

# Pro-social motivations among mid-career students in Barcelona

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Beyond Employability: Citizenship and Responsibility in  
Higher Education

**Aims of our research: “Los estudiantes  
ante la nueva reforma universitaria”  
I+D 2008-2011 [The students in front of  
new university reform].**

- Context: Bologna process, changes in teaching and learning methodologies.
- Quantitative and qualitative data combination.
- Main question: What factors have more influence on the academic results obtained by university students?
- To pay attention to more sociological issues, such as social and academic integration, student identity construction, social motivations, social capital, etc.

## Our research

- The research we are carrying out (r+d+i of the Ministry of Education) titled *Los estudiantes ante la nueva reforma universitaria* (Students coping with new university reform), 2008-2011 period.
- We are analysing 10 Bachelors at 4 Catalan public universities in the metropolitan region of Barcelona.
- Analysis of the context: documental revision, interviews to staff (deans, degree coordinators...).
- We did 8 student interviews on each of the Bachelors (80 interviews in total) on 2009 and 867 questionnaires to mid-career students on November 2010- January 2011.

## Sample

Areas of knowledge	
Arts	Translation and Interpretation (n=102) Humanities (n=61)
Social sciences	Social Education (n=90) Business Studies (n=128)
Health	Nursing (n=138) Pharmacy (n=78)
Sciences	Biosciences (n=48) Chemistry (n=94)
Engineering	Architecture (n=77) Telecommunications Engineering (n=51)

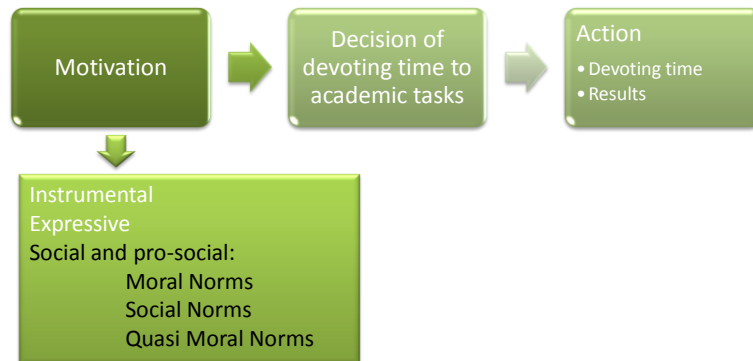
Sample = 867 students

### **Conceptual reference: students debt feeling towards their parents**

Delia Langa (2004) develops the concept of debt feeling towards one's parents as a determinant factor on the experience and strategies of the university students.

We take that concept together with other possible debt feelings (towards society) and normative assumptions developing a sense of social responsibility.

### **Motivation in the study process**



## Social motivations and norms

- **Moral Norms:** It is based on “everyday Kantianism” (do what would be best if everyone did the same) and on feeling guilty when there is a transgression. They are unconditional norms.
- **Social Norms and Quasi-Moral Norms:** They are based on concepts of *approbativeness* and shamefulness. They are conditional on other agents action.

Jon Elster (2007)

## Operationalization

- Often is not possible to distinguish the kind of norm (social, moral or quasi-moral) only referring to its content.
- So Elster himself stresses the differences referring to the *interlocutors* of the action. We operationalize the norms according to this distinction:
  - Moral Norm: nobody can see what I’m doing but me,
  - Social Norm: other people can see us and some consequences are derived,
  - Quasi-Moral Norm: we can observe other people, they become a model and I can imagine what would they think if they saw me.

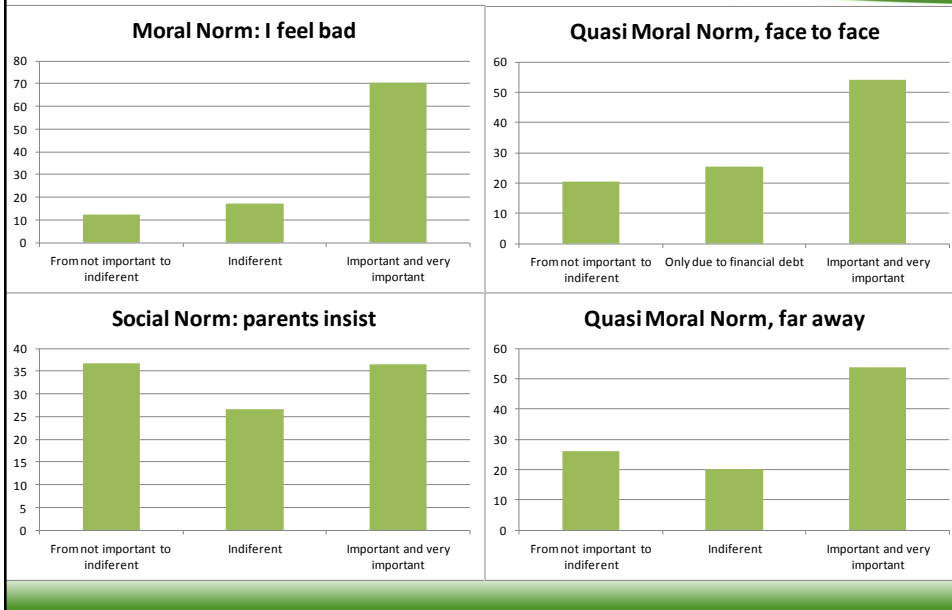
## Indicators

- Moral Norm:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) **I feel bad** if I don't enough devote myself to my studies.
  - How do you define yourself as a student? (1-5 scale) I always have given the **most effort** to my studies.
- Social Norm:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) My **parents insist** on me making this effort.
- Quasi-Moral Norm:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) The people **I value** consider this is my duty and/or they are **proud** of me.
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) My **parents finance** one part/all of my studies.
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) **Society finance** one part of my studies.
  - If you are still dependent on your parents, what do you think about it? 1. Nowadays, funding the offspring' studies is almost a **duty**. 2. They can pay and they are **happy** to do it. 3. I feel **I owe them something** because they are making an effort.

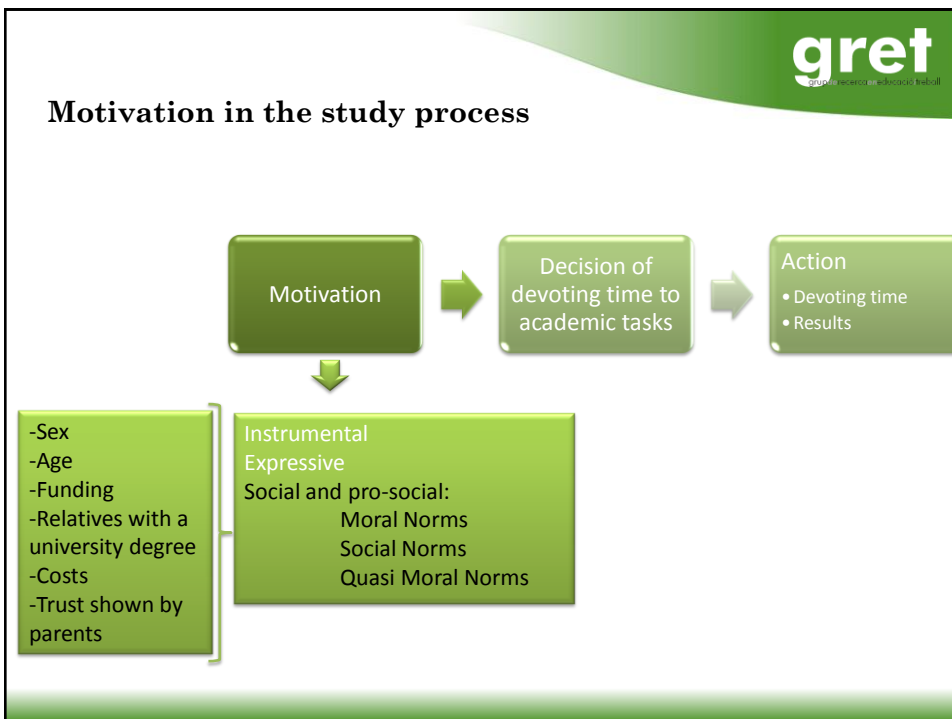
## Refined indicators

- Moral Norm:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) **I feel bad** if I don't enough devote myself to my studies.
  - How do you define yourself as a student? (1-5 scale) I always have given the **most effort** to my studies.
- Social Norm:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) My **parents insist** on me making this effort.
- Quasi-Moral Norm, face to face:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) The **people I value** consider this is my duty and/or they are **proud** of me.
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) My **parents finance** one part/all of my studies.
- Quasi-Moral Norm, far away:
  - How important is the following aspect to seriously devote yourself to studying? (1-5 scale) **Society finance** one part of my studies.
  - If you are still dependent on your parents, what do you think about it? 1. Nowadays, funding the offspring' studies is almost a **duty**. 2. They can pay and they are **happy** to do it. 3. I feel **I owe them something** because they are making an effort.

## Results: norms

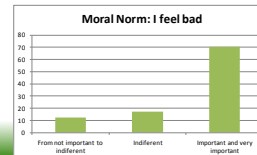


## Motivation in the study process



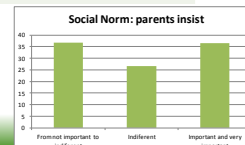
## Profile of Moral Norm

More Moral Norm among:	Less Moral Norm among:
Pharmacy; Translation and Interpretation	Social Education; Telecommunications Engineering
8-8.99 entrance mark (high mark)	
Women	
19-22 years old	
	No parents finance help
	Student working during academic year
He/She feels more privileged than the young already working	
All of his/her friends are university students	



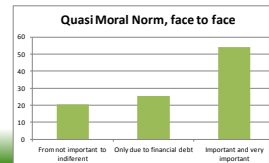
## Profile of Social Norm

More Social Norm among:	Less Social Norm among:
Pharmacy; Chemistry	Social Education
5-5.99 entrance mark (low mark)	
19-22 years old	27-35 years old
Parents finance (partially or totally)	No parents finance help
	Student works during the course
Most relatives have university degrees	Almost no relatives at the university
He/She feels more privileged than the young already working	
	Parents valued the same a good job than studying



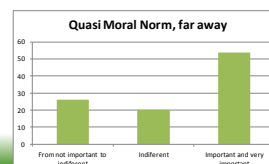
## Profile of Quasi-Moral Norm: face to face

More QMN face to face among:	Less QMN face to face among:
Pharmacy	Social Education
5-5.99 entrance mark (low mark)	
19-22 years old	27-35 years old
Parents finance (partially or totally)	No parents finance help
Student doesn't work during the academic course	Student works during the academic course
He/She feels more privileged than the young already working	
	Parents did prefer better him/her working than studying



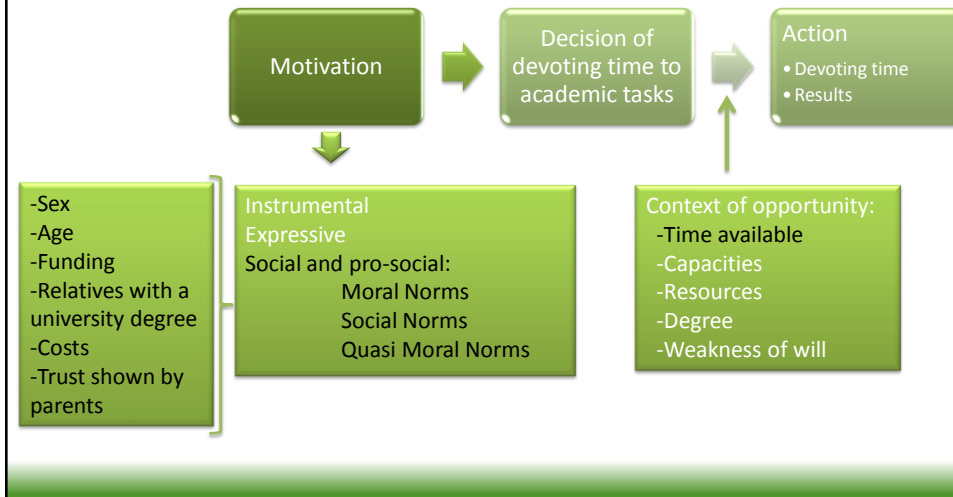
## Profile of Quasi-Moral Norm: far away

More QMN far away among:	Less QMN far away among:
Architecture	
Financing through grant	Not financing through grant
Working during academic vacations	
Some relatives have university degrees	Most relatives have university degrees





## Motivation in the study process



## Moral Norm consequences

- The degree of Moral Norm has an influence on class attendance (raising it), specially among full-time students.
- The more MN a student shows, the more delay in the progress of his/her studies... (!?) Does the relation work in the opposite direction?

## Social Norm consequences

- The Social Norm doesn't present any influence on class attendance, except for those who work part-time.
- The more SN among students, the more delay in courses progression... (!?) Again: Does the relation work in the opposite direction?

## Quasi-Moral Norm, face to face, consequences

- High degrees of QMNftf increments the attendance to all the lectures. But among the students responding only to a financial debt towards their parents, it decreases to only the half and less attended lessons.
- The more QMNftf among students, the more delay in courses progression... (!?) Yet again: Does the relation work in the opposite direction?

## Quasi-Moral Norm, far away, consequences

- High degrees of QMNfa increments the attendance to all the lectures among the full-time students; and it attains a 75% attendance among the full-time workers.
- There is no relation between QMNfa and delaying the progression through studies.

## Conclusions

- Students profile:
  - High degrees of Moral Norms and Quasi-Moral Norms can be found among students.
  - Differences founded are most explained by financial issues: studies cost, having a grant, parental funding, etc.; or, on the contrary, I do it all alone, I study without any support by anyone or any kind.
  - Some personality aspects seem to appear when Moral Norm is considered.
- Norms influencing results:
  - Norms, specially Moral and Quasi-Moral, move the students to better fulfill their obligations (measured as lectures attendance); but this is also conditioned by the actual possibilities of attending them (combination of studies and work).
  - Norms seem to be triggered by the results obtained, not be triggering those results.

Thank you!

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**Profile of Moral Norm (percentages)**

More Moral Norm among:	Less Moral Norm among:
Pharmacy (much: 81/69%); Translation and Interpretation (much: 78/69%)	Social Education (little: 24/13%); Telecommunications Engineering (much: 56/69%)
8-8.99 entrance mark (very high mark) (much: 80/71%)	
Women (much: 74/70%)	
19-22 years old (much: 75/70%)	
	No parents finance help (little: 20/13%)
	Student working during the academic year (little: 17/13%)
He/She feels more privileged than the young already working (much: 75/70%)	
All of his/her friends are university students (much: 83/70%)	



## Profile of Social Norm (percentages)

More Social Norm among:	Less Social Norm among:
Pharmacy (much: 46/35%); Chemistry (much: 45/35%)	Social Education (little: 54/38%)
5-5.99 entrance mark (low mark) (much: 50/38%)	
19-22 years old (much: 40/37%)	27-35 years old (little: 51/37%)
Parents finance (partially or totally) (much: 42/37%)	No parents finance help (Little: 55/36%)
	Student works during the academic year (little: 52/36%)
Most relatives have university degrees (much: 46/37%)	Almost no relatives at the university (little: 44/37%)
He/She feels more privileged than the young already working (much: 42/37%)	
	Parents valued the same a good job than studying (little: 57/37%)



## Profile of Quasi-Moral Norm: face to face (percentages)

More QMN face to face among:	Less QMN face to face among:
Pharmacy (much: 63/52%)	Social Education (little: 32/20%)
5-5.99 entrance mark (low mark) (much: 63/52%)	
19-22 years old (much: 58/54%)	27-35 years old (little: 54/20%)
Parents finance (partially or totally) (much: 58/54%)	No parents finance help (little: 51/20%)
Student doesn't work during the academic course (much: 57/54%)	Student works during the academic course (little: 41/20%)
He/She feels more privileged than the young already working (much: 59/54%)	
	Parents did prefer better him/her working than studying (little: 43/21%)



**Profile of Quasi-Moral Norm:  
 far away (percentages)**

More QMN far away among:	Less QMN far away among:
Architecture (much: 66/54%)	
Financing through grant (much: 69/54%)	Not financing through grant (little: 31/26%)
Working during academic vacations (much: 63/54%)	
Some relatives have university degrees (much: 59/54%)	Most relatives have university degrees (much: 48/54%)

