘‘ARILLAS’’ PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT

The values are categorized during the data analysis process into three main themes: i) Autenérgeia: listening actively to the child’s needs; ii) Synér gia: cooperation means unity; and iii) Symbiosis: oneness to each other and to nature. The quotes address the findings during the field observations, the dialogues, the video-stimulation discussion and the document investigations.
4.2.1 AUTENÉRGIEIA
LISTENING ACTIVELY TO THE CHILD’S NEEDS

The first observed value is named Autenérgeia\textsuperscript{32}. The word originates from the ancient Greek word αὐτενέργεια, comprised by the words αὐτός, autós, which means person and ἔργον, érgon which means action. Etymologically, the word introduces that the individual action comes from one's free will. In other words, it is referred to self-directed choice and autonomy\textsuperscript{33}.

The value of Autenérgeia: listening actively to the child’s needs was detected in the project’s pedagogical praxis. As the teacher has shared, “through freedom of choice, we can nurture self-regulation”. “Respecting autonomy and self-regulation, is one of our highest priorities in this school”, she also added during field observations. In this school, children are cultivated to form the pedagogical flow according to their needs and wills, while the teachers “act as guides, facilitators, and mentors, providing support and guidance to students as they navigate their educational journey”. They are there to “hold the space” and to support them when they need to.

Through “embracing conflicts” they “encourage children to transform them into learning opportunities”, as well as “trusting the natural flow”, as she was oftenly repeating, “we need to be patient when children are adapting in changes”. Particularly, she expressed during our video-stimulation dialogue:

“’There were times, we have been through great challenges in our interactions, also because of the language barrier. And I was like, it’s okay to feel like this now - to feel angry, it is okay to not knowing how to communicate, it is okay to not knowing what you want right now’. [...] “There were times that a child didn’t want to communicate at all with anyone, the child only wanted to climb up a tree, to stay there, cry there, because there (the child) was feeling safe. And I just said to the child, I am here for you, the team is here for you whenever and whatever you

\textsuperscript{32} Pronounced aftænærgeia.

\textsuperscript{33} Translated in English from Greek by the researcher. The etymology is available online: https://el.wiktionary.org/wiki/αυτενέργεια
need, we are waiting for you when you are feeling ready, and we will continue loving you”.

And she added:

“Sometimes children take distance from our common space to find their inner balance and I encourage those moments. I encourage them because this is beautiful, I say – what you do is beautiful, to take time and distance from us and you are telling us your own way that, now I want to be alone, I don’t want anyone to come here”.

Autenèrgeia, is a value based in freedom, self-regulation, the opportunity to “listen to your own needs” and choose for your own self. The teacher appeared to embody the value, through her slow and gentle bodily conduct, oftenly transmitting the message that she is there if someone needs her, “I am here if you need me, just say my name!” “When I need help, I communicate it”, she was repeating to the students. One day, a student brought some games in the school (student 1). Another student (student 2) approached and expressed the desire to play with the games (student 2). The teacher encouraged him to ask for it. However, student 1 expressed the need that she wants to play alone. The teacher, encouraged student 2 to respect and give time to her, and when she feels ready, she might share with them the games. The interaction between students was:

- Student 1: Can we see your games?
- Student 2: No!
- Student 1: We just want to see them!
- Student 2: No!
- Teacher: Okay, let’s go, she doesn’t feel ready yet.

The pedagogical value of listening to my own needs is being encouraged in “Arillas” pedagogical project. The following phrases were repeated oftenly during the pedagogical flow: “how do you feel now?”, and during (individual and collective) challenges “is there a way we can solve it?”.
4.2.2 SYNÉRGIA
COOPERATION MEANS UNITY

The second observed value is named Synérgia. Synérgia means synergy (in English) and is consisted by the Greek words σύν, sún, with/together, and ἔργον, érgon, action. The word refers to “working together and/or collaborating”34.

In “Arillas” pedagogical project, it is believed that social transformation can be nurtured through community life, collaboration and mutual aid. The ability to learn from each other; to understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others; relate and be sensitive to others, deal with conflicts in a group; as well as to facilitate collaborative and participatory problem–solving, encouraging to support, learn and take care of each other. An example is the following interaction:

— Student 1: Aiuto!

Said one student (i.e., help in Italian). However, the pedagogue couldn’t approach because she was doing something else that time. That was quickly recognized by another student:

— Student 2: I can help!
— Teacher: thank you (student’s name).

During our video–stimulation discussion, I showed to the teacher a video of an interaction that happened between three students and her during the pedagogical praxis. A student (student 1 for this example), asked the teacher to give a solution for her problem. She wanted a basket to make it a home for her little puppy, but only one was available at that time, taken by another student (student 2). As the teacher proposed different solutions, student 1 didn’t accept any of them. Then the teacher, invited another student (student 3) and asked him to help them overcome this situation. The dialogue between me and the teacher during our discussion:

— Researcher: “what happened here?”, “What did you do?”;
— Teacher: “I saw student 1 bringing a request in our pedagogical flow, student 2 a challenge and me being asked to propose a solution. Student 3 was invited to take the role of the helper, the supporter, the facilitator, because his friend needed help, and he (Student 3) eventually encouraged her

34 The etymology can be found online: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/synergy
(student 1) to search together, explore, and share an adventure, I was so moved’’;

— Researcher: “what was your role here?”;

— Teacher: “I became the mediator. Because I tried different options but she (student 1) didn’t accept them. Then, I had the intuition to invite another student to support her. I really believe in the pedagogical potential of peer-to-peer support rather than adult-to-peer support. I am not here as the adult, to bring solutions, but to mediate, encourage them to find their own solutions”.

4.2.3 SYMBÍOSIS
ONENESS WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH NATURE

The last value detected in ‘‘Arillas’’ pedagogical praxis is named Symbiosis. From the Greek σύν, sún, together and βίος, víos, life (or bio in English), it means living together/co–existing.35

In the pedagogical project of ‘‘Arillas’’, learning how to share the same space with care and altruism is a priority pedagogical value. During the daily activities, the students are encouraged to share games, water, food – “when they feel ready to do so”.

Free-play is integrated in their pedagogical praxis, as a tool to nurture Symbiosis:

“We believe in the transformative power of free play [...] they learn to collaborate, negotiate, and resolve conflicts, building strong social connections”36.

During our video-stimulation discussion, the teacher expressed how she nurtures the value of Symbiosis. She referred to two students as an example of how she integrates the value in her pedagogical behaviour, to foster understanding of “my personal space” and that “this space is someone else’s”. In their pedagogical praxis, the guideline of “body space” was constantly being expressed from the teacher. As a tool “to learn how to recognize and respect individual boundaries, to listen and take care of each other”, as she was addressing. Particularly, she shared:

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35 The etymology can be found online: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/symbiosis
36The official statement can be found online.
https://www.boschettodemocraticschoolcorfu.com
“For me is important to make it clear, this is my body space, and that is someone else’s body space. I try to remind them that, if someone doesn’t feel okay in this game, it is important to communicate it. When someone’s limits begin to diverge from the other’s limits, there I need to intervene, to remind to them, - I am expressing when I need to stop playing this game, I am saying, now it’s not okay for me, – I constantly say to them, my limit, my space, my body”.

And she continued:

“I create a context, a safety bubble. I am here to ask, what do you need? – To remind, I am here to listen to you. I recognize how you feel (...) I am here to create a safety zone for them. Because what is wild play for me, it doesn’t mean that it is wild for a child. I try to observe and keep distance. I feel like a satellite. That I am above them - observing and sending messages when it’s needed”.

When the teacher referred to her role as a satellite, she was referring to her intention to create a balanced role between non-intervention and intervention. As I observed, her bodily conduct in such cases was to move around the students (–as a satellite), and intervene when is needed to remind them some guidelines, as in the previous example: body space.

Additionally, through democratic decision-making, (co-)decision skills are nurtured. Every Friday, the class has its general assembly to co–decide which film they are going to watch. The students are encouraged to suggest films, while the teacher facilitates and documents all the suggestions. When all the suggestions are documented, they vote to decide with which film they will start.

At “Arillas” pedagogical project, while they learn how to co–exist with each other, they learn how to co–exist with nature. The value of Symbiosis with nature is highly prioritized in their pedagogical praxis. At this school, when someone wants to go out for a walk–in nature, the will is embraced and becomes a possible mission for everyone:

“Organically what is expressed, I observe it, I embrace it and invite in the stimuli whoever wants to be engaged. If someone does not want to follow, it is okay”, the pedagogue said to me in one of our dialogues.
Additionally, the official document of the school, establishes how they approach the value of *Symbiosis* with nature:

“With the island’s temperate climate and diverse flora and fauna, our democratic school encourages children to engage in nature-based play, promoting physical well-being, creativity, and a sense of wonder. Corfu’s natural beauty becomes an extension of our classrooms, inspiring curiosity, exploration, and a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things. At our democratic school in Corfu, we believe that the natural world is a powerful teacher, offering invaluable lessons in resilience, adaptability, and sustainable living” […] “with nature as our guide, we nurture young minds, fostering a deep sense of respect, stewardship, and harmony with the environment” […] “surrounded by the wonders of nature, our students have the opportunity to connect with the world around them, fostering a deep appreciation for the environment and its preservation. From exploring forests and meadows to discovering the secrets of the coastline, Corfu offers endless opportunities for outdoor adventures and experiential learning.”

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37 The official statement can be found online [https://www.boschettodemocraticschoolcorfu.com](https://www.boschettodemocraticschoolcorfu.com)
5 DISCUSSION

To complete the aim of the study, which is to identify the (individual and communal) values of the value framework of Eutopía, that can contribute in supporting Sustainability transition processes, the findings now are addressed in the light of the theoretical inputs presented at literature review. This chapter is divided in two sections: Shaping human beings through fostering values and Bringing visions into reality.

The main findings of the study, are the three identified values which were detected in ‘‘Arillas’’ pedagogical project, Autenérgeia: listening actively to the child’s needs, Synérgia: cooperation means Unity and Symbiosis: oneness to each other and to Nature that examined vis-à-vis to the theory of Human Values, can support us in establishing the value framework of Eutopia. The theory of HV proposes a universally recognized value framework, though not directed to Sustainability, it can be useful for the creation of the values of Eutopia, because it encompasses globally recognized individual and social values. This means that the theory of HV, offers us a strong basis to begin with and navigate us in constructing a value framework that can be useful for Sustainability and its transformative practices.

5.1 SHAPING HUMAN BEINGS THROUGH FOSTERING VALUES

For the purposes of this study, we need to process the findings described in the previous chapter, to construct the value framework through the lens of the vision of Eutopia. Particularly, we need to center in the certain values that appeared in data and go back to the research questions:

What values are essential to be nurtured in individuals through pedagogical practices as a means to promote Eutopía?

To navigate through the study, the research question was divided in three questions:

What values are detected in the literature review process?

What values are detected in the pedagogical praxis of Corfu’s project and how are they nurtured in individuals (through the project’s praxis)?

Through this study, it becomes evident that in order to shape the citizens of Eutopía, who live in harmony and respect with them–selves, their co–humans, Earth and all living creatures, we need to create pedagogical practices to cultivate individuals who possess certain qualities and values (UNESCO, 2014), which will be determined in an ethical consensus framework, serving
as a guide for navigating through the socio-ecological challenge we are facing. A framework that focuses on individual and societal values, attitudes, and behaviors that will support the global Sustainability transition. As Leiserowitz et al. (2006) has addressed, the study of sustainability values, attitudes, and behaviors will play a critical role in the emerging global dialogue about what the good life should mean for the varied peoples and places of Earth.

The analysis has shown that “Arillas” pedagogical project prioritizes values through its pedagogical praxis, as well as through the teacher’s pedagogical behavior and action. In parallel with Holistic Pedagogy, the project appears to approaching the role of the teacher as a friend, a mentor, a facilitator, a mediator, a companion and not as a person of authority who leads and controls the pedagogical processes (Scott, 1996). Seeing the role of teachers through these lenses, we can comprehend the significant influence they have in value-based learning processes. In the case of “Arillas” project, the teacher embodies the pedagogical values and acts as an essential part of the learning processes.

5.2 THE VALUES OF EUTOPÍA

Researchers (Fischer et al., 2012; Hill, 2017; Leiserowitz et al., 2006) invited academia to investigate and identify the values of Sustainability, as a means that holds unique potential in supporting the global dialogue about what a good life should mean in praxis for the people and places of the Earth. This study enlightens this not widely investigated invitation and proposes a value-oriented framework consisted by three core individual and social qualities, hoping to contribute positively in current scientific discussions.

Through the analysis, it becomes evident that values are located at the basis of change processes towards Sustainability (Fischer et al., 2012), though are slower and harder to be changed but can cause bigger changes (illustrated in Figure 2). Seeing the issue from this lens, drive us to discover that the cultivation of Sustainability values through pedagogical practices should be in the center of our focus, if we want to cause changes in the long run (of course in combination with faster and easier changes, such as political decisions).

The value framework of Eutopia is synthesized based on the theoretical ground of Schwartz et al., (2012) and the Ethnographic data. The following statement, acted as an invitation for the framework to be built upon the theory of Human Values:
“The theory of Human Values gives researchers the option of working with as large or as small a set of values as is appropriate to their purpose. They may choose to work with all 19 values or to combine values and work with the original 10, the four higher order values, or even two subsets (e.g., growth vs. protection values”).

(Schwartz et al., 2012, p.3)

Inspired by the theory of Human Values (see Figure 3 and Table 1), the values of Eutopia are created focused on the personal, social and ecological aspects of the map. The personal value of Eutopia, i.e., Autenérgeia, is parallelized to the value of Self-direction38 of Schwartz et al., (2012), while social and ecological values of Eutopia i.e., Synérgia and Symbiosis, are parallelized to Universalism and Benevolence39 in Schwartz et al., (ibid.). Corner et al., (2014) suggested, that biospheric and altruistic values (such as Benevolence and Universalism in Human Values map), play significant role for Sustainability. This study has shown, that indeed, Synérgia, the value of mutual aid and cooperation (altruistic value) and Symbiosis, the value of learning how to co-exist in peace with each other and with nature (biospheric value) are significant for “Arillas” pedagogical project and, possibly, for Sustainability-oriented changes processes. In addition to biospheric and altruistic values, the study has shown that egoistic values, (in this case) Autenérgeia, the value of autonomy, is significant for the project’s pedagogical praxis and can play catalytic role as well.

Autenérgeia
As mentioned before, the word originates from the ancient Greek word αὐτενέργεια, comprised by the words αὐτός, autós, which means person and ἔργον, ergon which means action. It introduces that the individual action comes from one's free will, as a self-directed and autonomous choice.40

Autenérgeia is integrated in the category of egoistic values (de Groot & Steg, 2007) and it is a value related to self-direction and self-regulation. The value of Autenérgeia is inspired by “Arillas” pedagogical project and its praxis. It becomes evident from the data, that “Arillas” project, prioritizes Autenérgeia in its praxis, as a tool to promote self-directed decision-making

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38 See Table 1: Self - Direction - thought and action
39 See Table 1: Universalism - nature, care and tolerance; Benevolence - caring and dependability
and learning. As Castoriadis (1984) pointed out, autonomy (in our case, Autenérgeia) plays essential role in causing societal transformation, especially when the world’s dominant social functionality is heteronomous, i.e., others deciding for ourselves, our life, our Education, our global future etc. While children are treated globally as un-ready and un-aware of their own self, a different approach and its transformative potential has to be recognized. The project’s pedagogical praxis, enlightens that through nurturing the value of self-direction (Autenérgeia in the values of Eutopia) in Sustainability-oriented pedagogical practices children are fostered to be ready for a future of transformations (UNESCO, 2018), being educated in an environment that empowers them to prioritize embracing, caring and respecting their own needs and learn how to communicate them with others.

The value of Autenérgeia can be significant for the vision of Sustainability, because people need to be educated in how to listen actively to themselves, and be empowered to claim for changes in their communities, as UNESCO (2017) has envisioned them to do. The educator’s role through this process, functions as a facilitator to discover the context of ideas and the belief systems that shape the way we think about our life on the planet as a species and on encouraging children to imagine alternative perspectives for themselves and the others. The value of Autenérgeia, can act as a base-value, integrated by educators who aim to cultivate autonomous thinkers and doers, while encouraging them to critique and change status–quo structures and social norms (Rodríguez Aboytes & Barth, 2020), while becoming socially responsible thinkers.

Synérgia

The second value of Eutopia is integrated in the category of altruistic values (de Groot & Steg, 2007). The value of Synérgia is inspired by “Arillas” pedagogical project. The project’s pedagogical praxis suggests the value of Synérgia, as a tool towards nurturing collaborative work and decision-making. The research has shown the school’s strong focus on collaboration and togetherness in its praxis. While in traditional educational practices, children are nurtured in antagonism and competition through their school years (Loucas, 2022), we can easily comprehend the transformative potential this practice may have on a person fostered in an educational environment where cooperation and unity is promoted.

The pedagogical project of “Arillas”, offers us insights of a democratic–based school community, where children are part of their school’s functionality and organization, deciding and forming their educational processes. The school is seen as a community embedded in a
whole i.e., the community of the village/town, and the wider community of humanity. Their assemblies are organized for them to co-decide and are centered around relationships (egalitarian, open and democratic), to teach them how to function in a group, where every member needs to have its own rights in decision-making, while working together to meet everyone’s needs. This can be a tool through which children are encouraged to be active members of a (global) community, responsible, well-grounded, self-aware (Kumar, 2023) to collaborate and create the future world as they want to.

*Symbiosis*

The last value of Eutopía is integrated in the category of *biospheric values* (de Groot & Steg, 2007). The value of *Symbiosis*, is an extension of *Synérgia*, determined by its eco-social direction. The value is referred to the necessity of learning how to co-exist with each other and with nature, with love, care and respect. It is hard to specify the project’s practices towards cultivating the values of *Symbiosis* in detail because of the limited time spent on their site. However, the analysis has shown that the pedagogical praxis of “Arillas” approaches the cultivation of *Symbiosis*, through embodying the value in its daily activities, e.g., compost station, recycling - one of those small pedagogical practices that can cause bigger impact -, and by bringing oftenly the classroom outdoors, while also, encouraging children to go outdoors when they feel to, is a way through which the pedagogical project mediates for students to meet Nature in a (self)explorative way.

5.3 BRINGING VISIONS INTO REALITY

Figure 5 illustrates how I perceive the values of Eutopia. The spiral is created to show how everything is connected to each other. Since values are an important cause of Human behavior/action and Human behavior/action is linked to Sustainability, those three are also integrated in the spiral. *Autenérgeia*, *Synérgia* and *Symbiosis* can as well overlap to each other because while we

![Figure 5: Values spiral (own design)](image-url)
focusing in fostering one of the values through our pedagogical practices the other possibly will be cultivated as well.

The three core values of the value framework of Eutopia are the beginning of my research journey. This framework, acts as an invitation for researchers to work together and identify the values of Sustainability, that will act as guiding principles for Educators (and not only) and their pedagogical practices. The value framework acts as the basis, upon which, pedagogical practices, methods and future learning opportunities can be created.

Envisioning a sustainable society, is followed by the question: how are we going to create the world we want to live in? While the world becomes more and more complex under the shade of climate crisis, we need to collaborate to materialize a vision for our global future. Indeed, times are hard for alternative, independent and self-organized schools - but when have they not been? Examples abound such as Ferrer's school, Montessori's, Korczak's, Freinet's, Neil's, etc. The desire to create different schools from the late 1800s in Europe and America arose from the need to change society, the need for a different individual and social Education. These educators fought to free the child from the construction of childhood and adult expectations, supporting children to manage the contradictions of the world, to gain critical awareness and also, to empower themselves for a future full of changes.

6 CONCLUSION
This study, delved into the inner dimension of Sustainability, to explore the unknown territory of the ethical dimension of Sustainability and Sustainability (individual and communal) values. Its purpose was to identify the particular character qualities that is essential to be fostered in individuals to support the Sustainability shift. By following the pedagogical praxis of a new emerged educational project in Corfu, Greece, value-oriented pedagogies were explored, centered and developed from and for the vision of Sustainability.

The educational project of Corfu, envisions and implements the school of the future, while critically exploring concepts, strategies, and visions for a transition to a society of enriched lives, human solidarity, and a resilient biosphere. The need for revised ways of thinking, learning, acting, and being, drove them to establish a new school paradigm and guided their project’s development.

As the Sustainability global challenge arises, we need transformative scenarios for understanding contemporary world and shaping its future, while redirecting the global
trajectory towards a socially equitable, culturally enriched, and ecologically resilient planetary civilization. Education for Sustainability is the key–instrument through which we can encourage this transition.


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