Cosmopolitan citizenship in education: Representations of Spanish secondary students

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Abstract

This empirical study analyses the representations of Spanish secondary students with regard to cosmopolitan citizenship. We used a questionnaire designed to explore citizenship and human rights. We present the results of applying this questionnaire to a representative sample of 2563 students from four Spanish regions (Extremadura, Andalusia, Basque Country, and Madrid). Significant differences were found in their views about cosmopolitan citizenship with respect gender and educational level.

Introduction

It seems important to know the representation that secondary students have on citizenship. After that we can consider the difficulties of understanding citizenship in its various dimensions. On this basis we can design educational proposals to promote conceptual change in these representations of citizenship more effectively.

Understand citizenship is a complex, multidimensional and dynamic construction. We believe that people can have different approaches to the concept of citizenship through its various components or dimensions. In this sense we can think that individual understanding of citizenship can vary within a possible cosmopolitan citizenship scale (CCS – see below). Variation can occur in different dimensions that form part of the concept of citizenship. For example, a person might have a very cosmopolitan conception of diversity dimension, a more traditional position in sustainable development subscale and intermediate position in migration subscale. Identifying these potential differences could enable further knowledge of what kind of representation students have on citizenship in its different dimensions or subscales.

Our starting point is the cosmopolitan view of citizenship, compared to a traditional view. Traditional citizenship view is understood as a rather passive approach, self-centred and less prosocial, which means citizens tend to represent himself as a subject whose civic engagement is concern always in the application, voting and other obligations, such as paying taxes (Cortina, 2001; Freijero, 2005; Moro, 2007). A traditional citizen tends to be primarily focused on their problems and solve them individually, paying little attention and interest in social or global context. Consider diversity as a dispersion of cultural identity, and therefore recognition of the rights of minorities does not occupy a central role. Traditional Citizenship is based on specific

traditions and customs as laws and regulations, which are quite reluctant to change, even if they are involving injustices and structural inequalities.

On the other side is the cosmopolitan view of citizenship (Osler, A. 2011, Berman y Philips, 2000), characterized by being an active approach (Crick, 2002, 2003), prosocial and little self-centred. From cosmopolitan citizenship people are oriented towards promotion and realization of human rights, and in search of Social Justice; actively participate in democratic process beyond voting exercise. There is an explicit recognition and defence of rights of others, not just themselves (Nussbaum, 1999). From a cosmopolitan view citizens works collaboratively to solve social problems in search for social justice, which involves a recognition and celebration of difference and diversity, which also implies adoption of a global and universal respect of rights and duties recognizing value of the context (Trotta, Jacott y Lundgren, 2008, Argibay, Celorio y Celorio, 2009).

Cosmopolitan citizenship view proposed by several authors (Banks et al, 2004, Osler and Starkey, 2003, 2006) includes a number of dimensions or subscales that give concrete shape to such citizenship, and through which young people should educate globalized world today. Table 1 show the subscales or dimensions that were taken into account in design of questionnaire has been applied in this research.

Cosmopolitan citizenship dimensions	Code
Democracy	SDm
Diversity	SDV
Globalization	SGl
Sustainable Development	SSd
Empire	SEm
Migration	SMg
Human Rigths	SHR
Prejudice	SPj
Justice	SJs
Digital Rigths	SDr

Table 1. Cosmopolitan Citizenship Subscales

Although described separately, each of the subscales are integrated in the global concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, and we must take into account these concepts that are deeply related between them and shares basic principles, such as social justice orientation and protection of human rights.

In order to know the understanding of these representations, we designed a specific instrument and methodology. It was decided the questionnaire should be informed in the basis of the ten key concepts or dimensions of citizenship education in multicultural contexts proposed by Banks et al. (2005) and Osler and Starkey (2006). In our opinion, their contributions show that it is essential to consider these concepts to design, apply and evaluate the process of educating for 'cosmopolitan' citizens.

In the questionnaire we have omitted the dimension of patriotism proposed by the authors, and with goal of maintaining ten dimensions we included a new dimension - not

suggested by Banks et al. (2005) and Osler and Starkey (2005) - related to the perception of digital rights of citizenship, which was the subject of a previous work (Garcia, 2011, Garcia, Jacott and Maldonado, 2011).

Participants

2563 students were participants in this study. They came from four Spanish autonomous regions according to distribution shown in table two.

In the four regions, the questionnaire was administered to students in second and fourth secondary grade school. However, in the community of Andalusia was applied to third-grade students, because in this region the Citizenship Education subject is taught in third grade. The Table 2 shows the distribution of participants.

Autonomous Region	Frequency	Percent
Extremadura	328	12,8%
Madrid	1430	55,8%
País Vasco	474	18,5%
Andalucía	331	12,9%
Total	2563	100%

**Table 2. Students sample for Autonomous Region**

Results

Since our main interest is to know the differences in the representation of students on citizenship by grade, our first analysis is a one-way ANOVA. As seen in the table three, there are significant differences between the three groups for cosmopolitanism index in the Cosmopolitan Citizenship Scale (CCS) obtained by the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire.

	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Sig.
Among groups	14898,924	1	14898,924	102,310	,000
intra group	372945,382	2561	145,624		
Total	387844,30	2562			

Table 3. ANOVA cosmopolitanism index in the CCS per course

We also found significant differences by gender, showing than cosmopolitanism index of women is higher than men ($F_{1, 2527}= 49,351$; p<0,000)

As described above, our conception of cosmopolitan citizenship includes a number of dimensions or subscales that are part of questionnaire design. In the Graph 1 can be seen how is the representation of citizenship of high school students in the different subscales. As shown in Graph 1, there are significant differences between seven of the ten subscales. Only Migration (SMG), prejudice (SPJ) and justice (SJs) subscales shows no significant differences between students grade groups.
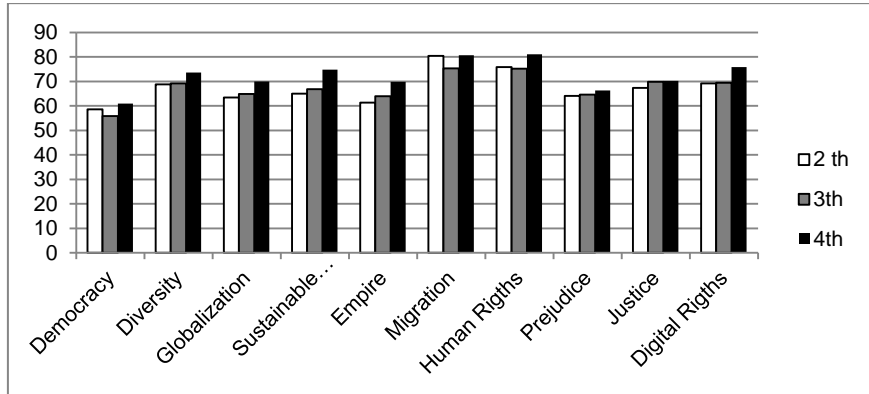
Graph 1. Cosmopolitanism index by grade in the subscales of Cosmopolitan Citizenship

In case of gender comparisons, we found women are more cosmopolitan than men in all subscales. Significant differences in the middle of them as we can see in Graph two.
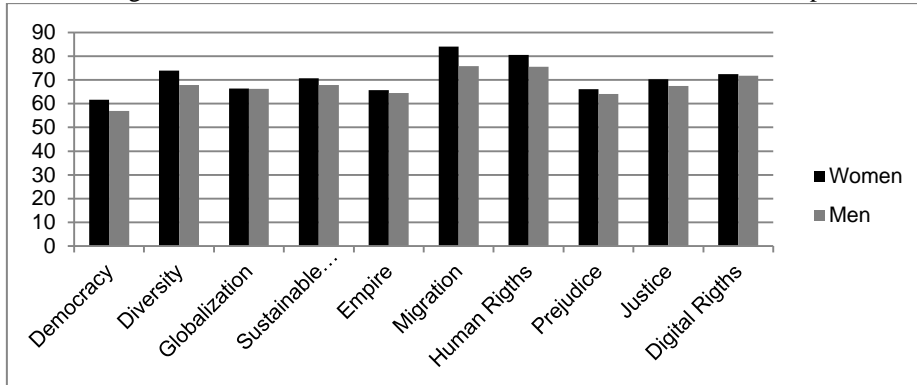
Graph 2. Cosmopolitanism index by gender in the subscales of Cosmopolitan Citizenship.

Conclusions

Based on our cosmopolitan conception of citizenship, we constructed a cosmopolitanism citizenship scale (CCS). Using this scale of cosmopolitanism we can obtain a Cosmopolitanism Index for each of the participants of this research. As the results shown, every person can understand citizenship from a more cosmopolitan view or traditional view in global terms. But in turn may have divergent conceptions in subscales each comprising the same. That is, we can find a person having, in the Cosmopolitanism Index, a position very close to cosmopolitan view, but that some of the index of the subscales would be closer to the traditional conception of it. The research work has shown us that we have designed a useful tool to know the representation that people have on citizenship, and to analyse them from a cosmopolitan view. As we have seen, the results are consistent with the theory outlined earlier. The actual results indicate that older students are more cosmopolitan than younger. We show a significant increase even in students of a previous course, and from one course to another. This make us think that one important factor in this approach to cosmopolitan view may reside both in the

development of personal thinking about citizenship as a by-product of the academic activities and their cognitive and prosocial development. Similarly, the results indicate that women are more cosmopolitan than men, both in the Cosmopolitanism Index as each of subscales that compose it. Finally, we think, that this study allowed us to see that the questionnaire and their analysis by subscales are a valid and interesting way to approach the representations that students on citizenship.

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