

First Outputs of a Research in Progress- Universitabile: Inquire into the Social Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and SLD in the Roman University Context

Carlotta Antonelli (carlotta.antonelli@uniroma1.it)

Department of Communication and Social Research, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Licensee [The RCSAS \(ISSN: 2583-1380\)](http://www.thercsas.com). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International License. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>). **Crossref/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.55454/rcsas.3.06.2023.005>

Abstract: *The proposal is based on the first outputs of the doctoral thesis "Universitabile", which has as its target population students with disabilities and SLD enrolled in the A.Y. 2020-2021 at La Sapienza, Tor Vergata and Roma Tre. Objectives of the paper are to analyse the variables affecting inclusion/participation and university performance and to analyze the role of study support services, distinguishing different targets. Since the beginning of the 21st century, Italian universities are increasingly plural places (Bolt and Penketh, 2016) and have to deal with diversity and the ways of including students with disabilities or SLDs (Oliver and Barnes, 2010). These have become a significant part of the Italian student population (Censis, 2017). The hypothesis is that university policies can produce ambivalent effects. In fact, these may contain "in germ the cues for a reversal of perspective, which from the anti-discriminatory strategy and the egalitarian ideal risk opening the door to the most extreme differentialism" (Piccone Stella, 2003). The research aims to assess how accessibility to structures and the quality of services contribute to inclusion, through the use of mixed methods approach (Mauceri, 2017), involving the administration of questionnaires to students, combined with in-depth interviews administered to support service providers.*

Keywords: Mixed Methods, SLD, Social Inclusion, Students with Disabilities, Universitabile

Article History: Received: 5 June 2023; Accepted: 15 June 2023; Published/Available Online: 30 June 2023;

1. Introduction and Theoretical Framework

The paper illustrates the preliminary results of a survey on the university inclusion of students with disabilities and SLD in the Roman university context. Specifically, the reference population is students with disabilities and Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) enrolled for the academic year 2020-2021 at the universities La Sapienza, Tor Vergata and Roma Tre.

At the beginning of the contribution, it seems appropriate to refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the first text that, with regard to education, states: "it must be directed towards the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN 1948, art. 26). Reaffirming this principle, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) goes further by imposing the obligation to ensure equal access and treatment to university education and vocational training for these individuals (UN 2006). According to the studies (Bolt and Penketh 2016), since the beginning of the 21st century, Italian universities have become increasingly plural places and have to deal with diversity issues, as well as how to include students with disabilities or SLDs (Oliver and Barnes 2010). These have become a non-negligible part of the Italian student population (Censis 2017). Thanks to Law no. 17/1999 on the guarantee of 'specific technical and didactic aids [...] as well as the support of specialized tutoring services' (Law no. 17/1999), the active participation of this category of students has been possible 'de jure and de facto'. However, the organizational autonomy of each university in this matter - 'within the limits of its own budget' - turns out to be an aspect that is not without criticism in providing for the dispositions of the law, as can be seen in the resources section of the recent ANVUR report (Borgonovi et al. 2022). What has been said so far opens up a reflection pertaining to the philosophy of law: if on the one hand the law aims to ensure contexts that are accessible to all as far as the same right can be demanded, thus reducing inequalities, on the other hand the translation of this principle, in the social context, poses practical difficulties essentially linked to the heterogeneity of the reference population, towards which the right in question must be generalized in order to be guaranteed; answering this question is fully within the scope of the objectives of this paper, since, in fact, the organizational autonomy granted to universities in the allocation of funds to guarantee the right to study for people with disabilities and SLDs translates into services, projects and initiatives that differ from university to university and which, therefore, produce considerable and considerably different impacts on the students who benefit from them.

The project proposal also intends to assess, from a comparative perspective between the three main Roman universities (Sapienza, Tor Vergata and Roma Tre), how university policies on services and didactics aimed at students with disabilities or SLDs favour the development of relational practices based on the principles of inclusive education (Moriña 2017). Research on university inclusion of students with disability has focused on specific issues in different national contexts (Riddell 2016). In this perspective, the realization of the shift from the concept of accessibility to inclusion in the university environment (Chiang 2019) cannot be separated from the study of interpersonal relationships among peers and with faculty members, further clarifying the empirical evidence from the literature on the topic, according to which the university inclusion of students with disabilities and SLDs is strongly associated to the presence of meaningful relationships with peers and teachers, as well as to the affective-emotional component, which is an essential part of the teaching and learning process (Moriña 2019). In recognizing the complexity inherent in the concept of social inclusion, the New Dictionary of Social Service (Campanini 2013) refers to its exact opposite, suggesting that terms such as marginality and exclusion should be used to explore the topic. The exclusion corresponds to the lack of access to basic resources, therefore, it is possible to state that inclusion is represented by the production of new policy mechanisms aimed at reducing or eliminating conditions of marginality. In this sense, it is necessary to consider the university community as an environment of interaction in which the identity of person with disabilities is constructed and to investigate how prejudice and discrimination against this category of students represent an obstacle to their full inclusion.

2

2. Pragmatic Goals

In this perspective, following the analysis of the structure of the variables, the objectives of the paper are, on the one hand, the understanding of the factors affecting students' inclusion/participation and their university performance and, on the other hand, the analysis of the role in students' inclusion/participation played by the different study support services. A further aspect worthy of investigation is to understand how factors related to the knowledge and use of the services offered by universities, as well as the relational dynamics between individuals favour or hinder the inclusion of students with disabilities and SLDs. It is considered appropriate, in this way, to identify how contextual, relational and individual factors are connected with the level of social inclusion/marginality, paying attention to the presence/absence of physical, institutional and social barriers. For this purpose, it is therefore intended to assess how accessibility to structures and the quality of services contribute to inclusion, understanding how relationships among peers and with teaching staff influence the learning process and how individual inclinations influence the action or perception of discriminatory behaviour. A final aspect of interest of the study is to understand how discrimination affects the achievement of career goals.

Bearing in mind that we are referring to an on-going project, we hypothesize that university policies on services aiming at the integration of people with disabilities or SLDs, understood as positive actions to reduce intergroup discrimination, may produce ambivalent effects. In fact, these may contain "in germ the cues for a reversal of perspective, which from anti-discriminatory strategy and the egalitarian ideal risk open the door to the most extreme differentialism" (Piccone Stella 2003).

3. Research Project Design

After setting out the broad theoretical framework and the cognitive and pragmatic objectives of the study, the main methodological steps of the research will be presented below. The project is based on the mixed methods approach (Mauceri 2017), to be understood as the integration of multiple sources of information to combine different levels of analysis through the combination of qualitative techniques (e.g. focus group interviews) and quantitative techniques (e.g. questionnaire) and was articulated in seven phases:

1. The first phase is represented by "background research", in which the aim was to verify the existence of a database per university, actually found in all the universities under investigation, which allowed the construction of reports providing the total number of students with disability and SLD in the individual universities. The evidence will be dealt with in detail in the following paragraph. In the same phase, focused interviews (Merton and Kendall 1946) were administered to the managers and staff members of the offices dedicated to supporting students with disabilities and SLDs. There were 12 interviews compared to the planned 20, as participation in the latter was voluntary and not all the figures potentially involved in the protection of students with disabilities and SLDs consented to the

survey. The interviews took place online, on the Meet platform, in the period from 13 May 2021 to 18 July 2021, lasting a maximum of 1 hour and 40 minutes and a minimum of 25 minutes and involved employees of the three surveyed universities, managers, the rectors' delegates for disability and, last but not least, specialized tutors and peer tutors who support students.

2. Subsequently, a semi-structured questionnaire (Marradi 1988) was designed and administered exclusively to students with disabilities and SLDs, aimed to investigate the following conceptual dimensions (Pavsic and Pitrone 2004):
 - a) socio-anagraphic dimension of the respondent (age, gender, social origin, etc.)
 - b) type of disability (visual, hearing, motor, other) or presence of SLD;
 - c) previous educational career;
 - d) social inclusion aspects:
 - i. use/accessibility of university facilities and spaces;
 - ii. subjective well-being/absence of discrimination;
 - iii. university performance;
 - e) degree of use of dedicated services;
 - f) aids required;
 - g) relations with other students with disabilities;
 - h) relations with able-bodied colleagues;
 - i) relations with teachers and administrative staff.
3. Subsequently, the questionnaire was administered to a small sample of subjects (10) involved in the study (Liani and Martire 2017). In this context, pre-testing played a key role in verifying the comprehensibility of the questionnaire questions and minimising sources of bias.
4. The type of sampling is convenience sampling (Albano, 2008), given the desire to reach the entirety of the students with disabilities and SLD of the universities involved in the research (La Sapienza, Tor Vergata and Roma Tre).
5. The survey was conducted in the online mode. In fact, a closed web survey (mail survey) was planned, on voluntary and anonymous participation. The questionnaire was sent to the e-mail addresses of the individual students registered in the dedicated offices, thanks to the valuable collaboration of the staff members. The questionnaire, consisting of 45 questions, has an average completion time of 40 minutes.
6. The research then included the 'ad hoc' design of a case matrix for variables (Marradi 2007) that aims to combine the data provided by administrative sources (Secretariat and possibly sources such as Infostud) and the data collected through the web survey. Subsequently, the resulting empirical material was subjected to a monivariate and bivariate analysis of the data (Di Franco 2011), in order to understand the role of the various services dedicated to inclusion and the services available to students with disabilities and SLDs.
7. In a final phase of the project, the students were asked to take part, on a voluntary basis, in the focus group (Corrao 2000), which aimed to qualitatively investigate the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the functioning of the services in order to improve them and make policy suggestions. Specifically, a focus group was carried out for each individual university, involving approximately ten students from each university.

It should be noted that this paper focuses on the preliminary results concerning the first phase ("background research") fed by the secondary data provided by the universities and by the in-depth interviews with private witnesses operating, at all levels, in the field of guaranteeing the right to study in the universities considered. The main evidence will be sequentially discussed in the following paragraphs.

Secondary Data Provided By Universities on the Numbers of the Phenomenon. Report: Graphical Elaborations

As regards the reports constructed using secondary data (Corbetta 1999) supplied by the universities, the first evidence gives the numbers of the phenomenon: in case of students with disabilities and SLDs enrolled at the "La Sapienza" university of Rome, in the A.Y. 2020/2021, these make up 2.49% of the total population of enrolled students, which specifically amounts to 111.726 units, while at the "Roma Tre" university, these make up about 5% of the total population of enrolled students, which is around 33.225 units.

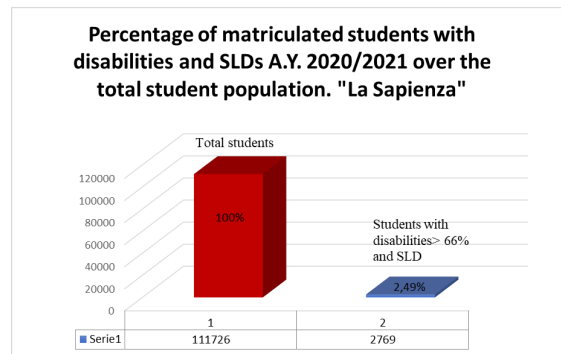


Figure 1: Percentage of matriculated students with disabilities and SLDs A.Y. 2020/2021 over the total student population. 'La Sapienza. University of Rome'

In the above "silent minority" graph (Figure1) elaborated thanks to the data provided by the staff working in the "sector for relations with students with disabilities and with SLDs", it can be seen that the total population of students with disabilities and with SLDs enrolled at "La Sapienza" University in the A.Y. 2020/2021 amounts to 2.49% (2769) of the total, which specifically is 111,726 units.

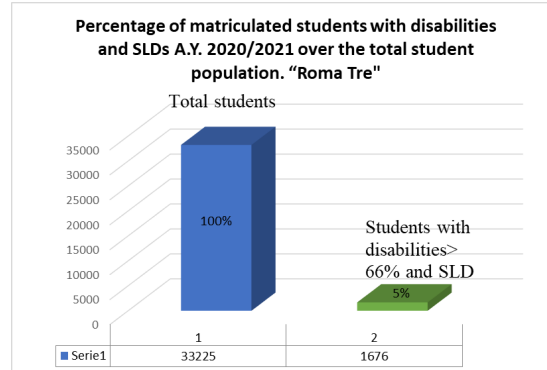


Figure 2: Percentage of matriculated students with disabilities and SLDs A.Y. 2020/2021 over the total student population. "Roma Tre"

In the above graph "rising population" (Fig.2), elaborated thanks to the data provided by the staff working in the university's "Office for Students with disabilities and SLDs", it is possible to read that the total population of students with disabilities and SLDs enrolled at the "Roma Tre" university in the A.Y. 2020/2021 is 5% (1676) of the total, which specifically amounts to 33.225 units.

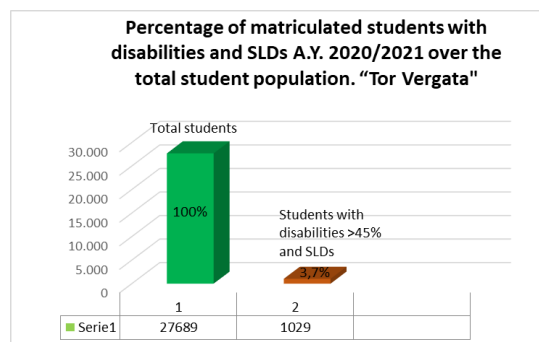


Figure 3:- Percentage of matriculated students with disabilities and SLDs A.Y. 2020/2021 over the total student population. "Tor Vergata"

“Tor Vergata” athenaeum (Figure 3) presents itself as the university with the highest percentage 3.7% (1029), in relative terms, of students with disabilities and SLDs enrolled, out of a total of 27,689. However, for a correct reading of the overall figure, two relevant factors must be taken into account: in the data provided by the university for counting students with disabilities, those with a degree of disability of 45% or more have also been included, unlike the “La Sapienza” and “Roma Tre” universities, which only consider students with disabilities as those with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 66%; a further non-negligible fact is that the number of students enrolled in the “Tor Vergata” university is considerably lower than that of the other two universities considered in our report.

The reports provide further data on gender differences with regard to grades and types of courses attended, as can be seen from the following graphs.

5

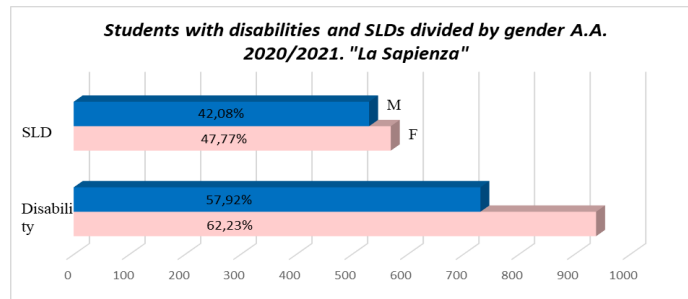


Figure 4: Students with disabilities and SLDs divided by gender A.A. 2020/2021. "La Sapienza. University of Rome"

As can be seen from the graph (Figure 4) above comparing students with disabilities and SLDs by gender, in both cases, the majority of students are women.

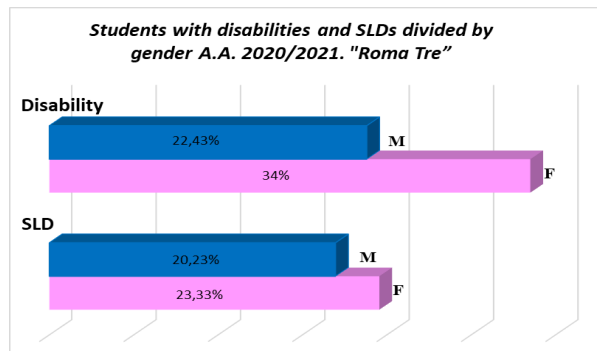


Figure 5: Students with disabilities and SLDs divided by gender A.A. 2020/2021. "Roma Tre"

The graphic representation above (Figure 5) shows that, in relation to gender, in both cases (students with disabilities and students with Specific Learning Disorders) it is predominantly women who choose to continue their university education, although those with disabilities are in a higher percentage when compared to both men with disabilities and women with SLDs.

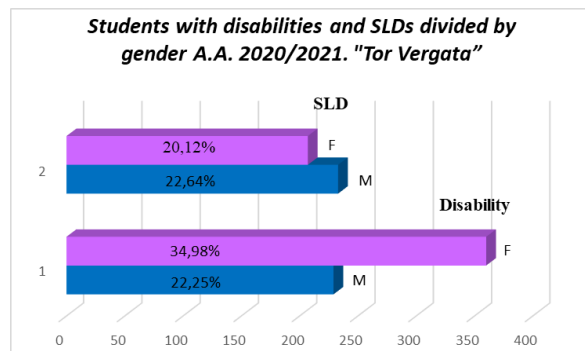


Figure 6: Students with disabilities and SLDs divided by gender A.A. 2020/2021. "Tor Vergata"

Differently from the previously analyzed universities, the Tor Vergata university (Figure 6), although by a small margin, shows a higher percentage of male students with SLD who decide to start a university education than female students, while the percentage of female students with disabilities who decide to continue their studies is higher, similarly to the data provided by the other universities.

In the two graphs below, concerning the university 'La Sapienza', we will see how almost all students, both with disabilities and with SLDs, are enrolled in three-year bachelor degrees. Aggregating the data, it is possible to recognise how another conspicuous part of the sample is enrolled in the secondary degrees of the new system, but the most interesting fact that emerges from the graphs is that the further one goes in the level of education, the more the number of enrolled students decreases; in fact, for Masters, Schools of Specialization and Doctorates the percentages are very low.

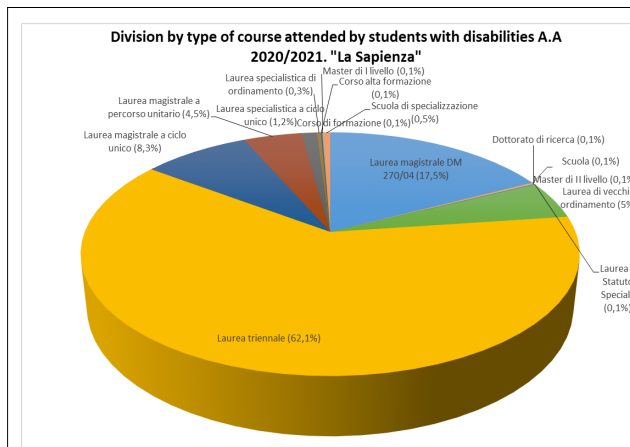


Figure 7: Division by type of course attended by students with disabilities A.A. 2020/2021. "La Sapienza. University of Rome"

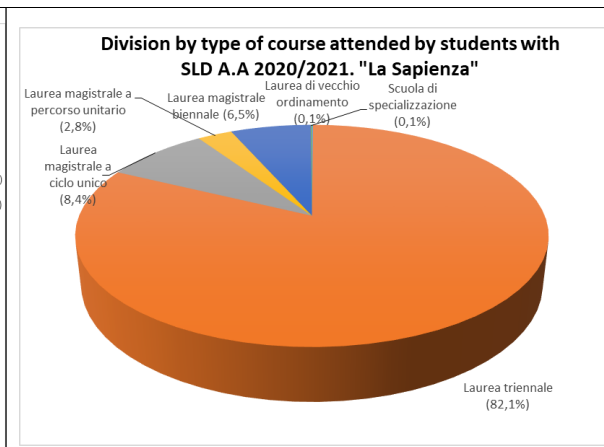


Figure 8: Division by type of course attended by students with SLD A.A. 2020/2021. "La Sapienza. University of Rome"

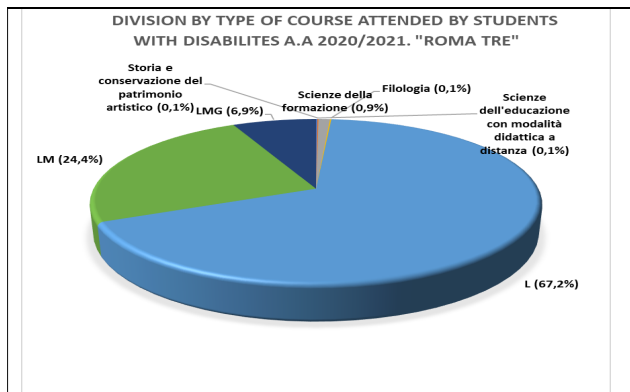


Figure 9: Division by type of course attended by students with disabilities A.A. 2020/2021. "Roma Tre"

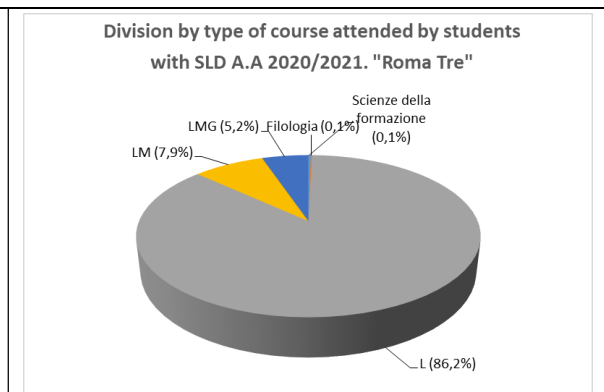


Figure 10: Division by type of course attended by students with SLD A.A. 2020/2021. "Roma Tre"

From this graphic representation (Figure 9), referring to the 'Roma Tre' university, it emerges that the majority of people with disabilities are enrolled in a three-year bachelor course (L) (638), counting also students following the 'History and conservation of the artistic heritage' course and those enrolled in 'Educational sciences' with distance learning mode; while a small number of students, albeit considerable, are enrolled in secondary degree courses (LM) (231).

As can be seen from the graph above (Figure 10), almost all of the students with SLDs belonging to the "Roma Tre" university are enrolled in a three-year bachelor degree course (629), while 59 subjects are enrolled in a secondary degree course, counting a single one enrolled in the "Philology" course.

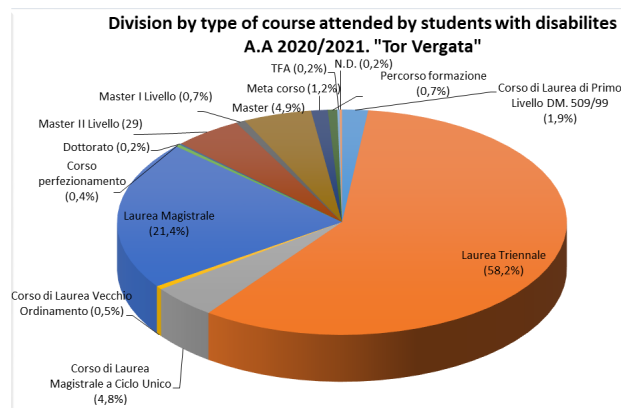


Figure 11: Division by type of course attended by students with disabilities A.A. 2020/2021. "Tor Vergata"

The graph above (Figure 11) concerning 'Tor Vergata' university shows that the majority of students with disabilities are enrolled in three-year bachelor degree courses (343) followed by those enrolled in secondary degree courses (126). The same trend as in previous reports can therefore be observed: in fact, only one student enrolled for a PhD, 2 for postgraduate courses and very low numbers for Level I (4) and Level II Masters (29). It should be noted that it was not possible to produce the same graph for students with SLD as the university provided the basic matrices with missing data.

However, the reports constructed are not limited to the evidence reported here for reasons of space, these provide further data on: the typology, the degree of the course attended and its annuality, the geographical provenience, the type of disability declared by the students, which, in some cases and only in certain universities, allowed them to choose part-time or full-time registration.

In conclusion, the secondary datum emerging from the reports that deserves more reflection is that as the level of education increases, the presence of persons with disabilities and SLDs progressively decreases; in fact, the number of students enrolled in doctoral courses does not exceed 3 in our overall sample and is not equally distributed in all the universities that took part in our research.

Testimonies from Key Informants and Field Experiences between Service Evaluation and University Inclusion

During the period 13 May 2021 - 18 July 2021, 12 in-depth qualitative interviews were administered (Gianturco 2005) to privileged witnesses working, at all levels, in the sector for students with disabilities and SLDs at the universities under research. The interviews investigated issues such as: access criteria and functioning of the Service, possible problems of governance of the university, relationship with internal and external institutional actors (existence of permanent tables for the management of disability policies), mapping accessibility of the universities, evaluation/monitoring of services/existence of listening spaces for students with disabilities and SLD, changes in service provision over time, specific projects for people with disabilities and SLD, relationship between communication and inclusion, relationship between inclusion and pandemic situation, concept of inclusion.

In line with the object of this article, interview excerpts will be presented that have returned data of particular interest regarding the specific topics "evaluation/monitoring of services" and "inclusion" that will be discussed, in extended form, in the following paragraphs.

State of Evaluation and Monitoring of Services in the Universities Surveyed from the Words of the Respondents

In the introduction to this topic, it is pointed out that the three universities surveyed do not seem, from the voices of those interviewed, to have set up assessment spaces for listening directly to students on the quality of the services provided. More specifically, on the theme in question, the professionals highlighted two relevant issues: the lack of listening spaces for students with disabilities and SLDs and the absence of quality assessment that takes their opinion into account.

Regarding specifically the staff members interviewed belonging to the university "La Sapienza", regardless of their positions, expressed themselves on the topic of "service evaluation" as follows: "To date, no, but when I was in charge, yes. For several years, we submitted anonymous service evaluation questionnaires to disabled people [...]. When the committee dealing with people with disabilities came into being, there were representatives who had a visual, hearing, physical disability". (Witness 1, top position Sapienza).

"Yes, we used to do it, even a customer satisfaction questionnaire. Now, the student with disabilities, if they have to evaluate us [...] for now there is no evaluation tool" (Witness 2, employee Sapienza).

"No, specific no, there will be counseling once he is restored, for now it is closed, they are modernizing [...] mah, we do the report to the evaluation team, every year. So that is our internal evaluation of the services and then there are the objectives... let's say internal objectives of the administration on which the officials are evaluated" (Witness 3, top position Sapienza).

"To my knowledge, no [...] but I think they are also obliged to do a review of what our work is" (Witness 9, employee official).

Even within the university 'Roma Tre', the situation on service quality assessment does not change compared to Sapienza university. One respondent, in fact, expressed himself as follows: "naturally these students are absolutely listened to, monitored and above all we have the very strong service of the 12 departmental referees, which is not an honorific nomination, it is a nomination of facts and each referee collects the well-being or the discomfort of the students of that department, the information is brought to me, to the office for students with disabilities and with SLDs and it is taken into account [...]. It's not that students with disabilities are a separate category, they are part of the quality survey system, certainly, so much so that when the university has had the visits that we have with regard to quality control and therefore evaluation, with regard to inclusion it has always reported a very high if not total response. So it is part of what I called the culture of the university". (Witness 12, top position Roma Three).

"If there is something wrong they communicate it to us and we learn about it. If there is no such communication it means that the service has been provided well [...]. The university annually or semi-annually has to make general communications concerning, I don't know, Erasmus, accommodation, services for the disabled, canteen and other things, OK? So what happens is that we go and make a statement about what has been done and then it goes into the general report. There is no specific report just for the disabled..."(Witness 4, employee Roma Tre).

The situation at the Tor Vergata university is no different, even though there are mechanisms for assessing the quality of services, which, however, are necessarily incomplete, as they do not voluntarily take into account the opinion of real users.

Witness 6 (employee Tor Vergata): 'Honestly I have never heard of it, I don't know if Caris does anything on its own, maybe sending out some questionnaires, but I don't know. As a tutor, I have never heard of it.'

Witness 8 (top position Tor Vergata): "I don't know what you mean, so look, I can take up the suggestion to put some kind of anonymous questionnaire, sometimes we did it [...] yes, quality assessment core... I think these are compulsory, so they should all answer yes...".

Witness 10 (top position Tor Vergata): "I don't think it exists specifically for our students, it wasn't, I mean it was planned, but I don't think it was activated, not by us [...] that is, if you mean the data of the quality assessment core... it's management data that the core does, that is, there is an office called the Evaluation Core, they ask us for data, we don't evaluate the student in relation to the service we provide, no, that's not it, it's data that we are asked for. How many students are there, how many interventions we have done in favour of students during the year, that yes, we are always asked for that."

Witness 11 (Tor Vergata employee): "the survey from our nucleus takes place annually, we are asked for both the management report on the type of activities we do and have done in the previous year, and on the number of interventions made [...] since we do not have a system for surveying the quality of our services for our students, we have not gone to so much trouble, because we already have so much work to do".

Regarding the issue of 'listening spaces', the respondents bring out the following evidence: "No, there's not a specific space where they can talk about the services, unless they talk about it with us'. (Witness 2, employee Sapienza)

"It is not systematic in the sense that it is not labelled as a listening space "if you want to come and talk to us and tell us your opinion". It is a space, that is, all our services before giving, listen to the students' requests" (Witness 7, top position Sapienza).

Another testimony that may fall into the 'idealists' category recognizes the service provided as a listening space without, however, indicating an institutionalized window within it, as can be read below: "For better or for worse, we always try to find a solution and improve. So, I would actually see listening spaces in the disability sector [...] the listening space is the counter's duty hours [...], as far as I am concerned, if you ask me for an institutional listening moment, it is the sector' (Witness 5, employee Sapienza).

Witness 4 (employee Roma Tre) repeats the same concept, mentioning, as can be read from the following excerpt, some offices of the university "Roma Tre ", but, once again, not a specific space where students are free to express their opinion: "So, there is no specific office. But they can go to the URP, they can go to the student representative, they can go to our office. But no, they don't have a defined space where they can go and say, "we can do this, this and this". They can do it directly through us, but no, there is no specific service [...]" (Witness 4, employee Roma Tre)

The respondents at Tor Vergata were also asked to express their opinion on the presence/absence of institutionalized listening spaces within the relations sector for students with disabilities and with SLD, the following testimonies are given below.

Witness 8 (top position Tor Vergata): "the problem within the CARIS counter is that there is no listening window to say "from Monday at 12 noon you can tell me if tot service has not been provided"[...] but if it happens that something has not gone well, very rarely, then they come to me [...]"

Witness 11 (employee Tor Vergata): "So, I'm not aware of it, but most probably the students have a self-managed space among themselves [...], it's a space that could be implemented".

Key Informants and Concept of Inclusion between Questions and Evidences

The last theme investigated in the interviews, which is the subject of the present discussion, took the form of a practical attempt to ask our key-informants for their personal definition of the concept of university inclusion, of which the salient excerpts will be reported.

Inclusion, by way of example, is conceived by the first interviewee as something extremely distant, in fact we read: "Distant. Objectively, I understood it in a generic sense. Within the university, and I am sorry to remain anonymous, but those who know me know that I speak the truth, I believe that great strides have been made. Perhaps, however, it is the smaller ones that are most needed, which are taking a little too long as far as my concept of celerity is concerned. But if, on the other hand, we expand outwards, I believe it is more than far, I have been generous. I believe that there has been a regression over the years because I find that everything that has been done started in the 1990s and it seems to me that at some point it came to a standstill. If the trend of growth in accessibility had increased, I believe we would not be talking about this today. (Witness 1, Top position)

"Inclusion is a [...] term now emblazoned, it can be said, somewhat pleonastic for how much it is now thrown up by anyone in any situation", Inclusion means "Swimming all in the same sea. Swimming all together. [...]" In the sense that no one excluded, no one out. [...]. It depends only on us, on our will' (Witness 2, employee).

"Inclusion is for everyone, it is not for one category of people, making a university inclusive means making it inclusive for everyone, that is, feeling free, welcomed and not discriminated" (Witness 3, top position).

"The difference is also made by the disabled student, sometimes disabled students do not want to be included, it happens, they want to be different from others and treated differently from others" and "many times different terminologies are used because they are more appropriate, you can call them whatever you want but it is always an issue that needs to be addressed and resolved..." (Witness 4, employee).

"I think inclusion needs to be free as a definition. This is because inclusion does not speak, it does not have a face, inclusion belongs to everyone, [...]. We make mistakes where we go and coin it to someone or attach it to something. We cannot think that inclusion is only for the disabled' (Witness 5, employee).

"It is participation, in the sense that inclusion is there when one actively participates, but it is something a bit uncomfortable to say [...] I have seen very little inclusion" and "one always remains a bit separated from the others, this is true, it almost creates that situation in which if we are all in a classroom for study, the other students from the faculty who come leave and this is bad, [...] it's a world of its own' and 'it would take a bit more communication, also with the lower levels, "what do you want to do? Because, for example, initiatives such as the wheelchair day were not taken well' (Witness 6, employee).

"True inclusion goes through the fact that we have passed the stage where to close a gap we have to give an advantage. And we all start from the same level. This is for me the concept of inclusion, the fact that differences are only differences and not inequalities, [...] they are an enrichment instead of a limitation' (Witness 7, top position).

"Inclusion comes from listening, many things come from listening to others, not just taking and writing data on paper with a pen ... then we all need to be included, that's the point, we all have a disability, a slowdown [...]" and "I would say it is an act of care, an act of love [...] it has to be done for everyone, not just for those who belong to a legally protected category" (Witness 8, top position).

"To include means to be part, so to help people to be part of a system by not feeling isolated, different, bullied, looked down upon. That is, to be part of a system like all the elements" (Witness 9, employee).

"Inclusion, at least as I experience it in my work but also in life, is to look at everyone with the same eyes [...] for me it's like that, it's to give everyone the opportunity to express themselves to the best of their ability" (Witness 10, top position).

"Inclusion. I understand it as the ability not to highlight difference. In the sense of no longer perceiving the difference of people. [...] It sounds the easiest of things to say, but it is the most difficult to implement, because it must not be a practice, it must be a mental disposition [...] it must take root in everyone's consciousness..." (Witness 11, employee).

The last respondent refers to the definition of inclusion as a process, found in the literature, but enriched by the human dimension: "Look, my personal one, but it also derives from my training, and also from my profession and this job, it is the one that defines inclusion as a process that never ends and that has as a priority task to eliminate barriers progressively [...] and also of course to introduce in a permanent and progressive way, the facilitators. [...] therefore eliminating barriers, in-creasing facilitators, in the sense of fighting discrimination, inequality, and therefore this is the affirmation of fundamental human rights and this is inclusion and then it is not a person, it is a system that must take charge, and everyone must be equally motivated and empowered, [...] in the centre is the student with his characteristics, his needs, whatever they may be, we are all equal and we are all different" (Witness 12, top position)

To conclude the focus on the common sense of the key-informants, what is remarkable is that in some excerpts, on the one hand, reference is made to an over-used concept of inclusion, in which everything is included, without referring to the individual dimension, on the other hand, responsibility is placed on the person with disabilities as an active part of the implementation of the inclusive process, but there is no reference at all to the sphere of rights. This brings us back to the first testimony that, while recognizing the steps forward that have been taken within the roman universities, considers inclusion as a goal that is still a long way from being achieved.

4. Conclusion

In light of the material presented, the preliminary results of the study suggest that, in considering the provision of services for students with disabilities and SLDs, one must necessarily take into account the subject as a whole, where "the very vision of disability, illness or health, is oriented towards a systemic perspective, considering the process of disability or illness a di- nomic process" (Fiocco and Martinati 2002, p. 193). Among the quality criteria that must be taken into account in the design of services are: participation (active involvement of the user in the definition of the intervention objectives); customization (adaptation to

the needs of the user); accessibility (full use of the service offered, with particular regard to reaching the physical location where the service is located). These criteria form the basis of the model of the so-called 'service quality tree' (Department of Public Administration 1995), which was developed to implement public service improvement. From this perspective, in fact, it is the awareness of the existence of a service that determines the demand-need and it is the supply that triggers the demand as a specific need. For this reason, "unexpressed demands or demands that are not channeled towards the service, which therefore are not reflected in the service offer, act as frustrated needs (independently of the awareness of the subject)" (Fiocco and Martinati 2002, p. 216). The dynamics of intervention should therefore rebalance the demand and supply of services, i.e. promote an integrated service for the person considered in his or her individuality. The construction of the quality of services, therefore, takes place through specific interventions on both organization and behavior, involving both staff and students with disabilities and SLDs in the upgrading project. It is precisely in this perspective, in fact, that an added value is recognized in listening to the voices of students with disabilities and SLDs and of service staff, in order to produce a concrete proposal to improve the performance of the universities, actively involving them, as privileged witnesses of the services they use and the relational dynamics in which they are immersed. Therefore, the ultimate aim is to draw up intervention guidelines for the promotion of active social inclusion policies that should, as emerges from a first reading of the empirical material presented, provide a space for the evaluation of the service offered (Palumbo, 2002) that is not merely procedural but takes into account the experiences of the students to whom these services are addressed directly, so that the evaluation is "truly" pluralistic (Stame 2016).

5. References

- Albano, R. (2008). *La scelta dei casi nell'inchiesta campionaria*. Carocci Editore.
- Bolt, D. & Penketh, C. (2016). *Disability, Avoidance and the Academy: Challenging Resistance*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Borgonovi, E., Comellini, F. A., Ferrucci, F., Mason, L., Migliaccio, G., Scaletta, A., e Tanucci, G. (2022). *Rapporto ANVUR: Gli studenti con disabilità e DSA nelle università italiane. Una risorsa da valorizzare*. ANVUR. <https://www.anvur.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Gli-studenti-con-disabilita%CC%80-e-DSA-nelle-universita%CC%80-italiane-Una-risorsa-da-valorizzare-ANVUR.pdf>
- Campanini, A., (Ed.). (2013). *Nuovo dizionario di servizio sociale*. Carocci editore.
- Censis (2017). *51° Rapporto sulla situazione sociale del paese*. Franco Angeli. <https://www.censis.it/rapporto-annuale/51%20B0-rapporto-sulla-situazione-sociale-del-paese2017>
- Chiang, E. S. (2019). Disability cultural centers: How colleges can move beyond access to inclusion. *Disability & Society*, 35(7), 1183–1188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.1679536>
- Corbetta, P. (1999). *Metodologia e tecniche della ricerca sociale*. Il Mulino.
- Corrao, S. (2000). *Il focus group*. Franco Angeli.
- Di Franco, G. (2011). *Tecniche e modelli di analisi multivariata*. Franco Angeli.
- Dipartimento della funzione pubblica (1995). *Cento progetti al servizio dei cittadini. Come migliorare gli uffici pubblici*. Roma.
- Fiocco, P. M. e Martinati, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Qualità sociale dei servizi sociali*. Franco Angeli.
- Gianturco, G. (2005). *L'intervista qualitativa. Dal discorso al testo scritto*. Guerini Scientifica.
- L. n. 17/1999. *Integrazione e modifica della legge-quadro 5 febbraio 1992, n. 104, per l'assistenza, l'integrazione sociale e i diritti delle persone handicappate* (G. U. n. 26 del 2 febbraio 1999).
- Liani, S. e Martire, F. (2017). *Pretest. Un approccio cognitivo*. Franco Angeli.
- Marradi, A. (1988). *Costruire il dato. Sulle tecniche di raccolta delle informazioni nelle scienze sociali*. Franco Angeli.
- Marradi, A. (2007). *Metodologia delle scienze sociali*. Il Mulino.
- Mauceri, S. (2017). L'avvento dell'era dei mixed methods. Nuovo paradigma o deadline di un dibattito?. *Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale*, 113(2), 39-61. <https://doi.org/10.3280/SR2017-113002>
- Moriña, A. (2017). Inclusive education in higher education: challenges and opportunities. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(1), 3-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1254964>

- Moriña A. (2019). The keys to learning for university students with disabilities: Motivation, emotion and faculty-student relationships. *PloS One*, 14(5): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215249>
- Merton, R. K., & Kendall, P. L. (1946). The Focused Interview. *American Journal of Sociology*, 51, 541-557. <https://doi.org/10.1086/219886>
- Oliver, M., & Barnes, C. (2010). Disability studies, disabled people and the struggle for inclusion. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31(5), 547-560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2010.500088>
- Palumbo, M. (2002). *Il processo di valutazione. Decidere, programmare, valutare*. Franco Angeli.
- Pavsic, R., e Pitrone, M. C. (2004). *Come conoscere opinioni e atteggiamenti*. Bonanno.
- Piccone Stella, S. (2003). *Esperienze multiculturali*. Carocci editore.
- Riddell, S. (2016). The inclusion of disabled students in higher education in Europe: Progress and challenges. *Centre for Research in Education Inclusion and Diversity, University of Edinburgh*. http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/creid/NewsEvents/64_i_TurinCNUDD_SR_Paper.pdf.
- Stame, N. (2016). *Valutazione pluralista*. Franco Angeli.
- UN (1948). *Dichiarazione universale dei diritti dell'uomo*.
- UN (2006). *Convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sui diritti delle persone con disabilità (CRPD)*.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest