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## Values and Feelings in Young Brazilians' Purposes<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Purposes are projections about the future based on past and present actions, including the integration and regulation of values and feelings. In this study, we aimed to analyze these processes in the purposes of young Brazilians. A total of 200 young people between 15 and 19 years of age who were public school students from the five geographical regions of Brazil participated in the survey. We applied a written, individual, and open-ended questionnaire that was constructed by the Stanford Center on Adolescence and adapted for this study. We identified seven different ways by which the future was designed, observing different dynamics of thought and great complexity in the integration of values and feelings. For the vast majority of respondents, family and work constituted central values and appeared in an integrated manner in the feelings they expressed: happiness, welfare, and satisfaction. These results cultivate a greater understanding of psychic organization in purposes, opening up new possibilities for studies in moral psychology.

**Keywords:** life projects, values, emotions

### Valores e Sentimentos nos Projetos de Vida dos Jovens Brasileiros

**Resumo:** Projetos de vida são projeções sobre o futuro embasadas em ações passadas e fundamentadas no presente, comportando processos de integração e regulação entre valores e sentimentos. Nesta pesquisa, tivemos por objetivo analisar tais processos nos projetos de vida de jovens brasileiros. Participaram 200 jovens, entre 15 e 19 anos, estudantes de escolas públicas das cinco macrorregiões do Brasil. Aplicou-se um questionário aberto, escrito e individual formulado pelo Stanford Center on Adolescence, adaptado aos propósitos da pesquisa. Identificamos sete formas de projetar o futuro, em que foram observadas diferentes dinâmicas do pensamento, com grande complexidade na integração entre valores e sentimentos. Para grande maioria dos jovens, família e trabalho constituíram valores centrais e compareceram de forma integrada aos sentimentos, sendo os mais frequentes: felicidade, bem-estar e satisfação. Tais resultados oportunizam maior compreensão da organização psíquica na elaboração de projetos de vida, abrindo novas possibilidades para os estudos em psicologia moral.

**Palavras-chave:** projeto de vida, valores, emoções

### Valores y Sentimientos en los Proyectos de Vida de Jóvenes Brasileños

**Resumen:** Los proyectos de vida son proyecciones sobre el futuro sobre la base de las acciones pasadas y presentes, incluyendo procesos de integración y regulación entre los valores y sentimientos. En esta investigación, nuestro objetivo está en analizar estos procesos en los proyectos de vida de los jóvenes brasileños. 200 jóvenes, entre 15 y 19 años, estudiantes de escuelas públicas en las cinco regiones geográficas de Brasil contestaron un cuestionario abierto, escrito e individual del Stanford Center on Adolescence, adaptado a los objetivos de esta investigación. Se identificaron siete formas de proyectar el futuro, con diferentes dinámicas de pensamiento y gran complejidad en la integración de los valores y sentimientos. Para la gran mayoría de los jóvenes, familia y trabajo fueron valores centrales, de manera integrada a los sentimientos de felicidad, bienestar y satisfacción. Estos resultados fomentan una mayor comprensión de la organización psíquica, abriendo nuevas posibilidades para los estudios en la psicología moral.

**Palabras clave:** proyecto de vida, valores, emociones

Although it includes a certain degree of flexibility, purpose is a stable intention that involves the *self* and consequently the world beyond the *self* (Damon, Menon, &

Bronk, 2003). It is a construct that intertwines the constitution of identity and the possibilities of interaction with the environment, mobilizing values and feelings (Machado, 2010) grounded in the relationships between past events, present actions, and future projections (Bundick, 2009; Damon, 2009; Yeager & Bundick, 2009; Yeager, Bundick, & Johnson, 2012).

While individuals address morality and moral projections in an integrated manner with their own identity throughout the course of their lives (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2014; Nucci, 1996; Turiel, Smetana, & Killen, 2014), youth seems to occupy a particularly profitable stage for understanding

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mental organization in the elaboration of life purposes. In both psychology (Dell'Aglio & Koller, 2011; Habigzang, Diniz, & Koller, 2014) and sociology (Leão, Dayrell, & Reis, 2011; Pais, 2001; Sposito, 2010), studies on youth identities adopt a view on complexity that includes the elaboration of life purposes from the perspective that such projections are grounded in trajectories and lived experiences. According to this perspective, purpose exhibits fluidity – comings and goings – within a field of possibilities. According to Velho (1994), the latter are understood as a sociocultural dimension, a space where purposes are formulated and implemented and youths are provided with the opportunity to transform themselves on a continuous basis: once a projection into the future is produced, the subject might transform him/herself and modify the reality in which he or she acts, thus creating new possibilities for projections.

Life purposes reveal the intersection of the *self* with morality (Colby & Damon, 1992; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2014; Nisan, 2004; Nucci, 1996) because values are intimately interlaced with the feelings, desires, objectives, and thoughts that constitute the human mind. Simultaneously, they also interact with some collective purposes in a continuous process of the exchange of values. In the elaboration of life purposes, morality is always interrelated with biological, social, affective, and cognitive features (Araújo, 2003, 2007). The processes that regulate those features reveal the mental organization and functioning of human beings.

According to Piaget and Gréco (1959/1974), regulation consists of a process that occurs between the individual and the environment via the interaction between personal values and social rules. This view leads to the idea of a moral consciousness that behaves as a regulator between the individual and the world and between the individual and him/herself. Thus, regulation occurs at the interpsychic and intrapsychic levels (Puig, 1996, 2007).

Within such dynamics, affectivity has a regulatory function because values and feelings interact with other – cognitive, social, and biological – subsystems that compose the psychological subject – and in the interpsychic functioning of the subject vis-à-vis the external world. Certain empirical studies, mainly studies that focus on feelings as regulators of the *self* (Barrett, Fox, Morgan, Fidler, & Daunhauer, 2013), have sought to elucidate the functioning of the mind based on such regulation. Within the field of morality, affectivity-mediated regulation is manifested in the influence of feelings on the mobilization of values in the face of a moral situation. Thus, affectivity and cognition in moral judgments and actions are included within a *continuum* (Arantes, 2003, 2013; Haidt, 2003; Moreno Marimón & Sastre, 2010; Pátaro, 2011; Pátaro & Arantes, 2014; Sherman & Haidt, 2011).

Given that values refer to affective exchanges with the external world that derive from the projection of positive feelings on things and/or people (Piaget, 1954/1981) and/or relationships and/or themselves (Araújo, 2007), the affective

load placed on each value determines its position, i.e., central or peripheral, for each individual in the face of a moral situation (Araújo, 2003, 2007; Damon, 1995). This positioning of values as central or peripheral, as a function of the affective load placed on them, is flexible and varies according to the physical, interpersonal, and sociocultural environment.

The notion of *integration* (Blasi, 1995, 2004) indicates that upon being integrated into the emotional systems, values provide a basis for the construction of identity, always moving toward the constitution of the psychological consistency that motivates moral actions. This construction is shaped by a hierarchical system organized in degrees of integration. As a result, an isolated value, i.e., a value that is poorly integrated with others, has a hierarchically lower position in the mental organization. By contrast, the more integrated values have a more central place in an individual's system of values. The mutual integration of values, and the place they consequently occupy in the mental organization, is revealed by the appearance or non-appearance of moral feelings such as guilt, sadness, remorse, anger, and shame, as several empirical studies show (Araújo, 2003; Lewis, Haviland-Jones, & Barrett, 2010; Muris & Meesters, 2014; Pinheiro, 2009).

Moreno Marimón and Sastre (2010) enrich the notion of integration, suggesting that feelings constitute complexes that also include thoughts and mental operations in an integrated manner within a set that gives them meaning but never in an isolated manner. Such complexes of feelings must be contextualized to behave as an intracommunicated and interconnected tissue that, when activated, simultaneously gives rise to a wide range of feelings, such as happiness, pleasure, well-being or nostalgia, grief or uneasiness. Thus, the “affective-emotional” context might be defined as all the feelings, emotions, and thoughts that participate in a given feeling and give it a particular meaning precisely as a function of the network that interrelates all of them together.

In the present study, based on the aforementioned views, we focused on the idea that not only feelings but also values ought to be understood as a web of interlaced aspects relative to principles, rules, and the others, on one hand, and the individual desires, wishes, feelings, thoughts, and objectives, on the other hand. Within definite contexts, such as the context of the elaboration of purpose, each individual simultaneously has recourse to a full series of affective and cognitive features in a highly complex process. Values and feelings are integrated via the network of meanings attributed by each individual that involve aspects of his or her moral identity and context. As a function of its hierarchically high position in the moral system, this integration comes to regulate the non-appearance of other possible organizations in the face of a moral context.

Facing the complexity inherent to the analysis of the integration and regulation of values and feelings in life purposes, we selected the Thought Organizing Models Theory elaborated by Moreno Marimón, Sastre, Bovet,

and Leal (1988/2000) as our theoretical-methodological framework. We made this choice because it allows us to perform a quantitative analysis of the integration of values and feelings in the elaboration of the youths' purposes, taking their individual idiosyncrasies into account while simultaneously detecting their mutual similarities and differences. This framework grants greater reliability to the data because it does not entail working with preset categories of organizing models that are extracted from the subjects' responses rather than resulting from the investigator's previous inferences.

According to the Thought Organizing Models theory, when facing "observable" events that allow for several interpretations, each individual selects and organizes a series of elements and meanings that are then used to construct a model. Although one and the same fact might be approached from different points of views, the possible ordering of the elements that compose an organizing model – which gives internal coherence to them – is not infinite because the elements exhibit some degree of compatibility with "reality" (Moreno Marimón et al., 1988/2000). It is important to note that although they are contingent to the logic that underlies the structures of thought, Organizing Models are not constructed based on structures of thought alone. Organizing Models broaden the scope of analysis by also including the users' desires, feelings, affects, social representations, and values. Thus, the framework chosen offers the possibility of a more thorough understanding of future projections by demonstrating how different aspects – affective, cognitive, and social – are dialectically articulated in mental functioning.

Several studies have investigated youths' life purposes by seeking to establish how the engagement of young people in projects directs their actions and gives life meaning (Burrow, O'Dell, & Hill, 2010; Damon, 2009; Klein, 2011; Uller, 2012; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Assuming the relevance of that concept but from the perspective of functional analysis, other studies have focused on the role of feelings in the youths' elaborations according to the Thought Organizing Models Theory (Pátaro, 2011; Pátaro & Arantes, 2014), opening a line of research that might allow for a deepening of the understanding of the influence of affectivity on the elaboration of purposes.

Working from the perspective inaugurated by the aforementioned studies and understanding that purpose provides a unique opportunity for identifying and analyzing human morality, the aim of the present study is to understand the processes of the integration and regulation of values and feelings that configure such elaborations in Brazilian youths.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 200 Brazilian youths aged 15 to 19 years old (average: 17 years old;  $SD = 3.50$ ) attending public schools from all five macro-regions of Brazil (North - N, Northeast

- NE, Center-West - CW, Southeast - SE, and South - S) participated in the present study. The sample from each region was commensurate to its relative proportion in the Brazilian youth population ( $N = 16$ ; NE = 48; CW = 24; SE = 64; S = 48). Gender proportionality was also maintained. Data were collected relative to two types of counties in each region: metropolises (population over one million inhabitants) and regional capitals (population up to 250,000 inhabitants). The participants resided in the periphery of urban centers and had a low socioeconomic level, as indicated by the Human Development Index (HDI) corresponding to the areas of data collection.

### Instrument

We used the questionnaire *The Youth Purpose Interview Protocol* (Andrews, Bundick, Jones, Bronk, Mariano, & Damon, 2006) that was constructed by the Stanford Center on Adolescence and adapted by the authors to the Brazilian context and the aims of the present study. A total of 13 open-ended questions were elaborated to investigate the youths' routines, what they hold to be most important, when and how they realized the relevance of the item noted, whether they had met difficulties in regard to it, what they would like to change in the world, their projections for the near (five years) and distant (40 years) future and their definition of purpose in life, in addition to the feelings associated with all of these aspects. The questionnaire was uploaded to a website ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) where the participants could respond using a computer.

### Procedure

**Data collection.** Data were collected at schools selected via contact with agencies such as the State Secretaries of Education for each region. On the appointed day, one of the investigators visited the schools, briefly described the study aims, and read the first pages of the questionnaire, which described ethical issues. Next, the investigator instructed the youths who were willing to participate to complete the online questionnaire in a complete and honest manner using a computer. The responses were immediately collected by the website that hosted the questionnaire, which facilitated the process of data storage.

**Data analysis.** The Thought Organizing Models Theory (Moreno Marimón et al., 1988/2000) was used as theoretical-methodological framework. Based on that framework, in the content of the responses to the 13 questions, the present study sought to identify the central elements highlighted by the youths, the evoked feelings, the meanings attributed to the elements and feelings, and finally, the relationships and mutual implications among them. Thus, the participants' thought organizing models were first extracted and then described. In addition, a quantitative analysis was performed to identify the distribution of the participants across the models to detect tendencies of mental organization relative to the youths' purposes in life.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The present study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de São Paulo, protocol no. 036/2013. In compliance with the National Health Council Resolution 466/2012, informed consent and assent forms were elaborated and applied to ensure the voluntary nature of participation and the adherence to the ethical guidelines regulating human research.

## **Results and Discussion**

We identified seven different thought organizing models that also reflect different manners of projecting the future. Each model is described below, focusing on its central elements and feelings as well as on the relationships/implications among them and their meanings. For each model, we present excerpts from the participants' responses to illustrate the youths' thought dynamics.

### **Model 1**

The elements "work" and "family" were noted, albeit without any attribution of meaning; feelings of "well-being" and "normal" appeared somewhat weakly. Elements and feelings were not strongly integrated, which indicates that they were not constituted as central values. Some of the participants who applied this model had "God" and some "negative life experience" as the central elements, which corroborates the fragile projection of the future vis-à-vis "work" and "family". Let us examine an excerpt:

To me, the purpose in life is to plan the future. However, getting concerned with the future is not very good, [but] living in the present and trying not to have regrets is crucial. As to my purpose, I feel normal, as if it were something that matters, from the beginning to the end of my life. My life will be normal, like any family, I'll have a house, a job, a car, children. (16 years old, male, São Paulo-SP)

### **Model 2**

The value "work" was integrated with feelings of "well-being", "fulfillment", and "happiness", given that the youths represented it as a means to acquire consumer goods (to be able to buy material things, to have money in the future, etc.). Let us examine an example:

I want my family to still be present in my life, to have a good job, so that I don't have to depend on others, and also to fulfill, conquer my childhood dream, as soon as possible, which is to buy my own car, with my own money. In the distant future, I'll be happy, will have a good job, and my dream will have been fulfilled. (15 years old, male, Ponta Grossa-PR)

### **Model 3**

"Interpersonal relationships" (with relatives, friends, boy/girlfriends, etc.) were integrated with feelings of "well-being", "happiness", "fulfillment", and "love". Love was strongly mobilized vis-à-vis such relationships. Being happy was constituted as value in itself (rather than merely as a feeling). For instance:

In the distant future, to be sure, I'll be old, but I hope I won't need to work, I hope my family will be with me. I don't want to feel tired or weary, but satisfied for having fulfilled my dream. My purpose in life is to be successful and happy, surrounded by the people I love. (15 years old, female, Rio Claro-SP)

### **Model 4**

The values "work" and "family" were integrated with feelings of "well-being", "fulfillment", "happiness", and "confidence". The participants had an idealized idea of "work" and "family", without giving any further indication of what they wanted or how to obtain it. Some youths noted "God" in relation to church "work". Let us examine an example:

When I'm 40, I hope I'll have a successful career, with a stable job and a well-structured family; my children will attend school and make me proud, and I'll have a kind husband. As always, what matters most will be my family and my friends, my happiness, and my health. (15 years old, female, Curitiba-PR)

### **Model 5**

The values "work" and "family" were the central values, being integrated with feelings of "well-being", "fulfillment", "satisfaction", and "happiness"; their meaning derived from the responsibility that the participants demonstrated vis-à-vis their families. The example below illustrates this model:

Family comes first, "marriage", to have a family, and keep on studying to get a wonderful job and support it [the family] and give to my children everything my parents couldn't give to me. My biggest dream is to have my own business, to attend college, have a family, and provide my parents a little more comfort later on. (17 years old, male, Ponta Grossa-PR)

### **Model 6**

The values "work" and "learning" were integrated with feelings of "fulfillment", "well-being", "happiness", and "tiredness" through the meanings attributed to them: "work"

was identified with personal fulfillment and social recognition, and “learning” was intimately related to “work” as the means to fulfill that goal. Let us examine an example:

Well, my wish is to work in the profession I believe I have a vocation for, doing what I like. Perhaps I’ll travel the world, or across Brazil, will get to know new places, appreciate nature, which is the most beautiful thing in this world. I want to be a biologist, to discover a species, for my name to become well-known, not by everybody in the world, but just for people to know I was someone important once [...]. (17 years old, female, Sobral-CE)

### Model 7

The values “work”, “family”, and “others” (we chose this term to designate people whom the participants believe they will benefit in addition to relatives and friends) were integrated with feelings of “happiness” and “fulfillment” relative to oneself and the beneficiaries of one’s actions through the following meanings: “work” as personal fulfillment, social recognition, a means to reach “others”, with “family” as a responsibility. In some cases, “work” was associated with “God” inasmuch as it would be accomplished through religion or volunteer work. The following excerpt exemplifies this model:

My life will be pretty busy, right? I’ll be working, I’ll have to care for my family, teach the right stuff to my children, always help the needy, and be happy with the remainder of the opportunities useful for me [...] I already have my own purpose in life. I want to be a fireman, and the reason for wanting to be a fireman is that I want to be able to help people. I want to save lives and risk my life for the sake of another’s life. I want to honor my work! (16 years old, male, Rio Claro-SP)

Given that the extracted central elements were constituted as *values* because they emerged from the positioning of the positive feelings related to them (Araújo, 2003, 2007; Piaget, 1954/1981), except for model 1, in which feelings were weakly mobilized, the elements “work” and “family” appeared as the central values (Araújo, 2003, 2007; Damon, 1995) for a large segment of the participants. Some values, i.e., “God”, “interpersonal relationships” (besides family), “learning”, and “desire to reach others” (“others”) were also organized as central but not in the vast majority of the models. The results relative to the purposes in life lead to the perception that they are composed of values (Machado, 2010) within a field of possibilities (Velho, 1994) as a function of one’s life history, engagement in present actions, and expectations for the future (Bundick, 2009; Damon, 2009; Yeager & Bundick, 2009).

Although there were multiple possibilities of integrating values in the elaboration of life purposes, “work” and “family” were most articulated, which is explained by cultural influences (Nucci, 1996; Turiel et al., 2014) that are significant for the centrality of such values (Souza & Oliveira, 2011; Sposito, 2010; Thomé, Telmo, & Koller, 2011). Although we identified practically the very same values across the various purposes, the dynamics of organization were differentiated, particularly by the established network of meanings. As a function of the meanings that were attributed, articulations were established between values and feelings, giving rise to a whole that was coherent for the participants and that made them assume a central position in the elaboration of purpose.

It is important to note that the centrality of the complexes of values was also due to their integration with the complexes of feelings attributed to them. The feelings did not appear in an isolated manner (Moreno Marimón & Sastre, 2010) but in complexes that involve the positive projection of feelings of happiness, well-being, and fulfillment. We were able to establish that the complex of values and feelings strengthened its central organization in the dynamics of the youths’ thought. Arantes (2013) and Pátaro (2011) consider that feelings play a significant role in the elaboration of purpose and emphasize that feelings of well-being and self-fulfillment are determinants for purpose, as are also other feelings related to the *self*. Our results confirm the role that feelings played in the elaboration of purpose by the participants.

Although certain trends of mental organization were evident in the youths’ ways of processing values and feelings, given that they elaborated their purposes in life vis-à-vis a “reality”, the actual execution occurred in a somewhat specific manner, according to the participants’ experiences, beliefs, and commitments to that which characterizes them as a *self* (Blasi, 1995, 2004; Colby & Damon, 1992; Nisan, 2004). The possibilities of articulating values and feelings ensured complexity in the elaboration of the projections relative to the future and brought to the participants the space of creation that develops and consolidates their identity (Blasi, 2004; Puig, 2007). The meanings attributed to values and feelings were also articulated within the dynamics of thought organization related to other values and other feelings, and they thus appeared as integrated aspects within a set that gave meaning to them (Moreno Marimón & Sastre, 2010) and that thus ensured the coherence of the youths’ reasoning. The process of integration that determined the centrality of those complexes in the organization of purpose regulated the non-appearance of other forms of dynamics related to other elements that were not equally significant for the participants and that did not receive positive affective exchanges likely to elevate them to the *status* of values in the organizing models (Araújo, 2003; Pinheiro, 2009).

Therefore, we observed that the articulated set of values and feelings that regulated the non-appearance of other forms of dynamics became specific for each participant via

the relationships/implications established within the set of meanings attributed to them. For this reason, although they included the same central elements that were configured as values in most of the models and the same feelings, the processes of integration and regulation were different in each organization of reasoning. The element “work” was configured as a value for most of the participants: on some occasions, it was given the meaning of a “consumer good” (model 2), it was idealized in others (model 4), it was represented as responsibility for the family (model 5) or as personal fulfillment and social recognition (models 6 and 7), as well as a means to reach society (model 7). This element was linked to others, such as family, interpersonal relationships, material goods, society, oneself, etc., within a network of relationships that involved feelings and, in turn, within a somewhat specific range of meanings.

An interesting example vis-à-vis the complexes involving values and feelings within the processes of integration and regulation was the element “God”, to which only a segment of the participants attributed meaning, despite the element’s being noted in most of the analyzed responses. “God” behaved as a value in three of the models but was given different meanings in each of them, thus constituting a complex that regulated the appearance of other aspects in the youths’ organization of reasoning. The power of religion to awaken self-confidence in youths and lead them to a positive self-transformation was emphasized by Marques, Cerqueira-Santos, and Dell’Aglío (2011). Nevertheless, in the present study, faith was also found to be able to exert a negative impact on the participants’ purposes by making them focus exclusively on the religious side. In this regard, we observed that the elaboration of models in which the value of religion was central was able to establish strength for the integration with other values and feelings (model 7), to serve as a reference for idealized views (model 4), or to “channel” meanings to other elements (model 1) in the elaboration of purpose.

As a complement to the qualitative analysis of the processes of the integration and regulation of values and feelings, we describe the participants’ distribution as a function of the organizing models they used to reveal their trends of thought organization in the elaboration of life purpose.

There is a stronger tendency in the youths to use models 1 and 4 (28% and 25.5%, respectively) (Table 1). The proportion of use of the remaining models was somewhat similar, ranging from 6% to 13% of the participants. According to our interpretation, models 1 and 4 were the most widely used because they are centered on culturally conveyed elements (Nucci, 1996; Turiel et al., 2014) – “work” and “family” – without being necessarily grounded in, or being weakly grounded in, an articulation with other elements within the same context, feelings, and values of the youths in the elaboration of purpose. The other organizing models also include those elements but integrate them with others and with feelings, resulting in more specific elaborations that were thus shared by a smaller number of participants.

Table 1  
*Distribution of Participants According to Organizing Models*

Organizing model	<i>n</i>	%
Model 1	56	28.0
Model 2	12	6.0
Model 3	16	8.0
Model 4	51	25.5
Model 5	26	13.0
Model 6	22	11.0
Model 7	14	7.0
Other	03	1.5
Total	200	100.0

*Note.* Three participants used organizing models that were different from the models described in the present study and were grouped in the item “other”. Due to the limitations of space, we were not able to include them in our more detailed description. Nevertheless, we included them in the table to demonstrate that we stress not only the regularities found in the responses but also the singularity of each organization of reasoning exhibited.

In addition to the interpretation described above, we believe that it is important to reflect on the study results from the perspective of the processes of the integration and regulation of values and feelings. For this purpose, we describe the analyzed data clustered in a different manner, including “categories of models” to explain the results in light of the main objective of the present study. These categories of models derive from principles previously defined by the investigators as a means to analyze data as a function of their study objectives. These categories have already been used in certain studies (Arantes, 2003; Pátaro, 2011; Pinheiro, 2009) that applied the Thought Organizing Models Theory (Moreno Marimón et al., 1988/2000) as a framework to achieve a more accurate analysis of the regularities present in the participants’ reasoning inasmuch as they allow for a broader visualization of the patterns of thought.

Table 2 describes the clustering of the models in three groups: (a) group A, characterized by little integration of values and feelings, contradictory responses, weak projection, and little to no mobilization of feelings (model 1); (b) group B, characterized by more evident purpose, the mobilization of one or two values, little integration among values, coherence among most of the responses, and regulation by feelings (models 2, 3, and 4); and (c) group C, characterized by the mobilization of two or more values, the integration and regulation of values and feelings, elaborated purpose, and high levels of coherence (models 5, 6, and 7).

Group A (28% of the participants), with little integration of values and feelings, contradictory responses, and little projection of feelings and Group B (41% of the participants), with mobilization of one or more values, little to no integration among values, and regulation by feelings, consist of a large number of participants who established poorly cohesive networks of relationships among the mobilized values. As a result, such values became somehow weaker by comparison to other models in which values were integrated by common

Table 2  
*Distribution of the Participants per Categories of Organizing Models by Considering the Processes of Integration/Regulation of Values and Feelings According to Complexity Levels*

Category of the model	n	%
Group A (model 1)	56	28.0
Group B (models 2, 3, 4)	82	41.0
Group C (models 5, 6 and 7)	62	31.0
Total	200	100.0

shared meanings and were attributed to a strong affective load, and the process of their appearance involved regulation. These findings are relevant because, although a large segment of the participants mobilized complexes of values and feelings, not all did so by establishing relationships resulting in consolidated purposes, which confirms the data collected by Damon (2009), Klein (2011), Pátaro (2011), and Yeager and Bundick (2009). One could observe that a significant segment of the participants could have attached more consistent meaning to values and feelings, thus making their purposes in life stronger. Given that this is a somewhat complex elaboration, one might understand that youths need time, which is not granted by either family or school, to reflect on their purposes in life (Damon, 2009; Danza, 2014; Klein, 2011; Pátaro, 2011; Pinheiro, 2009; Uller, 2012). The result might be an emptying of the meanings of the complexes of values and feelings that underpin their projections about the future.

As a function of the understanding of the configurations established by values and feelings, the results of the present study represent a relevant contribution to moral psychology. The complexity of the analysis that was performed, both qualitative and quantitative, made it possible to reveal the richness of the data. However, given that the material is too extensive, we had to limit our attention to the dynamics of the participants' organization of thought and set aside certain details that perhaps were relevant for the establishment of new theoretical constructs. That methodological perspective is new within the field of moral psychology, and as a function of the relevant results of the present study, it warrants other methodological configurations and studies that confirm and extend its results.

Among the results, the relevance of the affective dimension in the construction of purpose stands out because the feelings not only introduced the values into evidence but also seemed to be responsible for their very construction inasmuch as they were shown to be essential to the processes of the attribution of meaning and the abstraction of the elements that grounded the youths' purposes in life and were integrated into the participants' reasoning and identity. It is important to stress the need for further investment in studies that promote knowledge of the functionality of feelings in the human mind. The Organizing Models theory is a fertile path for future analyses that aim at delving deeper into

the complexity of the relationships established between values and feelings in life purpose, thus allowing for an understanding of both the singularities and regularities of human mental organizations.

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