Cristina Matiuța (Editor), *Democratic Governance And Active Citizenship in the European Union*, Saarbrucken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2015, 240 pages, ISBN 978-3-659-77508-6

Review by Ioana ALBU

The volume entitled *Democratic Governance and Active Citizenship in the European Union*, edited by Cristina Matiuta is meant to confer a scholarly view on the process of European integration related to key factors pertaining to *civic engagement* and *democratic legitimacy,* aiming, further on, at a better understanding of democracy in its genuine sense as well as the factors that best contribute to its reinforcement. The present work is part of the editor's concerns and previous studies in the field of democratic governance, civil society and European integration issues, the latter of which have consecrated her as a holder of a Jean Monnet project. The author's view on the European integration process is that it was an elite-driven process, wherein public opinion was attributed but a secondary role, thus pleading, by the entire research, for the need for enhanced involvement of the citizens in the democratic governance, as active citizenship acquires new dimensions in the European Union. Thus the citizens become indispensable to the process of real integration and raising the general awareness as to their key role in the multilevel governance is imperative.

The contributions of specialists in the field that are brought together in the present edition fall into two larger sub-fields, on the one hand studies are grouped under the heading *Democratic governance and the impact of new technologies,* that focuses on the institutions and actors at trans-national, national and sub-national levels within the EU multilevel governance system, whereas the second one, *Active citizenship and social integration* is aimed at bringing together views on ways and means of influencing the decision-making process and of citizens participation in the civic life as well as issues of social integration into a challenging multicultural European society of nowadays. Several case studies presented by contributors are valuable to the understanding of the citizens' role in the project, moreover they do not but reinforce the idea that active citizenship is key to counteracting intolerance, xenophobia and racism, while being at the same time a means for a better self-identification of the European citizens with the European institutions, which ultimately leads to social and economic development by each and every citizen's contribution to it.

Rounding off these initiatives of a better understanding of the EU governance system, the research results comprised in the present volume attempt at converging towards conferring legitimacy to institutions, that is of utmost importance with relation to the extent to which the citizens are interested to avail

themselves of the rights and duties that the EU citizenship confers to themselves, in the light of the way they view the entire EU construction.
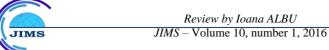
The author sticks to the idea that democracy and democrats are a determining factor in enabling citizens participation to the decision-making process in order to achieve an enhanced democratic legitimacy.

The first paper, within the first part of the volume-*Democratic governance and the impact of new technologies*, entitled *European Union's Multilevel-led Political Structures and System Theory Rethinking Post-National Integration*, written by Elisabeth Lefort and Esteban Kaipl poses the question whether the EU political integration could be explained by a theoretical model, suggesting that a new theoretical approach would enable the observing of multilevel citizenship in a more accurate perspective, as well as taking a closer look at the new political structures that are being changed by post-national European Union directives. The paper aims at proposing a new system theory of post-nationalism drawing on the perspective set forth by Niklas Luhmann, that moves the focus from national to post-national institutions. The authors add to the system theory framework that of governance setting forth the idea that it diffuses the core of the power distribution, stating that the nation-state no longer takes a central position. Further on, the authors advance the idea that the reconfiguring of the politics at this post-national level would define an open structure that could better see the obstacles incurred. In their view, multilevel governance structures could be perceived as autonomous structures, leaving thus aside the political system that is no longer the center of the society. The reality of contemporary politics imposes forming new institutions in the need for answers to the new reality, transcending nation-state centrism and the role of traditional institutions.

The second paper presents the author's view on the change of governance in the enlarged EU due to the European integration process. Professor Vasile Cucerescu's *Multilevel Governance Model for Enlarged Europe: Is Diversity Sustainable?* analysis shows that the various actors involved in the process – public and private; national, regional and local ones have to adapt themselves to the new social-political reality of the time. The main idea set forth by him is that multilevel governance, while affecting the quality of democracy, is leading to Europeanization. The paper aims to examine the Member States multilevel actors' behavior and the way diversity works for such varied actors, i.e. EU member states and accession countries.

Patricia Kaplanova's study, *From Representative to Participatory Democracy: Deliberation in the European Union* states that 'representative democracy in the EU has led to a *democratic deficit* for several years' by now. In order to overcome this, the EU has opened its political and institutional system to the public, bringing forth the concept of *deliberative democracy* with the aim of creating a desired public sphere as a step further in the political development of the Union. The author attempts to prove, by means of the present study, that the deliberative democracy process is already underway and aims at showing that the theory of deliberation could be an institutional approach by which the EU integration process could be approached.

Marco Orfino's paper, *The Web 2.0 and Its Impact on the Relations Between Citizens and Political Representatives* aims at demonstrating that once with the appearance of Web 2.0 the internet has become more than a means of communication and its connection with constitutional issues is stronger and stronger. The paper also approaches the issues of '*e-democracy'* and the changes brought to it by the Web 2.0., asserting that although at national level direct democracy institutions are not web-oriented as a rule, the new forms of communication involved in the political process, such as institutional blogs, social network accounts, political party platforms and wikis are extremely useful in the carrying out of the activities. The introduction of a new system of political participation and the political parties' role in this respect is but a great advantage. Further on, the paper also presents some of the limits to the adoption of the Web 2.0 system from the constitutional law viewpoint. The author is of opinion that the new web-based technology might help linking the EU institutions and the citizens in fighting the lack of participation in political issues at European level, which he identifies as being one of the poignant problems of the EU construction.

The following paper stays within the same range, being entitled *E-citizenship as a Tool to Increase the European Identity,* by Lehte Roots. The paper brings into focus the situation of Estonia, making it known that since 2014 the Estonians can apply for e-residence cards, which does not automatically confer either residence or rights thereto, but enables access to a multitude of services particularly the electronic signature. Making a parallel to this, the author suggests that a similar card could be created for EU citizens thus forging the link with their belonging to the European community. The paper draws on issues such as European identity, e-citizenship and the development of EU e-identity in an attempt to show the benefits that these would bring to an enhanced cooperation between EU member states.

The second part of the volume comprises papers within the umbrella of *Active citizenship and Social Integration,* thus the paper authored by Sergiu Gherghina and Sergiu Miscoiu, *Direct Democracy in the EU? Public Attitudes towards the European Citizens' Initiative* takes over the idea resulted out of the specialty literature according to which the EU citizens' role in the decision-making process is rather limited, bringing into discussion the European Citizens' Initiative in the attempt to trace the profile of the European citizen willing and able to use this tool in the future. The study is based on the data of the 2013 Euro-barometer for both country and individual level differences and indicates that the EU citizens are reluctant to resort to it, particularly the young generation, there being also revealed differences at country level as well as individual level. Important enough are also the limitations revealed as to that the authors acquiesce to the study carried out, one of them being the narrow selection of variables of the explanatory goal employed.

In the paper authored by Cristina Matiuta, *New Ways for Active Citizenship: the Role of Social Networks in Shaping Public Space and Electoral Behaviour in Romania* asserts that a new form of representation is needed to replace the outdated classical representative democracy. The paper refers to the case of Romania and the use of Internet as a significant means to mobilize people to vote in the November 2014 elections, underlining the situation of the diaspora and the

unsuccessful organizing of the voting system abroad that was improved by the social networks in adjusting the situation at the second round of elections. The study aims at shaping the profile of the participants in the protests that were generated as a result of the voting system and what effects does solidarity through social networks trigger. The analysis is joined by a series of case studies that do prove the influence of social networks in modeling both civic and electoral behaviour and eventually even the potential to change the results of the elections, in the era of a boom of mobile communications which ultimately changes the individuals' and citizens' relations with the state institutions for the better.

The Social Relations and Civic Co-operation: A Cross-Country Comparison for Romania, Poland, Germany and the United States by Dan Apateanu focuses on the two concepts of civic culture and social capital and their component parts and also refers to the case of Romania. Further on, using the World Values Survey database, the author carries out an analysis of social relations and civic cooperation, drawing relevant conclusions as to the condition of Romanians and their low level of trust, with a reduced participation in voluntary associations, while sharing most of other values with the other countries to which they are compared. The results obtained are relevant for the case of Romania, implying that the social class influence has been confirmed, there being an increase in all parameters the higher the social class. The author concludes that the middle class proved to be most relevant in explaining the issues of equality, solidarity and tolerance in the case of the four countries taken into study.

Raluca Viman-Miller 's *Second Generation Immigrants and the Problem of Social Integration* draws on the American experience, asserting that the famous "melting pot"of a *heterogenous* society found a better way of handling the integration process as compared to its European counterpart, with its *homogenous* societies, for which immigration is a more recent. The author tries to make a bold assertion implying that the current European democratic process would mean the end of democracy by increased support of radicalist right-wing parties. The author aims at further on looking into the roots of the problem, by trying to define the profile of the terrorists, as she identifies them with young radical individuals who do not integrate into their home society, speaking about radical right and Muslim migration in Europe that we are currently facing. By contrast, the author offers the opposed model of the US, where according to her research, tolerance, inclusion and religious rights are disseminated by the leading political forces Finally she speaks about the so-called post-migrants Muslim generation in search of an identity to put an end to their existential problem.

Mihai Sofonea's paper, *The Social Media Role in Re-shaping 'Immigration Cliches' in Europe* focuses on the role of social media and associated forms related to the idea that the media plays an important role in spreading ethnic prejudice and racism-in his view.-as well as migration phobia and ethnic prejudice. The overall aim of the paper is that of exploring the role that the social networks play in addressing immigration issues, while raising awareness of both opportunities and risks brought along by it.

Last but not least, Veroniki Krikoni, in her study entitled *Europe and the Balkans: Cultural Juxtapositions and Europeanization* focuses on the EU enlargement to the East and talks about the Balkan identity construction, pervaded by ethnic-national tensions translated into violence and analyzes Europeanization in n attempt to show that European-ness implies distinct aspects than Europeanization and having a European culture should transcend these differences.

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