Chapter 1
Community Education, Active Citizenship, and Immigration:
Learning to Participate in Community Contexts in Times of Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to report on the results, conclusions, and recommendations of a case study on community education experiences that are currently being carried out in the territory of Catalonia (Spain), in which migrants have opportunities to exercise their political rights of association and participation. The authors assume the hypothesis that community education is the most appropriate context to run an inclusive participation model, as opposed to a more segregating model in which the participation of migrants takes place within of their own communities, without interaction with the rest of society. By using a literature review, group interviews, and observations, they have identified the success factors underlying the observed good practices and, secondly, indicated which ones can facilitate or become a barrier for an effective development of migrants' participation practices.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF CITIZENSHIP IN A CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CRISIS

There is a general consensus on what the migrant integration model citizenship should be in Europe: this not only involves guaranteeing the social rights of migrants (education, health, housing) and economic (work, social care) but also political (Zapata-Barrero, 2001; Council of the European Union [CEU], 2004; British Council & Migration Policy Group [BC & MPG], 2006; Illamola, 2011; García-Juan, 2016). Integrating into a European society means participating in its communitarian life, getting involved in its political or trade union organizations, being part of the neighbourhood associations of its community.

However, the implementation of this political principle has not always been followed by tangible results: it is estimated that the quality of political participation of migrants in the EU has ranged between 23 and 28 points out of a total of 100 in the last five years (Migrant Integration Policy Index [MIPEX], 2020). The reasons for that are complex. The deep crisis of liberal democracies affects all its dimensions, immigration as well. To understand the challenge, we need to know what are the main factors that are seriously limiting the achievement of migrants full integration.

Political Crisis: The Devaluation of Democracy

The intellectual, social, political and economic institutions in which we live face the challenges of political and economic structures that emerge from globalization, and must deal with the consequences of international mobility, acculturation and interculturalization processes (Guilherme, 2002). It is about an implosion of modern societies (Baudrillard, 1996), a transformation of a modernity installed in a dynamic of differentiation that drifts towards parameters of de-differentiation, dissolution of frameworks and disintegration of former relationships, the end of an era addressed to universalism and the conception of a unified humankind (Morin, 1995; Nussbaum, 2020).

Although the second half of the last century revealed the beginning of these processes, what we realize in the current century is that globalization has somehow collapsed. In the economic sphere, we observe both a reallocation and fragmentation of production, which have been intensified after the economic crisis associated with the coronavirus pandemic. In the ideological sphere we assist to an increase of polarization. After a long period in which the political power was in hands of an ambiguous centered ideology (social democracy, liberal conservatism), the current trend is in favour of extremism. One evidence can be found in the latest European voting calls, which shows us how moderate socialism and liberal conservatism are losing ground in favour of fascism, ultranationalism and populism on the one hand (Griffin, 2020), and the green and feminist parties on the other. We are living in an era of polarization (Brandsma, 2017) and confrontation (Salmon, 2019), a new political approach based on feelings instead of ideas (Davies, 2019). In this context, appealing to migrants' political participation may seem go against the trends.

Social Crisis: The Breakdown of the Social Contract

As we said before, our time is also a time of both social fragmentation, and acknowledgement of pluralism simultaneously (Bauman, 2005). The social project of modernity, shaken by its own contradictions, has given birth to a society installed in risk (Beck, 2002). Western societies in a globalized world are a place where diversity is no longer underestimated and not fully integrated into pre-existing structures yet. The current frames of political and social participation belong to a former social model that is an outcome of modernity, and they need to start a social transition into alternative models where collective participation, and not individualism, is the core of social dynamics. Economy and politics are getting de-globalized, but citizens are willing to become more cosmopolitan than ever (Krastev, 2020).

We cannot justify that individualism is anti-humanism. We agree with Rosavallon (2012) that individualism, understood as an autonomy that establishes a separation from otherness, is not an individual attribute, It only makes sense if it becomes a social capacity, within the framework of an active reciprocity. However, the neoliberal drift caused by latest capitalism has transformed this notion of the individual into a symbolic prison, and has generated a generalized phenomenon of social fragmentation. We have hurt

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