Chapter 2
Knowledge Society:
Participation, Transparency, and Trust as Factors of Citizenship

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is developed along three conceptual axes: citizenship; knowledge society: transparency; and trust and participation. It begins by explaining the concept of citizenship and its historical roots, the Greek polis and the Roman civitas; the revival of cities in the Late Middle Ages and their consolidation in the Modern Age. It analyzes the citizenship construct with the affirmation of each inhabitant as a citizen involved in improving the several plans of the quality of urban life. The second axis evaluates the characteristics of knowledge societies as promoting factors to a citizenship based on socio-political indicators that build trust between the citizen. The third axis deals with transparency and trust as active disseminators of timely and relevant information to the public and its impact on corruption, as a barrier against a broad citizenship. At the methodological level, the study combines bibliographic research with a field research by questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter addresses the concept of citizenship and its relation to other concepts currently under focus, namely human sustainability in its five major dimensions (environmental, economic, social, cultural and political), the knowledge society and its impact on individual behavior and the participation and intervention of citizens in political processes at various levels.

The concept of citizenship has been an important focus of reflection: this reflection begins in the Greek polis, especially with the worship of justice and the connection between the individual and community destiny, expressed by the philosopher Solon, which is the basis of the construction of the concept. Solon first established, objectively, the causal link between violation of law and disruption of social life (Jaeger, 2001). In Rome, where the situation was not very different from what was lived in Greece, the concept was more formal: Rome was a slave society, based on the 'gens' (patrician families), which held citizenship and political rights. The plebs, made up of non-noble and foreign Romans, did not fit any kind of juridically defined right; only in the third century BC, after long political conflicts, were created institutions proper to the plebeian population, such as the Tribunate and the Assembly of the Plebe (Cardoso, 1985). The period following the fall of the Roman Empire (V century) in the High Middle Ages saw the vertical fall of the meaning of citizenship inherited from Antiquity: the constant barbarian invasions made Europe a territory in which institutions and customs were confronted. worlds barbarian and roman. A peculiar type of social organization (nobility, clergy and serfs) arose, with a central concern: fidelity to the masters, as a guarantee of security.

The picture just began to change with the formation of national states, centralized, favoring the development of cities and, consequently, the classic notion of citizenship, linked to the granting of political rights associated with urban life. Thus, began a new relationship between politics, economy and society, nourished by the dynamism of the emerging mercantile capitalism and, later, by the religious reforms of the fifteenth century. These acquisitions were consolidated by the Enlightenment philosophers and materialized in the French Revolution and the American Constitution and today embody the multidimensional construct of citizenship: civil and political rights; rights and measures of a more social nature, linked to the world of work, education, health and housing (mainly carried out in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries); finally, the most universal idea of rights linked to the very sense of humanity, defended mainly in the last third of the twentieth century and, today, as objectives of sustainable development (ODS-ONU, 2015).

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