



## Presentation 3

# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times: The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

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## Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

### The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

- Macroeconomic crises occur cyclically and entail negative social consequences for individuals, families, and communities.
- In the aftermath of one of the worst recessions in contemporary history, research on the families' experience of macroeconomic hard times has gained significant momentum.



We conducted a **systematic review** of empirical research on **families' responses to economic distress in the context of macroeconomic crises**

Fonseca, Cunha, Crespo, & Relvas (2016)

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## Families in the context of macroeconomic crises: A systematic review Fonseca, Cunha, Crespo, & Relvas (2016)



**Inclusion criteria**

- (a) empirical studies that used quantitative or qualitative methods, or both;
- (b) studies whose participants had been exposed to a macroeconomic crisis;
- (c) studies with a focus on family level factors such as family, couple, and/or parenting dynamics as study variables (quantitative studies) or category/theme (qualitative studies).

- (a) studies whose authors did not clearly specify if the participants had been dealing with the demands of a macroeconomic crisis;
- (b) studies that assessed family-related variables that did not concern a relational perspective (e.g., families' savings, marriage/divorce rates).



**Exclusion criteria**

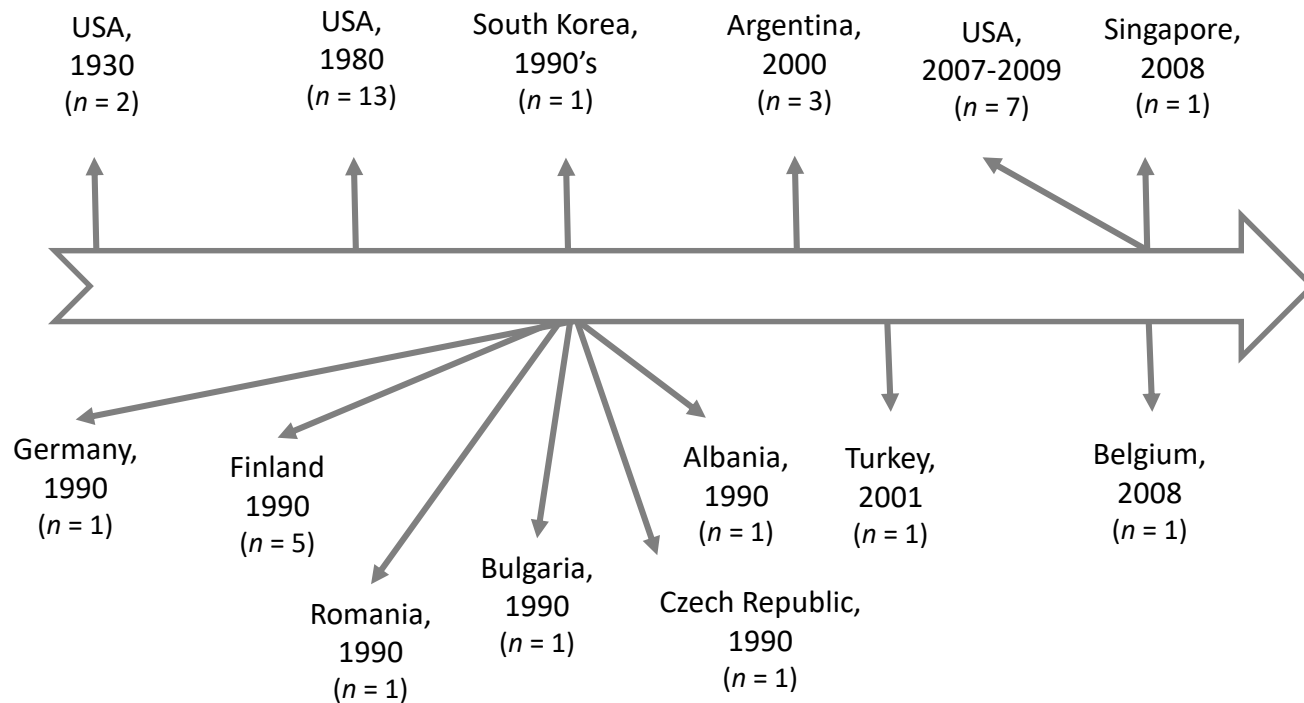


# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

## The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

### Families in the context of macroeconomic crises: A systematic review

Fonseca, Cunha, Crespo, & Relvas (2016)



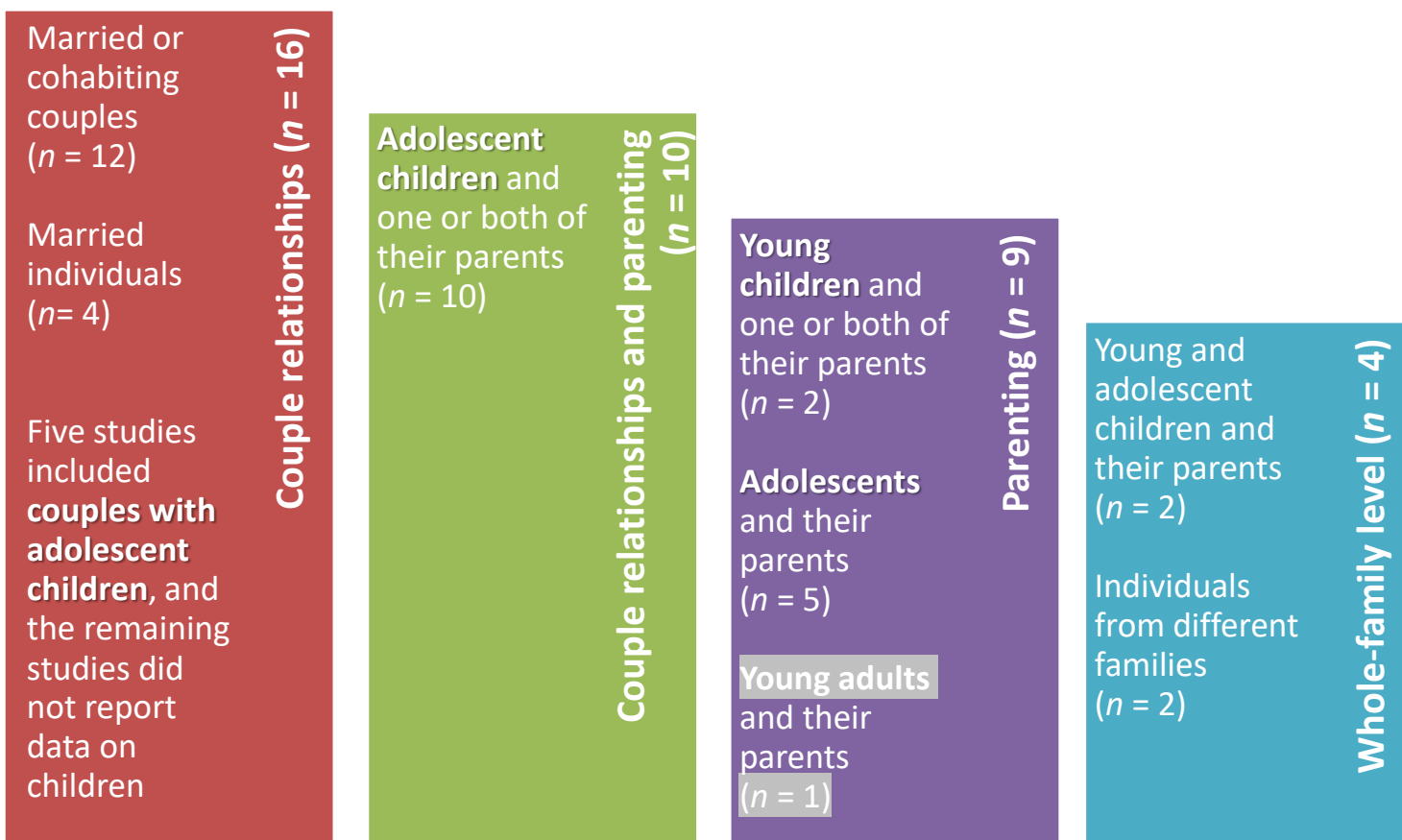
**39 quantitative studies** published between 1983 and 2015  
in 12 countries



## Families in the context of macroeconomic crises: A systematic review

Fonseca, Cunha, Crespo, & Relvas (2016)

### Main Studies' Characteristics

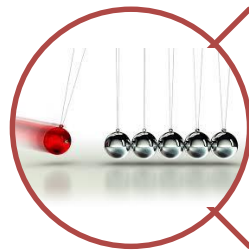




## Families in the context of macroeconomic crises: A systematic review

Fonseca, Cunha, Crespo, & Relvas (2016)

### Main Findings



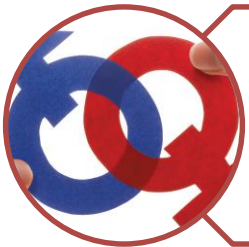
Economic distress was associated with negative changes in family dynamics, specifically couple relationships and parenting.

**Impact**  
*n* = 36



Protective factors were found to buffer the adverse effects of economic distress on family and individual outcomes

**Resources**  
*n* = 12



Individual responses to macroeconomic crises are likely to be moderated by sex



## Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

### The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

- One major research skew was the predominance of study samples involving two-parent families with **adolescent children**.
- A life course development perspective suggests that periods of macroeconomic crises **may be particularly challenging for emerging adults and their families** (Stein et al., 2011).
- The attainment of specific developmental tasks of this life stage might be compromised, namely:
  - emerging adults' **entrance in the labour market**, which have become more difficult especially in the aftermath of the most recent economic recession (Arnett et al., 2014).
  - the achievement of their own **financial self-sufficiency and independence** – criteria of adult status highly endorsed by emerging adults (Arnett, 2015; Nelson & Barry, 2005)
  - the **launching** of the children (Stein et al., 2011).





## Families navigating macroeconomic hard times The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

Investigating how families with emerging adult children respond to macroeconomic-related demands is of substantial relevance



The present study aims to 1) examine the perceptions of **economic pressure** and **financial worries** as reported by **emerging adults** (i.e., 18-30 years old), their **fathers**, and their **mothers**, adopting a multiple inform methodology; 2) investigate the **links** between **economic pressure** and **family functioning**.

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### Sample and Procedures

- Participants were **311 two-parent families** with at least one emerging adult child

Main sociodemographic characteristics	Fathers	Mothers	Children
Sex	-	-	62.7% female
Age	$M = 53.45$ $SD = 5.20$ Range = 38-69	$M = 51.24$ $SD = 4.90$ Range = 38-69	$M = 22.36$ $SD = 2.85$ Range = 18-30
<b>Family-level</b>			
SES	89 (28.6%): low SES; 159 (51.1%): medium SES; 62 (19.9%): high SES		
Number of children	$M = 1.6$ ; $SD = 0.69$ ; Range = 1-5		

- Data were collected in **2016-2017** using a snowball sample technique
- Initial statistical analyses were conducted with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and structural equation modeling was performed with the Analysis of Moments Structures (AMOS) program (versions 22)

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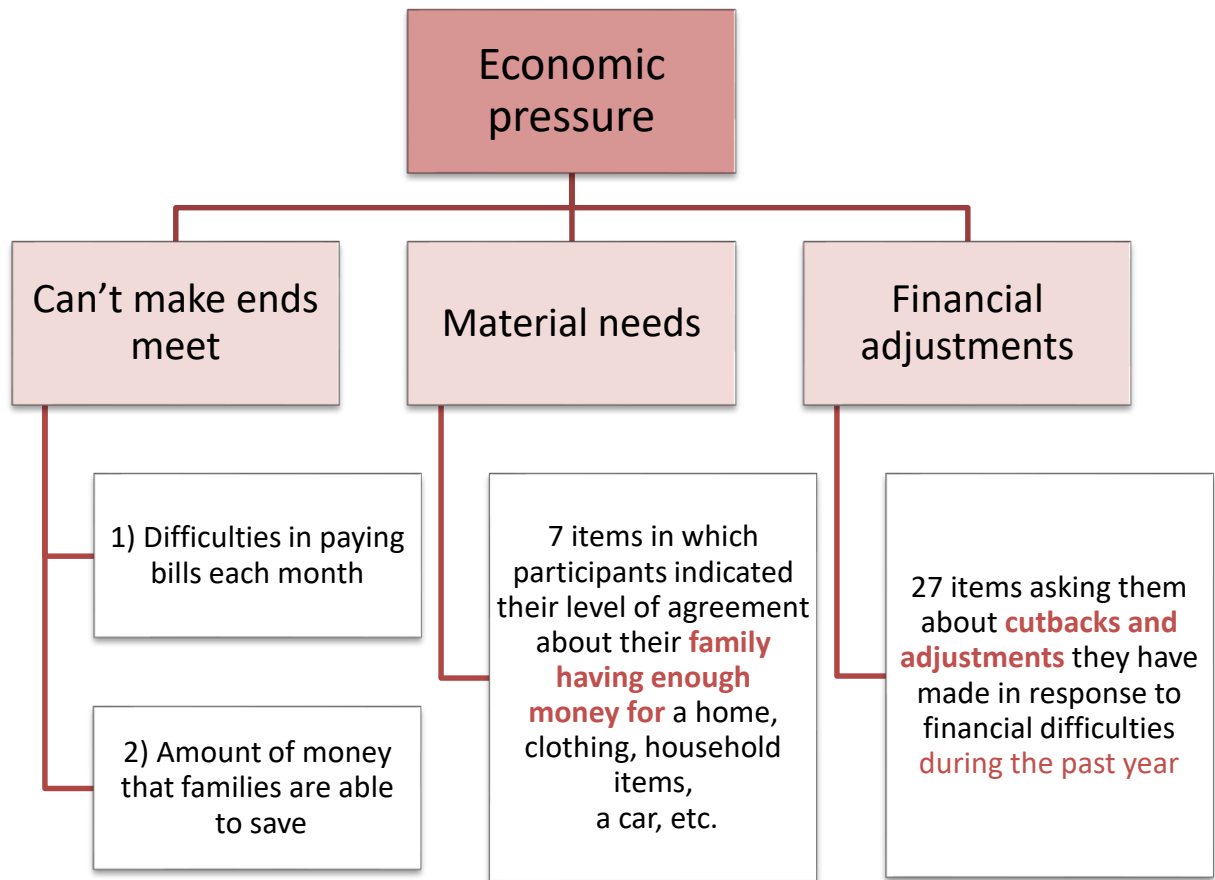
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## Variables and Measures



(Conger & Elder 1994; Portuguese version: Francisco & Pedro, 2015)

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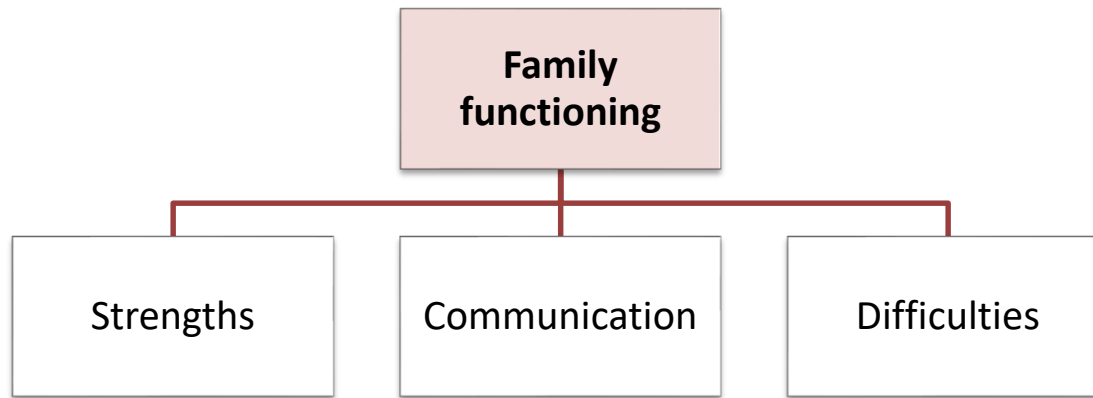
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## Variables and Measures



The **Systemic Clinical Outcome Routine Evaluation (SCORE-15;** Stratton et al. 2010; Portuguese version: Vilaça, de Sousa, Stratton, & Relvas, 2015) was used to assess participants' perceptions of the functioning of their families across 15 items. Participants indicated the degree to which each item described their family on a 5-point scale.

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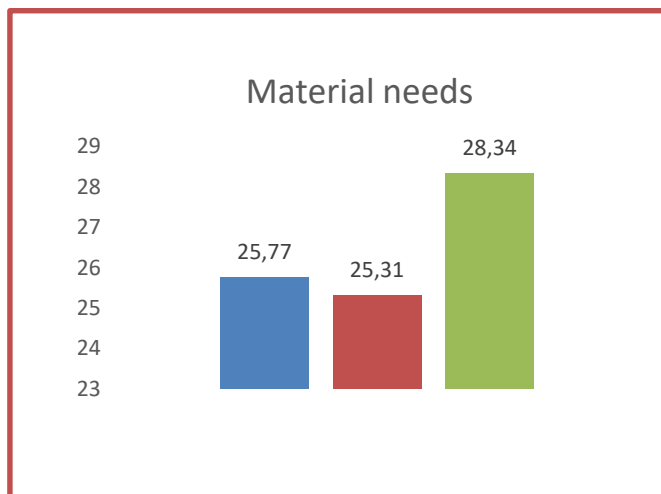
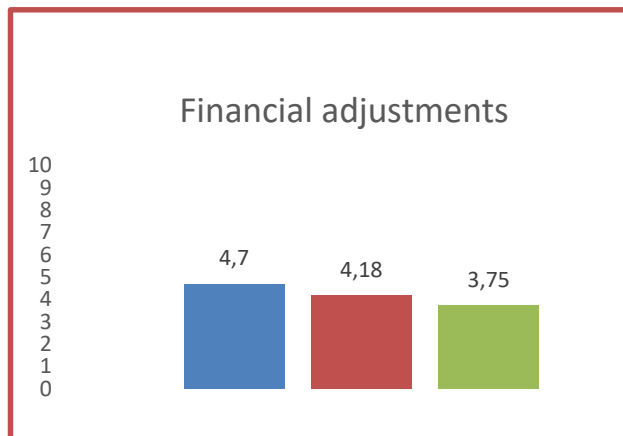
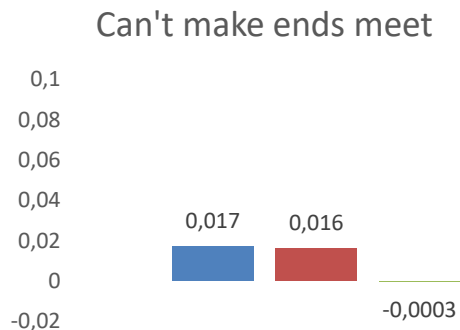


# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

## The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

### AIM 1

Responses to **economic pressure' indicators** and **financial worries** of fathers, mothers, and children



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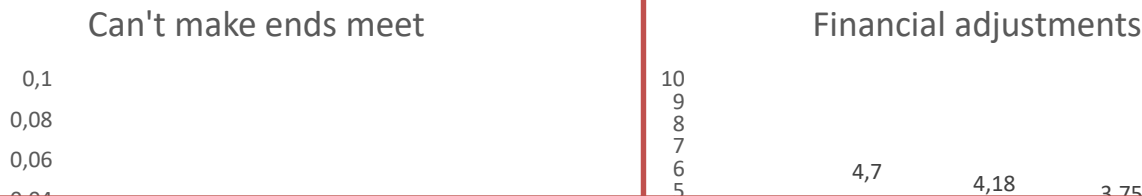


# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

## The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

### AIM 1

Responses to **economic pressure' indicators** and **financial worries** of fathers, mothers, and children



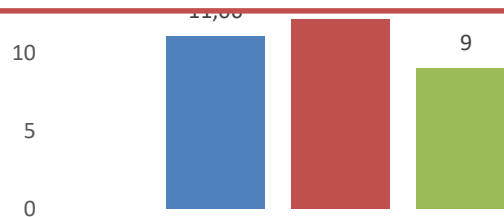
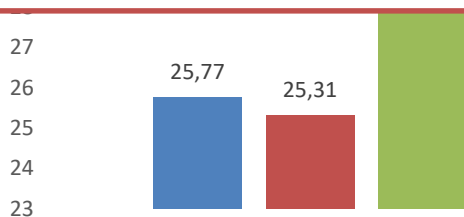
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Paired sample T tests indicated that **children' scores** on the **financial adjustments** indicator and on the **financial worries** subscale were **significantly lower than their parents' scores**. In addition, they presented **significant higher scores** on the **material needs** indicator compared to their parents.

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The scores between fathers and mothers were not significantly different in any economic pressure' indicator, however **mothers** reported higher levels of **financial worries** than **fathers**.

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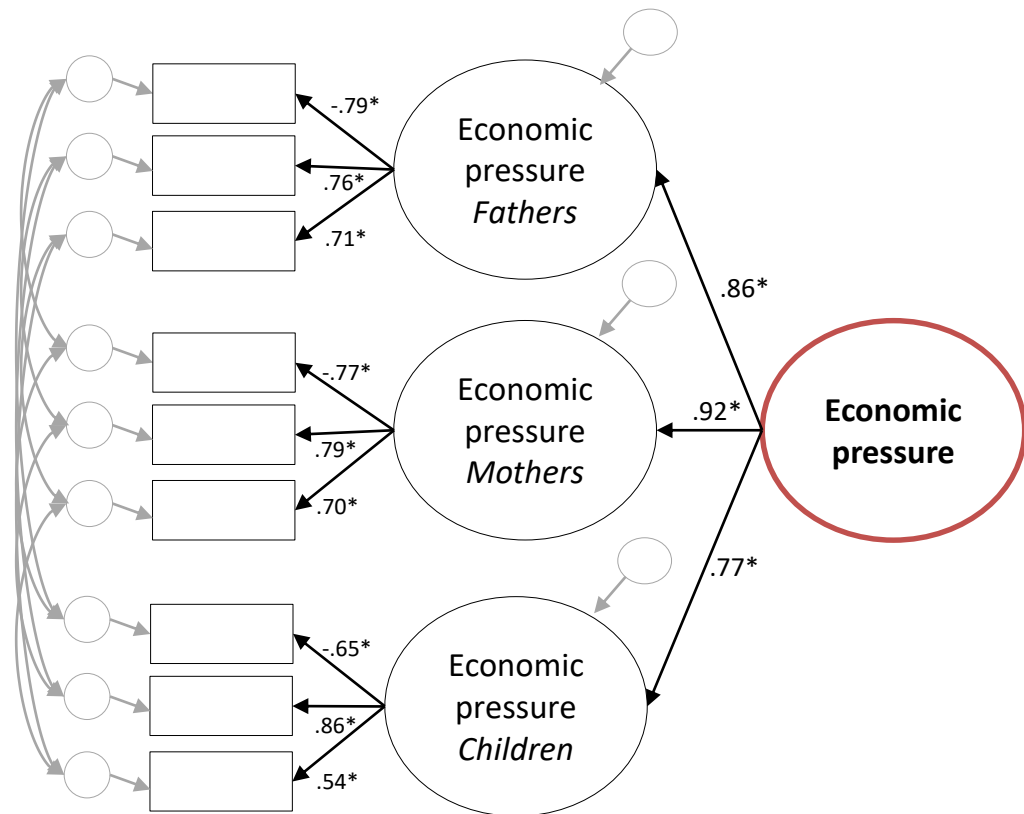
# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

## The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

### AIM 2

Links between **economic pressure** and **family functioning**

#### Measurement model



This model presented good fit to the data,  $\chi^2 (15) = 22.504, p < .001, CFI = .995, RMSEA = .040, 90\% CI [ .000, .072 ]$ . *Note.* Values represented standardized regression coefficients.  $*p < .001$ .

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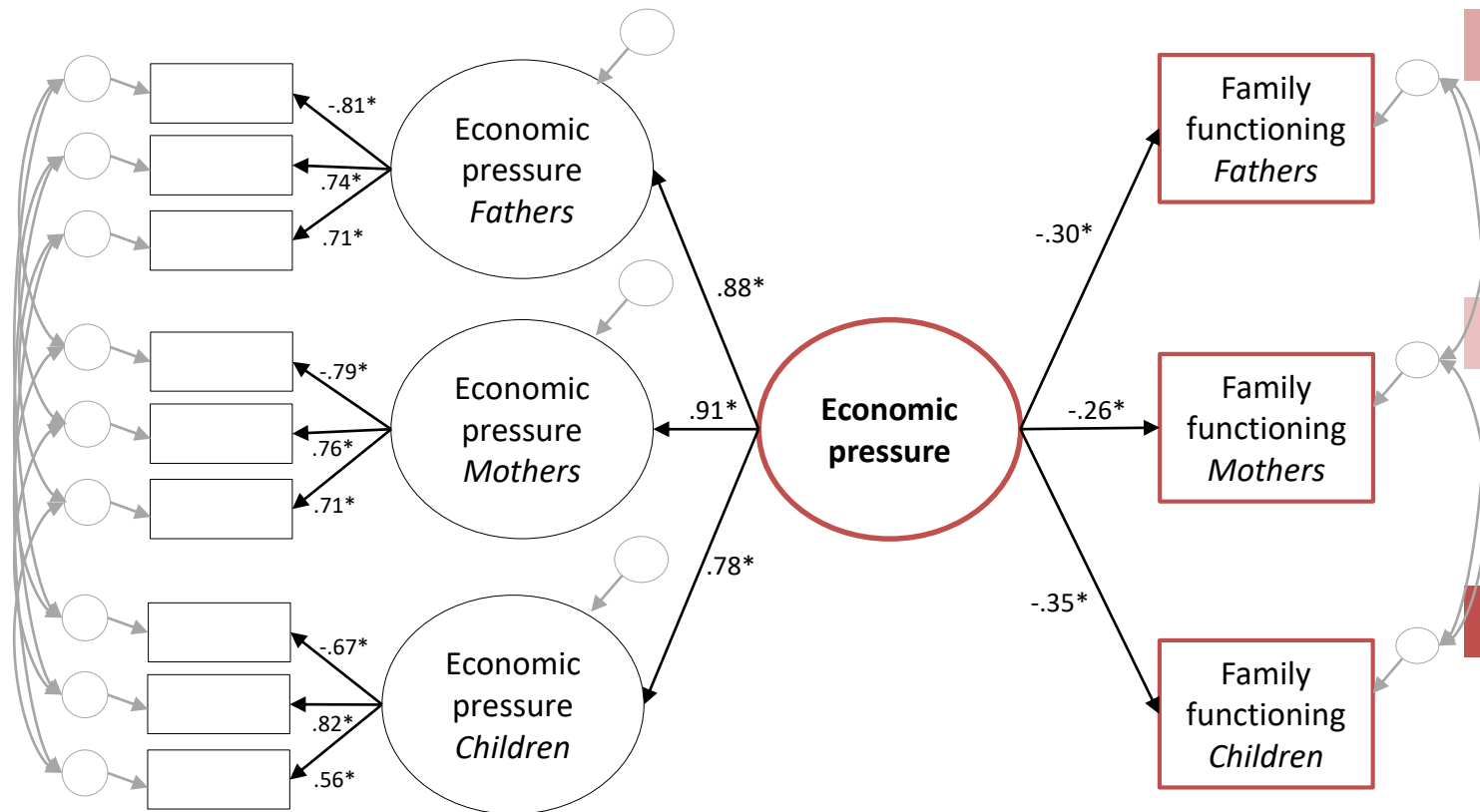
# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

## The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

### AIM 2

Links between **economic pressure** and **family functioning**

Measurement + structural model



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This model presented good fit to the data,  $\chi^2(39) = 87.059, p < .001, CFI = .972, RMSEA = .063, 90\% CI [.045, .081]$ . *Note.* Values represented standardized regression coefficients. \* $p < .001$ .



# Families navigating macroeconomic hard times

## The particular case of Portuguese emerging adults and their parents

### AIM 1

The results suggested that emerging adult children experience less economic stress than their parents

- On one hand, this might reflect **intergenerational differences in the economic pressure experience**, as parents and children assume **differentiated financial responsibilities** in the family.
- On the other hand, the economic pressure indicators were originally designed to capture parents' economic demands. Further studies should explore the appropriateness of these questions to portray emerging adults' economic stress.



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## AIM 2

Economic pressure was found to contribute to poorer family functioning, as reported by parents and emerging adult children.

- These results are in accordance with a large body of literature, establishing adverse effects of macroeconomic-related demands in family dynamics of families with adolescent children (e.g., Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994; Solantaus, Leinonen, & Punamäki, 2004).

### In sum:

→ Despite its limitations (e.g., convenience sample), this study provided a first look into the experience of economic-related demands by Portuguese families with emerging adult children.

→ Future efforts on the development and validation of intervention approaches that aim to support families with emerging adult children during macroeconomic challenging times would be valuable, contributing to the cross-fertilization of research and clinical practice.

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