



Acta de investigación psicológica

ISSN: 2007-4832

ISSN: 2007-4719

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Psicología

Dutra-Thomé, Luciana; Koller, Silvia Helena  
Emerging Adulthood Features in Brazilians from Differing Socioeconomic Status  
Acta de investigación psicológica, vol. 9, no. 3, 2019, pp. 56-66  
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Psicología

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22201/fpsi.20074719e.2019.3.322>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=358971648006>

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## Emerging Adulthood Features in Brazilians from Differing Socioeconomic Status

### *Características de la Adulthood Emergente en Brasileños de Diferentes Niveles Socioeconómicos*

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Received September 10, 2019; Accepted November 5, 2019

#### Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating emerging adulthood features in Brazilians from low and high socio-economic statuses (SEs). The sample was 547 Southern Brazilians; residents in the urban context, between 18 and 29 years old (Md = 22 years; IQR = 7), 64.2% females. From this sample, 13 participants were randomly selected to participate on the qualitative study. Instruments were the Brazilian Version of the Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood, a Semi-structured interview, and the variable socioeconomic status (SES) from the Brazilian Adolescence and Youth Questionnaire. Analysis from Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) indicated no associations between SES and IDEA (*Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood*) dimensions. Deductive thematic analysis revealed the presence of emerging adulthood features in Brazil (general Kappa = .83) and that economic disparities affected youth developmental trajectories. High SES individuals were more likely to experience EA features according to what has been observed in industrialized countries. Low SES individuals presented a divergent trend, because their opportunities to live a period of identity exploration would happen after another-focused period. The transition to adulthood considered as a nonlinear process influenced by the socioeconomic context is discussed.

**Keywords:** Emerging Adulthood, Socioeconomic Status, Context, Thematic Analysis, Human Development

#### Resumen

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar las características emergentes de la edad adulta en brasileños de estados socioeconómicos (SES) bajos y altos. La muestra fue de 547 brasileños del sur; residentes en el contexto urbano, entre 18 y 29 años (Md = 22 años; IQR = 7), 64.2% mujeres. De esta muestra, 13 participantes fueron seleccionados al azar para participar en el estudio cualitativo. Los instrumentos fueron la versión brasileña del Inventario de dimensiones de la adultez emergente, una entrevista semiestructurada y el estatus socioeconómico variable (SES) del Cuestionario brasileño de adolescentes y jóvenes. El análisis del modelado de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM) no indicó asociaciones entre las dimensiones SES e IDEA (Inventario de Dimensiones de Adultez Emergente; IDEA, *Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood*). El análisis temático

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deductivo reveló la presencia de características emergentes de la edad adulta en Brasil (general Kappa = .83) y que las disparidades económicas afectaron las trayectorias de desarrollo de los jóvenes. Los individuos con un Nivel Socio-Económico (NSE) más alto tenían más probabilidades de experimentar características Emergentes de la Edad (EA) de acuerdo con lo observado en los países industrializados. Los individuos con bajo NSE presentaron una tendencia divergente, porque sus oportunidades de vivir un período de exploración de identidad ocurrirían después de un período centrado en otro. Se discute la transición a la edad adulta considerada como un proceso no lineal influenciado por el contexto socioeconómico.

**Palabras Clave:** Adulthood Emergente, Estatus Socioeconómico, Contexto, Análisis Temático, Desarrollo Humano

The present study focuses on the transition to adulthood, having as background the Emerging Adulthood (EA) theory. EA emerged as a new perspective, updating some aspects of Erikson's Theory of Psychological Development (Erikson 1950, 1968) considering world's changes and its impact on the complex process of the transition to adulthood in industrialized countries. Particularly, the EA theory identified an extension of the psychosocial moratorium from adolescence to young adulthood, since society allows young individuals to explore their identity in different fields of their lives until their late twenties (Arnett, 2004; Demuth & Keller, 2011). EA is defined as the chronological period ranging from 18 to 29 years (Arnett, 2011) with five features: (1) Identity Exploration: people are moving towards making crucial choices in love and work, trying to integrate their interests and preferences with the opportunities available; (2) Instability: due to their inconstant experiences (e.g., in love and work) while exploring different possibilities; (3) Self-Focus: they have more opportunities for making decisions independently because they have fewer long term commitments (e.g., they are not married, they do not have a stable job); (4) Feeling in between: they feel neither entirely like adolescents nor entirely like adults and present characteristics of both life stages; and (5) possibilities, because no matter how their current lives are, they believe they will reach the lives they envision (Arnett, 2004, 2011). In the present study, we included the "Other-Focused" dimension, which would indicate individual's commitment to others and responsibilities, characteristics associated with reaching adulthood and opposite to the EA feature Self-focus (Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2007).

Considering EA within the Brazilian context, where socioeconomic disparities greatly affect young individuals' developmental processes, the question remaining is whether EA is a relevant concept for all segments of the population considering their socioeconomic status (SES). Taking into account this perspective we highlight that EA is affected by individuals' social and cultural background, in particular socioeconomic aspects (Arnett & Tanner, 2011). However, most studies have been conducted with college samples in industrialized countries and it is not clear how EA occurs in more disadvantaged backgrounds. Considering that, the present research aims to investigate EA in college and non-college Brazilians from differing SESs, residents in the urban context.

### **The Course towards Adulthood around the World and in Brazil**

There is evidence of the existence of EA in diverse countries. However, the manifestation of EA is always affected by contextual specificities. In Turkey, different from their peers in industrialized societies, emerging adults are less self-focused because they always consult their family, institutions, and peers to make decisions (Atak & Çok, 2008). In India, despite a growing high-tech economy leading young people to interact strongly with the global economy, they still value the arranged marriage as an option, following their cultural tradition (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2007). In China, the Confucianism influences emerging adults, and they are oriented towards family's compliance and filial piety. They place high importance, for instance, to take care of their families, and having consideration for others (Zhong & Arnett, 2014). In Argentina emerging adults have a strong tie

with their family and they did not consider EA as the age for leaving home (Facio, Resett, Micocci, & Mis-trorigo, 2007). In Brazil, the transition to adulthood is affected by the phenomenon of familism, such as in other Latin and Asian countries (Facio et al., 2007; Zhong & Arnett, 2014); as well as by socioeconomic aspects (Dutra-Thomé & Koller, 2014). Brazilians present two modalities of transition to adulthood: (a) traditional model, composed of individuals who leave the parental home and become house holders (with or without love partners and kids), already concluded school and are working; (b) partial model, composed of individuals who already left school, are working, but still cohabit with their parents. The partial model reflects, on one hand, that some individuals face financial difficulties to become house holders due to low salaries. On the other hand, for those who choose to live with their parents despite having their financial independence, this option may reflect strong family tights as well as that, for those individuals, reaching “adulthood” is not related to leaving the parental house (Camarano, Mello, Pasinato, & Kanso, 2004).

As reflected by economic disparities in Brazil, divergent transitions to adulthood trajectories may exist among young individuals from differing SESs. Despite Brazil and U.S. presenting quite similar Gini<sup>2</sup> indexes in 2011 (0.511 and 0.477, respectively; Lara, 2013), in the U.S., Arnett (2004, 2006, 2011) argued that low-SES individuals would also experience EA, because they try different possibilities in love and work, face instability, and present high hopes for the future. The difference is that low-SES individuals might enter adulthood one or two years earlier in comparison with those from a higher-SES. Thus, SES level seems to introduce differences on the process of EA that is living with some dissimilar characteristics regarding education and entrance in job market. While high SES young people are making educational changes, low SES young people are making job changes (Arnett, 2006). However, in Brazil, the historical mark of economic inequality may lead young individuals to live divergent

trajectories towards adulthood. A recent Brazilian study comparing young individuals from low and high SESs within the urban context identified that low SES individuals assumed adult roles earlier (e.g.: working to assist with the household income, marriage/cohabitation and living alone). They also reported higher frequencies of the perception of having already reached adulthood when compared to the young people of high SES. Nevertheless, despite the economic factor having influenced the transition to adulthood of these groups, more than 50% of the total sample reported perceiving themselves as in-between adolescence and adulthood, what could indicate the presence of EA in the both SES groups (Dutra-Thomé & Koller, 2014). Based on that we can say that it is not clear whether economics differences between low and high SESs Brazilians affects their transition to adulthood.

Aiming at clarifying this problem, the general objective of this research was to investigate the transition to adulthood in Brazilians from low and high SESs. The quantitative study aimed to investigate the association between SES and the five EA features (Arnett, 2004, 2011) and its counterpart “Other-focused” (Reifman et al., 2007). The qualitative study aimed to investigate the EA features in Brazilians from differing SESs discourses.

The study’s hypothesis (quantitative phase) were:

1. Lower SES will be associated with lower mean scores of the IDEA dimensions “Identity Exploration” and “Possibilities”, and higher mean scores of the “Other-focus”, considering their tendency to assume adult roles earlier in order to help with their family income and/or take care autonomously of their financial lives; The study’s expectations (qualitative phase) were:
2. Low SES participants will be more “other-focused” for the reasons explained on the study’s hypothesis;
3. High SES individuals will present a discourse oriented to their behavior of identity exploration, considering they may have more opportunities to live an extended psychosocial moratorium.

<sup>2</sup> Index of socioeconomic inequality

## Method

### *Design*

The present study used a mixed-method approach, which allowed acquiring a more comprehensive scenario about Brazilian transition to adulthood (Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegduzie, & Green, 2012). The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed us to access the EA phenomenon by two diverse strategies of data analysis (Bryman, 2006).

### *Participants*

The sample included 547 Southern Brazilians; residents in the urban context, between 18 and 29 years old ( $Md = 22$  years;  $IQR = 7$ ), 64.2% females, of low (35.5%) and high SES (64.5%). Individuals from varied SES were accessed in College and Non-College institutions: (a) two technology courses; (b) three universities; (c) two courses focused on preparing students of low SES for university entrance exams; and (d) two schools that work with young individuals and adults with limited or no previous education (e.g., people with difficulties in writing, reading, and solving basic math problems).

From this sample, 13 participants were randomly selected to participate on the qualitative study, following the SES criteria (high and low). Participants experiencing extreme poverty or extreme wealth were not recruited, in order to reach more tenuous socioeconomic influences in their transition to adulthood. We based this choice on the fact that the extension to adulthood is related with higher and medium educational and professional standards in industrialized and post-industrialized countries (Arnett, 2004; Blustein, 2006), a context less available to young individuals experiencing extreme poverty, with a per capita income lower than the Brazilian national minimum wage of USD 294.62.

### *Procedures*

For the quantitative study, the questionnaire and instruments were digitalized and applied by two methods: online (i.e., the participant was invited by e-mail to access an external website where the instruments

were available) and in-person (i.e., the participant completed the instruments in a lab with one researcher present). In both cases, the instruments were self-administered. The aims of the study and the research group were presented to the institutions. Those participants who took part in the in-person data collection signed the Institutional Terms of Agreement. Before the collection, the following aspects were described to the participants: the nature of the study, the confidentiality of the information shared, and the data analysis process. Next, the Informed Consent Form was read. In the institutions where the data collection was only performed virtually, a meeting with the potential participants was carried out, in which they were invited to participate in the study and, if interested, could register their email address on a list. In these cases, the Informed Consent Form was accessed from the online platform.

For the qualitative study, participants who answered the quantitative study questionnaire were informed that they would, eventually, be contacted to participate on a sequential part of the project, since the research group had their electronic contact information registered. Using our contacts data bank, we selected randomly 13 potential participants, who were contacted by e-mail and invited to contribute to the second study of the first author's PhD. It was not possible to gather all participants in the first contact, so we kept on randomly selecting and systematically sending invitations until we filled a minimum of six people in each group (low and high SESs). Participants interested in contributing to the study were then contacted by phone.

Three undergraduate psychology students were trained to develop the interviews. They were also trained in qualitative methods and participated in the process of developing the semi-structured interview. Afterwards, pilot interviews were applied and analyzed, and necessary changes were incorporated. Three new pilot interviews were then developed and filmed with a focus on improving interviewers' posture. Finally, the definitive interviews were carried out at the university or at participants' homes. All interviews were in Portuguese.



### Instruments

*The Brazilian Adolescence and Youth Questionnaire* (Second version; Dell’Aglío, Koller, Cerqueira-Santos, & Colaço, 2011), with 77 questions. For the purposes of this study, we selected specifically the variable SES, based on the socioeconomic classification from the Brazilian Association of Institutions of Market Research (Abipeme, 2008). This classification attributes scores for “domestic comfort items” (e.g. washing machine, freezer, and television) and the household’s level of education. In the present research, the criterion used to determine the head of household was the parent with the higher level of education. Varying from minimum 18 points to maximum 108 points, high SES in this study corresponds to scores above 58.

*Inventory of Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood* (IDEA, Reifman et al., 2007; Dutra-Thomé & Koller, 2017). IDEA subscales formed the group of dependent variables (DVs). The Brazilian version of IDEA presented 29 items divided into the following subscales (a) Identity Exploration (items 12, 24, 26, 27, and 28); (b) Experimentation/Possibilities (items 1, 2, 4); (c) Negativity/Instability (items 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 17, and 20); (d) Self-Focused (items 5, 7, 13, 15, 19, 22, 23, and 25); (e) Feeling In-Between (items 29, 30, 31, and 32), and (f) Other-Focused (items 14, and 18). For all subscales, the higher scores represent the higher sum of the construct of EA. In Brazil, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the six subscales ranged from .61 to .79, and the full-scale’s reliability was .80 (i.e., 29 items).

*Semi-structured interview.* The qualitative research questions presented: (a) a description of peer characteristics, which served as an indirect source of information about the participants - i.e., an analogy for how participants thought about and perceived lives (b) a life trajectory assessment, inviting participants to think about their lives some years ago, at the current moment, and in the coming years (c) a description of participant’s social network expectations (e.g., society, family, and peers), (d) work experiences, taking into account the central role of working in building participant’s independence, and (d) future perspectives, because EA has been described as a period of optimism (Arnett, 2011).

### Data Analysis

#### Quantitative study

To investigate if responses to IDEA questionnaire changed according to SES status bivariate analysis were performed followed by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique, using the software Mplus. The model contemplated IDEA’s dimensions estimated latent factors as dependent measures. In considering our model, values of the CFI and TLI equal to or higher than .90 represent an acceptable fit, and higher than .95 represent a good fit. Values of the RMSEA equal to or lower than .08 represent an acceptable fit, and lower than .05 represent a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

#### Qualitative study

To explore how young individuals from distinct SESs described their transition to adulthood qualitative interviews were conducted. Data was analyzed by thematic analysis. Themes were chosen according to research goals, not on quantity or prevalence of content in the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was applied consistently with a contextualist approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Tudge, 2008), which recognizes the individual’s process of making meaning as being influenced by the broader social context. The epistemology of the study was essentialist or realistic, i.e., considering motivations, experiences, and meanings to be theorized in a straightforward way. Because language was a source of articulating meaning and experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006), themes were grouped by thematic similarity.

The qualitative analysis was developed by a deductive (or “top down”) process, based upon the theoretical background of the EA perspective. Specifically, the five EA main features (Arnett, 2011) and their counterpart (Reifman et al., 2007) which composed IDEA scale comprised the themes of analysis: (a) Age of identity exploration, (b) Age of instability, (c) Self-focused age, (d) Age of feeling in-between, (e) Age of possibilities, and (f) Other-Focused. The analysis focused on participants’ collective experience of transition to adulthood. Cases were analyzed

horizontally, and each person's discourse was considered as an expression of the group experience.

The program NVivo (version 10) was used in the process of categorizing data. Initially, the first author read all the interviews in order to have a general view of all participants' experiences. The first author then selected paragraphs that expressed participants' personal experiences and opinions and coded them with respect to the six themes of analysis. Afterwards, one coder participated in the process of categorizing the data, which was selected based on their familiarity with topics related to youth and transition to adulthood using a guidance (see Table 1). The coder accessed the entire content of the interviews and was guided in analyzing the selected paragraphs and code them considering the six themes of analysis. The concordance coefficient among coders (Cohen's Kappa coefficient - K; Robson, 1995) reached levels of excellence, varying from 0.74 to 0.88, with general K of .83. A consensual discussion between coder and the first author was carried in the process of the K calculation. Subsequently, through the analysis of the six categories, the first author included SES as an aspect to be analyzed.

### Results and Discussion

Results indicated that SES was not associated with the mean scores of IDEA's dimensions. Bivariate analysis indicated a positive correlation between SES and the

IDEA's dimension Possibilities, however, the effect size was low ( $< .30$ ; see Table 2). Thus, the study's hypothesis that low SES would be associated with lower mean scores of "Identity Exploration" and "Possibilities", and higher mean scores of the "Other-focus" (Arnett, 2011; Galambos & Martínez, 2007) was not sustained by the proposed model, what may indicate that young individuals from both the low and high SES would experience EA (Arnett, 2004, 2006, 2011).

The qualitative study indicated the manifestation of EA's dimensions in participants' discourses (general K = of .83). The investigation also confirmed the study's expectation of a discourse towards an "other-focused" behavior in low SES participants. Low SES individuals are demanded to help with the family income and/or to manage demands of parenthood, what leads them to be Other-focused, just as defined in the qualitative study expectations.

"Just me and my mom live in the house, so I help her. I give money to her every month. She bought a washing machine 2 months ago, and I helped her to pay" (Interview 10, low SES, 18-24, male).

"No, I studied one semester at the College, but I didn't have money to continue. I needed to build a structure, and even at home I didn't have structure to study. I have a kid, I have my sister... then I didn't focus too much on my own life, I focused on them, at least until they have some directions in their lives,

**Table 1**  
*Coder's Guidance for Categorizing Interviews*

Code	Rules
Identity exploration	1. Description of experiences participants had in fields such as romantic relationships, education, and work 2. Exploratory experiences of leisure, partying, traveling, and use of legal and illegal drugs
Feeling in-between	1. Thoughts and/or experiences of ambivalence: Ex.: although participants assume some adult roles, they do not feel independent financially or emotionally
Instability	1. Experiences of feeling pressured; facing instability or precarious situations at work 2. Experiences of depression, anxiety, and family problems 3. Expression of feelings of suffering
Self-focused	1. Thoughts/ experiences/situations when participants are focused on doing whatever they want 2. Personal interests as a priority
Possibilities	1. Optimistic view of the future 2. Plans
Other-Focused	1. Participants present a discourse of provision for or care towards others; 2. Experiences of assuming responsibilities at work

*Note.* Descriptions of the rules for identification of each category based on EA theory. Rules were developed by the first author to guide coders concerning distinctions between categories.

**Table 2***Factor scores correlations between IDEA's dimensions and SES*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. SES						
2. Identity Exploration	-.011					
3. Feeling In-Between	.044	.383**				
4. Instability	.030	.283**	.287**			
5. Self-focus	-.051	.293**	.009	.066		
6. Possibilities	<b>.147**</b>	.229**	.083	.116**	.199**	
7. Other-focus	-.056	.140**	-.046	.161**	.259**	.086*

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ . Cells in **bold** highlight significant correlations between IDEA's dimensions and SES.

I think it's going to be like this. And I can't leave my son alone, so I'm dedicated to them, all money I receive I spend on them, not on me" (Interview 6, low SES, 25-29, female).

Their process of entering at the job market is different. Low SES individuals assumed the responsibility of working earlier as a family demand of helping with the house income and paying their own bills (e.g. rent and university). Their educational paths were less stable due to commitments to their jobs or families:

"When I was a child, I remember my mom: for some time she was working in two jobs. She would conclude one and go directly to the other. She would go home and sleep two hours, and then she would start her work day again. Then, for a period she was really without money, and then I looked at her and I asked: 'would you like me to work these jobs, too?'" (Interview 10, low SES, 18-24, male).

On the other hand, high SES individuals start working as a way of exploring different job experiences and receiving some income to buy things independently of their parent's financial support and can live an extended moratorium of Identity Exploration. They act like this as a way of exploring their autonomy, as an essay to their future as adults, meaning that, different from the low SES individuals, they are not required to help with the family income:

"It was very good receiving my own money. I felt an atmosphere of 'independence', though not completely, since I was living with my mom and I could not support myself alone. But I thought: 'I can walk on my own two feet, I don't need to ask my mom or my daddy'. It was important for me to do what I wanted to do. Beyond the emotional independence, which I already have, I had the financial independence, not totally, but I could feel the taste" (Interview 9, high SES, 18-24, male).

"Actually, I depend on my parents considering my mom pays the power bill, water, telephone; she buys things... buys the food. But all the rest, clothes, transportation... Those were things I started to pay, because if I let my mom decide, she would give money also for these things" (Interview 1, high SES, 25-29, female).

However, the expectations of "identity exploration" as exclusive for high SES individuals was not confirmed. The earlier demand for assuming adult responsibilities of low SES individuals in Brazil (Dutra-Thomé & Koller, 2014) led to the observation trend not previewed in the study's expectations, the manifestation of a developmental shifting process of low SES participants, since they would have a delayed period of Identity Exploration. After some years of investment in their families, they allow themselves to live a period of exploration. Therefore, the experience of EA would be lived by them later, based on their own process of reaching autonomy.



“(...) I didn’t have this stage, then when I was 23, I lived a period I should have lived much before. This was very good in some aspects, but it was also a bit destructive, because it was supposed to be a period of settling in, I should be dedicated to my studies and my professional life, and I was partying for a while, because although I was enjoying it I always had too many responsibilities, which blocked my adolescence” (Interview 12, low SES, 25-29, male).

“After my children can do things on their own it will be much easier for me to be focused on my own priorities” (Interview 6, low SES, 25-29, female).

In contrast, high SES individuals were not found to experience demands to work earlier to help generate family income, and an extended period of exploration tended to be offered to them from adolescence. It might be said that low SES individuals in Brazil, different from their U.S. counterparts, may experience the EA stage well after high SES individuals, supported by their own financial independence.

At the same time, some similarities between low SES and high SES groups in the US have been shown to hold true in Brazil: e.g., both groups experiment with different possibilities in love and work, and face instability (Arnett, 2004). However, these similarities should be analyzed carefully. For instance, although both low SES and high SES individuals face instability, the origin of this instability might be different. For instance, the lack of structural work and demands of higher educational and professional training constrains the opportunities available in the job market for both groups (Camarano et al., 2004; Netto Fleury, 2007), what makes it challenging for them to reach financial independence. Nevertheless, more frequently the low SES group also deals with family financial restrictions, accumulating the instability inherent to the process of transitioning to adulthood and their own family instability:

“I am living alone again because before I was at my mom’s house for a while. However, here, it was remarkable because I was in this apartment for two years, and in the beginning, my father was living with me. After he left for another state, I felt as if

I was more the father of my father than the son of my father. Before, he and I lived together in another state. Then, we returned, and he did not give any news for one year. After reconciliation, we lived together again. However, soon he left and let me be alone again, and again I had a feeling that my father was my son” (Interview 12, low SES, 18-24, male)

The identification of a developmental shifting among low SES emerging adults in Brazil is reinforced when we did not find associations between SES and IDEA categories in the quantitative study, meaning that SES is not affecting the manifestation of EA in Brazil. Nevertheless, even though both groups would live the EA, low SES individuals would follow a different course toward adulthood, with a delayed moratorium.

**Table 3**  
*Associations between IDEA’s dimensions and SES by means of Structural Equation Modeling regression models*

Standardized regression weights ( <i>p</i> )	
Outcome variable	
SES	
Identity Exploration	
SES	-.010 (.840)
Feeling in-Between	
SES	.059 (.213)
Instability	
SES	.035 (.481)
Self-focus	
SES	-.064 (.237)
Possibilities	
SES	.141 (<.001)
Other-focus	
SES	-.049 (.342)

*Note.* Cells in **bold** highlight significant associations between IDEA’s dimensions and SES. Fit indices CFI =.856, TLI = .838, RMSEA (90% CI) = .063 (.059 – .067)

Finally, participants presented a willing to be close and/or keep a close relationship to their parents, a cultural mark of Brazilian familism, placing high importance to family, similarly to other Latin and Asian countries; and through Catholic influence (Facio & Micocci, 2003; Facio et al., 2007; Fulligni, 2007):

“(...) financial independence yes, but emotional independence I guess I’ll never have. While I can,

I'll have my mother as a reference to talk to about emotional and affective themes" (Interview 1, high SES, 25-29, female).

"... My boyfriend bought an apartment—an apartment above his mom's apartment. And he did not directly invite me to live with him, but he kind of said indirectly that he would like it... but I was very clear and honest with him that I would not like to live there with him considering that while I live in my parents' home, I can save money and focus on my trip" (Interview 1, high SES, 25-29, female).

At the same time, participants used more "self-focused" lengths when pursuing goals regarding work and education. Pursuing their goals was basing the foundation their adult lives (Arnett, 2004).

"Currently, I'm focused on my profession. I have to be dedicated. I want to become a member of the Federal Police, that's what really matters for me now, my priority" (Interview 9, high SES, 18-24, male).

"It's a moment when I have to be dedicated to my studies. I have to be dedicated because things depend on me. (...) I can't see myself getting married, having kids, at least not now (...). Especially nowadays, that we don't have to be worried about that until our forties, you know. I want to travel a lot and learn many new things" (Interview 1, high SES, 25-29, female).

Brazilian familism could be a source of enhancement of emerging adults' Feeling-in-Between (Arnett, 2011). At the same time, they wish to reach autonomy and financial independence taking directions towards long term responsibilities, they see with naturality they closeness to their parents (Borges & Magalhães, 2009), making a prolonged period of cohabitation more acceptable.

### Final considerations

This study investigated the transition to adulthood of Brazilians, grounded in the EA perspective. The existence of EA features indicated that Brazilians are also affected by worldwide changes associated with

globalization, technological advances, and social changes (Arnett, 2011; Tudge, 2008). At the same time, considering contextual specificities of the Brazilian context was essential, because they allowed us to identify the expression of EA features in particular ways. We highlight here the developmental shifting process of low SES in relation to high SES participants. While in Brazil, high SES individuals were more likely to experience EA features according to what has been observed in industrialized countries (Arnett, 2011), low SES individuals presented a divergent trend because their opportunities to invest in their Identity Exploration would happen after an Other-Focused period (Arnett, 2011; Demuth & Keller, 2011; Galambos & Martínez, 2007; Henriques et al., 2004).

Concerning the study's limitations, the SES classification was not always sufficient for categorizing participants' real economic situations, a limitation intrinsic to national economic classifications. When including all age groups and all Brazilian regions, the measure's precision was affected. We observed that sometimes the SES of some participants did not correspond to their own perception considering their discourse. It may also be associated with the fact that participants' SES conditions might have been updated, meaning that, although a participant is currently presented as having high SES, previously he or she belonged to a low SES family. In other cases, a participant was from a low SES when disregarding his or her family's financial, despite the family's overall economic conditions suggesting a classification of high SES.

Another limitation was not developing an inductive process of analysis for the qualitative study, which would have considered participants' idiosyncratic experiences and introduced the possibility of creating new categories. In future analyses, an inductive process may be developed. It would be interesting to select four cases and to define a posteriori themes strongly linked to the data itself. Participants' experiences may be organized into a "relevant thematic organogram," connecting different elements related to participant discourses.

Finally, we are aware that the experience of 13 participants do not make our results generalizable, especially regarding our observation of a possible

developmental shifting in low SES participants, who would live a period of Identity Exploration later, in a non-linear process. We consider this result coherent with outcomes of the quantitative study, since it reinforces that SES is not associated with IDEA's dimensions, what may indicate that both low and high SES individuals would live a period of EA. However, it sheds light on the fact that the trajectories lived by low and high SES individuals present relevant differences, since low SES individuals have a particular developmental trajectory, characterize by an early demand for assuming adult roles, and a posterior period of identity exploration, supported by their own financial conditions.

### Compliance with Ethical Standards

The Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Protocol No. 2011014) and the institutions where the data collection took place approved the investigation. All participants signed a Consent Form (following resolutions No.196/1996 and No. 446/2012 of the National Health Council and No. 016/2000 of the Brazilian Federal Council of Psychology). All Authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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