



**An assessment of the influence of public participation processes on  
public policy formulation: The case of the Catalan Citizenship and  
Migration Plan 2017 – 2020**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMB	Citizenship and Migration Board
CMP	Citizenship and Migration Plan
DGCPEP	Directorate General of Citizen Participation and Electoral Processes
ICI	Interdepartmental Commission for Immigration
SEIC	Secretariat for Equality, Immigration and Citizenship
TSO	Third Sector Organisation

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Over the last decades, a perceived democratic deficit of the contemporary political systems has led to increased questioning of the role of traditional public administrations. Such questioning emerges in significant part with two major trends in society. On one hand, citizens and other stakeholders are every time more interested and capable to understand governance information, are increasingly politically sophisticated, and are losing confidence in the representative capacity of the political parties and institutions (Castellà, 2016, p.47). On the other hand, the complexification of societal issues, as the increasing contestation of migration and citizenship, requires more complex governance. Governance in some policy areas often involves disagreement both in how to solve a policy problem but also *'at a more basic level on what the policy problem actually is'* (Scholten, 2020). Additionally, matching new policies with societies' expectations is also more and more difficult due to an enlarged variety of interests within stakeholders in one same society. Against this backdrop, governments are increasingly considered unable to deal with these complex societal issues, to ensure the quality of governments' performance, or to use scarce public resources efficiently. Consequently, the credibility and legitimacy of governments have been affected and the traditional models of policy-formulation and decision-making have been questioned.

In response, a new model of governance that puts emphasis on public participation in policymaking through deliberative practices has emerged: participatory governance. Public participation has long been discussed (Russack, 2018) as it enhances trust and legitimacy, improves public accountancy, builds relationships, creates knowledge, and provides a more effective and efficient policies implementation process. In short, it enhances a higher quality of governance. Whilst there is a general growing recognition that stakeholders participation in public policymaking is the way to overcome the main challenges of traditional forms of governance, there is no consistent way of approaching it in the literature. Essentially it requires a more equal distribution of political power and resources, the decentralisation of decision-making processes or the establishment of a transparent exchange of knowledge and information (Levi-Faur, 2012, p.458). One common way of engaging the public with policymaking is through public participation processes – or participatory processes. Such processes, which change in every setting, entail the direct involvement of sectors of society other than governmental authorities in the design of the policies in which they have an interest. This new approach to

policymaking has been embraced by major political bodies and organisations such as the Council of Europe, the World Bank, and the European Union. In fact, in the last years, the Council of Europe has increasingly recognised the need to establish ‘*effective and sustainable mechanisms for dialogue, consultation and co-operation between civil society and the authorities at all levels*’ (Secretary General of the Council of Europe, 2015, p.53). All things together, it seems therefore that participatory processes are something that governments will increasingly need in order to be able to effectively govern.

As it is further developed in the theoretical framework of this thesis, the literature holds different “ladders of participation” which distinguish different levels in which the public can get involved in policymaking. Each rung of these ladders signifies the amount of weight given to the public voice. Some scholars consider that only the upper levels of the ladders show a “real” participation, where stakeholders actually have a certain power in decision-making. The scholarship on participatory governance also identifies three main challenges of public participation processes: (1) most forms of participation are suitable for expert communities rather than general citizens; (2) top-down instruments are promoted over bottom-up tools, limiting stakeholders to make their voices heard; and (3) that stakeholders’ contribution is mostly limited to a consultative level (Russack, 2018). Moreover, Schiller et al. (2020) identify that when it comes to issues relating to migrants’ integration there is a lack of participation of actors outside the migration policy field.

Against this background, this thesis explores the influence of the public participation process in the elaboration of the Catalan migrants’ integration policies, more specifically the Migration and Citizenship Plan 2017-2020 (CMP). The governance of migration-related issues, which has traditionally been managed by nation-states, is increasingly being addressed at the sub-national level. Schmidtke (2014) argues that the sub-national level specifically, has become a ‘*meaningful arena*’, as these regions have become ‘*important laboratories for deliberating, developing, and implementing immigration and, in particular, integration policies*’ (p.79). This shift in responsibilities responds to an increased belief that the “nation-state” as the principal organising unit of society, implies political constraints and limitations to address complex realities. At the same time, Catalan public administrations are increasingly making efforts to incentivise the active presence of individual citizens and other stakeholders with their proposals, opinions, and initiatives, in the policymaking arena.

Therefore, a single case study of the public participation process conducted to formulate the CMP is deemed appropriate and relevant to conduct this study. This thesis has used a mixed method of data collection – document analysis and semi-structured interviews –, that resulted in the analysis of over 420 pages of documents and 13 interviews with participants and policy-makers.

With over two years of work experience in a third sector organisation in Barcelona dedicated to the research and promotion of the social economy in Catalonia, the co-production of efficient and sustainable solutions to societal issues is of special interest to the researcher.

### ***1.1. Research objective and research questions***

The main objective of this study is to understand how public policies may be shaped by the contributions of actors outside the government department responsible for developing a public policy, collected through a public participation process. Thereby, to explore how a public participation process influences the formulation of public policies, this study is guided by the following primary research question:

*How has the public participation process conducted during the fourth quarter of 2016 informed the formulation of the Catalan Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020?*

Additionally, an array of sub-questions provide the guiding thread around which this study finds the relevant information to answer the main research question. The sub-questions are:

- (i) Why did the Catalan government seek public participation in the design of a migrants' integration policy?
- (ii) Which governmental and non-governmental actors participated in the public participation process conducted to formulate the policy?
- (iii) How did the stakeholders participate in the process?
- (iv) How were the outputs of the public participation process integrated into the final policy?

### ***1.2. Scientific relevance***

Whilst literature on participatory governance and participatory policymaking are abundant, these theories have not been systematically tested across multiple policy areas

(Baldwin, 2020). Elizabeth Baldwin (2020) argues that participatory governance is likely to be particularly effective in contexts where the actors in charge of the implementation of the policy may lack full knowledge of the policy domain. Thereby, scholarship has mostly focused on participatory processes conducted to develop policies in the environmental arena, health care or telecommunications (Baldwin, 2020, pp.2-3). However, recent studies on governance, argue that the governance of many societal issues is becoming increasingly complex – as the increasing contestation of migration and citizenship. Thereby, neither the government nor actors outside the government acting alone have the knowledge and means to address these dynamic problems. Additionally, the question of whether such strategies have an actual effect on policy outcomes also remains understudied. This thesis focuses on a single policy area – migrants’ integration – that is very little studied in relation to participatory policymaking, yet its findings are also relevant to other domains. Hence, this study addresses existing gaps in the literature, by focusing on the influence of the participatory process in the policy formulation rather than on the process itself. Addressing this problem is ambitious due to the lack of previous studies on public participation processes in this policy domain as well as the complex nature of migrants integration policies.

### ***1.3. Societal relevance***

Policy-making processes that involve actors outside the government are becoming increasingly widespread. Successful examples of participatory processes prove the existence of a strong and committed civil society that helps to make better informed and more legitimate policies. Aiming to contribute to the strengthening of this practice, this research empirically analyses a case of participation process and suggests few policy recommendations in order to help administrative institutions improve their performance to ensure citizens can express themselves as well as the institutions become receptive to citizens’ suggestions.

### ***1.4. Study Outline***

This thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter lays out the theoretical framework of the study, which includes a review of the literature on participatory governance and participatory policymaking, as well as a theoretical analysis on how the Catalan government seeks public participation for policy-making. Next, the methodological approach of the study is expounded. Then, the findings informed by the data collected

through document analysis and semi-structured interviews with participants in the participatory process are presented. Afterwards, a discussion section interprets the findings by connecting them to the existing literature identified in chapter 2. Lastly, the study ends by bringing up the conclusions and the limitations of the research, and some policy recommendations for practitioners.

## **Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework**

To examine the influence of a public participation process, this chapter builds a conceptual framework by exploring the literature on participatory governance, policy formulation and public participation in policymaking. A comprehensive review of the literature debate on these concepts is beyond the scope of this study, yet this theoretical framework combines insights from both academic and practical fields to identify the context in which the empirical analysis is conducted. The theoretical observations hereunder, allow the researcher to draw forth four expectations that the empirical research will later verify or falsify. The expectations can also be found in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter ends with a discussion on the gaps identified in the literature.

### ***2.1. Governance: A theoretical perspective to the interactions between the government and non-governmental actors***

The traditional meaning of government has changed significantly during the last decades with the emerging concept of “governance”. In an attempt to increase democracy and legitimacy of the governmental actions, this new concept defines a new form of governing, or ‘*a new method by which society is governed*’ (Rhodes, 2000, p.5), that goes beyond the government unit. With a complexification of societal issues, as the increasing contestation of migration, citizenship and diversity, their governance also becomes more complex. Increasingly, neither the government nor actors outside the government acting alone have the knowledge, information and means to successfully address these complex and dynamic problems. In response to this challenge, the processes of planning and public policy formulation are increasingly characterised by attempts to involve non-governmental actors.

In governance systems, the dividing lines between public and private become blurring. In this regard, literature holds a debate on the consequences of governance concerning the authoritative power of governments. Peters and Pierre (1998, p.224) argue

that the interactions with the private sector dispel government from its role as the source of the “authoritative allocation of values” (Easton, 1965). However, other authors suggest that the interpretation of “governance without government” is misleading (Capano et al., 2015, p.313). They argue that the appearance of governance brings new forms of governing rather than radically change the role of governments. As government becomes one of many actors, it needs to take a coordinating role and learn how to manage the different stakeholders to deliver the services efficiently (Kjaer, 2004, p.191). Therefore, the new ways of governing and coordinating policy-making exist alongside the more traditional “government perspective”<sup>1</sup> (Capano et al., 2015, p.314), and not necessarily imply a shift of authority from governmental to non-governmental actors. Kooiman (2000) identifies a change from traditional patterns towards a model in which aspects, problems, and opportunities of those governing and those governed, are taken into consideration in a systematic interaction between the two governing systems. He further identifies that ‘*institutions, general social structures, rules and behavioural norms, patterns of communication, [...]*’ (p.143) are structural aspects that condition such interactions. In conclusion, governance is about establishing and supporting the relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors in the governing process, i.e. it is about actors’ interactions through which policy processes are coordinated (Capano et al., 2015, p.313).

The scholarship encompasses different modes of governance, one of the main categorisations is Kooiman’s (2003) in *Governing as Governance*. Kooiman distinguishes three different types: self-governance, hierarchical governance, and co-governance.

- 1) *Self-governance*: refers to the capacity of non-governmental actors to govern themselves, outside the purview of government.
- 2) *Hierarchical governance*: It is the most classical and common mode of governance where there are continuous interactions between a government and its citizens. It is a top-down style of intervention (Kooiman et al., 2008, p.9), where the State – or government – remains the central governance unit, although it recognises the need to interact with other actors outside the government to pursue its objectives. Interestingly, in their analysis of the roots of hierarchical

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<sup>1</sup> The traditional government perspective should be understood as the way of governing where political and administrative actors take the central role in creating and implementing public policies.

governance, Margaret Stout and Jeannine M. Love (2016) conclude that governmental agencies may influence citizens to make them voluntarily cooperate with administrative experts to plan and manage policies.

- 3) *Co-governance*: uses systemic and organised forms of interactions between the different actors to govern. It refers to an arrangement in which public, private and civil society organisations participate in the planning and/or delivery of services (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006, p.497). I.e., governmental and non-governmental actors actively co-produce<sup>2</sup> service delivery. Yet, this concept refers to the different forms of collaboration and cooperation between actors without an actor having a central or dominant role.

## **2.2. Participatory Governance**

Public participation is a key issue in democracies where citizens participate directly or indirectly in different political and administrative issues. Participation has traditionally been very limited to ‘*voting, public hearings, written comments in pending rules, and access to agency information*’ (Elías & Alkadry, 2011, p.872). I.e. public participation has generally been only grounded in democratic principles. Increasingly, representative democracy is perceived as being unable, on its own, to ensure the quality of state performance, empower citizens and use scarce public resources efficiently. With the adoption of participatory governance, Western countries are making efforts to increase participation in ‘*the practice of joint knowledge creation through deliberation between public administrators and citizens*’ (Elías & Alkadry, 2011, p.870). Stakeholders participate through dialogue, exchange and mutual learning rather than by the mere aggregation of individual interests through voting (Quick & Bryson, 2016). Thus, public participation entails an “extra-electoral” way in which society can participate politically (Però, 2007). Elías and Alkadry (2011, p.887) identify two main challenges: (1) how to empower non-governmental actors to participate and (2) how to provide mechanisms for that interaction to be meaningful.

Several authors have reflected on the introduction of participatory mechanisms by the public administrations (Dalton, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Rodhes, 1997; Clarke & Stewart, 1997; as cited in Castellà, 2016). The introduction of such mechanisms respond to a range

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<sup>2</sup> Co-production has been defined by Elinor Ostrom (1996) as ‘*a process through which inputs used to provide goods or services are contributed by individuals who are not from the same organisation*’ (Johnston, 2015, p.3-4).

of factors: more information within the reach of all citizens; citizens more interested and capable to understand the information; a citizenship every time more politically sophisticated; and a citizenship that is losing confidence in the representative capacity of the political parties and institutions (Dalton, 2004, as cited in Castellà, 2016, p.47).

Public participation in governance generates numerous advantages (Quick & Bryson, 2016, p.160-161). A variety of participants may provide new and different information as their perception of an issue and their motivation to address a problem may be diverse. Participatory governance also enhances trust and legitimacy and creates resources for future policy problem-solving since it builds relations and generates knowledge. Some authors further identify that participatory governance can support a more equitable distribution of limited public resources (Abers 2000; Simonsen and Robbins 2000, as cited in Quick & Bryson, 2016, p.161). Furthermore, from a deficit model perspective, *'participation is expected to lead to public support for planning decisions and, as a result, to effective and efficient implementation processes'* (Turnhout et al., 2010). When considering a public participation approach, one must consider not only the benefits but also the downsides. When there are more actors involved costs may be higher, decision-making and implementation may suffer delays, accountability may be fragmented and *'the regulation of stakeholder power may erode trust'* (Johnston, 2015, p.4).

Whilst both scientists and practitioners widely agree about the need for participation, authors such as Esther Turnhout, Severine Van Bommel, and Noelle Aarts, have a more critical stance towards participation. Those authors suggest that participation often has *'unintended consequences which lead to failures in meeting its objectives'* (Turnhout et al., 2010). More specifically they identify that participation creates different categories of citizens, that often is a performative practice, and that rather than empowering local inhabitants, the participation contributes to the *'reinforcement of already powerful interests'* (Turnhout et al., 2010). Beer (1982) also identifies problems arising from the participation of stakeholders as *'delay, postponement, immobility and, [...] pluralistic stagnation'* (as cited in de Vries, 2006, p.144).

### ***2.3. Participatory Governance in the Catalan government: The “open government” as a new model of institutional relations between government and citizens***

Public administrations in Catalonia have recently shown an increasing interest in strengthening their relations with citizens. The interests are not only to ensure democracy and increase public efficiency but also to respond to an institutional and economic crisis of the last years (Cerrillo, 2015, p.40). Catalan public administrations refer to “*govern obert*” (open government) as a new model of relationship with the citizenship by means of (Cerrillo, 2015, p.43-46):

- 1) *Public transparency*: provides citizens with information about the functioning of the public administrations, prevents corruption, and guarantees public entirety.
- 2) *Participation*: allows citizens to communicate their interests to the public administrations, other than the representative democracy.
- 3) *Collaboration*: involves citizens in the implementation of policies, service delivery and development of public activities.<sup>3</sup>

The open government allows citizens to influence the design and execution of public policies in accordance with the information that administrations make available. The aim is to boost dialogue and make the administration aware of the citizens’ opinions, adapt policy decisions to citizens’ preferences, and count on collaboration for the development of the public policies (César & Lorenzo, 2010). To this effect, open government policies pursue a ‘*bidirectional, permanent and transparent*’ (Generalitat de Catalunya, n.d.) contact between the administration and the citizens.

The Catalan Parliament defines governance as ‘[a] governing way based on the interrelation between the bodies in charge of the political leadership and the civil society, to give power, authority and influence to the society over the decisions that affect the public live’<sup>i</sup> (DAL, 2018)<sup>4</sup>. It further recognises that governments, society and the market, interact autonomously through negotiations to formulate and implement public policies. This is done through ‘*self-regulated, interdependent, horizontal, and relatively stable networks in a policy framework*’<sup>ii</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The Law 19/2014 on transparency, access to public information and good government, regulates these three main instruments of the open government

<sup>4</sup> Please note that several quotes along the document (especially in the findings chapters 5, 6 and 7) have been translated from Catalan or Spanish to English. The original references can be found in the footnotes. More information on the sources of the quotes in the findings chapters can be found in Tables 2 and 5.

The theoretical observations in the field of participatory governance, both from the literature review and from research on the Catalan government's approach, draw forth the first expectation of this study: (E1) *the Catalan government seeks public participation to formulate migrants integration policies systematically following a top-down style of intervention*. Within the objectives of promoting open government, and following a hierarchical mode of governance in which the Generalitat remains the central governance unit while recognises the need to interact with other actors, the Generalitat is who encourages public administrations to make use of participatory mechanisms in policymaking. Accordingly, this thesis expects to find that the Catalan government pushed for a public participation process to happen. Moreover, the actors' ability to participate seems to be very limited by the information and the mechanisms that the government chooses to make available. Finally, the contact between public administrations and citizens is expected to be "permanent", and hence the participatory process under study to be systematic rather than a once-off exercise.

#### ***2.4. The process of policy formulation***

Policy problems are socially constructed conceptions of reality, which are constantly constructed, reproduced and reformulated. Howlett et al. (2009) define public policy as a 'complex phenomenon consisting of numerous decisions made by many individuals and organisations' (p.10) that aim to provide solutions to policy problems. The policy process, concerned with how policies are made, is divided into distinct stages that, in terms of the actions taken by the different stakeholders, form a linear or circular sequence defined as "policy cycle" (Laswell, 1956; Howlett et al., 2009). In other words, a policy process is a course of actions that take place over a certain period to respond to a problem, with a policy. Traditional – and rational – stages models of the public policy process, refer to a linear process that begins with the identification of a problem and finishes with its solution. In those, the policy formulation phase starts once a public policy problem has been defined and moved onto the policy agenda (Bekker et al., 2017), and is part of the pre-decision phase (Sidney, 2007). Public policy processes involve complex dynamics that do not comply with the simplistic approach of previous theories that view policy stages as clearly separated and consecutive. Therefore, latest trends indicate a more dynamic process that presents a cycle of phases of interactions without a defined beginning or end.

The policy formulation step is particularly important since it entails the government response towards the problem identified. Howlett (2011) argues that policy formulation generates ‘*options about what to do about a public problem*’ (p.29). In this stage, identified problems, policy proposals, and demands ‘*are transformed into government programs*’ (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p.48).

Scholarship on policy formulation encompasses a range of broad issues. Among others, the literature focuses on how actors generate the alternatives or how and why some of these alternatives remain in the decision agenda while others do not. Consequentially, the policy formulation process allocates power among social, political and economic interests. Furthermore, policy formulation is embedded in studies of subsystems, advocacy coalitions, networks and agenda-setting (Sidney, 2007). A common feature of the theories is the coalition of the actors involved in, and the ones excluded from, the policymaking process. Howlett and Ramesh (1995) highlight the importance of identifying the actors and understanding their opinions, motivations and perceptions when analysing the process of policy formulation. The interaction between the stakeholders, including governmental and civil society actors, vary in each policy domain, government level, or even nations depending on political cultures, traditions and constitutional settings (Jann & Wegrich, 2007, p.50).

### ***2.5. The actors in participatory policymaking***

So far this research has illustrated that there can be a broad range of different stakeholders with different concerns involved in governance processes. Consequentially, policy formulation processes allocate power among social, political and economic interests. For that reason, literature pays attention to the ‘*interests involved and the balance of power held by participants*’ (Sidney, 2007, p.80), including their ideas and values. Scholarship indicates that power is usually unbalanced. In line with the hierarchical mode of governance earlier introduced, Johnston (2015) states that government ‘*maintains its dominant role through its financial and regulatory authority*’ (p.10). She further identifies that what governance offers is ‘*non-state actors the opportunity to inform the state, as the authoritative sector, on public service delivery needs*’(p.10).

Policy networks have been defined by scholars to ‘*illustrate the complex web of policymaking and the inter-relationships between different state and non-state actors*’ (Tantivess & Walt, 2008, p.329). David Marsh and Raw Rhodes (1992) identify two

categories of policy networks that differ in the number of members, interests, resources and power: *policy communities* and *issue networks*. The first, refers to a group ‘*with a limited number of participants, high levels of continuity and a persistent balance of power among members*’ (Tantivess & Walt, 2008, p.329), although often few of them are dominant. Issue networks, on the contrary, are formed by a large number of participants with different values and backgrounds, and power and resources are imbalanced. Therewith, issue networks are often characterised by conflicts. The influence of the network on the policy formulation also diverges in each type. Sripen Tantivess and Gill Walt (2008, p.329) argue that while policy communities often lead policy decisions, issue networks have much more limited access and influence to the policy process.

Regarding the role of non-governmental actors in the policy formulation stage, Tantivess and Walt (2008) argue that given the complexity of the process, the actors must have a ‘*minimal level of knowledge and skills about problems and solutions in the subject domain*’ (p.330) as well as be motivated by “enduring interests”. The literature review has identified some common patterns in the role of the different actors in public participation processes. Government experts and consultants are generally selected by the public authorities, therefore, usually have a greater influence over the process than others (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003, as cited in Tantivess & Walt, 2008, p.330). “Epistemic communities” – i.e. networks of academics – may also play significant roles (Stone, 2001, as cited in Tantivess & Walt, 2008, p.330). In his study on NGOs as policy actors, John Casey (1998) argues that NGOs participate by ‘*articulat[ing] their demands into specific actions designed to influence government decision and actions*’ (p.22). He further identifies that their participation is not always positively received and that the attitudes towards their participation vary according to social and economic conditions. Moreover, he recognises that NGOs ‘*must have the capacity to demonstrate that they have a broad political base and that they are experts in the theory and practice of the policy in question*’ (p.22).

*‘NGOs have been seen either as: peripheral to a strong governmental system; essential and desirable players in a pluralist distribution of power; a threat to democracy [...]; or the legitimate future of democracy’* (Casey, 1998, p.22).

Literature has furthermore investigated the different kind of knowledge that is expected from the stakeholders’ groups in participatory policy-making. Some authors argue that “expert knowledge” (Scott, 1998; Yanow, 2004; as cited in Quick & Bryson,

2016) is commonly considered over “lay knowledge” (Ozawa & Susskind 1985; Fischer 2000; as cited in Quick and Bryson, 2016). The former refers to ‘*technical and/or professional expertise that derives from academic training*’ (Yanow, 2004, p.12), which sometimes appears decontextualised, producing poor outcomes. Lay knowledge, conversely, refers to knowledge that is locally specific and context-based. Regardless of the type of knowledge, public participation introduces empathetic and experimental understandings that provide valuable knowledge into the formulation process (Quick & Bryson, 2016).

The theoretical framework on stakeholders that participate in participatory policy formulation inspire the second expectation of this research: (E2) *An issue network of a wide range of different actors, all of them with expert knowledge, participated in the process. The type of participation though, varied according to the actor’s profile.* Since the Generalitat is increasingly making efforts to integrate civil society in administrative issues, it is expected to find a big presence of non-governmental actors in the process. Furthermore, in line with the literature and because migration and integration issues are very complex by nature, it is expected to find more actors bearing “expert knowledge”, i.e. actors with academic, technical or professional expertise in the field. Thereby, government experts and epistemic communities are expected to be specifically selected by the public authorities to participate as well as to have a greater influence through the process than others.

## ***2.6. Public participation in policy formulation***

Public participation in policy formulation entails the direct involvement of sectors of society other than governmental authorities, such as civilians, businesses or NGOs, in the design of policies, plans or programs in which they have an interest. Literature also refers to this practice as “participatory policymaking”. By the early 2000s, public participation was usual and expected from public policymaking (Bingham et al. 2005, as cited in Quick & Bryson, 2016). But, why is public participation so valued? As Elías and Alkadry (2011, p.87) argue, making the policy process accessible to citizen input enhances the representativeness of the system as well as achieves accountability and creates active citizenship. It needs to be highlighted that there is no one specific formula for a good participatory process, instead, the participants, methods, intensity and form interplay uniquely in every setting. Therefore, this section reviews some of the different models of public participation processes that can be found in the literature.

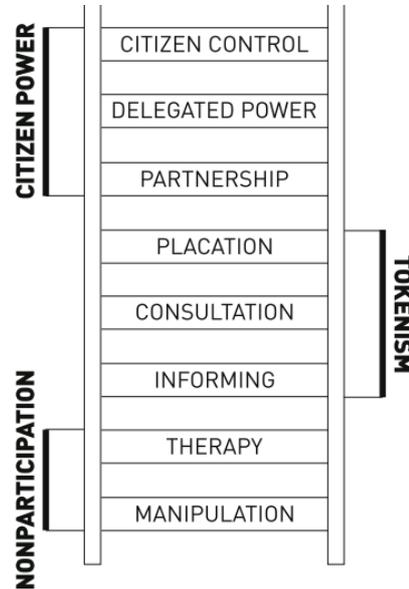
Regarding the roots of a participatory process, the motivation can be top-down, i.e. the government seeks citizen's input and elaborates the process; or bottom-up, i.e. stakeholder groups advocate for this approach aiming at influencing a specific policy (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2017, p.1). These two pathways differ in its dynamics and objectives. Literature has been long much more focused on government initiated forms of participation, however, bottom-up strategies are increasingly receiving attention (Brandsen et al., 2017; Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk, 2016; Igalla et al., forthcoming, as cited in van Meerkerk, 2019). Ingmar van Meerkerk (2019) identifies the latter as '*diffused and fragmented*'. On one hand, literature on top-down pathways often holds that the need for obtaining public acceptance is a key motive for governments to conduct participatory processes (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p.57; ). On the other hand, literature on bottom-up strategies finds that dissatisfaction about a current situation is an important motivation for citizens involvement in co-production of services. In his comparison between top-down and bottom-up pathways to collaboration between governments and citizens, van Meerkerk (2019) concludes that bottom-up forms of participation can partly be seen as a response to the issues of top-down participation (mainly the mismatch of expectations of participants).

Additionally, the process can be limited to a one-time event for a particular policy, or follow a systemic participatory approach. Scholarship claims that the development of communications technology – especially Internet – has been a crucial factor for increasing the participation of non-governmental actors in policy formulation processes (Quick & Bryson, 2016; Slotterback, 2011; Martin et al., 2014; Cerrillo, 2015; Akom et al., 2016). Different forms of information technology support such participation by facilitating communication and active listening to make use of citizens' knowledge and experiences (Cruz-Rubio, 2014, p.11).

Public participation processes obtain stakeholders' inputs according to the level of public involvement. Therewith, several academics have distinguished different forms of participation and developed various "ladders of participation" in which each rung signifies the amount of weight given to the public voice (see Arnstein, 1969; Hart, 1992; Rocha, 1997; Karl, 2002). These participation ladders generally define the degree of stakeholders participation from informing to empowerment, yet although the different ladders share some similarities, there is no consistent way of measuring participation in

the literature. Sherry Arnstein’s “ladder of citizen participation” includes eight rungs that correspond to degrees of “nonparticipation”, “tokenism”, and “citizen power”.

*Figure 1. Sherry Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation"*



*Note.* Reprinted from *Who Designs? Technological Mediation in Participatory Design* (2015), by Vardouli, A. Springer, 13–41.

Arnstein (1969) was critical of the lower levels of her ladder and argued that the “real” participation could only be found on the higher ones (Turnhout et al., 2010). In fact, Arnstein declared citizen control the true form of participation (Arnstein, 1969). Hence, the levels placed at the bottom of her ladder, “manipulation” and “therapy” are considered forms of nonparticipation. This rung describes a *‘paternalistic form of decisionmaking, where experts or authorities decide in the name of “the people” and appeal to benevolent intents in order to legitimize their choices’* (Vardouli, 2015, p.23). In the “informing”, “consultation”, and “placation” levels in the tokenism rungs, voices are heard but the final decisions are made by experts or authorities. It is only at the top of the ladder, where “partnership”, “delegated power”, and “citizen control” are forms of citizen power.

In line with Arnstein’s theory, most participation ladders indicate that there is a continuum of levels where the lower have no opportunities to influence public outcomes and the higher have almost full influence. In this framework, this thesis uses a continuum of participation from an FAO document<sup>5</sup> which suggests 7 progressive levels (Karl, 2002)

<sup>5</sup> The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) published a working paper on participatory policy reform from a sustainable livelihoods perspective within the Livelihood Support Programme. See in <http://www.fao.org/3/ad688e/ad688e00.htm#Contents>

as it is considered to be the most suitable for later describing the participation in the empirical case. Figure 2 outlines the continuum of stakeholders participation. Furthermore, the literature suggests that the consultation level is the dominant way in which stakeholders participate in policymaking, a relatively low level that does not encourage the establishment of relationships, collaborations or empowerment.

**Figure 2.** *Continuum of stakeholders participation*

<i>Contribution</i>	Voluntary or other forms of input to predetermined programmes and projects.
<i>Information sharing</i>	Stakeholders are informed about their rights, responsibilities and options.
<i>Consultation</i>	Stakeholders are given the opportunity to interact, provide feedback, and express suggestions and concerns. Yet, analysis and decisions are made by outsiders and stakeholders have no assurance that their input will be used.
<i>Cooperation and consensus-building</i>	Stakeholders negotiate positions and help determine priorities, but the process is directed by outsiders
<i>Decision-making</i>	Stakeholders have a role in making decisions on policy, project design and implementation
<i>Partnership</i>	Stakeholders work together as equals towards mutual goals
<i>Empowerment</i>	Transfer of control over decision-making and resources to stakeholders

*Note.* Adapted from *Participatory Policy Reform from a Sustainable Livelihoods Perspective* (2002), by Karl M. FAO, Rome.

In recent years, literature on stakeholder engagement has analysed the use of the outputs of deliberative interactions between stakeholders to inform policy decisions. Newig et al. (2018, as cited in Baldwin, 2020, p.367) argue that the output of the different forms of engagement informs policy decisions differently:

*‘[D]eliberative information exchange, may shape the content of policy decisions, whereas other forms of engagement— those that build a network of engaged actors— may serve to enhance regulators’ capacity to monitor implementation and ensure compliance with those policy decisions’.*

Jennifer Rietbergen-McCracken (2017, p.4) suggests 7 stages of a “general process” in which a government could seek broad participation in the design of a particular policy: (1) identify the stakeholders; (2) establish a working group; (3) organise consultation and dialogue forums; (4) design and implement a process; (5) arrange reporting back sessions; (6) hammer policy options and decide on the way forwards; and (7) implement a communication strategy. Furthermore, she identifies the three most commonly used tools in participatory policymaking (pp.2-3): information-sharing tools, consultation tools, and active participation tools.

**Figure 3.** *Most commonly used tools in participatory policymaking*

<i>Information-sharing</i>	Draft policy documents or progress reports on existing policies are shared through different media channels. It can also be shared by teaming up with civil society organisations who share it with their members.
<i>Consultation</i>	Includes a wide range of tools, such as discussion forums – e.g. round tables, public hearings, focus groups, surveys –; or other feedback mechanisms – e.g. public opinion polls, comment periods on a draft policy. On a more continuous consultation process, another mechanism is advisory committees of interest group representatives.
<i>Active participation</i>	Citizens help to set the policy agenda, shape the dialogue or propose policy options. It shows more in-depth participation, yet the final decision still rests within the government.

*Note.* Adapted from *Participatory policy making* (2017), by Rietbergen-McCracken, J. World Alliance for Citizen Participation.

The public is increasingly involved in the policy formulation process because it has multiple benefits: better informed and more equitable policies; strengthens trust, legitimacy, transparency and accountability; strengthens ownership; enhances capacity and inclusion of marginalised groups; enhances government capacity; builds relationships which will help in future interactions; promotes common understandings and provides greater quality decisions and effective implementation (Quick & Bryson, 2016; Rietbergen-McCracken, 2017; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007). Although participatory processes show multiple benefits, they also entail some challenges and risks, among others: are time and resources consuming; raise people’s expectations of having their

views taken into account; can create conflicts among different stakeholders; civil society organisations may seem to lose independence and can also be seen as to be interfering in political matters (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2017, p.7).

Scholarship on participatory processes consistently suggests that participatory processes design varies from case to case. Therefore, it is difficult to anticipate how the Generalitat designed the process to formulate the CMP. However, by examining the Catalan government's approach in other participatory processes and combining the findings with the literature review, this thesis draws the following expectation. (E3) *Stakeholders participation is to be found at the level of consultation, and thereby consultation tools are the main tools this study expects to identify in the participatory process.*

### ***2.7. Public participation in the Catalan government's policymaking***

In 2013, the President of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (the Catalan government), drafted a transparency law and strengthened mechanisms for collaborative participation<sup>6</sup>. The objective was to encourage citizens to get involved in the design, management and definition of plans and public policies<sup>7</sup>. Although the scope of the law is limited, it provides two main participation mechanisms. First, it stipulates that all citizens and entities can transmit proposals, suggestions and opinions about any issue the administration has competency over. Second, that the public administration must establish participation proceedings for the elaboration of the most relevant public policies. In his analysis of open government, Agustí Cerrillo i Martínez (2015), explains that to guarantee the efficiency of these two mechanisms, the information that the public administration provides for the citizens must be given well in advance, and in an adequate, systematic and understandable way. Furthermore, the administration must assess the outcome of the participation process, take it into account when making decisions and inform the participants about the decisions and their justification.

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<sup>6</sup> *Llei 19/2014, del 29 de desembre, de transparència, accés a la informació pública i bon govern (I.e. Law 19/2014 on transparency, access to public information and good government)*

<sup>7</sup> See *Propostes i reflexions del President de la Generalitat en matèria de transparència i regeneració democràtica* (i.e., Proposals and reflections of the president of the Generalitat in terms of transparency and democracy regeneration). Retrieved from: <https://www.parlament.cat/document/intrade/8502>

In addition to this law, the Open Government Plan 2019 – 2020<sup>8</sup> reaffirms the will of the Government of Catalonia to improve the quality of Catalan democracy and public services and defines the vision for the year 2023 in the field of open government. One of the objectives set for this time horizon is to incorporate civil society participation in the elaboration and evaluation of public policies regularly. The plan also includes three sub-objectives: (1) promote public participation processes and mechanisms; (2) improve the public participation infrastructure; and (3) generate knowledge.

When further investigating the mechanisms that the Catalan government makes available for participation, one can easily find an online platform with the different open processes categorised by themes<sup>9</sup>. This platform differentiates two moments in the process of policy formulation in which citizens can participate:

- 1) *Public consultations*: before drafting the policy, the government consult the citizenship about the most relevant aspects of the issue to regulate. This is an initial phase where citizens can also value the need to regulate the issue.
- 2) *Feedback on the draft of the policy*: once the government has drafted the first version of the policy, it is made public to citizenship for improving the content. In this phase of the process, citizens can submit comments on the draft before the definite approval of the policy.

The platform includes a wide range of participation processes<sup>10</sup> designed by the Directorate General of Citizen Participation and Electoral Processes<sup>iii</sup> (DGCPEP), which vary in format. However, one can easily recognise some common features in the information provided: introduction to the policy and the process, objectives and justification; main themes of the debate; how to participate and who can participate; information about the deliberative sessions/workshops; etc.

The overall theoretical framework motivates the last expectation of this thesis: (E4) *The participants have been able to make significant contributions, which have been assessed and analysed by the responsible government department and finally introduced into the policy.*

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<sup>8</sup> See the executive summary of the plan (in Catalan) in <http://governobert.gencat.cat/en/que-es/Pla-de-govern-obert/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://participa.gencat.cat>

<sup>10</sup> The processes that can be found in the online platform are those that are currently open for participating or that have been recently closed.

## ***2.8. Gaps in the literature***

Literature on participatory governance and public participation has been much focused on the different kinds of participation or the expansion of '*citizens' roles in policy process*' (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p.1). Also, the emphasis of the theoretical and empirical literature is increasingly placed on two other areas. On one hand, most of the recent studies on participatory mechanisms are focused on the procedural features (Glicken, 2000; Rowe & Frewer, 2000; Anduiza & Maya, 2005; Castellà & Jorba, 2005). Given the difficulty to determine the quality of the processes, these studies point out the need to consider which aspects of the process are desirable and then assess the presence and quality of those aspects in the process (Castellà, 2016, p.49). On the other hand, numerous studies place attention on the evaluation of public participation (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006; Rowe & Frewer, 2000; Webler & Tuler, 2000; Rowe & Frewer, 2004). Scholars agree that evaluating public participation and identifying what makes it successful is difficult to determine, and therefore, improving the process is challenging. In compliance with this last inquiry, most of the empirical research has focused on evaluating the impact of public participation processes on '*a range of citizen participant attribute*' (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p.20). Much less is known about the actual and direct impacts these processes have on the formulation of policies, i.e. the actual effects of participation in practice. Against this backdrop, this thesis aims at responding to this gap in the literature by studying the influence of a public participation process in the elaboration of migration and integration policies at the regional level, specifically in the context of the Catalan government.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

This chapter provides the research design and methodological approach of this study. Firstly, it operationalises the theories identified in chapter 2 by identifying variables and indicators that enable the theoretical concepts to be measured empirically (Toshkov, 2016, pp.83-105). Secondly, it explains the research design and case study selected as a research strategy. Finally, this chapter exposes the mixed methods of data collection and data analysis that the research applies.

### 3.1. Operationalisation

As this thesis has previously discussed, while evaluation of participatory policymaking processes has been broadly studied, the impact of such processes on the formulation of policies has been overlooked in the literature. Against this backdrop, scholarship shows different frameworks for evaluating processes and lacks in suggesting others for analysing the impact of participatory processes on policy formulation. To make the theories discussed in chapter 2 applicable to the empirical study, this thesis operationalises the key concepts of the research: *participatory governance, public participation process and policy formulation*. Table 1 illustrates the operationalisation of the concepts, variables, attributes, and indicators. As table 1 shows, these concepts are not measured in line with one solely theory for each variable. To operationalise them, all theories described in chapter 2 were considered. For example, to measure the relationships between the different actors involved, this thesis mainly applies two theories. One is Kooiman's (2003) categorisation of modes of governance. Another one is Marsh and Rhodes' (1992) policy networks. Jann and Wegrich (2007) argue that the interaction between stakeholders, vary in each policy domain, government level or even nations. That is why, this study has encountered the need to use a wide range of different theories that together allow to understand how the participatory process to formulate the CMP was conducted.

**Table 1.** Operationalisation of the theoretical concepts

	VARIABLES	INDICATORS	METHODS	SOURCES
Participatory governance	GOVERNANCE			
	Modes of governance	<i>Are the different actors independently governed or does one actor play a central role?</i>	Interviews	Policymakers and stakeholders
	Leadership	<i>Who is the leader of the policy? And of the plan? Is there any advocacy group?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	POLICY NETWORKS			

	Participants' relationships	<i>How are the inter-relationships between the actors? Is the number of participants limited or large? Do the actors share values and backgrounds?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
Public Participation Process	ORIGIN			
	Initiative	<i>Is the process a top-down or a bottom-up type of intervention?</i>	Interviews	Policymakers and stakeholders
	Motivation	<i>What is the need/will for conducting a public participation process?</i>	Interviews	Policymakers and stakeholders
	PARTICIPATORY METHOD			
	Procedure	<i>What are the different stages of the public participation process?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Opportunity to participate	<i>What are the spaces available to make proposals? In which level of the "ladder of participation" do stakeholders participate?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Information quality and transparency	<i>How do participants receive/access relevant information? Is the information produced clear and useful? Are the objectives of the process clear to the participants?</i>	Interviews	Policymakers and stakeholders
	Quality of the debate	<i>What deliberation techniques are used? Could the participants contribute effectively? Have proposals raised from the deliberation?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	PARTICIPANTS			
	Actors involved	<i>Who has participated? Is there diversity among the actors involved? Is there representativity among the actors?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Type of knowledge	<i>Do the actors have expert knowledge or lay knowledge? Has the knowledge of the actors influenced their participation?</i>	Interviews and Content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Perceptions and Opinions	<i>Do the participants share opinions, or is there a diversity of opinions?</i>	Interviews	Policymakers and stakeholders

	RESULTS OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS			
	Outcome	<i>Are the results of the process documented? Have the results been communicated to the participants?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Assessment of the contributions	<i>How are the results followed up and monitored? What are the grounds for accepting/rejecting the contributions? Has the type of actor/type of knowledge influenced the way the contribution has been assessed? Is there any public feedback on the results? Have the participants received a justification of why the contributions were accepted/rejected?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Participants' satisfaction	<i>How is the overall participatory process evaluated by the participants?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	IMPACT OF THE PROCESS			
Policy Formulation	Inclusiveness	<i>Are the contributions of the process translated into concrete actions, programs or policies? Are all contributions considered equally?</i>	Interviews and content analysis	Policymakers, stakeholders and policy documents
	Participants' satisfaction	<i>How is the resulting policy evaluated by the participants?</i>	Interviews	Policymakers and stakeholders

### 3.2. Research design

Following logic and systemic sequence when performing any empirical-based research, allows the researcher to control the veracity and reliability of the conclusions. Research design in qualitative studies is the '*reflexive process operating through every stage*' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.24) of a study, from the formulation of the problem to the generation of conclusions. It usually involves: formulating a strategy to resolve the problem; elaborate research questions; collect, analyse and interpret data; and publish the results (Maxwell, 2005).

Over the last decades, research on public participation has shifted from being very based on quantitative methods, to include a diversity of perspectives and investigation techniques (Castellà, 2015, p.106). This thesis opted for a positivist deductive approach to test a pattern that is theoretically expected based on theories on participatory

governance and public participation processes. Hence, it is an explanatory theoretically informed empirical research, which constantly waves back and forth between data and theory. The reason why a deductive study was deemed appropriate is threefold. Firstly, it offers the possibility to explain causal relationships between concepts and variables. Secondly, it allows contributing to theory development with its findings. And lastly, considering time constraints, this approach is often quicker to conduct.

To study the effect of an independent variable – the participatory process – on a dependent variable – the formulation of a public policy – a single case study design is performed. Fact remains that, single case methodology is challenging for generalization. However, Castellà (2015, p.107) identifies that some authors such as Flyvbjerg (2005) affirm that it is valid to generalise from one single case, being as complementary or as an alternative of other investigative methods. Furthermore, a single case enables the study to be more detailed and more in-depth investigated.

### ***3.2.1. Case selection***

In order to select an appropriate case of participatory policy formulation, several aspects were taken into consideration. Among others, whether a set of participation methods had been employed; whether there is sufficient and accessible information on the process and stakeholders involved; and whether a varied range of participants with different interests participated. As a result of the selection process, the case chosen to perform the study is the Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020 developed by the Secretariat for Equality, Migration and Citizenship of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (the Catalan Government). This plan is an outstanding case. The urgent demand for actions in response to the rapid increase of migrants in Catalonia interlinks with the general government's will to operate in joint responsibility among administrations and citizenship. Furthermore, the reason why the formulation of this policy is a strategic case for this study is fourfold.

1. It is an area of public policy that is particularly complex and for that reason requires complex solutions. Literature refers to these issues as “wicked problems” (Crowley & Head, 2017; Bevir, 2010; Raadschelders, et al. 2019; Rhodes, 1997);
2. The Catalan government is an autonomously governed region in the sub-national level, which is increasingly assuming responsibilities in the management of migration, and specifically in defining an own approach to the integration of newcomers;

3. Over the last decades, the Catalan public administrations are putting efforts into creating a new model of relationship with citizenship. One of the main goals of this model is to promote and strengthen the participation of citizens in policy-making;
4. This case meets practical matters such as the availability of information or reachability of stakeholders.

### **3.2.2. Research methods**

This thesis has used a mixed method of data collection, including key document analysis and semi-structured interviews to in-depth contextualise the documents. In order to answer the research questions, the context, i.e. the public policy, and the process, i.e. the public participation process, have been studied. Literature highlights the importance of identifying the different actors, their opinions, motivations and perceptions when trying to understand a process of policy formulation (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995). Thereby, this thesis approaches the topic from an actor-centred perspective. Understanding that different actors with different goals and expectations participate in the processes, the research has followed a “user-based” approach (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p.12). The opinions, expectations and experiences of the participants in the public participation process have been placed at the core of the research.

#### **3.2.2.1. Data collection**

To evaluate both the context and the content data has been collected through document analysis. A sample of units of analysis has been systematically selected (Babbie, 2010, p.334). All documents analysed are primary documents that were collected from official web pages of the Catalan Government; the Secretariat for Equality, Immigration and Citizenship (SEIC); and the Directorate General of Citizen Participation and Electoral Processes (DGCPEP). Table 5 in the Appendix shows an overview of the documents used for this research.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to better grasp the reality of the process, and to find the areas of common ground, disagreement and unique perspectives (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p.26) of the participants. At first, interviewees were selected through a non-probability sampling approach, specifically a purposive sampling technique (Babbie, 2010, pp.192-193). However, to ensure representativeness and

facilitate the reachability of other stakeholders, this method has been later combined with a snowball sampling method.

The final sample included a range of governmental and non-governmental actors. On one hand policymakers and representatives of two governmental departments: (1) the one responsible for the elaboration of the policy (SEIC); and (2) the one responsible for the elaboration of the methodology of the participatory process (DGCPEP). Interviews have also been conducted with actors that participated in the process, including, technical experts from numerous local authorities, third sector organizations – i.e. non-for-profit organisations, and academic circles.

**Table 2.** *List of interviewees*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Type of Actor</b>	<b>Type of Participation</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>R01_TSO</b>	Third Sector Organisation	Participant	04.05.2021
<b>R02_AC</b>	Academic Circle	Participant	05.05.2021
<b>R03_TSO</b>	Third Sector Organisation	Participant	05.05.2021
<b>R04_TSO</b>	Third Sector Organisation	Online Participant	07.05.2021
<b>R05_TSO</b>	Third Sector Organisation	Participant	07.05.2021
<b>R06_GO</b>	Local Government Official	Participant	10.05.2021
<b>R07_GO</b>	Local Government Official	Participant	11.05.2021
<b>R08_TSO</b>	Third Sector Organisation	Participant	12.05.2021
<b>R09_GO</b>	Local Government Official	Participant	18.05.2021
<b>R10_AC</b>	Academic Circle	Participant	19.05.2021
<b>R11_AC</b>	Academic Circle	Participant	19.05.2021
<b>R12_LPr</b>	Official from the DGCPEP	Leaders of the process	21.05.2021
<b>R13_LP0</b>	Official from the SEIC	Leaders of the policy	28.05.2021

### **3.2.2.2. Data analysis**

The data collection stage resulted in the compilation of over 420 pages from 18 key documents, and over 780 minutes of 13 recorded interviews. All the empirical data was coded and analysed using a qualitative data analysis software, the Atlas.ti. Partly driven

by theory and partly driven by the data collected, a coding scheme was created in a deductive manner. The coding process consisted in three phases: (1) open coding; (2) axial coding; and (3) selective coding (Babbie, 2010, p.397). First, considering the theories and questioning the data collected, initial key concepts were identified, classified and labelled (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.102). The open coding resulted in an extensive list of codes such as “actors”; “inter-relationships”; “process”; “transparency”; “outcome”; or “satisfaction”. Second, the policy documents and interview transcripts were partly reread to regroup and categorise the codes into “code groups”. For example, a number of codes were grouped into the categories of “Actors: number, diversity and representativity” or “Process: digital participation”. Finally, from the codes created through open coding and axial coding, this thesis has more precisely selected the codes that included the data that directly helps to answer the research questions. This final selection helped to generate the arguments that bring insight into the complex process of public participation for the formulation of public policies.

#### *Ethical considerations*

As this thesis conducted interviews as part of the data collection method, ethical issues related to privacy and data protection have been carefully considered, especially informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Before each interview took place, interviewees were asked to sign an information sheet and an informed consent form. These documents made the interviews fully transparent and most important, collected the permission of the participant to be registered for the purpose of transcription. Thereby, before doing the interviews, interviewees already knew the purpose of the project, the kind of data to be collected as well as the mechanisms for collecting it, the individual’s rights (e.g. to withdraw at any time during the interview), and how the data is retained. Almost all interviews have been conducted through video conference because the sample is based in Catalonia, far from where the researcher is located. One interview was made on the telephone and therefore not recorded, but extensive notes were taken during the interview that effectively collect what was discussed. The records and the transcriptions have been securely stored in folders with passwords in a hardware. Furthermore, ensuring anonymity the tape records and the interview transcripts were labelled in a way that the participant cannot be identified.

## Chapter 4. Background of the case

Catalonia is an Autonomous Community in northeast Spain with a Statute of Regional Autonomy. Policy responsibilities within Spanish territory are increasingly divided and shared across supra-national, national, and sub-national governments. Therewith, the Catalan government (*Generalitat*) has its own political and administrative institutions that operate as basic tools for creating and implementing public policies (Chaqués-Bonafont & Tomàs, 2014, p.46). In fact, Quim Brugué, Ricard Gomà, and Joan Subirats (2000) argue that the Generalitat is ‘*a major actor in policy formulation, with the Spanish state and the EU playing restricted and selective roles*’ (p.97).

The competencies over migration-related issues are distributed among different public administrations: state, regional, and local. As expected, the Spanish state holds extensive competencies in the field. Article 149.1.2 of the Spanish Constitution stipulates that the State holds exclusive competencies over nationality, immigration, emigration, the status of aliens, and right to asylum, i.e. control – e.g. borders, visas and flows control – and admission – e.g. status, residence permit and family reunification.

As it has also been observed in other countries over the last decades, the governments at the Spanish regional level have been gradually taking over competencies in the field of integration of newcomers. In 1993, the Catalan government created the first Interdepartmental Immigration Programme to integrate the ‘*immigrant population in Catalonia [...] to guarantee the coexistence in diversity and social cohesion*’ (SEIC, 2015, p.1). This programme led to the establishment of the Interdepartmental Commission for Immigration (ICI), which was created by local and regional administrations, trade unions, NGOs, immigrant communities, neighbourhoods, migration experts, etc. Later, the Organic Law 4/2000 considered the regional governments and local administrations as partners in the management of immigrants’ integration by means of their own competencies (SEIC, 2009, p.48). Catalonia has since then, competency over migrant’s integration in exercising its own powers in the fields of social assistance, education, health service, implementation and enforcement of labour laws, etc. Moreover, to create policies in coordination with other governmental departments, the Generalitat created what today is known as the Secretariat for Equality, Migration and Citizenship. Today, the SEIC carries out the functions of continuous monitoring, coordination, and leadership. As from 2006, with the approval of the Catalan

Autonomy Statute, the Catalan government fully assumed the competencies of initial reception of immigrants and the development of integration policies: *'[t]he new Autonomy Statute recognises Catalonia as a welcoming territory and transfers some competencies to the Catalan Government which previously lacked'* (Brugué et al., 2020, p.105). One last key development to understand the policy framework at the regional level is the generation of the *National Pact for Immigration* (NPI). In 2008, this regional initiative consisted of a social debate with over two thousand persons and resulted in the signature of a regional agreement.

Public administrations at the local level are also key actors in dealing with migration policies as cities are the first point of entry for most migrants. Reception offices that guide newcomers, or programs of municipalities against discrimination, are examples of local administration's efforts in the Catalan region.

#### ***4.1. The Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020***

As this thesis studies the case of the formulation of the CMP 2017–2020, the interest is not on the content of the policy, but rather on how it was developed. However, the policy is shortly introduced hereunder.

From 2009, after the signature of the NPI, the Catalan migration policy consists of four-year plans that take an intersectional approach to recognise difference and diversity to eradicate historical inequalities and discrimination (SEIC, 2017, p.8). These policies are a *"sectoral planning [...] embedded into the NPI which was a long-term strategic agreement"* (R13\_LPo). In other words, these policies set out an *'operational framework in the form of a series of annual action plans'* (SEIC, 2017, p.86). The CMP is the Generalitat's planning tool for citizenship, reception, and integration policies. Moreover, is an instrument of citizen participation and accountability of government to the general public. The CMP contains 433 actions grouped into 44 programmes organised around four pillars: *interaction, inclusion, democratic quality, and state tools*. It provides tools to integrate those who arrive or return to Catalonia, heeding respect for diversity and cohesion balancing the Catalan culture and the cultural diversity of the population. One of the pillars of the policy states the following objective:

*"[A]chieve a model of coexistence based on equality, interaction, recognition of diversity and the creation of a feeling of belonging and shared values"* (SEIC, 2017, p.4).

In other words, the Catalan integration policies aim for a model of interculturalism. This perspective, unlike the multicultural model, pursues equal opportunities, inter-ethnic contacts, and a shared sense of belonging, and is oriented at the entire diverse population without distinguishing between specific target groups (Scholten et al., 2017, pp.285-286). Therewith, interaction, inclusion, and diversity are very repeated words along the Plan.

## **Chapter 5. Operational structure of the policy formulation**

Based on the empirical findings, this chapter explains the operational structure of the policy formulation by breaking the process down into three phases: (1) diagnosis; (2) participatory process; and (3) assessment of the contributions, policy writing, and parliamentary approval. The second and third phases are only introduced in this section as they will be further developed in the following chapters. The SEIC did not only join forces with stakeholders outside the Generalitat to formulate this plan. During the whole formulation process, other ministries of the Government of Catalonia also participated. Therefore, this section ends by exposing the cross-coordination within the framework of different departments.

### *Diagnosis*

By conducting extensive research, a diagnosis brings together existing evidence to identify a policy problem and formulate an informed policy. In this case, the diagnosis was very little (R13\_LPo). During the formulation of the PNI, in 2008, a very extensive diagnosis resulted in the definition of a strategic framework for the following Catalan integration policies, which are considered “*updates of this framework and its diagnosis*”<sup>iv</sup> (R13\_LPo). Deviating from the most common procedure – where first strategic objectives are defined, and then actions are proposed –, the conceptualisation of this plan was made bottom-up. Firstly, actions were defined, and secondly, these actions were categorised by identifying similarities with concrete fields (R13\_LPo).

*“it was an operational plan rather than a strategic plan”<sup>v</sup> (R13\_LPo)*

That, however, does not mean there was no previous research. The official technicians of the SEIC reviewed the previous citizenship and migration plans. Moreover, during a period of economic cuts in 2014-2015, the Catalan public administrations

developed several thematic plans in the field of refuge, migration movements, etc., that were “*diagnosis and sets of measures*”<sup>vi</sup> (R13\_LPo). These plans, together with the different programmes, projects, and activities that were already being conducted in the field, were also analysed internally. The draft document of the CMP (D02) was the result of the diagnosis phase. This document had a similar structure as the final policy document and included among others: background information, objectives of the policy, and the 4 lines of the policy with proposed programs, and objectives and activities to develop such programs (D02).

### *Participatory process*

The second phase of the policy formulation identified in this thesis is the public participation process. Once the SEIC had taken the decision of conducting a participatory process and commissioned the DGCPEP to design it, the public participation process started on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 and finished on December 7<sup>th</sup> of the same year. This process resulted in the collection of more than 420 proposals.

*“During this process there were 17 meetings with 230 people, representing 170 institutions and organisations from associations, academic circles and the local level, which together presented more than 420 proposals. Contributions were also received through the [participa.gencat.cat](http://participa.gencat.cat) web portal, which received 45 responses to the questionnaire and 121 specific proposals”* (D01).

### *Assessment of the contributions, policy writing, and parliamentary approval*

Once the participatory process had finished, an external company commissioned by the DGCPEP to moderate the sessions, collected all the contributions made through the participatory spaces and drafted a report for the SEIC. Next, the SEIC assessed the contributions, defined which would be included and excluded in the plan, drafted the feedback documents (see D05 and D06) and wrote the final policy (D01). Afterwards on September 17<sup>th</sup> 2017, more than half a year later, the CMP was approved in the Parliament (R13\_LPo).

### *Cross-coordination within the framework of different administration bodies*

Within the government level, there is an interdepartmental commission that had a relevant role in the formulation of the CMP: the Interdepartmental Commission for Immigration (ICI). This commission is formed by those government departments that had at least one

program addressed to migrants. The ICI together with the Citizenship and Migration Board<sup>11</sup> (CMB) coordinates the collaboration of different departments in the context of migration policies. The CMB is a stable participatory space of the Generalitat that acts as a negotiating, counselling, and monitoring body which also has formal and informal contacts with the organised civil society as well as with individual citizens. Since integration policies require an intersectional approach, once the diagnosis phase was conducted by the SEIC, the ICI presented the draft policy to different ministries, the CMB, local administrations, municipality associations, etc. After the participatory process took place, the results were also shared with the different government departments through the ICI as “*there were actions that corresponded to other departments*”<sup>vii</sup> (R13\_LPo).

## **Chapter 6. The public participation process**

This chapter presents the empirical findings regarding the independent variable of this research: the participatory process. Aiming at explaining how the process was conducted as well as showing the most relevant information collected to answer the research questions, this chapter first introduces the actors that participated in the participatory process. Next, it explains why the government conducted the process. Then, it describes the design of the process by explaining the participatory mechanisms. And finally, it analyses the communication strategy.

### ***6.1. The actors that participated in the formulation of the CMP***

Along the various stages of the process to formulate the CMP, people with different expertise participated: academics, government officials, politicians, third sector organisations (TSO), migrants’ organisations, and individual citizens. As mentioned, the diagnosis phase was not participatory, therefore, only government officials from the SEIC and political officers conducted the activities of this phase. In the participatory process, a lot more people were involved: ‘*230 people, representing 170 institutions and*

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<sup>11</sup> The Citizenship and Migration Board (*Taula de Ciutadania i Immigració*) is composed of social actors – trade unions and management boards –, representatives of some governmental departments and Barcelona’s city council, the associative sector, etc. (R13\_LPo). See [https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits\\_tematics/immigracio/taula\\_ciutadania\\_immigracio/index.html#googtrans\(ca|en\)](https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits_tematics/immigracio/taula_ciutadania_immigracio/index.html#googtrans(ca|en))

*organisations from associations, academic circles and the local level*' (D01) from all over the Catalan territory. However, all interviewees criticised the fact that the participants are always "the same".

*'you always find your colleagues with whom you have been working and doing the same for over 20 years. Therefore, we already know what the others will say, what they think, etc.'*<sup>viii</sup> (R01\_TSO)

The participants identified in this process can be categorised into three groups: (1) individual citizens; (2) TSO and academic circles; and (3) staff from local government bodies. A vast majority of the participants (65%) are staff from public administrations, i.e. government actors, and 20% work in health, education, or social services.

*'I think that in general, all these processes fail in that [the organisers] invite the people that are directly implicated and leave out all the people that can have [...] negative attitudes towards migration. [...] I doubt there were differences among our thoughts'*<sup>ix</sup> (R10\_AC)

Moreover, only 20% of the participants are born outside Spain (D04). These findings show there is not a wide variety of backgrounds, which suggests that the participants may have similar opinions about the topic discussed. Finally, while individual citizens are welcome to participate, there is no presence of citizens who are not working or researching migration issues. In fact, the representative of the leaders of the policy recognised that the participation of individual citizens is not directly encouraged (R13\_LPo). As s/he explained, previous experiences demonstrated that individual citizens do not want to participate. In those cases, many resources were allocated to promote their involvement – e.g. distribution of leaflets or notice boards in community centres – but then the participation was very low, resulting in a waste of resources.

### ***6.1.1. Which is the relationship between the actors and the government?***

All participants in the discussion sessions interviewed expressed having a very close relationship with the Generalitat and more specifically, with the SEIC. The following is an outline of the relationship between each type of actor and the SEIC<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> This outline only includes the participants that participated in the discussion sessions as there is no record of who participated in the digital spaces.

- Staff from local government bodies. The staff from local administrations interact constantly with the SEIC as *‘there is a direct line of financing’*<sup>x</sup> (R09\_GO) from the Generalitat to the local administrations. Furthermore, SEIC and local governments collaborate in the development of migration-related projects.
- Third sector organisations. TSO working in the field of migration have *‘much contact with staff from different government departments’*<sup>xi</sup> (R05\_TSO). Similar to the previous case, the primary way in which the TSO and the SEIC relate is through project grants that the SEIC awards to the organisations. In fact, R13\_LPo indicated that the TSO invited to participate were those included in an internal database, which in turn is formed by those organisations that receive grants from the SEIC through grant calls.

*‘[U]s, as an entity, live on public grants in general, and the ones from the Generalitat are the prevailing ones’*<sup>xii</sup> (R01\_TSO)

- Academic circles. Academic circles also seem to have a close relationship with public administrations. In this case, though, the academics produce knowledge, which becomes relevant information for policymakers. In fact, R02\_AC indicated that *‘the information [they produce] is very important to make well-informed political decisions’*<sup>xiii</sup>.

In short, the findings on the different actors involved in the process show that although there is representativity (in name of how many people a participant speaks up for), there is no diversity of participants (different opinions and perspectives). All participants bear expert knowledge as they are academic, technical, or professional experts in the field. Moreover, although documents suggest several migrant entities participated, a very few participants were migrants themselves. On another important note, all types of actors have a stablished relationship with the SEIC, in fact, the majority of the participants seem to be very dependent on the SEIC. Only the interviewees from the academics circles defined their relationship with the SEIC on a more equal level, even insinuating the SEIC could be to some degree dependent on their input.

## **6.2. Roots: Political will and stakeholders support**

Although the Generalitat is increasingly interested in including the public in policy debates, conducting a public participation process is voluntary and depends entirely on political will. A person from the DGCPEP (R12\_LPr) indicated that a politician wants to

consider citizens' opinions because it improves the quality of decisions, provides for transparency, and contributes to creating citizenship by acknowledging citizenship commitment. Furthermore, it offers mechanisms for influencing public policy to actors that do not have other usual channels to do so – e.g. non organised citizenship or organisations with little resources. Yet, there are two main reasons why a politician may not want to conduct a public participation process: (1) it is time-consuming and requires allocating resources that sometimes are scarce; and (2) the politician is obliged to justify which contributions from the public will include in the policy, why, and why others are thrown back. R12\_LPr argues that this need for accountability is a big handicap for participatory processes.

The CMP was politically led by the Secretariat for Equality, Immigration and Citizenship and specifically by Secretary Oriol Amorós<sup>13</sup>. The public participation process was designed and lead by the Directorate General of Citizen Participation and Electoral Processes. It should be recalled that the political situation at the time was somewhat exceptional. The Catalan government 2016 – 2017 was presided by Carles Puigdemont and had as main objective the organisation of a referendum for the independence of Catalonia. Therefore, the priorities of the government were unusual, and much government's attention was put on the referendum. The political leadership of the policy is deemed positive by the actors that participated.

*"Oriol Amorós, with no doubt, is a very receptive person and processes the information very well, surprisingly well considering he is a politician"*  
(R02\_AC)<sup>xiv</sup>.

Once is known that conducting a participatory process depends on political will, what was the main motivation to carry one out for formulating the CMP? Interestingly, as described hereunder, this research finds that the different actors involved have diverse understandings of the objective of the process. This suggests that, consequently, there is a mismatch between the expectations of the different actors on their participation.

On one hand, a representative of the SEIC and the leading figure of the participatory process explained in the interviews that the SEIC opened a debate for the CMP because they wanted to gather new "*proposals of concrete actions*"<sup>xv</sup> (R13\_LPo) as

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<sup>13</sup> Oriol Amorós, member of the party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* – the social democratic left party – was Secretary of the SEIC from 2016 to 2020.

well as to contrast some own ideas on concrete lines of the policy with the citizenship (R12\_LPr). On the other hand, the participants interviewed perceived that the objectives of the process were to collect amendments to the draft policy, to present the policy to the actors, or to make the administration aware of the opinions of the actors on the drafted policy. Furthermore, while both the leaders of the plan and the policy documents ensure that the process did not aim at finding consensus, some participants think this was indeed, the main objective.

*“The objective is that the plan gathers the maximum consensus. [...] the process could be named “concept making process”, it is really a process to create consensus”<sup>xvi</sup> (R02\_AC).*

*“The objective is always that the plan gathers the maximum consensus”<sup>xvii</sup> (R04\_TSO).*

*“The face-to-face sessions, allow an exchange of opinions that do not aim at achieving consensus. Achieving consensus is not the objective of the debate, the divergent opinions are legitimate”<sup>xviii</sup> (R12\_LPr).*

*“...is not intended to deliberate with the citizenship and achieve consensus [...] this is what is done in the parliaments”<sup>xix</sup> (R13\_LPo).*

In summary, this thesis finds that the process arose from a political will to collect stakeholders’ proposals of concrete actions to include in the policy. Secondary objectives were improving the quality of decisions, providing transparency, and creating citizenship. Additionally, there is a mismatch in the understanding of the objectives of the process, probably due to poor communication.

### ***6.3. Mechanisms and spaces for actors’ participation***

During its three months, the process collected the participants’ proposals through two participatory spaces: discussion sessions, and open-source participatory platforms.

#### ***6.3.1. Discussion sessions***

A total of 12 face-to-face discussion sessions were held in 7 different areas of Catalonia<sup>14</sup>. Half of these focus-group sessions were with members of TSO and the other half, with

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<sup>14</sup> The discussion sessions were held in Barcelona, Terres de l’Ebre, Manresa, Girona, Lleida, Tarragona and Vic

technical officials from local governments. All sessions had a similar structure: firstly, a representative of the SEIC held an institutional introduction and presented the draft document of the CMP in order to contextualise the upcoming debate. Secondly, moderators presented the working dynamic of the session. Thirdly, the participants were divided into groups in which they debated about each action proposed in the draft and made new contributions. The dynamic was supervised by moderators and followed the structure of the questions proposed in the document *rules of the participation process* (D03). This document suggests a total of 14 questions to encourage reflection on the different subject areas of the policy. The document was sent to the participants previous to the discussion sessions together with the invitation to participate. However, some respondents to a satisfactory questionnaire distributed after each session pointed out the need to be more prepared to effectively intervene, for instance by knowing the dynamic beforehand (D04). In fact, the representative of the SEIC, also indicated in the interview that "...[the participants] *that ended up coming [to the discussion sessions] were entities that when they came and participate, had not done a previous preparation*"<sup>xx</sup> (R13\_LPo). For that reason, s/he mentioned, the dynamic was structured in a way that the entity did not need to do any previous research. These findings suggest that either the dynamic was not accurate enough for the level of preparation of the participants or that there is a miscommunication on what the participants need to know before participating.

EDAS, a company with expertise in reflection processes and participation specialised in the general "social field" (Espai d'anàlisi social, n.d.), moderated the sessions and the debate. The satisfactory questionnaire (D03) shows a high degree of participant satisfaction with the moderators. However, two interviewees (R01\_TSO & R10\_AC) and few respondents of the satisfactory questionnaire pointed out that the fact that the moderators were not specifically specialised in the subject of debate negatively affect the debate. In fact, the DGCPEP also lamented this as they sought to contract a company specifically specialised in interculturality and community affairs, but public procurement rules precluded it (R12\_LPr).

*"I remember that the moderation was poor, very poor. [...] I would say there was not much staff from the Directorate General and that the people that moderated the process did not know the content. [...] The feeling was that the people moderated a process in which they did not have knowledge over the content, that*

*were there just discussing and collecting the information to be transferred”*<sup>xxi</sup> (R11\_AC).

The length of the sessions was also criticised by many of the participants who considered them too short to be able to make significant contributions. In fact, in some sessions not all the sections of the policy could be discussed<sup>15</sup>. The leaders of the process justified this claiming that SEIC requested the elaboration of the process very late, which meant that the DGCPEP were very limited in time to conduct each activity. Two months is not enough time to prepare the sessions in a way that allows participants to absorb the content, debate it internally and make well-founded contributions (R12\_LPr).

### **6.3.2. Open-source participatory platforms**

“Open-source participatory platforms” (Borge Bravo et al., 2019) are innovative mechanisms used by public administrations when conducting participatory processes. In the case under analysis, the DGCPEP used a website platform that encourages citizen participation as a complement to offline participation. The representative of the SEIC interviewed, argued that this tool is ‘*open to the entire citizenry*’<sup>xxii</sup> (R13\_LPo). However, the digital divide existing in Catalunya challenges the access of some groups of the population to the platform, e.g. old people or people with limited resources. The platform is furthermore defined as ‘*a citizen participation platform with the format of a social media platform*’. This definition suggests that the tool not only intends to increase citizen participation but also to increase engagement, exchange opinions, comment on others’ contributions, etc., i.e. to generate debate. Actually, the website further indicates that the platform is a “*dialogue space*” *between the citizenry and the Administration*. However, the deliberative quality of this concrete digital space is totally lacking. When one visits the platform now, one can easily see that the discursive elements of dialogue and informed debate that characterise participatory processes, and that the administration advocates for, had been rather neglected. Although there is a section set up to pass comments, these deliberative spaces are scarcely used. There are only 8 comments, 4 of which are technical questions, none of them is answered and appear as rejected. Neither the leaders of the plan nor the leaders of the process foster the debate

Beyond this, participants could also answer a questionnaire made up of open and multiple-choice questions for each programme proposed in the draft document. This

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<sup>15</sup> For example, see the discussion session in Tortosa on 09.11.2016 in Document 16 analysed

research could only interview one person that participated through the online platform, who criticised that this is a ‘*very unidirectional tool*<sup>xxiii</sup> (R04\_TSO). According to his/her experience, s/he never received any feedback, nor justification of whether his contributions had been accepted or rejected. This disregard impacts negatively on digital participation. When the interviewee was asked whether s/he would participate in future participatory processes, s/he indicated that because participation requires certain resource mobilisation, s/he would only participate if s/he knows his/her participation will be effective and useful for the elaboration of the policy. The leader of the process (R12\_LPr) also recognised that although this tool is advantageous because one has 24 hours to participate and it allows people to participate who cannot move about, the disadvantage is that it is “unilateral”. Another criticism raised by those who participated online (R04\_TSO and D04) is the ‘*need to have more information, i.e. to know what was done in the previous plan, what is the results of the implementation of that plan, etc.*’<sup>xxiv</sup> (R04\_TSO).

Lastly, the online platform was also used by those participants that attended the discussion sessions and wanted to make contributions that could not be done during the session, either because of a lack of time or because they came up with the idea afterwards. In that regard, the leaders of the plan that attended the meetings and the moderators encouraged the participants to use the platform to take the discussions forward online (R13\_LPo).

To summarise, although the participatory mechanisms seem to have succeeded in collecting contributions, they failed in generating a deliberative space. On one hand, due to a lack of expertise of the moderators in the discussion sessions. On the other hand, due to a failure to boost dialogue by the leaders in the open-source participatory platforms. Moreover, actors felt constrained in contributing due to a lack of effective preparation beforehand.

#### ***6.4. The communication in a participatory process***

There can be no citizen participation in the public policy elaboration process without a continued communication between citizenry and Administration. Therefore, any participatory process must be accompanied by a communication strategy that allows effective participation. When analysing the communications that took place during the studied process, this thesis identified that the objective of the communication was fourfold: (1) give visibility to the process; (2) generate interest; (3) offer information to

the participants about the policy; and (4) offer practical information about the process. Moreover, the communication was structured as follows.

Firstly, the recruitment phase aimed at attracting participants and preparing them to effectively participate. After the need for developing the policy had been identified, the political decision of conducting a public participation process had been made and actors had been selected, the SEIC in collaboration with the DGCPEP, prepared the “preparatory documentation”. The documentation included, on one hand, a document with the objectives of the process, lines of the debate, limits of the debate, the foundation for the participation, and a forward schedule of the phases of the process (D03, p.1-4; R12\_LPr). This information is highly important to ensure that participants have realistic expectations and know exactly how they can participate. On the other hand, the document resulting from the diagnosis phase, which provides the policy background information. Most of the participants in the discussion sessions interviewed – the TSOs and the technical officials from local government (R01\_TSO, R03\_TSO, R05\_TSO, R06\_GO, R07\_GO, R08\_TSO & R09\_GO) – pointed out that they received a formal invitation via email in what looked like a generic invitation to all the entities on one hand, and municipality departments on the other, that worked in the field of migration as they receive communications and the Generalitat count on them regularly (R05\_TSO). Nonetheless, the actors on the academic circle mentioned that although they participated as any other actor in the process, they were contacted and invited personally by a technical official of the SEIC via phone or email, rather than the university where they work receiving this general invitation (R02\_AC, R10\_AC & R11\_AC). Furthermore, a public call for the discussion sessions was made through the web portals *Agenda Immigració* and the participatory platform *participa.gencat.cat*. No attendees to the sessions interviewed were reached through these spaces. Respondent 04, the only interviewee that participated through the web portal, was never contacted to participate in the discussion sessions – although being a big and known organisation in the territory –. The respondent indicated that they knew about the possibility to participate because they “*check periodically the participation portal*”<sup>xxv</sup> (R04\_TSO), but they did not know the government conducted the discussion sessions in parallel. According to the representative of the SEIC (R13\_LPo), the communication of the digital participation is “*not easy, because not everyone is constantly watching this platform*”<sup>xxvi</sup>, s/he furthermore describes the communication as “*very generalist, and therefore little focused*”<sup>xxvii</sup> (R13\_LPo).

Secondly, the closing and feedback phase. After collecting, analysing, and assessing all the contributions, the response and the communication of the conclusions from the leaders of the policy is a crucial step to ensure the transparency of the process. The forward calendar on the document with the rules for participating (D03) indicated that 2-3 months after the process took place, a feedback session with the participants was going to be conducted. However, there is no evidence that this session took place. In fact, when the interviewees were asked how was the communication of the results, most of them indicated that did not hear back from the SEIC after having participated in the discussion session. A document with the contributions (D05) and another with the government's feedback on the contributions (D06) are posted on the participation web portal. These documents are written in very plain language that does not promote any emotional bonding to the process. Moreover, they gather the feedback for all contributions in one same document, therefore, it is not adapted to the different audiences.

In conclusion, the research on the communication strategy finds that the communication was not constant, attractive nor effective which jeopardises the overall process. The communication channels did not succeed in reaching those citizens that are not directly involved in migration issues. Furthermore, cutting communications once the participation phase was over, resulted in the detachment of the participants from the policy.

## **Chapter 7. The policy formulation**

This chapter presents the empirical findings regarding the dependent variable of this research: policy formulation. Chapter 5 has already analysed the operational structure of the policy formulation, yet this section shows the results of the process and analyses how they have shaped the formulation of the CMP. Firstly, it exposes the participants' satisfaction regarding the process and the resulting policy. Next, it visualises quantitatively the participants' contributions. Finally, it analyses how the contributions have been assessed by the leader of the process and the policy.

### ***7.1. Participants' satisfaction***

The Generalitat de Catalunya 2012's report (Parés & March, 2012) identifies at least five objectives of the evaluation of any participatory process: (1) compliance with a rule; (2)

bestow legitimacy on the process; (3) boost improve the efficiency of future processes; (4) make the participants co-responsible, as the evaluation allows a reflection on the participation; and (5) citizenship-building. Moreover, the evaluation allows the leaders of the process to learn what has been done well and what not. When evaluating the participatory processes 3 big concepts can be evaluated: the context in which the process takes place; the process itself and its tools; and the impacts of the process. The analysis of the documents published (D04, 09 – 18)<sup>16</sup> shows that the evaluation forms used to assess the participatory process for elaborating the CMP, aimed at evaluating only the process itself and its tools. But no formal evaluation was done of the context nor the impact of the process.

### ***7.1.1. Participants' satisfaction with the process***

Although there is a diversity of opinions among the respondents of the evaluation questionnaires, most respondents were satisfied with the overall process. Nonetheless, there were two aspects of the process that were very criticised. Firstly, that both the overall process and the discussion sessions were too short. Secondly, that the process lacked participation – e.g. “*A participatory process with so few people cannot be called participatory*”<sup>xxviii</sup> (D04) –. Other interesting criticisms were raised such as the lack of expertise of the moderators or the use of too technical terminology (criticism also raised by R07\_GO). Although the experience is generally assessed positively, as might be expected, one can easily find a diversity of opinions among the respondents. Thus, few participants were in no way satisfied with the process.

*“The participatory processes must be done in a different way. This is not a participatory process”*<sup>xxix</sup> (D04, p.18)

*“It has been a process partially participatory. Because things were taken for granted; it was too short in time; and it lacked representativity of groups of people”*<sup>xxx</sup> (D04, p.18)

Interviewees' satisfaction with the overall process was a bit more closely aligned. All interviewees expressed that they would participate again in the next participatory process. However, most of them were – albeit to differing extents – critical of the studied process.

*“[...] I had the feeling of having participated in a process in which it would be said that people had participated, it would be said that few people were gathered,*

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<sup>16</sup> participants' evaluation questionnaires online (D04) and summaries of contributions of each discussion session (D09 – 18)

*but neither the dynamic of the sessions nor the final result, [...], satisfied me* <sup>xxxix</sup>  
(R10\_AC).

*“Often, the process is not designed as a procedure to articulate and make contributions, rather it is set out with a closed objective, and this does no help. We are always limited by what the Administration wants”* <sup>xxxix</sup> (R08\_AC)

### **7.1.2. Participants’ satisfaction with the resulting policy**

As stated above, the participants’ satisfaction with the resulting policy was never formally assessed. However, this thesis has researched the participants’ satisfaction through interviews. Surprisingly, most of the interviewees do not know the content of the policy in depth, which is surprising because as one interviewee indicated (R04\_TSO), participants invested time and energy into the process. Moreover, people and entities participate in those processes in which they have something to say or a will to influence the resulting policy, probably because the result may affect their activity. Thus, one may expect that when a considerable effort has been placed on the process, the participants may be more attached to the resulting policy, or at least interested in following it up. This non-attachment is partially explained by the fact that participants never received directly any feedback on their participation nor the final policy.

Besides the lack of communication between the administration and participants after the process, another identified fact may explain why the participants did not follow up on the policy outcome. The CMP is a policy updated every four years, therefore it is rather a “consolidation policy” than an innovative one.

*“Honestly, I do not remember this plan too well. Now, I do remember the pact [the NPI 2008], because the pact had a very big implication [of actors], it was very original, innovative, committed, it marked a turning point, etc. This plan [the CMP], is a routine plan, thus, I remember some things but in my opinion, is not a very significant memory”* <sup>xxxix</sup> (R02\_AC).

All things considered, the overall process lacked a complete evaluation. While the contributions have been assessed, the impact of the process has not. This includes, among others, an analysis of the capacity of the process to reach the objectives, or the capacity to build relations and generate knowledge. On another note, as one may expect, the opinions about the process diverge among participants. In general, the process is deemed positive, however, there are few voices that are very critical with it as consider that the

lack of diversity among the participants or the perceived inability to influence the final decision makes the process lose its meaning. Moreover, the findings show that the participants are generally not aware of the content of the policy, suggesting once more, that the lack of effective and constant communication lead to the participants' detachment from the policy.

## ***7.2. The results of the public participation process***

The results of a participatory process can be of various types. The more substantial results are the participants' contributions, being the ultimate result the Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020. However, results can also be more intangible, e.g. strengthening the relations between actors or the advocacy about integration policies. The findings of this research regarding the contributions and their treatment are depicted below.

### ***7.2.1. The quantitative results***

The participants in the discussion sessions made 404 proposals and the digital platform collected a total of 121 (D05, p.5), distributed among the four pillars of the plan. The percentages of proposals received per pillar vary considerably between the two participatory mechanisms as Table 3 shows.

***Table 3. Percentage of proposals collected per pillar and participatory space***

	<b>Pillar 1</b>	<b>Pillar 2</b>	<b>Pillar 3</b>	<b>Pillar 4</b>	<b>Outside the pillars</b>
Discussion sessions	28,5%	48%	7,4%	10,6%	5,4%
Open-source platform	27,3%	23,1%	24%	25,6%	0

*Note.* Reprinted from *Sintesi de resultats i aportacions* (D05) by Generalitat de Catalunya (2016)

The disparity between the number of contributions per pillar in one mechanism and the other is somewhat surprising. One plausible explanation could be that, as argued earlier, the discussion sessions were too short making it impossible to discuss the last pillars in some of the sessions. Thus, although pillars 3 and 4 seem to be as relevant as the other for the participants online, participants in the sessions may not have had the opportunity to debate about them.

### 7.2.2. *The treatment of the contributions*

When the three months participation process ended, the DGCPEP collected all the contributions and drafted the *Summary of the contributions and results* (D05) which was forwarded to the SEIC. Later, a three-step process was conducted (R13\_LPo). First, the proposals were organised and set correctly in the corresponding pillars. This task was needed because ‘*it most commonly occurs that the proposals are very generic, a little bit vague sometimes or they are things that did not fit in the outline initially prepared*<sup>xxxiv</sup>’ (R13\_LPo). Second, once the proposals were placed, they were accepted or rejected according to specific criteria, as explained later on. Finally, the plan with the accepted contributions incorporated was shared with the governmental departments that were affected by, at least, one of the actions of the policy. This brought a ‘*double task of accepting [the proposals] and convincing [the other departments] to do the actions proposed*<sup>xxxv</sup>’ (R13\_LPo).

A representative of the department that lead the formulation of the policy (R13\_LPo) indicated that although to a certain extent the SEIC knows what type of actor has done each contribution, there is no hierarchy in selecting and rejecting the proposals. However, s/he also mentioned that generally, the contributions made by technical officials fitted much more than the contributions made by non-governmental actors. This is because, the interviewee further mentioned, normally governmental staff is more aware of what the Generalitat has competency over, and has more knowledge on how to do concrete proposals. Moreover, ‘*the preparatory work that the institutions do is much more aligned with [the SEIC’s] purpose*<sup>xxxvi</sup> and ‘*proposals made by non-governmental actors tend to be more naïve or generic*<sup>xxxvii</sup>’.

R12\_LPr and R13\_LPo described the criteria for accepting or rejecting the proposals as follows. It is first relevant to mention that on the whole, the contributions had to fit with the NPI because, as aforementioned, the CMP is a continuation of the strategic framework defined in the NPI. Then, the contributions were classified into accepted – the acceptance did not mean that they were literally included in the draft policy, nor in the section where the contributions were made – and rejected. The government rejected some contributions on three grounds:

- *Incorrectness*: the contributions were not accepted because they were generic statements, which did not define any concrete action. Some examples are ‘migrants’ empowerment’<sup>xxxviii</sup> and ‘to promote solid working positions’<sup>xxxix</sup>.
- *Lack of competence*: the contributions were not accepted because the proposed actions fell under the jurisdiction of another administration, or were actions on a private level that could not be carried out by the public administration. An example is ‘that the Catalan government check and deny any trade treatment with corporations that exploit the resources and the population of third countries causing the displacement of the residents’<sup>xl</sup>.
- *Disagreement*: the contributions were not accepted because the administration disagreed with the proposed action. The disagreement could be from a conceptual point of view, or because although agreeing on the purpose of the measure, the administration did not agree with the concrete action proposed. Some examples are ‘bring back intercultural mediators in the health sector’<sup>xli</sup> and ‘include migrants in high public and private positions, eliminate Catholic-Christian education from public schools, and extend the positive impact of the immigration in the country’s economy’<sup>xlii</sup>.

Some authors argue that decision-making processes are explicitly affected by the way the participatory process is designed (Font, Smith, Galais & Alarcon, 2018, p.5). In this empirical case, proposals were accepted on the basis of their fittingness with the NPI, and their manageability. Proposals co-exist with existing policies, hence, it is reasonable that the willingness to adopt the contribution was affected by the extent to which it conforms with or challenges the NPI. Table 4 outlines the percentage of proposals accepted and rejected. Several accepted contributions were repetitive, i.e. proposed similar actions. Therefore, the accepted contributions (70%) were afterwards analysed, synthesised, adapted, and included in the final policy. Nonetheless, R13\_LPo said that ‘there are people that watching at the policy, would identify some of the things she/he said in the sessions’. This statement suggests that, to a large extent, many of the contributions were directly incorporated in the policy.

**Table 4.** Percentages of accepted and rejected proposals

Accepted/Rejected	Criteria	Percentage
Accepted	Fitting	70%

Rejected	Incorrectness	13%
Rejected	Lack of competence	4%
Rejected	Disagreement	13%

Source: Personal collection

It is interesting to note that the leader of the plan indicated that some proposals that were rejected because of incorrectness, were not only generic but also incomplete or unclear. However, s/he also pointed out that when contributions were unclear, there was no procedure to contact the participant who made the contribution to give the opportunity to clarify it. S/he justified this by saying ‘*it was very difficult to contact [the participant] because often it was a contribution made by a concrete person from an entity in a concrete work session*’<sup>xliii</sup> (R13\_LPr). This suggests that some contributions that may have been interesting or innovative proposals were automatically rejected because of a lack of resources – time and labour force – to track the contributor.

Once this work was done, the SEIC and the DGCPEP collaborated once more to draft a feedback document that aimed at justifying why each contribution was accepted or rejected.

The findings regarding the results of the process are summarised as follows. Firstly, there was no hierarchy of contributions, i.e. the contributions were equally assessed regardless of what type of actor made it. However, the contributions made by staff from local government bodies are generally more fitting than the ones made by non-governmental actors. Secondly, the vast majority of contributions were initially accepted, suggesting that the participatory mechanisms were appropriate. These contributions were later merged, synthesised, and adapted to fit in the final policy. Lastly, there is a lack of concrete conclusions and evaluation of the process from the leaders of the policy and the process.

## Chapter 8: Discussion

The goal of this study was to explore the influence of public participation processes on the formulation of public policies. The analysis of the empirical findings has allowed to verify and falsify the expectations drawn from the literature review. It is important to remember that participants, methods, etc. interplay uniquely in every process. Therefore,

this chapter discusses how the participatory process to formulate the CMP was conducted and how the findings on this concrete process interplay with the main theories that build the theoretical framework.

The theoretical observations in the field of participatory governance and participatory policymaking in chapter 2 informed the following expectations: firstly, the Catalan government seeks public participation to formulate migrants' integration policies in a systematic way following a top-down style of intervention. Secondly, an issue network of different actors, all of them with expert knowledge, participated in the process. The type of participation though, varied according to the actor's profile. Thirdly, stakeholders' participation is expected to be found at the level of consultation, being consultation tools the main tools used in the participatory process. Lastly, considering the mechanisms in place, participants have been able to make significant contributions, which have been assessed and analysed by the responsible government department and finally introduced into the policy. Below, this chapter answers the sub-questions of the thesis and presents how the expectations played out. One of the research questions of this thesis asked: *'why did the Catalan government seek public participation for the design of migrants' integration policies?'* The findings showed that rather than having stable spaces for participation where public administration bodies regularly meet stakeholders to discuss the migration policy approach, the participatory process to formulate the CMP was a one-time event. It started at a certain moment, lasted few months, and ended with a political decision –the approval of the plan. Rietbergen-McCracken (2017) argues that participatory processes can either be top-down or bottom-up. The empirical findings demonstrated that participatory processes conducted by the Catalan government always respond to a political will. They follow a top-down style of intervention and leave little room for stakeholder groups to advocate for this approach. Furthermore, in accordance with most theories on public participation (Quick & Bryson, 2016; Rietbergen-McCracken, 2017; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007), the Generalitat sought public participation to improve the quality of decisions, provide for transparency, and to create citizenship. However, some interviews suggest that those were only secondary objectives, the main objective of the process was purely to inform the policy by collecting stakeholders' proposals of concrete actions. This process concretely sought "proposals of concrete actions" because, as some interviewees indicated, the policy was an "operational policy" rather than a strategic plan. The literature does not differentiate the type of participation

in accordance with the type of policy to be developed. The empirical findings suggest that literature would benefit from differentiating the processes to formulate strategic plans from the processes to formulate operational plans. Literature also refers to ensure effective implementation as one of the main objectives of participatory processes. However, the SEIC was the only body monitoring the implementation of the policy. In this case, it would be erroneous to consider that the participatory process improved the implementation efficiency of the policy. This study overcomes this shortcoming by suggesting that an ongoing relationship between the government and the participants after the participation, for instance by creating a mixed monitoring body of stakeholders in and out of the government, would contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the implementation.

Another research question of this thesis sought to determine which governmental and non-governmental actors participated in the process. In compliance with Marsh and Rhodes (2008), the participants in the public participation process form an issue network rooted in a large number of participants with different power and resources and limited access to the policy process. 3 types of actors had relevant participation in this process: TSO, academic circles, and local government bodies. The participants' professional backgrounds may be diverse, however, all actors bear expert knowledge (Tantivess & Walt, 2008; Scott, 1998; Yanow, 2004), i.e. have a minimal level of knowledge and skills about migrants' integration. Moreover, it has been identified that their values and opinions do not differ significantly. All things considered, the findings showed that there is a relatively high degree of representativity among participants, though lacking the presence of citizens and migrants themselves. Nonetheless, there is no diversity of participants' ideas and perspectives.

On another important note, the vast majority of the participants have a very close relationship with the SEIC. The relationship between the public administration and the citizens can be defined as hierarchical (Kooiman, 2003), as the government remains the central governance unit but recognises the need to interact with other actors outside the government to pursue its own objectives. In line with what Stout and Love (2016) suggest, a governmental agency influenced the actors to voluntarily cooperate with administrative experts. Although the impact that the existent relationship between the actors is greatly studied, this thesis has identified a situation that is somewhat overlooked. In this case, most of the participants seem to be very dependent on SEIC, specifically as the

organisations are mostly funded by SEIC's grants. Only the interviewees from the academic circles defined their relationship with the SEIC on a more equal level, even insinuating the SEIC is to some degree dependent on the academic's input. This research reckons that this dependency-relation may affect the participants' capacity to provide contributions that are not in line with the government's standards. Moreover, according to the literature, one of the main impacts of participatory processes is the improvement of the relationships between citizens and government, and to build citizenship. However, as said, this is a case where nearly all participants had a previous close relationship with the SEIC.

With respect to the third research sub-question – *how did stakeholders participate in the participatory process?* – this thesis has found that in compliance with the third expectation, participants have participated in the consultation rung (Arnstein, 1969). To boost public participation, the Generalitat used two of the tools used in participatory policymaking identified by Rietbergen-McCracken (2017): information-sharing, and consultation tools. Draft policy documents were shared through different media channels – email and [participa.gencat.cat](http://participa.gencat.cat) – to recruit participants and prepare them for participating. Consultation tools, as the scholarship reveals, include a wide range of tools. The public participation process to formulate the CMP used a mix of on-site and virtual spaces. The mechanisms in place were designed to create deliberative spaces where, through dialogue and debate, concrete actions would be defined. Indeed, the participatory mechanisms have succeeded in collecting contributions, yet, as the interviewees indicated, they failed in generating these deliberative spaces. On one hand, due to a lack of expertise of the moderators in the discussion sessions. On the other hand, due to a failure to boost dialogue by the leaders in the open-source participatory platforms.

In line with the scholarship, this thesis has found that different types of actors participated differently. Literature generally identifies epistemic communities and government experts as having a greater influence over the process suggesting they may play a more significant role (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003; Stone, 2001; Tantivess & Walt, 2008). John Casey (1998) is also critical of the role of NGOs as policy actors, as their participation is sometimes more challenging. In this empirical case, however, the distinction in participation is placed between individual citizens and the rest. While in theory all actors are invited to participate in the on-site sessions, the invitations only effectively reached TSO, academic circles, and staff from local government bodies.

Therefore, citizens only have the “real” opportunity to participate online. It is also important to remember that there is no effective communication about the online participatory spaces, therefore, only those citizens that are constantly checking the open-source platform can participate. Contrarily to what the literature suggests, the other actors, participated equally as all discussion sessions are structured similarly. However, participants were divided into two groups and the sessions were held separately: governmental actors, i.e. staff from local governments, and non-governmental actors, i.e. TSO and academic circles.

Additionally, the empirical findings showed that participants are not aware of the content of the final policy, i.e. they are not engaged with it. Scholarship on stakeholder engagement suggests that stakeholders’ engagement with the policy depends on the level of participation (Newig et al.’s, 2018). Additionally, literature on citizens’ participation suggests that upper levels of the ladder of participation may serve to enhance participants’ engagement. For example, at the decision-making level, the stakeholders not only have a role in making decisions but also in implementing policies (Karl, 2002). In line with these theories, this thesis argues that consultation processes shape the content of policy decisions but do not serve to engage participants in monitoring the implementation or ensuring compliance with those policy decisions. From the interviews, this thesis also suggests that more constant and effective communication between the public administration and the participants would overcome the participants’ detachment from the policy.

Finally, the last research question asked: *‘how were the outputs of the participatory process integrated into the final policy?’* The empirical findings showed that, as expected, the participants made significant contributions that were later assessed and analysed by the SEIC and finally used to draft the policy. In fact, a big share of proposals (70%) was accepted to be assessed and integrated into the final policy. Literature suggests that citizen participation is a way to overcome the limitations of representative democracy to ensure the quality of government performance (Elías & Alkadry, 2011). In fact, Cerrillo (2015) argues that participatory processes aim at “ensuring democracy”. This participatory process, however, showed a scenario in which government authorities interacted with actors outside the government itself to formulate better-informed policies but the first was fully responsible for making the final decisions. Actually, the literature does recognise this type of process as it suggests that there are two

possible options in participatory processes regarding who makes the final decision: the participants, or the government body responsible for the elaboration of the policy. The main issue identified in this research is that when the government has full responsibility for making the final decisions, the democratic characteristic is devaluated. The government was always in full capacity to reject contributions because of “disagreement”. Therefore, even if stakeholders with diverse values and opinions – e.g. actors advocating against migration – participated, it would not have had an impact on the influence of the participatory process on the formulation of the policy. The participation of people with other values, however, may have had an intangible impact by affecting the relationships between actors working in the field.

On another note, together with the theories over the type of participation according to the type of actors discussed in previous paragraphs, the scholarship also considers that greater account is taken of inputs from government experts and epistemic communities (Tantivess & Walt, 2008). As opposed to this argument, the empirical findings demonstrated that all contributions were treated equally. However, similarly to the idea of these same theories, one interviewee – who is a member of the governmental department in charge of treating the contributions and formulating the policy – indicated that staff from local governments always make more significant contributions (R13\_LPo). This is explained as the government experts have more knowledge over the competencies of the Generalitat as well as over what type of actions a government is interested in conducting.

Finally, although a great number of contributions were accepted, stakeholders were only given the opportunity to interact and express suggestions. Therefore, in line with Arnstein’s theory, this thesis found that the participants’ opportunities to influence public outcomes were very limited. Participating in the consultation rung of the Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation (1969) corresponded to the degree of “tokenism”, i.e. pretending to give opportunities to other groups in society in order to give the appearance of fairness. In fact, one-third of the interviewees explicitly indicated that they felt the process was “performative” (R02\_AC). As justified previously, the process is considered to have, in fact, informed the policy. This thesis attributes this misunderstanding to a lack of effective communication before, during, and after the process.

## Chapter 9: Conclusions and policy recommendations

### 9.1. Conclusions

The present study was designed to determine the influence of a public participation process on the formulation of a public policy. To do so, this study has analysed the case of the participatory process conducted to formulate the Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020 by the Government of Catalonia as it is an area of public policy that is particularly complex and requires complex solutions. Moreover, Catalan public administrations have been recently putting efforts in strengthening citizens' participation in policy-making to create a new model of relationship with citizens. By analysing 420 pages of documents, and interviewing 11 participants, 1 policy-maker and 1 government official responsible for designing the participatory process, this thesis has collected and analysed an extensive amount of qualitative data that has allowed the researcher to answer the research question: *How has the public participation process conducted during the fourth quarter of 2016 informed the formulation of the Catalan Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020?*

The participatory process conducted to formulate the CMP informed the resulting policy by creating collective spaces to share proposals of concrete actions to be conducted in the field of migrants' integration. Actors in and outside the government participated in these spaces. Whilst it was not a binding process in which participants' decisions were directly transferred to those responsible for creating the policy, it was a consultative-deliberative process in which participants contributed proposals to the decision that those governing later made.

To assess the influence of the participatory process on the resulting migrants' integration policy, this study has gone beyond the limitations of the literature previously identified, by researching not only the tools and mechanisms employed but also the treatment of the outputs of the process. Thereby, this thesis has researched, among others, the reason for conducting the process, the type of actors that participated, how these actors participated, and how the outputs of the participatory process were integrated into the policy. Firstly, the findings showed that participatory processes, as understood by the Catalan government, refer to experiences of political participation that are fostered by a public administration and that have the objective of formulating a specific public policy by combining the authority of the governmental body with the contributions of citizens,

TSO, academic circles, and local governments. The process responded to a political will to make more informed decisions as well as to ensure transparency and create citizenship.

Secondly, the major finding regarding the actors involved was that a large number of participants with enduring interests participated. All participants bear some kind of expert knowledge and have similar values and opinions. Therefore, although there was representativity – a large number of TSO participated including some migrant organisations –, there was no diversity. In fact, a minimal number of contributions collected were rejected for not fitting from a conceptual point of view. One could say that deliberative spaces benefit from having diverse opinions. However, in this case, the leaders of the policy were looking for proposals of concrete actions for better integrating migrants into Catalan society. Therefore, it seems reasonable that all participants had a similar stance regarding migrants' integration. The issue, however, is whether this methodology is embedded in democratic principles since not all voices are heard.

Thirdly, a significant finding emerged from this study in relation to how the stakeholders participated. The participatory process was designed by a ministry of the Catalan government, which made available two types of participatory spaces: a set of discussion sessions, and an online platform. It is relevant to point out, that the participants in the process did not have any opportunity to participate in the design of the process. Yet, they were only contacted once the process was already planned. The methodology employed was different in each space. Although both settings intended to create a deliberative space, the deliberation was somewhat limited. On one hand, in the discussion sessions because of a lack of expertise of the people appointed to moderate the sessions. On the other hand, in the online platform due to a failure to boost dialogue by the governmental departments in charge. Nonetheless, a great number of proposals were collected. The type of participation observed is identified in the literature as “consultation” where the voices of those selected to participate are heard but the final decisions are made by authorities. It is important to note that some scholars such as Arnstein (1969) consider this type of participation not entirely “real”.

Lastly, regarding how the outputs of the participatory process were integrated into the policy, the following has been found. Governments can seek participation in policy formulation according to different criteria. One is particularly important as affects both the design of the process and the way participants' contributions inform the final policy. This criteria relates to who makes the final decisions. There are two options: the

participants, or the government body responsible for the elaboration of the policy. As mentioned, the participatory process conducted to formulate the CMP saw the participation of diverse actors who proposed and discussed different alternatives, however, as the process was non-binding, the government body had the ultimate decision power. A great number of contributions were accepted, adapted, and integrated into the final policy. However, the contributions that were not in line with the government's expectations were rejected. Additionally, the findings showed that although there are documents that justify the government's decisions, such documents never reached the participants. Thereby, the participants could amend neither their contributions nor the results. Considering this, it is once more confirmed that stakeholders' participation was very limited to making proposals without having any influence on the final decisions.

In summary, this thesis has talked about a participative and deliberative system of government which is accompanied by a representative system. Overcoming the lack of literature on the actual effect of participatory processes in the formulation of migrants' integration policies, this thesis offers an innovative new perspective on the participatory policy-making scholarship. The empirical evidence has shown that the process informed the formulation of the policy by including insights from different stakeholders. However, the process did not meet other envisaged goals of participatory processes such as strengthening relationships, providing transparency, creating trust, and building citizenship. Moreover, this thesis concludes that the process had a very limited participation. A wide range (not variety) of actors participated in the formulation of the public policy, yet it had a very limited citizen engagement. In addition, rather than being involved in the design and management of the process, stakeholders only participated as they were asked to, and during a very limited period of time. Finally, this thesis detected a clear separation between the participative and deliberative spaces, and the decision-making processes. Those that made all decisions – from the decision to conduct a participatory process, to the approval of the final plan were only governing teams. On a final note, this research considers the need for a more “participative participation” in which the voices of the citizens are not only heard but also are more considered in the processes of proposing, debating, and most important, decision-making.

## ***9.2. Limitations***

A limitation of this study relates to the case selected. The data collection took place during May 2021, i.e. more than four years after the participatory process took place. In

practice, this meant that some of the interviewees had to fall back on blurry memories to answer some of the questions. Moreover, several participants interviewed had a long history of participating in participatory processes. Thus, sometimes the interviewees found it difficult to distinguish their experiences from multiple processes. This study was furthermore limited by the fact that this policy was, as some interviewees defined, a “consolidation policy”. To a certain extent, this meant that some participants did not consider neither the policy nor the process as relevant as others. Again, not only their memories regarding the process were sometimes blurry but also the ones regarding the resulting policy. Future studies on participatory governance would benefit from selecting more recent cases.

Lastly, whilst an assessment of the democratic quality of the process was beyond the scope of this thesis, the findings provide the basis for further explorations of this aspect in future research. More information on whether the concentration of the decision power just in the government authority downplays the democracy of participatory processes would help to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

### ***9.3. Policy Recommendations***

The empirical observations of this research suggest various practical recommendations for those government officials that lead the participatory process and those that were in charge of formulating the CMP. This section outlines 5 recommendations.

1. *Improve communication and information dissemination before, during, and after the participatory process.* Establishing more consistent and effective communication between the SEIC and the participants is beneficial for several reasons. First, it will prevent a misunderstanding regarding the objectives of the process and ensure that participants’ expectations are aligned with leaders’ expectations. Thereby, stakeholders will have a better idea of how best they can participate, contributing with more relevant proposals. Second, interactive communication, i.e. a two-way exchange of information, will help generate debate and contrast inputs. Finally, maintaining contact after the participatory process, by reporting back to participants, will increase stakeholders’ engagement with the policy.
2. *Participation must be well-informed in order to be meaningful and effective.* The information regarding the process procedure needs to be clear and accessible to

everyone considering different capabilities. That includes considering giving more emphasis to offline communication channels to ensure the participation of citizens regardless their access to technology. Moreover, participants need to be able to understand the context of the policy to be able to analyse, select and compare the information. Mechanisms for counselling – from the administration and independent – should be explored and put in place.

3. *Better incentivise citizen participation.* Although the open government aims at strengthening contacts between Catalan public administrations and citizens through public participation processes, this process saw no citizens' participation. This would partially be overcome by, again, improving the communication strategy. Other options to incentivise citizens' participation are: remunerate participants; or provide other compensations such as seasonal public transport tickets, or tickets for cultural events.
4. *Ensure inclusivity.* In line with the previous recommendation, to enhance the legitimacy of participatory processes, it is important to engage a diverse group of organisations as well as participants. Participatory processes must bypass involving always the same participants and reach out to organisations and citizens who are traditionally marginalised from decision-making venues.
5. *Moderators must have sufficient knowledge on the topic of discussion.* The findings indicated that often public procurement rules limit the possibility to contract an external company specialised in the topic of discussion to moderate the discussion sessions. The recommendation to overcome this limitation is twofold. One option is to offer intensive training by technical experts from the SEIC to the moderators before conducting the sessions. Another option is to increase the presence of these technical experts in the sessions to help the moderators solve participants' doubts.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix A. Interviews guides*

#### *Appendix A.1. Interview guide with participants*

- How is the scope of the *Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020* linked to your area of work/expertise?
- According to your understanding, and in general terms, how is the relationship between the organisation you represent and the Generalitat de Catalunya? How do they collaborate?
- Can you explain me how did you participate in the elaboration of the *Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020*?
  - Why did the organisation participate in the process? Why do you think the leaders of the process selected your organisation to participate?

- What is your opinion on the mechanisms offered to the public to participate?
- How would you describe the relations among the participants? Did everyone participate equally? Was there any hierarchy? Was there trust and coordination? Were there tensions and difficulties?
- How was the information-sharing during the whole process?
- In your opinion, were there any people, group of people or organisations, that were directly affected by the Plan, not represented in the participation process? If so, many? Which ones?
  - If affirmative; should this, in your opinion, invalidate the process?
- How were the communications from the leaders about the outcome of the process? Did you receive information regarding what and why was considered from the process in the Plan?
- What is your opinion on the outcome of your participation? Do you think it was meaningful for the subsequent definition of the Plan?
- In your opinion, does the Plan successfully include the inputs of the public?
  - If yes; how are they included?
  - If not; why do you think so?
- How would you improve the process?
- With the experience of having participated in the last process, would you participate in the elaboration of the next plan?
- Can you explain me, as an expert in migration and integration issues, your impression/perception of the *Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020*?
  - In your opinion, what is the need to have this policy?
  - What is your opinion on the Plan? Does it meet your expectations and interests?
  - Do you miss anything in the Plan? If yes, what? Did you contributed with this idea during the process?
- Is there anything you would like to share with me which this interview did not cover?
- Finally, can I contact you via email if needed for clarifications?

### ***Appendix A.2. Interviews guide leaders of the policy***

- Can you briefly explain me the policy formulation process, from the decision to make the plan until its governmental approval?
- How did the different governmental departments participate?
- How were the tasks distributed among the technical officials of the Secretariat?
- How were the participants in the discussion sessions selected?
  - What do you think about the participation of individual citizens?
- How were the contributions assessed?
  - How were the contributions integrated in the final Plan? What percentage of contributions were integrated?
  - What is the criteria used to decide which contributions are included?
  - Are all contributions equally considered or is there any hierarchy of contributions depending on the actors?
- Is there anything you would like to share with me which this interview did not cover?
- Finally, can I contact you via email if needed for clarifications?

### ***Appendix A.3. Interviews guides leaders of the process***

- Why are public participation processes conducted for elaborating public policies? What benefits do they have? And what limitations?
  - Why are public participation processes conducted for elaborating migration and integration policies? Do you think these processes are more needed than in other public policy fields?
  - Is the design of the processes always the same?
- Can you briefly describe how was the process conducted in the fourth quarter of the 2016 to formulate the Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020?
  - Were the moderators experts in integrations issues?
- How are the participants selected? Do you think participants need a specific knowledge to participate?
  - What is your opinion on general citizenship participation?
- How were the contributions assessed?
  - Who is in charge of assessing the contributions?

- How were the contributions integrated in the final Plan? What percentage of contributions were integrated?
- What is the criteria used to decide which contributions are included?
- Are all contributions equally considered or is there any hierarchy of contributions depending on the actors?
- How did the different governmental departments participate? Did they receive the results of the process?
  - Is there anything you would like to share with me which this interview did not cover?
  - Finally, can I contact you via email if needed for clarifications?

### **Appendix B. List of documents analysed**

**Table 5. List of documents analysed**

	<b>Document name</b>	<b>Document type</b>
D01	Secretaria d'Igualtat, Migracions i Ciutadania (October 2017). <i>Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017 – 2020</i> . Generalitat de Catalunya	Policy Document
D02	Secretaria d'Igualtat, Migracions i Ciutadania (October 2016). <i>Pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Procès Participatiu</i> . Generalitat de Catalunya	Explanation of the process and the axes of discussion (Policy Draft) – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/183/Document_Participaci%C3%B3_PCM17-20_versi%C3%B3_final_.pdf">https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/183/Document_Participaci%C3%B3_PCM17-20_versi%C3%B3_final_.pdf</a>
D03	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procès Participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017 – 2020</i>	Report with the rules of the participation process: background; objectives; axes and limits of the debate; rules for participating; and calendar. – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/182/Document_de_bases_proc%C3%A9s_participatiu_PCM17-20.pdf">https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/182/Document_de_bases_proc%C3%A9s_participatiu_PCM17-20.pdf</a>
D04	Generalitat de Catalunya (December 2016). <i>Informe d'avaluació del procés participatiu per al Pla de Ciutadania i de les Migracions 2017-2020</i>	Evaluation report based on the participants' evaluation questionnaires – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/2532/Informe_de_valoraci%C3%B3_Pla_de_Ciutadania_i">https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/2532/Informe_de_valoraci%C3%B3_Pla_de_Ciutadania_i</a>

		<a href="#">Immigracions_2017-2020_rev2.pdf</a>
D05	Generalitat de Catalunya (December 2016). <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions</i>	Summary of the contributions and results – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/2521/Informe_global_d_aportacions_FINAL.pdf">https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/2521/Informe_global_d_aportacions_FINAL.pdf</a>
D06	Secretaria d'Igualtat, Migracions i Ciutadania (January 2016). <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Informe de retorn de les aportacions rebudes a través del portal Participa.gencat.cat.</i> Generalitat de Catalunya	Government's feedback on the contributions done through the web portal – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/2522/Informe_retorn_propostes_Participa_gencat_SIGNAT.pdf">https://participa.gencat.cat/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/2522/Informe_retorn_propostes_Participa_gencat_SIGNAT.pdf</a>
D07	Secretaria d'Igualtat, Migracions i Ciutadania (July 2017). <i>Proposta d'acord del Govern pel qual s'aprova el Pla de Ciutadania i de les Migracions 2017-2020.</i> Generalitat de Catalunya.	Government proposal arrangement for the approval of the Plan – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/web/.content/03ambits_tematics/05immigracio_refugi/03politiquesplansactuacio/pla_ciutadania_immigracio/pla_2017_2020/Memoria-justificativa-4-9-17.pdf">https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/web/.content/03ambits_tematics/05immigracio_refugi/03politiquesplansactuacio/pla_ciutadania_immigracio/pla_2017_2020/Memoria-justificativa-4-9-17.pdf</a>
D08	Informe economic	Economic report – To be downloaded from:
D09	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Barcelona, 25 d'octubre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Barcelona on the 25.10.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D10	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Vic, 22 de novembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Vic on the 22.11.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D11	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Sessió amb personal tècnic del món local. Manresa, 22 de novembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Manresa on the 22.11.2016 workers from the municipalities – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>

D12	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Tarragona, 1 de desembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Tarragona on the 22.11.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D13	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Lleida, 28 de novembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Lleida, on the 28.11.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D14	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Sessió amb personal tècnic del món local. Amposta, 9 de novembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Amposta on the 9.11.2016 workers from the municipalities – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D15	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Barcelona, 27 d'octubre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Barcelona on the 27.10.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D16	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Barcelona, 9 de novembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Tortosa on the 9.11.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D17	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat. Girona, 23 de novembre 2016</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Girona on the 23.11.2016 – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>
D18	Generalitat de Catalunya. <i>Procés participatiu per al pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020. Síntesi de resultats i aportacions del taller de debat.</i>	Summary of the contributions from the session in Amposta on the 9.11.2016 workers from the municipalities – To be downloaded from: <a href="https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania">https://participa.gencat.cat/processes/enriquir-pla-ciutadania</a>

	<p><i>Sessió amb personal tècnic del món local. Girona, 23 de novembre 2016</i></p>	
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## NOTES

- <sup>i</sup> Manera de governar que es fonamenta en la interrelació dels organismes encarregats de la direcció política d'un territori i la societat civil, per donar poder, autoritat i influència a la societat sobre les decisions que afecten la vida pública
- <sup>ii</sup> xarxes autoregulades, interdependents, horitzontals i relativament estables dins d'un marc regulador i normatiu
- <sup>iii</sup> Direcció General de Participació Ciutadana i Processos Electorals
- <sup>iv</sup> actualització d'aquell marc general i del diagnòstic que portava
- <sup>v</sup> era més un pla operatiu més que no pas un pla estratègic
- <sup>vi</sup> diagnòstics i conjunts d'unes quantes mesures
- <sup>vii</sup> hi havia coses que corresponien altres departaments
- <sup>viii</sup> Sempre et trobes amb els teus companys de 20 anys que estem fent tots el mateix, i per tant, nosaltres ja sabem el que diran, ja sabem el que pensen i tot
- <sup>ix</sup> Jo crec que en general tots aquests processos pequen de que convidem a la gent directament implicada i obvien tota la gent que pot tenir actituds [...] negatives cap a la immigració. [...] Dubto que hi haguessin massa diferències entre les nostres mirades
- <sup>x</sup> hi ha una línia directa de finançament
- <sup>xi</sup> Tenim molt de contacte amb les tècniques i els tècnics que estan als diferents departaments
- <sup>xii</sup> nosaltres com a entitat vivim de les subvencions públiques que en general, les que tenen més pes a tota l'entitat són les de la Generalitat
- <sup>xiii</sup> La informació és molt important per a prendre decisions polítiques informades
- <sup>xiv</sup> Oriol Amorós sense cap mena de dubte és una persona molt receptora i que processa molt bé la Informació, sorprenentment bé per ser un polític
- <sup>xv</sup> Propostes d'accions concretes
- <sup>xvi</sup> L'objectiu sempre és que el pla reculli el màxim consens. Diguem, el procés que tu anomenes, es podria anomenar molt bé el *concept making process*, realment és un procés per a crear consens
- <sup>xvii</sup> L'objectiu sempre és que el pla reculli el màxim consens
- <sup>xviii</sup> En canvi a les sessions col·lectives, cara a cara, permet un intercanvi d'opinions que no tenen l'objectiu d'arribar al consens. Perquè no és l'objectiu del debat arribar a un consens, les opinions divergents son legítimes
- <sup>xix</sup> estan pensats no per arribar a un consens, a una deliberació, un diàleg [...] això és lo que es fa als parlaments
- <sup>xx</sup> ...que acabaven venint eren entitats que quan venien i participaven no havien fet un treball previ de lectura en aprofundiment
- <sup>xxi</sup> "Recordo que la dinamització de la sessió era pobre, molt pobre. [...] Diria, que no hi havia molt personal propi de la direcció general i que les persones que dinamitzaven el procés no coneixien massa el contingut. [...] Jo crec que aquelles persones simplement eren persones que dinamitzaven un procés però que ni tenien coneixement del contingut del que allà s'estava discutint i la impressió era ho recollim, ja ho direm i ja està
- <sup>xxii</sup> Obert a tota la ciutadania

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- <sup>xxiii</sup> Una eina molt unidireccional
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Necessitat de tenir més informació, és a dir, de saber que s'ha fet en plans anteriors, quins son els resultats de la implementació d'aquest pla, etc.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Dons revisant periòdicament la pàgina de transparència.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> no és fàcil perquè no tothom està constantment mirant aquest portal web
- <sup>xxvii</sup> molt generalista i per tant, poc focalitzada
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Un proceso participativo con tan pocas personas no se puede llamar participativo
- <sup>xxix</sup> Els processos participatius s'han de fer d'una altra manera. Això no és un procés participatiu
- <sup>xxx</sup> Ha estat un procés parcialment participatiu tant pel que ja es donava per fet com pel temps, massa breu, com perquè potser faltava representació de persones i col·lectius
- <sup>xxxi</sup> És a dir, tenia la sensació una mica d'haver participat en un procés en que es diria que s'havia participat i es diria que havíem reunit a algunes persones però que ni la dinàmica que s'havia dut a terme aquell dia ni el resultat final, [...], a mi em va satisfer
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Moltes vegades no plantejem el procés, com un procediment per fer aportacions. Sinó que ho plategem amb un objectiu tancat. I això no ajuda. És a dir, sempre estem marcats per allò que vol l'administració
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Sincerament, jo d'aquest pla no recordo massa. Ara bé, del pacte si, perquè en el pacte va haver-hi una implicació molt forta, era tot novedós, era innovador, era molt compromès, va marcar un abans i un després, etc. En aquest pla, és un pla de rutina, per tant, recordo coses, però realment no és un record molt significatiu des del meu punt de vista
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Lo més habitual era que fossin propostes del gènere molt general, una mica vagues a vegades o que eren coses que no encaixaven en cap del esquemes que havien preparat inicialment
- <sup>xxxv</sup> hi havia una doble feina de dir l'acceptem i convencem algú que no siguem nosaltres que la de fer
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> El treball previ que fan segons quines institucions és molt més alineat amb el teu
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Les propostes que fan les entitats tendeixen a ser més naïf o generalistes
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Empoderament de les persones immigrades
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Promoció de llocs de treball estable
- <sup>xl</sup> Que el Govern Català revisi i negui qualsevol tracte comercial amb les empreses que provoquen el desplaçament de les persones resident a països tercers, a causa de l'explotació dels recursos i la seva població
- <sup>xli</sup> Incorporar de nou mediadors a l'àmbit sanitari
- <sup>xlii</sup> Incloure persones immigrades en alts càrrecs públics i privats; eliminar l'educació catòlic-cristiana definitivament de les escoles públiques; fer extens l'impacte positiu de la immigració en l'economia del país
- <sup>xliii</sup> era molt complicat contactar perquè moltes vegades era fruit del que havia dit una persona concreta d'una entitat concreta en un context d'una reunió de treball concret