original article

Relations with parents and identity statuses in the relational domain in emerging adults

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BACKGROUND

Emerging adulthood is a core developmental period in which individuals can develop a meaningful identity in the relational domain (with a romantic partner). The aim of the study was to examine relationships between relations with parents and identity statuses in the relational domain in emerging adults.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Participants were 266 (47.30% males) emerging adults (M = 22.50, SD = 1.73). They completed self-report measures of relations with parents and identity.

RESULTS

More than half of the participants were in the moratorium status or were not involved in a romantic relationship (35% and 29%, respectively). Relations with parents were linked to identity statuses in the relational domain. Particularly, the perception of low autonomy given by the father was related to less mature identity statuses.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlighted that transition from singleness to stable partnerships seems to be challenging. Therefore, it is important to examine correlates of identity statuses in this domain.

KEY WORDS

identity; relations with mother; relations with father; emerging adults; romantic relationship

BACKGROUND

EMERGING ADULTHOOD

The main developmental tasks during adolescence and early adulthood involve forming a stable sense of identity (Erikson, 1968; Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008). However, the lives of young people have changed radically in industrialized countries in past decades and influence the identity development (Arnett, 2007). The most important changes are linked to the transition into adult roles, such as transition to living independently, stable full-time work, marriage, and parenthood (Crocetti, Scrignaro, Sica, & Magrin, 2012). Emerging adulthood is a new conception of development for the period from late teens to the twenties and is defined as the period of trying out various possibilities before making final adult commitments, which can be exalting as well as distressing or confusing (Arnett, 2007).

One relevant transition during this period is the transition from singleness to stable partnerships. More specifically, emerging adults should make decisions regarding their partner choices (Crocetti et al., 2012; Rostowski, 2005). It has been observed that the lack of a stable romantic relationship is becoming a frequent problem in intimate relationships. Moreover, intimate relationships are becoming less stable, e.g., some results indicated that among unmarried young adults 36.50% had one or more break-ups during 20 months (Rhoades, Kamp Dush, Atkins, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). A meta-analysis focused on predictors of dissolution of nonmarital romantic relationships in longitudinal studies showed that approximately 34% of young adults' relationships ended between Time 1 and the next assessment (range: 2-77% dissolution) (Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn, & Mutso, 2010). It may be influenced by socio-demographic characteristics, family context, and intrapersonal factors, among others (Mandal & Latusek, 2014; Klimstra et al., 2013). In fact, individuals with stable and well-defined identities are likely to take on adult roles and responsibilities more readily; hence they become involved in more satisfactory and stable romantic relationships (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005).

PERSONAL IDENTITY

Erikson (1968) postulated that personal identity development as the main task across the entire lifespan can be described by the process of defining oneself, exploring identity alternatives and choosing meaningful commitments across various life domains. Thus, personal identity refers to a self-definition at the level of the individual person and is important to find one's place in society (Erikson, 1968; Marcia,

1980). Marcia (1980) continued the thought of Erikson (1968) and created an identity status model based on two processes: exploration and commitment of individual experiences. Exploration concerns the period of considering a broad array of goals, values and beliefs. Commitment determines the level of an individual's commitment to his/her choices (Marcia, 1980). Depending on the level of these two processes, Marcia (1980) distinguished four identity statuses: 1) achievement (the most mature identity status, active exploration leading to commitments), 2) foreclosure (strong commitments without much exploration; the source of commitment is identification with significant people, usually with the parents), 3) moratorium (active searching, studying and analyzing alternatives without clear commitments), and 4) diffusion (the most immature identity status, lack of both commitment and systematic exploration).

In recent years, Crocetti and Meeus (Crocetti et al., 2008; Meeus, van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz, & Branje, 2010) have proposed the extension of Marcia's (1980) identity statuses paradigm (for other extensions see: Identity Process Models – Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Meeus, 1996; the Dual-Cycle Model of Identity Formation; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006). Contrary to other extensions of Marcia's identity statuses paradigm, their three-factor model represents the domain-focused approach to identity development and makes it possible to analyze how individuals deal with various identity domains that are important for their current experiences (e.g. educational, job, relational) (it also allows one to measure the global identity by summing responses across all domains) (U-MICS; Crocetti et al., 2008).

The Three-Factor Model postulated that identity formation can be expressed by three identity processes of commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment (Crocetti et al., 2008; Meeus et al., 2010). The commitment shows the level of an individual's commitment to his/her goals, values and beliefs in various identity domains (including education, job, interpersonal relationships). In-depth exploration presents the extent to which individuals consider actively the alternatives about their existing commitments and search for additional information about them. Reconsideration of commitment refers to the revision of an individual's existing commitments when they stop being satisfactory. The combination of the level of these three identity processes allows one to empirically distinguish five identity statuses (Crocetti et al., 2008): 1) diffusion – low commitment, in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment; 2) searching moratorium – high commitment, in-depth exploration as well as reconsideration of commitment; 3) moratorium – low commitment, a medium level of in-depth exploration and high reconsideration of commitment; 4) closure – moderate commitments, low both in-depth exploration and re-

consideration of commitment; and the most mature 5) achievement – characterized by high commitment and in-depth exploration, combined with low reconsideration of commitment (Crocetti et al., 2008).

PERSONAL IDENTITY IN RELATIONAL DOMAIN

A formed identity is considered to be a precondition of being ready to build intimate relationships (Erikson, 1968; Klimstra et al., 2013; Pilarska & Suchańska, 2015). Moreover, identification with choices in various life domains, such as romantic relationships, is an important aspect of identity development (Erikson, 1968; Meeus, 1996; Crocetti et al., 2012). Thus, the mature identity, formed as the optimal resolution of developmental crises, experienced as a sense of independence, consistency, continuity in time, and awareness of one's goals, values, and beliefs (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980; Meeus, 1996), might be associated with stronger willingness to proceed with a relationship (Klimstra et al., 2013). Some studies show that identity processes, especially commitment, can be considered as predictors of relationship stability (Le et al., 2010; Klimstra et al., 2013). In fact, commitment is also the central construct in Rusbult's Investment Model and the main predictor of attachment to and continuation of close relationships. However, commitment in this model is based on notions of social exchange and interdependence theory (Rosbult, 1980), whereas commitment in the identity formation is a self-defining process (related to the developmental perspective).

FAMILY, RELATIONS WITH PARENTS AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Many studies have been conducted on personal identity status and its correlates (Crocetti et al., 2008; Meeus et al., 2010). Previous research emphasizes the role of family in the process of identity development (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Michałek & Rostowska, 2014). Scabini and Manzi (2011) stated that the process of shaping young people's identity takes place through the mutual differentiation of family members, which is responsible for the release of family members from each other, but maintaining emotional links. Reciprocity is expressed in the fact that not only does the adolescent show the need of independence from the family, but the family as a system must also allow this process or encourage it. The main task of the family is to support the development of its members. Therefore, the family with an adolescent or emerging adult must show willingness to renegotiate the rules and roles prevailing in the family, as a response to growing the adolescent's need for autonomy and separateness. Families that for various reasons are unable to change in response to the needs of growing children may seriously complicate the formation of a mature identity (Koepke & Denissen, 2012).

The results of recent studies indicate that families characterized by emotional closeness and encouragement of autonomy and independence support mature identity development (Schultheiss & Blustein, 1994). Other studies suggest that high levels of conflict, high family cohesion and low emotions between parents and children inhibit the growth of identity. When the family structure does not meet the needs of adolescents, they can manifest rebellion or take a passive attitude (Willemsen & Waterman, 1991). In contrast, families that are flexible and adequately change to the needs of growing children and provide autonomy allow them to engage in relationships outside the family, especially with peers and a potential romantic partner (Watson & Protinsky, 1988). Family relations during emerging adulthood improve significantly in a variety of cultural contexts; they become more reciprocal, less conflictual, and more supportive than in adolescence. Other changes include increasing levels of mutuality, having more open communication, and having more appreciation and respect for one's parents (Crocetti et al., 2012).

In the context of identity in the relational domain, the parent-adolescent/emerging adult relationship is important because it is the initial basis for the adolescents' views of romantic relationships (Pittman, Kerpelman, Soto, & Adler-Baeder, 2012) and can be a positive or negative model of behavior in intimate relationships. Particularly, a high level of parental support, nurturing and open two-way communication within the family is linked to more identity exploration (Luyckx et al., 2006).

In fact, the literature has shown that that the relational domain is important (e.g. Crocetti et al., 2012; Klimstra et al., 2013; Luyckx, Seiffge-Krenke, Schwartz, Crocetti, & Klimstra, 2014), but it is understudied relative to other domains, including in the context of family relations. Thus, the unique contributions of family relations and identity statuses in the relational domain still need to be analyzed, especially because the contemporary transition from singleness to stable partnerships, when many more alternatives are available, seems to be more and more challenging for emerging adults (Crocetti et al., 2012; Rostowski, 2005).

CURRENT STUDY

The main aim of the current study is to examine whether different identity statuses are associated with differences in perceptions of relations with parents in emerging adulthood. Firstly, it was tested

whether the identity statuses in the relational domain that emerged in previous studies (Crocetti et al., 2008; Crocetti et al., 2012) could be extracted in a Polish sample of emerging adults. I expected to find all of the identity statuses in emerging adults, with the only exception being the diffusion status. Emerging adults being in intimate relationships tended to report commitments and search for them (similar to the job domain, cf. Crocetti, Avanzi, Hawk, Fraccaroli, & Meeus, 2014). Moreover, the number of young people in the diffusion status strongly decreases with age (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). Secondly, it was analyzed whether the distribution of individuals across the identity statuses differed according to gender. Based on previous studies (Koepke & Denissen, 2012) I expected that the identity statuses would not differ in terms of gender; such differences are evident in the younger groups, mainly in early and middle adolescence. Thirdly, the differences in perception of relations with mother and father were analyzed depending on emerging adults' gender. I expected that mothers would be perceived by daughters higher in communication and cohesion dimensions than fathers, whereas fathers would be perceived by sons as given more autonomy than mothers, which is consistent with the findings of some authors (Updegraff, McHale, Crouter, & Kupanoff, 2001). Finally, considering the importance of relations with parents for identity formation, in order to investigate the relations between identity statuses and family relations, I tested the profile of emerging adults in different identity statuses in terms of perception of relations with both parents. I hypothesized that relations with both parents were related to identity statuses. In particular, I expected that individuals in achievement and closure would display a higher level of autonomy given by parents, whereas individuals in the other statuses would show a lower level of this relation (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Scabini & Manzi, 2011). Moreover, I hypothesized that emerging adults in the moratorium and searching moratorium statuses would report a higher level of cohesion than participants in achievement and early closure (Willemsen & Waterman, 1991).

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 266 (47.30% males) emerging adults, ranging in age from 19 to 26 years (M_{age} = 22.50, SD_{age} = 1.73). The sample was diverse in terms of education, employment and family statuses. Seventy-one percent of the participants stated that they were involved in a romantic relationship. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents were not involved in a romantic relationship, and according to the measure instruction they did not fill in the relational identity measure. Missing data comprised less than 5% due to item nonresponse and were imputed with hot deck imputation (Fuller & Kim, 2005).

Participants were recruited to take part in the study using the snow-ball method, i.e. university students were asked to invite other emerging adults (their family members, friends, or colleagues) to take part in the current research. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study. They completed the study measures as a print self-report questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was guaranteed. Participants were not paid for their participation in the study.

MEASURES

Identity statuses. Personal identity in the relational domain was assessed with the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS) (Crocetti et al., 2008; Polish adaptation – Cieciuch, 2010, see: Karaś, Kłym, & Cieciuch, 2013). According to the measure instruction only participants who are involved in a relationship should fill in the scale. The subscale consists of 13 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely untrue*) to 5 (*completely true*) and measures the following identity processes: 1) Commitment (5 items; e.g., "My partner gives me security in life"), 2) In-depth exploration (5 items; e.g., "I often reflect on my partner"), 3) Reconsideration of commitment (3 items; e.g., "I often think it would be better to try to find a different partner"). Individuals are classified into specific identity statuses from the combination of these identity processes (cf. Results section). Cronbach's α in the current study ranged from .71 to .92. In the current study the intercorrelations among identity processes suggest that these processes are distinct but interrelated (Crocetti et al., 2008): commitment was weakly and positively associated with in-depth exploration (r = .36, p < .001), in-depth exploration was weakly and negatively correlated with reconsideration of commitment (r = −.21, p = .004), and commitment was moderately and negatively related to reconsideration of commitment (r = −.53, p < .001).

Relations with parents. The perception of current family relations with parents was measured using the Family Relations Questionnaire (KRR), My Mother and My Father Subscales (Plopa & Połomski, 2010). Each subscale includes 24 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (where the number 1 represents strong disagreement with regard to the content of statements, while 5 represents total acceptance). My Mother and My Father subscales measure the following dimensions: 1) Communication – the level of openness of the relationship with parents (8 items; e.g., "My Mother/My Father always finds time to lis-

ten to me"), 2) Cohesion – the level and the quality of emotional ties with parents (8 items; e.g., "Even when we argue, I know that My Mother/My Father still loves me"), 3) Autonomy-control – the level of given autonomy (the higher the score the higher the level of given autonomy, vs. the lower the level the higher the control) (8 items; e.g., "My Mother/My Father meddle too much in my life"). Cronbach's α ranged from .85 to .90.

RESULTS

CREATING IDENTITY STATUSES

To analyze personal identity using a person-centered approach (Crocetti et al., 2012), cluster analyses using K means and simple Euclidean distance were used on standardized scores of identity processes in the relational domain: commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment. The final decision on the interpretation of the cluster solutions was guided by theoretical conceptualizations of identity statuses and the level of explanation of the variance in each of the identity dimensions (the cluster solution had to explain approximately 50% of the variance in each of the identity processes)[1].

Figure 1 presents the means of the identity dimensions in the relational domain of the 4 groups in the final cluster solution. The first cluster, which represents achievement status, included 10 participants (4%, 4 females, 6 males) scoring high on commitment and in-depth exploration, but low on reconsideration of commitment. The second cluster consisted of 18 individuals (7%, 9 females, 9 males) scoring high scores on commitment, and low scores on in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment (early closure status). The third cluster included 92 emerging adults (35%, 56 females, 36 males) who scored low on commitment and in-depth exploration, but high on reconsideration of commitment (moratorium status). The fourth cluster comprised 67 participants (25%,
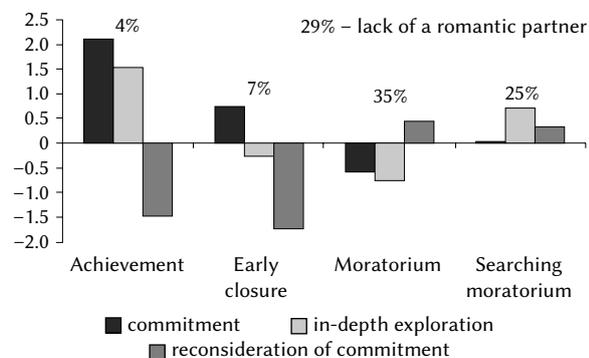

Figure 1. Z-scores for commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment for the four identity statuses in the relational domain.

30 females, 36 males) scoring moderately high on commitment and high on in-depth exploration as well as reconsideration of commitment (searching moratorium status). Seventy-nine emerging adults (29%, 45 females, 34 males) were not in an intimate relationship and did not fill in the identity measure. Thus, the expectations of finding four identity statuses (without diffusion status) in a Polish sample of emerging adults were confirmed.

AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN IDENTITY STATUSES

The χ^2 test was conducted to examine the gender differences in the identity statuses distribution. Consistent with the expectations, no significant gender differences were found, $\chi^2 = 4.85$ (3, $N = 187$), $p = .183$. In addition, a one-way ANOVA indicated that there were no associations between age and four identity statuses, $F(3, 183) = .25$, $p = .864$ (Figure 1).

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF RELATIONS WITH PARENTS

Two-way analysis of variance with repeated measurement with multivariate analysis in the 2 × 2 [relation (mother's, father's) × gender (female, male)] model was carried out to examine the differences in perception of relation with mother and father taking into account emerging adults' gender (for each relation separately) (see Table 1). The results indicated that in general mothers were perceived as more open in communication than fathers, $F(1, 239) = 32.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$. In the case of cohesion the findings showed that the interaction effect was significant, $F(1, 239) = 6.73$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that daughters perceived higher cohesion of mothers in comparison with sons ($p = .011$). There were no statistically significant differences regarding the perceived parents' autonomy. Thus, these results confirmed the hypotheses about perception of communication and cohesion. However, the expectations about the perception of given autonomy were not confirmed.

IDENTITY STATUS DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF RELATIONS WITH PARENTS

To examine differences in relations with mother and father reported by participants classified into the various identity statuses in the relational domain a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed. The results indicated that identity statuses had multivariate effects on perception of relations with parents. Diversity stems basically from the effect of the identity statutes for the perception of autono-

my given by parents, Wilks' λ = .83; $F(24, 807)$ = 1.87, p = .007, η^2 = .05. Especially, the role of autonomy given by the father (p < .001) was confirmed [mother's given autonomy, p = .096 (non-significant)] (see Table 2). Tukey post hoc comparisons showed that individuals in the achievement statuses reported higher scores on autonomy given by the father than individuals in the moratorium, searching moratorium and participants without a romantic partner. Concerning autonomy given by the father, individuals in the achievement statuses reported higher scores than individuals in the moratorium, searching moratorium and participants without a romantic partner. Moreover, participants in early closure declared higher father's autonomy than emerging adults in moratorium and without a romantic partner. Thus, these results confirmed the expectations about the perception of higher given autonomy (mostly by the father) by individuals in achievement and early closure than in other statuses or without a romantic partner. The hypothesis about the cohesion and identity statuses was not confirmed.

DISCUSSION

In this article, light has been shed on the association between relations with parents and identity statuses in the relational domain in emerging adulthood. During this developmental stage, young people can explore various alternatives in different life spheres, including a romantic relationship as one of the most important developmental transitions, before enacting final adult commitments (Arnett, 2007).

IDENTITY STATUSES IN RELATIONAL DOMAIN AMONG EMERGING ADULTS

In order to gain a better understanding of this issue, a person-centered approach has been used (Crocetti et al., 2012). According to expectations the four identity statuses were extracted in a sample of Polish emerging adults. Thus, the identity of achievement, closure, moratorium and searching moratorium dif-

Table 1

Means of relations with mother and father by emerging adults' gender

Variable	Female		Male		Effect	Wilks' λ	$F(1, 239)$	η^2
	M	F	M	F				
Communication	31.36 (5.70)	27.66 (7.53)	29.68 (6.02)	27.65 (6.95)	A	.88	32.49**	.12
					A × B	.99	2.76	.01
Cohesion	32.53 (5.88)	27.89 (7.68)	30.49 (5.56)	28.28 (7.10)	A	.82	53.17**	.18
					A × B	.97	6.73*	.03
Autonomy	14.34 (5.16)	15.11 (6.19)	17.10 (6.38)	17.02 (6.13)	A	.99	0.81	< .01
					A × B	.99	1.25	.01

Note. A – relation, B – gender, M – mother, F – father, *SD*s in brackets, *p < .01, **p < .001

Table 2

Means of relations with mother and father by identity statuses

Variable	Identity statuses					$F(4, 213)$	η^2
	A	E	M	S	L		
Mother							
Communication	28.63 (8.37)	29.64 (2.79)	31.01 (5.98)	30.40 (5.75)	30.66 (6.13)	0.44	.01
Cohesion	28.13 (8.69)	29.86 (5.20)	32.53 (5.39)	31.70 (5.38)	31.16 (6.25)	1.70	.03
Autonomy	17.25 (5.31)	19.64 (7.87)	15.35 (5.62)	15.27 (5.82)	15.22 (5.76)	2.00	.01
Father							
Communication	24.38 (7.42)	26.93 (5.89)	28.20 (7.64)	27.08 (7.49)	28.00 (6.85)	0.70	.01
Cohesion	24.88 (8.24)	24.86 (6.31)	28.92 (7.54)	27.95 (7.57)	28.14 (7.12)	1.32	.02
Autonomy	24.25[a] (7.29)	19.93[a,c] (7.57)	15.53[b,d] (5.70)	15.95[b,c] (5.69)	14.89[b,d] (6.05)	6.12*	.09

Note. A – Achievement, E – Early closure, M – Moratorium, S – Searching moratorium, L – lack of a romantic partner. An identity status mean is significantly different from another mean if they have different superscripts. A mean without a superscript is not significantly different from any other mean, *p < .001

ferentiate Polish emerging adults (Crocetti et al., 2012). Evidence of a diffused status characterized by a low score on all the identity processes was not found, which is consistent with the fact that the number of individuals in the diffusion status decreases with age (Kroger et al., 2010). This result might also be related to the percent of emerging adults in the sample who were not involved in a romantic relationship and in accordance with the instruction did not fill in the measure of identity. However, individuals who were not involved in a romantic relationship probably could not be considered as in diffusion statuses. Future studies are necessary to clarify the difference in these two cases.

RELATION WITH PARENTS IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Being committed with a romantic partner is related to changes in connectedness to parents, and to an increase in independence from parents (Kins & Beyers, 2010). In the current study, the results showed that mothers are perceived higher in the communication dimension than fathers. Moreover, daughters perceived higher cohesion with mothers in comparison with sons, which is consistent with previous studies (Updegraff et al., 2001). Unexpectedly, the findings suggested no differences in perception of autonomy given by parents. Emerging adult daughters and sons probably try to achieve personal independence from both parents, as becoming independent is the main task during this period (Kins & Beyers, 2010).

IDENTITY STATUSES IN RELATIONAL DOMAIN AND RELATIONS WITH PARENTS AMONG EMERGING ADULTS

Furthermore, the profile of youth in different identity statuses in the relation domain in terms of perceived relations with mother and father was examined. Using a person-centered approach (Crocetti et al., 2012), it was found that individuals' classifications in various identity statuses in the relational domain and individuals not involved in a romantic relationship were significantly associated with relations with both parents. Specifically, the role of perceived autonomy given by the father was confirmed (autonomy given by the mother only at a level below statistical significance). Individuals in the achievement statuses perceived their fathers as given more autonomy than individuals in the moratorium, searching moratorium and participants without a romantic partner. In addition, participants in early closure reported higher autonomy given by fathers than emerging adults in moratorium and without a romantic partner. Unexpectedly, perceived parents-emerging adult cohesion

was not associated with identity statuses. This result suggests that growth in personal independence from parents (mostly from the father) might play an important role in successful transition from singleness to stable partnerships, which is consistent with the previous studies (Kins & Beyers, 2010; Koepke & Denissen, 2012).

IMPLICATIONS

The current study has theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical point of view, the results suggest the importance of examining identity in the relational domain, not only in the family context. Thus, it is important to propose a more straightforward model of identity formation in this domain.

Since more than half of the participating emerging adults were in the moratorium status and were not involved in a romantic relationship (35% and 29%, respectively), early screening of those groups and psychosocial interventions aimed at supporting their identity formation taking into account relations with parents could be important for clinicians and practitioners.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The current study is not without limitations. First of all, the research used a correlational design, and therefore no conclusion about the direction of the effect can be drawn. Thus, in future research it would be useful to use a longitudinal study design. Secondly, the sample size was limited, reducing statistical power to identify smaller effects. Moreover, I obtained no relevant data in the course of the present study concerning the reasons for not being involved in romantic relationships in emerging adulthood. It would be worthwhile to investigate what factors affect not being in a partner relationship in this period. Future research should include some variables that could have moderated the findings (e.g. the type of romantic relationship, the relationship length). In addition, analysis of identity in the relational domain (with romantic partner) taking into account identity statuses in other domains (job, educational, interpersonal – with friends) is important.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study provided an original contribution to the literature by focusing on the family role for the occurrence of identity statuses among emerging adults and considering the relational identity domain, which is relevant for transition to adulthood. The main results highlighted that transition toward adulthood, especially from singleness to sta-

ble partnerships, seems to be challenging. Moreover, relations with the mother and father are linked to identity statuses in the relational domain. In particular, the perception of low autonomy given by the father was related to less mature identity statuses in this domain. Thus, the findings suggest that the family plays an important role in the development of a mature identity in the relational domain and that emerging adults should be supported in finding fulfilling commitments in close relationships, in the family context. It is important to continue this work and obtain a deeper understanding of identity formation in the relational domain, especially nowadays in the context of the observed progressively postponed transition to adulthood.

Endnotes

1 The ANOVA confirmed that the clusters have been chosen to maximize the differences among cases in different clusters: commitment, $F_{(3, 183)} = 66.86$, $p < .001$; in-depth exploration, $F_{(3, 183)} = 91.66$, $p < .001$; reconsideration of commitment, $F_{(3, 183)} = 94.12$, $p < .001$.

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