

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

Dreaming up the Right Career

*An Exploratory Study of the Career Aspirations of Low-Income
Adolescents in Urban Sao Paulo*

MOHAMED ZAKZOUK

SÃO PAULO
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Dissertation presented to Escola de
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as a requirement to obtain the title
of Master in International
Management (MPGI).

Knowledge Field:
Gestão e Competitividade em
Empresas Globais

Adviser: Prof. Dr. Edgard Elie
Roger Barki

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Zakzouk, Mohamed.

Dreaming up the Right Career: An Exploratory Study of the Career Aspirations of Low-Income Adolescents in Urban Sao Paulo / Mohamed Zakzouk. - 2015.

77 f.

Orientador: Edgard Barki.

Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo.

1. Adolescentes pobres. 2. Carreiras e oportunidades. 3. Capital humano. 4. Classe média. 5. Mobilidade social. I. Barki, Edgard. II. Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo. III. Título.

CDU 331.961

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Approval Date

____/____/____

Committee members:

Prof. Dr. Edgard Elie Roger Barki

Prof. Dr. Tania Modesto Veludo de
Oliveira

Prof. Dr. Haroldo da Gama Torres

AGRADECIMENTO | ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Eu gostaria de agradecer ao Professor Edgard Barki por supervisionar este estudo, e pelo seu inestimável aconselhamento e apoio durante todo o projeto, bem como os outros membros do comitê de defesa, Professora Oliveira e Professor Torres, pelas suas observações e sugestões construtivas.

Gostaria também de agradecer a Géraldine Challe pelo seu apoio com informações de fundo e pesquisa preliminar; a Professora Isabela Curado pelo seus comentários sobre o questionário de pesquisa; a Bruna M. Cenço, o Sergio Andrade, a Silvana Gusmano e o Pierre-Eloi Gay-Tabarly pela sua ajuda a organizar e coordenar a reunião do grupo de foco no Gol de Letra na Vila Albertina; a Angela Aparecida Sao José Ferreira pela sua ajuda a organizar e coordenar a reunião do grupo de foco na Biblioteca Comunitária UNAS na Heliópolis; o Padre Assis, o Fred Rio, a Joelma Silva e a Edna Maria da Silva pela sua ajuda a organizar e coordenar a reunião do grupo de foco na Arca do Saber na Vila Prudente; e a Maria de Lourdes Andrade de Souza, a Jane Rodrigues e a Bérengère Petit pela sua ajuda a organizar e coordenar a reunião do grupo de foco na Associação Vila Nova Esperança na Vila Nova Esperança.

Por último, mas não menos importante, gostaria de agradecer aos 25 participantes (cujos nomes devem permanecer anônimos) por compartilhar seus conhecimentos e ideias durante as reuniões do grupo de foco, assim como meus ex-alunos da Arca do Saber e UNAS Heliópolis por inspirarem o estudo.

I would like to thank Professor Barki for supervising this study, and for his invaluable advice and support throughout the project, as well as the other members of the defence committee, Professor Oliveira and Professor Torres, for their constructive comments and feedback.

I would also like to thank Géraldine Challe for her support with background information and preliminary research; Professor Curado for her feedback on the research questionnaire; Bruna M. Cenço, Sergio Andrade, Silvana Gusmano and Pierre-Eloi Gay-Tabarly for their help in organizing and coordinating the focus group meeting at *Gol de Letra* in Vila Albertina; Angela Aparecida Sao José Ferreira for her help in organizing and coordinating the focus group meeting at the *Biblioteca Comunitária UNAS* in Heliópolis; Padre Assis, Fred Rio, Joelma Silva and Edna Maria da Silva for their help in organizing and coordinating the focus group meeting at *Arca do Saber* in Vila Prudente; and Maria de Lourdes Andrade de Souza, Jane Rodrigues and Bérengère Petit for their help in organizing and coordinating the focus group meeting at the *Associação Vila Nova Esperança* in Vila Nova Esperança.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the 25 participants (whose names are to remain anonymous) for sharing their knowledge and insights during the focus group meetings, as well as my former students at *Arca do Saber* and *UNAS Heliópolis* for inspiring the study.

RESUMO

No Brasil, os jovens de baixa renda estão propensos ao desemprego, o que é particularmente problemático em uma economia emergente onde a desigualdade de renda é relativamente alta, e onde o desenvolvimento socioeconômico futuro pode depender do crescimento e da estabilidade de uma classe média já vulnerável. Além disso, o desemprego entre os jovens, especialmente em cidades urbanas, está associado a elevada incidência de violência, comportamento ilegal, aumento da desigualdade e instabilidade sociopolítica. Este estudo complementa tentativas existentes de promover as perspectivas de emprego da juventude brasileira, investigando as aspirações profissionais de 25 adolescentes que vivem em comunidades de baixa renda na zona urbana de São Paulo. A pesquisa foi realizada através de grupos de foco durante o período de quatro encontros nas comunidades paulistanas de Vila Albertina, Heliópolis, Vila Prudente e Vila Nova Esperança. Os resultados da pesquisa repetem, em grande parte, o conhecimento existente que diz respeito a adolescentes; eles confirmam o papel importante que o mérito individual, o microambiente e os modelos exemplares (isto é, familiares, colegas e educadores locais) têm de moldar e possibilitar (ou impedir) os planos de carreira de jovens adultos, e destacam a flexibilidade e a diversidade de interesses profissionais nesta faixa etária. Ademais, os resultados revelam atitudes paradoxais face às comunidades de baixa renda em São Paulo. Todos os participantes pareciam empoderados por elementos dentro de seu microambiente, exibiam sentimentos de orgulho e que faziam parte de sua comunidade; porém, muitos pareciam perturbados pela maneira como pessoas de fora estereotipam ou estigmatizam os moradores da "favela". Ao todo, o estudo destaca tendências que sustentam razões para maiores investimentos no desenvolvimento profissional dos jovens de baixa renda. Na qualidade de um ecossistema com potencial para desenvolvimento socioeconômico, as comunidades de baixa renda podem constituir uma fonte rica não apenas de recursos humanos, mas também de oportunidades comerciais e empregos.

Palavras-chaves: *Jovens de baixa renda, Carreiras e oportunidades, Capital humano, Mobilidade social, Classe média, Adolescentes, Base da pirâmide.*

ABSTRACT

In Brazil, low-income youth is prone to unemployment, which is particularly problematic in an emerging economy where income inequality is relatively high, and where future socioeconomic development may depend on the growth and stability of an already vulnerable middle class. Furthermore, youth unemployment, especially in urban cities, is associated with high incidents of violence, illegal behaviour, widening inequality and sociopolitical instability. The present study complements existing efforts to advance the employment prospects of Brazilian youth, by exploring the career aspirations of 25 late adolescents living in low-income communities in urban Sao Paulo. The research was conducted by means of focus groups, over the course of four meetings in the Paulistano communities of Vila Albertina, Heliopolis, Vila Prudente and Vila Nova Esperança. The research findings largely echo existing knowledge pertaining to adolescents; they confirm the important role of individual merit, the micro-environment and role models (namely family, peers and local educators) in shaping and enabling (or hindering) the career paths of young adults, and highlight the flexibility and diversity of professional interests during that age. Furthermore, the findings reveal paradoxical attitudes towards low-income communities in Sao Paulo. All participants seemed empowered by elements within their micro-environment, exhibiting sentiments of pride and belonging to their community, yet many seemed troubled by how outsiders stereotype or stigmatize “*favela*” dwellers. Overall, the study highlights tendencies that support the case for further investment in the professional development of youth at the base of the economic pyramid. As a potential ecosystem for socioeconomic development, low-income communities can constitute a rich source of not only human capital, but also business opportunities and employment.

Key words: Low-income youth, Careers and opportunities, Human capital, Social mobility, Middle class, Adolescents, Base of the pyramid (BoP).

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“Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies.”

– Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General, United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment figures since Brazil’s economic adjustments of the 1980s indicate that young adults have been the most vulnerable to unemployment—a trend that continued despite major improvements in the country’s economic stability after 1995 (Filho and Scorzafave, 2009). Low-income youth is believed to be particularly vulnerable. According to the World Bank (World Bank, 2007, p.16-17), Brazilian youth from the poorest families have the “highest unemployment rates across the family income distribution.” Furthermore, there is evidence that young people who are neither employed, nor studying or in training (NEET, or “*nem-nem*”¹ as they are known in Brazil) come from the poorest households in Brazil, with the “highest rates of worklessness and the lowest levels of educational attainment” (OECD, 2014, p.32). Brazil has a higher *nem-nem* rate than the OECD average (Figure 1), which is problematic, considering that *nem-nems* face the “greatest risk of economic and social exclusion” (OECD, 2014, p.32). In 2012, the number of *nem-nem* Brazilians aged 15-29 reached 9.6 million, representing one in five people of their age group, according to the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*, IBGE (Andrade,2013).

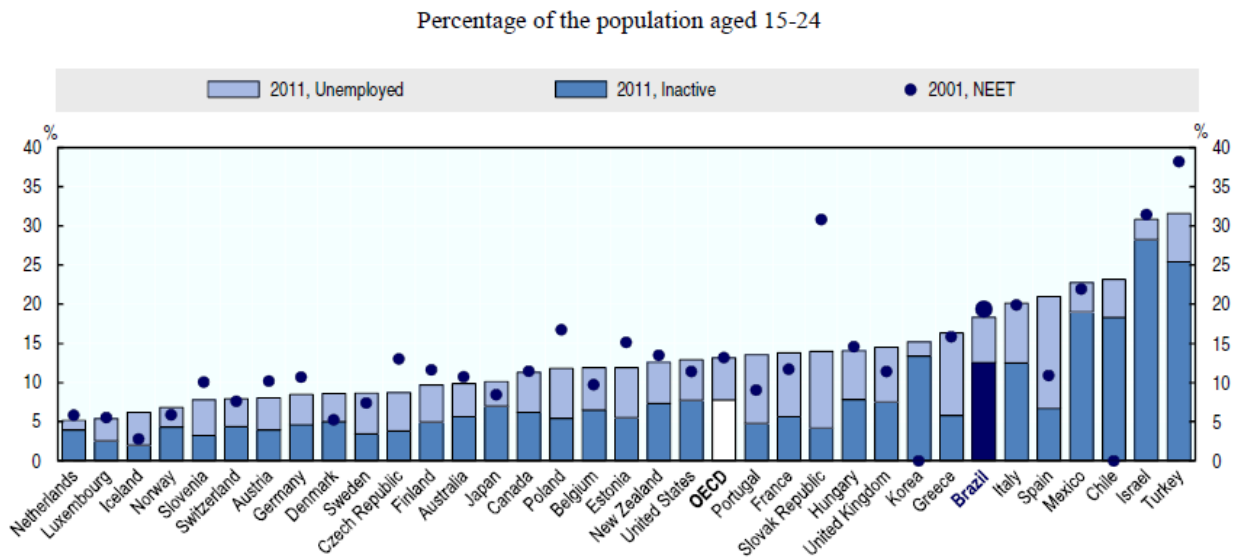


Figure 1: *Nem-Nem* (or NEET) Rates in Brazil and OECD Countries, 2001-11

Source: OECD (2014, p.32)

¹ The term *nem-nem* originates from the description “*nem estudando nem trabalhando*,” which means “neither studying nor working.”

Even though its population growth has been on the decline persistently since the 1980s, Brazil remains a young society (Figure 2; IBGE, 2010; OECD, 2014). According to the OECD (2014), the country is experiencing a “youth wave” at a time when the younger portion of the workforce seems to be experiencing “significant labour market difficulties” (2014, p.11). Young Brazilians are “over three times more likely to be unemployed than adults” (2014, p.11)—in 2012, 15-24 year-olds represented 24.4% of the country’s working-age population, and 46.3% of its unemployed (OECD, 2014, p.29). Their employment volatility and job turnover rates are high; educational attainment low; and their high cost of hiring (for employers) makes the low-skilled and disadvantaged among them even more vulnerable to unemployment (OECD, 2014, p.11). Furthermore, the OECD demonstrates that Brazilian youth generally hold poorer jobs than their adult counterparts, in sectors that “tend to be characterised by high turnover as well as more precarious work” (Figure 3; OECD, 2014, p.131). According to a 2008 survey of Brazilian youth, 61% identified the “lack of work opportunities as the most important challenge facing their age group, and 44% believed that youth employment programmes should be the government’s number one priority” (OECD, 2014, p.29).

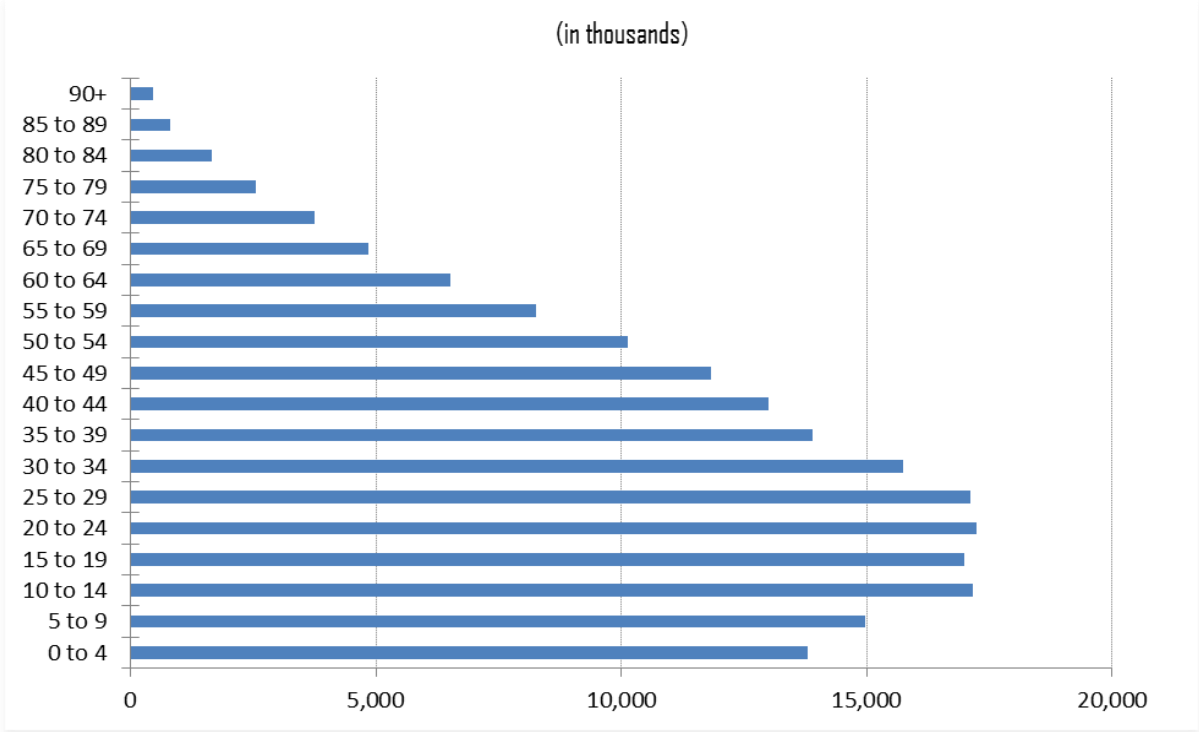


Figure 2: Brazil’s Population by Age Group, based on 2010 Census

Source: IBGE (2010)

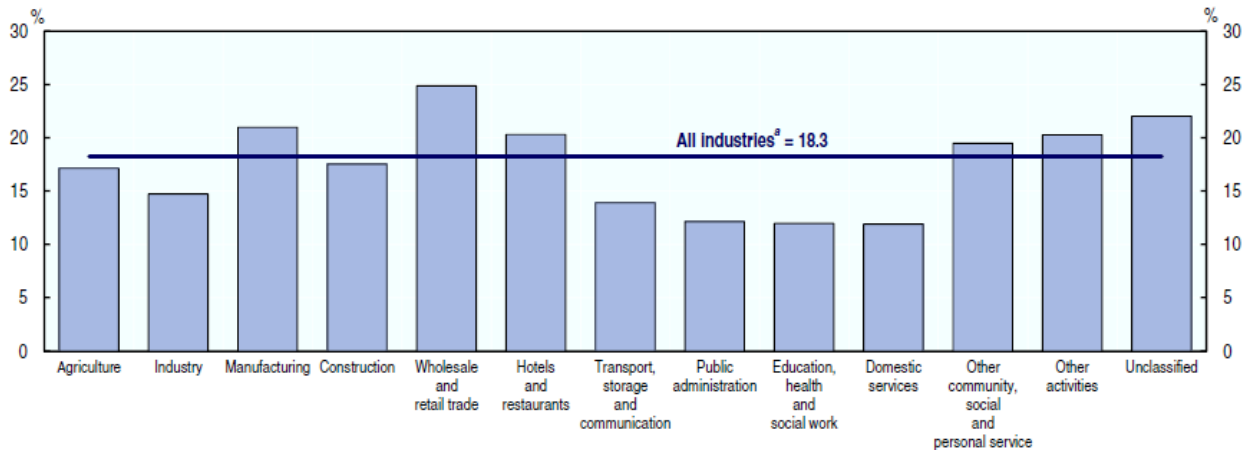


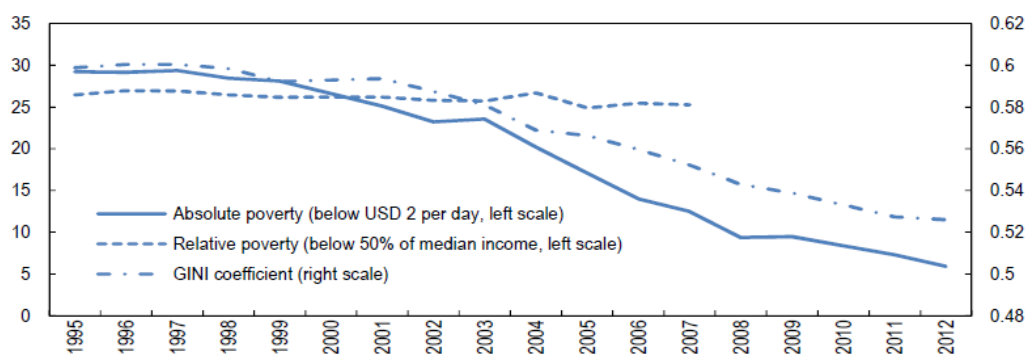
Figure 3: Proportion of Workforce aged 15-24 by Industry in Brazil, 2012

Source: OECD (2014, p.131)

Youth unemployment, especially in urban cities, has been linked to high incidents of violence, illegal behaviour, widening inequality and sociopolitical instability (Ali, 2014; World Bank, 2007). This is particularly problematic in Brazil, considering the country’s relatively high income inequality (OECD, 2013b, p.81) and the sheer size of its young population (Figure 2). According to Ali (2014, p.13), “high concentrations of unemployed, disenfranchised youth in rapidly growing urban centers has led to explosive conditions that have resulted in social upheaval, political crisis, instability, and violence.” The author further states that the lack of employment opportunities for urban youth is among “the greatest security and development challenges today [...]” (Ali, 2014, p.13). Furthermore, according to the World Bank’s (2007) conservative estimates of the various costs to society of risky behaviour by young people (especially at-risk youth), the economic costs of *not* investing in youth, over the lifetime of a single youth cohort, can represent 12 to 21 percent of the country’s GDP (World Bank, 2007, p.44).

The threat of risk behaviour aside, the professional development of low-income youth is economically favourable in an emerging economy where the middle class has been rapidly expanding. According to Arnold and Jalles (2014), even though Brazil continues to have one of the highest inequality levels in the world, income inequality has been declining constantly since the late 1990s (Figure 4). Between 2003 and 2014, the population’s share of the C-class (i.e., the middle class) increased from 66 million to 115 million, while the D- and E-classes (i.e., members

of the base of the economic pyramid, or the BoP) were in decline (Arnold and Jalles, 2014, p.7). A growing middle class is typically associated with sociopolitical development, economic growth and increased international investment opportunities (Pezzini, 2012; Invesco, 2014); however, there are concerns that the “new” middle classes of emerging economies (including Brazil) may not be sustainable: “Their employment (many work in the informal sector), education (few have university degrees) and consumer behaviour do not coincide with perceptions of a middle class that drives domestic consumption and growth” (Pezzini, 2012). Furthermore, the OECD (2013a) warns that the capacity of the “new” middle classes to sustain economic development, particularly in Latin American, may be threatened by their general inability to contribute to the diversification of the economy towards industries with a higher value added (i.e., beyond the early-phase of economic development)—a phenomenon known as the middle income trap (OECD, 2013a, p.66). Achieving further economic development in Brazil requires improvements to labour productivity (Canuto *et al.*, 2013), as well as a “functional upgrading” that involves the “development of knowledge-based assets resulting from a commitment to innovation and human capital [...]” (OECD, 2013a, p.85). In that sense, the vulnerability of Brazil’s “new” middle class highlights the importance of fostering a competent future labour force, particularly among the most vulnerable to returning to previous levels of poverty (i.e., the least privileged of the middle class, or the wealthiest of the BoP).



How to read this chart: Absolute poverty headcount refers to per cent of the population with household income per capita below the extreme poverty line set out in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations (USD 2 per day). Relative poverty is the per cent of the population with per capita income below 50% of the median income. The Gini coefficient measures the inequality of distribution on a scale between 0 and 1 with higher values representing more income inequality.

Figure 4: Inequality and poverty over time (Brazil)

Source: Arnold and Jalles (2014, p.5)

The rise in upward social mobility among Brazilians is owed largely to policy choices that support social inclusion, particularly with regards to improvements in access to education, labour market conditions (e.g., a rise in minimum wages and labour incomes at the BoP), as well as government support through social transfer programmes, most notably *Bolsa Familia* (Arnold and Jalles, 2014; World Bank, 2015). According to Arnold and Jalles (2014), Brazil’s social policies not only raised the certification and enrollment rates over the years (Figure 5), they also had positive externalities on low-educated individuals: “as more people attained higher levels of education, skills have become less scarce and skill premiums have declined accordingly [...] Concretely, this meant that even people that were not able to improve their educational attainments personally saw their earning opportunities rise with the emergence of more skilled labour” (Arnold and Jalles, 2014, p. 13). In the meantime, many programs and policies have addressed root-causes of unemployment by aiming to improve the general education and wellbeing of youth (e.g., the *Fundo de Desenvolvimento e Manutenção do Ensino Básico e Valorização do Magisterio*, *Bolsa Familia*, and the *Abrindo Espaços*), while others have targeted employment issues more directly (e.g., the *Sistema Nacional de Emprego* and the *Programa Primeiro Emprego*).

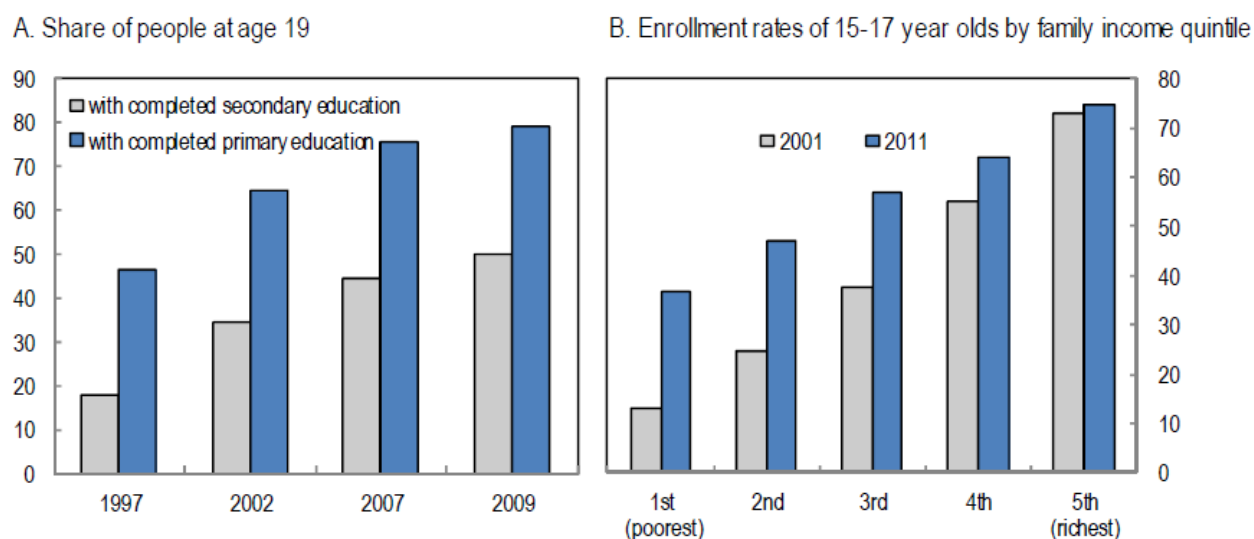


Figure 5: Progress in education

Source: Arnold and Jalles (2014, p.12)

Despite notable improvements in employment conditions at the BoP (including employability and academic qualifications), three underlying dilemmas seem to persist with regards to youth unemployment: 1) improving the employability of youth does not guarantee the availability of job vacancies (i.e., labour shortage barriers); 2) available vacancies may not correspond with the qualifications and/or interests of the individuals seeking jobs (i.e., job matching barriers); and 3) the skills that the labour market demands are difficult to predict (World Bank, 2003; World Bank, 2007; Youth Employment Inventory, 2014). It seems only logical that the need to secure future jobs for the sizeable youth population at the BoP calls for some degree of job-creation—but what kind of jobs, and in which sectors? How could policy makers align the interests of employers (i.e., the labour market) with the employment prospects of such a densely populated human resource pool? How could Brazil sustain the momentum of an emerging middle class, in order to achieve further economic growth and sociopolitical development?

This study is intended to complement existing efforts to advance the employment prospects of low-income youth by bringing forward the perspectives of young people (specifically late adolescents in the 15-19 age group) with regards to their own career aspirations. As an *exploratory* and a *qualitative* study, the primary objective is to explore shared attitudes and perceptions among low-income adolescents that are relatively privileged among their community counterparts (i.e., adolescents that already attend school, or are members of the training programs/social networks of local NGOs), in order to gain a better understanding of the primary factors that enable or hinder their professional development efforts. It is assumed that these individuals are among the most likely to experience upward social mobility from the BoP; as a result, their professional prospects are directly linked to Brazil's broader interests in fostering a sustainable middle class. The research question is presented as follows:

How do Sao Paulo's most privileged low-income adolescents (in the 15-19 age group) conceive their career aspirations?

For the purpose of this study, the term “privileged” is used to refer to adolescents that are either attending school, or are members of the training programs and social networks of local NGOs—which are typically selective about their youth memberships. The research question is concerned

with how employment-related realities are perceived and presented by these adolescents, rather than objective evidence regarding such realities. Like other qualitative studies, the analysis “accepts introspection as data,” and relies on interpretation to make sense of subjective meanings (Donoghue, 2000, p.49). Conceiving a career aspiration implies a mix of latent opinions or attitudes regarding employment—to *conceive* is to “[form] or devise (a plan or idea) in the mind [...]” or to “[form] a mental representation of [something]; imagine [it];” synonyms of the term include *think of, formulate, frame, envisage, develop* and *perceive* (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). On the other hand, an *aspiration* is a “hope or ambition of achieving something,” and is synonymous with *desire, hope, wish, goal* and *dream* (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014).

For the purpose of terminology, the term *community* is used instead of the more popular term *favela*, which is increasingly seen as a derogatory reference to low-income communities in Brazil. The term *favela*—the Brazilian equivalent of *slum*—is no longer appropriate for a growing number of low-income communities where residents have been granted property rights to their homes, and where a growing network of legitimate businesses and community services are available (Geraldine Challe, Personal Communications).² Furthermore, the terms *youth* or *adolescents* refer to *averages* and are not intended to promote stereotypes or to suggest any normative behavioural trends within the target age group. Finally, the term *low-income adolescent* is used to refer to dwellers of low-income communities. The study assumes that by living in these communities, the study participants could offer valuable insight regarding the adolescent experience in a low-income environment, regardless of their individual economic status. As previously mentioned, the study targets the most privileged at the BoP.

The following section presents a literature review highlighting key themes with regards to adolescent cognitive reasoning, decision making, and general behavioural development, followed by a section on the methodology used to address the research question, and finally, two sections outlining the research findings, analysis, implications and conclusions.

² Personal communications on 9 April 2014 with Gerladine Challe, former social worker at *Arca do Saber*, a Franco-Brazilian NGO in the community of Vila Prudente.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Low-income adolescents are difficult to generalize because of the multidimensional factors involved in shaping the cognitive and behavioural characteristics of each individual. As pointed out by the American Psychological Association (2002), an adolescent is a “package deal” that cannot be truly understood outside the context of their “family, neighbourhood, school, workplace, or community or without considering such factors as gender, race, sexual orientation, disability or chronic illness, and religious beliefs” (APA, 2002, p.5). Furthermore, despite certain commonalities within their cultural and socioeconomic environments, dwellers of Sao Paulo’s low-income communities constitute a broad demographic that is also difficult to generalize. A study by Saraiva and Marques (2007) reveals notable socioeconomic variations across Paulistano “*favelas*”, arguing that even though many communities have experienced significant development strides over the years, the impacts have not been equally felt across all communities, leading to a situation of “social heterogeneity” (nonetheless, one of overall “poverty,” according to the authors). Similarly, Challe’s (2014) study of 49 families in Vila Prudente presents a fairly wide spectrum of socioeconomic situations across families within the same community, revealing variations with regards to family structure, income levels, education, as well as risks and vulnerabilities, such as unemployment, disability, substance abuse, etc. (Challé, 2014).

The diversity of socioeconomic situations that can be observed across Sao Paulo’s low-income communities is illustrative of the broadness and versatility of what constitutes “poverty” in practice. Far from the \$1-a-day threshold that defines *extreme poverty* (UNESCO, 2014), 27 of the 49 families in Challé’s (2014) study have an income that exceeds Brazil’s minimum wage salary, and 43 are homeowners.³ Are these families “poor,” according to Saraiva and Marques’ (2007) characterization of Sao Paulo’s “*favelas*”? Indeed, UNESCO’s (2014) definition of *relative poverty* broadens the parameters of poverty by assessing socioeconomic status in relation

³ The minimum wage used in Challé’s study is R\$724, Brazil’s minimum wage in January 2014. Of the 49 families, 3 had no income, 19 lived on up to one minimum wage salary, 19 lived on more than one and up to two minimum wage salaries, 6 lived on more than two and up to three minimum wage salaries, and 2 lived on more than three minimum wage salaries. Most families (34 of the 49 families) had only one or two children, and in 26 of the 49 families, there were four people or less living in the same household (14 of the family homes housed three people, 12 housed four people, 8 housed five people, and the rest housed six or more people). (Challé, 2014)

to the rest of society, so that even if dwellers of Sao Paulo's low-income communities do not live in *absolute poverty* (or "severe deprivation of basic human needs"), they arguably live in *relative poverty*, where access to resources "deviates from the societal average" (Raphael, 2013, p.5). In other words, they reside in communities that are considered to be at the base of the city's socioeconomic pyramid.

The evolution in the understanding and application of the term "poverty" has occurred in conjunction with shifts in international development ethos, from one of approaching poverty as a "culture" in the mid-20th century, to one of viewing poverty as a consequence of ineffective market employment in the 1980s, to broader understandings of poverty as a situation of vulnerabilities and deficient freedoms (Frediani, 2007, p.135). According to Frediani (2007, p.136), much of the current development logic is influenced by Sen's (1999) concept of 'development as freedom'— particularly his 'capability approach', which de-emphasizes the exclusive preoccupation with income-based approaches, and focuses more generally on "the ability people have to achieve the things they value." In Sen's (1999, p.3) words, development requires "the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states." By expanding substantive freedoms, Sen argues that attention gets directed to the "ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means [e.g., gross national product, personal incomes, etc.] that, inter alia, play a prominent part in the process" (Sen, 1999, p.3). Sen's work has also inspired modern understandings of *vulnerability* as a "function of the relative status of socioeconomic groups," including income, class, clan and political affiliation (Ribot, 1995, p.120). Just as dwellers of Sao Paulo's low-income communities can be considered relatively poor, they are also believed to be relatively vulnerable to socioeconomic risks, such as higher likelihoods of school dropout, unemployment, and downward social mobility (OECD, 2014; World Bank, 2007; Arnold and Jalles, 2014; Pezzini, 2012).

The following sections explore the primary individual and social factors that characterize the process of adolescence, with some emphasis on low-income environments.

A. Cognitive Development during Adolescence

There appears to be broad consensus, according to the literature, that adolescence is a period of heightened cognitive and emotional development, where individuals begin to establish a sense of social and economic independence and acquire the skills needed to live as adults (Court, 2013; Spear, 2000; APA, 2002; WHO, 2014). According to Spear (2000a), the adolescent transition from youth to adulthood, which is common among a number of mammalian species, is typically a period where individuals acquire the skills necessary to survive as independent adults. Furthermore, Court (2013, p.883) states that adolescence is a period of “learning and social development, a time for determining a career and embarking on appropriate training.” Similarly, the APA describes adolescence as a time when individuals develop the ability to think in “shades of grey”, and thus become able to engage in “the kind of introspection and mature decision making that was previously beyond their cognitive capacity”—such as reflection, reasoning, evaluating alternatives, setting personal goals, and planning for the future (APA, 2002, p.11).

During adolescence, individuals go through a process known as cognitive pruning, where the gray matter in the brain is thinned (Chick and Reyna, 2012; Court, 2013). According to Chick and Reyna (2012, p.379), the process follows a “less is more” theme, allowing adolescents to process “fewer, higher quality aspects of information as they approach adulthood, a shift in processing reflected in a more streamlined, efficient, and interconnected neural network.” Furthermore, Court (2013) highlights the development of the areas of the prefrontal cortex responsible for executive behaviour, social behaviour, and motivation. The author states that these developments influence “attentional control, the manipulation of stored knowledge and the modulation of complex actions, cognition and emotional behaviour” (Court, 2013, p.883).

Despite their improved cognitive capacity, adolescents are also known to be relatively impulsive or emotionally-driven. According to Casey *et al.* (2008), the increased emotional reactivity during adolescence is associated with the slower development rate of the prefrontal cortex, which supports self-control among other things, relative to the limbic system, which governs emotions,

pleasure-seeking and other behavioural tendencies (Figure 6). The authors provide evidence, based on human brain imaging and animal studies, that individuals exhibit “heightened responsiveness to incentives and socio-emotional contexts” during that age (Casey *et al.*, 2008, p.111). They argue that although adolescents are capable of making rational decisions, they “will rely less on intellectual capabilities and more on feelings” when making immediate personal decisions, or in emotionally charged situations: “when a poor decision is made in the heat of the moment, the adolescent may know better, but the salience of the emotional context biases his or her behavior in opposite direction of the optimal action” (Casey *et al.*, 2008, p. 122).

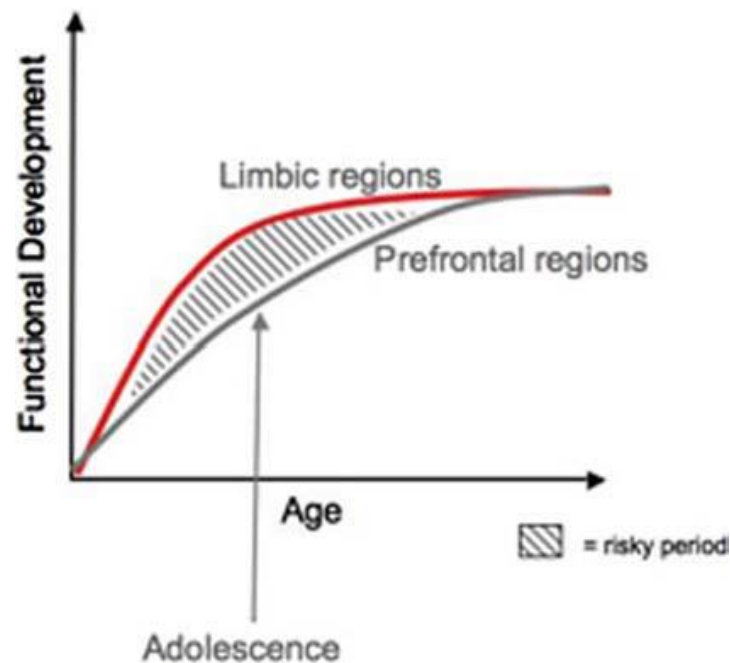


Figure 6: Development of the Prefrontal Cortex relative to Subcortical Limbic Regions

Source: Casey *et al.* (2008, p.116)

Similarly, Steinberg (2007) states that studies of different mammalian species indicate “an especially significant increase in reward salience [...] around the time of puberty, consistent with human studies showing that increases in sensation seeking occur relatively early in adolescence and are correlated with pubertal maturation [...]” (Steinberg, 2007, p.57). According to Court (2013, p.884), the increased-reward seeking behaviour during that age poses “a window of vulnerability” to unhealthy environmental influences—particularly in situations involving immediate reward. A number of other studies present similar findings (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2011; APA, 2002; World Bank, 2007).

Some analysts suggest that low-income youth face tougher development challenges due to their disadvantaged socioeconomic situation, mostly because of limited access to the resources necessary for favourable cognitive development (Baldwin, 2007; Kitano, 2007; Ford, 2007). For example, in Baldwin's (2007, p.23) view, "[in] poverty situations, it is clear that children who are born with potential will be affected by poor environmental situations that limit optimal brain development." Similarly, Ford (2007, p.38) argues that the cognitive inequalities between rich and poor become magnified over time, as low-income youth are systematically subjected to lesser educational resources than their more advantaged counterparts.

B. Identity Formation and Self-Esteem

"Poverty. Oh it's the absolute truth. It had to do more with the impact on your self-concept. [...] It was a struggle just to look nice every day. You look at folks, and I knew I was smarter than they were, but they had so much more. That was probably one of the biggest obstacles [...]" –Participant discussing her high school years in a study of gifted women of colour in the United States (Kitano, 2007)

In addition to being an age of heightened cognitive development, adolescence is also known to be a critical period for identity formation (WHO, 2014; APA, 2002), including:

- A. *self-concept*, such as "beliefs about one's attributes (e.g., tall, intelligent), roles and goals (e.g., occupation one wants to have when grown), and interests, values, and beliefs (e.g., religious, political)" (APA, 2002, p.15); and
- B. *self-esteem*, which can be defined as "the extent to which one prizes, values, approves, or likes oneself" or "the overall affective evaluation of one's own worth, value, or importance" (Twenge and Campbell, 2002, p.59). Self-esteem can involve self-perception as a whole, or only certain parts of the self, such as being a student or a potential employee. (APA, 2002)

The APA (2002, p.15) further states that identity refers to more than the self-perception of adolescents in the present time; it also includes the "possible self"—or, "what individuals might become and who they would like to become [...]." Similarly, in a 2009 presentation to the National Academy of Sciences, Dahl (2009) argues that goals are often linked to social identity during adolescence. He describes the age as "a period of intensity when the developing sense of

self is sculpted by context and experience,” but also as “a time when adolescents can be idealistic and passionate about positive goals, whether in sports, literature, the arts, or politics and can begin trying to change the world in positive ways” (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.44). In that sense, adolescence is also viewed as a period where experimentation, or exploring different paths and interests, is considered “developmentally appropriate” (APA, 2002, p.15).

In general, self-esteem has a positive correlation with an individual’s persistence to succeed in achieving their goals, and, in people with high self-esteem, the drive towards success tends to get even stronger after failure (McFarlin *et al.*, 1984). According to a study by Orth *et al.* (2012), self-esteem tends to increase from adolescence to adulthood, peaking at age 50, and then declining into old age (Figure 7). For low-income individuals, however, Twenge and Campbell (2002, p.67) found a “small but statistically significant” correlation between self-esteem and socioeconomic status (SES), suggesting that living in a low-income environment may have a negative impact on self-esteem. The authors base their results on three possible models that link self-esteem with SES:

1. *The social indicator or salience model*, which predicts a positive correlation between elevated self-esteem and elevated SES: “If an individual aspires to success in the form of social status and wealth and achieves these goals, elevated self-esteem should result. Conversely, the individual who does not achieve social status may suffer from lowered self-esteem” (Twenge and Campbell, 2002, p.60).
2. *The reflected appraisals model*, which also predicts a positive correlation, by hypothesizing that self-esteem is affected by how individuals internalize others’ perceptions of themselves: “If others see us as lower class and lower status, we are likely to see ourselves that way and therefore experience lower self-esteem” (Twenge and Campbell, 2002, p.61).
3. *The self-protective mechanisms model*, which predicts a more neutral correlation, by positing that individuals possess self-protective strategies that guard them from external feedback pertaining to SES—for example, low-income individuals may use a “self-serving bias” by taking credit for their SES achievements but blaming external factors for their lowered SES, or they may “maintain self-esteem by always comparing themselves

to those who are less fortunate, no matter what level of SES they have obtained” (Twenge and Campbell, 2002, p.62).

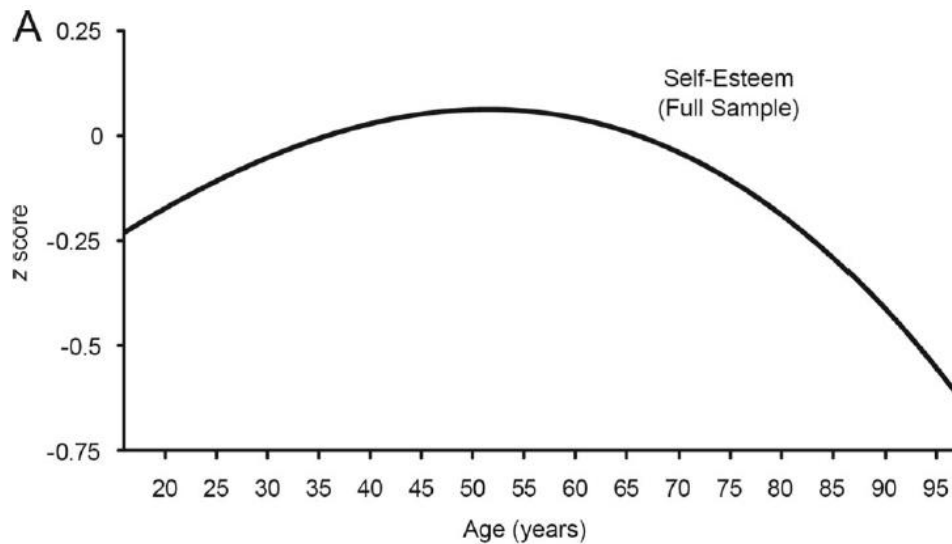


Figure 7: Self-Esteem and Age

Source: Orth *et al.* (2012, p.1278)

Twenge and Campbell (2002, p.67) state, however, that the correlation between SES and self-esteem tends to be less pronounced during childhood and adolescence, when SES reflects the parents’ (rather than the children’s) earned status. Their study shows that the correlation increases progressively, peaking at middle age, and then declining past the age of 60 (Figure 8; Twenge and Campbell, 2002).⁴ On the other hand, Kitano (2007) and Baldwin (2007) suggest that poverty, which often affects identity and self-concept from a very young age, can take a persistent toll on an individual’s self-esteem. For example, Baldwin (2007, p.23) states that “[a] child of poverty can have inherited the same amount of potential as a child of more advanced means, but the poor child’s potential might not be recognized because his or her environmental influences did not provide the necessary nurturing.” From the perspective of the reflected appraisals model discussed above, Baldwin’s statement could indeed suggest a higher likelihood

⁴ Contrary to what Figure 8 may suggest, Twenge and Campbell (2002, p.65) state that “[high] school and college students did not differ significantly in effect size. The slightly smaller effect size in college students might have been caused by reduced variance in SES in this group.”

of low self-esteem in some “children of poverty,” although the implications of her statement, according to the self-protective mechanisms model, could be interpreted differently.

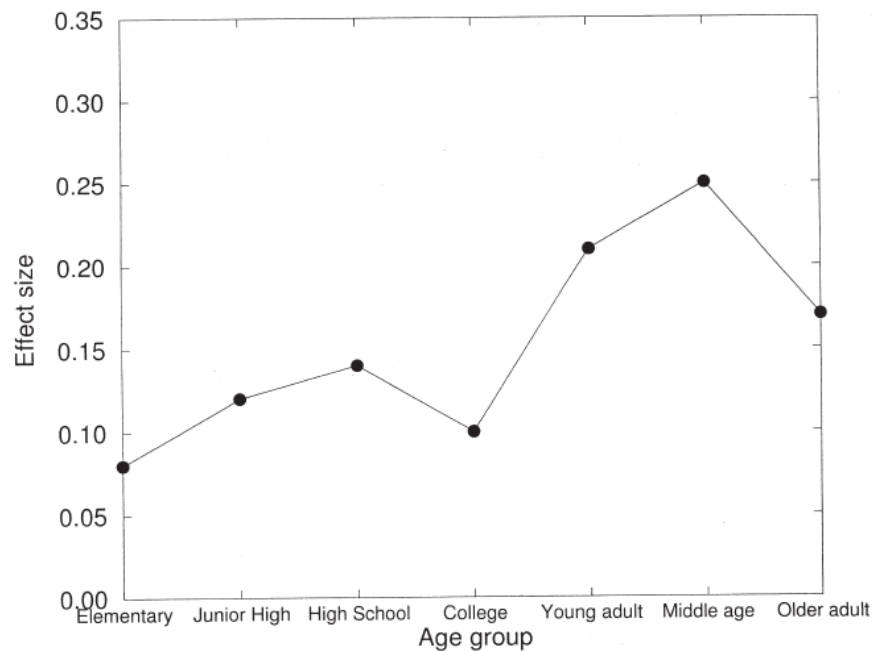


Figure 8: Effect of Age on the Correlation between Socioeconomic Status on Self-Esteem

Source: Twenge and Campbell (2002, p.66)

Regardless of the direct link between SES and self-esteem, many researchers associate SES-related factors, such as income, education or occupation, with levels of self-esteem (Orth *et al.*, 2012; Trujillo *et al.*, 2010; Twenge and Campbell, 2002). For example, a study by Orth *et al.* (2012, p.1278) found a positive correlation between self-esteem and levels of education for different age groups, by “plotting the predicted self-esteem trajectory for individuals with high (i.e., one standard-deviation unit above the mean) and low (i.e., one standard-deviation unit below the mean) levels of education.” As figure 9 demonstrates, the study findings reveal consistently higher self-esteem levels in participants with higher education levels compared to those with lower education levels—although the self-esteem trajectory reveals a similar curvilinear trend in both cases (Orth *et al.*, 2012, p.1283). On the other hand, the authors state that their findings, overall, are consistent with the hypothesis that self-esteem is a “cause rather than a consequence,” of life outcomes: “self-esteem was prospectively related to higher levels of relationship satisfaction, job satisfaction, occupational status, salary, and physical health,

controlling for prior levels of these variables, but none of these life outcomes had reciprocal effects on self-esteem (or, if significant, the coefficients were small)” (Orth *et al.*, 2012, p.1283).

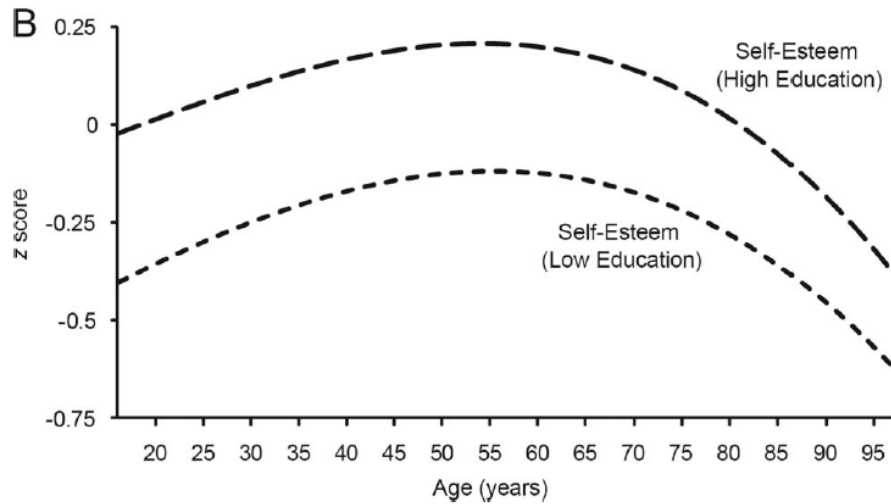


Figure 9: Self-Esteem and Levels of Education

Source: Orth *et al.* (2012, p.1278)

It seems reasonable to conclude, based on the literature, that self-esteem is a broad concept with notable individual variations, and is therefore difficult to generalize for practical purposes (also, considering its small correlation with SES, as shown by Twenge and Campbell). Contrary to popular opinion, McFarlin *et al.* (1984) challenge the assumption that self-esteem is inherently conducive to success (or “optimal functioning”), by showing that individuals with high self-esteem often persist unproductively in situations where quitting (or moving on) would be more constructive. According to the authors, “high self-esteem can mean delusionally conceited as easily as low self-esteem can mean pathologically insecure” (McFarlin *et al.*, 1984, p.153). Furthermore, Swann and Seyle (2006, p.203) point out that self-esteem is an abstraction: “a fiction we construct to make sense of who we are, what others think of us, and how we should behave,” and a “constantly updated filter” (as opposed to a fixed structure) that varies greatly across individuals and is likely to change over time. The authors highlight the complexity of separating the individual and social processes involved in self-esteem, stating that “intrapersonal concepts can exist only insofar as they receive nourishment from the interpersonal arena which is in turn guided by intrapersonal processes” (Swann and Seyle, 2006, p.203). The following section explores in more detail the susceptibility of adolescents to social influence.

C. The Balance of Social Influence

There appears to be broad consensus, according to the literature, that adolescence is a period where social influence has a critical impact on individual behaviour and attitudes (APA, 2002; World Bank, 2007; IOM and NRC, 2011; World Health Organization, 2014). In a 2009 presentation to the National Academy of Sciences, Dahl (2009) highlights a “delicate balance” between the *affective load* (e.g., social stress and conflict, peer and media influence, etc.) and the sources of *regulatory control*, both internally (e.g., self-regulation) and externally (e.g., social support and adult monitoring), in how adolescents think and behave (IOM and NRC, 2011). As Figure 10 demonstrates, the affective load increases sharply at puberty, thereby heightening the impacts of pubertal drives and emotions, peer and media influence, anxiety and social stresses. On the other hand, social support and adult monitoring play an important role on the regulatory control side, which develops more slowly, as previously discussed (Casey *et al.*, 2008). Dahl (2009) points to a host of factors—such as disadvantages in the living environment, social support systems, or individual differences/genetic variability—that can tip the balance in one direction or the other (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.43).

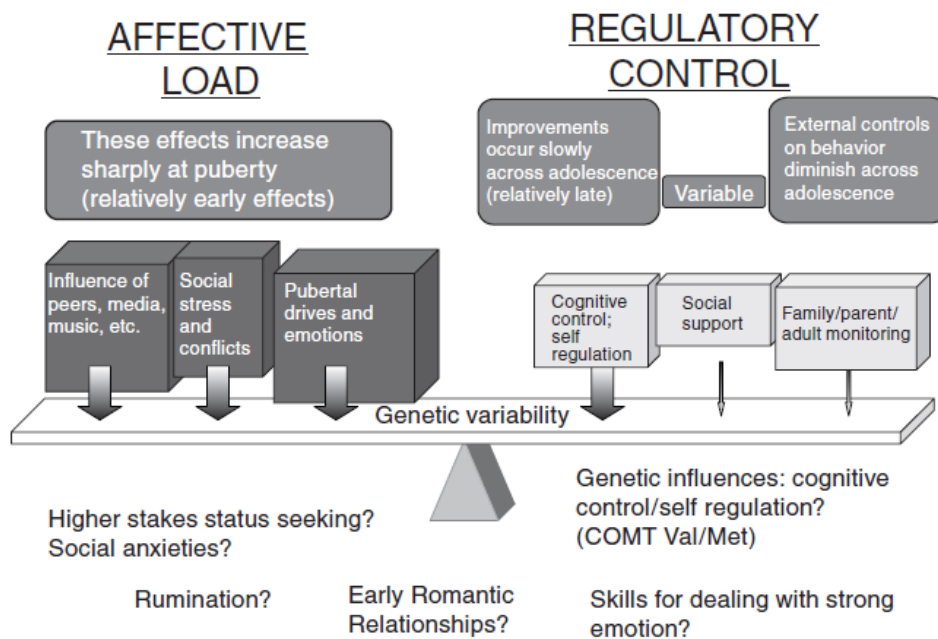


Figure 10: Balance between affective load and sources of regulatory control

Source: IOM and NRC (2011, p.43), based on Dahl (2009)

Similarly, in its study on at-risk youth in Brazil, the World Bank argues that youth behaviour can be understood by analysing the interaction among three dimensions:

1. *the individual* (e.g., biological attributes and personal merit);
2. *the micro-environment*, including the family, peers, community members and social networks; and
3. *the macro-environment*, including the larger socioeconomic, cultural and historical realities—although the Bank states that macro-environmental factors are the least important, based on evidence from the United States (World Bank, 2007, pp.46-49).

As Figure 11 demonstrates, the interaction between individual and micro-/macro-environmental factors during childhood affects behavioural patterns during adolescence (e.g., professional development, sexual behaviour, engagement in risky activities, etc.), which, in turn, affects life outcomes in adulthood (e.g., employment, income, social status, health and general wellbeing). The Bank’s model is based on the Ecological Framework for Human Development, which posits that “how young people at the age 15 behave is a result of events, relationships, and influences that they have experienced over their lifetimes, combined with the person’s unique psychological composition” (World Bank, 2007, p.46). The Ecological Transactional Framework presents a similar interaction between individual and external factors, but emphasizes the role of the family in helping adolescents navigate through important social challenges (Figure 12).

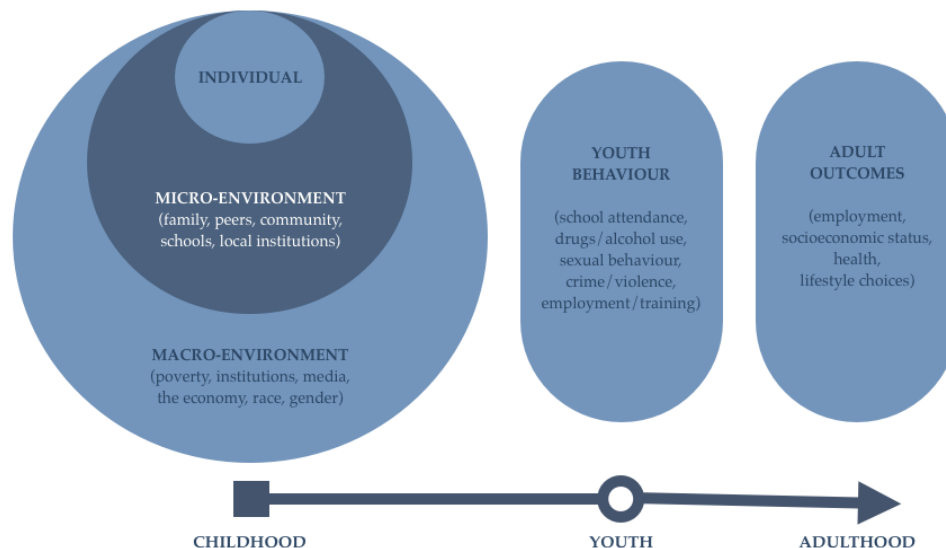


Figure 11: Factors that Affect Young People’s Propensity to Engage in Risky Behaviour

Source: adapted from World Bank’s (2007) figure.

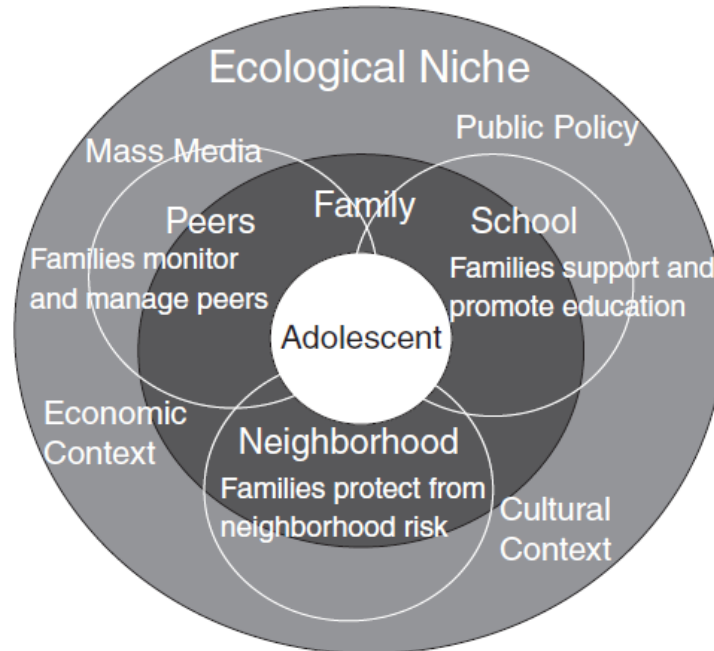


Figure 12: The Ecological Transactional Framework

Source: IOM and NRC (2011, p.62)

Numerous other experts explore how different social factors and SES (particularly within the micro-environment) may affect the life outcomes of adolescents (Ford, 2007; Kitano, 2007; Baldwin, 2007; APA, 2002). For example, the APA (2002, p.11) stresses the importance of parents (and other trusted adults) in the cognitive and emotional development of adolescents, stating that adolescents need adult guidance, particularly when it comes to important life decisions such as “attending college, finding a job, or handling finances.” Furthermore, Kitano (2007, p.33) suggests that low-income youth is more likely to succeed in a home environment “characterized by warmth and stability of mother-child interactions and opportunities for learning.” Ford (2007, p.37) also highlights the role of SES in the family, arguing that individuals growing up in high SES environments have “qualitatively and quantitatively more opportunities to develop their gifts and talents than other children.” The author cites different studies that show that higher SES families tend to expose their children to more (and better) educational opportunities and professional development resources than lower SES families (Ford, 2007, p.37).

Similarly, a number of researchers correlate youth behaviour and life outcomes with neighbourhood characteristics, or community-based factors (Sampson *et al.*, 2002; Ford, 2007; Kitano, 2007; IOM and NRC, 2011). For example, in a 2009 presentation to the National Academy of Sciences (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.79), Leventhal identifies three factors that could link neighbourhood structure to adolescent behaviour: 1) *institutional resources*—i.e., “the hypothesis that young people are influenced by the quality, quantity, diversity, and affordability of neighborhood resources (e.g., schools, health and social services, recreational and social programs, employment opportunities)”; 2) *norms and collective efficacy*, or a neighborhood’s ability to work collectively for the common good, and to demonstrate concern for the wellbeing of others; and 3) *social ties and relationships*, particularly in how they affect the family—for example, a disadvantaged neighbourhood is likely to contribute to “family stress and economic hardship, which, in turn, can have negative consequences on parental well-being, parenting, and adolescent outcomes.” Similarly, Gorman-Smith (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.79) identifies four mechanisms through which the community influences young people: 1) *social connection/support*, 2) *social norms*, 3) *informal social control*, and 4) *routine activities*. However, Gordon-Smith also points out that the correlation between wealth and social organization is generally mild in the literature, arguing that the “important question not easily answered [...] is how some neighbourhoods develop social supports and others do not” (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.80).

Discussions of peer influence are particularly prominent in the literature on adolescence—likely because individuals in that age group tend to increase their preference to socialize with their peers, which may be to help develop social skills towards independence (Spear, 2000b, p.116), and/or because of the common belief that peer influence plays a critical role in promoting risk behaviour (Brown *et al.*, 2008; APA, 2002; World Bank, 2007; IOM and NRC, 2011). According to Prinstein (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.64), peer-influence among adolescents can be explained through two concurrent tendencies: 1) the tendency to “belong to homogeneous peer groups” by electing to socialize with individuals who are “already similar to themselves,” and/or 2) the tendency to “adopt” the behaviours and traits of the people or groups with whom the adolescent socializes. Similarly, Dodge (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.69) argues that “[the] general

tendency is for groups to harmonize,” so that traits that are common among the majority get adopted by other individuals within the group, for better or for worse.

In line with Casey *et al.*'s (2008) evidence of the differential development rate of the limbic versus prefrontal regions, Steinberg (2007, p.56) discusses peer-driven risk behaviour during adolescence as a product of a “competition between the socio-emotional and cognitive-control networks,” where social influence plays an important role. The author states that while the adolescent cognitive-control network is “strong enough to impose regulatory control over impulsive and risky behavior,” the socio-emotional network becomes activated enough to diminish that regulatory effectiveness “in the presence of peers or under conditions of emotional arousal” (Steinberg, 2007, p.56). Steinberg (2007, p.56) further states that “[the] conclusion drawn by many researchers, that adolescents are as competent decision makers as adults are, may hold true only under conditions where the influence of psychosocial factors is minimized” (Steinberg, 2007, p.56). Figure 13 summarizes Steinberg’s (2007) study, comparing the influence of peer on risk taking behaviour among adolescents, young adults and adults during a video driving game.

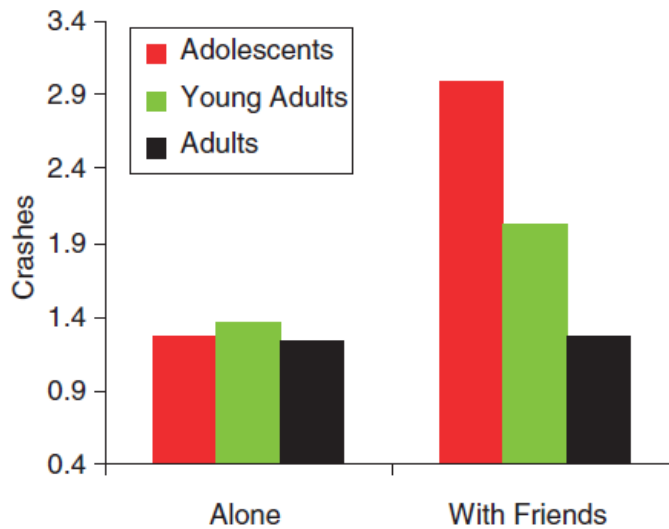


Figure 13: Risk taking of adolescents, young adults, and adults during a video driving game, when playing alone and when playing with friends.

Source: Steinberg (2007, p.57)

Conversely, Brown *et al.* (2008, p.18) are of the view that many researchers, the media and popular opinion tend to overemphasize the negative impacts of peer influence during adolescence, stating that “the vast majority of studies that address peer influence focus on delinquent, deviant, or health-compromising behaviour.” By consolidating a wide range of peer-related studies, the authors reveal potential for peers to “encourage [both] positive as well as problematic behaviour” (Brown *et al.*, 2008, p.18), and thus describe peer influence as:

1. *multidirectional*, in the sense that it can encourage “healthy as well as harmful behaviour”;
2. *multidimensional*, in the sense that it “operates in a variety of ways that are not equally well documented”; and
3. *a complex process* that is not entirely understood at the present time (Brown *et al.*, 2008, p.18).

The authors state that peer-related factors are difficult to understand, “partly because there has been more emphasis on outcomes than the process of influence, but also because there has been too little effort to connect the vast and divergent literature” (Brown *et al.*, 2008, p.18).

Finally, media and technology are worth mentioning among the social influences on adolescent behaviour—especially considering the prevalence of television culture in Sao Paulo’s communities, particularly *novelas* (World Bank, 2007). Pertinent theories include: the *social learning theory*, which suggests that individuals tend to imitate or adopt positively-portrayed behaviours; the *cultivation theory*, which suggests that media portrayals “supersede” perceptions of the real world, including social norms; and a number of *persuasion theories*, which look into how different media strategies (e.g., the use of peripheral cues and repetition) may influence adolescent behaviour (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.83). Other situational and individual characteristics (e.g., psychosocial influences, cognitive reasoning, etc.) are also believed to affect the overall influence that the media may have on particular youth (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.84).

III. METHODOLOGY

This section provides an overview of the methodology used to address the research question, including the research scope and participation, the frameworks and tools used for data collection and analysis, and the research challenges and limitations.

A. Research Scope and Simplifying Assumptions

This study targets late adolescents in the 15 to 19 age range. The reason behind this choice was based on two determining factors: 1) the fact that mandatory education in Brazil ends at the age of 14, making age 15 the first time that young people could, at least from a legal perspective, choose to discontinue their education; and 2) age 19 being the end of adolescence, based on the definition adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014). It was determined that by focusing on the period of late adolescence, the study would target participants that are old enough to have to consider their educational and professional plans beyond Brazil's legal age, and young enough for their environment to still play a formative role in their personal and professional development, as discussed in the literature review.

Furthermore, the study targets adolescents that are relatively privileged among their community counterparts, based on the assumption that low-income communities (popularly known as "*favelas*") are inherently at the BoP of Sao Paulo's socioeconomic spectrum (Saraiva and Marques, 2007). Consequently, participation was not based on the actual family income of each participant, but on their place of residence (i.e., low-income communities) and social network (i.e., local NGOs, which tend to attract the community's most promising youth). Of the 25 study participants, 21 were confirmed members of local NGOs, and 19 indicated explicitly that they were attending school (attendance for the remaining six participants could not be confirmed due to unclear responses and/or unwillingness to talk about school). All participants were contacted through the social networks of local NGOs.

Finally, while it is recognized that any study pertaining to adolescents must account for a host of psychological and psychosocial considerations (as previously discussed), for the purpose of methodology, the research scope is defined according to two principle limitations:

1. The study explores the conceptions of low-income *adolescents as a group* (as opposed to individuals). In other words, it is based on the assumption that the vast majority of adolescents living in urban Sao Paulo—regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs—are subject to employment considerations in one way or another. Consequently, instead of analysing the findings on a case by case basis, the research analysis explores only global trends that may characterize ways in which the average adolescent conceives employment. Specifics pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation or disabilities are outside the scope of this study.
2. The study explores the conceptions of low-income adolescents *through the perspectives of individuals*. The research is limited to input from individuals within the study age range, and hence, all social factors (e.g., family, peer and community influences) are interpreted solely from the perspectives of the focus group participants.

B. Research Techniques

Considering the exploratory nature of this study, and its focus on the career aspirations of individuals, a qualitative approach was deemed most suitable. According to Creswell (2007, p.39-40), qualitative research is appropriate in a number of situations that apply to this study, including:

1. cases where there is a “need to study a group or population, identify variables that can then be measured, or hear silenced voices”;
2. questions that require a level of detail/understanding that can “only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature”;
3. research that aims to “empower individuals to share their stories [...] and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study”;

4. studies that seek to “understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue”; and finally,
5. cases where quantitative and statistical analyses do not fit the problem (Creswell, 2007, p.40).

The research was conducted through community focus groups, using projective techniques in conjunction with direct questioning and group discussions. Projective techniques, which may be described as a “structured-indirect way of investigating the *whys* of situations” were deemed appropriate since they are often used to uncover “innermost thoughts and feelings” that many individuals find difficult to articulate (Donoghue, 2000, p.47-48). According to Donoghue (2000, p.51), projective techniques can make a “significant contribution” in research studies that seek to explore “beliefs, values, motivation, personality or other aspects related to individuals, their unique cognitions and behaviour.” Furthermore, projective techniques:

- are designed to be relatively vague and unstructured, and do not inform subjects about the exact nature of the appraisal, thereby limiting elements of self-bias and encouraging a wider range of ideas;
- encompass a broader scope of data collection than self-reporting techniques, since they make “little or no demand in terms of literacy or academic skills [...] and are largely independent of particular languages [...]”;
- can be “extremely useful in opening discussions or debating issues that are socially sensitive, or where subjects may be embarrassed, lack knowledge or fear self-incrimination”; and finally,
- offer opportunities to construct an enjoyable discussion, which could be used to create a constructive group dynamic. (Donoghue, 2000, p.50-51)

Other methods (e.g., direct questioning, group discussions and individual questionnaires) were incorporated within the focus group structure in order to accommodate different personality types and reporting styles, and to improve the reliability of the data—a method known as triangulation (Donoghue, 2002, p.50).

The research methods were used to explore the career aspirations of the research participants according to two broad categories: 1) aspects pertaining to their *career goals* (i.e., the individual

and/or micro- or macro-environmental factors⁵ they use to rationalize their career choices); and 2) perceptions of *professional development means* (i.e., how different individual and/or micro- or macro-environmental factors may act to facilitate or hinder their employment prospects).

C. The Focus Groups: *Logistics, Data Collection and Analysis*

Sao Paulo was deemed appropriate for the study for reasons of convenience, and considering the city's relatively big population and labour market. Four focus groups were scheduled and conducted over a 1.5-month period, from mid-May to the beginning of July 2014, including a total of 25 participants from the following communities:

1. Vila Albertina: The focus group was conducted at *Gol de Letra*, a local NGO, on June 2, 2014, from 2 to 3 pm, with a total of thirteen participants in attendance (ten male and three female, between 16 and 18 years old). All participants were students at the same professional education program at *Gol de Letra*, and nine of the thirteen explicitly indicated that they were attending school (the responses of the remaining 4 were not clear, and thus, their school attendance cannot be verified based on the current data).
2. Heliópolis: The focus group was conducted at the *Biblioteca Comunitária UNAS Heliópolis*, a local library, on June 10, 2014, from 2 to 3:30 pm, with five participants in attendance (three male and two female, between 16 and 19 years old). All participants were students, including four that were interns at UNAS.
3. Vila Prudente: The focus group was conducted at *Arca do Saber*, a local NGO, on June 18, 2014, from 3 to 5 pm. Even though six participants showed up to the meeting initially, only four met the age requirement for the study and, therefore, were able to participate (three female and one male, between 15 and 18 years old). Two of the participants were students, and two did not comment on their current employment or studies (their school attendance cannot be verified based on the current data). While at least one participant indicated membership to a local NGO, none had any formal affiliation with *Arca do Saber*.

⁵ As previously discussed in the literature review, *individual factors* refer to aspect such as biological attributes and personal merit; *micro-environmental factors* include the “people and institutions with which the young person interacts on a regular basis” (e.g., family, peers, educators and social networks), and *macro-environmental factors* refer to the “larger context” of an individual’s experience, including socioeconomic, cultural and historical realities (World Bank, 2007, p.46-49)

4. Vila Nova Esperança: The focus group was the last to be convened at the *Associação Vila Nova Esperança*, a community-run organisation, on July 7, 2014, from 3 to 4:30 pm. Even though six people were confirmed, only three ended up attending the meeting (all female, between 17 and 19 years old). All three participants were students, including two that explicitly indicated an affiliation with at least one local NGO.

These four communities were chosen for reasons of convenience, and considering their location in the City of Sao Paulo. All four communities are connected to Sao Paulo's labour market.

Each meeting was conducted according to the following structure:

1. *Introduction*: The moderator introduced himself, thanked the participants and explained the general purpose and structure of the meeting. Subsequently, each participant was given a questionnaire (Appendix C) and asked to indicate their age and area of study and/or job, where applicable. In order to encourage free and open discussion, and to account for potential privacy concerns, the identity of participants was kept anonymous
2. *Individual exercise*: The first exercise in the questionnaire (Appendix C) included photographs representing 11 employment sectors (e.g., education, healthcare, the business sector, the informal sector, etc.). Each participant was asked to identify at least one job they could see themselves doing in each sector. Subsequently, they were asked to rate up to three top career choices, explain their choices in writing, and then discuss at least their top choice in more depth.⁶
3. *Group exercise*: Each participant was asked to imagine the stories of two people from their community—one that is successful professionally and one that is not—and to identify and discuss the main reasons for the professional success and failure of each person. The participants were then asked to revisit the discussion by exploring the potential impacts of individual and micro-/macro-environmental factors on the employment prospects of the same two people.

⁶ Only few participants ended up speaking during the first meeting in Vila Albertina, due to time limitations as well as the relatively large size of that focus group (more below).

4. *Closing exercise*: Each participant was given the chance to include additional reflections and comments in writing, in case there were points they had forgotten or were not comfortable enough to discuss in a group setting.

The main focus group discussions were audio recorded (although many impromptu comments and side discussions were not captured), all participants were encouraged to write their thoughts down on paper throughout the meeting, and a note taker was assigned to each group in order to document the conclusions and reasoning during group discussions. Summaries of the participants' profiles and group discussions are available in appendices A and B respectively.

In practice, most participants seemed fairly comfortable with the discussion topics, and were more eager to vocalize their opinions and participate in group discussions than originally expected. On the other hand, they were generally less eager to write things down (e.g., very few participants decided to fill out the closing exercise). While the exact reason for their preference to vocalize their opinions (as opposed to writing them down) is unclear, it is possible that some participants may have felt self-conscious about their writing skills. In order to ensure maximum participation, the balance of projective versus direct approaches was adapted according to the dynamic of each focus group, as well as the comfort levels of participants with different reporting tools.

Some research approaches had to be modified based on field experience—particularly following the first focus group in Vila Albertina, which was a useful testing ground for the research methodology. Most notably, the structure of the original projective exercise (where photos representing 11 sectors were introduced) proved to be too long in the sense that it demanded too much information that was not particularly useful for such a qualitative study (e.g., naming the first profession that comes to mind for each industry, as well as positive and negative feelings associated with that profession). Most participants did not finish the exercise within the allocated timeframe, and some had tired out by the length of the exercise before getting to the more central parts of the focus group discussion. Consequently, the questionnaire was adapted to request the identification of only one profession for each sector. The questions were also deemed more

appropriate as a general icebreaker and warm-up exercise as they proved to encourage brainstorming (most participants also seemed to enjoy the visuals).

Furthermore, the original group discussion question (where participants were asked to imagine two scenarios of professional success and failure) was presented in a way that identified individual and micro-/macro-environmental factors at the outset. It was later determined that such approach had most likely biased and/or narrowed down the group's responses by providing too much guidance. Consequently, the exercise was adapted to introduce a more general discussion question, followed by a guided follow-up discussion according to the aforementioned factors.

D. Research Challenges and Limitations

The qualitative nature of this research makes all data sets inherently subjective. According to LaPiere (1934, p.7), “[whatever] our attitude on the validity of ‘verbalization’ may be, it must be recognized that any study of attitudes through direct questioning is open to serious objection, both because of the limitations of the sampling method and because in classifying attitudes the inaccuracy of human judgment is an inevitable variable.” Similarly, Donoghue (2000) explains that projective techniques involve complex data that require an advanced level of interpretive and analytical skills, and typically yield highly subjective results that can be difficult to assess for reliability.

Furthermore, a number of specific challenges and limitations arose during the study, most notably with regards to scheduling, planning and timelines. For example, even though eight to ten participants were requested for each meeting, the turnout was unpredictable in most cases. Several meetings in Héliopolis and Vila Prudente had to be cancelled and rescheduled due to excessive cancellations and/or no-shows. In both communities, participants had to be convened at the last minute in order for the meetings to take place. In Vila Nova Esperança, only three participants showed up to a meeting that supposedly had eight confirmed participants. Rescheduling was not an option in that case due to timeline limitations, and considering the relatively remote location of that community. The Vila Albertina meeting was the only case

where participant turnout matched the planned expectations, since all participants were students of the same professional education program at *Gol de Letra*—a fact that presented a different limitation (i.e., an overly homogenous group). Finally, the study had to be conducted over a period of 1.5 months, which limited the opportunities for participation even further.

There are also concerns regarding the quality of the research data. Despite numerous efforts to encourage inclusive participation through different means of reporting, there is no real guarantee that participants had all voiced their opinions sufficiently and/or honestly. Finally, while all meetings followed more or less the same structure, there were variations in how each group (and participant) chose to approach the study questionnaire in practice, and in how participants communicated information through different reporting tools. During the analysis phase, occasional discrepancies were observed between different reporting sources, which required subjective judgment calls in order to interpret, simplify, or sometimes eliminate certain data.

IV. ANALYSIS

The conceptions of the focus group participants with regards to their career aspirations can be broadly divided into two categories: 1) aspects pertaining to their *career goals* (i.e., the individual and/or micro- or macro-environmental factors they use to rationalize their career choices), and 2) perceptions of the *professional development means* available to them (i.e., how different individual and/or micro- or macro-environmental factors may act to facilitate or hinder their employment prospects). The following sections outline the research findings according to these two categories.

A. Career Goals

With regards to career goals, the following observations summarize common characteristics of how the focus group participants conceive their employment aspirations.

1. *Noticeable impact of the micro-environment* (particularly role models and local resources)

Even though it was often difficult to get participants to articulate a convincing rationale behind their stated career aspirations, the vast majority had no problem identifying the primary social inspiration behind their professional choices. When asked about why they wanted to pursue a certain career, many responded by saying things like “because it’s a good [or cool] profession,” or “because I like it [sports, people, etc.]”, while fewer participants articulated more earnest statements, such as: “[I want to become a lawyer] because law contributes to the valorization of ethical values, thereby advancing social development,” or “[I want to become a photographer] because I see art in areas where others don’t.” On the other hand, most participants could immediately identify the primary role model or social influence behind their choices: an admired family member or friend, a celebrity, an influential teacher, the trainers at *Gol de Letra*, or a character from a famous *novela*. Even in the few cases of seemingly self-driven participants,

references to social support were generously shared (e.g., “I owe much to my mother. She has always supported my choices, even when she disagreed with them,” or, “My music teacher at UNAS has motivated me to expand my opportunities by exploring different areas in music [in addition to rap],” etc.).

This observation emphasizes the importance of social influences in guiding (or triggering) professional interests, which is consistent with much of the literature on adolescence (APA, 2002; Dahl, 2009; IOM and NRC, 2011; Brown et al., 2008; World Bank, 2007). As a result, it supports the development views that stress the importance of community development and education in advancing the career prospects of low-income, or disadvantaged, youth (OECD, 2014; World Bank, 2007).

2. *Interest in different career goals* (within the same or different employment sectors)

Some participants discussed different but interconnected career choices, some talked about completely unrelated professional interests, but very few chose to identify only one career goal (only 5 of the 25 participants did). Even in Vila Albertina, where many expressed interest in the sports sector exclusively, most respondents identified at least two career choices (e.g., teaching capoeira and/or managing a sports center). In some cases, professional interests were also presented according to a personal theme. For example, one participant that aspires to be a linguist or psychologist argued that all her career aspirations are connected to language, because “language is everything,” as it affects all social interaction and learning, and therefore the “psychology” of people. Another participant related his interest in sports to the overall health and wellbeing of people (both body and mind), as he described his desire to become a physiotherapist, a physical educator or a message therapist. In other cases, however, participants listed completely unrelated career aspirations. For example, one participant that discussed his interest in the design and construction aspects of civil engineering (largely inspired by family members), also mentioned wanting to become a livestock keeper because he likes animals and rural life. Similarly, a participant that aspires to become a painter or makeup

artist, also mentioned wanting to become a chemistry or history teacher (because she enjoys helping people).

The wide range of interests, and fairly experimental nature, expressed by most participants is consistent with the literature on adolescence being a formative period for identity development, where experimentation is developmentally appropriate (APA, 2002; IOM and NRC, 2011). Furthermore, it echoes Dahl's (2009) discussion of adolescence as a time for passion and idealism, where individuals can begin formulating positive goals towards constructive social change (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.44). These findings strengthen the case for professional development initiatives during that critical age.

3. *Diversity of interests among participants*

Overall, the participants, as a group, covered a wide range of professional interests, mainly in highly-skilled careers (e.g., as doctors, engineers, lawyers or business managers), and, notably, in careers in the creative and sports sectors (e.g., as dancers, web designers, capoeira instructors, musicians, rappers, writers, photographers, models/makeup artists, painters, professional sports players, physical educators, etc.). Further research is needed to test the empirical validity of these observations, and to investigate how the career aspirations of youth differ across socioeconomic classes in Sao Paulo, and why. Furthermore, future research could map out the career aspirations of low-income youth relative to the professional opportunities available to them, in order to identify areas where sectorial development (or job creation initiatives) could be beneficial.

B. Professional Development Means

With regards to professional development *means*, the following observations were common in how the focus group participants conceive the individual and/or micro- or macro-environmental factors that affect their employment aspirations.

1. Perception of individual merit/qualifications as the primary cause of professional success or failure (especially academic qualification/specialization)

When asked to imagine two scenarios of a professionally successful and professionally unsuccessful member of their community, all focus groups indicated individual qualifications as the primary cause of professional success (e.g., competence, intelligence, creativity, passion, self-confidence, willpower, motivation and/or dedication; the ability to valorise one's merits and seize existing opportunities; the ability to recognize one's shortcomings, and to ask for help when necessary; the ability to perform undesirable tasks to reach desirable goals, such as "study math to become an engineer;" the ability to collaborate with colleagues and integrate well within an existing work culture; and the ability to behave and speak professionally (or "well") and respectfully among work colleagues). The focus group discussions systematically emphasized the importance of academic qualifications to professional success—most notably with regards to having the right certification and/or specialization for any given employment. There seemed to be broad consensus that education is the ultimate professional development means, although only few participants were able to describe their academic aspirations in specific terms. For example, when asked how they plan to achieve their career goals, many participants tended to respond vaguely by saying that they intend to "go to college" or "take a course in that [subject] area," while fewer participants could name specific academic programs that apply to their field of interest.

Similarly, all focus groups indicated mostly individual shortcomings (mainly, the lack of the aforementioned factors) as the primary cause of professional failure—although some

also blamed external factors (e.g., the lack of job opportunities; the “bad job” and “bad pay”; discrimination, contempt and/or devaluation by professionals/employers in their field of interest; and/or the lack of family support). With regards to education, there seemed to be general consensus that dropping out of school leads to professional failure. Furthermore, the professional development choices in some cases seemed to be linked to what is feasible (or available) in the community. For example, nine of the thirteen participants from *Gol de Letra* indicated interest in areas other than sports (including four whose primary interests were not sport-related), and yet the general tendency within that group was to emphasize sports-related careers (an area they clearly knew more about). Similarly, in Vila Prudente, a participant that has always aspired to be a lawyer is pursuing an education in environmental engineering and seems to be on a path towards a career in work safety, while another participant from Vila Nova Esperança stated that she would gladly pursue a nursing course, if the opportunity arises, but is happy to continue working as a manicurist, and to seek out potential opportunities in modelling. In many of these cases, the participants may be pursuing alternative interests because they feel it may not be feasible for them to attain the education they need to achieve their primary career goal (although further research is required to confirm this hypothesis). Finally, some participants criticized the quality of Brazil’s secondary education for being inadequate to prepare them for admission to colleges/universities, arguing that the system favours wealthy students that can afford to pay for supplementary courses to improve their grades.

The tendency to highlight individual factors suggests that most participants may see employment as a primarily individual pursuit, regardless of the social factors that may contribute to the development of a person’s professional merits. This finding is consistent with the literature on how individual factors (i.e., biological attributes, personal merit, cognitive development, etc.) play a central role in determining life outcomes (World Bank, 2007; Orth *et al.*, 2012; IOM and NRC, 2011; Spear, 2000; Chick and Reyna, 2012; Casey *et al.*, 2008). For example, it echoes a similar logic to Orth *et al.*’s (2012, p.1283) hypothesis and findings that self-esteem (in this case, other personal merits) is a “cause rather than a consequence” of life outcomes. Furthermore, it is arguably consistent

with some of the literature on self-esteem, particularly the *self-protective mechanisms model*, which predicts a “self-serving bias,” or tendency to take credit for one’s achievements but blame external factors for failures (Twenge and Campbell, 2002, p.62)—although the participants always identified individual shortcomings *in addition to* external factors (e.g., a preferential public education system).

The participants’ tendency to adapt their interests according to the educational/training opportunities available to them is further proof of their relatively flexible approach to career development, as well as the influence that local organizations/resources can have in shaping their professional goals. Finally, their criticisms of the quality of Brazil’s public education system are consistent with the views of leading development experts, including the OECD (2013b) and the World Bank (2007). As Arnold and Jalles (2014, p.17) state: “Following the advances in terms of access to education [in Brazil...], one of the principal challenges going forward will be to improve the quality of education.”

2. *Perceptions of family and peers as double-edged swords*

Overall, the participants seemed to view family and peers as both potential enablers and inhibitors of professional development. While family support was widely seen to be a prerequisite to professional success (both from a moral and financial perspective), the language used to describe how a family could hinder an individual’s success tended to focus on issues such as miscommunication, destructive criticism, apathy, negligence, and/or the inability to support or understand the aspirations of children. This observation is consistent with the views of community experts (and in some of the literature) that family education/awareness is an important means of improving a student’s professional development opportunities (Fred Rio *et al.*, Personal Communications; World Bank, 2007; IOM and NRC, 2011).⁷ It should be mentioned, however, that most participants

⁷ The statement is based on student cases from *Arca do Saber* (a Franco-Brazilian NGO and school in Vila Prudente), according to testimony from Fred Rio, the school’s former President, and other school teachers and social workers. In the case of one female student, the family decided that it would be better for their daughter to work at a hair salon, instead of continuing her education. In the case of another female student, the mother insisted that it was time for her daughter to abandon her studies in order to get married. There are other examples of parents not supporting (or relating to) the educational or professional development prospects of their children.

tended to view their families, and the role of family, in general, as an enabling factor in their professional development. For example, they made statements such as: “family is everything,” or “if my family doesn’t support me (or believe in me) who else will?”

Similarly, a number of peer-related factors were discussed and/or implied by all groups, with no clear bias regarding whether peers are perceived to present more negative or positive influences. For example, while the participants in Vila Nova Esperança seemed to agree that negative peer influence tends to be more powerful than positive peer influence, the discussion from Heliopolis (which emphasized collaboration, harmony and democracy at the work place) and the dynamic and collegial attitudes of the Vila Albertina group seemed to indicate otherwise. The “double-edged sword” of peer influence, is consistent with Brown *et al.*’s findings (2008, p.18) that peer-related literature reveals potential for peers to “encourage [both] positive as well as problematic behaviour”. Furthermore, it echoes Dodge’s argument that general traits within a given peer group tend to become harmonized across all members of that group, for better or for worse (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.69).

3. *Paradoxical attitudes, reflecting both pride and stigma, with regards to how the community affects their employment prospects*

In one way or another, all participants seemed empowered by elements within their micro-environment (e.g., by describing the influence of local resources, NGOs, leaders or educators on their career development). When discussing community-based opportunities, their vocabulary and body language tended to be positive and proactive. They would say things like: “we are all capable of achieving something”, “[professional development] opportunities are diverse and equally available to all,” or “people fail because they’re lazy” (or, rude, disrespectful, careless, or unmotivated). Numerous participants were generous in their expressions of gratitude for the inspiration and guidance they receive through their local communities. For example, one participant emphasized her deep commitment to Heliopolis, and her desire to give back to the community, following in the footsteps of the “inspiring and motivating” people that have

coached her at UNAS. Another insisted on wanting to be a physical trainer at *Gol de Letra* specifically, because he identifies with the NGO's culture and activities. Finally, many emphasized the enabling role of local resources and opportunities in their professional development (e.g., community libraries, dance bursaries, internships, etc.).

On the other hand, when discussing sources of opportunities outside their community, the participants tended to be less optimistic about their employment prospects, alluding to perceptions of discrimination and conveying less confidence and/or more defensive behaviour (e.g., by pointing out perceived prejudices of employers outside the community, or arguing that Brazil's public education makes them less competitive than wealthier youth). One participant recalled the reaction of a community outsider after finding out she lives in Vila Prudente: "No way! You live in a *favela*? You don't seem like someone that lives in a *favela*. People in *favelas* have no ideology or culture." Furthermore, there was agreement that residents of low-income communities should never indicate their real address in their *curriculum vitae* (C.V.) for fear of discrimination, and one participant stated that most outsiders think of "*favelas*" as unclean neighbourhoods for only "bad things" and morally inferior people that do not shower. He added that employers think "all *favela* residents are drug users" that would ultimately sell drugs at work. Others argued that Brazil's public education makes them less competitive than wealthier youth, indicating that a low-income individual has lesser chances of attaining sufficient qualifications for highly-skilled careers. Language training (particularly in English and Spanish) was singled out as a critical area where low-income communities have a disadvantage, considering Brazil's increasingly international labour market.

The way in which the participants expressed negative and positive characterizations of their community echoes the complexity of correlating SES with self-esteem and self-concept. A wide spectrum of reactions was expressed, that could lead to various and/or conflicting interpretations of that correlation—for example, some seemed victimized, angry and/or frustrated by inequalities in Brazil's education system (which could be seen as a self-protective mechanism), others alluded to shame (or perhaps caution) with

regards to the inclusion of their community address in their C.V. (which could be interpreted as a form of reflected appraisal and/or self-protection), and some responded to perceived discrimination by ridiculing the extremity of external perceptions/stereotypes of their neighbourhood (which, again, could be interpreted in a variety of different ways). Regardless of the realities or controversies that may explain the participants' seemingly paradoxical sentiments towards their native communities, the implications of perceived discrimination on their self-concept and social conduct/performance (e.g., at a job interview) are concerning. Further research could explore the practical impacts of perceived discrimination and social stereotypes on the employment prospects of low-income youth in Sao Paulo, or in Brazil overall.

4. *Generally critical attitudes towards government policies and programs*

In line with the previous observation, most participants seemed to express positive attitudes towards community-based programs, but were more critical of national programs and policies—regardless of the fact that many national programs provide support to local organizations. For example, a few participants argued that national programs are inadequate and/or badly managed, and some alluded to elements of corruption and public apathy that contribute to inequality in Brazil. One participant even suggested a shift away from the presidential system in Brazil towards a system that is more focused on “humanism” and collective interests (in his written comments, he also indicated his opposition to capitalism). It is worth noting, however, that most participants tended to focus on their micro-environment in their responses, which is consistent with the findings of the U.S. studies cited by the World Bank (2007).

5. *General lack of emphasis on media and technology*

While the role of technology is implied in discussions of the professional development opportunities/resources at local organizations, most participants did not bring up technology (e.g., online employment searches and educational resources) as a means of career development. Furthermore, only one participant discussed the negative impacts of

social media (particularly *facebook* and *whatsapp*) as a distraction from school work, and a “destructive” social influence for youth. *Novela* characters were brought up in a few cases, mainly as career role models. Further research could investigate the perceptions, usage and impacts of technology and the media on career development in low-income communities.

6. *General awareness of high-risk behaviour*

Overall, the study participants seemed aware of the potential impacts of high-risk behaviour on their employment prospects (e.g., drug use/trafficking, dropping out of school, or abandoning one’s family). For example, one participant cautioned against youth that “abandon their families and end up alone,” and many highlighted the negative impacts of dropping out of school, drug-related activities, or dating too young and getting distracted from school. *Lança perfume* was singled out for being a popular “gateway drug” that is widely available at youth parties and social gatherings, and that often leads young people to experiment with more dangerous types of drugs and eventually lose their way.

The general awareness of the possible consequences of high-risk behaviour is consistent with Renya’s argument: “It is a myth that teenagers do not understand the risks of prevalent behaviours—or believe they are invulnerable” (IOM and NRC, 2011, p.54). It is less clear, however, whether there is equal awareness of the professional development opportunities available in low-income communities (e.g., online resources, as previously discussed).

C. Summary of Observations

Table 1 presents a summary of the nine observations outlined above: three observations pertaining to career goals, and six pertaining to professional development means.

Table 1: Summary of Observations

CAREER GOALS	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MEANS
<p>1) Noticeable impact of role models Most participants could immediately identify the primary role model or social influence behind their choices: a family member, friend, local educator (NGO) or celebrity. This observation confirms the importance of community development and education in advancing the career prospects of low-income youth.</p> <p>2) Interest in different career goals Most participants (20 of the 25) identified multiple career goals, within the same or different employment sectors. This observation confirms the relative flexibility of career aspirations in adolescence, and strengthens the case for professional development initiatives during such a critical age.</p> <p>3) Diversity of interests As a group, the participants covered a wide range of professional interests, mainly in highly-skilled careers, as well as careers in the creative and sports sectors. Further research is needed to explore adolescent career interests in different sectors, across Brazil's socioeconomic classes, and relative to the opportunities available to low-income youth.</p>	<p>1) Individual merit/education: main cause of professional outcomes All focus groups indicated individual qualifications (especially certification/academic specialization) as the primary cause of professional success or failure (although, in the latter, external factors were sometimes identified in addition to individual shortcomings). The quality of Brazil's secondary education system was criticized for being inadequate to prepare for college/university admission, and thus preferential to students that can afford private tutoring.</p> <p>2) Family and peers: double-edged swords Most participants seemed to view family and peers as both potential enablers and inhibitors of professional development, which further confirms the importance of community education/development that targets both youth and their families.</p> <p>3) The community: a source of pride and stigma All participants seemed empowered by elements within their micro-environment, exhibiting sentiments of pride and belonging to their community, yet many seemed troubled by how outsiders stereotype or stigmatize "favela" dwellers. Further research could explore the practical impacts of perceived discrimination and social stereotypes on the employment prospects of low-income youth.</p> <p>4) Government policies: perceived as generally inadequate While the participants generally focused on their micro-environment, they seemed critical of national programs and policies when they came up in discussion. In contrast, most participants perceived community-based programs more favourably.</p> <p>5) Media/technology: not emphasized during discussion Further research could investigate the perceptions, usage and impacts of technology and the media on career development in low-income communities.</p> <p>6) General awareness of high-risk behaviour The participants were generally aware of the impacts of high-risk behaviour on their employment prospects (e.g., abandoning school, drug-related activities).</p>

Figure 14 presents a visual model of how the participants conceive their career aspirations, based on the nine study observations. The centre of the diagram outlines the three observations on career goals, while the two arrows break down the ones on professional development means into *preventative factors* (i.e., what participants perceive to be forces that are likely to prevent them from attaining their career goals, thereby leading to professional failure) and *enabling factors* (i.e., forces that are perceived to be helpful in facilitating the path towards professional success). The diagram is partly inspired by the World Bank’s model of individual experiences divided into *risk factors*, leading to negative outcomes, and *protective factors*, leading to positive outcomes (World Bank, 2007, p.46).

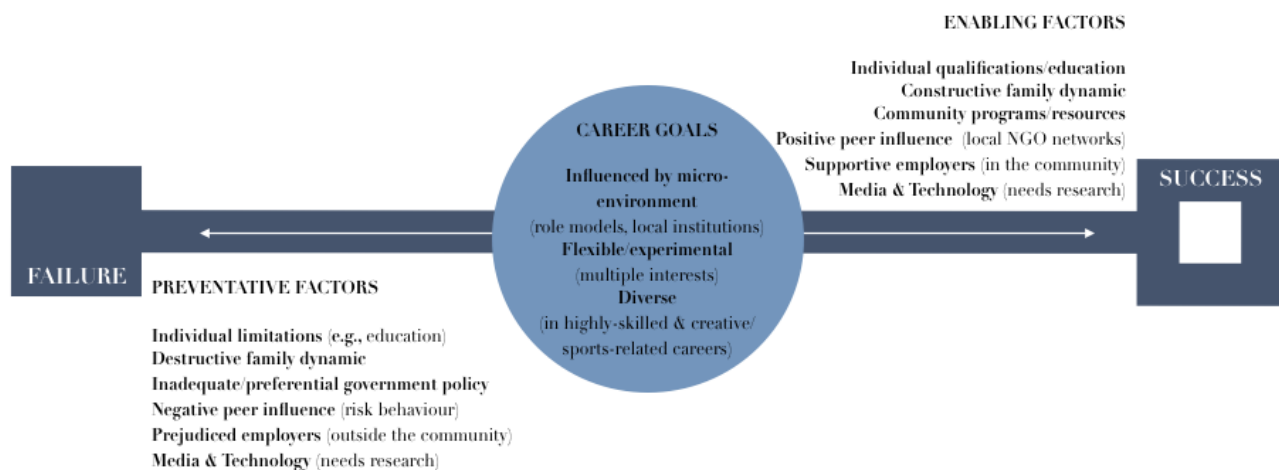


Figure 14: Participants’ conceptions of career goals and professional development means (as *preventative factors* versus *enabling factors*)

(Partly inspired by the World Bank’s (2007, p.46) model of individual experiences as risk factors versus protective factors)

V. CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this paper should be approached with caution, given the complexity of the subject matter, and the various limitations involved in the study. In general, the qualitative nature and limited scope of the research make all data inherently subjective and difficult to assess for reliability. The study is based on input from only 25 participants, and there is no real guarantee that they had all voiced their opinions sufficiently and/or honestly. Furthermore, the study age group and demographic are difficult to generalize because of the multidimensional factors involved in shaping the cognitive and behavioural characteristics of different adolescents, as well as the diversity of socioeconomic situations across Sao Paulo's low-income communities. Even though the study participants are considered relatively privileged among their community counterparts, in the sense that they were mostly students and/or members of local NGOs, they may be facing individual or family-related challenges that were not accounted for, considering the limited scope and resources of the study. Finally, variations in how each group (and participant) approached the study questionnaire in practice, and in how participants communicated information through different reporting tools, resulted in occasional discrepancies in the collected data, necessitating subjective judgment calls in order to interpret, simplify, and sometimes eliminate certain responses.

As shown in the analysis section, the study findings largely echo existing knowledge pertaining to the adolescent experience. While some study participants seemed set on specific career goals, the majority were relatively flexible and open to experimentation, revealing a diversity of professional interests in a wide range of employment sectors, and exhibiting a noticeable degree of influence from role models in their micro- and/or macro-environments—e.g., their family, community (particularly at local NGOs), peers, and public figures, such as famous rappers, singers, or characters in Brazilian *novelas*. These findings are highly consistent with the literature on adolescents, particularly the work of Court (2013), Dahl (2009), Spear (2000), the APA (2002), Leventhal and Gorman-Smith (IOM and NRC, 2011), Sampson *et al.* (2002), Ford (2007), Kitano (2007), and the World Bank (2007). Similarly, the participants' emphasis on the importance of individual merit for professional success echoes a similar logic to Orth *et al.*'s

(2012) findings, suggesting that biological attributes and personal merit are primarily causes, rather than consequences of life outcomes. Furthermore, their views on family, peers and community resources as enablers and/or inhibitors of professional success are largely consistent with the findings presented in the literature review, most notably the work of Dahl (2009), Brown *et al.* (2008), Casey *et al.* (2008), Sampson *et al.* (2002), Ford (2007), Kitano (2007), the APA (2002), the World Bank (2007), and a number of experts from the IOM and NRC (2011).

The research findings also highlight tendencies with implications for policy makers and the private sector. As previously mentioned, the Brazilian economy has been threatened by low productivity gains, potentially owing to low labour productivity (Canuto *et al.*, 2013), and a vulnerable middle class that may not have sufficient employment/financial security to sustain domestic consumption and growth, nor the skills/education required to diversify the economy towards industries with a higher value added (OECD, 2013a; Pezzini, 2012). In order to strengthen its global competitiveness and overcome possible middle-income growth traps, Brazil needs to strengthen its middle class: 1) by promoting further upward social mobility and social inclusion (Arnold and Jalles, 2014), and 2) by investing in a more highly skilled human-capital base (OECD, 2013a; Canuto *et al.*, 2013; Pezzini, 2012). There is potential to achieve both of these objectives through strategic investments in the professional development of low-income youth.

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions may be of use to youth employment initiatives at the BoP:

1. There is widespread understanding of the benefits of education among low-income adolescents (sometimes out of ambition and self-drive, fear of marginalization, or simply following family/community norms and/or expectations). Facilitating the admission of high-potential students to leading tertiary educational institutions is likely to improve their employment prospects by helping them advance their academic qualifications, and by widening their professional networks and access to more sustainable, higher-skilled occupations. One of the most significant barriers to academic success, according to the study participants, is the inadequate quality of the public education system—a view that is consistent with the findings of Arnold and Jalles (2014), the OECD (2013b), and the

World Bank (2007). While improving the overall quality of Brazil's education system may be a medium-to-long-term objective, there seems to be an immediate need for accessible pre-university courses to compensate for the educational gaps of students at the BoP (*Cursinho FGV* is one example of such initiative).⁸ According to the OECD (2013b), "early detection and tailored support with tutoring classes should be pursued to reduce drop-out rates [in secondary education]," thereby supporting the foundations of a better-skilled labour force (2013b, p.37).

2. Adolescents are generally open to variations in their employment paths; targeting youth development at an early age (e.g., through internships and training programs) is likely to attract and shape the interests and qualifications of a competitive future workforce. Community-based programs and resources are likely to be effective, considering the trusted social networks that local NGOs seem to foster. On the other hand, professional development opportunities outside the community may be useful to familiarize low-income youth with different social networks and working environments, thereby facilitating their social inclusion in mainstream society. Finally, youth training programs seem to encourage constructive peer group dynamics, as observed among interns at *UNAS* and members of *Gol de Letra's* sports program.
3. Family education/awareness is an integral part of youth professional development in low-income communities. Organizations that seek to accomplish intergenerational progress should be aware that some parents may not be up to speed with the ambitions and aspirations of their children—based on how the focus groups discussed family-related barriers (e.g., by emphasizing negligence, miscommunications, and/or lack of understanding), as well as the experience of educators at *Arca do Saber*.
4. The impact of technology-based resources on youth development is unclear, based on the findings of this study. Youth development initiatives could explore further the potential of such resources to drive innovation and creativity at the BoP. The *Centro de Inovação Vila Nova Esperança* is one example of a community-based project that encourages technical innovation among low-income youth.⁹

⁸ *Cursinho FGV* is a pre-university tutoring programs offered by FGV students to youth living in low-income communities. More information about the program is available at <http://www.cursinhofgv.com/>

⁹ More information about the *Centro de Inovação Vila Nova Esperança* is available at <http://www.nexso.org/es-es/SolProfile/sl/777666fe-289c-42b3-8f56-96f5c1dc2c7c>

5. There seems to be widespread perceptions of discrimination and prejudice against residents of low-income communities. Outsiders should be aware of these sentiments, as well as any prejudgments they may be holding as they approach these communities for the first time. Sao Paulo's low-income communities are complex environments with rich social fabrics; they should be approached with a fair level of curiosity and cultural sensitivity.

Further research could map out the career aspirations of low-income youth relative to the professional opportunities available to them, in order to identify areas where sectorial development (or job creation initiatives) could be beneficial. The findings could in turn inform policy makers and private employers on further development and economic opportunities. Furthermore, a survey of existing public-private partnerships could identify investment gaps, based on the interests of local youth, with an eye to future employment creation in sectors where vacancies may not be available today. In other words, by identifying a broader range of investment areas, governments and businesses could support grassroots creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship with the aim of encouraging a more hybrid, community-driven business environment that could improve the diversity and resiliency of the Brazilian labour market (the First Employment Program (World Bank, 2003) is one example of a public-private partnership that focused on youth entrepreneurship, as well as the professional and personal preparation of low-income youth for the labour market). It may also be worthwhile to compare the career aspirations of youth across socioeconomic classes in Sao Paulo, in order to gain a better understanding of the main factors that shape the professional interests of different adolescent groups (or subgroups).

Finally, the perceived prejudice of community outsiders against "*favelas*" is an area that requires further investigation. The participants exhibited paradoxical attitudes, reflecting both pride and stigma, with regards to how the community affects their employment prospects—for example, by expressing a sense of promise and empowerment with regards to professional development opportunities in their respective communities, while arguing that Brazil's public education makes them less competitive than wealthier youth; or, by suggesting a sense of pride and belonging to their local environment, while agreeing that residents of low-income communities should never

put their real address in their C.V. in order to avoid prejudice and discrimination. Further research could explore the root causes of these perceived social divisions through a cross-cultural study between Sao Paulo's employers and youth at the BoP (i.e., prospective employees). The research should identify the primary areas of miscommunications and/or misunderstandings between these two social groups, potentially by seeking to identify how each group's self-concept and social expectations divert from the perceptions and social expectations of the other group. Furthermore, governments and employers should be made aware of these sentiments as they design new programs and policies, or as they target potential employees in low-income communities.

The wealth of young talent and potential explored in this study may be only a modest example of the economic and business opportunities that could be realized through further youth development initiatives. Furthermore, the pride and empowerment that many participants expressed with regards to their micro-environment is a testament to the development potential of low-income communities. From a business perspective, the BoP represents a strategic investment ground for the development of talent, human resources and new consumer markets—the so-called “fortune at the bottom of the pyramid” (Prahalad and Hart, 2002). For the government, it represents a promising ecosystem for further socioeconomic development—a resource for innovation and human capital development, and a potential foundation for a larger, more sustainable middle class. In that sense, the young potential in low-income communities is an asset that should not be taken for granted.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

Code*	Age	Gender	Occupation	Career Aspiration(s)	Observations
AB01	16	M	Student	Physical educator	Driven by personal interest in sports, and training at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
AB02	18	M	N/A	Physiotherapist Physical educator Massage therapist	Interested in the general healthcare aspects of physical education. Driven by interest in the human body and sports, and by training and peers at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
AB03	17	F	Student	Physical educator	Driven by personal interest in sports, and training at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
AB04	16	M	Student	Writer/Violinist Physical educator Soccer player	Inspired by the philosophical/political aspects of rap, especially poets/writers that address social issues in urban Brazil (e.g., inequality; drug abuse). Role model: Brazilian poet/musician, Renato Russo. Also interested in sports, especially soccer, and is inspired by training at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
AB05	18	F	Student	Capoeira trainer Business manager Gym owner	Interested in management within the sports sector. Driven by personal interest in sports, and training at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
AB06	17	F	Student	Photographer Sports	Driven by the artistic elements of photography, especially landscape photography—she sees art in things that may seem ordinary to average people. Would also consider a career in the sports sector.
AB07	16	M	Student	Civil engineer Business manager Livestock keeper	Interested in the design and construction aspects of civil engineering. Inspired by family members that work in engineering and construction. Would also consider being a businessman, mainly to make money, or a livestock keeper, for his interest in animals, farming and rural life.
AB08	17	M	Student	Web designer Basketball player Physical educator	Strongly identifies with design, and has always liked working with computers. Has been enrolled in a design course for one year. Also interested in sports, especially basketball, and is inspired by training at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
AB09	18	M	Student	Capoeira trainer (formerly, design)	Has wanted to be a designer until joining <i>Gol de Letra</i> , where he became aware of his interest/potential in sports. Interested in capoeira for being a Brazilian martial art, and wishes to promote it further.
AB10	18	M	Working (unclear)	Physical educator (at <i>Gol de Letra</i>)	Interested in becoming a professional trainer at <i>Gol de Letra</i> specifically. Identifies with the NGO's community/culture/activities. The participant did not specify his current profession.
AB11	N/A	M	N/A	Physical educator Owner, clothing store	Unclear responses/details (assumption of masculine gender is based on masculine endings in responses; assumed to fall within the group's age range: 16-18). Interested in sports, young people and clothes.
AB12	16	M	Student	Business manager Sports player Physical educator	Interested in owning/managing a business. Would also like to become a professional sports player outside of Brazil, or to become a physical educator.
AB13	17	M	N/A	Sports trainer Capoeira trainer	Driven by personal interest in sports, and training at <i>Gol de Letra</i> .
HE01	16	M	Student/ Intern (UNAS)	Singer Soccer player Engineer	Has been rapping/singing since childhood (is part of <i>rap nacional</i> culture). UNAS exposed him to other types of musical expression (one particular UNAS teacher inspired him to expand his opportunities by pursuing a broader education in music, in addition to rap). Plans to continue UNAS training, and then to pursue different opportunities in the music industry. Also interested in soccer and engineering.
HE02	16	M	Student/ Intern (UNAS)	Inker (<i>arte-finalista</i>)	Inspired by his sister, who works as an inker (or <i>arte-finalista</i>). His experience at UNAS further confirmed his desire to pursue a career in design. He plans to study graphic design and continue practicing through his sister's work.
HE03	17	F	Student/ Intern (UNAS)	Social worker Public policy	Driven by the idea of helping others, particularly in her community (deep sense of connection to Heliopolis). Inspired by her uncle (a social worker), as well as colleagues at UNAS, who she finds supportive/motivating. Would like to pursue a degree in social studies or public policy and education.

Code*	Age	Gender	Occupation	Career Aspiration(s)	Observations
HE04	19	M	Student/ Intern (UNAS)	Mechanical engineer Doctor Psychologist	Interested in creativity, technical innovation and market opportunities in engineering. Inspired by his father (a mechanical engineer). Wants to complete his college degree, and then specialize in hydraulics or robotics. Also considered becoming a doctor or psychologist because he likes helping people
HE05	17	F	Student Designer	Linguist Psychologist Productions engineer	Interested in human beings and communication. Believes languages and psychology to be highly interconnected, since they involve communication/interpersonal relationships/learning from one another. Influenced by her multicultural background (she was raised in a way that forced her to identify with different cultures/languages). Currently undertaking different language trainings, and plans to pursue a college education in psychology, or in studies related to “social health.”
VP01	17	F	Student (work safety)	Criminal lawyer Environmental or civil engineer	Interested in the <i>whys</i> of how society functions (she believes that the ethical values of societies could be valorised through law, and could thus help in societal development). Inspired/driven by a lawyer movie character she identified with as a child; support/encouragement from her father; educational resources at her school and communities libraries, which she has used to advance her professional development. Currently pursuing a course in environmental engineering (mainly interested in the social aspects and market opportunities of the profession).
VP02	16	F	N/A	Doctor Veterinarian	Driven by interest in biology and medicine, in general, and a desire to help people or animals. Inspired by “doctor games” she used to play with her cousin. Wants to apply to medical school, although it is unclear how she is currently preparing to achieve her professional objectives.
VP03	18	M	Student (dance)	Dancer Singer Acrobat	Interested in the performance arts, particularly dancing. Was first inspired to pursue a dance career after attending a friend’s dance show when he was 12 years old. Attained a dance study bursary from <i>Pássaro de Fogo</i> (at age 13). Driven by moral and financial support from his mother (although she was initially critical of his professional choices), as well as his passion, dedication and hard work.
VP04	15	F	N/A	Doctor Literature	Unclear responses. Inspired by a doctor character from a <i>novela</i> she used to watch as a child. Interested in medicine, although it is unclear how she is currently preparing to achieve her professional objectives.
NE01	18	F	Student	Painter Makeup artist Teacher	Interested in working with colours; has a knack for drawing and painting. Only recently started thinking about wanting to become a painter; has been developing her talent at a local innovation centre. Would also consider a career in teaching, because she enjoys helping people
NE02	19	F	Student	Manicurist Model Nurse	Inspired by her mother (a manicurist) who has been tutoring her since she was 13. Also interested in becoming a model or a nurse (has already been in a modelling competition, and thinks nursing is a good profession). Would gladly pursue a nursing course, if the opportunity arises, but is happy to continue her manicuring activities, which she enjoys, and seek out potential opportunities in modelling
NE03	17	F	Student (business)	Business manager (graphic design or advertising)	Interested in business management. Inspired by her mother (owner of a design business, or <i>acabamentos gráficos</i>) to specialize in design or advertising. Would like to pursue higher education in business management and innovation at the <i>Faculdade Tecnológica de Gestão de Negócios e Inovação</i> . Has also taken an introductory course in graphic design (at SAGA), and believes she is well-positioned towards a career in the advertising business, considering her professional inclinations/training.

*To maintain anonymity, each participant was assigned a code. The first two letters are abbreviations for each participant’s respective community: AB=Vila Albertina, HE=Heliópolis, VP=Vila Prudente, and NE=Vila Nova Esperança.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

During the focus groups, the participants were asked to imagine the stories of two people from their community—one that is successful professionally and one that is not—and to identify and discuss the main reasons for the professional success and failure of each person. The following sections provide an overview of the discussions, by focus group.

A. Vila Albertina¹⁰

When asked to imagine two scenarios for a professionally successful and professionally unsuccessful member of their community, 12 of the 13 participants indicated individual qualifications as the primary cause of professional success (e.g., competence, ethics, focus, dedication, aspects of emotional intelligence, collaboration, etc.), and 11 of the 13 participants placed the primary blame on individual factors in the case of professional failure (e.g., poor performance/ethics, carelessness, lack of experience, dedication or motivation, “settling for what they have”, etc.). Only one participant praised or blamed the family for providing (or not) academic incentives since childhood, and one participant blamed the “bad job” and “bad pay” for the professional failure. These answers likely reveal an instinctive response that may indicate that most of the youth interviewed see employment as a primarily individual pursuit, regardless of the social factors that may contribute to a person’s professional merits.

Conversely, when the participants were asked to discuss their scenarios in groups, according to specific individual and micro-/macro-environmental factors, all three groups agreed that family is the most critical source of professional success or failure. The participants discussed a number of family-related factors, most notably moral and financial support, stating that family is a critical moral and ethical base, and the primary source of the financing necessary to initiate professional success for any individual. One participant stated that parents are the people that

¹⁰ The fact that all the participants were students in the same physical education program made for a relatively homogenous group, rendering this particular data set difficult to analyse for wider community trends. Furthermore, the group discussions had to be cut short due to scheduling limitations at *Gol de Letra*.

“care the most”, while another criticized youth that fail professionally because they leave their family and end up alone.

The participants also highlighted the importance of literacy and academic success (e.g., basic communication skills, pursuing the right education, having the right qualifications for the right job, etc.), the availability of job opportunities and a good “network” with knowledge of the job market, the role of social development programs (particularly at *Gol de Letra*), as well as other factors pertaining to individual performance (e.g., respect, focus, motivation, and the ability to overcome negative or destructive attitudes towards success). With regards to education, it was stated that illiterate people will ultimately fail because of their inability to demonstrate basic professional skills (e.g., “speaking properly”), and that even hard workers will not become successful without proper education. Finally, it was stated that community youth need to have access to career opportunities in order to demonstrate to “other people” that they can become successful. One participant mentioned that there are “many influential people” that can help change the lives of everyone.

B. Héliopolis

When asked to imagine two scenarios of a professionally successful and a professionally unsuccessful member of their community, the group highlighted factors related to individual job performance, including the ability to valorise one’s own knowledge and qualifications; the ability to recognize one’s competencies and shortcomings, and to ask for help when necessary; the ability to perform undesirable tasks to achieve desirable goals (e.g., “study math to become an engineer”); the ability to integrate within an existing work environment and culture, and to collaborate with and learn from others; and the ability to behave professionally and respectfully among work colleagues. Furthermore, they discussed success factors with regards to good leadership at work—for example, it was stated that a good leader is competent, democratic, humane, willing to help others grow, and able to establish harmony in the workplace. Finally, factors specific to professional shortcomings included failure to accept professional challenges, to keep personal issues away from work, or to accommodate (and learn from) the opinions of

others. Being the group with the most reported professional experience (i.e., internships at UNAS), the focus of the Heliopolis participants on workplace-related factors was atypical relative to the other focus groups.

When asked to revisit the scenarios according to individual and micro-/macro-individual factors, the group tended to explore different ideas without necessarily arriving at consensual conclusions. Most notably, they focused on issues pertaining to government programs and policies. For example, it was pointed out that national programs are inadequate and/or badly managed and that the public education system is unfair to low-income youth. Different elements of corruption and public apathy (e.g., statements like: “the population accepts its problems”) were also brought up, although the exact arguments were unclear. Furthermore, one participant suggested a shift away from the presidential system in Brazil towards a system that is more focused on “humanism” and collective interests (in his written comments, he also indicated his opposition to capitalism). Other participants pointed out the importance of fighting inequality, helping others, “opening doors” and creating opportunities, and finding “new solutions to new problems.”

In contrast, the participants tended to highlight more positive aspects with regards to community-based opportunities and programs, largely drawing on their experiences at UNAS. In their written responses, however, they indicated both positive and negative factors community (e.g., compromise, unity, cultural education, and positive attitudes towards youth, versus inequality, the lack of opportunities, or failure to valorize positive local qualities). Similarly, they indicated positive and negative factors pertaining to family (e.g., love, support understanding, unity, leadership, and constructive communication patterns, versus negligence, apathy, prejudice, lack of dialogue, and destructive or discouraging communication patterns)

C. Vila Prudente

When asked to imagine two scenarios for a professionally successful and professionally unsuccessful member of their community, the group identified dedication and the lack of

incentives as the primary reasons for professional success and failure respectively. Similarly, when asked to elaborate on the scenarios, the group identified only individual factors as the main contributors to success (e.g., dedication, passion, self-confidence, academic specialisation, and the ability to valorise one's qualifications and to seize opportunities), and blamed a mix of individual and social factors for professional failure (e.g., insecurity or feelings of inferiority relative to others, insecurity as a result of the lack of opportunities, and contempt and/or devaluation by professionals working in their field of interest.)

When asked to revisit the scenarios according to individual and micro-/macro-individual factors, the group was able to explore a wider range of social themes. Regarding family influence, the participants identified a number of factors that may contribute to professional success (e.g., moral support, freedom of expression, constructive dialogue and communication patterns, and general interest in the professional development of children) or professional failure (namely, rejection and destructive communication patterns). It was agreed that family members are expected to guide and support their children, and should teach that there is more than one way of achieving professional success. Furthermore, it was stated that many insecurities “stem from childhood” when a person is told they are incapable of achieving their dreams and thus develop a fear of even trying to, which “shuts down their thinking.” The group also outlined a number of individual barriers to professional success (e.g., “weakness” or “insecurity” towards the pursuit of one's own professional aspirations; “incompetence” or failure to work hard enough, which often leads to failure and feelings of inferiority; the lack of academic specialisation; and the tendency to “follow” others instead of valorising one's own skills and qualifications.) One participant stated that “we are all equal,” affirming that success depends on individual attitudes and perspectives towards one's future, for better or for worse.

The group also highlighted a number of social issues that they believe affect their employability. Most notably, they highlighted inequalities within the public education system, stating that the poor quality of Brazil's free public education puts residents of low-income communities that may not be able to afford private lessons at a competitive disadvantage with regards to college admissions. Some participants even alluded to elements of corruption designed to make people dependant on private schools (i.e., *a escola particular*). Conversely, it was stated that if two

applicants, one from a public school and the other from a private school, were equally qualified on a college application, the public school applicant could very well be granted admission. Furthermore, the participants singled out public language training (particularly for English and Spanish) as a critical competitive disadvantage for them when attempting to attain higher tier jobs that increasingly require international communication skills.

On the other hand, the group seemed to have a more positive view of the professional development opportunities within their communities, particularly those offered by local NGOs. It was stated that there are many educational opportunities in the community that are “equally available to everybody”, and the participants were consistent in highlighting the importance of self-confidence and self-drive/motivation in making the best of such opportunities. In her closing remarks, one participant wrote that the available educational opportunities are diverse, helping individuals achieve a “good professional placement”, and that it is “necessary” to demonstrate that we are all capable of achieving something. Another participant wrote that the opportunities that contribute to a person’s professional success depend on “where the person lives”, indicating that support (presumably from government and social services) and opportunities are needed to ensure the continuity of a person’s professional development. He stated that having an NGO close to one’s home makes it easier for individuals to improve their professional credentials, adding that “plenty” of self-confidence is still needed to overcome professional barriers.

Finally, the participants expressed concerns regarding employment discrimination due to a general stigma against residents of low-income communities (or “*favelas*”). For example, one participant recalled the reaction of a community outsider when she found out that the participant lived in Vila Prudente: “No way! You live in a *favela*? You don’t seem like someone that lives in a *favela*. People in *favelas* have no ideology or culture.” Another participant stated that most outsiders think of “*favelas*” as places for only “bad things” and “dirty people”, indicating that those people perceive his community as an unclean neighbourhood for morally inferior individuals that do not shower. Drug trafficking was singled out for being particularly damaging for the reputation of community residents, and for presumably contributing to a common perception that “all *favela* residents are drug users.” One participant stated that employers think that a “*favela*” resident would inevitably end up selling drugs at work. Finally, all participants

agreed that living in a “*favela*” is enough grounds for immediate rejection at a job interview outside their community.

D. Vila Nova Esperança

When asked to imagine two scenarios for a professionally successful and a professionally unsuccessful member of their community, the participants identified a number of factors pertaining to an individual’s qualification and performance on the job (e.g., intelligence, certification, motivation, willpower and having the right knowledge and skills for the job). The participants highlighted the importance of being able to distinguish one’s self in an increasingly competitive job market. Academic performance and qualifications, in conjunction with creativity and willpower, were deemed necessary to achieve that goal.

The group elected to discuss the scenario of the professionally successful worker by describing the case of an entrepreneurial shop owner. They agreed that any independent worker will inevitably go through periods of failure, uncertainty or self-doubt (e.g., as a result of lower sales than desired, or a general sense of job insecurity), and that sustaining one’s willpower and motivation, and having a sustainable source of initial funding (e.g., by having a different source of income or being initially wealthy) significantly improve the long-term prospects of a new project. On the other hand, it was stated that an independent business owner (or salesperson) can be creative about their business strategy, and is lucky to have the flexibility of determining their own working hours and schedule. One participant stated that owning one’s own shop is a “good profession.” It was fairly evident from the discussion that the participants were keen on presenting a multidimensional conception of professional success, including financial, social and psychological wellbeing. One participant seemed particularly sensitive to any normative statements regarding prerequisites of professional success (e.g., statements like “you must have a university degree to find a job”), implying that there could be many different ways to become successful.

Similarly, the participants elected to discuss real (or imagined) cases of professionally unsuccessful individuals. They particularly highlighted cases of youth getting distracted from their studies or “getting off-track” at a young age. Most notably, they discussed cases of individuals that fail academically due to carelessness or apathy, and that subsequently become involved with drug use and/or trafficking. It was pointed out that drug trafficking appeals to some youth because it is often viewed to be an easy way of making money. On the other hand, the participants pointed out that there are no more drug traffickers in their community; only users. One participant stated that younger people (especially 12-13 year-olds) can be quite impressionable and often fall off-track as a result of drug use. *Lança perfume* was singled out for being a popular “gateway drug” that is widely available at youth parties and social gatherings, and that often leads young people to experiment with more dangerous types of drugs. It was stated that many young people start using drugs out of curiosity, and that negative peer influence tends to be more effective than positive peer influence. The group also discussed cases of young people, especially females, that start dating too young and get distracted from (or abandon) their academic pursuits, as well as youth that becomes distracted by technology and social media (especially *facebook* and *whatsapp*).

Finally, when asked to revisit the scenarios according to individual and micro-/macro-environmental factors, the group identified individual factors (e.g., willpower, interest, motivation, or lack of willpower and submission to negative influences), family-related factors (e.g., motivation and support with professional choices, or criticism and disregard of professional interests), as well as community-based factors (e.g., the availability of a “variety” of educational opportunities and social activities to keep young people occupied and provide them with the resources to develop their skills and creativity, or drug-related issues and the lack of openness within the community to new ideas and possibilities.) The group also mentioned the importance of transportation facilities to connect community residents to job opportunities in the City of Sao Paulo.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Código: Idade: Sexo: Tipo de estudos e/ou trabalho:

Email (opcional, para receber o relatório da pesquisa):

As respostas são anônimas e todas são válidas: não há respostas certas ou erradas.

QUESTIONÁRIO SOBRE O MUNDO DO TRABALHO

A Diversidade no Mundo do Trabalho

(a) Tem varias temas e setores do trabalho. Imagine uma profissão preferida em cada caso e indique se gostaria trabalhar no setor.

1. O trabalho escolar:



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

2. O trabalho técnico e da engenharia



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

3. O trabalho da saúde



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

4. O trabalho rural



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

5. O trabalho nas empresas



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

6. O trabalho da restauração



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

7. O trabalho das vendas ou marketing



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

8. O trabalho cultural ou criativo



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

9. O trabalho esportivo



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

10. O trabalho público: no governo, direito e ordem pública



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

11. O trabalho independente ou informal



Sua profissão preferida: _____ . Gostaria trabalhar neste setor: SIM / NÃO

12. Outro trabalho (opcional) : _____ .

(b) Aonde você quer estar na sua vida profissional daqui 10 anos? Escolha até 3 profissões:

Profissão	Razões / Estudos
1: _____	Por que gostaria desta profissão? _____ _____ O que queria estudar? _____
2: _____	Por que gostaria desta profissão? _____ _____ O que queria estudar? _____
3: _____	Por que gostaria desta profissão? _____ _____ O que queria estudar? _____

Grupo:	Códigos:
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DISCUSSÃO EM GRUPO
O Sucesso no Trabalho (Parte I)

(a) Imaginem duas pessoas amigas cresceram na comunidade. Uma pessoa tem muito sucesso no trabalho, mas a outra não. Escrevem suas histórias. Cada pessoa pode ser homem ou mulher.

Pessoa X tem muito sucesso na sua vida profissional. Ela/ele trabalha como _____
no/na _____. Ela/ele tem sucesso no trabalho porque: _____

Pessoa Y não tem sucesso na sua vida profissional porque: _____

Listam as 3 razões as mais importantes para o sucesso ou o insucesso profissional. Por que?

	Sucesso Profissional	Insucesso Profissional
1		
2		
3		

Grupo:	Códigos:
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DISCUSSÃO EM GRUPO
O Sucesso no Trabalho (Parte II)

(b) Para entender mais as suas situações, precisam detalhar:

	A pessoa com sucesso	A pessoa sem sucesso
Quais são as contribuições da comunidade para o seu sucesso/insucesso? (Pode ser muitas coisas ou nada)		
Quais são as contribuições da sua família para o seu sucesso/insucesso? (Pode ser muitas coisas ou nada)		
Quais são as contribuições das seus méritos pessoais para o seu sucesso/insucesso? (Pode ser muitas coisas ou nada)		
Quais são as contribuições do governo brasileiro e as políticas/programas públicas para o seu sucesso/insucesso? (Pode ser muitas coisas ou nada)		
Outras fatores e fatos importantes sobre a pessoa:		

