

## **Transnationalism From Below and Multiculturalism From Above: Citizenship Perspectives for Immigrant Incorporation in Chicago**

### **Transnacionalismo desde abajo y multiculturalismo desde arriba: perspectivas de ciudadanía para la incorporación migrante en Chicago**

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#### ABSTRACT

The restructuring of citizenship has become a fundamental topic in the midst of contemporary debates surrounding the dynamics of immigrants. The research questions guiding this paper are: how are immigrant local dynamics reshaping citizenship? Why is the approach of immigrants and that of local governments towards citizenship so sharply contrasting? And, what are the consequences of these contrasts for immigrant incorporation? This paper presents a case study of the citizenship perspectives of Chicago's immigrants and of the city's government, contrasting the transnational approach emerged from below with a multicultural project posed from above.

*Keywords:* 1. citizenship, 2. incorporation, 3. transnationalism, 4. multiculturalism, 5. Chicago

#### RESUMEN

Entre los debates contemporáneos sobre las dinámicas de los migrantes, la reestructuración de la ciudadanía es un tema fundamental. Las preguntas que guían esta investigación son: ¿de qué forma están reestructurando a la ciudadanía las dinámicas locales de los inmigrantes? ¿Por qué las perspectivas sobre ciudadanía de los migrantes y de los gobiernos de acogida tienden a ser contrastantes? y ¿qué consecuencias tiene esto para la incorporación migrante? En este artículo se analizan las perspectivas ciudadanas de los migrantes y del gobierno local en Chicago, contrastando una propuesta transnacional surgida 'desde abajo' y un proyecto multicultural propuesto 'desde arriba'.

*Palabras clave:* 1. ciudadanía, 2. incorporación, 3. transnacionalismo, 4. multiculturalismo, 5. Chicago.

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## INTRODUCTION

After the settlement and consolidation of a number of diasporas, the general perspective on economic migrants as passive actors hidden in the host society is changing towards a one in which they are important social participants. Thus, numerous debates have now resurfaced and this proposal is based on one of them: the restructuring of citizenship from the local arena.

Kymlicka (2003) explains that “*Citizenship is, by definition, treating people as individuals with equal rights before the law... nothing else will bring together the various groups of society and prevent mutual distrust and conflict.*” He also adds that citizenship should be a forum where people, despite their ideological and cultural differences, can build agreements for the common good. This definition is of an inherent inclusive character that contrasts with the traditional notion, exclusive in its nature because it defines ‘who does and who does not belong.’

The restructuring of citizenship by means of migration dynamics refers in practice to a political debate about immigrant incorporation. Particularly so in urban contexts with high transnational immigration, such as the main cities of the United States, where there are densely represented groups that tend to generate socio-political capital and civic participation, dynamics that grant them influence to present proposals in their localities. These immigrant communities organized around their segmented identity challenge the normative criteria of membership and restructure the subjective components of citizenship through their practices and participation channels.

The theories that guide these reflections are circumscribed within the critical perspectives of globalization, especially post-nationalism and reterritorialization towards localities, which in this article are focused through the approaches of transnationalism and multiculturalism. Two models of citizenship are described from these theories, each one corresponding to theoretical and practical postulates supporting both perspectives. Once the contrasts have been explained, the methodological approach of *processes from above and below* (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 2003) is applied to a case study: the city of Chicago. This city is considered an epicenter for immigrant organizations –mainly Mexican– who have enough socio-political capital<sup>2</sup> to voice their own proposal on what kind of citizenship they want to exercise in the process of incorporation into the host society. At the same time, the city government aims to shape integration projects through its citizenship programs and sanctuary actions.

The main contributions of this article consist in explaining the origin and effects of the contrasts between the citizen projects of the immigrants and those of the political elites at

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<sup>2</sup>Socio-political capital refers to the variable set of resources, relationships and structures that a group can mobilize to influence social and political change.

the local level, which is the arena where there is greater progress (Sternberg & Anderson, 2014). Hereby I also heed the call of Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2009) about generating more theoretical explanations in terms of what is being done in migrant host cities to develop a theoretical frame based on empirical cases on local dynamics.

### THE STATE OF THE QUESTION: CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRANT INCORPORATION

Traditionally, normative approaches and formalistic criteria have dominated the definition of citizenship (Lucas, 1999), which is generally understood as the formal ascription to a nation state, acquiescence of an equal status under the law, and the legal recognition of rights and obligations. This reflects how, within liberal doctrines, citizenship has historically been erected to eliminate conflicting privileges due to its intrinsically equalizing character. Nowadays, a political use of this notion has raised questions against these dogmas. Citizenship is increasingly becoming a political tool to redefine limits and boundaries between individuals and institutions that are constantly being reterritorialized towards the local level.

Currently, heterogeneity is characteristic to most societies in the main cities of the world, individuals have increasingly more diverse personal affiliations (given by ideology, class, religion, ethnicity, gender, etc.). In this context, the right to difference –and not equality– has become the most important social and political value for minorities. In addition, ascriptions vary at the local, provincial, national and regional level, so recognizing ‘who belongs’ and ‘who does not’ to a socio-political imaginary has become an increasingly complex task, particularly in urban spaces with high transnational exposure.

In short, these circumstances have generated a renewed academic impulse to discuss and explain the relationship between citizenship and immigrant incorporation (Bakker 2011; Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008; Gilbert, 2014). Citizenship contains both objective and subjective elements. On the one hand, the objective elements relate to the recognition of formal affiliation by *ius soli* and *ius sanguini*, or by naturalization; on the other hand, the subjective components include the rights, opportunities and obligations that such a membership embodies, and the fundamental elements that constitute an entrance ticket to the public space and participation. Discussions on the restructuring of the notion of citizenship have been precisely developed on the analysis of subjective criteria. In this regard, an academic segment headed by Bauböck (2003), Joppke (1996) and Soysal (1994) argues that egalitarianism is an anachronism, and they call for the development of theoretical arguments based on pluralism and the right to difference.

Sartori (2001) states that a pluralistic political culture should be based on the idea that difference –and not equality– should provide the basis for social cohesion. According to

Lucas (1999), the differentiated rights of minorities can be summarized in particular membership, participation, well-being and cultural diversity. These, are all components for a peaceful coexistence in pluralistic regimes and they must be insured through citizenship in its extensive connotation.

In addition, more and more social sectors are questioning their membership and identity, challenging any given notion of citizenship. Brubaker (2010, p. 65) explains “*only for a marginal or minoritarian part of the population there is no doubt or contestation about their substantive membership or their citizenship status, which refers to the access and enjoyment of substantive rights, and their full acceptance as members of a society [...].*” For the rest of the individuals living in contemporary societies, it is common to question their affiliation and their identity, through this exercise they are restructuring the notion of citizenship.

New citizenship conceptions incorporate civil processes, guarantees, regularization (naturalization), as well as social and civic processes (Thomas, Kinast & Schroll-Machl, 2010); It means the articulation of two democratic values: institutional justice and identity affiliation. The first is a practical and formal mechanism; the second, a symbolic and subjective one.

Then, at the institutional level, these are the factors that are enabling the adoption of new forms of citizenship:

1. The rejection of idealized conceptions of the national states as unified entities, which rather flow vertically and horizontally thanks to social mobility (Hepburn, 2011).
2. A perception of the national level as distant, while localities emerge as immediate public spaces and political arenas for citizens (van Leeuwen, 2010),
3. General decentralization within states in favor of localities, especially in terms of citizen rights and access to public services (Hepburn, 2011).

On the other hand, at the social level, diversity contributes to the restructuring of the notion of citizenship since it challenges the foundations of membership, and thus membership criteria become ambiguous. Migrant groups<sup>3</sup> frequently develop *de facto* citizenship despite the lack of full legal recognition as members of the society to which they belong in practice. The flexibility of citizenship at the local level is an important element of dialogue between migrants and the institutions of host societies, it is also nurturing other processes of incorporation. In contemporary liberal democracies, the key mechanism to adjust ideological differences is the protection of fundamental freedoms as well as social and political rights through citizenship.

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<sup>3</sup>The term “migrant groups” is used to refer to the heterogeneity in profiles of legal status, socioeconomic characteristics, generation, etc., of migrants who have grouped around an ethnic group under the assumption of group conscience.

## THEORETICAL PROPOSAL: POST-NATIONAL APPROACHES TO SUBSTANTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The previous specified conditions suggest that we are witnessing a post-national phase<sup>4</sup> of citizenship. Post-nationalism takes up two components that were revolutionary at the time, and which are intrinsic to the concept of citizenship: universalism and inclusion (Koopmans & Statham, 1999; Soysal, 1994). Originally, the model of liberal citizenship served as a space of equality for individuals within a territory;<sup>5</sup> however, participation arenas are currently more plural, and minorities are protagonistic by proposing changes through liberal values. Cultural pluralism and minority rights have been attractive philosophical principles for societies in the past already, but it is until now that they are impacting on specific local policies (Reitz, 2009).

Societies have not yet established whether rights are individual or collective assets, and this debate extends even to membership (Lucas, 1999). Then, we find that immigrants would favor collective affiliation, while governments insist that such a matter is individual. In this scenario, the interests and projects of the players seem highly contrasting. On the one hand, immigrants seeking access to the local political arena regularly do it through their organizations; therefore, they have appropriated group demands and privilege issues such as dual citizenship, minority empowerment, simultaneity (transnationalism) and the right to difference. In contrast, from governments come an emphasis on principles such as social cohesion, individualism, egalitarianism and restriction in transnational practices.

Consequently, the perspectives on the dynamics of immigrant incorporation can be grouped under two theoretical approaches: transnationalism and multiculturalism. These approaches serve as the basis for defining two models of citizenship. The first is transnational citizenship, which corresponds to migrants while the second is linked to local governments and pertains to multicultural citizenship.

### *Transnational Citizenship: A Proposal From Below*

Transnationalism de-emphasizes the role of geography in the formation of collective identity, recreates membership by overcoming territorial borders, and emphasizes the ability to maintain and generate post-migratory relationships and bonds (Levitt, 2001). According to Martiniello and Lafleur (2008), the following elements characterize transnationalism:

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<sup>4</sup>Post-nationalism refers to the erosion of the concept of a monolithic, homogeneous and geographically defined nation state. This implies that political decisions cannot be taken only under territorial criteria because, arising from the local, they can have global effects.

<sup>5</sup>This definition of citizenship refers to its contemporary liberal connotation, without ignoring the historical development of the patrimonial condition, since previously only free men who owned property were citizens.

- a) It is contrary to assimilationist views and argues that bonds between the individual and the nation state are not exclusive of other affiliation relationships.
- b) The spaces in which migrants develop their life projects cannot be clearly identified between countries of origin and residence.
- c) Every aspect of the life of immigrants and all their associative activities can have transnational implications.

Several disciplines have adopted the concept of transnationalism to explain the dynamics of migrants; however, one of the less explored topics has been the role of transnational practices in the process of citizen incorporation, which is also one of the indicators that best reflect the success or failure of accommodation processes. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) points out how the development of transnationalism endows immigrants with socio-political capital to influence policies at their place of origin, and that capital is also channeled into the politics of the place of residence, where “*The local dimensions of citizenship imply the incorporation of stakeholders in local decision-making, policy formulation and implementation through processes of governance*” (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2011, p. 24). Siemiatycki (2011) explains that through transnationalism immigrants can participate in local politics and help to determine the rules by which they will live, what society owes its members, and the obligations that individuals have towards society.

Immigrants tend to perceive the national level as distant and indifferent to their demands, but in cities they find arenas to negotiate the form and areas of participation. In this regard, Ginieniewicz (2010) states that although immigrants suddenly come to a world whose rules, laws, codes and references differ from those they know, the migratory experience includes a process of learning civic practices and rules of the place of settlement. The politicization process is progressive, but in most cases negotiation is the first challenge for the political incorporation of migrants.

The restructuring of citizenship is essential for transnational migrants because one of their main demands is a “double presence instead of double absence.” Faist (2000) suggests that transnational citizenship includes complementary and compatible political elements of the double affiliation of migrants. In this case, it is necessary to point out that the *transnational* adjective refers to the character of the agents and not to a diffuse figure of multinational or transborder membership. In this regard, Bloemraad (2004) highlights important analysis elements for the restructuring of migrant citizenship: the deterritorialization of the ascription due to the individual's multiple territorial ties, multiple memberships with which they can identify, and the fact that there are few migrants who are promoting these proposals by means of concrete actions.

Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that citizenship is a multi-layered construct affected by ideological interactions, relationships and positions, and challenged by groups that reconstruct the notions of belonging. Transnational citizenship refers to a membership

project of a group of migrants that receives its name after the transnational nature of its practices. In this regard, Fox (2005) points out that what makes transnational citizenship is the fact that, from within a cosmopolitan society, certain groups develop activism towards another country while building political participation arenas that are rooted in the place of residence. This way, transnational citizenship is a combination of the empowerment of transnational migrants, the institutional recognition of freedoms, the search for opportunities in the sociopolitical arena, and the space of citizen exercise where the multiple identities of each of its members do not have to represent a risk for social cohesion.

In this sense, the recognition of diversity, a collective affiliation as a minority, and the search for a certain autonomy as a particular sector of society will be basic components and demands of the vision of transnational citizenship. In addition, transmigrants conceive citizenship as a role or agency, not simply as an affiliate relationship. The roles they intend to promote are precisely as relevant agents of communication that keep their particularities and constitute themselves as participant minorities.

#### *Multicultural Citizenship: The Answer From Above*

Contrasting with the transnational citizenship to which an immigrant sector aspires through its practices, multicultural citizenship arises. The main response of some governments and academic sectors of contemporary liberal democracies has been characterized by the transition from assimilationist models to the adoption of incorporation projects. These perspectives agree that due to the different affiliations and interests that converge in the same socio-political imaginary, it is impractical to deny public rights and policies that would favor certain minority sectors of the population, even if those individuals do not meet all the formalities to be recognized as full members.

Supporters of this perspective base their premises on multiculturalism. Abdallah-Preteille explains that “*based on a dualism between a philosophical, theoretical and methodological construction on the one hand, and on the other on an empirical reality, multiculturalism is understanding and action*” (Abdallah-Preteille, 2006, p. 477). Kymlicka, pioneer in the field, (1995, 2003, and 2007), analyzed contemporary societies in North America and formulated the concept of multicultural citizenship. Multiculturalism is based on three fundamental principles: citizenship, right to difference and unity in diversity (Giménez-Romero, 2001). Additionally, multiculturalism implies not only exalting the presence of other cultures, but also converging on a same social project.

Multicultural citizenship became a relevant aspect to be developed in the processes to integrate migrants according to the work of Joppke (1996), Baubock (2003), Brubaker (2010) and Bouchard (2011). All of them agree on reviewing the liberal concept of citizenship and in formulating a new post-national membership project, whose main

components are full recognition of civil rights and freedoms regardless of immigration status. Multiculturalism focuses cultural rights on individuals and not on groups, since for its promoters, multiculturalism is an individual rather than a collective construction (Bodirsky, 2012).

Multicultural citizenship is the most common political strategy to accommodate diversity in cities (Zapata-Barrero, 2003). Its main objective in the medium term is to promote the recognition of diversity and to achieve harmonic accommodation among the main groups that converge in the city. In the long term, it is intended to create a new public culture that guides all institutional and civic practices aimed at creating a new tie through cultural tolerance, interaction included (Zapata-Barrero & Pinyol Jiménez, 2013).

Supporters of multiculturalism state that this perspective of multicultural citizenship is compatible with liberal democracies, as it is based on respect for the diversity of groups and because organization is one of its pillar values. Reitz (2009) explains that *“multiculturalism –not only understood as tolerance to cultural diversity but as a demand for the legal recognition of racial, religious or cultural rights of groups– has been established virtually in all modern liberal democracies.”* Consequently, multicultural citizenship implies a positive interaction between cultures, but rejects structures of ethnic representation or exclusive forums for certain groups (Thomas et al., 2010).

Kymlicka (1995) proposes that minorities should not be seen simply as external allies; in fact, he suggests that ethnic groups are non-rigid and intermittent categories. These groups want to keep their cultural peculiarities within society; they do not want to build a parallel society within the states they inhabit. In this regard, Cantle (2014) points the following as the main objectives of cities towards multiculturalism: 1) the search for stability by aiding in the convergence of political traditions with rights, 2) cohesion and social inclusion, and 3) co-development. In this context, governments use multiculturalism –both discursive and practical– to manage cultural differences as social assets rather than as threats.

Multiculturalists agree that a first phase consists in the recognition of pluralism; this simply means that alternative perspectives displace the dominant ideologies in the discourse. In a second stage, these objectives are institutionalized as political principles, and even in this normative stage they become policies. There is currently a call for the development of methodologies for the diagnosis and evaluation of multicultural citizenship processes, which in migrant host cities find favorable spaces to guide integration and participation in the immediate political arena.

Multicultural citizenship rejects ethnic platforms and the isolation of cultural groups (Thomas et al., 2010). Consequently, these are the central concepts of multicultural citizenship: access to social institutions and programs without ethnic or cultural discrimination, an education sensitive to different cultures, opening government

institutions to cultural diversity, the representation of minority sectors, especially in advisory bodies and, to a lesser extent, in political participation. The mechanisms meant to ensure the effectiveness of multicultural citizenship relate to the creation of inclusive contexts, with equal opportunities and affirmative action destined to reduce the vulnerabilities of cultural minorities.

*The Contrasts Between Citizenship Projects ‘From Above’ and ‘From Below’*

As previously stated, the main question guiding this text is *why is citizenship being restructured through contrasting projects arising from the local arena?* Halfmann (1998) posits that citizenship is the basic right required to be a full member in a political community, which can only be executed within the organizational framework offered by a constituted political entity, and whose main attribution is the direction of the physical means to guarantee compliance spaces for citizen deliberations. Consequently, the reformulation of affiliation relationships and the renegotiation of the rules for the assimilation of new members into societies lead to two different initiatives, one ‘from above’ and one ‘from below.’

Portes (1997) explained that organized immigrants deployed transnational practices as a strategy to counteract restrictive and exclusive positions, to erode the systemic response that ‘capital is global while work is local’, and to reduce the neoliberal effects on labor markets and in the lives of immigrants. Subsequently, Portes *et al.* (2003) developed this idea, stating that “...the ‘transnationalism from below’ enacted by the migrant population seeking social, economic and political integration generates an elitist response ‘from above.’” That is, the dynamics of the migrants are motivated from below as mechanisms of survival against their vulnerabilities, but later when the diaspora is settled and holds social capital, it motivates host governments’ responses *from above*.

Following this line of research, the following differences are proposed between the perspectives of citizen restructuring, explained as processes ‘from below’ and ‘from above’:

Table 1: Theoretical Differences Between the Perspectives of Post-National Citizenship

<b>Transnational citizenship</b>	<b>Multicultural citizenship</b>
Collective membership: individuals belong primarily to minorities. The political entity is a group of minorities in constant negotiation.	Individual membership: the political entity is a sum of individuals whose cultural diversity is postponed for the common good.

Migrants have multiple memberships; however, their dynamics are contained in political arenas delimited by the city and therefore they seek to incorporate.	The formal criteria are a national prerogative, but cities are responsible for substantive citizenship and therefore they delimit the incorporation strategies of migrants.
The sociopolitical experience acquired with transnationalism provides migrants with participatory capital, which motivates them to reformulate the notion of citizenship.	Among the city's mandates are social cohesion and diversity management, which is why they expand citizenship, creating participatory dimensions for migrants.
In this model, migrants become aware of the group, organize themselves to promote agendas, ensure effective representation and reduce vulnerabilities.	In this model, integration policies are created to reduce vulnerabilities, homogenize opportunities, avoid ethnic competition and ensure social cohesion.
Mechanisms: strong participation of migrants in political design. Participation is collective, from groups.	Mechanisms: Governments guide political change and motivate individual participation through established mechanisms.

Source: Own elaboration.

In this context, the following question is also raised: what are the consequences of having contrasting citizenship projects or perspectives? Considering that, beyond the debates on inclusion and exclusion, membership approaches can generate or prevent social conflicts, and motivate or constrain the progress of immigrants.

### METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

Once the theoretical proposal that supports this research has been exposed, the second part consists of an in-depth case study. A paradigmatic case is developed that corresponds to the prototypical context in which the characteristics of the proposed case study are highlighted. It meets the objective of explaining a scenario where both parts of the theoretical model are located.

The methodology is based on a first stage in describing the context in which reformulations on practical citizenship are developed in Chicago, a liberal and pro-immigrant city immersed in a hostile national context whose citizenship criteria still

remain normative. Once this context is established, sanctuary ordinances and welcome and incorporation policies are analyzed for the case of multicultural citizenship model. In the case of transnational citizenship, substantive practices promoted by migrant coalitions are taken as referential benchmarks, particularly “citizenship workshops,” a response that reflects how immigrants link their civic practices in their host communities without renouncing their cultural particularities and binational interests.

Finally, a balance is derived based on the following guide questions: How are migrant dynamics restructuring citizenship in Chicago? And what consequences do the differences between the citizenship projects promoted by the city and the strategies of the migrant collectives have on migrant incorporation?

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION IN CHICAGO

The city of Chicago has a long history of migration and has established interesting political trajectories to manage it, moving from the initial ethnic segregation in its neighborhoods to more assertive forms of citizen interaction. The city currently has one of the most diverse populations in the world, from Irish, Italians and Poles who identify with the founding social nucleus, to Latin Americans, Chinese, Indians and Filipinos who challenge every *melting pot* model (Boruchoff, Gzesh, Pallares, Vonderlack-Navarro & Fox, 2010). Migrants in Chicago are immersed in an unfavorable national context, the reform so necessary for such a deteriorated immigration system is a federal prerogative and the issue remains deferred.

The United States Census Bureau estimates that Chicago has a total of 2.7 million inhabitants, of which 567,555 are migrants (2014). In this sector, it is estimated that there are 183 000 migrants who are undocumented in the Chicago metropolitan area, of which 75% are Mexican (Paral, 2014). It is estimated that in the state of Illinois there are up to 370 000 legal permanent residents eligible for citizenship, of which 213 400 are concentrated in Chicago (Lee & Baker, 2017). Within this last group, Mexicans are the ones with the lowest naturalization rates, only 42% carry out the process while the average is 67% (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2017).

Chicago has been an important electoral bastion of the Democratic Party (Michelson, 2001), and migrants have successfully joined this political structure with representatives of migrant origin. Currently, we find Commissioner Garcia at the county level, while George Cárdenas, Ricardo Muñoz and Danny Solís are at the City Council level, three representatives from a total of 50. Another exceptional feature of Chicago is that in 14 districts Latinos, as a mixed status, represent 40% of the inhabitants (Pew Hispanic Center, 2016). This context reveals Chicago as a favorable scenario for political innovation.

In addition to the representatives of migrant origin in the government, there is a vast organizational culture recorded in the database of Rivera-Salgado, Bada and Escala-

Rabadán (2005). In Chicago, there are numerous promising organizations and important affirmative action programs that have an enormous capacity for mobilization, as it has been demonstrated in their mega demonstrations against federal anti-immigrant laws during 2006 (Pallares & Flores-González, 2010). Nevertheless, before reaching this more efficacious immigration governance, the city perceived immigration under a quite different light; it was even described as a successful model of unilateral assimilation (Suro, 1998). This until the social boundaries of ethnic gentrification collapsed, and new incorporation strategies had to be generated (Banda & Zurita, 2005).

In many cities, immigrant organizations arise as a result of migration in solidarity networks; however, ethnic organizations in Chicago emerged as a result of community segregation (Dorantes & Zatarain, 2007; Sternberg & Anderson, 2014). The neighborhoods served as breeding ground for community leaders who, in a representative democracy like the United States is, gradually managed to hold niches in formal politics. Immigrants developed strong associative strategies and dynamic solidarity networks (Wilson & Taub, 2011), as well as the impulse of participation and transformation of the rules of the political game with a deep sense of community (Zamudio Grave, 2004).

The history of Chicago and its particular urbanization processes have allowed the emergence of a peculiar migratory governance, as institutional channels and participation structures that respond to a tolerant political environment have slowly developed, altogether with promising allies and ethnic organizations (mainly Mexican) that have managed to gather and channel their socio-political capitals. In this regard, it is worth reflecting on the following issues: Do the changes in Chicago correspond to the transnational migrant perspective on citizenship or to the multicultural project promoted by the city's administration? To answer this question, the proposals for exercising citizenship from above and from below will be analyzed.

### *The Multicultural Proposal of the Political Elites in Chicago*

Chicago has tried to respond to the demands in the city through urban migration policies, especially by creating spaces to shape and channel the citizen incorporation of these migrants. A first step has been taken through the use of concepts. In Chicago and in other cities in the *American Welcoming Cities*<sup>6</sup> coalition they don't talk about migrants or foreign workers, but about *new Americans*, which is an inclusive denomination with an intrinsic invitation to integration, and of merely discursive value.

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<sup>6</sup>This coalition led by the mayors of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston sets forth that migrants are a key factor for the vitality and economic growth in these urban spaces; therefore, cities must respond with incorporation initiatives.

In 1985, Mayor Harold Washington –elected in 1983 thanks to an inter-ethnic coalition, therefore an important promoter of the civic participation of immigrant groups, mainly of Latinos– signed an executive order to cancel the practice of requesting citizenship proof when requesting services and licenses in the city, the local cooperation with immigration officers was also limited. Then, in 1989, Mayor Richard Daley extended this ordinance by establishing fair and equal access for all regardless of the country of origin; however, the same year an amendment was passed that allowed the disclosure of immigration status to fight gang activity in the city (Paik, 2017). It was in 2006 when the city council unanimously passed the ordinance that turned Chicago into a sanctuary city and initiated the so-called welcoming policies.<sup>7</sup>

Currently, the Office of Immigration Services has several initiatives to promote this new citizenship. The *New Americans Initiative* (2011) is the most complete effort; it has a concrete action plan based on multicultural citizenship, the *New Americans Plan* (Kerr, McDaniel & Guinan, 2014). This policy aims to transform Chicago into the most hospitable city for immigrants in the world. Among its motivating factors, the initiative highlights the economic and cultural contributions of immigrants to the city.

In its political design, this plan had the participation of 50 migrant organizations among chambers of commerce, promoting associations and community organizations. Many of them have deployed migrant valorization campaigns and have offered citizenship workshops, as will be explained later. In addition to the advisory council, the plan incorporates the creation of an executive office to monitor compliance and to carry out administrative tasks, which also works to link immigrants with the local government and that concentrates all the city's migration programs. Since its foundation, this office has been headed by officers of Mexican origin.

The plan becomes public policy by establishing several concrete initiatives and also defines a set of indicators to assess progress. Although an important part of these initiatives are economically motivated, such as the incubation of businesses among migrants and the professionalization of migrant workers, these initiative also focus on education. However, the plan mostly incorporates multicultural policies: they emphasize the impulse towards multilingualism and cultural sensitivity in public offices in the city, endorse equal access to public services, the promotion of civic participation especially in young people, the promotion of naturalization campaigns, and the incorporation and dissemination of migratory services at the local level.

Another important aspect is that Chicago is a “sanctuary city”: the local police does not cooperate with immigration officials to carry out mass raids or arbitrary detentions, in case

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<sup>7</sup>The Chicago Tribune newspaper chronicles the sanctuary city movement in Chicago since 1930, and monitors the institutionalization of this process through its archive. See <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-chicago-sanctuary-history-htmlstory.html>

of misdemeanors detained migrants are not handed to immigration officials. This sanctuary ordinance contains several exceptions: the police are obliged to cooperate with immigration officials in cases of violations of state laws, when the person has been previously imprisoned, and when there is a record of alleged gang membership. In this regard, various city authorities have stated that their priority is to strengthen local laws and reduce violent crimes, and not the mere deportation of undocumented immigrants, but the risk of such an outcome still exists.<sup>8</sup>

Sanctuary cities stand out because any resident can access basic services such as basic education, health, housing and public safety without providing any proof in terms of their immigration status. The problem is that they cannot access other services that are funded by state and federal funds.

In 2016, alliances such as “*Chicago is with you*” and “*One Chicago*” were launched. These in force campaigns are aimed at disseminating the immigration services provided by the city and also include a one-million-dollar legal assistance fund for immigrant *dreamers*. Recently, a program to issue a local identification card was also approved. However, critics of these City ID programs (Graauw, 2015) state that their effectiveness is limited since they become mere bureaucratic programs because a consular matricula is already accepted locally in these cities.

For the political elites in Chicago, stimulating citizenship implies investing in the education of human capital, fostering individual immigrant development strengthens ties with the city. That is why the services they provide are job training, English as a second language courses, business incubation, etc. They also highlight in this strategy the generation of multicultural skills in public offices and in the security forces that are part of the administration that interacts daily with immigrants.

This proposal is framed within the model of citizenship molded *from above*, which corresponds to a multicultural perspective and in which through their plans governments channel and shape the way that immigrants should be integrated. These are the main values prioritized, matching with the classic values of American society: individualism, entrepreneurship, self-made attitude and meritocracy. In addition to the culture of separating ethnic particularities and cultural values from citizen participation, this mechanism differs from the practices of the most vulnerable immigrants, which are rather based on cultural resilience as a political stakeholder.

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<sup>8</sup>The police accountability task force reports a disproportion in the treatment given to African Americans and Latinos, since they are statistically more arbitrarily detained than the rest of the population. Full report available at the following URL: [https://chicagopatf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/04/PATF\\_Final\\_Report\\_Executive\\_Summary\\_4\\_13\\_16-1.pdf](https://chicagopatf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/04/PATF_Final_Report_Executive_Summary_4_13_16-1.pdf)

In this approach to multicultural citizenship, the migrant participates exclusively through consultative forums, and there are only spaces for those who are active in organizations that have made contact with the city administration, and who have organizational structures that are perceived as positive because of their minimum degree of institutional confrontation. Thus, according to this approach, it is possible to establish a positive interaction through a common language. This implies an invitation to join local governance, but only along defined lines of the plan. This means that this initiative from above is aimed only at a certain profile of migrants with the possibility of reaching citizenship, excluding the most vulnerable, who are affected by the lack of legal means for citizen incorporation at the federal level, and whose organizational efforts are halted by not being able to engage in that civic and political project framed by the locally dominant sector.

### *Citizenship Projects of Transnational Migrant Organizations*

Latinos in Chicago are one of the most organized and politicized migrant groups in the United States, since they knew how to adopt the social structures that already existed in the city, created by the African American civil rights movement and the labor mobilizations in the first mid-20th century. Based on these patterns, they organized around social structures within communities, such as school councils, churches, community organizations, unions, chambers of commerce and, recently in political organizations (Mendoza & Bada, 2013). In all these spaces, the condition as an immigrant ethnic minority has been the main element of cohesion.

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 was a detonating element to raise awareness among immigrant organizations about the need to promote the exercise of citizenship both in its objective and substantive dimensions. Election statistics showed that up to three million migrants across the country could obtain full civil and political rights, and therefore vote. That is, a hostile context motivated the search for alternatives to increase their socio-political capital by promoting naturalization processes.

In this way, migrant coalitions in Chicago –the *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights* (ICIRR), *Alianza Américas*, *Enlace Chicago* and *Casa Michoacán*– began to develop Citizenship Workshops. These workshops are events in which permanent residents are invited to naturalize; they also provide logistical support, legal advice and transnational support funds –such as Slim Foundation, in Mexico– to pay the fees and prevent fraud cases.

An interesting aspect on bonding is that volunteers have been trained to accompany migrants throughout the naturalization process. Organizations report that in the city of Chicago citizens of all ethnic groups volunteer in solidarity with migrants. Another important ally for the success of these workshops has been the Mexican consulate, which

lends its facilities, its experts and its dissemination channels (radio channels, mobile consulates, etc.). Likewise, several Latino elected officials, through their offices and in alliance with the coalitions, have given Citizenship Workshops in their facilities and also offer information about funding opportunities.

According to the Immigrant Services Fund of the city of Chicago, between 2016 and 2017 approximately 96 000 people participated in the citizenship workshops. The results cannot be reflected immediately because the naturalization process takes time. The USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) reports a delay in the processing of applications; however, the last report of 2016 showed that in that year the applications had increased by 14%.<sup>9</sup> It is also necessary to note that there are many formal details involved in each application and that organizations point out that for many migrants there is no legal path to regularization; therefore, all social agents must continue promoting flexible forms of local citizenship.

Regarding the profile of the participants, organizations in Chicago report that 60% of them did not finish high school education or are not fluent in the English language, which according to the 2015 *National Survey of Latinos* is the main obstacle to applying for citizenship (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2017). In this sense, organized migrant communities through citizenship workshops aim to raise awareness among other migrants that they are not alone in the incorporation process, and that in it they can use their cultural values and their particularities as assets. Immigrants trust organizations surged from within their communities. In addition, a result of participating in their citizenship programs is the adoption of such groups' positions and demands.

The influence of migrant organizations in the process of political incorporation has resulted in a more pragmatic vision of exercising citizenship that is related to the transnational citizenship model proposed in this research. Organizations have vast experience –inside and outside local institutions– in exercising substantive citizenship derived from civic participation and in impacting on their communities' public policy. These are precisely the values that they convey through their citizenship workshops, in which migrant organizations in Chicago raise awareness about how citizenship not only implies status regularization and voter registering, it should be instead a substantive exercise towards impacting on policies and programs that favor collective interests.

In addition, organizations conduct training workshops for community leaders, campaigns for access to social policy and other binational programs. These programs

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<sup>9</sup>For now, the only information on results is that provided by organizations themselves; for example, Erie House, in association with the Chicago Public Library, reports having helped 492 people obtain citizenship through their workshops; the *Instituto Del Progress Latino* reports 200 people. However, these figures cannot be taken as such, since a person is likely to use services from more than one organization.

include *Know Your Rights*, in which organizers explain how every individual regardless of immigration status is entitled to several constitutional guarantees in the United States. In these campaigns, organizations have made an efficient use of the communication channels (radio, television, social networks, etc.) that Latin American immigrants have deployed in the city.

In Chicago, immigrant organizations with very elaborate internal structures have managed to position themselves as relevant communicative agents in society. They have also managed to establish cooperation channels with both host and home governments, and through their dynamics, citizens root transnational activism. It is true that the economic and political resources to which these immigrant organizations have access are limited, that the learning process has ups and downs—even problems within the collectives themselves—and that for many migrants in Chicago citizenship is not a viable path; however, through these exercises they promote the empowerment of the migrant collective as a whole, always favoring group perspectives under a collective approach marked by transnational experiences.

#### DISCUSSION: ARE THERE CONFLICTING CITIZEN PROJECTS IN CHICAGO?

Until today there are two perspectives that help to understand the way in which migrants are restructuring political membership in Chicago. The first case is on the side of migrants, it is a gradual process to improve policy from the grassroots. These migrants generate forms of participation membership that go beyond naturalization. They fight for the acknowledgement of their contributions to their host societies, they demand the right to difference for themselves and their descendants, even in some spaces they have already negotiated specific forms of direct participation in advisory councils, affirmative action programs, representation quotas, etc.

In other cases, from above, when facing the need for foreign workers, political elites have realized the need for citizen incorporation programs for migrants and have made changes through their institutions that allow the construction of more equitable social and political contexts for these irregular residents with whom they coexist (Newman, Hartman & Taber, 2014). In these contexts, the host localities have designed strategies to encourage incorporation from above. Cities have economic motivations to expedite the incorporation of migrants, but they also follow their political mandate to keep social cohesion and ensure that each individual finds mechanisms to exercise their civic and political rights.

Migrant citizenship can work in two ways depending on the vision that has gained the most weight in its restructuring: it can be an input for the segmented incorporation of transnational migrants or it can serve as the output of unilateral integration to the host society. The resulting contrasts between the two projects will reflect the priorities of the agents towards local politics.

Returning to the case of Chicago, the issue of citizenship is frequently addressed by local political agents, both in its formal connotation (regularization, legal advice, fraud prevention) and in its substantive elements of access, participation and exercise. Regarding whether the citizenship is a collective or individual exercise, I found that in Chicago migrants and their descendants are grouped into a condensed cluster, which can be heterogeneous to the inside in gender profiles, classes, generations, etc., meanwhile to the outside it has formulated interests and demands of a whole different nature than those of the rest of society. These migrants speak of a necessary empowerment of the collective and of seeking opportunities for minorities in education, work, housing and regularization. The problem is that they often do not find a way to properly articulate these demands for them to function with those of other vulnerable social sectors, and that is why they stake on the consolidation of their transnational projects.

One of the main discussions within immigrant organizations pertains the paradox of having to choose between networking with the government or working independently. In the first case, they would have greater access to resources and funds, the political incorporation would be expedited and their activities would reach greater legitimacy and sympathy among the mainstream population. On the contrary, autonomy allows immigrant organizations to adopt controversial positions on socially and politically divisive matters; it also imply legitimacy among their base and freedom to develop transnational citizenships.

In contrast, governments prefer to invest in migrants at the individual level in aspects such as education, professionalization, English language fluency and job training. This strategy based on multiculturalism aims to create a more equitable social context, which would result in multicultural integration. The problem is that there is a budget deficit in social projects throughout the country and, in addition, the project of the Chicago elites excludes the most vulnerable migrants, who have not been linked to any organization for reasons of access, time and risk.

Another fundamental element of analysis consists of the aspects of substantive citizenship privileged by political agents. Migrants perceive that formal citizenship is a necessary requirement to boost the ethnic platform and it can be a pillar of minority empowerment. In contrast, governments, motivated by the economic contributions of immigrants and their growing demographic weight, work to generate tolerant and welcoming contexts that better integrate immigrants. In the case of Chicago, these paths converge because both agents are developing campaigns to inform and motivate regularization, but their ultimate intentions diverge, especially in a political context such as the United States today.

When I mention that immigrants in Chicago are safer than in other cities in the United States, I do not mean that Trump's policies are not affecting the city. It is not that deportations do not exist in Chicago, but in Chicago immigrants are responding to attacks

through independent organizational strategies, while the local government is collaborating with institutional programs.

In the case of Chicago, the positive local context encourages immigrants to create coalitions with other political and economic agents. In addition, compared to other cities with immigrant groups, Latinos in Chicago are organized into community associations with strong structures, and have acquired an enormous capacity for mobilization (Rivera-Salgado et al., 2005). This demonstrates how these immigrants see in collective action the way to improve their socioeconomic conditions and the mechanism for political incorporation. This means that they will continue promoting visions of collective affiliation and perspectives of transnational citizenship, despite the city's efforts to channel pluralism through multiculturalism. Although meeting these goals is difficult for the local administration, they have the advantage of budget control and they can allocate it 'from above' to the programs. Then, 'from below', migrants have the disadvantage of having a longer path to get their citizen projects 'up there' in the political arena.

## CONCLUSIONS

The nature of the incorporation of migrants at the local level produces two contrasting citizenship perspectives: one individual and one collective, one ethnic and the other pluralist, one 'from above' and the other 'from below', one transnational and the other multicultural. These exercises generate spaces for political negotiation between groups: those who fight for their collective interests, and local governments, who seek faster and one-dimensional processes of incorporation into the host society.

The more sociopolitical capital a group of migrants has, the more their members will tend to exercise de facto citizenship through civic participation and the generation of concrete courses of action. In this scenario, migrants can be a counterweight that pressures local governments to adopt new membership criteria that accept identity simultaneity and transnational practices by extending naturalization campaigns, among other actions. These migrants feed perspectives that recognize that the right to the city is collective, and that the dynamics of the social sectors of that locality have the capacity to achieve urban regeneration (Harvey, 2006). The dynamics of transnational migrants, through the social innovation with which they intend to join the host society, have generated a political response from the city government, which in turn has discovered the productive value of diversity, gained greater awareness of its plurality and created citizen alternatives based on multiculturalism.

In sum, the contrasts and consequences between the transnational and multicultural perspectives are included in a novel line of creative management of social conflict. Chicago demonstrates that relations between migrants and host governments can reach

dialectical feedback, and it is the citizenship as a whole that will benefit from these membership and participation restructuring processes.

When a group of organized immigrants consolidates a minority, and if we add to that the degree of incorporation and the level of knowledge of the host society –in a context aware of immigrant contributions– a perception that the projects *from below* are a contribution to the city is gained. If seen otherwise, the proposals of migrants can be perceived as invasive or challenging by the dominant sectors of the host society. On the side of governments, if citizen projects come only ‘from above’, they can be considered by migrants as distant, as impositions towards integration, unrelated to their demands. This implies analyzing how citizen negotiation is not a linear process. Transnational citizenship often implies creating a new public space that did not exist in liberal notions, while citizenship ‘from above’ implies generating legitimacy and consensus.

Translator: Fernando Llanas

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