



# Social Work Education and Training for Professional Values

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## ABSTRACT

This study results from the question ‘is the process of social work education and training as a secondary socialization of young adults effective to train students to become social workers aligned to the ethical values of Social Work, especially if personal values differ from those of the profession?’

It is a study in progress, based on a case study (ISSSL), intending to extend in time with diachronic studies and enlargement of the sample with the involvement of other national and foreign universities.

Is anchored on the concept of social orientations and in the five ideal-type modalities that represent them: autonomy, independency, resistance, heteronomy and exclusion (Casanova, 2004).

The preliminary results allow to conclude that the process of social work education and training, as a secondary socialization of young adults to professional values, is effective, since almost all the students stand at the end of the training in the ideal-type of autonomy, which is the modality that better incorporate the main values of the profession and revel the best practices (Sousa 2015).

## INTRODUCTION

Social Work values and ethics is one of the nine sets of standards detailed in the Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession, adopted at the General Assemblies of International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Workers, Adelaide, Australia, in 2004. This Global Standards underlined the necessity of the recognition that social work values, ethics and principles are the core components of the profession.

The role of Social Work Schools is understood as the training and qualification, through teaching and research activities, of critical and competent social workers, linked to the defense and promotion of human rights (Sousa, 2015).

The process of social work education and training is so understood as a secondary socialization of young adults to professional values that is expected to result in the linkage to a conceptual model of social work based on the competencies and potentialities of clients, and on strengthening the idea of citizen holding rights and duties, in which participation is simultaneously a right and a duty, giving a new meaning to the right to social utility (FITOUSSI & ROSANVALLON, 1997: 139). In other words, the idea of client as a citizen, political subject, an actor of solidarity and not merely an object of care; a resource person, for *himself*, for his family, for his community.

In addition, students are expected to become social workers who engage in active, purposeful professional citizenship.

Education and training to adopt professional values, especially if they diverge from the personal values, it’s a sensitive matter, so far little studied.

This exploratory study aimed to contribute to this challenge.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This exploratory study aimed to understand the process of social work education and training, as a process of socialization of young adults and particularly:

- know to what extent the formative process consolidated or altered the social orientations of the students, as "more or less naturalized cultural traits that can function as a matrix of behaviors and ideas" (Casanova, 2004);
- assess the degree of articulation between personal and professional values.

Is anchored on the concept of social orientations and in its two analytical dimensions: (i) the orientation on social inequality, distinguishing nonconformity guidelines, in which respondents assess social inequality as not being inevitable, and in conformity, in which respondents assess social inequality as inevitable; (ii) and the orientation related to action, distinguishing proactive orientations in which respondents make a positive assessment of the social consequence of goal-based action and non-proactive where respondents disbelieve in the social consequences of such action (CASANOVA, 2004).

As for the five ideal-type modalities, the first two translate a certain polarization and the following three, although they present some qualitative differences between them, correspond to intermediate stages between the first two:

- exclusion – corresponding to respondents who did not respond to the questions whose structuring is clearly associated with social conditions characterized by extreme deprivation of resources, both economic and scholar, and which manifests social reflexivity and societal involvement residual or null;
- autonomy – associated with the proactive egalitarian modality, in which culminate processes of self-determination and extended autonomy, intensely involved in the relations of power, in the institutions and in the determination of social relations;
- independency - related to proactive non-egalitarian modality;
- resistance - related to the non-proactive egalitarian modality;
- heteronomy - articulated to non-egalitarian and non-proactive modality.

## METHOD OF RESEARCH

This is a longitudinal exploratory study, of quantitative nature.

In this 1st phase based on a synchronic case study (ISSSL), intending to extend in time with diachronic studies and enlargement of the sample with the involvement of other national and foreign universities (2nd phase).

The collect of empirical data was carried out through a questionnaire survey, applied to the students of the 3 years of the course, according to the following criteria: at the beginning of the course (1st year); at the end of the 2nd year (before the experiential training); at the end of the course (3rd year).

Data analysis was performed using statistical treatment and the Content Analysis technique.

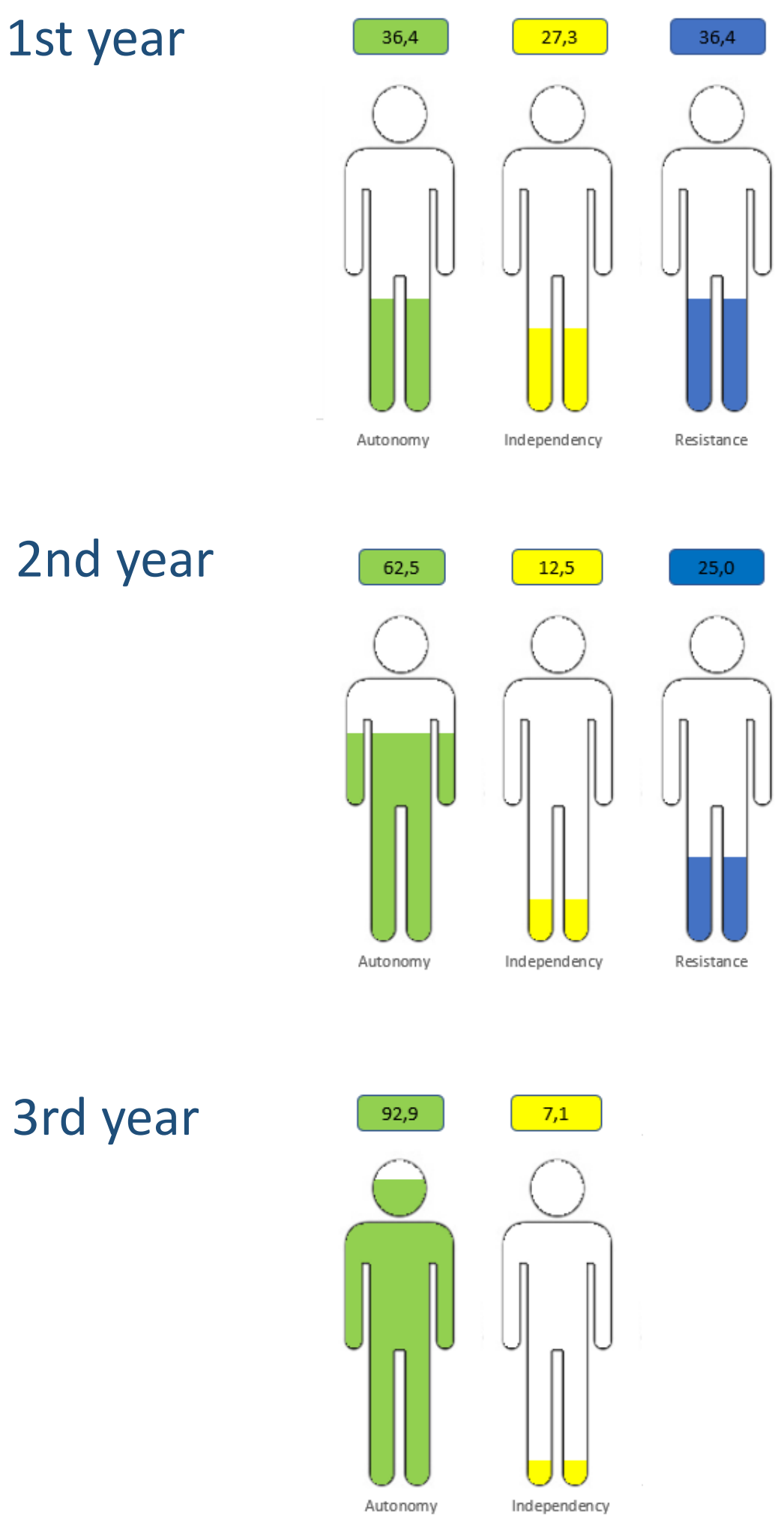
## RESULTS

Only three of the five ideal-type modalities are presents in the sample:

- autonomy;
- independency;
- resistance.

Concerning the beginning of Social Work education process, some similarity was found in the distribution of ideal-type, particularly in relation to the most representative one - that of the proactive egalitarians (autonomy) - found by CASANOVA (2014) for the Portuguese population in general (37.1%).

As can be seen, over the 3 years of training, this group increases significantly reaching at the end of the process almost 100%.



These results seem to suggest that the cultural traits that support social work values and practices, such as nonconformity with inequality and proactivity, were acquired or reinforced during the training.

## CONCLUSION

The preliminary results allow to conclude that, in this case, the process of social work education and training, as a secondary socialization of young adults to professional values, is effective, since almost all the students stand, at the end of the training, in the ideal-type of autonomy, which is the one that better incorporate the main values of the profession and revel the best practices (Sousa 2015).

Considering the relevance of this matter to the academic community and profession of Social Work, to the clients and society in general, it is important to extend the research with diachronic studies and the involvement of other national and foreign universities.

Furthermore, it is equally important to conduct follow-up studies to assess the extent to which these social orientations as result of the social work education and training are stable and long-lasting.

## REFERENCES

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