LA RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL UNIVERSITARIA (RSU): UN PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN INTERUNIVERSITARIO

The University Social Responsibility (RSU): an inter-university research project

Guido Benvenuto

Universitá degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza" (Italia)

RESUMEN: La responsabilidad de las universidades en la educación para la ciudadanía y su desarrollo, así como la responsabilidad civil, son los objetivos a perseguir y monitorear con mucho cuidado. El proyecto interuniversitario, patrocinado por el CEPES (Centro de Estudios para el Perfeccionamiento de la Educación Superior) de la Universidad de La Habana (Cuba), ha permitido y promovido la primera fase de investigación, una fase exploratoria utilizando una pequeña muestra de profesores y estudiantes de Sapienza (Universidad de Roma, estudios de italiano). La investigación analiza las opiniones de profesores y estudiantes, su experiencia, expectativas y perspectivas. Los diferentes resultados que surgieron de los cuestionarios ofrecen la oportunidad de analizar los diferentes puntos de vista y su triangulación. Las universidades están planeando cada vez más en la dirección de una tercera misión, pero solo una fuerte intencionalidad política y una visión global e interuniversitaria pueden mejorar las intervenciones y calificarlas para un desarrollo atento a los valores de lo cívico y la sostenibilidad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *ciudadanos activos, educación cívica, responsabilidad política, cooperación intersectorial, comparación internacional*

ABSTRACT: The responsibility of universities in education for citizenship and its development, as well as civil responsibility, are the objectives to be pursued and monitored very carefully. The interuniversity project, sponsored by CEPES (Center for Studies for the Improvement of Higher Education) of the University of Havana (Cuba), has allowed and promoted the first phase of research, an exploratory phase using a small sample of professors and Sapienza students (University of Rome, Italian studies). The research investigates the opinions of teachers and students, their experience, expectations, self-assessments, and perspectives. The different results that emerged from the questionnaires offer the opportunity to analyze the different points of view and their triangulation. The world's universities are increasingly planning in the direction of a third mission, but only a strong political intent and a global and interuniversity vision can improve interventions and qualify them for a development attentive to the values of civics and sustainability.

KEYWORDS: *active citizens, civic education, political responsibility, cross-sectorial cooperation, international comparison*

1. Social responsibility and universities' third mission

Changes in society and the processes of globalization in recent decades have extensively modified higher education scenarios in terms of: the expansion and differentiation

in the modes of access (the transition from the elite, grounded, universal); the integration of public and private systems; the multiplication and sharing of international spaces; the organization and management of a knowledge society. The will to harmonize university systems, in the European context, has led to designing and organizing a European common area of Higher Education, through the Bologna process[1].

In the Ministerial Conference of Berlin (2003)[2], in which non-EU countries participated as well, the Ministers, to emphasize the social dimension of higher education, added a fundamental principle: "the need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and European level".

The Higher Education is considered a "public good and a public responsibility" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). Public authorities, the Ministry of education and training institutions, as well as universities can and must contribute to the economic development, seen as a central tool for social cohesion and the formation of responsible citizens. In the London Communiqué (2007) it is therefore reiterated that "the political strategies should aim at maximizing the potential of individuals in terms of personal development and their contribution to building a sustainable and democratic society based on knowledge". But participation in a training process so vast can not be limited to the transmission of knowledge or specialization professionalizing. It requires a new vision of higher education, which promotes the acquisition and dissemination of values and principles of ethics of, the sense of community, of a new humanism that makes the students confident of their role in society and responsible citizens, as well as respectful and in solidarity. In practice, among the main tasks of training and education there are citizenship education, civic responsibility, human values, from an intercultural perspective and respecting self-determination of peoples.

This third mission has to do with the role and the function that university studies have in connection with the society. In other words, with the cultural role and with the scientific and educational function that the university may have in a given society, at that particular moment in history. The university social responsibility is clearly mentioned in the UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education (2009, p.2)[3]:

---

[1] The Bologna Process is an international reform of the EU's higher education systems, which set out to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA - European Higher Education Area). Based on previous agreements and treaties, it started in 1999, after 29 European education ministers had met on 18 and 19 June 1999 in Bologna and had signed an agreement known as the Bologna declaration. An important concept is expressed in the Declaration: "The Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognized as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, confirming citizens with the skills necessary to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural. Education and cooperation are confirmed further as essential tools for the development and consolidation of democratic, stable, peaceful and [...] »

[2] In the Berlin Conference in 2003, entitled "Realising the European Higher Education Area" participated more countries, even outside the European Union, as well as representatives of the Common Space for Higher Education European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean (EULAC).

[3] World Conference on Higher Education (2010). *La nueva dinámica de la educación superior y la investigación para el cambio social y el desarrollo* (UNESCO Headquarters, París, 5-8 July 2009). Recuperado de https://bit.ly/36IcFOT

> La educación superior debe no sólo proporcionar competencias sólidas para el mundo de hoy y de mañana, sino contribuir además a la formación de ciudadanos dotados de principios éticos, comprometidos con la construcción de la paz, la defensa de los derechos humanos y los valores de la democracia.

And a possible theoretical framework of the University Social Responsibility (RSU) is presented by Vallayeis (2009, p.4), which stresses the lack of attention of the scientific and academic world to influence the university ethical training of students.

> La Universidad tiene por supuesto un impacto directo sobre la formación de los jóvenes y profesionales, su manera de entender e interpretar el mundo, comportarse en él y valorar ciertas cosas en su vida… Influye asimismo sobre la deontología profesional, orienta (de modo consciente o no) la definición de la ética profesional de cada disciplina y su rol social."

It is therefore desirable for university to give attention to the Third Mission as well as a higher number of studies and reflections on training citizenship education and civic responsibilities. It is therefore necessary, in this view, to rethink the study of university curricula in order to deepen the relationship between "science" and "society" and support a dialogue between the parties, valuing the area concerned and consolidating the network of players operating in that territory. Certainly the third mission will always be the expression and the reflection of different university settings, and then to find applications and focus according to different cultures, contexts, social histories, policies, institutions.

Linguistic variants of the expression "third mission" invite to a first general reflection on the importance and function that it can take in the tertiary education policies: ¿University Extension, proyección social or tercera misión?; University extension, outreach (social impact) or third mission? However, dealing with the Third mission surely forces us to face the original vocation of higher education: universalize the study by making the knowledge available to the whole community, and help to make the society better, more democratic, more confident.

A society that wants to contrast the consumerist drift (not for profit!) with consumer of knowledge, must promote the efforts that public universities make to increase a formative outcome: interact with the society (Third Mission), interact with the scientific community (research), interact with students (teaching).

The social dimension and university's social responsibility in general education of students/citizens is not a new theme for universities in the world and the Italian ones. But more and more, at least in contexts with high industrialization which are exposed to the stress of a competitive job market, the effect on the "social" have enhanced the economic products of research (patents, spin-off, third party research, territorial infrastructure). The consumerist dimension has taken precedence over the education of the individual and the community in terms of impact on society (relationships science-society, civic engagement, cultural heritage, health).

In an attempt to define the "citizenship and its educational outcomes, and the value attributed to it in the university (Academic Citizenship), more research has involved both target students (the codes of conduct and expected values for college students), and the

institution (duties, responsibilities and functions of university facilities). This debate about the function and the importance of the third mission of universities is now even more present and growing because of the conflict and social contrasts between the countries, but also because of the attention to inclusive policies and the search for democratic forms of a culture of global peace.

2. Method

2.1 Aims and research tools

The social dimension and university's social responsibility in general education of a student/citizen are the focus of a large university project[4] and the frame of the exploratory research presented in this paper. The research agreement between CEPES (Centro de Estudios para el Perfecionamiento de la Educacion Superior) of the Universidad de la Habana (Cuba) and the Department of Psychology of Development and Socialization Processes (DPPSS), of Sapienza, University of Rome, has therefore promoted a pilot study on the University Citizenship Education.

The research investigates the views of professors and students. Some questions are open-ended, in order to collect qualitative information and indications, other close-ended to arrive at comparisons. The analysis of responses has no claim to statistical generalization, whereas respondents are all subjects that have become available and have completed the questionnaire independently, but above all the open-ended questions have provided to the working group[5] inspiration and guidance for the development of the following survey.

The answers will serve to highlight the key elements of the multifactorial construct that in sociology and pedagogy in recent years has occurred in many sizes and facets: active citizenship, democratic citizenship, global citizenship, global education (or world citizenship). Internationally, major studies have been conducted by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement)[6] and involved mainly students between 10 and 14 years old, schools, teachers and principals. The attention to the level of tertiary education is significantly lower than the one in studies on adolescents, and covers education for citizenship in the continuing education field (Bohlin, 2005).

The citizenship construct, which is the basis of our exploratory study needs to be considered in multifactorial perspective: intertwining cognitive, affective and motivational

---

[4] The university project, entitled "Tendencias actuales de la formación universitaria. Una visión desde la Pedagogia", is promoted by CEPES (Centro de Estudios para el Perfecionamiento de la Educacion Superior) of the Universidad de la Habana (Cuba) with the initial involvement the Departamento Didáctica y Educational Theory, Facultad de Formación of Profesorado. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (España).

[5] The analysis of the open-ended questions, which required a long phase of categorization and agreement in the use of textual analysis criteria, was accomplished with the careful and valuable assistance of two graduate students in the master's program in Pedagogy and Educational Sciences and Education, Sapienza, University of Rome: Adriana Timpone and Francesca Scrocca.

[6] The IEA has conducted several comparative studies at the international level on civic education and citizenship: in 1971 (Six Subject Study, see. Walker, 1976), in 1999/2000 (IEA Civic Education Study, CIVED) and the 2008/2009 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, ICCS en Schulz, Fraillon y Ainley, 2011; Torney-Purta, y Schwille, 2011). With ICCS (2016) has carried out a new survey by expanding study variables and the number of countries interested in the different continents (Europe, Asia, Latin America).

dimension and then between knowledge, values and attitudes. In Table 1 we report the construct of the two questionnaires translated and adapted from the original form (in Spanish, administered in University of Havana, Cuba).

Table 1. *The structure of data collection tools (knowledge questionnaires)*

Professor questionnaire	Student questionnaire
Personal details Faculty, disciplinary Sector, Role, Years of service, Gender	**Personal details** University, School, Age, Year of study Gender
Teaching skills According to you, is education for citizenship a responsibility of academic institutions? How do you think your university activities (teaching and research) contribute to students' citizenship education? (State major themes and teaching methods used)	**Institutional competence** According to you, do universities have a responsibility in citizenship education?
Methods How do you think your university activities (teaching and research) contribute to students' citizenship education? (State major themes and teaching methods used) Among the academic activities you habitually carry out (research, teaching, science dissemination) which ones contribute most to citizenship education and why? Can you provide an example of an academic activity you have undertaken /organized /coordinated that in your opinion contributes/has significantly contributed to students' university citizenship education? On the whole, what methods and strategies do you consider most effective for citizenship education of a university student?	**Methods** Do you think you received citizenship education during your university studies? If so, can you provide an example of a university activity that has been particularly effective for you in this respect?
Knowledge / Skills According to you, how important are the various thematic areas in the table for citizenship education?	**Knowledge / Skills** Can you explain what "citizenship education" means to you? In your opinion, what are the three main qualities and / or skills that characterize a university student trained as a "citizen"?
Values What are, according to you, the main obstacles to students' citizenship education?	**Values** What would you need to get the widest citizenship education? What are, in your opinion, the obstacles to citizenship education of university students?

Professor questionnaire	Student questionnaire
Self-assessment Self-assessment professors' competence How do you consider the preparation of university professors in the citizenship education of their students?	**Professors' competence evaluation** How do you consider the preparation of university professors in the citizenship education of their students? **Self-assessment** How do you judge your training as a "citizen"?

2.2 Students and professors samples

The original questionnaire, developed by Berta González of CEPES, has been adapted to be administered in the Italian context, considering both the differences between the two countries (Cuba and Italy) from a socio-cultural point of view, but above all, the different focus and sensitivity that universities have historically developed in training, instruction and values education, particularly in higher education.

Online administration took place in June- November 2015 and involved a group of students and professors from two Sapienza Faculties, University of Rome, as reported in Table 2. Respondents certainly do not represent a sample, but this first administration had no claim to generalization, was simply a pilot test, to verify the adequacy of data collection instruments and the availability of respondents. The two questionnaires were adapted and arranged for an on-line administration to speed up the contacts and automate the data entry.

Table 2. *Distribution of respondents by area of study*

Grade Professors					Students	
Faculties	PO	PA	Ric.	**Tot.**		**Total**
Arts and Humanities	1	3	7	11	Arts and Humanities	3
Medicine/Psychology: Psychology	4	0	5	9	Medicine/Psychology: Psychology	48
Medicine/Psychology: Education	0	2	2	4	Medicine/Psychology: Education	68
Total	**5**	**5**	**14**	24	**Total**	**119**

Legend: PO, Professori Ordinari (Full Professor); PA, Professori Associati (Associate Professor); Ric, Ricercatori (Researcher)

The questionnaire was sent to the professors using the institutional email, accompanied by an introductory email that clarified the purpose, the meaning and the exploratory nature of the research. To invite the professors of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities to participate in the administration of the questionnaire the Faculty Dean, Roberto Nicolai, sent an information note. For professors of the Department of Psychology of Developmental and Socialization Processes the communication note was sent from the Director, Emma Baumgartner, followed by reminders from the author, head of research.

The student questionnaire was always administered on-line, using the Moodle platform, in the section for students of different structures (faculties, courses of study). The administration (tab. 2) reached 24 professors (9 males, 15 females) and 119 students (9 males, 110 females), after repeated mailings and reminders, in the period between June and November 2015.

3. Results

3.1. Professors' point of view

The questions posed to university professors relate largely to the role and responsibilities that academic institutions have in education for citizenship. All 24 professors believe that academic institutions have a central role in such education.

Focusing more on the role of professors in student education, as active citizens, professors were asked what topics had been discussed more frequently during classes and the teaching methods employed. As we know, each professor teaches different subjects and also the Scientific Sector (SSD) is different (education, psychology, history, philosophy, and finally arts). Then, for each teaching field we considered important to quote some examples of the main issues that are addressed in class. Teaching methods are easy to categorize, inasmuch as all 24 professors said that most of the time there is a discussion and a debate during lesson hours, and they offer opportunities for self-study.

A professor in educational area responded that:

> «*One of the main issues that I have worked on for several years, both in education and research, is prejudice. In particular, during the lessons I work on the meaning of prejudice, how students develop prejudice and how it is possible to overcome prejudice, considered in its various spheres, showing that education is a fundamental tool of prejudice reduction. The teaching methods used, as well as the lectures, are based on a range of activities, with the aim to demonstrate to students, in a concrete way, some theoretical concepts and the operation of certain mechanisms of social interaction*»

A psychology professor, unlike the others, states that there is not a specific objective and explained it in the following manner:

> «*It is not an explicit objective that guides the design of subjects and teaching methods, but imagining the link with what I teach. In my opinion to promote citizenship education of students the following contribute: a) solicitation of observation and analysis of social phenomena (eg. identity, cultural belonging, deviance, marginality, processes of labeling etc.) as socially constructed phenomena, not attributable to the individual but as emerging from the interaction/participation; b) examination of PARTICIPATION construct (Goffman, Goodwin) as central to the analysis of the construction of the subject, the mind and social contexts; c) analysis of the skills building (eg, children or novices) as a negotiating outcome, situated "apprenticeship" developed through participation in meaningful cultural practices for the actors who carry them out; d) an in-depth analysis of*

ethno-methodological assumptions that enhance the "ethno-skills" of social actors.

Among the research topics, promotion and detailed analysis of skills of actors traditionally considered vulnerable (eg. Patients, foreign patients) or little relevant (eg. Children with certified difficulty) - promotion of their participation and critical analysis of the mode of labeling processes instead of relegating them as little influential actors in different contexts.

While the philosophy professor tries to convey to his students a sense of citizenship:

«*By giving example and teaching with devotion, an educational-emotional approach and also a correct basic dissemination, intending to encourage a full development of the individual in the construction of the self, of correct and meaningful relationships with others and a positive interaction with the natural and social reality.*

Using a qualitative scale, ranging from "very" to "not at all", teacher were asked to express their opinion (a judgment) on the importance of some thematic areas in citizenship. As shown in Table 3, all issues listed (political, religious, environmental, ethical, social, cultural and legal), are considered very important by professors for the student to become a socially active citizen. The only less important issue is the religious one that, according to many teachers (11), has little or no relevance. There are no major differences between the responses of the professors of the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology and Humanities, except for the political issue, which almost all (11 of 13) Professors of Medicine and Psychology consider very important, while among professors of Humanities only 5 consider it very important and the remaining "somewhat" important.

Professors have subsequently indicated which academic activities contribute most to students' citizenship education. Many of them indicate more than one activity, such as education with scientific dissemination or doing research and reporting findings during class, as a teacher said: «*Both research and teaching are equally important in building responsible citizens*», another *teacher wrote: «TEACHING: because the university has not only the task of providing students with disciplinary knowledge, but also of contributing to their growth and overall training. SCIENTIFIC DISSEMINATION: why - taking position on the main themes of a public debate and intervening in the media - I can demonstrate how the themes of my teaching, which concern the functioning of public cultural services and access to knowledge, are strongly linked to the overall development of society*».

The majority of them (18 out of 24) indicate their teaching as the main educational activity: «*Teaching, because it is a long path in time that allows you to work on individual and group responsibility*». 10 professors add that research is crucial in this context: «*That action research because it allows you to decline the specific skills related to academic education in a concrete action of citizenship*» and 7 designate popular scientific dissemination, «*perhaps dissemination (in the classroom and in training courses) of research findings, to focus on the skills and participation of social actors traditionally considered as "subordinates" and little agentive - es. patients, children, children "difficult", migrants*».

Table 3. *Judgment of importance on some citizenship thematic areas*

Thematic/areas	Faculties	Scale of importance			
		very	somewhat	a little	not at all
Political	Medicine/Psychology	11	1	1	
	Arts and Humanities	5	5	1	0
	Total	**16**	**6**	**2**	**0**
Religious	Medicine/Psychology	3	3	5	2
	Arts and Humanities	1	6	2	2
	Total	**4**	**9**	**7**	**4**
Environmental	Medicine/Psychology	6	7	0	0
	Arts and Humanities	6	4	1	0
	Total	**12**	**11**	**1**	**0**
Ethical	Medicine/Psychology	11	2	0	0
	Arts and Humanities	9	1	1	0
	Total	**19**	**3**	**1**	**0**
Social	Medicine/Psychology	12	1	0	0
	Arts and Humanities	12	1	0	0
	Total	**24**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Cultural	Medicine/Psychology	12	1	0	0
	Arts and Humanities	10	1	0	0
	Total	**24**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Legal	Medicine/Psychology	6	5	2	0
	Arts and Humanities	6	3	2	0
	Total	**12**	**8**	**4**	**0**

Finally, three professors said that other support activities to teaching and research may be useful, such as conferences, theme days and more: *«the activity consisting of organizing conferences and open theme days to citizenship. These initiatives are useful because they also seek to involve people outside the university context».*

According to their comments on educational practices, they were also asked to provide an example a type of activity that have significantly contributed to citizenship education. 2 professors find games fundamental, not understood in the sense of "fun", but putting yourself someone else's shoes and empathizing. 3 stated that the activities they have done during their lessons is the analysis of data, those factors that can affect the development of education for citizenship; whereas 3 other professors 3 claimed that, according to them, what contributes most are conferences contributes most are the conferences.

The most relevant is that 6 out of 24 professors, said that only the active participation of the student could lead to citizenship education: *«University students have the opportunity to participate as observers and through training activities planned for graduation and gaining experience that allow them to reflect on citizenship education»*; There were professors (4) that answered negatively to this question, stating that there is no activity, *«No, there are no activities that contribute significantly, because at present the role is marginal and indirect. If conceived in a perspective of citizenship education, however, you can differently plan courses»*; 2 professors argued that only through the reading of some texts, one can develop such education. Subsequently professors were asked to give an opinion on their colleagues and self-evaluate the degree of readiness for the implementation of citizenship education (Table 4). The data show that about half of them (13 out of 24) believe that professors have an average readiness and only 2 believe that there is a high readiness (both of Art and Humanities). There are no specific differences between the responses of the professors of the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology and those of Art and Humanities.

Table 4. *Self-assessment of degree of readiness for the implementation of citizenship education*

Faculties	Fully prepared	Almost completely prepared	Average prepared	Shortly prepared	Very little prepared	Not at all prepared
Medicine and Psychology	0	0	7	4	2	0
Arts and Humanities	1	1	6	3	0	0
Total	**1**	**1**	**13**	**7**	**2**	**0**

With regard to the most effective strategies for student citizenship education, many professors identified one or more instructional strategies. Most of them (11 out of 24) stressed the students' need to play `by` gaining direct experience or doing practical activities in the field, to immerse themselves directly in problematic situations and find solutions to these problems, for example: *«Direct experience with privileged witnesses. Get to the emotional part of students and not only to the cognitive. `Gain` first-hand experience».* As a result of practical activities, 3 of them mention moments of reflection on the theme: «The ones related to active participation followed by meta-reflexive activities». 3 professors indicate that it is most important that they themselves give a good example to the students: «I think that teachers can and must first of all be positive examples of citizenship». Other 3 professors indicate the need to create opportunities for discussion on the subject even with the participation of experts, research and practical activities around specific issues of social impact, from the local to the general, with particular attention to the use of reliable sources. 2 professors consider it necessary to establish a dialogue and cooperation between students and professors. Other 2 mention compliance with the rules as an essential element. Again, 2 professors, in addition to the need for practical activities, mention the need for students to cooperate with each other and develop a sense of community: *«To collaborate and participate: interacting in groups, including the different points of view, enhancing their and others' skills, managing conflicts, shared learning and contributing to the implementation of joint activities, in recognition of the fundamental rights of others».* Other professors individually express more generic concepts such as raise interest and passion, set up stages, use social networks, have accuracy in literature search. Only one says that traditional teaching methods are enough for citizenship education.

The last question they were asked was to identify the main obstacles to students citizenship education. Many of them have found one or more obstacles. 14 out of 24 respondents indicate themselves (professors) as the main obstacle for many reasons, such as: «The poor training and motivation of professors. The lack of programs or *courses designed specifically for citizenship education. In any case, each course should provide modules on these issues»*. The remaining 10 on the other hand indicate broader problems of society, the university structure, the previous education of students and others, for example: «*The unwillingness at the Government level to put the issue of citizenship as a priority educational objective with the others»*.

6 of them were more specific and indicated the lack of space and activities for students to reflect or act: «*The main obstacle is the lack of spaces where students can think critically about what is happening in their social context. In this sense, some students perceive the university not so much as an open space for research and comparison, but as a place where* they take exams»; 8 professors maintain that the problem is classes, ex cathedra teaching which only transmits theoretical contents without any interaction of students and eliminates any type of constructive dialogue between a professor and students: *«1) abstraction of themes and lessons;. 2) transmission and non-participatory methods. Focusing on disciplinary aspects rather than on education».* As a problem, 3 professors also mention the lack of interest on the side of the students and their poor training during high school. Finally, two professors restate what is said in the previous answer, only to confirm that a fair example of professors is the first condition for a serious citizenship education, otherwise there is an obstacle to citizenship education. Other professors indicate several more general factors, pointing out the lack of interest on the side of the government, excessive privileges of professors, poor university organization, lack of preparation and motivation of their colleagues.

3.2 Students' point of view

119 students have responded to the questionnaire. Most were enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology, Sapienza, University of Rome (116), one at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and 2 at the University of Roma Tre, respectively enrolled in Economics courses and Languages and literatures of the modern world. Students (110 females and 9 males), also have different ages (modal age 20-25, 77 cases out of 119), and have been enrolled for several years, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Student questionnaire, responses by faculty and course years*

Courses level	Medicine/Psychology: Education	Medicine/Psychology: Psychology	Other Faculties	**Total**
Bachelor's degree (freshman)	25	8		33
Bachelor's degree (2nd, 3rd year)	26	13		39
Bachelor's degree (off course)	8	5		13
Master's degree (current)	7	18	3	28
Master's degree (off course)	2	4		6
Total	**68**	**48**	**3**	**119**

Concerning the university's institutional role in citizenship education, most of the students (109 out of 119) consider that universities play an important role in citizenship for everyone. 78 out of 85 students enrolled in a bachelor degree program and 31 out of 34 in a master course responded affirmatively to the question: *According to you, do universities have a responsibility in citizenship education?*
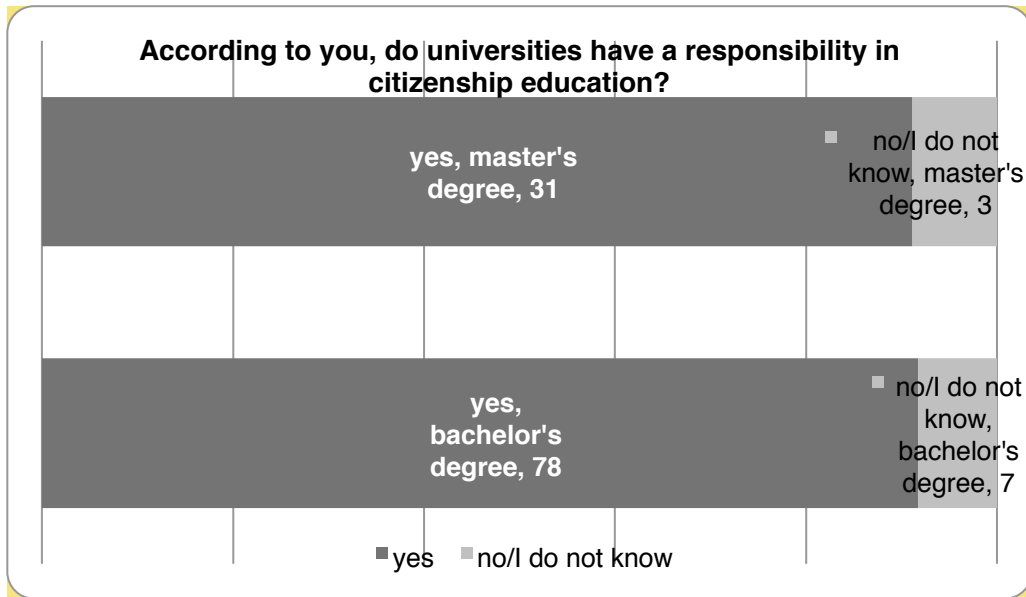

Figure 1

However, when students were asked to give examples of citizenship education activities at the university, if they believe that they have actually received citizenship education during their university experience, the answers were different.
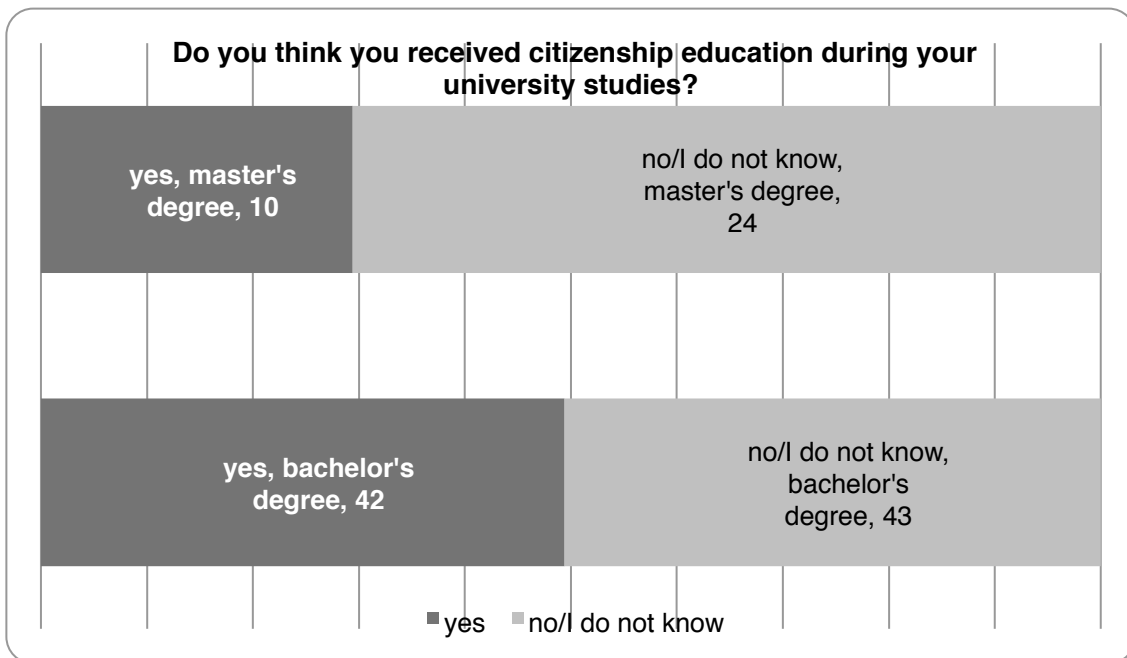

Figure 2

In fact, half of the students enrolled in a bachelor's degree program (three years) gave a positive answer (42 out of 85) whereas the other half raised concerns and responded negatively; while the students enrolled in a master's degree program, the most frequent answer is the negative one (24 out of 34).

The 52 students who claimed to have participated in activities addressed to citizenship education (42 bachelor + 10 master) and some of the 27 who expressed uncertainty provided an example of a university educational activity addressed to educational citizenship. Many (22) mentioned one or more specific courses as a place where they engaged in such an activity, such as the course of intercultural pedagogy, social pedagogy and law courses. Other 22 students were more general and indicated benefits of seminars, workshops and lectures, 3 of them specifically pointed out the discussions and debates held during the classes as an educational moment; 7 students on the other hand considered internship an extremely educational activity, a girl wrote:

> *«I think that internship might be an activity through which I received Citizenship Education: starting from a personal interest, get in contact with the institution, take responsibility, take action in person in a work task and face the possible obstacles encountered in it. The three-year experience working on my dissertation allowed me to broaden my citizenship education: collection of documents, the search for reliable sources of information, selection, elaboration and exposition in front of the Commission».*

On the other hand, 16 students that being included in a university context in itself educate for citizenship, having to confront daily with reality and problems of community life made of bureaucracy and human relationships. Almost all indicate the importance of teamwork, relationships with peers and interaction with them as an example of citizenship education, as well as setting up small working groups and the duty to respect and manage the needs of others. The students believe it is a very good preparation for the future:

> *«I did find educational sharing experiences, consolidate the new knowledge and use what learnt». «Small group work (ability to work together, collaborating on a joint project and sharing their respective competences), in my opinion, constitutes an effective dimension of university citizenship education».*

Assessing the preparation of their professors in the implementation of programs addressed to citizenship education, both undergraduate and masters students students believe that in general their professors are well prepared (64 out of 119, tab. 6). The appear to be more lenient in their judgment of the professors than the professors are in self-assessment (see Table 4). None of the 13 professors of the Pedagogy and Psychology program who responded to the questionnaire considers him/herself fully or completely prepared, while 38 students gave high (discrete + good) feedback to their professors of the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology.

Table 6. *Student evaluation of professors in preparation and implementation of citizenship education*

Courses	Evaluation scale					Total
	Excellent	Discrete	Good	Fair	Poor	
Bachelor's degree program	6	25	45	4	3	83
Master's degree program	1	6	19	3	1	30
Total	7	31	64	7	4	113

The second part of the students questionnaire does not focus on the university, but on the student's role as an active citizen. In this regard, they were asked to indicate what qualities or competences make a university student a 'citizen'. Their responses were categorized and summarized using a "cloud of words" representation (*word clouds*, figure 3)[7].

Answers shows that the most important quality identified by the students is respect (66), in different areas, such as respect for others, for the laws and rules, for the city, toward himself, the environment and diversity. Personal knowledge (65) follows, as a set of skills and information that a good citizen should have in order to be properly integrated in society, such as knowledge of rules, rights and duties, culture, territory, politics, but also thinking independently, be able to reason, to have critical skills. Then there is the category concerning the relations with others (55), no longer associated with respect, but related to the concepts of living together in harmony with others, such as fairness, collaboration, sharing and cooperation, prejudice elimination and multiculturalism, kindness, to do good, tolerance, empathy, mutual help, listening and understanding others. The next group of terms defines the expressions related to the various attitudes (56) that a student should take to become a good citizen, such as honesty, a sense of innovation, flexibility, awareness, openness of mind and in discussion, study, persistence, continuous improvement, proactiveness, autonomy. The next category is all the expressions given by students related to suggestions on how to take practical and concrete actions in society, how to actively participate (36) in debates, public initiatives in democratic life, in courses, in politics, in public life, but also on how to have a proactive approach, how to express their ideas, to be resourceful and dynamic. The term active or activities is used 18 times and the term participation 13 times to emphasize the importance of first-hand involvement in being good citizens. Finally all the expressions regarding education (environmental, civil, road safety) and training (25) were aggregated, expressions that refer to the "responsibility" (14) that an individual must possess in order to integrate into society (civic, of their rights and duties, of own actions) and those relating to the concept of consciousness (11), of diversity and of own rights. The item "other" (8) encompasses all the terms that are without a context, are unclear or do not refer to any of the preceding categories, such as "work", "age", "democracy", "civil" , "analysis."

---

[7] To obtain a word clouds representation you use different words standardizing the singular and plural, eliminating all the words with less than 4 letters, and prepositions and conjunctions with equal length or greater than 4 (eg. as, of, at).

Figure 3

The students were then asked to provide, on a scale from *very poorly prepared* to *fully prepared*, an assessment of their level of citizenship education. The responses (tab. 7) show that only 21 students think that they their level is not good (poorly prepared + very poorly prepared), the majority believes that they have an "average" preparation (64 out of 119) and 34 believe that they are properly prepared (fully prepared + almost completely prepared).

Table 7. *Student self-assessment of their level of citizenship education*

Courses	fully prepared	almost completely prepared	on average prepared	poorly prepared	very poorly prepared	**Total**
Bachelor degree program	6	19	49	10	1	85
Master degree program	2	7	15	8	2	34
Total	8	26	64	18	3	119

To analize the open-ended questions of the questionnaire (questions 4-7), whose aim was to collect the viewpoints of individual students, giving the opportunity to write and to give examples, we agreed on the methods of analysis with the group of the Havana University. Once agreed upon and having discussed the criteria identified (see box1) we analyzed the responses of the Italian students with a double evaluator.

Criteria for the evaluation of the concept of citizenship (CEPES, Cuba)

Joint analysis of the questions 4: Can you explain what "citizenship education" means to you? and 7: What would you need to get the widest citizenship education?

Value 1 (ignorance): has a vision related to other non-relevant content, or does not respond. He does not see the need for transformation, neither internal nor external, nor does he respond to it.

Value 2 (not very adequate): it has a very general or formal vision of its meaning, without seeing the possibility of actor of the subject, referred in a very simple way to external performance. He sees the need for transformation in very general external action or in his passive transformation without contemplating the interaction.

Value 3 (adequate): when it contemplates the subject's limited vision of the subject and appreciates it more in concrete social behavior, referring to one of the fields. He sees the need for his transformation in the external action of others or the passive transformation of his surroundings or himself.

Value 4 (very adequate): when contemplating the vision of being an actor of the subject, referred to at least one of the forms (participation, interaction, reflection) in at least one of the fields. He sees the need for his transformation internally, as a transformation, to one who more concretely (in actions) in relation to some external factor.

Value 5 (broad): when contemplating the actor's vision of the subject referred to participation, interaction and reflection in different fields. He sees the need to achieve it internally as a transformation of himself, in relation to external factors of different types.

Box 1

Analyzing the answers given by the Italian students we encountered difficulties in adjusting the analysis model of the Cuban team, since Italian students' responses were more general, thus being difficult to categorize in such a scheme. The inconsistency is probably due to the formulation of the question that was asked differently in the two languages. In the questionnaire in the Spanish language, the two questions were formulated in the second person: «cual es su idea de a qué se refiere la formación ciudadana?» and «qué necesitaría para lograr una formacíon ciudadana más completa?»; while in the questionnaire in the Italian language they were in the third person singular8: «Can you explain what "citizenship education" means to you?» and «What would you need to get the widest citizenship education?». It is possible that due to the way the question was formulated, the Italian students did not understand that it had to do with their personal involvement in citizenship education (as required by categories 4 and 5 of the scale, see Box 1) and, for that reason, gave more general responses thus making the comparison between our and their answers inconsistent. For these reasons, in order to obtain an analysis of the most consistent answers, we felt it was necessary to slightly modify the categories, making them more suitable to the

---

[8] In the Italian language using a more formal courtesy form, using third person singular "his" instead of second person "you" (as in the Spanish language and in English translation), we have made question number 4 more formal: "Può spiegare cosa significa per lei "educazione alla cittadinanza"? and also question number 7: "Di che cosa avrebbe bisogno per raggiungere un'educazione alla cittadinanza più ampia?".

responses of the Italian students. The criteria and categories used in the analysis of the responses by Italian are reported in Box 2.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">

Criteria for the evaluation of the concept of citizenship (Italia)
Joint analysis of the questions 4: *Can you explain what "citizenship education" means to you?* and 7: *What would you need to get the widest citizenship education?*

<u>Value 1</u>: does not answer the question, can not identify possible changes, or considers that it is not needed.
<u>Value 2</u>: general and formal viewpoint, does not specify any concrete action but recognizes the need for deepening their understanding of the topic.
<u>Value 3</u>: overview, but gives more concrete information and identify possible actions by third parties to implement transformations.

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">

<u>Value 4</u>: proposes solutions such as interaction with others, reflection, active participation by part of people and changes in order to improve educational practices for citizenship.
<u>Value 5</u>: understands the interaction with others, reflection and participation as important elements so that there is the concept of citizenship, but especially puts himself as an actor for changes.

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">categories example</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>**Value**</td>
<td>**Can you explain what "citizenship education" means to you?**</td>
<td>**What would you need to get the widest citizenship education?**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**1**</td>
<td><u>I do not know.</u></td>
<td>A course of education for citizenship, because I do not know what it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**2**</td>
<td><u>In my opinion "Education for Citizenship" means adopting a right and determined attitude, in accordance with the citizenship integration rules</u></td>
<td><u>Justice and equality.</u></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**3**</td>
<td>The term "education for citizenship" refers to all the educational activities (formal and informal) aimed at acquiring the skills necessary to exercise their rights and their duties, and to participate actively in the democratic life of their societies.</td>
<td>To have more opportunities in group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**4**</td>
<td>Educating for an active and conscious citizen providing information on what is happening all over the world.</td>
<td>Debate and confront other people on some important issues, especially in this period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**5**</td>
<td>To me educating for citizenship means transmitting those essential values which every good citizen should have, such as: interest in what happens to the country and to the city or care (sense the) of people who are in need.</td>
<td>Tools to read what's happening around me and to make a contribution.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Box 2

By means of an in-depth analysis (Table 8) we found that the main category is value 2, (49 out of 119) showing a very general and not very in-depth view on the issue of citizenship; 38 students responded, however, providing suggestions and possible actions by third parties (value 3); 15 responses were categorized with a value of 4; 10 with a value of 5 and finally only 7 students had no opinion on the topic and were not able to identify any change. There were no major differences in the distribution of answers for undergraduate and master's students.

Table 8. *Meaning of "citizenship education"*

Courses	Val. 1 Do not know, be confused	Val. 2 Attitude of Integration	Val. 3 Skills acquisition	Val. 4 Social Awareness	Val. 5 Values transmission	**Total**
Bachelor degree program	5	35	27	13	5	85
Master degree program	2	14	11	2	5	34
Total	**7**	**49**	**38**	**15**	**10**	**119**

The idea behind the last question: "What are, in your opinion, the obstacles to citizenship education of university students?" was to investigate the conditions of and challenges to citizenship education at the university level. The criteria provided to us by the University of Cuba were used with some adjustments. The Italian students were quite vague in their responses, or they did not give a response (not provided for in Cuban colleagues criteria).

The general and vague answers, which forced us to add a fifth category, seem to indicate a general interpretation: Italians students answering the previous questions indicated the need for education for citizenship, assessing the weight and clarifying the meaning, but faced with a question that puts them in a critical perspective, that requires knowledge and an overall opinion of society in which they live and of the changes underway, report a greater detachment and lack of awareness. Moreover, the answers suggest the need for more general knowledge, as well as acquisition of the skills of critical and reflexive thinking in the field of higher education.

An analysis of the answers given by the Italian students (Table 9), reveals that for most of them (39 out of 119) obstacles to citizenship education are factors that do not concern either the person or the organization of society, but general factors, without analyzing in detail the causes and responsibilities derived from such obstacles. Students enrolled in bachelor's degree program, unlike their colleagues enrolled in more advanced programs, indicate more clearly the responsibility of educational institutions (22), the policies and the society in which they live as the main causes that hinder a good citizenship education.

Table 9. *What are, in your opinion, the obstacles to citizenship education of university students?*

Courses	Cat. 0 null	Cat. I school	Cat. II outside	Cat. III society	Cat. IV individual	Cat. V generic	**Total**
Bachelor degree program	4	14	9	15	18	25	85
Master degree program	3	8	4	2	3	14	34
Total	**7**	**22**	**13**	**17**	**21**	**39**	**119**

Discussion

It is essential for the issue of citizenship education to be investigated in an international context, especially if carried out in diverse geographical and cultural contexts. The university project, entitled "Tendencias actuales de la formación university. A visión desde la Pedagogy", promoted by CEPES (Centro de Estudios para el Perfecionamento de la Educacion Superior) of the Universidad de la Habana (Cuba) has allowed and promoted a first phase of research, an exploratory one, on a small sample of professors and students of Sapienza, University of Rome. The existing co-operation and international relations between universities of the two countries has made it possible to exchange the methodologies and opinions of the two groups. In this study we have presented the first phase of this international research project. The first phase of research, a prelude to a larger investigation, which will involve the entire academic community. The widest possible participation, on the part of professors and students of a university, is not simply a requirement of methodology, certainly to be taken into account in order to develop generalization plans, finding quali-quantitative evidences and increase a critical reflection.

The responsibility of universities in citizenship education and its development as well as the civil responsibility are goals to be pursued and monitored very carefully, precisely at a time and in those contexts where the construction of "walls" is overtaking the construction of "bridges", in those countries and in those latitudes where separation and individualism are re-emerging with vigor and strength. The challenge of a global citizenship and a heightened sense of sharing and solidarity must not be lost, but should be supported by training activities and social action-plans.

The fight against the consumerist and consumer model it is up to those societies and communities that will encourage and even supply the public universities to increase their value and the educational fallout in the triple mission: to interact with the society (Third Mission), interact with the scientific community (research), interact with students (teaching/learning).

References

Arthur, J. y Bohlin, K. (Eds) (2005). *Citizenship and Higher Education, The Role of Universities in Communities and Society*. London. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203415931

Conferenza Ministeriale di Berlino (2003). *Realizzare lo Spazio Europeo dell'Istruzione Superiore*. Recuperado de https://bit.ly/2QsbyfE

Macfarlane, B. (2005). *Placing service in academic life*. In R. Barnett (Ed.), *Reshaping the university: New relationships between research, scholarship and teaching* (pp. 165–177). Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.

Macfarlane, B. (2006). *The academic citizen: The virtue of service in university life*. London: Routledge.

Macfarlane, B. (2007). Defining and Rewarding Academic Citizenship: The implications for university promotions policy. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *29*(3), 261–273. doi:10.1080/13600800701457863

Nussbaum, Martha C. (2011). "*Non per profitto. Perché le democrazie hanno bisogno della cultura umanistica*". Bologna: Il Mulino(tit. orig.: *Not for profit. Why the Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Losito, B., y Agrusti, G. (2016). IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 Assessment Framework. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-39357-5

Schulz, W., Fraillon, J., y Ainley, J. (2011). *The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study* (ICCS). In C. Papanastasiou, T. Plomp y E. C. Papanastasiou (Eds.), *IEA 1958–2008: 50 years of experiences and memories*. Volume 1 (pp. 187–200). Nicosia, Cyprus: Cultural Center of the Kykkos Monastery.

Torney-Purta, J., y Schwille, J. (2011). The IEA Studies in civic education: their history. In C. Papanastasiou, T. Plomp , y E. C. Papanastasiou (Eds.), IEA 1958–2008: 50 years of experiences and memories Volume 1 (pp. 97–113). Nicosia, Cyprus: Cultural Center of the Kykkos Monastery.

UNESCO (2009). Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior. *La nueva dinámica de la educación superior y la investigación para el cambio social y el desarrollo*. (Sede de la UNESCO, París, 5-8 de julio de 2009); COMUNICADO (8 de julio de 2009). ED.2009/CONF.402/2. Recuperado de https://bit.ly/34BKdNm

Shils, E. (1997). *The calling of education: The academic ethic and other essays on higher education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vallaeys F., de la Cruz, C. y Sasia, P. (2009). *Responsabilidad Social Universitaria, Manual de primeros pasos*. McGraw-Hill Interamericana Editores. Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo. México. Recuperado de https://bit.ly/36Je5Zj

Walker, D. A. (1976). The IEA Six Subject Study: *An empirical study of education in twenty-one countries*. Stockholm, Sweden/New York, NY, USA: Almqvist and Wiksell International/ John Wiley and Sons.

Ward, K. (2003). *Faculty service and the scholarship of engagement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Recuperado de https://bit.ly/2M4QPgF