

# PSY 273 Youth Development

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## Youth development: psychological view and cultural context (PSY273)

### Timetable and topics

Date	Session	Teachers
20.2.	What is special about adolescence and transition to adulthood. Information regarding students' assignments	Petr Macek Lucia Kvasková
27.2.	Self and identity during adolescence and transition to adulthood I	Ondřej Bouša
6. 3.	Self, identity, and family relationships during adolescence and transition to adulthood II	Petr Macek
13.3.	Romantic relationships and sexual behavior during adolescence and transition to adulthood	Lenka Lacinová Anna Ševčíková
20.3.	Study and career development during adolescence and transition to adulthood	Lucia Kvasková
27. 3.	Youth and social media	David Šmahel
3. 4.	Youth and Risk I: Online addictions	Lukas Blinka
10. 4.	Youth and Risk II: Online aggression	Hana Macháčková
17. 4.	Civic and political participation of youth	Jan Šerek
24. 4.	Students presentations I	Lucia Kvasková Petr Macek
1.5.	National holiday in Czech Republic/ Time for reading	
8.5.	National holiday in Czech Republic/Time for reading	
15.5.	Students presentations II, round table, information regarding exam	Lucia Kvasková Petr 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.

- **(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](mailto: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.

## What is special about adolescence?

- Adolescence as a period of life is a product of modern technological society (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- Preparation for work roles requires years of schooling (compulsory education),
- Adolescence is a time for the practice and experimentation (with roles, relationships), identity formation, and consolidation of self,
- It is the time of **psychosocial moratorium** (a 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)

## What is special about adolescence?

### How the concept of adolescence developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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



# **Sociocultural patterns of the "rites de passages"**

**The important age stepping-stones determining social roles and the status**

**15 years: End of obligatory school education. It enables the young to be employed with certain limitations related to the work of youth. It is also the "age of consent" meaning that sexual contacts with another person are not punishable by the law**

**18 years: Legal adulthood includes the rite to vote and also a possibility to be employed without limitations. Also a right to marry and to get married (there is a special legal procedure for those cases, when a new family needs to be established earlier)**

# 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?

- At present, the Czech Republic has about 10.5 million people. Adolescents (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?

- 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

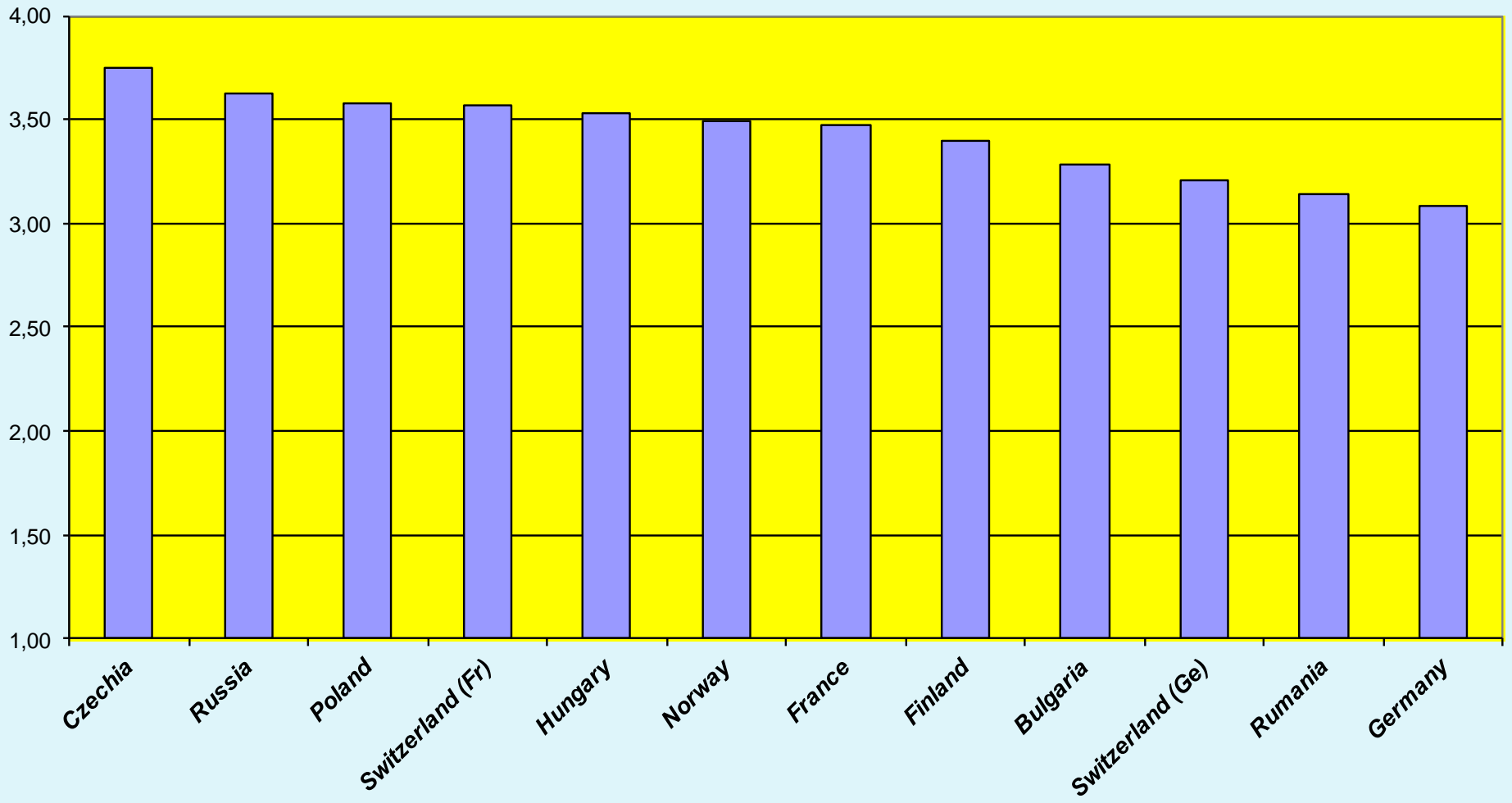
• Switzerland (German speaking)	3,28
• USA	3,21
• Norway	3,18
• Finland	3,16
• Germany	3,14
• Switzerland (French speaking)	3,08
• Bulgaria	3,06
• Poland	3,03
• France	3,01
• Rumania	2,96
• Russia	2,91
• Hungary	2,91
• Czechoslovakia	2,83



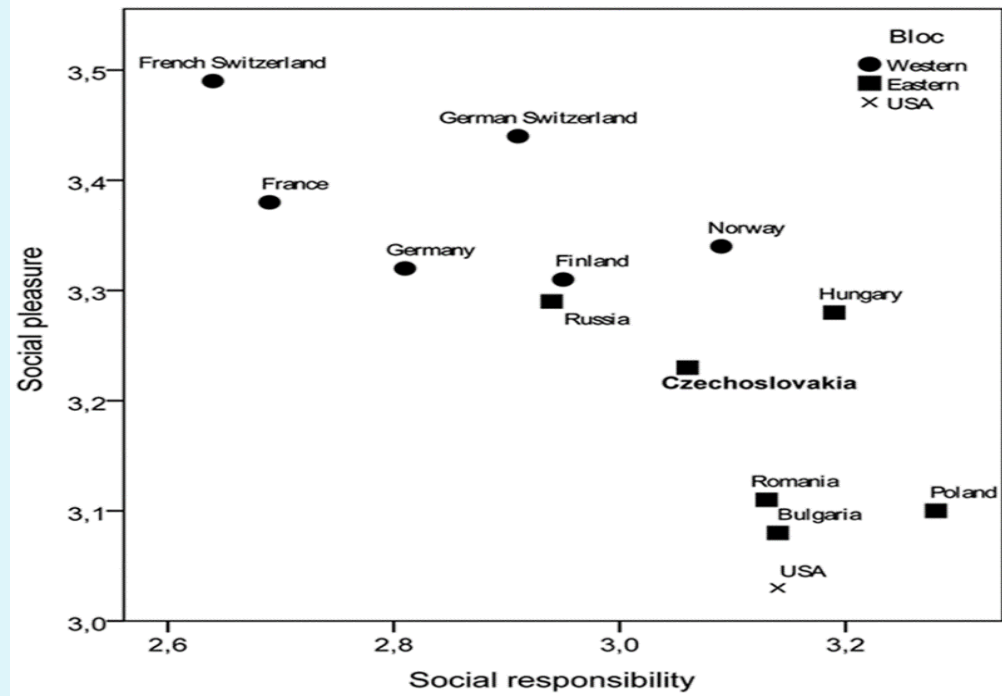
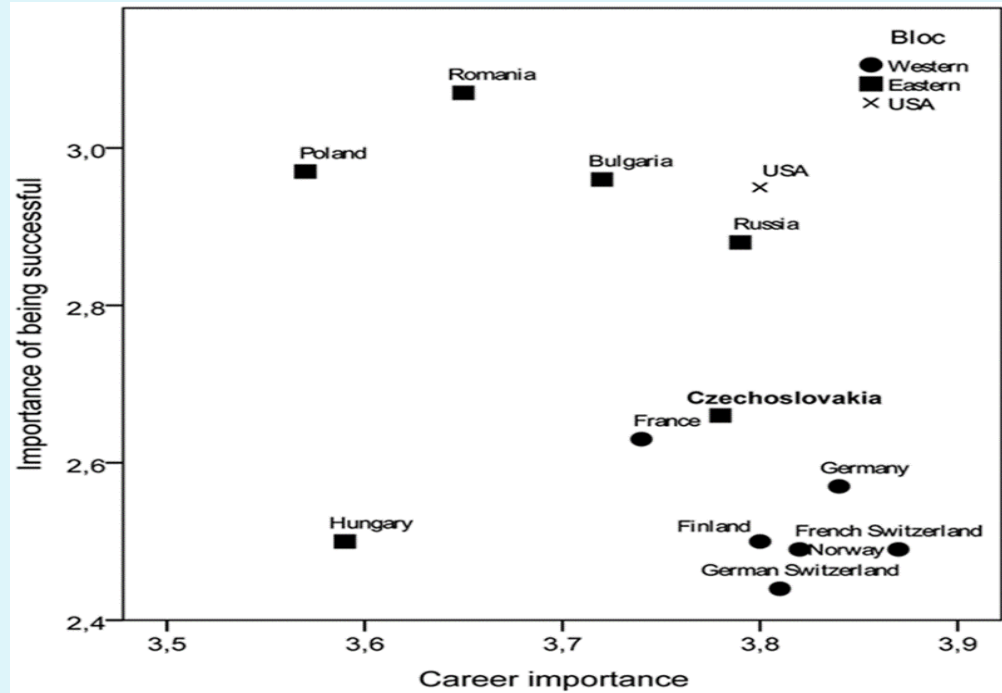
# **I accept the things in my life that cannot be changed and whatever happens, I can see the bright side**

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"



The position of Czechoslovak adolescents between Eastern- and Western-bloc countries in terms of four value orientations based on the importance of personal goals.



## Czech adolescents after time of social change

We have comparable data from three samples, representing three different cohorts (1992, 2001, 2011).

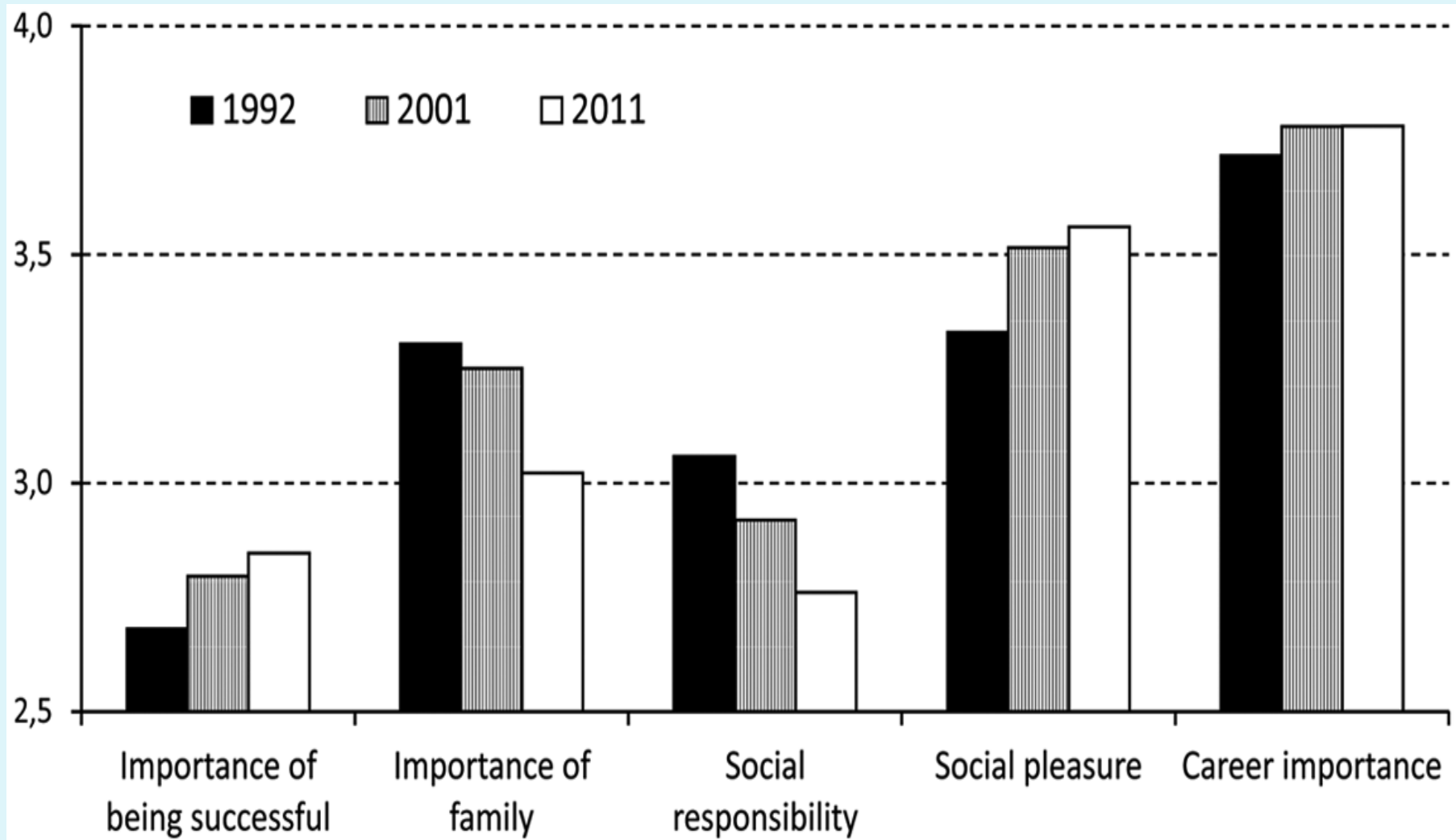
The first one is the post-totalitarian generation described above,

the second one is a generation of adolescents on the threshold of the new millennium, who spent their childhood in the period of turbulent societal changes,

and the third one represents the generation of current adolescents, who have no direct experience with the previous political regime and who have spent all their lives in freedom and democracy.

In general, the changes bring Czech adolescents more close to their Western peers from 1992. For example, the previously described value orientations have changed more toward success, social pleasure, and career, and away from family and social responsibility

## The development of five value orientations: Cohort means from 1992 to 2011



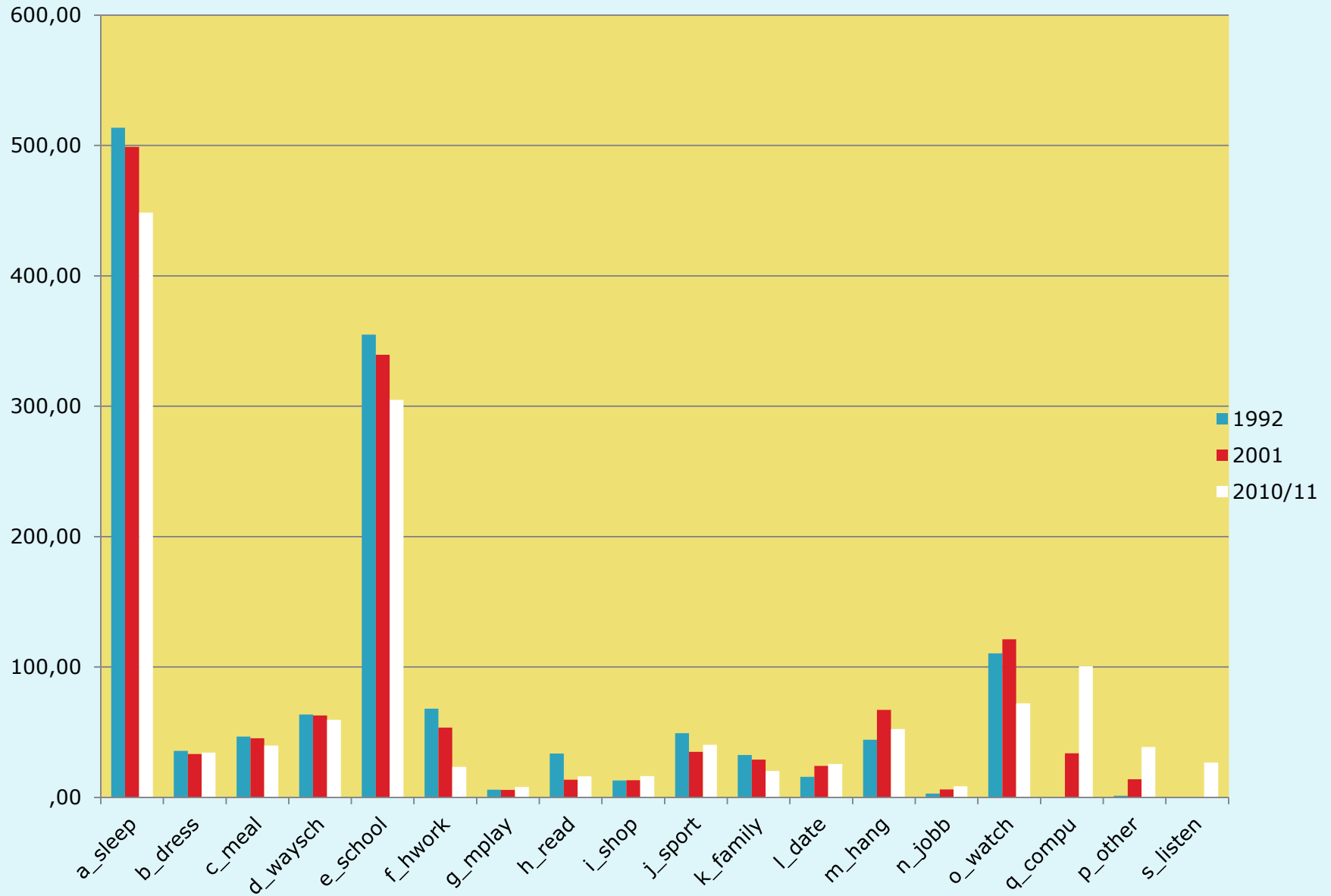
- The current sample compared with sample from the 1992 rated :
  - higher importance to spending free time with friends,
  - getting good education,
  - the goal to earn a lot of money.

On the other hand, current adolescents rated lower:

- the importance of their wish to be useful for their country,
- to have good relations with others,

The 1992 generation planned to have the first child at the age of 24; the present generation wants to become parents mostly in their thirties. These results correspond with the current data on parenting of young Czechs: The mean age of the birth of the first child has risen over the past two decades demonstrably, and, today, almost 50% of children are born to mothers more than 27 years of age (Macek et al., 2011).

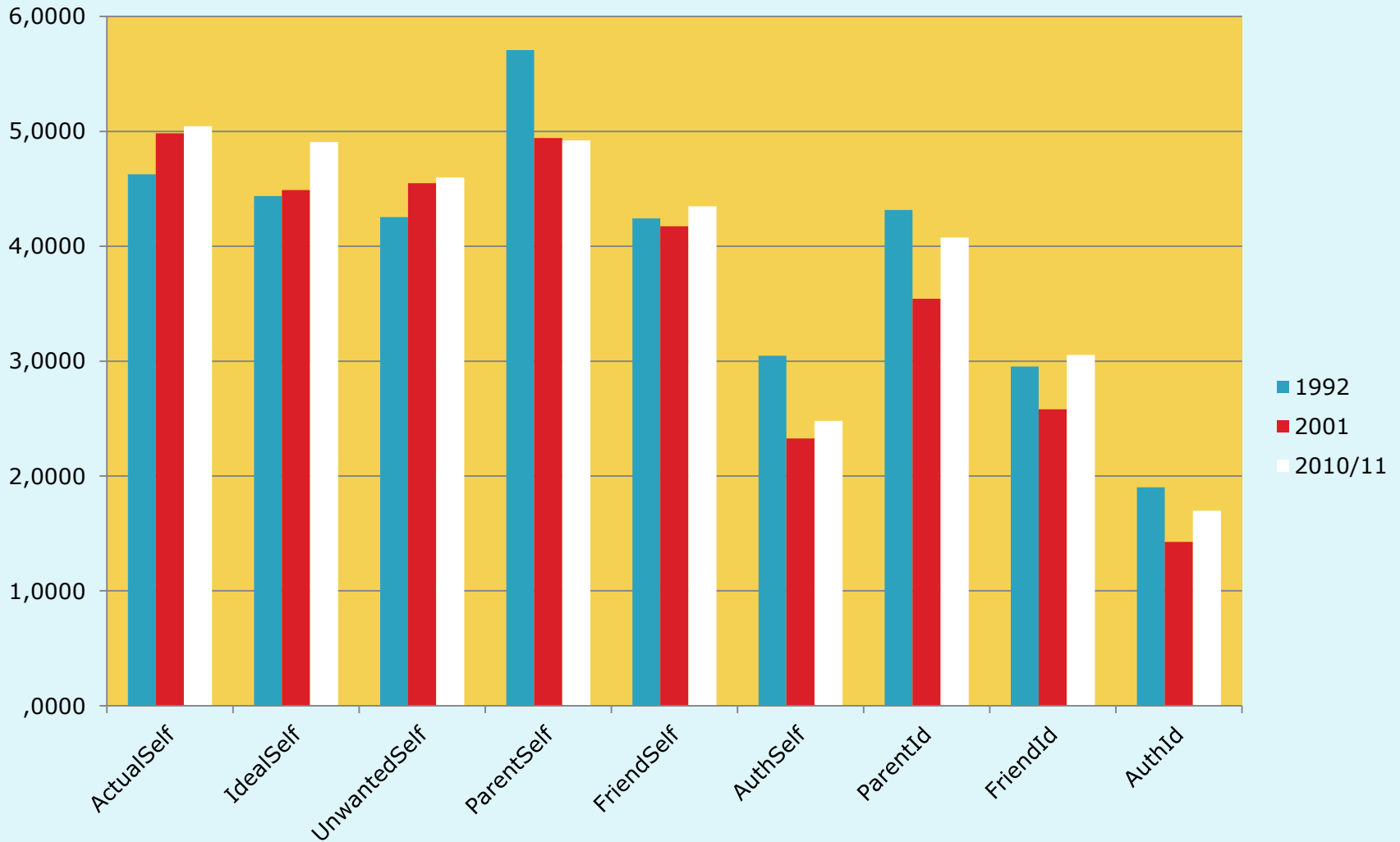
# Daily activities of Czech adolescents – comparison 1992, 2001, 2011



- The time spent at the computer and new media should be seen in relation to adolescents' other activities. The more they sit at the computer, the less they sleep and also spent less time at school and doing their homework.
- Despite some myths, it has not been confirmed that time spent at the computer would negatively correlate with time dedicated to sports or reading books (Macek, 2013).
- Other interesting results:
  - Lower dependency on authorities, less „deep“ conflicts with parents
  - Increasing an importance of autonomy



# Importance of different self-representations



# General conclusions

- The majority of CzA do not experience their growing up as a period of crises and conflicts with authorities. In comparison with the past, they more often experience it as a free space that needs to be filled.
- 
- The time required for studies and career preparation is much longer now, and marriage and parenthood are postponed until their late 20s or on the beginning of 30s.

## General conclusions

- Second, social changes and the openness toward new influences, mostly through the new media, brought more diversity into adolescents' lifestyles.
- In comparison with the early 1990s generation, two trends are salient: The dependence on adult authorities has decreased, and, besides the increased emphasis on autonomy and self-regulation, the importance of free and open communication with peers and adults has also increased

# General conclusions

- Third, adolescents' relationships with parents have changed. The current generation does not spend more time with their parents than the previous one did. However, it is evident that adolescents still perceive their parents as the most important referential persons influencing their lives.
- Research shows that the relationships with parents or within family play a crucial role in adolescents' emotional well-being, their value orientation, or study and career choices.
- Open communication plays a major role as well. Conflicts with parents are not barriers if adolescents can express their opinions and feel that their voices are accepted.

# General conclusions

- Fourth, Czech society is much more liberal than 20 years ago.
- This also has negative consequences for today's adolescents' lives. Generally accepted moral norms and rules are weaker, and the concepts of good and evil are much more relative.
- Material and hedonistic values are preferred, and adolescents have little guidance or support in deciding what is right and what is wrong for their lives.
- Compared with the past, today's adolescents more often prefer passive forms of leisure-time activities, simple entertainment, and short intense experiences.

## Emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; 2004)

- 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.
- 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

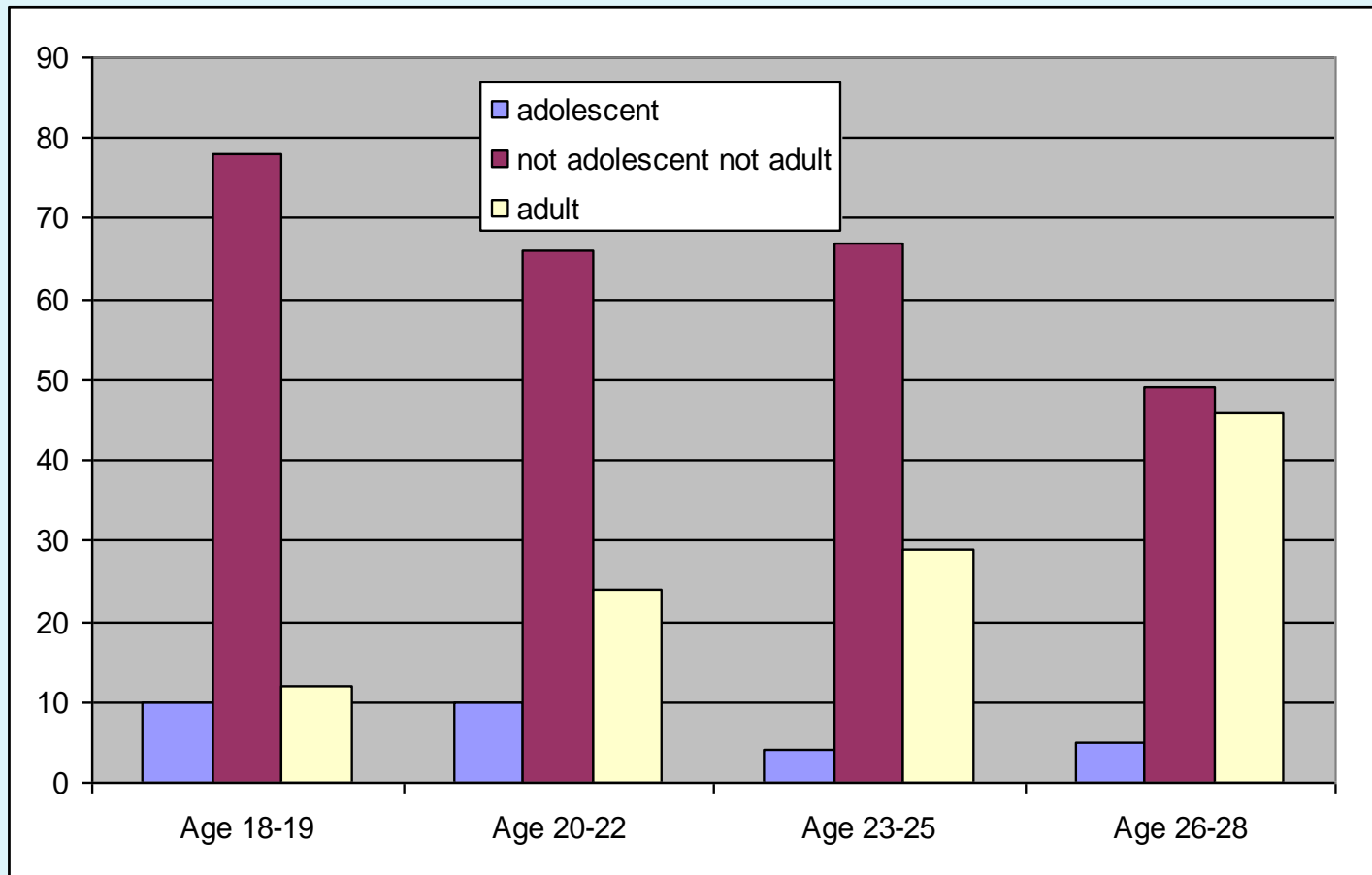
# Quantitative Study

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:

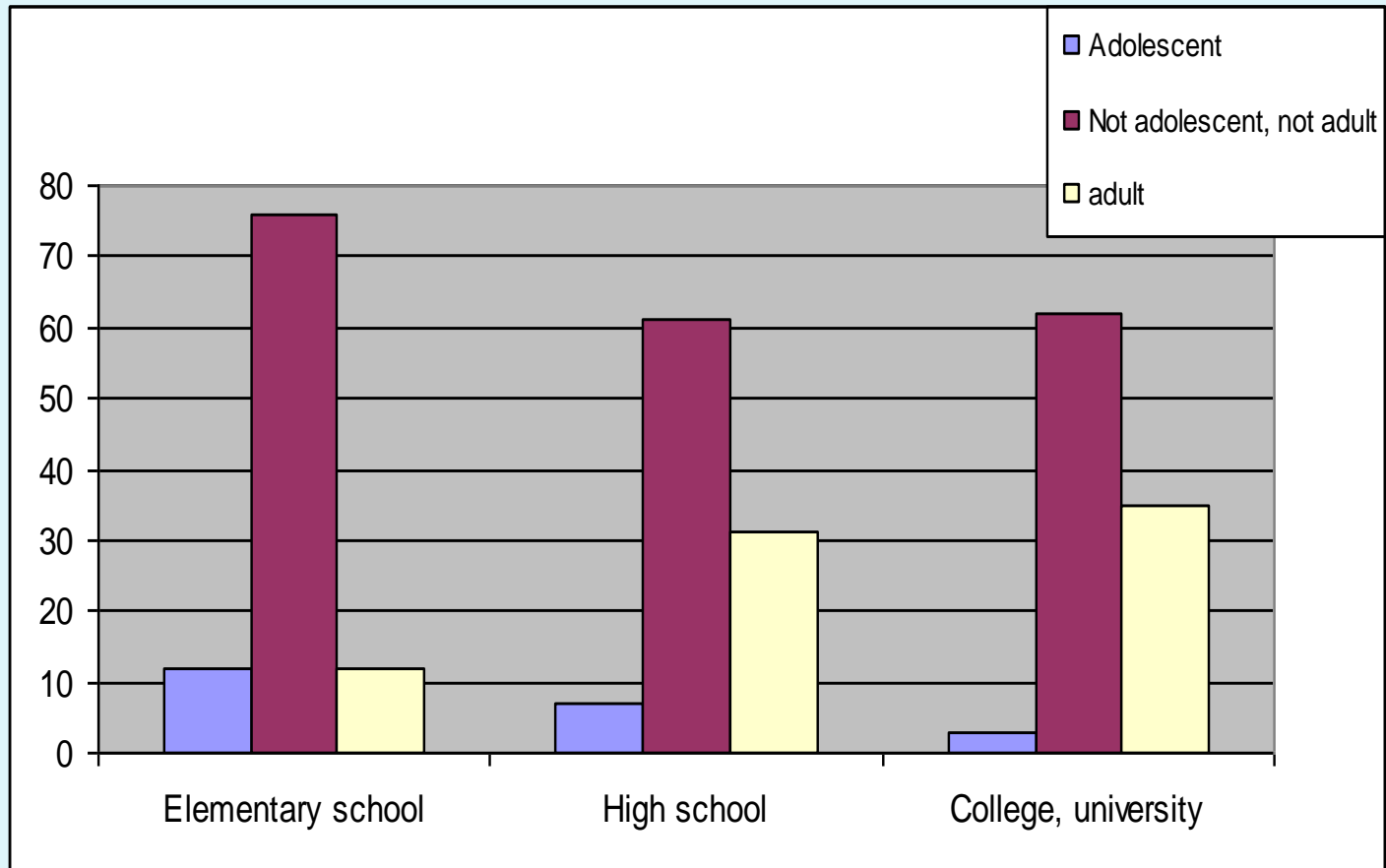
- Subjective developmental status (adolescent, not adolescent not fully adult, adult)
- educational attainment, employment status, marital status, place of living, financial support
- Stability, self-focused orientation, diffuse orientation, clarity of values, identity exploration, concern for others

# Do you feel that you have reached adulthood?

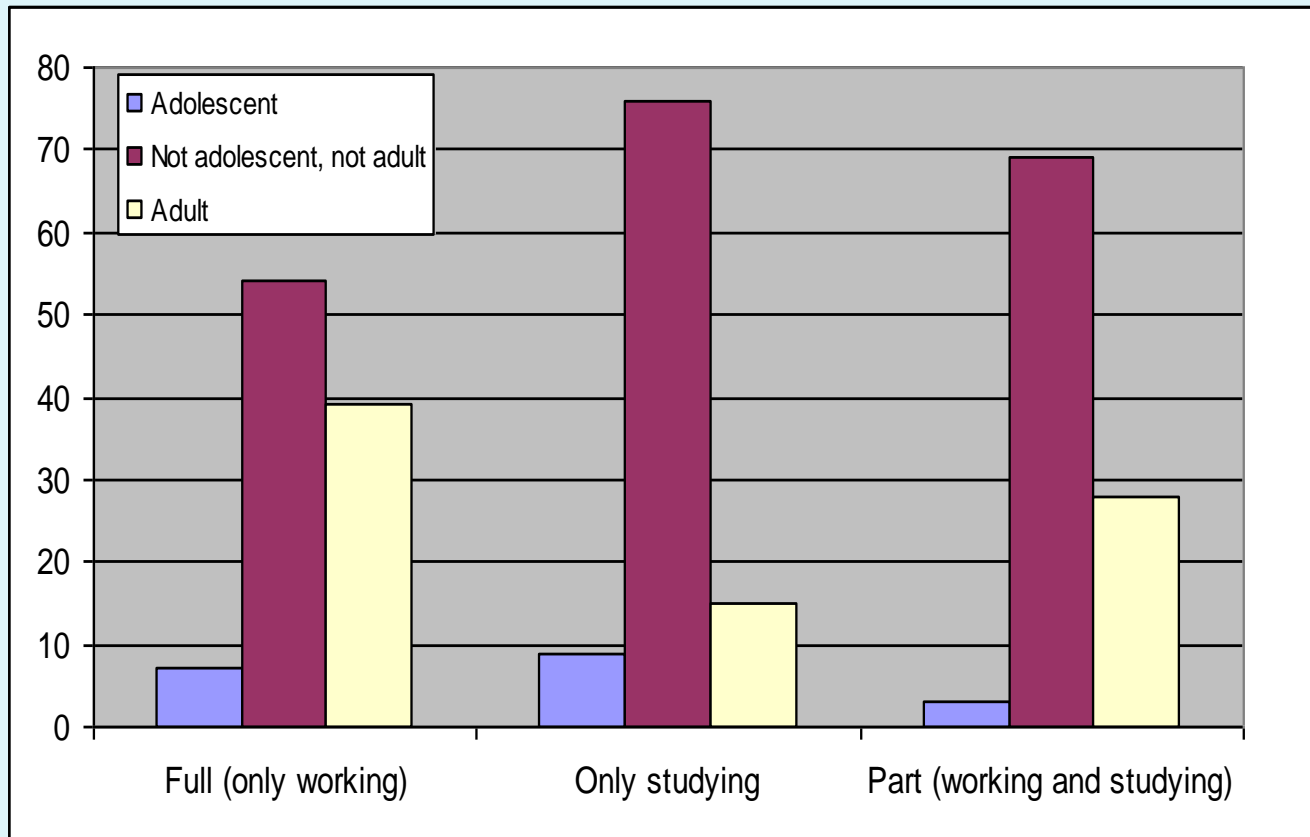


Total sample: 64% report the subjective status of an emerging adult, 30% as young adult and 7% of respondents as adolescent.

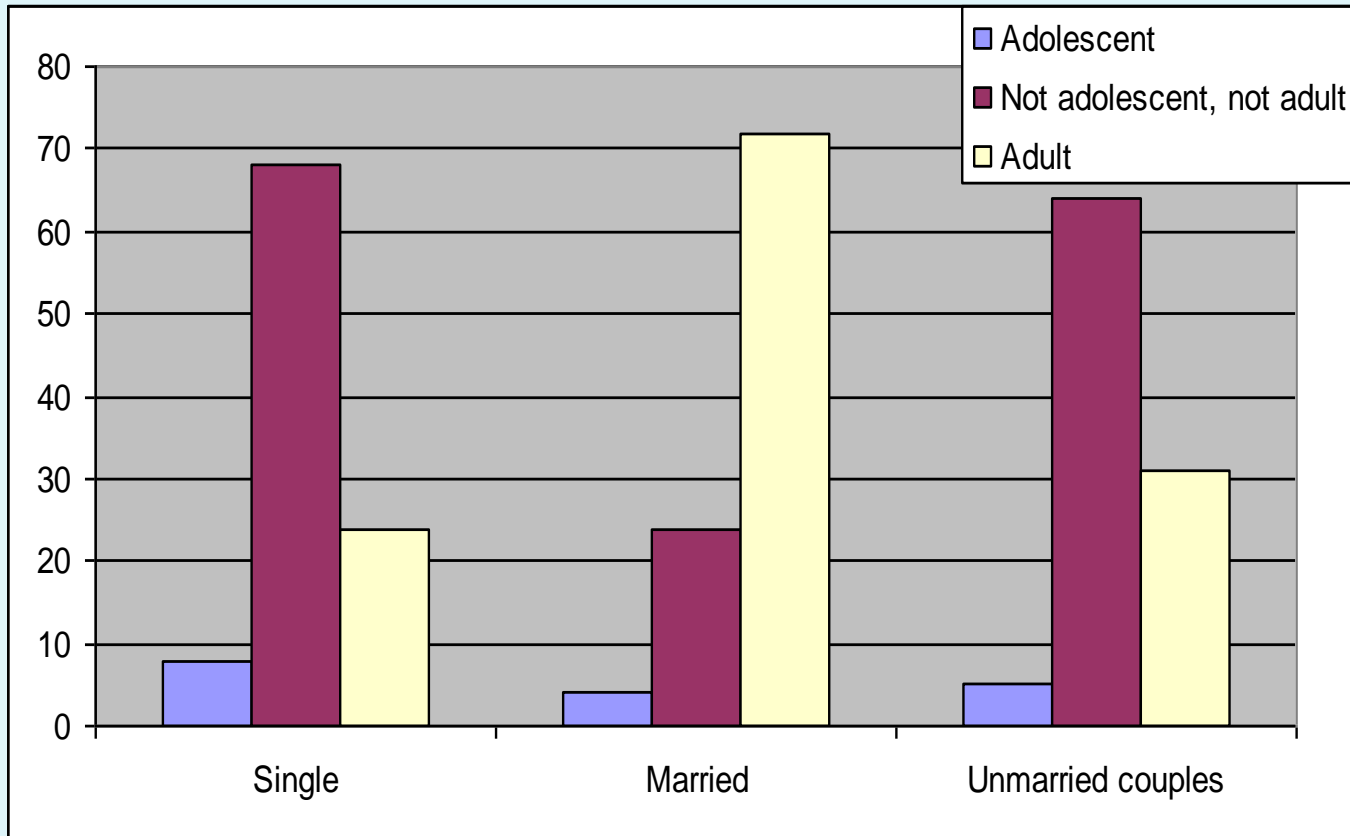
# Highest educational attainment



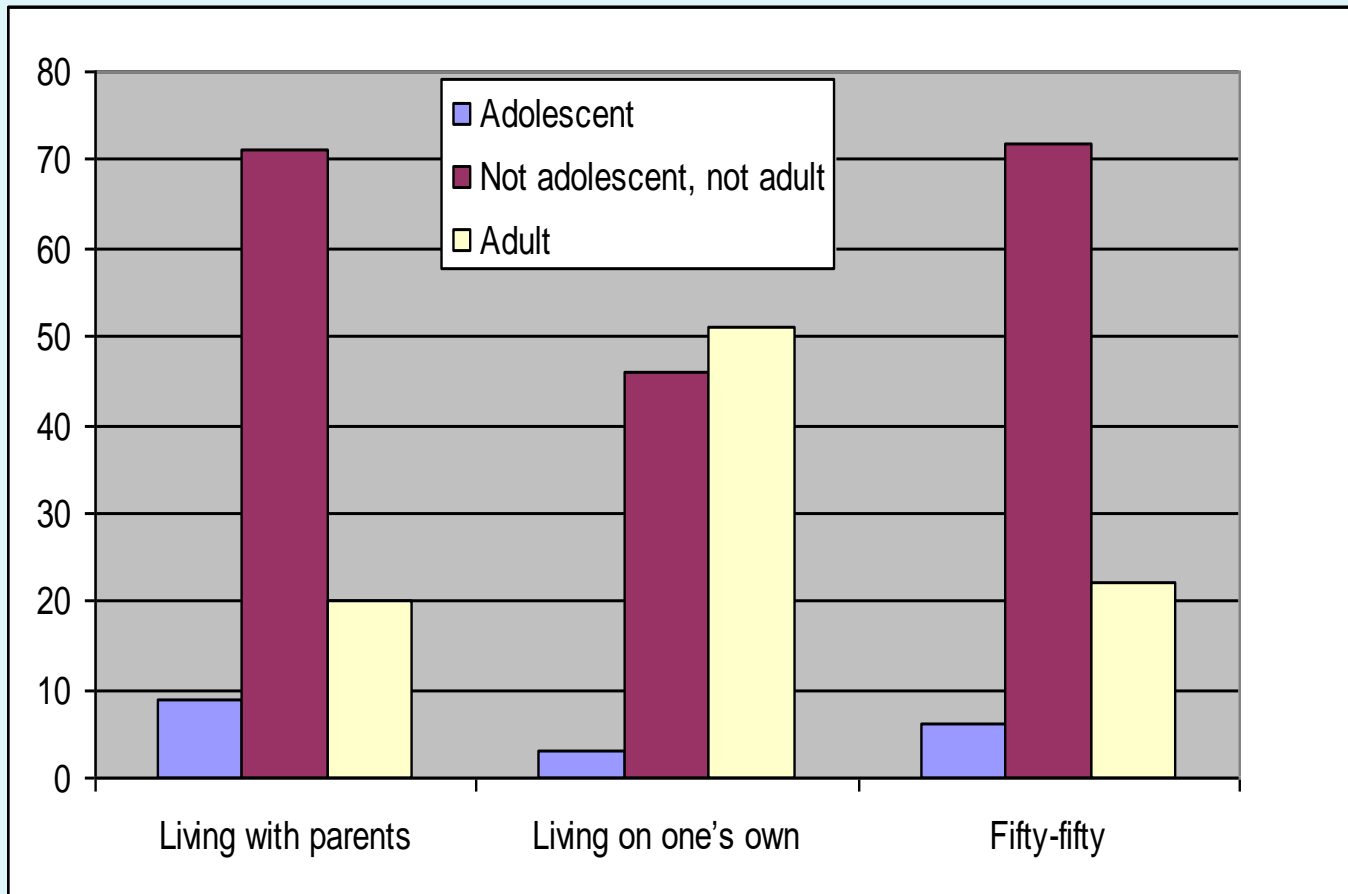
# Employment status



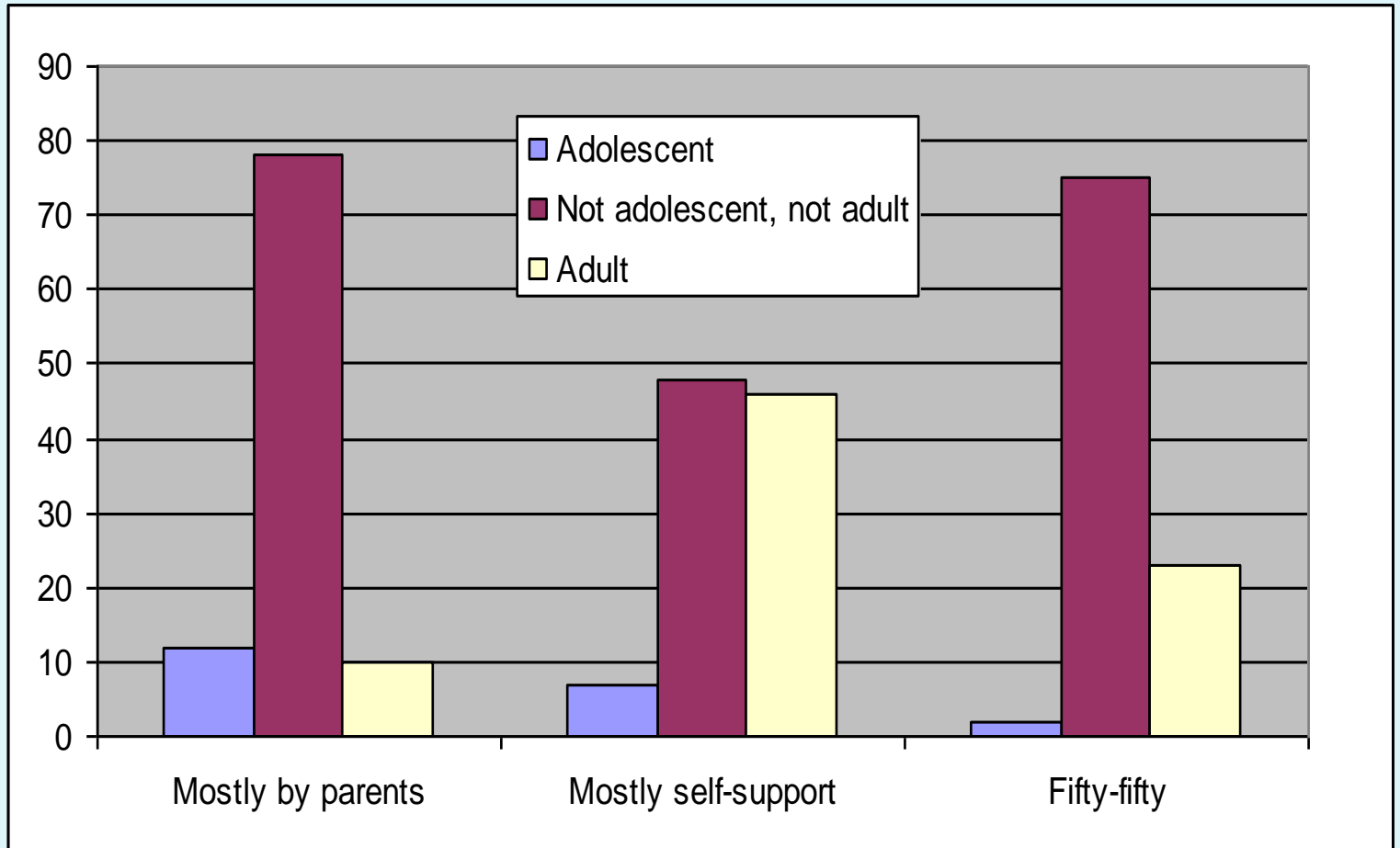
# Marital status



# 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“).

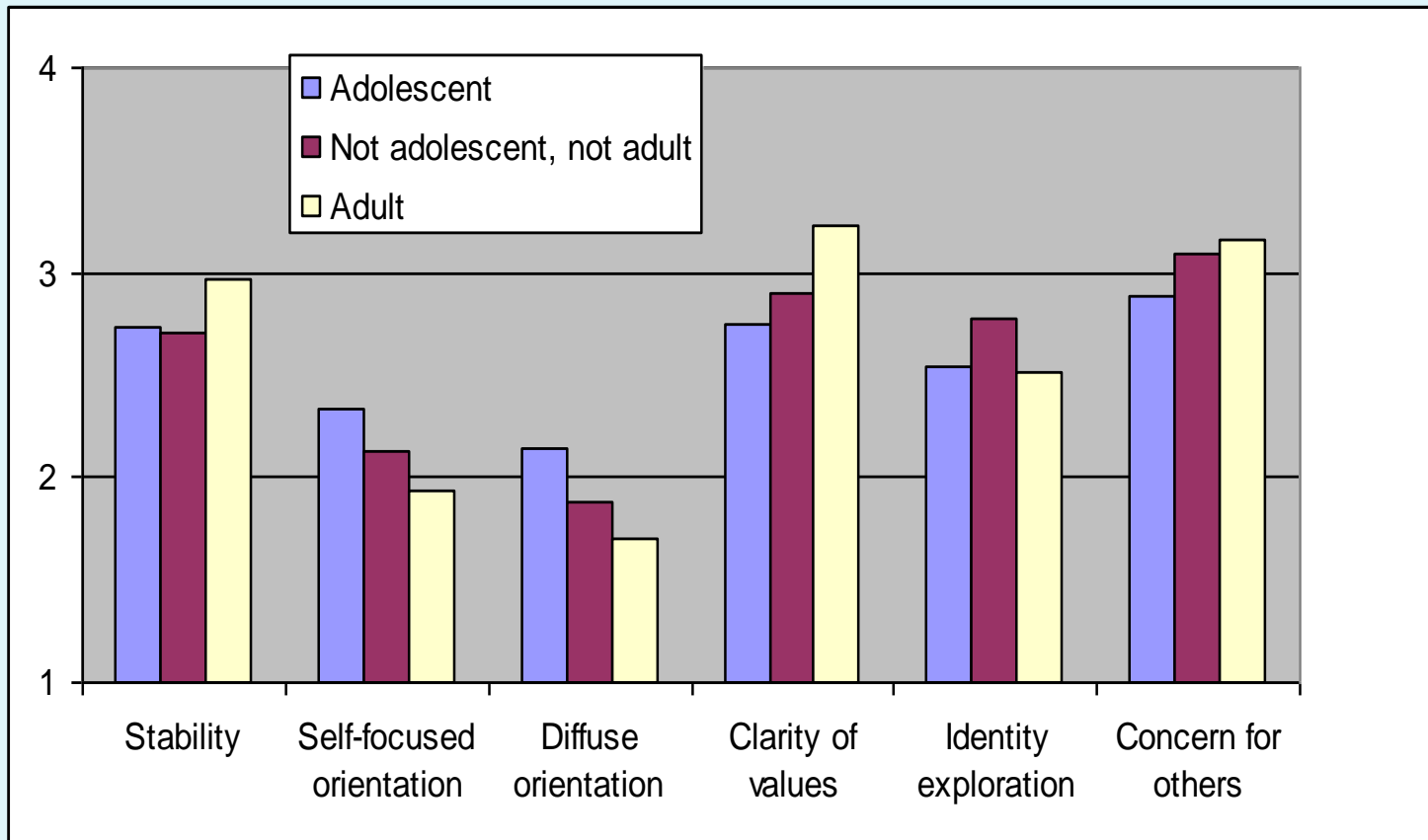
**Diffuse Orientation.** (6 items,  $\alpha = .71$ ) expressing a tendency to avoid responsibility and self-responsibility, unwillingness to plan ahead („I'm being irresponsible“, „I'm usually spontaneous and don't plan ahead“).

**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 an



# Questions for discussion

Co je důležité, aby se mladý člověk ve věku 18 – 20 let cítil spokojený a šťastný

V čem je život vaší generace (mladých lidí ve věku 18-22 let) odlišný od předchozích generací (when you parents were in age 18-22)

Can you Can you sopJe nějaká zvláštnost, specifčnost mladých lidí ve vaší zemi ve srovnání s Evropou?