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"The social participation of young people with a migrant background in building a more inclusive European society" - Erika Bernacchi.

Bio

Erika Bernacchi holds a Ph.D. in Gender Studies at University College Dublin and is a researcher in Sociology of Cultural and Communication Processes at Pegaso University. Her research interests include multicultural societies, gender and migration, social mobilization among young generations with a migrant background, postcolonial and decolonial studies, gender stereotypes in education. She has served on the Scientific Committee of the Gender Studies Section of the Italian Sociological Association. Her publications are available at: <https://ucd.academia.edu/ErikaBernacchi>

Abstract

The social participation of young people with a migrant background represents one of the most significant dynamics shaping contemporary European societies. Across Europe, new generations born or raised in migratory contexts are increasingly redefining the meaning of belonging, citizenship, and participation beyond traditional national frameworks. Rather than perceiving identity as fixed or exclusive, many young Europeans with migrant roots develop forms of "hybrid identity" that combine multiple cultural, linguistic, and symbolic references.

In this perspective, the social participation of young people with migrant backgrounds should not be understood solely in terms of "integration," but as an active force in the redefinition of Europe itself. These generations play a crucial role in promoting more inclusive and democratic societies by fostering intercultural dialogue, challenging exclusionary narratives, and creating new spaces of representation and belonging. Their experiences highlight the possibility of imagining Europe not as a culturally homogeneous entity, but as a plural and evolving social space shaped by multiple histories, memories, and identities. Understanding their contribution is therefore essential for reflecting on the future of European citizenship, social cohesion, and cultural democracy in increasingly diverse societies.