CONCEPTION OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD: UKRAINIAN CASE

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Abstract. Similarly to other European countries, in Ukraine scholars can identify a developmental stage of emerging adulthood. Little work has been done to examine emerging adulthood in Eastern European countries, such as ex-Soviet Union republics like Ukraine, which are making the transition out of communism into the broader free-market economy of Western Europe. Conceptions of the transition to adulthood were examined using data from 117 persons (51 women, 66 men) aged 16-34, including 43 adolescents (aged 16-19), 51 emerging adults (aged 20-29), and 23 young-to-midlife adults (aged 30-35). Participants indicated the characteristics necessary for a person to be considered an adult on a questionnaire containing 43 possible criteria. Results found that the majority of Ukrainian young people did not consider themselves to be adults. The top criteria endorsed emphasised aspects of chronological transitions as criteria for adulthood by a large majority

in the study. Among the criteria indicated with least influence are family capacities.

Keywords: criteria for adulthood, emerging adulthood, identity, Ukraine

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Introduction

It is an indisputable fact that, since mid-19 century on world-wide scale in all post-industrial societies, the time of transition from adolescence before entering the world of adults has increased for young people (Arnett, 1998). They remain in school longer, marry and have their first child at increasingly late age in comparison to the generation of their parents (White, 2003). Arnett (1998), after performed investigations in various countries with young people who officially had ended the period of adolescence but still didn`t feel completely adults, introduces the term "emerging adulthood" for the period examined, which encompasses the age between 18 and 28 years.

In most societies, the life transition to adulthood is a significant stage of human development (Goossens, 2001). During it, important life events, such as finishing the compulsory education, leaving the parents' home, finding a job, contracting a marriage or entering the role of a parent, take place. Young people in this period increasingly ponder on how to solve their life tasks they face, determine their future goals and make efforts to realise them. Their distinguishing feature is the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to be free. More and more researchers direct their efforts to an in-depth study, analysis and understanding of the prerequisites and consequences of the period of emerging adulthood, to which the present study belongs.

Young people in the period of emerging adulthood perceive themselves as older than adolescents, but having not yet entered the world of

adults. According to Arnett (2000), "Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood, emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews". In the development of the theoretical point of view offered by him, he based himself on authors who have created before him, such as (Erickson, 1968) and (Keniston, 1970). According to Erickson (1968), the formation of the identity is a main life task in the period examined, which is positioned between the 5th and 6th stage in the classification he makes. When building his theory, Arnett bore in mind the demographic and social changes that have taken place in the post-industrial societies, whereas Keniston (1970) directed his attention mainly to young people who have participated in the protests at the end of the 60s, i.e., emphasis is placed rather on the historic moment than on the main features of young people of this period.

Arnett (2004) defined the *distinguishing features* of the period examined; the *feeling in-between*, between adolescence and adulthood, the *active exploration of the own identity*, more specifically in fields such as employment, intimate life and views of the world, *self-focus* not in the sense of egocentrism, but for lack of obligations towards the others, *instability* caused by intensive changes in the social status, in the relationships with the intimate partner, in the labour positions occupied, in the choice of a speciality for education, and many *possibilities* provided or an *optimism* to arrange the own life in the direction desired.

The context of the study

The Republic of Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe with a capital Kiev and population of 45.5 million people. On 24 August 1991, independence from the USSR was declared. Administratively, it is divided into one autonomous republic (Crimea), 24 oblasts (provinces) and 2 cities of special

status (Kiev and Sevastopol). Kharkiv, where this study was conducted, is a big city in the eastern part of Ukraine, an administrative centre of Kharkiv oblast. It is the second largest city of Ukraine in terms of population (1.5 million people) after Kiev; the main scientific, industrial, transport and students' centre of the country.

The *aim* of the study conducted is to determine which of the examined psychological characteristics for reaching adulthood are of greatest and, respectively, least importance for the persons studied, with analysis having been made with respect to following variables: *gender*, *age*, and *subjective development status*.

Method

Participants

The participants were 117 persons aged 16-34, with a mean age of M=22.6 (SD=6.2), women were 51 (*M*=22.8, *SD*=6.0), and men were 66 (*M*=22.5, *SD*=6.4). The sample contained three groups of people: 43 adolescents (aged 16-19), with a mean age of *M*=17.3 (*SD*=1.0); 51 emerging adults (aged 20-29), with a mean age of *M*=22.2 (*SD*=3.0), and 23 young-to-midlife adults (aged 30-35), with a mean age of *M*=33.5 (*SD*=1.4). The majority did not have children (81%). Sixty-eight per cent of the participants were living with parents, 11% lived with somebody and 21% lived alone. Participants with college education were 38% and with university degree – 62%.

Procedure

The adolescents were sampled from two high schools and from Kharkiv National University, which are in Kharkov metropolitan area in east Ukraine. At school, the participant were randomly chosen by the principal. In the university, the dean of the faculty showed again randomly in which groups

to conduct the survey. Over 95% of the asked persons agreed to participate. The questionnaire took about 18-20 minutes to complete.

Measures

The participants were asked to fill in a 52-item questionnaire on the transition to adulthood. There were 43 items on the questionnaire participants were asked to "indicate whether you think the following must be achieved before a person can be considered to be an adult" (Arnett, 2004). They could indicate one of 4-graded Likert rating scale from: 1 – "very important", 2 – "quite important", 3 – "slightly important" and 4 – "not at all important". These 43 items form 7 emerging adulthood markers (subscales): *Independence* (6 items, an example of a questions is: "No longer living in parents' household".), *Interdependence* (5 items, an example of an item is: "Committed to long-term love relationship".), *Role Transitions* (6 items, an example: "Have at least one child".), *Norm Compliance* (8 items, for example: "Avoid becoming drunk".), *Biological Transitions* (4 items, of which 3 are for men and 3 for women, an example of an item is: "Have had sexual intercourse".), *Chronological Transitions* (5 items if a man and 6 items if a woman, an example of a questions is: "Have obtained driver's licence and can drive a car.") and *Family Capacities* (8 items, of which 4 are for women and 3 for men, for example: "If a woman, become capable of running a household" and "Become capable of keeping family physically safe (men).". No items are reversed.

The participants were asked on the questionnaire: (i) "What are the three most important things for a person to be considered an adult? You may answer by writing in the numbers of any of the 43 items above, or by writing in your own response"; (ii) In addition, a variety of questions concerning background and demographic information were included.

The result of each of the 7 emerging adulthood markers (subscales) represents an average of all answers given and they are between 0 (minimum) and 4 (maximum). For all scales, the higher values obtained correspond to higher importance attached by the persons surveyed to the psychological characteristics that are comprised in them.

In early studies, most of the markers showed good internal consistencies: between α=0.42 and α=0.88 (Arnett, 2003); between α=0.55 and α=0.88 (Arnett, 2003); between α=0.50 and α=0.75 (Ganeva, 2013) and high internal consistencies – between α=0.70 and α=0.90 (Maysless & Scharf, 2003).

Statistical analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics version 19 was used for statistical analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate reliability (internal consistency) of seven emerging adulthood markers. Analysis began by computing descriptive statistics and correlation among markers with Pearson's linear correlation coefficient. Then were compared groups on markers and by analysis of variance: two-factor between-groups ANOVA, one-way repeated measures ANOVA and one-way between-groups ANCOVA. In line with the recommended thresholds (Cohen, 1988), it was considered a correlation ***r***: ≥ 0.70 much larger than typical (>L), 0.50-0.69 larger than typical (L), 0.30-0.49 medium or typical (M), 0.10-0.29 smaller than typical (S), and 0.00-0.09 trivial (T). Cohen's *η (eta)* was used as a measure of effect size for group comparisons and was interpreted: ≥ 0.45 as much larger than typical (>L), 0.37-0.44 as larger than typical (L), 0.24-0.36 as medium or typical (M), 0.10-0.23 as smaller than typical (S), and 0.00-0.09 as trivial (T), according to Cohen (1988). The alpha (α) was set to $p<0.05$ for statistical significance and there was no practical significance when effect size was trivial.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

The descriptive statistics and the results of the correlation analysis of 7 adulthood markers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample correlation matrix, means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), observed and maximum range for seven emerging adulthood markers

correlation between	*and markers for transition to adulthood*						
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Independence	1						
2. Interdependence	0.46***	1					
3. Role Transitions	0.35***	0.43***	1				
4. Norm Compliance	0.22	0.32***	0.45***	1			
5. Biological Transitions	0.27**	0.10	0.22**	0.34***	1		
6. Chronological Transitions	0.22**	0.18*	0.35***	0.30**	0.75***	1	
7. Family Capacities	0.47***	0.54***	0.55***	0.41***	0.09	0.07	1
age	-0.02	-0.12	-0.17	0.14	-0.24**	-0.22*	-0.05
gender	0.19	-0.03**	-0.01	0.16*	0.24*	0.05*	0.21*
children	-0.11	-0.14	0.07	-0.24**	-0.09	-0.18	-0.10
education	-0.06**	-0.07	0.18	0.14	0.23**	0.49***	-0.06
development status	-0.28**	-0.15**	-0.02	-0.19	-0.21**	-0.26**	-0.07
living with parents	-0.11*	-0.23	0.14	0.07	0.10	0.24	-0.04
M	2.09	2.08	2.34	2.16	2.21	2.68	1.93
SD	0.56	0.62	0.68	0.69	0.92	0.89	0.67
Observed range	1.0, 3.67	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 3.83	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.0
Maximum range	1.0, 4.00	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.00	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.0	1.0, 4.0

Note: seven markers and variables *age*, *education* (1-college, 2-university), *development status* (1-adolescent, 2-emerging adult, 3-fully adult) were analysed using Pearson's linear correlation coefficients; dichotomous variables *gender* (1-men, 2-women), *children* (0-no, 1-yes), *living with parents* (1-yes, 2-no) were analysed using point-biserial correlation; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$.

Except for the marker Chronological Transitions, their mean values *M* are lower than the mean value for the maximum range of variation *M*=2.50. This shows that the respondents as a whole feel less adult with respect to each of the markers shown. The standard deviation *SD* is also approximately equal, which shows homogeneity in the answers of the respondents. Most homogeneous are their answers for Independence *SD*=0.56, and most heterogeneous are their answers for Biological Transitions *SD*=0.92. The range examined for five of the seven markers coincides with the maximum possible range, which shows that the respondents have had the maximum possible different opinion.

Reliability and validity

The interval consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for 7 adulthood markers was between α=0.61 and α=0.83. The internal reliability of the Independence marker that consist of 6 items is α=0.61 for the whole sample; of the Interdependence marker that consist of 5 items is α=0.66; of the Role Transitions marker that consist of 6 items is α=0.71; of the Norm Compliance marker that consist of 8 items is α=0.80; of the Biological Transitions marker that consist of 4 items is α=0.73; of the Chronological Transitions marker that consist of 6 items is α=0.83 and of the Family Capacities marker that consist of 8 items is α=0.66.

Organisation of the markers (subscales) was guided by theoretical criteria rather than by a quantitative statistical approach such as factor analysis (Arnett, 2004). That is why in order to explore construct validity of the scale, instead of confirmatory factor analysis (43 items and 7 subscales) Pearson's linear correlation coefficients between the markers were analysed (Table 1). The correlations between markers were generally low and middle and that is why they could be interpreted rather as independent markers than as subscales of one total scale. That is way all 7 markers will be analysed only separately (Arnett, 2004).

Marker comparisons by gender and age

Seven two-factor between-groups ANOVAs were conducted to explore the impact of *gender* and *age* (independent variables) on mean of markers (dependent variable). Subjects were divided into three age groups according to their age (adolescents: 16-19, emerging adults: 20-29 and young-to-midlife adults: 30-35) and two gender groups – male and female. The interaction effect between *gender* and *age* groups was significant for Biological Transitions marker: $F(2,111)=2.86$, $p=0.05$ with a small effect size, $\eta(eta)=0.12$, however, it was not statistically and practically significant for the rest of the markers: *Independence* $F(2,111)=0.36$, $p=0.70$, $\eta(eta)=0.08$; Interdependence marker $F(2,111)=0.06$, $p=0.94$, $\eta(eta)=0.01$; Role Transitions marker $F(2,111)=0.66$, $p=0.52$, $\eta(eta)=0.02$; Norm Compliance marker $F(2,111)=0.48$, $p=0.62$, $\eta(eta)=0.03$; Chronological Transitions marker $F(2,111)=1.19$, $p=0.16$, $\eta(eta)=0.06$ and Family Capacities marker $F(2,111)=1.13$, $p=0.33$, $\eta(eta)=0.04$. The results show that the combined, simultaneous effect of *gender* and *age* only affects the Biological Transitions marker.

Gender and marker comparison

The average of markers for the whole sample and for men and women is shown in Table 2. Analyses were conducted on the markers to examine respondents' overall evaluations of the importance of each of the seven areas included in the markers. To compare markers, a repeated measures ANOVA with Wilks' Lambda multivariate test was conducted for the whole sample and for men and women. Post hoc constructs using Bonferroni adjustment revealed all the differences. In all three cases, most significant is the Chronological Transitions marker, and least significant – the Family Capacities marker.

Table 2. Average of markers, for a whole sample and for men and women

markers for transition to adulthood	All	gender		statistics	
		men	*women*	*p*	***η**(eta)*
Independence	2.09[ab]	1.95[a]	2.19[a]	***0.02***	*0.22,S*
Interdependence	2.08[ab]	2.10[ab]	2.07[a]	*0.75*	*0.03,T*
Role Transitions	2.34[b]	2.35[bc]	2.34[ab]	*0.58*	*0.01,T*
Norm Compliance	2.16[ab]	2.05[ab]	2.24[a]	***0.05***	*0.14,S*
Biological Transitions	2.21[b]	1.97[ab]	2.40[ab]	***0.02***	*0.24,M*
Chronological Transitions	2.68[c]	2.63[c]	2.72[b]	*0.61*	*0.04,T*
Family Capacities	1.93[a]	1.77[a]	2.05[a]	***0.03***	*0.21,S*
p	*<0.001*	*<0.001*	*<0.001*		
***η**(eta)*	*0.70,>L*	*0.83, >L*	*0.62, >L*		

Note: low scores represent low relevant importance of the marker, and high score represent high relevant importance; (1-minimum, 4-maximum); *p*-values in bold typeface are significant at the $p<0.05$ level; means with separate letters differ significantly at the $p<0.05$ level. The letters (a, b, c, d) indicate which values per column (variable) differ from each other; data analyses using one-way repeated measures ANOVA with Wilks' Lambda multivariate test and Bonferroni pairwise comparison (by columns) and one-way between-groups ANCOVA (by rows).

In order to find if there is a difference between men's and women's mean for every marker, one-way between-groups ANCOVA with age as a covariate was conducted for every marker. Age was used as a covariate because of a high age difference of respondents – between 16 and 34 years. The results of the analysis of covariate show that there is a statistically significant effect of the covariate *age* on the independent variable *gender* in the case of the following markers: Norm Compliance: $F(1,114)=8.01$, $p=0.01$, *eta(η)*=0.26; Biological Transitions: $F(1,114)=5.60$, $p=0.02$, *eta(η)*=0.22, and independent variable *gender* is significant (Table 2); and Chronological Transitions: $F(1,114)=6.22$, $p=0.01$, *eta(η)*=0.23. The covariate *age* is not statistically significant for markers Independence: $F(1,114)=1.81$, $p=0.18$, *eta(η)*=0.09, *gender* is significant; Interdependence: $F(1,114)=3.20$, $p=0.08$, *eta(η)*=0.16; Role Transitions: $F(1,114)=2.19$, $p=0.14$, *eta(η)*=0.16; Family Capacities: $F(1,114)=0.18$, $p=0.67$, *eta(η)*=0.04, *gender* is significant. *Gender* differences are only observed for three of the seven markers: Independence,

Biological Transitions and Family Capacities, with women in all the three cases attaching greater importance to the respective marker in comparison to men. For the Norm Compliance marker, there is only a practical significance, with women also in this case attaching greater importance to the marker.

The results presented in Table 2 show that all persons surveyed attach greatest importance to Chronological Transitions and least one to Family Capacities followed by Biological Transitions and Role Transitions.

The group of women attaches equally great importance to the Independence, Interdependence, Norm Compliance and Family Capacities markers. To men, of greatest importance is the criterion Chronological Transitions, and of least one – Independence and Family Capacities.

Age group and marker comparison

In order to find the difference between adolescents, emerging adults and midlife adults (Table 3), one-way between-groups ANCOVA with gender as a covariate was conducted for every marker. Gender was a covariate because some of the items on the questionary were gender-specific. The results of the analysis of covariate show that there is a statistically significant effect of the covariate *gender* on the independent variable *age group* in the case of the following markers: Independence: $F(1,113)=5.62$, $p=0.02$, $eta(\eta)=0.22$; Biological Transitions: $F(1,113)=9.38$, $p=0.01$, $eta(\eta)=0.28$, and Family Capacities: $F(1,113)=4.88$, $p=0.03$, $eta(\eta)=0.20$. The covariate *gender* is not statistically significant for markers Interdependence: $F(1,113)=0.10$, $p=0.76$, $eta(\eta)=0.03$; Role Transitions: $F(1,113)=0.01$, $p=0.98$, $eta(\eta)=0.01$; Norm Compliance: $F(1,113)=2.55$, $p=0.11$, $eta(\eta)=0.15$ and Chronological Transitions: $F(1,113)=0.99$, $p=0.32$, $eta(\eta)=0.09$. In the case of three of the seven markers, a difference between the age groups is observed, with the oldest group (midlife adults) in all the three cases feeling least adult.

To compare markers for every age group, a repeated measures ANOVA with Wilks' Lambda multivariate test was conducted. Post hoc constructs using Bonferroni adjustment revealed all the differences. Chronological Transitions and Family capacities were the most and the least important for adolescents and for emerging adults, but for a midlife adults, Chronological Transitions was one of the most important areas.

With the increase of the age of the persons surveyed, however, their opinion changes and to the midlife adults surveyed of greatest importance is Role Transitions. The three age groups attach different importance to the Biological Transitions and Chronological Transitions markers. To emerging adults, it is of greater importance in comparison to midlife adults.

Table 3. Average of markers for age groups (adolescents: 16-19, emerging adults: 20-29 and midlife adults: 30-35)

markers for transition to adulthood	age groups			statistics	
	adolescents	emerging adults	midlife adults	*p*	***η**(eta)*
Independence	2.10^{ab}	2.13^{ab}	1.97^{ab}	*0.46*	*0.09,S*
Interdependence	2.16^{ab}	2.09^{ab}	1.90^{a}	*0.27*	*0.07,S*
Role Transitions	2.23^{ab}	2.36^{bc}	2.51^{b}	*0.28*	*0.05,S*
Norm Compliance	2.19^{ab}	2.26^{abc}	1.88^{a}	*(0.05)*	*0.21,S*
Biological Transitions	2.18^{ab2}	2.56^{c2}	1.51^{a1}	*<0.001*	*0.47,>L*
Chronological Transitions	2.51^{b2}	3.19^{d3}	1.87^{a1}	*<0.001*	*0.67,>L*
Family Capacities	1.97^{a}	1.88^{a}	1.97^{ab}	*0.85*	*0.05,T*
p	*<0.001*	*<0.001*	*<0.001*		
η(eta)	*0.65,>L*	*0.90,>L*	*0.86,>L*		

Note: low scores represent low relevant importance, and high score represent high relevant importance; (1-minimum, 4-maximum); *p*-values in bold typeface are significant at the $p<0.05$ level; means with separate letters (numbers) differ significantly at the $p<0.05$ level. The letters (a, b, c, d) or numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) indicate which values per column (row) differ from each other; where a *p*-value appears in parenthesis (), the significant effect could not be located by the post hoc tests; data analyses using one-way repeated measures ANOVA with Wilks' Lambda multivariate test and Bonferroni pairwise comparison (by columns) and one-way between-groups ANCOVA (by rows).

Development status (reached adulthood) analysis

To compare markers for every reached adulthood's group, a repeated measures ANOVA with Wilks' Lambda multivariate test was conducted. Post hoc constructs using Bonferroni adjustment revealed all the differences. In all the three cases, most important is the Chronological Transitions marker, and least important – the Family Capacities marker.

Table 4. Average of scales by Development status (Reached adulthood), three groups: "no", "in some ways yes, in some ways no" and "yes"

markers for transition to adulthood	Reached adulthood (development status)			statistics	
	no	*yes/no*	*yes*	*p*	*η(eta)*
Independence	2.33^{ab2}	2.16^{ab12}	1.90^{ab1}	0.01	0.28,M
Interdependence	2.25^{ab}	2.12^{ab}	1.96^{ab}	0.19	0.17,S
Role Transitions	2.44^{ab}	2.30^{ab}	2.36^{ab}	0.74	0.07,T
Norm Compliance	2.24^{ab}	2.32^{ab}	1.93^{ab}	(0.02)	0.27,M
Biological Transitions	2.35^{ab}	2.41^{b}	1.90^{ab}	(0.02)	0.25,M
Chronological Transitions	2.88^{b2}	2.89^{c2}	2.35^{b1}	0.01	0.31,M
Family Capacities	2.00^{a}	1.95^{a}	1.88^{a}	*0.84*	*0.05,T*
p	*<0.001*	*<0.001*	*<0.001*		
η(eta)	*0.84,>L*	*0.79,>L*	*0.73,>L*		

Note: see notes to Table 3.

In order to find the difference between the three groups of reached adulthood: yes, no and between (yes/no) (Table 4), a one-way between-groups ANCOVA with gender as a covariate was conducted for every marker. The results of the analysis of covariate show that there is a statistically significant effect of the covariate *Reached adulthood* on the independent variable *age group* in the case of the following markers: Independence: $F(1,113)=4.78$, $p=0.01$, *eta(η)*=0.22; Biological Transitions: $F(1,113)=6.28$, $p=0.01$, *eta(η)*=0.23 and Family Capacities: $F(1,113)=4.83$, $p=0.03$, *eta(η)*=0.20. The covariate *gender* is not statistically significant for markers Interdependence: $F(1,113)=0.17$, $p=0.68$, *eta(η)*=0.04; Role Transitions: $F(1,113)=0.01$, $p=0.91$, *eta(η)*=0.00; Norm Compliance: $F(1,113)=1.99$, $p=0.16$, *eta(η)*=0.13 and

Chronological Transitions: $F(1,113)=0.14$, $p=0.71$, *eta(η)*=0.03. For four of the seven markers, a difference between the three groups of development status is observed, with the values of all the four markers being minimum for the reached adulthood group.

The results presented in Table 4 show that all persons surveyed attach least importance to the Family Capacities marker, and greatest one to the Chronological Transitions. The Independence marker is of least importance to the persons surveyed, who have not entered the world of adults. To young people who feel adult, of least importance is the Chronological Transitions marker.

Discussion

The *aim* of the study is to determine which of the examined psychological characteristics for reaching adulthood are of greatest and, respectively, least importance to the persons studied. The analysis were conducted in respect to the following variables: *gender, age,* and *subjective development status*. All persons surveyed attach greatest importance to Chronological Transitions, such as being 18 and coming of age, which allows obtaining a driving licence, permission to smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, and least one to Family Capacities followed by Biological Transitions and Role Transitions. Striking is the difference importance attached to the Independence, Biological Transitions and Family Capacities markers, such as founding own family and taking care of its members, keeping house, etc., by the men and women surveyed. To the group of women, those markers are of greater importance in comparison to men.

Logically, the results obtained show that young people in Ukraine, probably because of financial difficulties and standard in the country, are hardly allowed to take independent decisions and feel independent to a low extent both of their parents and the society as a whole. They are similar to the

results of the study conducted (Schlegel & Barry III, 1991) on development of adolescents from 186 cultures different from the West European one, which show that the transition and entry into the adults' world are not characterised by individualistic criteria, such as financial and emotional independence of the parents, leaving their home and establishing equal relations with them, characteristic of the American society. In respect to those studied in the USA (Arnett, 2004), most important is the financial and emotional independence of the parents, leaving their home and living independently. This trend could find its explanation in the fact that the Ukrainian society is more collectivist in comparison to the American one.

Another trend that is observed in the persons studied from Ukraine, who are not an exception from the same generation in Western Europe, is that young people do not wish to found a family and to have children up to the age of 35, they postpone in time the commitment to a matrimonial partner, and when this happens, they are assisted in the bringing-up of the offspring by their parents. It is an indisputable fact that the birth of a child also provokes the increased attention of grandmothers and grandfathers to everything in the life of the young parents who do not feel independent and self-dependent. Although in the modern world the role of grandmothers and grandfathers in the life of their heirs changes over the years, they devote their labour, support, time, worldly knowledge accumulated and assistance, staying invariably next to their children and grandchildren. No matter what changes in the relations between the generations, the grandmother and the grandfather in Ukraine continue to be a symbol of stability, tradition, customs, collective memory, of tranquillity and security. Their images personify the traditions in the penumbra of the newly formed familial nucleus.

The future of each nation depends to a great extent on what conditions for its young generation are created, what the attitude towards it is and how it is realised. A recommendation from the study conducted to the political elite

in Ukraine is to direct its efforts to pursuance of an active, constant, purposeful and flexible policy for support to and development of young people in the country. A good idea is to develop and to offer to them participation in national and international programmes for hourly or half-day employment in order to increase their "independence of the pocket".

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