

Analysing the integration process of migrant youth in Catalonia: a socio-educative approach

Reflexiones sobre el proceso de integración de la juventud extranjera en Cataluña: un enfoque socioeducativo

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the process of integration among migrant young people in Catalonia aged from 14 to 18. For this purpose, a study was made, using a survey and four discussion groups probing the points of view of both the migrant and native youth. Results are organised around a model of integration based on four core dimensions: structural, cognitive-cultural, social and of identity; and confirm that a society which is plural in its beliefs, convictions and forms should be reflected in democratic systems and social and educational policies based on a concept of integration as reciprocity and understood as a fundamental principle in the management of diversity.

Keywords: Integration, youth, immigration, racism, diversity.

Resumen

Este artículo presenta un diagnóstico del proceso de integración de la juventud migrada de entre 14 y 18 años en Cataluña. Para ello se ha realizado un estudio por encuesta y las aportaciones de cuatro grupos de discusión desde la doble perspectiva de los extranjeros y del resto de jóvenes. Los resultados obtenidos fundamentan un modelo de integración basado en cuatro dimensiones básicas: estructural, cognitiva-cultural, social y de identidad. Estos resultados nos confirman la necesidad de que una sociedad plural en sus creencias, en sus convicciones y en sus manifestaciones debe quedar reflejada en los sistemas democráticos y en unas políticas sociales y educativas basadas en un concepto de integración como reciprocidad y las bases de la integración entendida como principio fundamental para la gestión de la diversidad.

Descriptorios: Integración, jóvenes, inmigración, racismo, diversidad.

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1. Introduction

This paper¹ aims to address the need to understand further the integration process of young Maghrebis migrating to Barcelona. Due to its location on the European Mediterranean, the city and its wider geographical area (Catalonia and the Spanish State) are a field of both contact and rupture (Nair, 2006) with a wide variety of migrants, especially those from the African continent (Idescat. *Padrón municipal de habitantes en Cataluña*, Catalan Municipal Residents' Register, 2015).

The growth of migration and mobility in the last fifty years has wrought a structural transformation in our societies, which are now economically advanced, socially complex, diverse, and currently immersed in a deep political-ideological identity crisis. Unfortunately, it would be inaccurate to assert that this change has brought with it the best possible form of integration for migrants, or legislation in accordance with the principles and basic values of human rights (Cachón, 2009; Essomba, 2012).

In this context, and in line with the Common Basic Principles for Immigration Integration Policy (BCPI) agreed by the Council of the European Union (Council of Europe, 2004 and 2009), this paper is grounded in a theoretical basis which positively links migration, development and citizenship with the aim of achieving successful management of migration from a standpoint of intercultural dialogue and exchange (Aparicio & Tornos, 2000; Favell, 2001; Borgström *et al.*, 2002; Torres, 2002; Palou, 2011a & Portes, Celaya, Vickstrom & Aparicio,

2011; Essomba, 2012; Pérez & Sarrate, 2013).

The recent increase of migratory flows has coincided with a profound shift in the criteria according to which European societies define their own cohesion. Neo-liberal globalization has brought decisive changes in this area: the state has lost a large part of its control over labour markets (Beck, 2002; Sassen, 2001) and this has led to a fundamental change in our societies' criteria for cohesion, with the commitment to civic values emerging as a key factor for social cohesion and for channelling political participation, at least in the regulatory field. An integration policy of this type starts from an idea of who we are, what binds us together and as a consequence what any new prospective citizen should share with us for their integration to be successful (Innerarity, 2016, p. 41). This favours the development of integration policies based primarily on an intercultural model, aiming to surpass both the cultural monism of assimilationism and the absence of dialogue of a ghettoised multiculturalism (Council or Europe, 2008).

Spain is no exception, and there is growing interest in regulations of this type for managing cultural diversity. Thus recently we have seen the emergence of two sets of public policy designed to address the integration of the migrant population, one for the whole of Spain (the 2nd Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration 2011-14) and the other more specifically for Catalonia (the 5th Four-Year Plan for Citizenship and Migrations: Horizon 2016). These plans have in common the challenge of promoting a "concept of

citizenship which embraces the non-national population,” thus reinforcing human capital and equal opportunities in public initiatives in order to enhance human rights and social cohesion. As the most recent *Report on Migrant Integration in Catalonia 2015* (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016) states, the goal is to embrace a logic of diversity in these services, not only in order to boost coexistence and social participation, but also to make sure that new arrivals can identify with the country’s project for the future, and to make this viable.

These recent sets of regulations, arriving at both European and individual state levels, are driven by a view of integration which we share, since we see it as a voluntary process requiring equal opportunities accompanied by real access to a common public culture where “the other” is recognized in her/his difference and in her/his equality in order to contribute to and enrich society as a whole (Bilbeny, 2010; Samper, Moreno, & Alcalde, 2006; Torres, 2002): “Democratic integration is the process through which individuals and ethnic-cultural groups voluntarily become part of a society with equal opportunities and real access to rights and duties, goods and services, responsibilities and positions; in such a society these individuals and groups can participate, equally and reciprocally, in a common public culture, and receive recognition of and support for their own particular demands” (Bilbeny, 2010, p. 77).

Rather than passively being part of a society, this implies actively becoming part of a greater whole; and this in turn involves participating in conditions of

reciprocity and sharing goods and services, rights and duties, and obligations and responsibilities, in a context of mutual respect, recognition and support in cultural diversity. Integration is not solely incorporation into a state; neither is it merely identification with one particular cultural tradition. We integrate to the extent that we take part in and feel part of a single society which includes us and which at the same time we construct with our own contribution and respect for the common rules of work and coexistence.

In the current state of social flux, interpretation of the “immigration issue” in Spain and the EU since the end of 2008 has had to address new risks brought by the economic crisis, with its effects (above all) on employment, its dangers of social exclusion and its (relatively) new discourses on immigration, all wrapped in a “climate of fear” (to borrow Wole Soyinka’s expression) which brings in its wake new challenges for political approaches to integration policies in host societies (Cachón, 2009). As Essomba (2012, p. 139) warns, there is currently a “gap” between discourse and reality: “a tension between policies of inclusion aimed at immigrants —when these policies exist— and the social practices of citizens in general, since the local majority which directly undergoes the impact of the arrival of new residents (normally from low-to-middle social classes) feels the subjective threat of loss of rights and wellbeing.”

Given this social conjuncture, and bearing in mind the socio-educational perspective from which we have approached this paper, here we set out to develop an

analysis aimed at advancing policy in general and socio-educational policy in particular, on the basis of data obtained from a study of young migrants' integration in Catalonia. For this purpose we see Martínez (2006) multidimensional model as especially interesting, as it structures successful integration around four key elements, each with a set of concrete factors for practical application:

The *structural dimension*, referring to equal opportunities in the individual's participation in professional activities and social and political institutions. The concrete variables of this dimension are: legal status (citizenship and residency); position in the education and training system and the labour market; economic resources; and access to housing and welfare. The *Report on Migrant Integration in Catalonia 2015* (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016) also considers the employment, economic and political aspects of the issue when assessing the state of integration in Catalonia, and concludes that among the most important factors favouring this process employment is key, since most immigrants come to the country for work and economic reasons, and therefore access to employment is fundamental as it affords the basic resources for integration to get under way.

The *cognitive-cultural dimension*, encompassing the learning of necessary cognitive skills and familiarity with the host society's culture. The concrete variables in this case are: knowledge of the language/s; political values; cultural values and rules; and religious beliefs and lifestyles. The *Report on Migrant Integration*

in Catalonia 2015 (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016) states that in building an integration-oriented society, mastery of the social language and the lingua franca (Catalan and Spanish) is the first step towards integration.

The *social dimension*, referring to the individual's social relations within and outside her/his community and her/his access to means of integration. The variables of this dimension are: the extent and type of family relationships; contact with members of the individual's own community; contacts with local residents; friendships; and connections with civil society associations and bodies. The social dimension, as a way of looking at the positive effects of sociability, stresses the most common function attributed to social capital as the source of benefits mediated by a network spreading beyond the immediate family (Bourdieu, 1980). In the process of integration social relationships acquire a central role, together with learning the language and work. Thus the *Report on Migrant Integration in Catalonia 2015* states that: "Connecting with mixed social networks which enable the individual to develop relationships with the local population favours integration; while it is also true that access to these networks is not easy for migrants" (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016, p. 126).

The *identity dimension*, which includes the subjective factors of belonging and personal identification with the community. The variables of this group are: the subjective perception of belonging (national or cultural); attitudes of immigrants towards the host society and

vice-versa; the type and degree of identification with it; and the orientation of the host society towards intercultural relations (Martínez, 2006). For integration to be effective and for immigrants to feel that they really form part of the host society it is essential for them to feel valued and recognized in their original identities also (Esteve *et al.*, 2008).

From the standpoint of this model and in the field of socio-educational management, the challenge is to rebuild a public, shared discourse which sees diversity as part of our cultural capital, to be valued and promoted by means of a range of responses which would be: open, taking different cultural models into account and making them visible; inclusive, making equality between all citizens possible; and democratic, easing civic participation for all citizens in building the whole society (Bartolomé & Cabrera, 2003).

The scenario we have outlined, with positive European and state policies for integration, urgently requires effective means of solving the problems currently found in educational and community actions. Our analysis provides insights into the present and future, primarily from the socio-educational field; insights which may be of use in complementing the indicators and dimensions identified above, for a realistic assessment of the current state of integration and to bridge the gap between public policy and administrative practice on the state and regional levels (European Commission, 2013 and Council of Europe, 1997). One can never stress enough the fundamental role of schools as a vehicle for the social and cultural integration of immigrants.

2. Method

The main purpose of this study is to uncover insights which can help to make advances in this challenge, on the basis of an analysis of young migrants' integration process in Catalonia, specifically among young people between 14 and 18. This overall aim is articulated into two more specific objectives:

1. To identify the key factors in the integration of young migrants in Catalonia by means of a survey taken from two points of view: that of the young migrants and that of locally-born young people.

2. To investigate the factors favouring and hindering integration and the specific features of the integration process of young people in Catalonia through the optic of the key dimensions of integration (Martínez, 2006, and Palou, 2011b).

In order to address these objectives a single methodological approach would not have been sufficient. According to Sabariego (2004), new issues in education and social studies are creating new ways of doing research which bring together different research traditions. Thus for this descriptive-analytical study, we combined work on qualitative and quantitative data to suit the object studied and so that one might complement the other (Bericat, 1998).

To address the first objective an intentional sample of Catalan schools was made, since this is a privileged context where young people between 14 and 18 congregate naturally, and represents a heterogeneous arena with a wide

diversity of personalities, characters, cultures, tendencies, etc. An extensive sample (3,830 young people) was needed, calculated according to the population frequencies for the specific group of young people this study focuses on. Thus in the sample the proportions of young people in terms of their origins reproduced the proportions of each group in the general population.

An in-depth diagnostic study was essential in order to identify the key aspects of the current state of integration of young migrants in Catalonia; and this enabled us to define the fundamental factors and specific features of their integration process from the viewpoints of both

the migrant youth and the rest of the group.

In order to achieve the second objective we set up four discussion groups aiming to analyse in depth how participants experienced the integration process and what they saw as the key factors favouring their integration.

Below we explain the process of data collection and the conditions deriving from the study design:

– For the purposes of the survey we administered the Social Cohesion among Young People Questionnaire (Palou, 2010) to a sample with the following features:

TABLE 1. General breakdown of the sample.

Elements	Total
N. of surveys administered	3,830
Age	14-18
Schools and education centres	52 – ESO (compulsory high school) 72% – Bachillerato (pre-university studies) 24% ²
Student origins	– Catalonia 73% – Maghreb 10% – Latin America 9% – Other parts of Europe, Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa 3% – Other parts of Spain 3%

Source: Own elaboration.

The questionnaire was validated by judges and its internal and content validity confirmed. The instrument had 41 items addressing the most important

variables in the study, which includes the Knowledge of Cultural Diversity Scale, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.715. Due to the nature of the variables Chi-squared

contrast tests were carried out, in addition to non-parametric contrast tests for the Scale.

– The discussion groups were held in four of the most relevant educational institutions for their mix of social and intercultural relationships between migrant adolescents and local youth: two high schools (offering both compulsory secondary education and pre-university studies) and two non-formal education centres. The sample was intentional and the discussion groups were facilitated by two members of the research team (one chairperson and another researcher responsible for recording exactly what was said).

In this empirical context the study was carried out in three main stages:

First stage: selection of information sources and gaining access to them.

Second stage: data collection through the surveys and discussion groups.

Third stage: analysis of data collected and development of conclusions as a basis for making recommendations in favour of coexistence and social cohesion.

With respect to the scientific rigor of the study, in the design we presented the elements of the descriptive-analytical diagnostic study in order, and we justified its multimethod approach, with the complementary combination of quantitative and qualitative data, which also enabled the triangulation of the results (presented in the following section).

3. Results

Here the results of the study are presented under four headings corresponding to the four dimensions of Martínez' model (2006) in order to describe the social integration process of young migrants in Catalonia: the structural, cognitive/cultural, social and identity dimensions.

3.1. Structural dimension

The regulatory aspects of integration were approached according to participants' views on who may be seen as a citizen. Thus 31.3% were of the opinion that a citizen was a person with their "papers in order," followed by 30.8% who saw this as a person "living and working here." This concept of citizenship linked to "legalized" administrative status was accompanied by a shared image of migrants as a social category especially associated with the current context of economic-financial crisis. Biased social representations and negative views, images and attitudes towards immigration were confirmed, conforming to a logic of excessive differentiation (Delgado, 1998) which problematizes those who were seen as different on two levels:

Firstly the *discourse of social alarmism*. Almost half the people born in Catalonia/Spain, when asked about what they thought of migrants and what they thought society's opinion was, said that they were seen as thieves, criminals, troublesome, problematic, bad, violent, causing fights, bringing problems, lacking in respect and making coexistence more difficult: "I don't care if they come here

(...) what I don't like is (...) that the ones who come here come to rob...' "And what we don't realise is that (...) you've got all kinds everywhere (...) yes, normally it's true that immigration is associated with vandalism, in general..." (native student, 1st year of *Bachillerato*).

Apart from this, the migrant youth confirmed this socially constructed perception of immigration linking it to poverty and lack of education and culture, under a vision which is both uniform (seeing all immigrants as the same) and stereotyped: "This one's Colombian, so he's a low-life type, that one's Chinese, so he's quiet and shy and you can do anything you like with him – that's how people see it..." (student of Uruguayan origin, 1st year of *Bachillerato*).

Secondly the *discourse of competition*: immigration is associated with the loss of resources (housing, work and access to social services), and this exacerbates rejection of migratory flows. Thus most of the young locally-born people affirmed that society responds more favourably to immigrants (they are offered social assistance, subsidies and grants; they receive more aid than others; work and housing is found for them, etc.). This critical attitude towards the supposed favourable treatment of immigrants (positive discrimination) is one of the factors that most hinders their integration.

Regarding *migratory projects*, it was notable that both native and migrant youth, whilst providing evidence of a stereotyped perception of immigration, concurred in recognising the same factors as

motives for migration: one of the main reasons given for migrating was the opportunity to improve quality of life (economic advancement through better-paid work): "Here you have a lot of things you don't have in our countries: social services, health, work..." (Maghrebi student, Open Centre); "They're people who emigrate to another country for different reasons. For a better future for example." (Native student, 3rd year of *ESO*).

3.2. Social dimension

This dimension refers to young people's social relationships, the development of these within and outside their communities, and the possibility of playing an active role in two specific contexts: the school or educational centre and the public sphere. The data collected via the survey and discussion groups yielded the following results for the two contexts:

3.2.1. School or educational centre

Native young people participated more in activities within the school or education centre, including those conferring responsibility, while foreign-born young people were more involved in neighbourhood activities. 32% of the young people had been school year delegates, 31% had taken part in school committees, and 24% in activities organized outside the centre and various types of solidarity initiatives. However, the young migrants were more active in all activities outside the school/centre ($X^2=10.02$, $p=0.007$, $\alpha=0.05$) and

took part less as year delegates ($X^2=10.6$, $p=0.005$, $\alpha=0.05$) and on school committees ($X^2=62.4$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$). In general the participants did not see school as the best place for integration and felt more comfortable in out-of-school activities, which were more oriented towards leisure and play and addressed their needs more closely, thus confirming the outcomes of previous studies (Palou, Rodríguez, & Vilà, 2013). Among the most typical community activities favouring intercultural coexistence were theatre ($X^2=17.4$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$) and dance groups ($X^2=121.4$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$) for the girls and sports groups ($X^2=450.4$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$) for the boys.

3.2.2. The public sphere

Turning to intercultural coexistence in the public sphere, 53% of participants stated that “I don’t mind if people from different cultures live in my area as long

as they mind their own business.” This evidences acceptance of cultural diversity and migration from the standpoint of passive tolerance but without the positive recognition that would represent a step towards real coexistence; this latter was only accepted by 17% of the sample. At the same time, a worrying 13% stated that “I don’t like people with a different culture living in my area.”

In order to study in greater depth the acceptance and recognition of migration, it was necessary to analyse opinions on coexistence with specific ethnic-cultural groups. Thus, while 80% of the sample accepted having Spanish residents in their area, only 22% accepted Roma neighbours, as Table 2 shows. In order of frequency, from the most acceptable to the least, we found: non-Catalan Spanish people³, Catalans, Europeans, Latin Americans, Asians, Eastern Europeans, Maghrebis, Africans and Roma⁴.

TABLE 2. Acceptance and recognition of migration.

	% ACCEPTANCE			
	TOTAL	Catalonia	Spain	Other Countries
Latin Americans	39.8%	37.2%	36.5%	49.1%
Eastern Europeans	26.3%	24.7%	23.8%	31.5%
Europeans	66.1%	68.0%	63.5%	60.8%
Catalans	77.9%	84.4%	68.3%	59.4%
Non-Catalan Spanish people	80.4%	85.0%	88.9%	65.4%
Maghrebis	25.8%	19.2%	27.0%	46.1%
Asians	28.8%	27.2%	30.2%	33.9%
Africans	25.6%	24.7%	26.2%	28.7%
Roma	21.7%	22.3%	28.6%	19.3%

Source: Own elaboration.

Paradoxically, the perception of social rejection in multicultural spaces was only expressed by the young migrants. In the discussion groups they told stories of lack of respect and problems in participating on equal terms: "Well I think that it's different and I go round with Asian people, because I had a Spanish friend, but she always laughed at me, so since then I didn't want to have any more Spanish friends, because I couldn't speak Spanish properly, so she laughed at me and I didn't like it. So I stopped going round with her and since then I've always had Asian friends" (Bangladeshi student, 1st year of *Bachillerato*).

Regarding social relationships, although the participants as a whole stated that they had quite diverse relationships, their responses show statistically significant differences according to their place of birth. Thus, while Catalan youth and those from other Spanish provinces had more relationships with natives (a certain cultural endogamy was noticeable), the young migrants had more varied friendships and fewer relationships with natives. This pattern is common to friendships in the school/education centre ($X^2=562.2$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$) and the local area ($X^2=869.8$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$).

Thus one factor which hinders integration from both migrant and native sides is a lack of affective social networks (lack of social capital) and the ghettoization of people from the same community, stemming from primary processes of socialization and ethnocentric, monocultural educational centres.

These are factors proper to the social dimension of integration, and the lack of them favours neither social relationships nor participation with other members of the community, as this student remarks: "If you come here and you don't know anyone you can't get ahead. Because if you find that sometime there's no one to help you because you don't know anyone..." (Cameroonian student, Open Centre).

It's best if close relationships and the opportunity to choose role models are able to exercise a strong influence on young people's orientations and aspirations for the future (Portes, Vickstrom, & Aparicio, 2011). Beyond these contextual factors, the migrant youth indicated that personal qualities (respect, openness, empathy, sociability, extraversion) favour integration in the current social context: "Being yourself. First change yourself and it then it depends. If you don't want racism to exist in the world or with the Spanish, you're the first person who has to be non-racist" (Ecuadorian student, informal education centre).

Native youth also recognised the need for the reciprocal closeness and empathy required for integration: the recognition of the "other" starts with an interest in and acceptance of their difference, thus confirming the two-way, voluntary, dynamic nature of the process: "I think that it doesn't depend on any kind of politics or anything. It depends on our way of thinking and theirs. We can't impose their way of thinking on people here, and we can't force people coming here to adapt either" (native student, 3rd year of *ESO*).

3.3. Cognitive-cultural dimension

This dimension encompasses factors relating to learning and the use of a common language, knowledge of the environment, understanding of and critical thinking on public problems and issues, and adopting social rules. Participants' linguistic status did not coincide with the bilingualism prevalent in Catalonia. The majority spoke only Spanish both at home and with their friends (48% spoke Spanish at home and 7% both Catalan and Spanish with friends).

Concerning the linguistic situation at school, the tendency was rather different to these contexts. The most frequent was the indistinct use of Catalan and Spanish (47%), followed by 28% who stated that they only used Catalan as the *lingua franca* at school, and 21% who spoke only in Spanish.

Language, and more specifically, learning the language of the host country, is the factor that all participants agreed was the most important for integration in the host society: "I think that you have to speak the language, because it's not the same if you come from Latin America, where people speak different types of Spanish, and we understand each other because it's still Spanish. So it's much easier to arrive here and start relating to people because they understand you. But if someone comes from another country where the language isn't anything like Spanish it's going to be much more difficult for them, and actually it seems the ones who adapt best are the South American people" (native student, 1st year of *Bachillerato*).

Also they were of the opinion that lack of competence in cognitive skills and knowledge of the host country's culture (basically, not speaking the language) was a barrier to integration: "My parents still have problems because they don't speak or understand Catalan" (Maghrebi student, 3rd year of *ESO*).

Thus migrant reception management (in terms of willingness and effort on the part of the local population) and setting up initiatives in education (in the reception class, in tutorials and in subjects such as "Education for Citizenship") and socio-education (in open centres and social services) is what the education centres themselves see as essential for easing *contact, relationships and in the long term the integration of young migrants*: "Well, if you're studying, the way the teachers speak to you as well, you know, if they say, 'If you have any questions just ask me' and so on, also makes you feel better and that you can talk to them and ask things and... integrate into the class, for example" (native student, 1st year of *Bachillerato*).

Another important variable in this dimension is young people's understanding of and critical thinking on public issues. Our analysis revealed that they were rather passive when faced with problems affecting their surroundings, but that their involvement had a positive correlation with the closeness and meaningfulness of the context. Thus 53% would only take part in resolving issues involving their school/centre if they were asked, while 28% stated that they always took part in these. In the classroom context,

closer and more meaningful to them, the opposite tendency was found: 66% said that they always got involved, compared to 31% who had to be asked.

In these contexts, in contrast, knowledge and observance of the shared rules of coexistence takes on special relevance for the integration process. This is a key variable that almost half those taking part in the survey saw as very important and highly unfavourable if not adhered to.

3.4. Identity dimension

This dimension refers to the subjective factors of the feeling of belonging and personal identification with the community. In terms of belonging, the majority (49%) felt Catalan, 17% Spanish, 16% from their home country, and 10% both Catalan and Spanish.

However, the young migrants still valued two key factors reaffirming their ethnic-cultural identity: religion and food. Specifically, 76% stated that they were in agreement with the majority religious beliefs of their home country, and 72% also stated that they ate the typical food of their home country. Celebrations, music and the romantic partner were also important for their identity. In contrast, 77% of young migrants preferred the host country's clothes.

This data can be read differently when we take into account the time of residence in Catalonia. Thus 60% of young migrants living for less than a year in the country gave more importance to following the rules and behaviours of

their home countries, compared with those with longer residency (only 31% of those living here for between five and ten years were of the same opinion: $X^2=19.6$, $p=0.003$, $\alpha=0.05$).

Time is key factor favouring integration in the host country. Young migrants with more than five years residence were those who most frequently valued the lifestyles of both home and host countries equally, while almost half those with less than five years in the country valued that of the home country more ($X^2=20.1$, $p=0.002$, $\alpha=0.05$). These more expressive cultural factors (the home country's cuisine in contrast to its style of dress and music) lost weight as foundations of identity with the passing of time.

Finally, for most of the young people the feeling of civic belonging (where they saw themselves as citizens) was linked to the place where they lived. Thus 71% of young people born in Catalonia felt themselves to belong to the place where they lived, while only 37% of the migrant youth felt that they were from their place of residence ($X^2=335.6$, $p=0.000$, $\alpha=0.05$).

4. Conclusions and discussion

These results, set out according to the four dimensions of integration, confirm that a society which is plural in its beliefs, convictions and forms should be reflected in democratic systems and social and educational policies based on reciprocity and equipped to manage diversity.

The integration of migrants is a reciprocal social process which makes

demands on both the host society and the migrants themselves. This reminds us of Maalouf's (1999) idea that the host society is a place in construction. It is important to adapt, to prepare, to get used to specific new conditions: learn the language, the history and the politics of the host country. But adapting in this way does not mean adopting wholesale or giving up being yourself. Thus for their part, and in line with the principle of reciprocity, the native population (adults and young people) should not only tolerate but also positively recognise the practices of the immigrant population's traditions and customs in order to build an authentically democratic coexistence within a new intercultural social framework (Bartolomé 2002; Siguán 2003; Chaib, 2005). Interculturality signifies a project of coexistence, of realization: going beyond that which already exists (cultural pluralism) to build and share a social and political project characterized by equality and the justice of its practices in a context of diversity.

In this paper we wished to analyse in depth young people's integration process in the educational and community contexts closest to them (the local neighbourhood and town or city), responding to these fundamental challenges:

a) Taking formal education as the privileged social field for building arenas favourable to intercultural coexistence, modular social processes and transferable forms of relationships. This is an ideal context for facilitating an approach to and understanding of the host society, reducing prejudice and teaching people to be

autonomous and critical, to live together rejecting all forms of discrimination, and to participate in public life in a free and cooperative way.

This exercise of citizenship demands specific types of knowledge and above all skills, values and attitudes which constitute a way of acting in accordance with the challenges facing our society today.

Education in these values and for exercising citizenship is, therefore, a central concern for education professionals, a concern which represents and no doubt should represent a vital part of educational policy for a significant part of their work of providing education to all students without exception.

b) In the community we need to consolidate existing initiatives and promote new ones which will help us to give shape to a new form of coexistence on the basis of:

1) Real and effective equity in rights and duties for participating on equal terms in a common project (the political dimension). As our results have shown, the local neighbourhood and the town or city are highly advantageous and important contexts of participation for favouring the meeting of people and cultures and the real social construction of shared spaces, and these, together with residents' and business associations, carry out essential work in facilitating participation and coexistence (Chaib, 2005).

2) Equal social treatment for all and the permanent struggle against

all forms of discrimination (the socio-economic dimension). Although cultural diversity is a natural and legitimate social reality, immigration is still a stigmatised social category, fixed in the collective mind in the form of biased images and negative views and attitudes, as we found in this study. The persistence of these presents a twofold challenge: to eradicate ideologies of exclusion (Delgado, 1998) and to favour the process of social integration.

3) The right to difference, from the standpoint of the acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity (the cultural dimension). All citizens should be able to freely live their culture, as long as they respect others and their surroundings and show openness to the host society.

4) The creation of unity in diversity, of coexistence in multicultural contexts, which involves building social cohesion from the standpoint of equal participation in a shared public culture, involving all sectors (immigrant groups; local civil society; local, regional, national and European governments; businesses; schools; social actors and religious organizations), and taking this challenge on voluntarily (with solidarity in practice as a key value).

Both the integration policies put forward in the Spanish central government's *Second Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration, 2011-14* (Secretary of State for Immigration and Emigration) and the Catalan regional administration's fifth

four-year plan, the *Citizenship and Migrations Plan: Horizon 2016* put forward a route map which is favourable to the management of cultural diversity and social participation from the standpoint of these principles and more in line with human rights.

The increasing complexity and plurality of our societies requires us to build a social model of integration which will be capable of promulgating the idea of a common public culture based on plurality as a foundation stone for a social, political and cultural project which is aware of and cares for differences.

Notes

- ¹ The results presented here form part of the research project titled "An In-Depth Analysis of the Integration of Young Migrants in Catalonia between the Ages of 14 and 18," funded by the Generalitat de Catalunya in the 2010 funding round for aid to promote applied research and university education on the subject of immigration in Catalonia (ARAFI), in which the authors were the leading researchers.
- ² The rest of the young people were in vocational training and informal education.
- ³ The "non-Catalan Spanish" group comprises all participants born elsewhere in the Spanish State.
- ⁴ The Roma group is included in the study because it is a cultural group traditionally present in our context, still the traditional object of "exclusion".

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