

PSYb 2730 Youth Development

Youth development



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Place and time:

Faculty of social studies, Joštova 10,
Room U33, 16,00 - 17,40

- This course is for foreign students only who are visiting Masaryk University. The course requires basic knowledge in the field of psychology and social sciences, an interest in developmental and social psychology of youth (adolescents and young adults).
- Course will be conducted in the combined form of lectures and seminars. Participation of students on lectures and discussions is required (seven lectures as minimum); thus, class participation is important. Students are expected to come to class prepared and following updates in IS (e-learning system).

Date	Session	Teachers
3. 3.	What is special about adolescence and transition to adulthood. Information regarding students' assignments	Macek & Kvasková
10. 3.	Self development during adolescence and transition to adulthood: family context	Macek & Huang
17.3.	Identity during adolescence and transition to adulthood	Bouša
24. 3.	Youth and social media	Šmahel
31.3.	Youth and online risks	Macháčková
7. 4.	Political Participation	Šerek
14. 4.	Romantic relationships and sexual behavior during adolescence and transition to adulthood	Lacinová & Ševčíková
21. 4.	Study and career development during adolescence and transition to adulthood	Kvasková
28. 4.	Adolescent development in different cultures: the case of China and the case of Nigeria	Huang, Bassey & Macek
5. 5.	Reading and preparing presentations	
12. 5.	Students' presentation I	Kvasková & Macek
19. 5.	Students' presentation II	Kvasková & Macek
26. 5.	Evaluation and exam	Macek

Evaluation

- **(1) Exam**

- There will be one exam (multichoice answer quiz) at the end of the semester covering the lectures and assigned readings (class presentations and reading materials, which will be available online as well). The exam accounts for 50% of the final grade. Preparing for exam should be a process that is spaced out over time.

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- **(2) Assignments**

- The remaining 50% of your grade is collected through assignments and class presentations.

- **Review Paper Assignment**

- The major assignment in this course is a brief research (review paper) on a specific topic about youth development in **your country**.
- First, students will choose a relevant topic about youth development. The topic selected will be proposed to the teaching assistant (Lucia Kvitkovičová, lucia.kvitkovicova@gmail.com), before March 31st.
- Second, if the selected topic is accepted, students will prepare the review paper (no more than 10 pages long, and at least 5 pages), and a Microsoft Power Point presentation. This brief research has to include relevant and, but not necessarily exclusively, new literature about the topic. For better results, we encourage students to give a cultural perspective, to propose new ideas, and to use the knowledge acquired during the lectures and seminars.

What is special about adolescence?

Structure of presentation:

- A period of Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood in Western Cultures and Central European Context: what is general and what is special about these life stages.
- Brief history and theories of adolescence.
- Contemporary Czech adolescents and emerging adults - some empirical results

What is special about adolescence?

- Youth, teenagers - sociological terminology
- Adolescence, adolescents - psychological terminology
- A stage of development that leads a person from childhood to adulthood (the second decade of life)

What is special about adolescence?

- From historical point of view:
- Adolescence as a period of life is a product of modern technological society (19th century)
- It arised as a time period of preparation for work roles. It requires years of schooling (compulsory education) and practical (professional) training.
- That is – a period of adolescence can be seen as a „training“ for time of adulthood

What is special about adolescence?

- Adolescence is a time for the practice and experimentation (with roles in different domains of life, relationships), identity formation, and consolidation of self
- Industrial and democratic societies constituted some „space“ for personal development. It is the time of **psychosocial moratorium** (a young person can be relatively free to experiment with different social roles in order to find her/his specific and unique place in environment and life without of fatal commitments)
- That is, adolescence is the time for personal and social development, looking for self and identity (for more a and less stable self-evaluation, close relationships to peers, friends, partner..)

What is special about adolescence?

How the concept of adolescence developed throughout the 20th century

<i>Time of adolescence - changes throughout the 20th century</i>	<i>Theoretical approaches to adolescence</i>
Revolt, opposition against authority and the world of adults (adolescent identity in contrast to adult identity)	Adolescence as Storm and Stress (G.S. Hall, 1904), also as a generation conflict (S. Freud, A. Freud, 1946)
Developmental task and social pressure (achieving a “socially appropriate” identity)	Adolescence as a certain period for accomplishing a developmental task (R. Havighurst, 1948; E. Erikson, 1968).
Space for self-fulfilment and life style (searching for one's value, forming “the real adolescent identity“)	Adolescence as the conceptualization of life space (youth culture) (K. Lewin, 1939; U. Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
Start to the authorship of one's own life (adolescent identity as an important stage of the lifelong formation of identity)	Adolescence as the time for forming one's development (R. Lerner, 1985, 2001)

What is Special about Adolescence?

Contemporary adolescence is a long period. It is useful to consider adolescence having three phases: early, middle, and late:

- the early adolescence (11-14 years) is dominated by pubertal biological changes, emotional lability, and egocentrism. The understanding and respecting he/she as unique person is very important.
- the middle adolescence (14-17 years) may be considered as „typical“ adolescence (a specific life style, "youth culture" - dressing, hair style, sports, musical preferences, slang). The need of acceptation (from peers, parents) is very important.
- the late adolescence (17-20) it the phase most explicitly looking toward young adulthood. Experiences of the autonomy, competence and the intimacy (close relationship) are very important (future goals, future roles and commitments in more domains of life).

What is special about Czech adolescents?

- At present, the Czech Republic has about 10.5 million people. Adolescents and young adults (demographically the group of 10-25-year-olds) make up 21% of the total population.
- The Czech Republic is an ethnically homogeneous country. The majority of adolescents are Czechs (94% of the total population), while there are 2% Slovaks. Other more frequent minorities are formed by Ukrainians, Romans, Vietnamese, Germans, and Poles.
- Although the total number of minority members is small, the number of immigrants, especially young people from Eastern Europe and Asia, is increasing.

What is special about Czech adolescents?

- Not at first sight; they do not differ much from their peers from other European countries and the globalization trend is clearly evident in adolescent behavior and lifestyle
- To a degree, adolescents from all over the world communicate via information technologies, use the same information resources, social media and networks, listen to the same music, and buy clothes from the same companies. They find new friends on social networks, define their peer groups in new ways, and establish close relationships with similar-minded peers (and adults) elsewhere in the world
- We suppose also that they argue with their parents over the same issues, maybe only communication strategies are a bit different. However, at the same time, diversity in adolescence and different paths to adulthood are evident, too
- Diversity can be related to specific historical and social events and changes that determine adolescent life in terms of future expectations and personal plans and goals, identity formation, or development of self-efficacy and control beliefs

What is special about Czech adolescents?

- For these reasons, it is useful to closer examine adolescents' lives in a particular country, in particular, social, political, and cultural conditions, such as adolescents in the Czech Republic.
- The fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the resulting political and economic reorganizations during the 1990s dramatically influenced everyday life of these countries' citizens. Such instances of social upheaval have raised questions concerning how young people are affected socially and psychologically by societal changes
- Compared to previous generations (1970s, 1980s), adolescents during 1990s experienced:
 - - more personal freedom in many aspects and domains of life
 - - time of possibilities and high optimism
 - - more personal responsibility
 - - more difficulties in decision-making
 - - more personal uncertainty

What is special about Czech adolescents?

- The age of 15 marks the end of compulsory school education (but only 2% of Czech adolescents do not proceed further to study at secondary school). It enables the adolescents to be employed with certain limitations related to the work of youth.
- At this age, sexual contact and intercourse with another person becomes legal. For young Czechs, the age of 18 means full legal responsibility.
- They gain the right to vote, can get married, are legally allowed to obtain a driver's license for car, can be fully employed with no limitations, and can buy and consume alcoholic beverages

What is special about Czech adolescents?

- Considering beliefs and values, most Czech adolescents are quite liberal and tolerant (e.g., regarding drugs, abortion, sexual behavior). A large majority hold no religious beliefs at all. According to the data from 2008, only about 14% of adolescents declared themselves as religious (Rabušic & Hamanová, 2009). The majority of these were Christian (83% Roman Catholic, 4% Protestant).
- The number of practicing Christians has not been growing significantly over the past years; yet, there is an increase in various subcultures and religious and interest groups.
- In this respect, it is appropriate to add that very often, adolescents do not seek abstract ideas and values but rather choose a particular reference group and an authority they can trust (Macek et al., 2011).

Euronet Pilot Study – the first cross-national psychological research in Europe (1992)

Sample 3250, 12 European countries:

- Bulgaria (236)
 - Czechoslovakia (257)
 - Finland (208)
 - France (180)
 - Germany (267)
 - Hungary (572)
 - Norway (305)
 - Poland (215)
 - Rumania (215)
 - Russia (191)
 - Switzerland
- German speaking (243)
French speaking (187)
and USA (250)

Included variables:

Daily activities

Future expectations

Daily hassles

Coping strategies

Subjective well-being:

- Life satisfaction

- Global self-esteem

- Control beliefs regarding:
Self, School environment
and Future career

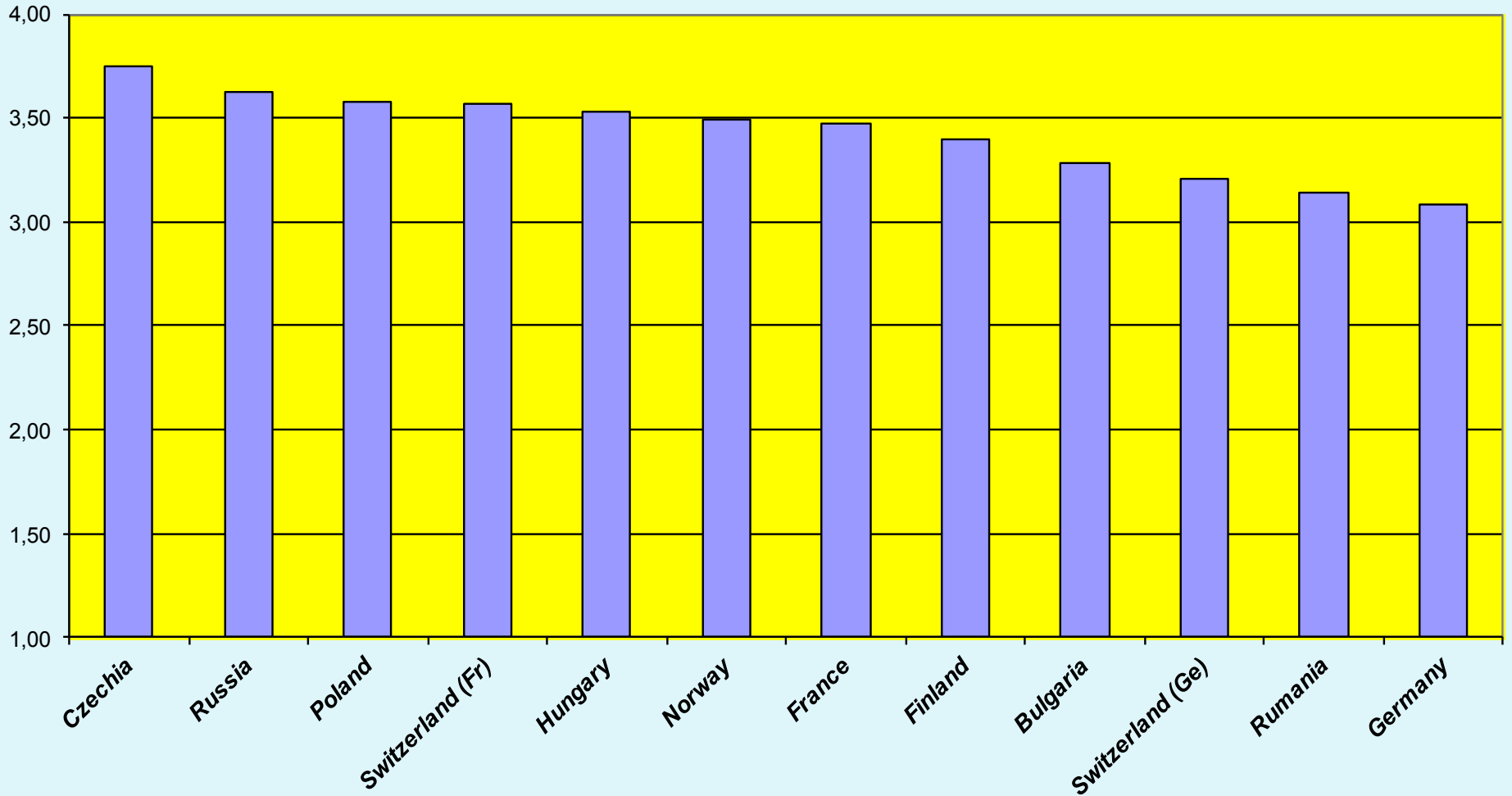
Subjective well-being of adolescents

• Switzerland (German speaking)	3,28
• USA	3,21
• Norway	3,18
• Finland	3,16
• Germany	3,14
• Switzerland (French speaking)	3,08
• Bulgaria	3,06
• Poland	3,03
• France	3,01
• Rumania	2,96
• Russia	2,91
• Hungary	2,91
• Czechoslovakia	2,83

I accept the things in my life that cannot be changed and whatever happens, I can see the bright side

Czechoslovakia	3,01
Rumania	3,00
Finland	2,96
USA	2,96
Switzerland (German speaking)	2,88
Poland	2,87
Germany	2,87
France	2,84
Switzerland (French speaking)	2,84
Norway	2,79
Hungary	2,70
Russia	2,68
Bulgaria	2,45

The importance of the wish "Being liked by other people"



Emerging adulthood in Czech republic

- EA: Period from approximately from 18 to 25 age in industrialized countries during which young people become more independent from parents and explore various life possibilities before making enduring commitments (Arnett, 2000).
- Why it is not already adolescence, why it is something special? (not full adulthood)

Emerging adulthood

- Emerging adulthood is subjectively specific. Most young people no longer feel as adolescents and at the same time, they do not feel as full adults, **they feel “in-between”**.
- In comparison to the previous period of adolescence, a majority of young people experience a feeling of freedom and independence to a much higher degree. They do not face a great pressure to make major decisions on important life issues, they are free to change their minds and explore other possibilities (in relationships, love, studies, work, etc.)

Young Czechs

Young Czechs obtained the legal status of adulthood at the age of 18. Nevertheless, reaching legal age does not mean that most of them also feel as adults subjectively.

Similarly to their peers in other European countries, in a majority of cases they also report that they undergo the stage of life when they do not regard themselves as adolescents nor as complete adults.

Young Czechs

Correspondingly to other advanced European countries:

- the time of study and career-preparation of young Czechs extended,
- leisure time enhances its value, and the range of options of how to spend an adult life is widened,
- the marriage rate has decreased by half and first marriages are often postponed until the late twenties (the mean age of brides was 28 in 2011 compared to 22 in 1989, and for grooms it has risen from 24 to 31)
- the mother's age of the birth of the first child has also risen demonstrably, the mean age of mothers is over 28

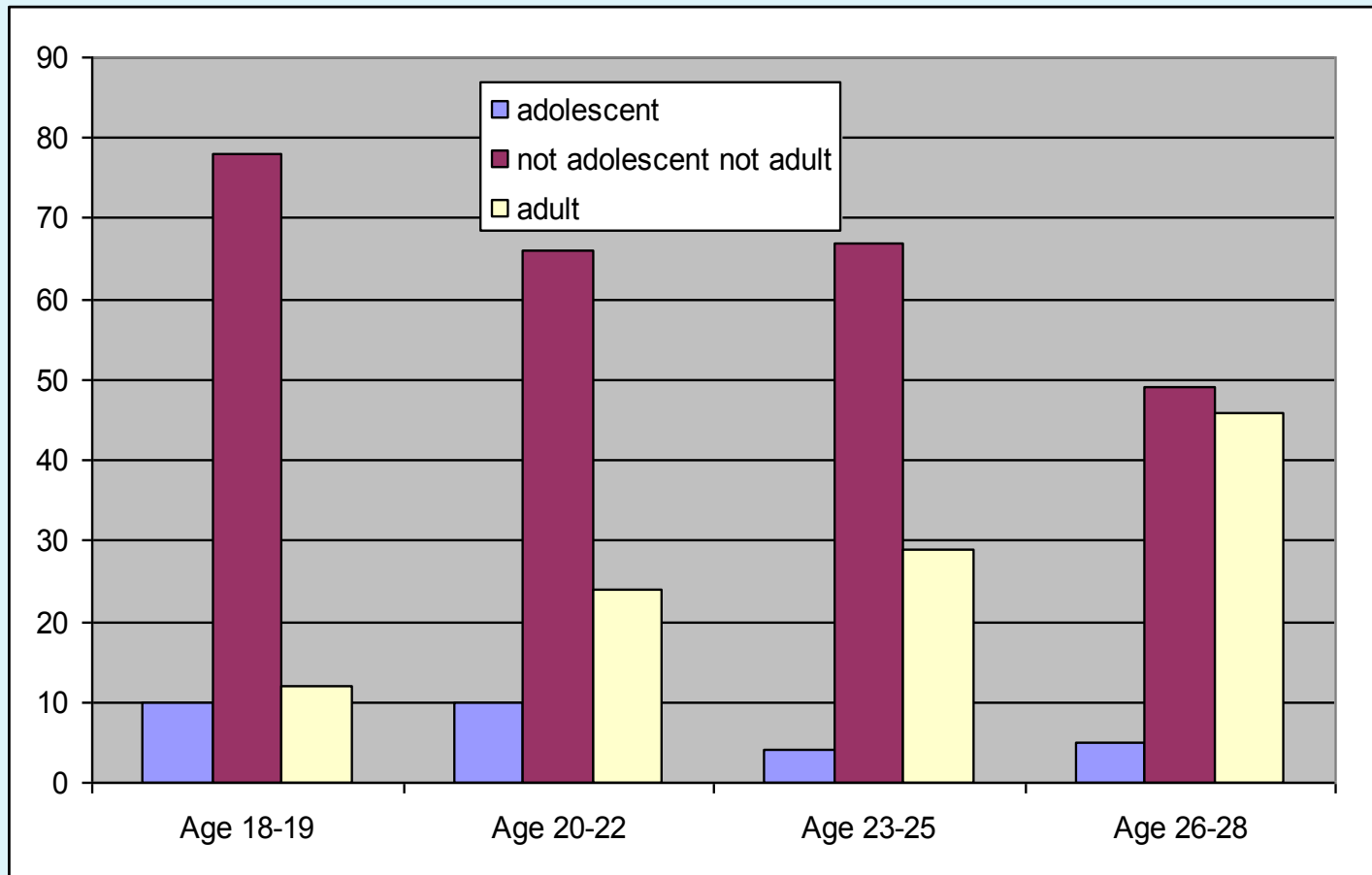
Quantitative Study

The participants were 436 young people (196 male, 246 female) aged 18 to 27. We intended to include both university students and young people who had already completed their education and work full-time.

Variables:

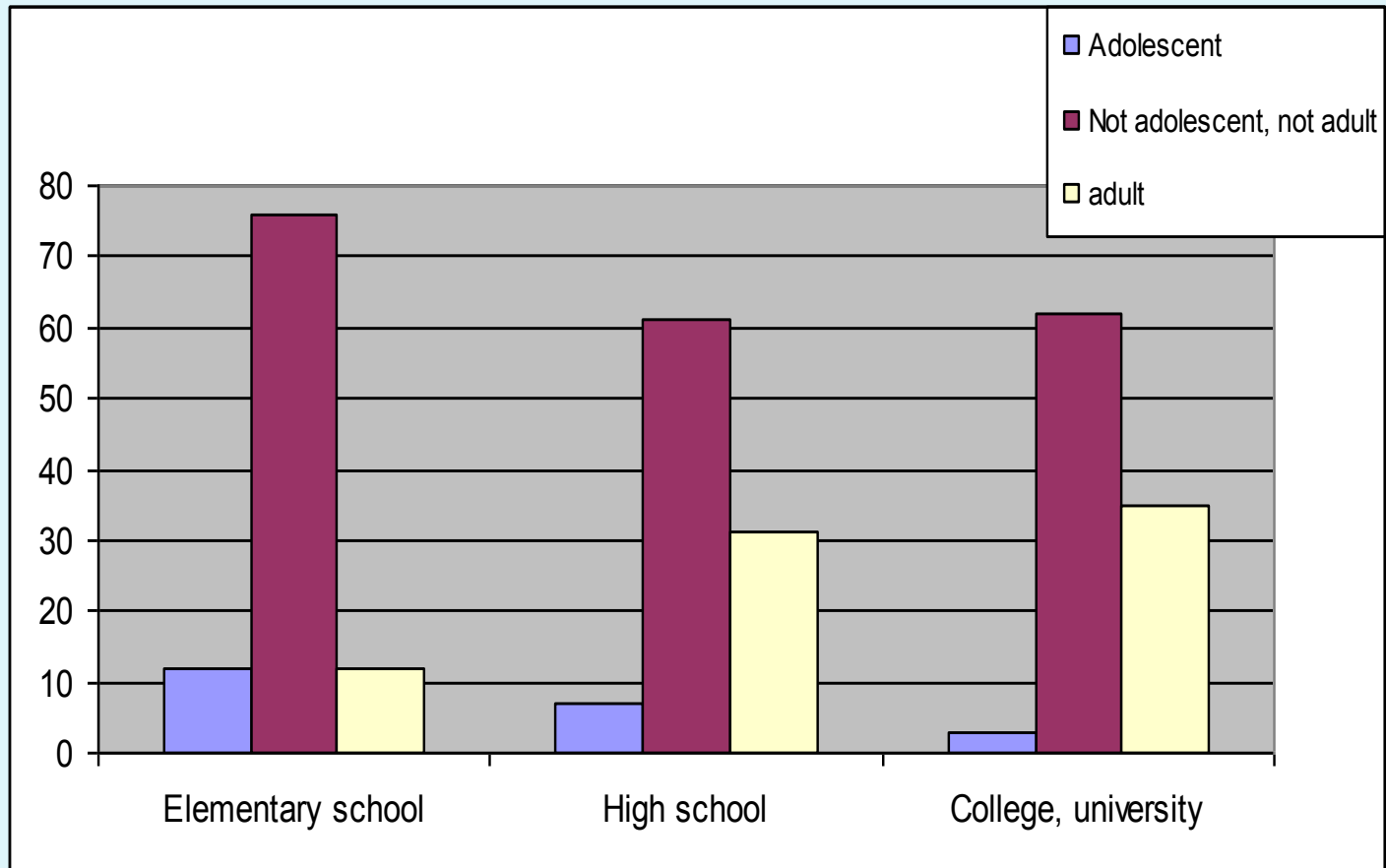
- Subjective developmental status (adolescent, not adolescent not fully adult, adult)
- educational attainment, employment status, marital status, place of living, financial support
- Stability, self-focused orientation, diffuse orientation, clarity of values, identity exploration, concern for others

Do you feel that you have reached adulthood?

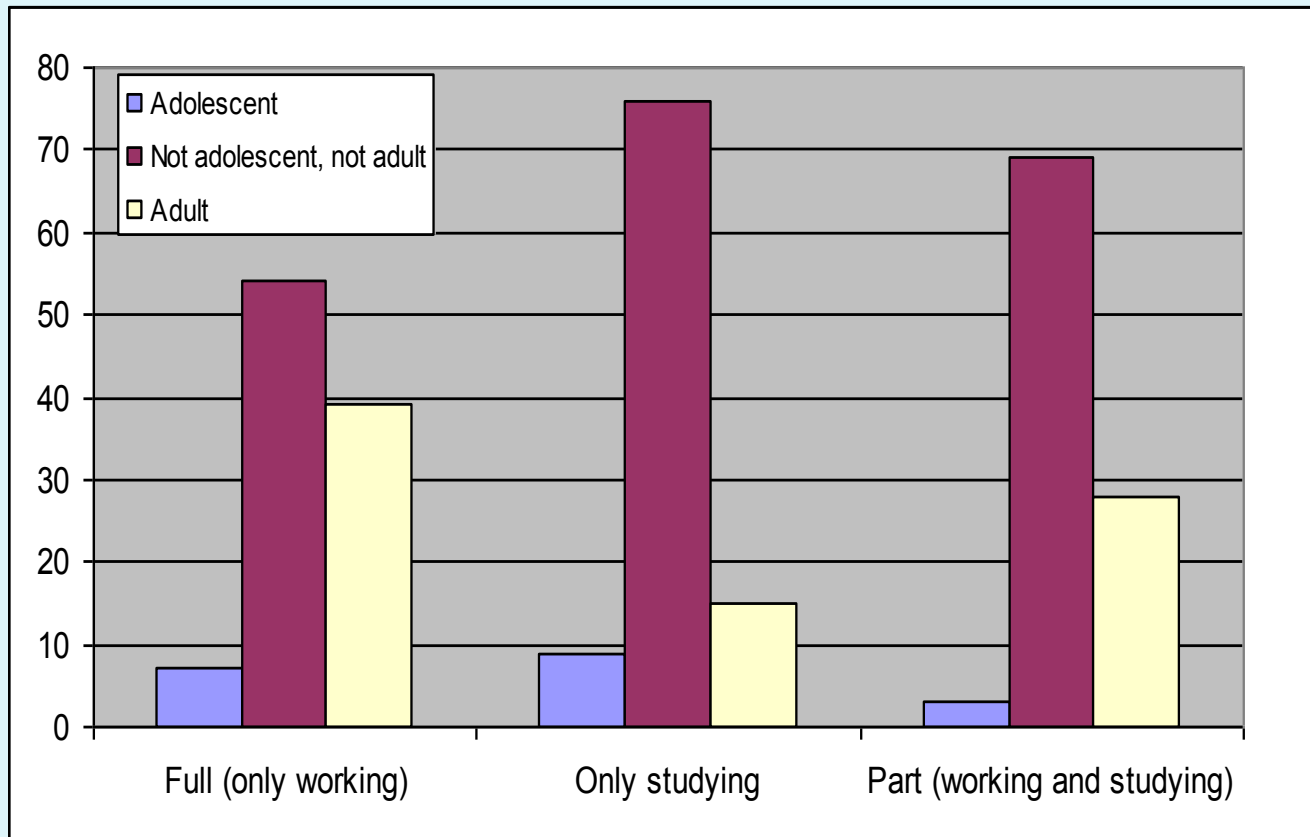


Total sample: 64% report the subjective status of an emerging adult, 30% as young adult and 7% of respondents as adolescent.

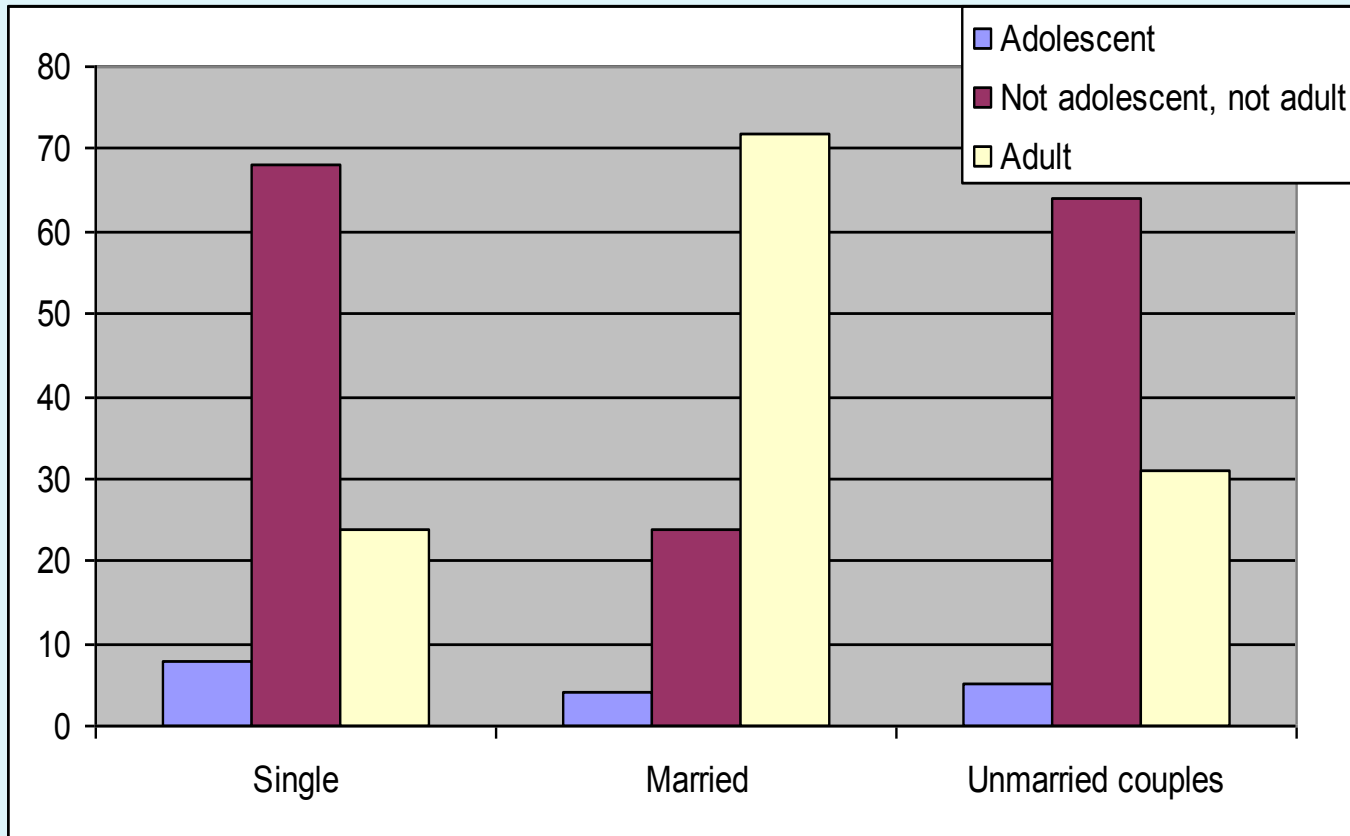
Highest educational attainment



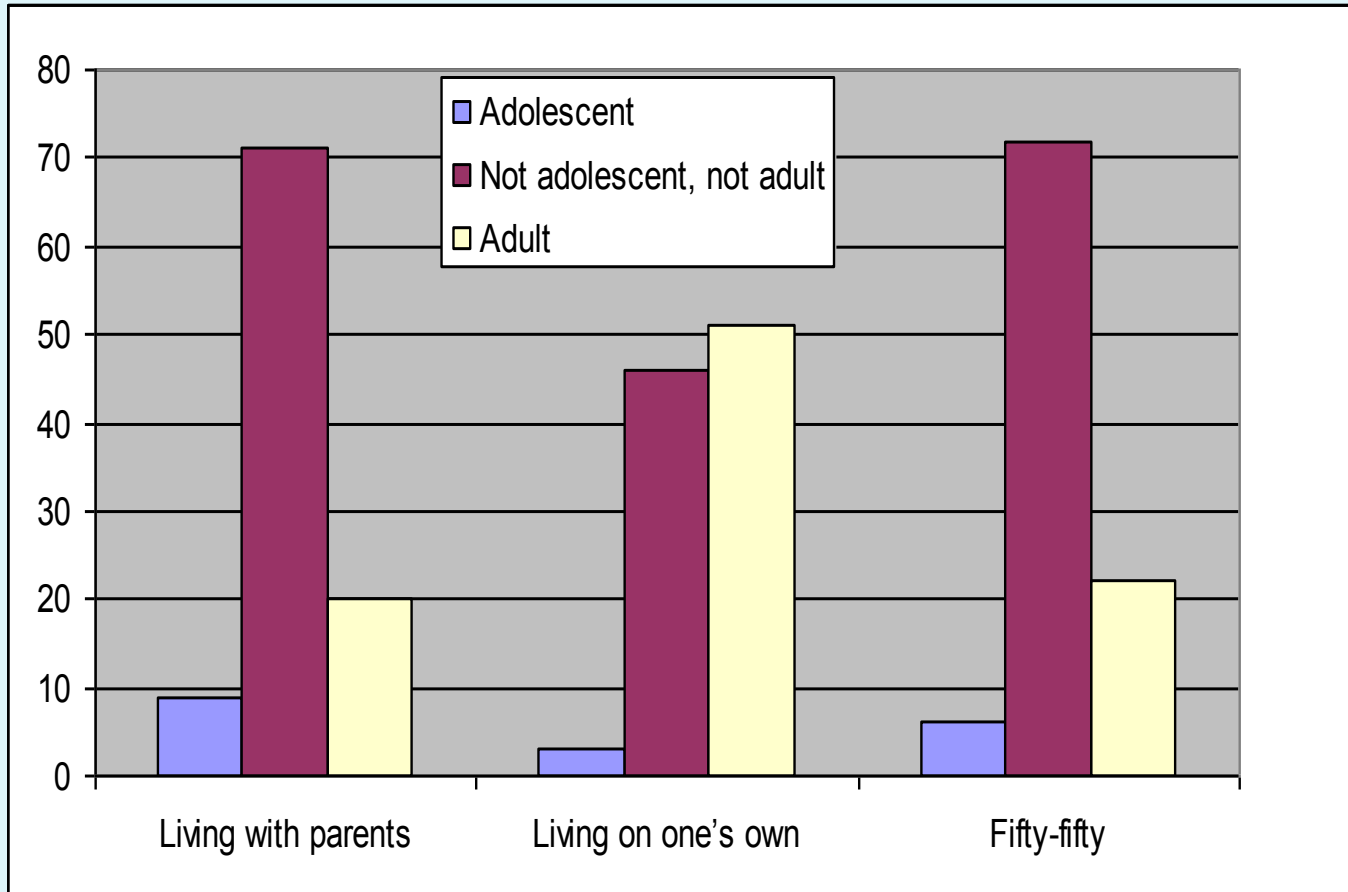
Employment status



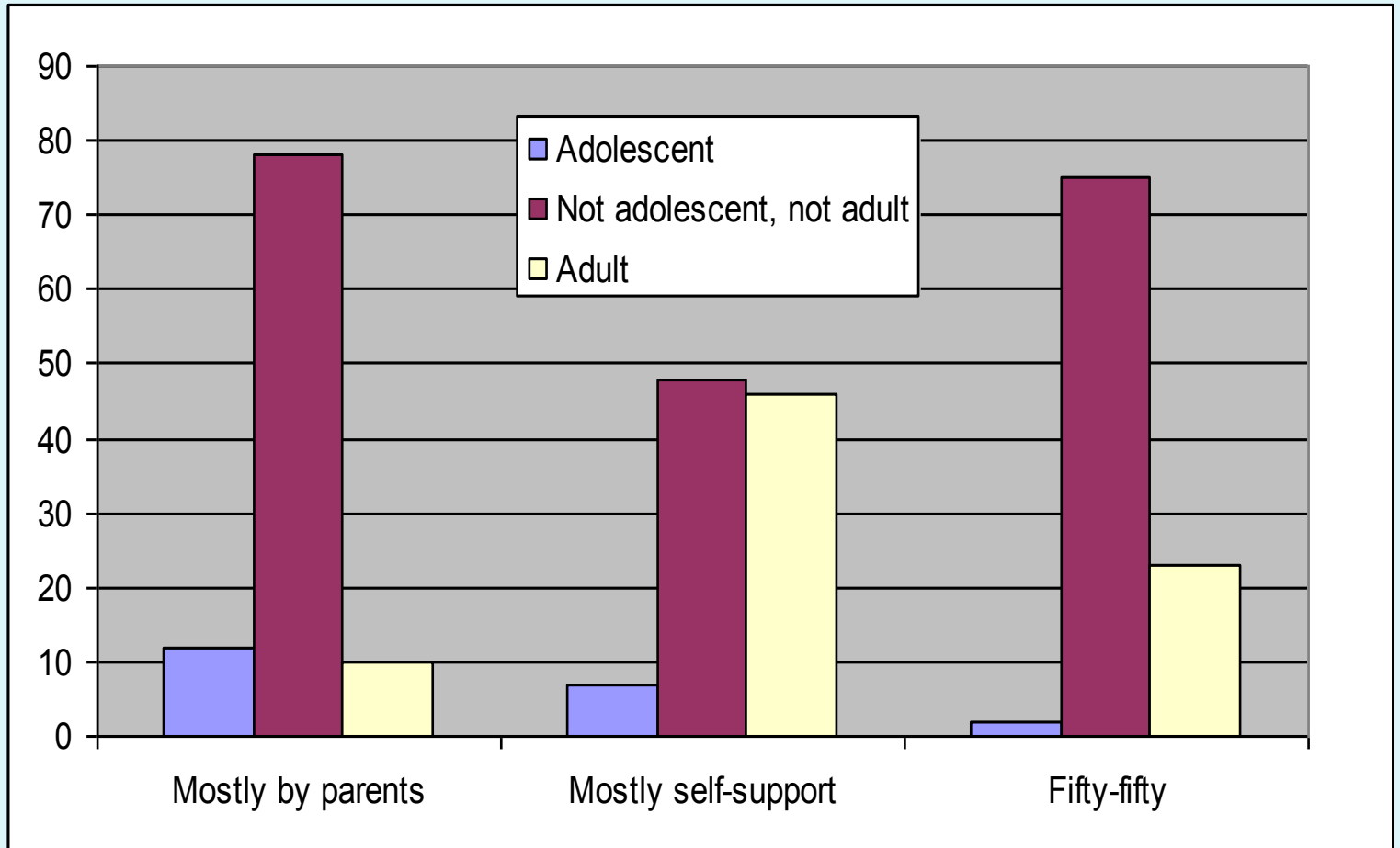
Marital status



Place of living



Financial support

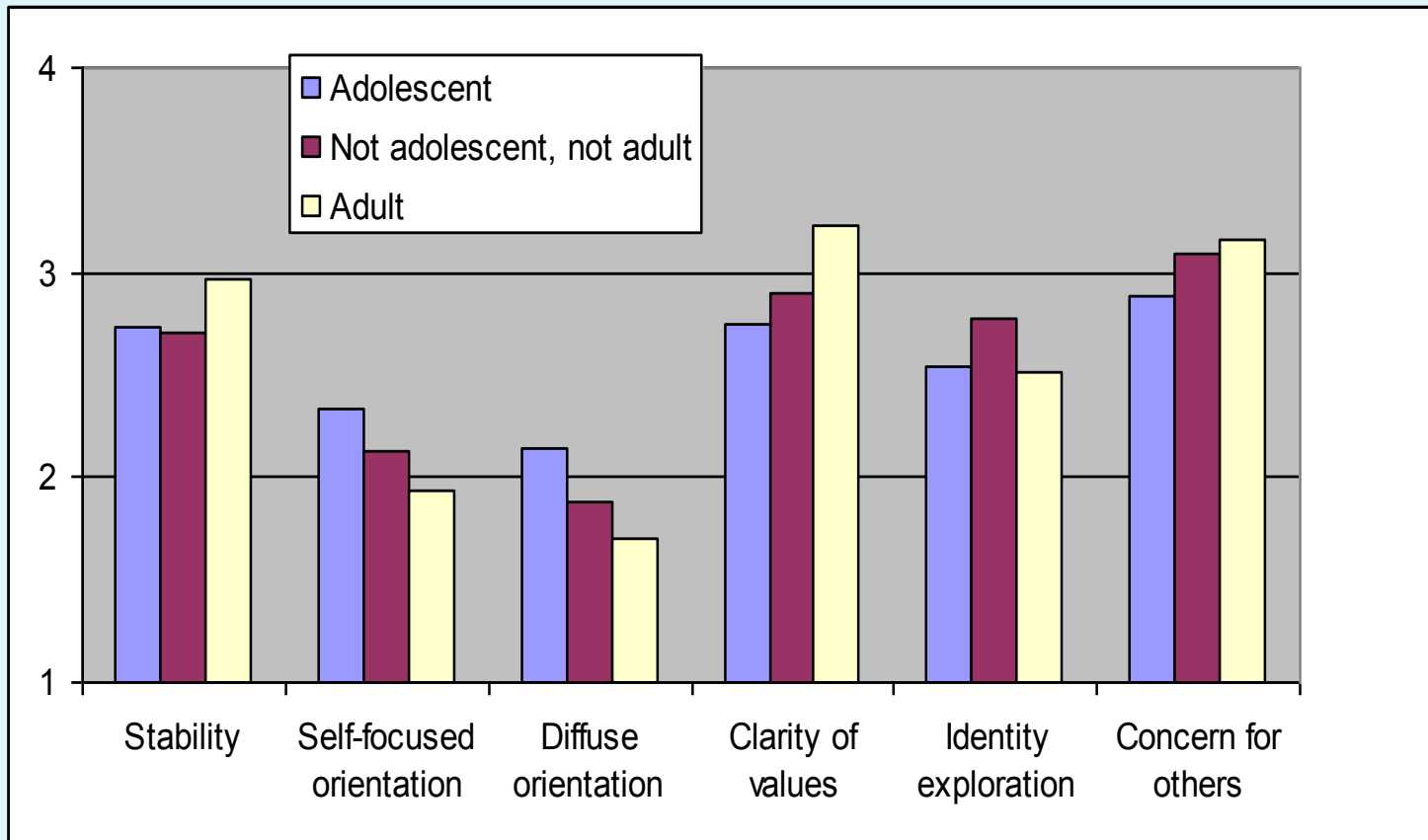


Quantitative Study - psychological characteristics

Questionnaire (inspired by IDEA, Reifman, Arnett, & Colwell, 2003) measured six variables relevant to essential qualities of emerging adulthood:

- Stability** (6 items, $\alpha = .79$) expressing the stability of mood („I don't let anything bother me“, „I am usually in a good mood“) and the feeling of prevailing inner harmony or distress („My life is quite settled right now“),
- Self-focused orientation** (7 items, $\alpha = .75$). The semantic core is the individualistic concept of freedom and self-focused orientation („I'm rather self-centered“) contrasted to a long-term relationship („I prefer individual freedom to a steady relationship“, „I want to have 'fun' as long as possible“).
- Diffuse Orientation.** (6 items, $\alpha = .71$) expressing a tendency to avoid responsibility and self-responsibility, unwillingness to plan ahead („I'm being irresponsible“, „I'm usually spontaneous and don't plan ahead“).
- Clarity of Values** consists of five items ($\alpha = .71$). („I know what I want to achieve in my life“, „I have a clear set of values“).
- Identity Exploration** (3 items, $\alpha = .69$). The key item here is the statement „I would like to find my place in life“ semantically linked to the need of living a meaningful life.
- Concern for Others** is formed by two items only („I care about other people's worries“, „I have commitments to others“).

Psychological characteristics



Stability: Ad = EA < A

Self-focus: Ad = EA > A

Diffuse: Ad > EA > A

Clarity of V.: Ad = EA < A

Identity E.: EA > Ad = A

C. for others: Ad = EA = A

Compared to emerging adults, adults presented higher Clarity of Values, higher Stability, and lower Self-focused Orientation

Compared to others, emerging adults presented higher level of Identity Exploration

Specific topic: Contemporary Czech emerging adults and their parents

Qualitative study,

n = 15, based on interviews with emerging adults

As it was shown in the results of the previous quantitative research, it is quite usual for the Czech emerging adults to live together with their parents. The economic benefit of a shared place of living is unquestionable.

However, subjectively, co-living with one's parents can be interpreted in different ways.

Contemporary Czech emerging adults and their parents

The first one represents the opinion that ***sharing housing with parents is the best option*** that has no substantial drawbacks. For instance, Vita says:

“Well, I talk with them about anything, it’s not really relaxed but it’s OK with me because they are my parents ... but I live with them, so I have to put up with it somehow ... On the other hand, I’m not complaining, I could make my own living but I am lazy...I just have a comfortable life there, I don’t have to take care of anything, it’s more convenient. I just don’t feel like it yet.” (man, 23 year old, working)

Contemporary Czech emerging adults and their parents

The pragmatic convenience of a shared place of living is favored even when living with parents is far from being ideal. Here, it is very important to emphasize the ***awareness of one's individual freedom*** manifested as independence in personal decision-making. Martin (man, 24 years old, university degree, working) says:

“Well, the bad thing is that you are under a regime at somebody else’s place, they still think you are a child ... But I am not really dependent on them. Neither my mother or my father. Neither of them. Just to meet them once at the weekend in the afternoon, mother will be happy to see me and she won’t be a pest, it could work best this way. When she sees me everyday, she doesn’t enjoy it all that much and that annoys me, she keeps bugging me all the time ... about everything.”

.. But the advantages are incredible. That’s a really good living that I have there ... I’ll rather pay 3 000 CZ to them than elsewhere for the rent because I know what I can do here, basically just about anything. It’s just more convenient, I don’t think that those principles of theirs are such a “hard core” to make me move out ..”

Contemporary Czech emerging adults and their parents

In other respondents' answers is mentioned ***awareness of psycho-social dependence***. In the period of emerging adulthood, this is also perceived differently. It can be viewed as ***something positive*** which the particular person does not want to or even is not able to give up. For example, Anna (woman, 23 years old, university degree, working) depicts her relationship with her parents accordingly:

„I am happy that I have graduated from university, that meant a lot to me ... I quite managed to find a good job quickly ... But I might be more dependent on my family, I am not quite able to become independent, I'm still waiting for something ... for instance now I say to myself when I have more money. I don't know I might be fooling myself. But the family just matters most to me”.

Contemporary Czech emerging adults and their parents

It becomes apparent that among the Czech emerging adults, the range of perceiving relationships with parents is very wide.

It is important to stress that even the image of a completely grown-up person includes relationships to parents. As a frequent topic, we can identify recurrent ideas about ***personal responsibility to one's own parents***. For instance, Ilona (woman, 19 years old, student) sees the changes in her relationship with her parents in the following way:

“But the relationship with my parents has changed a lot. They used to regard me as a child that they had to look after, now they see me on the same level and I sometimes feel responsible for them ... I'm starting to be protective towards them because I simply know what this young world is all about ..”

Contemporary Czech emerging adults and their parents

Czech emerging adults also refer ***the continuity of mutual relationships*** with parents and *the change in roles and expectations*. Milan (man, 25 years old, university student) says:

“They are still my parents and there are moments when I am still their child. I don’t know but I feel that if they needed anything they can count on me to do it...”

Surely, these examples do not show the whole range of relationships that adult children and their parents have. Our results cannot be generalized.

Nevertheless, the fact that in the replies of emerging adults did not appear the opposite point of view that adult children and their parents should look only after themselves is, in our opinion, very interesting.

Conclusion

- Czech emerging adults have similar characteristics as their peers from other European countries.
- Nevertheless, their psycho-social development has to be seen in the context of social changes of the Czech society in the last twenty years. A lot of adults (including their parents) had to rearranged their personal values and to choose a new life goals and perspectives.
- The relationship to one's own parents has proved as a very important issue connected to the transition to adulthood – acquiring economic independence is rather difficult before the age of 25.
- Moreover, in many cases it is just as challenging to overcome psycho-social dependence as well and leave the 'comfy home'.
- As our results show, the concept of adulthood of Czech emerging adults does take into account the bond with parents. Accepting one's own responsibility is often associated with the idea to take care of one's parents in old age and in difficulties.

Questions for discussion

What is important for young people aged 18 – 20 years to feel satisfied and happy?

Is a life of your generation (young people aged 18 – 26 – 29 years specific? Different from life of previous (former) generations of young people?

Can you find some specificities for everyday life of young people in your country (compared to other countries)?