

## Emerging adulthood in Greece: Developmental features for this period in the face of economic adversity

Vasileios Ismyrlis

*Hellenic Statistical Authority, Greece*

**ABSTRACT:** Emerging adulthood is a phenomenon of the economic development of our times. Several studies have attempted to explore this aspect-situation, as first captured by scholar J.Arnett. In this study, which is referred to Greece, important aspects of emerging adulthood (as developmental characteristics) are examined simultaneously, with specific demographic characteristics. To achieve this, a questionnaire was created and addressed to a random sample of people aged 18-29. The main scope of this research is the presentation of the current status of emerging adults in Greece, during an economic crisis period, concerning the emerging adulthood characteristics. The sample included 315 individuals, employed and unemployed individuals. The variables of the questionnaire were examined in order to discover relationships between them. The results revealed that there are many differentiations, concerning gender, employment, education level, economic support etc.

**KEYWORDS:** *Developmental characteristics, Emerging adulthood, Greece*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Emerging adulthood (EA), is a relatively new phenomenon and can be considered to be a spawn of modern western society, due to the serious economic and social changes have occurred in the last years. The main reasons for its introduction, is the generalization and longer duration of education, the need for more job specialization, the economic crisis that prevents young people to abandon their parents' nest and the appearance of puberty at an earlier age.

In response to demographic and socioeconomic changes that have taken place during the last few decades, young men and women are in fact increasingly postponing the timing in which they go through their most important transition steps, such as leaving the parental home, getting a job, and forming a new family (Furstenberg, 2010). As a result, the transition to adulthood nowadays is becoming longer and uncertain as well as more "individualized" (Iacovou, 2002). This means that individuals are no longer expected to become adults following predetermined social steps, but their identity development depends on how they are autonomously envisioning their future life trajectory.

The word "emerging" reflects the dynamic, fluid and continuously changing the mental world of a person, which although it has developed biologically and by means of age it is an adult, it still tries to grow up, to define itself and to structure its personality. Arnett and Taber (1994) describe this period of life as a developmental situation that although it comes after adolescence it is not exactly adulthood. Few persons in this age period, have conquered most of the adult life attributes, such as leaving the family shelter, completion of studies, job placement and marriage (Galanaki & et al., 2008).

The conception of EA aims just to describe the specific phenomenon because it can't be generalized to all the people that belong to this age frame worldwide, since as it had mentioned it is a characteristic of western world and countries with similar socioeconomic conditions (Arnett, 2011). In general, it can be referred that this phenomenon occurs when there is a gap of many years between the time young people finish secondary education and the time that they enter stable adult roles in work and love (Arnett, 2015). As Arnett (2000) declares, EA exists in cultures where the responsibilities undertaking and adult people roles, are delayed for many years after adolescence. It is a characteristic of cultures, not countries, as it is evident that even social class can be more important than ethnicity and in economically developed countries there is a cultural split between urban and rural areas (Arnett, 2015). It is a period that emerging adults, most of the times, feel neither minors nor adults (Arnett, 2000; Munsey, 2006). Moreover, Arnett (2004) highlights that adulthood defines the end of independence and this is a possible reason why emerging adult tries to avoid or delay it.

From the time that EA was recognized as a separate life stage (Arnett, 2000) and consequently it has been investigated in the context of developmental psychology, many studies have been conducted to register various of its characteristics, such as perceptions of what is important to define adulthood, perceptions of whether emerging adults have reached adulthood, perceptions for the achievement of adulthood criteria, identification of many more emerging adulthood subjects.

Regarding the EA phenomenon, it is also remarked (Arnett, 2000; Arnett 2001) that it changes from culture to culture and therefore it would be an interesting issue to explore. The case of Greece is examined in this paper, with the contribution of a questionnaire, in which except the questions that characterize EA, there were also questions about demographics. Our main aim is to illustrate the state of emerging adults in Greece this period, as it is obvious social and economic turmoil have occurred and many more are approaching in the country.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to register the views that the emerging adults express for this period they are going through, there is the potential to measure EA dimensions. The theoretical background of the scales used to characterize EA, follow in the remaining of this section.

Emerging adults are considered adults in some elements and not in others (Hill et al., 2015). However, their subjective experience for this period of their lives can vary depending on the country, the culture, and social or economic conditions. In order to be able to register the view of emerging adults about their life, Reifman et al. (2003;2007) developed a scale, called IDEA, which measures the five dimensions of EA proposed by Arnett, with the addition of one more, the other-focus.

One more characteristic in the period of EA, is whether young people feel that they have become adults. Many of them, in the question if they have reached adulthood, they respond "in some respect yes, in some respects no" and this is an indication of the existence of EA.

### 2.1 Country-cultures differentiations

The elongation of the formative period (EA) of young people and the delay in entering the workforce, has affected the relationship of generations, in the modern western society (Arnett, 2000). However, inside the western societies, and of course in the European countries, significant differences are realized regarding the timing of reaching adults' role developmental tasks, such as entrance in the job market and family formation (Buhl & Lanz, 2007).

The south-European variant (including Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal) offers more conservatives recipes, such as strong family ties (Arundel & Ronald, 2015; Petrogiannis, 2011), and these ties are stronger, related to North Europe (Billari, et al. 2008; Fuligni & Masten, 2010; Lanz & Tagliabue, 2007; Mendonca & Fonaine, 2013; Moreno, 2012). Moreover, in these countries (of south), the welfare state doesn't function appropriately (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Ferrera, 1996). In these countries, the household breadwinner (most of the times the male one) benefits from relatively stronger employment protection and pensions with welfare support mainly distributed – and assessed- through the family and kinship networks rather than via market or state institutions (Arundel & Ronald, 2015). The result is the delay of all major transitions markets to adulthood, such as completion of schooling or home-leaving, and difficulties in job-entry further complicated by protected labor markets (Baranowska & Gebel, 2010; Breen, 2005; Gangl et al., 2003).

One more characteristic of the south-European countries is that young people live many times even with other relatives (except their family), a fact that does not occur in the countries of North Europe (Arundel & Ronald, 2015).

### 2.2 Greece's special characteristics

Greece is an urban and industrialized western/Mediterranean country, based on elements of a European identity as a part of its ethnic identity (Georgas, 2001). This country of European south is considered a typical example of family kinship forms and practices (Papataxiarchis, 2012), where the relationships with emotional mothers are far more intimate than relationships with distant and unreachable fathers (Paxson, 2004).

Paxson (2004) refers to the Greek familism as "the notion that family relations are prominent social relations, that the family should be a cohesive unit, that the family's loyalty supersedes all others" (p.144). The Greek family emphasizes the importance of supportive relationships among family members and friends and endorse high intimate relationships within the family, and Greek familism also reinforces a pattern of dependencies among family members (Pnevmatikos & Vardos, 2014). The family operates as the primary provider of welfare support, and this is reinforced by the absence of a family policy (Papadopoulos, 1998). In this way, young people become more dependent on their family and thus their dependency on the family is maintained. Tertiary studies facilitate young people's independence from the family to some extent, although familism and lack of policy on students' financial assistance prevent emerging adults from gaining their independence from the family (Pnevmatikos & Vardos, 2014).

Eventually, it is apparent that as in other Southern European countries, Greek young people follow the 'living apart and together' model (Billari et al., 2008). Thus, Greek emerging adults lack a crucial element that promotes self-reliance and emotional autonomy: leaving the parental home (Kins & Beyers, 2010).

Greece, except the aforementioned peculiarities of its culture that also characterize countries of southern Europe, presents one more characteristic, which even though it can be considered global, has affected Greece more severely. We are referring to economic and social crisis, which lasts since almost a decade and the dimensions and the consequences caused and burden the Greek citizens, produce even more difficult the integration of the young people (those that have not migrated) in the workforce, forcing them to stay more years in the family house and to accept financial support from their parents for a longer period.

Certain statistical data that illustrate the present economic situation in Greece, are presented in the following tables (Tables 1 and 2). In Table 3 there are indicators regarding the economic situation and the occupation of young people in Greece, in relation with the countries of the European Union (EU). The deterioration to all the indicators in relation to 2008 is evident, but even more, Greece presents one of the worst performances in Europe.

**Table 1: Economic situation indicators of the Greek population**

Year	2008	2016				
	Indicator	Perc %	Perc %	Aver of EU 28 country	Ranking in 28	Ranking in 34*
	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	26.2	33.2%	21.8	26	29
	Inability to make end meets	20.0	40.6%	9.6%	28	34
	Young people employment: ages 20-24	39.4	23.7	50.6	28	34
	Young people employment: ages 20-29	58.0	41	62.6	28	34
	General satisfaction from life (2013)	-	6,2***	7.1	25	29
	Satisfaction from economic situation (2013)	-	4.3***	6.0	28	32
	Have someone to rely on (2013)	-	89.9	96	28	32**

Source: Eurostat (assessed 27/07/2017)

\* plus the countries of: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, FYROM, Serbia, Turkey

\*\* except for Turkey and FYROM

\*\*\*(rating 0-10)

Some social-demographic indicators for young people in Greece are displayed in Table 4. The percentage of people age 20-29 that lives with their parents is quite large (71,5%), the mean age of leaving parental home is almost thirty (29.4) and the percentages of people studying and people unemployed is near fifty percent in the young Greek people, until the age of thirty.

**Table 2: Sociodemographic Indicators for Greek Youth (assessed 10/05/2017)**

Sociodemographic indicators	Percentage %
Living with parents (20-29 years)	71.5 (2013)
Attending tertiary education	48.15(20-24 years)- (2016) 41.47(20-29 years)- (2016)
Unemployment (15-24 years)	49.0* (2015)
Employment rate of recent graduates	49.2* (2016)
Proportion of young adults living with at least one parent	20-24 years:82.1*** (5 <sup>th</sup> larger)
Proportion of young adults living with at least one parent	25-29 years:58.2*** (4 <sup>th</sup> larger)
Proportion of young adults living with at least one parent	30-34 years: 28.3*** (3 <sup>rd</sup> larger)
Housing status of 18-34-year-olds	57.10% **
	<b>Age-mean average</b>
Age of students in tertiary education	23.9 (2014)
Age of leaving the parental home	29.4 (2015)
Age of first marriage (men/women)	32.77/28.55 (2015)
Age at first childbirth (women)	31.3 (2015)

Source: Eurostat (2017), in parentheses the latest year data refer to.

Notes: \* The highest in Europe.

\*\* Arundel & Richard 2015, Data source: Eurostat, Eu-SILC (2005-2011 averages)

\*\*\* Aasve et al., 2007, Data source: ECHP, Eurostat(1994-2001).

It is an aftermath that Greece, a country belonging to the western side of the world and also considered a developed country, should present proportional characteristics in the EA subject and indeed many studies have preceded in the Greek area to examine the subject, like these of Galanaki et al. (2008), Stephanou (2011), Leontopoulou & Triliva (2012), Pnevmatikos & Bardos (2014), Leontopoulou et al., (2016), Galanaki & Leontopoulou (2017) and Galanaki & Sideridis (2018). The above studies were addressed mainly in University students and the age ranges covered, were usually in the range of 18-25.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Participants and procedure

Participants in the current survey were 315 individuals, living in Greece, covering the whole suggested age range for EA, of 18 to 29. These persons were chosen randomly and most of them (57%) were students in Greek Universities, the majority was females (58%), some employed (39%) and some unemployed (and not students), which were approached in a local employment office (OAED). The questionnaire was distributed to the participants, which consented to participate in the research and to complete it after they had been informed about the content and had been assured for the confidentiality of the data. During the completion of the questionnaires, there was always a researcher present, for queries and clarifications, in order to avoid mistakes and voids in the questionnaires. Moreover, the questionnaire was created in the "Google Forms" application so that it would be easy to fill out, electronically as well (Link:[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1tF3cJJELsl6RaDdQUOAAAnN3AXUdyLEicluxzT066U/edit?usp=drive\\_open&ths=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1tF3cJJELsl6RaDdQUOAAAnN3AXUdyLEicluxzT066U/edit?usp=drive_open&ths=true)). The researcher had also sent e-mails to individuals in his professional and academic environment, covering the specific age range. The completion of the questionnaire required about 20-25 minutes. The research started in January of 2017 and ended in June of 2017.

#### 3.2 Measures of the questionnaire

The main two measures (scales) of the questionnaire were the following:

A. Developmental characteristics of EA researched with the *The Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) as proposed by Reifman et al., 2003, 2007*

This measure included thirty-one questions, which were answered in a 4-grade Likert scale (from "(1)=completely agree" to "(4)=completely disagree").

B. Subjective adulthood status (SAS)

The participants were asked if they believe they have reached adulthood and there were three possible answers Arnett (2003): "Yes", "No", "In some respects yes, in some respects no".

The measures of the questionnaire were also presented and translated in the Greek language by Galanaki & Leontopoulou (2017).

There were twenty questions to obtain information about economic, demographic and social characteristics of the participants, such as:

- Demographics: gender, age (theirs and their parents), country of origin
- Education: level of education for the emerging adults and for their parents
- Relationships: family status and love relationships.
- Employment and residence: job, people they live with, financial support
- Religion

The above variables will be referred to as demographics in the following sections of the paper.

#### 3.3 Hypotheses-Research questions

The main aim of the current study was the display of EA elements in Greece and (initially) the exploration of the influence of these elements, by demographic and social characteristics of the respondents. The research hypotheses and questions to be analyzed and responded, were:

- Research Hypothesis (R.H.) 1: Are there differences in the developmental characteristics of EA in relation to demographic and social variables such as gender, age, level of education, romantic relationships etc.?
- Research question (R.Q.) 1: Which are the most important developmental characteristics of Greek emerging adults?
- R.Q.2: The extent to which Greek young people experience EA.

### IV. RESULTS

#### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

The participants in the survey conducted, were 56.81% students, 58% women and 60.8% unemployed. Analytical descriptive statistics of the socio-demographic variables are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics of the socio-demographic variables of the sample (N=315)

Variable	Values	Percentage
Gender	Male	41.86
	Female	58.14
Occupation	Yes	39.17
	No	60.83
Studying	Yes	56.81
	No	43.19
Education level	Post-graduate	8.00
	Tertiary	26.58
	Post-secondary	6.98
	Secondary	58.47
Marital status	Single	92.36
	Engaged/married	6.97
	Divorced/separated	0.66
Romantic relationships	Married	3.32
	Steady	46.51
	Occasional	22.59
	No	27.57
Living arrangement	Alone	23.36
	With parents	64.60
	With other	6.57
	With husband/companion	5.47
Financial support	Little/not at all	13.62
	Occasional	24.92
	Quite frequently	20.27
	In a permanent basis	41.20
Age	Category1: 18-21	43.54
	Category2: 22-25	31.36
	Category3: 26-29	25.09

**Table 4 :** Education of the respondents' parents

Father's education	Perc	Mother's education	Perc
Primary	11.07	Primary	9.15
Junior high school	18.12	Junior high school	12.88
Secondary	41.28	Secondary	41.69
Tertiary	27.18	Tertiary	31.19
Post-graduate	2.35	Post-graduate	5.08

Table 5 below, presents the mean averages and the percentages per subgroup of the IDEA scale. The sub-groups of "Experimentation" and "Identity exploration" distinguished positively, as emerging adults appreciated them much, with a percentage over 75%, while "Other focused" and "Negativity" ones, were not endorsed as much by the Greek emerging adults.

**Table 5:** Developmental characteristics' subgroups mean averages and percentages per category

Subgroup	Average	St.dev.	Categories			
			% 1:comp dis	% 2	%3	% 4:comp agree
Experimentation/possibilities on	3.07	0.87	6.34	16.37	41.52	35.78
Negativity/instability	2.74	0.97	14.71	24.80	32.67	27.82
Self-focused	3.00	0.84	6.00	19.91	42.08	32.01
Identity exploration	3.05	0.88	7.78	16.22	39.23	36.78
Other focused	2.64	0.88	10.45	32.01	40.15	17.38
Feeling-in-between	2.91	1.01	13.13	18.19	33.51	35.17
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>9.57</b>	<b>20.68</b>	<b>38.33</b>	<b>31.73</b>

Table 6 following, displays the percentages per category and mean averages of all the items of IDEA scale. The total mean average of all the items was 2.92 (at a range of one to four), which indicates that EA can be considered to be a relevant concept in Greece.

**Table 6:** Developmental characteristics' items mean averages and percentages per category

Is this period of your life a...	Subscales	Categories				Average	St. deviation
		1:comp. dis.	2	3	4:comp. agr.		
1. time of many possibilities?	Experimentation/possibilities	6.27	9.90	42.57	41.25	3.19	0.85
2. time of exploration?	Experimentation/possibilities	3.30	13.86	39.60	43.23	3.23	0.81
3. time of confusion?	Negativity/instability	12.87	21.12	34.65	31.35	2.84	1.01
4. time of experimentation?	Experimentation/possibilities	10.23	22.44	42.24	25.08	2.82	0.92
5. time of personal freedom?	Self-focused	5.28	16.83	41.25	36.63	3.09	0.86
6. time of feeling restricted?	Negativity/instability	30.03	43.23	18.48	8.25	2.05	0.90
7. time of responsibility for yourself?	Self-focused	2.64	9.90	34.65	52.81	3.38	0.77
8. time of feeling stressed out?	Negativity/instability	9.90	19.47	36.30	34.32	2.95	0.97
9. time of instability?	Negativity/instability	18.81	26.40	32.34	22.44	2.58	1.04
10. time of optimism?	Self-focused	6.60	17.82	46.86	28.71	2.98	0.86
11. time of high pressure?	Negativity/instability	12.87	22.11	37.29	27.72	2.80	0.99
12. time of finding out who you are?	Identity exploration	16.17	18.15	33.00	32.67	2.82	1.06
13. time of settling down?	Other focused	12.87	19.47	42.90	24.75	2.80	0.96
14. time of responsibility for others?	Other focused	12.54	39.60	33.33	14.52	2.50	0.89
15. time of independence?	Self-focused	5.61	17.16	44.22	33.00	3.05	0.85
16. time of open choices?	Experimentation/possibilities	7.26	18.15	40.92	33.66	3.01	0.90
17. time of unpredictability?	Negativity/instability	11.88	22.44	33.00	32.67	2.86	1.01
18. time of commitments to others?	Other focused	5.94	36.96	44.22	12.87	2.64	0.78
19. time of self-sufficiency?	Self-focused	9.90	38.28	38.28	13.53	2.55	0.85
20. time of many worries?	Negativity/instability	6.60	18.81	36.63	37.95	3.06	0.91
21. time of trying out new things?	Experimentation/possibilities	4.62	17.49	42.24	35.64	3.09	0.84
22. time of focusing on yourself?	Self-focused	5.94	19.47	47.19	27.39	2.96	0.84
23. time of separating from parents?	Identity exploration	14.85	25.74	35.31	24.09	2.69	1.00
24. time of defining yourself?	Identity exploration	6.93	16.17	49.17	27.72	2.98	0.85
25. time of planning for the future?	Identity exploration	2.31	6.60	36.96	54.13	3.43	0.72
26. time of seeking a sense of meaning?	Identity exploration	6.93	17.82	40.26	34.98	3.03	0.90
27. time of deciding on your own beliefs and values?	Identity exploration	4.62	14.85	37.62	42.90	3.19	0.85
28. time of learning to think for yourself?	Identity exploration	2.64	14.19	42.24	40.92	3.21	0.78
29. time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?	Feeling-in-between	8.25	17.16	35.64	38.94	3.05	0.94
30. time of gradually becoming an adult?	Feeling-in-between	9.27	14.90	38.74	37.09	3.03	0.94
31. time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?	Feeling-in-between	21.85	22.52	26.16	29.47	2.62	1.13
<b>Averages</b>		<b>9.57</b>	<b>20.68</b>	<b>38.33</b>	<b>31.73</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>0.90</b>

From the examination of the above table, which presents the items of the IDEA scale, we noted the following. The five most important developmental features of EA as evaluated by the Greek emerging adults were (in the parentheses the sub-groups they belong): time of responsibility (Self-focus), planning for the future (Identity exploration), learning to think for yourself (Identity exploration), deciding on your own beliefs and values (Identity exploration) and time of many possibilities (Experimentation/possibilities). Hence, the three items come from the Identity exploration subgroup and this is an indication that the Greek emerging adults are still in a stage to explore their identity. In contrary, the less important features were: feeling restricted (Negativity), self-sufficiency (Self-focus), responsibility for others (Other-focus), instability (Negativity). Here, as the Negativity items were neglected, we can realize the optimism of the emerging adults, as they seem to reject the negativity items.

#### 4.2. Analysis with MANOVA

As the main scope of this study was the exploration of associations between the demographic variables and the scales of IDEA, we utilized the statistical technique MANOVA. The predictor/independent variables in the analyses were the following eight demographics: Gender, SAS\*, occupation, romantic relationships, education level, accommodation, financial support, age. The dependent variables were the thirty-one questions of the IDEA scale.

\*The variable-question ‘‘do you believe you have reached adulthood’’ is called from now on ‘‘subjective adulthood status’’ and was utilized as a demographic-predictor variable.

From the results of the analysis, it was evident that SAS, level of education and accommodation affected many from the IDEA scale items-questions. More specifically, they affected 15, 12, and 9 number of questions respectively. This means that especially SAS and level of education generated differences in a greater extent in the view of the emerging adults for this period of their lives.

The questions (and their sub-groups) that were more correlated with the eight demographic variables are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Items correlated with the demographics**

Is this period of your life a...	Subscale
1. time of many possibilities	Experimentation/possibil
5. time of personal freedom?	Self-focused
7. time of responsibility for yourself?	Self-focused
9. time of instability?	Negativity/instability
11. time of high pressure?	Negativity/instability
20. time of many worries?	Negativity/instability
25. time of planning for the future?	Identity exploration
29. time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?	Feeling-in-between
31. time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?	Feeling-in-between

We present in Table 8, indicatively one from the above realized MANOVA analyses, the analysis of the items of IDEA with the variable ‘‘being adult-SAS’’. The significance level (‘‘Sig.’’) was below 0.05 in fifteen cases-items.

More specifically, those that felt in some aspects adults and in some not, they considered this period as a time of many possibilities, instability, finding out who you are, deciding on your own, feeling adult in some ways but not others, gradually becoming an adult, being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood and finally they considered that it is not a time of feeling restricted or responsibility for others. Those that were feeling totally adults, considered this period of their lives, a time of responsibility for yourself, planning for the future, exploration and learning to think for yourself and not of instability or not to be sure whether they have reached adulthood. Those that did not feel adults at all, considered their time a chance to learn to think for themselves, (of course) they were not sure if they were adults, and declared that it was not a time of responsibility of others, of high pressure, of settling down, and of self-sufficiency. The larger differences between the three categories were detected in the items: time of being not sure whether you have reached adulthood, feel adults in some ways, many possibilities, planning for the future.

Table 8: MANOVA of IDEA items and being adult

Is this period of your life a...	Subscales	Averages			F	Sig.
		Yes	No	In some		
1. time of many possibilities?	Experimentation/possibilitieson	3.09	2.63	3.32	6.273	.002
2. time of exploration?	Experimentation/possibilitieson	3.17	2.88	3.30	2.539	.081
3. time of confusion?	Negativity/instability	2.75	2.56	2.95	2.087	.126
4. time of experimentation?	Experimentation/possibilitieson	2.72	2.75	2.91	1.551	.214
5. time of personal freedom?	Self-focused	3.12	2.44	3.13	4.939	.008
6. time of feeling restricted?	Negativity/instability	2.08	2.44	1.99	1.932	.147
7. time of responsibility for yourself?	Self-focused	3.43	2.81	3.39	4.715	.010
8. time of feeling stressed out?	Negativity/instability	2.94	2.63	2.99	1.023	.361
9. time of instability?	Negativity/instability	2.41	2.25	2.74	4.569	.011
10. time of optimism?	Self-focused	2.93	2.50	3.06	3.430	.034
11. time of high pressure?	Negativity/instability	2.89	2.19	2.79	3.589	.029
12. time of finding out who you are?	Identity exploration	2.68	2.44	2.96	3.455	.033
13. time of settling down?	Other focused	2.85	2.19	2.82	3.451	.033
14. time of responsibility for others?	Other focused	2.57	2.13	2.48	1.823	.163
15. time of independence?	Self-focused	3.11	2.63	3.04	2.259	.106
16. time of open choices?	Experimentation/possibilitieson	2.95	2.81	3.07	0.977	.378
17. time of unpredictability?	Negativity/instability	2.78	2.69	2.95	1.109	.331
18. time of commitments to others?	Other focused	2.63	2.56	2.65	0.108	.897
19. time of self-sufficiency?	Self-focused	2.65	2.19	2.52	2.447	.088
20. time of many worries?	Negativity/instability	3.09	2.44	3.10	3.994	.019
21. time of trying out new things?	Experimentation/possibilitieson	3.01	2.69	3.19	3.614	.028
22. time of focusing on yourself?	Self-focused	3.02	2.63	2.95	1.654	.193
23. time of separating from parents?	Identity exploration	2.76	2.25	2.67	1.932	.147
24. time of defining yourself?	Identity exploration	3.00	2.63	2.99	1.452	.236
25. time of planning for the future?	Identity exploration	3.41	2.88	3.50	5.899	.003
26. time of seeking a sense of meaning?	Identity exploration	2.95	2.88	3.11	1.364	.257
27. time of deciding on your own beliefs and values?	Identity exploration	3.08	2.81	3.30	3.874	.022
28. time of learning to think for yourself?	Identity exploration	3.15	3.19	3.26	0.560	.572
29. time of feeling adult in some ways but not others?	Feeling-in-between	2.76	2.69	3.30	13.91	.000
30. time of gradually becoming an adult?	Feeling-in-between	2.89	2.88	3.16	3.366	.036
31. time of being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood?	Feeling-in-between	2.05	2.94	3.05	34.4	.000
	<b>Average</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.99</b>	-	-

In Table 9, the mean averages and standard deviations of some variables per category for the IDEA scale examined, are presented.

Table 9 : Means and SDs for some demographics and the factors of the IDEA scale

	Men	Women	Age 1	Age2	Age3	SAS-Y	SAS-N	SAS-M
Expe	3.06	3.07	3.03	3.15	3.03	2.99	2.75	3.16
Neg	2.66	2.79	2.51	2.92	2.92	2.71	2.46	2.79
SF	2.95	3.03	3.01	2.98	3.02	3.04	2.53	3.02
Iden	2.95	3.12	3.02	3.14	2.98	3.01	2.72	3.11
OF	2.60	2.67	2.63	2.65	2.67	2.68	2.29	2.65
FB	2.88	2.93	2.97	3.06	2.61	2.57	2.83	3.17
<b>Aver.Id</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.99</b>
	<b>Ed1-post</b>	<b>Ed2-tert</b>	<b>Ed3-post sec</b>	<b>Ed4-second</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>			
Expe	3.30	3.02	3.34	3.03	3.07			
Neg	2.96	2.89	2.95	2.62	2.74			
SF	2.96	2.98	3.12	3.01	3.00			
Iden	2.94	3.06	3.31	3.03	3.05			
OF	2.55	2.68	2.65	2.64	2.64			
FB	2.78	2.76	3.24	2.96	2.91			
<b>Aver.Id</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>2.92</b>			

In the next table Table 10, we present the factors of the IDEA scale and how the demographics have correlated with them. SAS and Education level have produced significant differences in five out of six factors, followed by Accommodation with four.

**Table 10: MANOVA of IDEA factors and demographics**

<i>Subgroup</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>SAS</i>	<i>Occup</i>	<i>Rom.re</i>	<i>Edu</i>	<i>Accom</i>	<i>Fin.sup</i>	<i>Age</i>
Experimentation/possibilities		Y*			Y	Y		
Negativity/instability					Y			Y
Self-focused		Y			Y	Y		
Identity exploration	Y	Y			Y	Y		
Other focused		Y						
Feeling-in-between		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

\*= Yes: Sig.<0.05

It can be concluded that the above subjects resulted in different responses from emerging adults with different social characteristics, where especially Education level and SAS produced more significant differences in the factors the developmental characteristics scale.

## V. CONCLUSION

Most important developmental characteristics of the emerging adulthood period, were considered by the Greek young people, those related with achieving independence from parents, as to accept responsibilities for the consequences of their actions, to be able to decide based on their own beliefs and of course economic independence from parents. The above criteria are related to identity exploration and self-focus, which represent their willing for freedom and independence (financial and not) from their parents. This fact was also referred in the study of Galanaki & Lentopoulou (2017). Arnett (2007) considered that the dimensions that characterize this period, although they are common, they may differ among societies or countries, but he believed that the identity exploration is the most important dimension and in this aspect contributes the absence of obligations and commitments to others. These characteristics are also appreciated by emerging adults in other developed countries, although in some studies, like the ones from Crocetti et al., 2015; Dogan, et al., 2015; Seiffge-Krenke, 2015 where the young people were employed, this was not the case. However, in other studies (Leontopoulou et al. 2016; Atak & Cok, 2008; Lisha et al., 2104 Negru, 2012; Sirsch et al., 2009) where the sample was consisted only from students, the factors of Experimentation and Identity development, had also distinguished. Studies in USA (Facio et al., 2007; Fierro Arias & Moreno Hernandez, 2007), displayed similar results, and in addition the scores were lower on the feature of instability, like in the present study. Surely, Arnett (2007) considered that the explorations make this period of life more unstable and maybe this adds more anxiety, although in general it is considered a period of optimism (Arnett, 2004, 2007). In addition, this age frame offers a number of abilities to every individual, such as ability for economic independence, ability for effective self-protection and protection of other persons, acquisition of sexual experience, ability to care for children, all of which require skills, such as realistic confrontation of life, diligence, courage, strength and self-confidence (Galanaki et al., 2008).

Some other cultures and studies, like the one for the country of China (Nelson et al., 2004), showed that Chinese emerging adults placed greater emphasis on collectivistic goals and displayed greater commitment to others, indicating that this period is not so self-focused, as referred in USA or European studies. Moreover, a study in Argentinian emerging adults (Facio et al., 2017), presents Argentinian people more other-focused.

The least important characteristics by the Greek emerging adults, were mostly related to role transitions. Generally, the tendency existed in Greece for the criteria that lead to adulthood, are identical to those from other countries of the western world.

While instability was a characteristic that was not present in the people included in the sample of our study, it was nevertheless evident that optimism was not so much appreciated, as other studies in Greece (Galanaki & Leontopoulou, 2017), where the optimism item was endorsed by 78% of the participants. The present study was conducted recently, the economic situation in Greece was worst than five years before and the sample did not include only students. Hence, all these factors have led to relatively different results. It seems that optimism was not neglected, but it was not a major tendency, and at the same time Greek emerging adults did not feel that they were in a state of instability.

The demographics included in the questionnaire have presented strong associations with most of items. More specifically, the demographic variables that affected in a greater extent the items of the developmental characteristics scale, were: Subjective adulthood status, Level of education, Age and Accommodation. The items affected more, were from the ‘negativity/instability’ and ‘identity exploration’ subgroups.

Next the most important demographics that produced significant differences, are presented.

The most educated people of the sample (Post-graduate studies) did appreciate the Experimentation factor and they did not: Other-focus, Self-focus and Feeling-In-Between (FIB). The less educated (secondary education) did experienced less than the others, the characteristics of negativity and Experimentation. Those that felt adults in some ways and other not, considered more important the Experience group and the Identity groups, than the others.

Gender did not produce significant differences, hence the opinions of the Greek men and women were almost similar, with the exception of one significant difference in the Identity exploration group, were women seemed to feel more independent. However, another study in Romania (Negru, 2012) showed that gender and educational level, influence together developmental characteristics of EA. This study was conducted only in students and it concluded that girls benefit more from the educational transition (university studies) as they report higher degrees in experimentation, self focus and other focus, compared to boys, which outperformed girls during high-school studies. Moreover, another research also conducted in Greece (Leontopoulou et al., 2016), displayed that FIB was more prevalent in women. The same phenomenon was referred in the studies of (Crocetti et al., 2015; Dogan et al., 2015), the first in Japan and Italy and the second in Turkey. As referred in Galanaki & Leontopoulou (2017), certain other studies presented the dominance of women in most of the developmental features, contrasted to Greece and this is maybe an indication of the existent dependency of the Greek women from their parents, plus the fact that they experienced less freedom and finally they altered their attitude toward adulthood.

Regarding the 'Age' variable, the young people of the 22-25 age period, felt in between appreciated more FIB and more identity exploration. Negativity was not evident in the 18-21 period. People in the ages 26-29 did not feel in between. In general, Negativity seems to increase with Age. In the Experimentation, FIB and Identity exploration, there was an increase in the second category and in the transition to the next category we have a decline.

The developmental characteristics of this life period, were evident in the sample of Greek individuals examined in this study, which is an indication of the existence of the EA phenomenon. The mean averages of the six factors of the IDEA were above average (with values of 2.64-3.07). However, the Greek emerging adults felt neither adults nor minors, with a 53.8 percentage, which is lower than other studies and countries, but we must always have in mind that the sample in this study, included many young people that were not students and many of them had already found an occupation. However, in studies with a similar mixture of persons (employed and unemployed, students and not) the results were relevant. For example, in the research of Sirsch et al (2009) conducted in Austria and the sample were not consisted only from students, the percentage was 55%, in another corresponding study in Czech from Macek et al. (2007) was 64% and in Argentina (Facio & Micocci, 2003), where the participants were of 25 to 27 years old, the percentage of the young people declaring that were partly adults, was 45%.

Nevertheless, the developmental characteristics of this period of life, was obvious in the sample of Greek people examined in this study, which is an indication that the phenomenon of emerging adulthood exists in Greece. It can be concluded that the majority of the Greek young people of the sample (aged 18-29) viewed themselves in a transition toward adulthood.

As referred, SAS was examined initially only as demographic and independent variable, in order to check if it correlates with the IDEA scale. However, an ANOVA analysis was conducted to estimate its relationship with the demographic variable Sex. It was observed that the percentage of men declaring adults was bigger (with a statistical significant difference) and the percentage that declared partly adult is smaller than the women. This is maybe an indication of the Greek cast of mind, which expects from the man to grow up, and undertake many responsibilities, to be more independent from his parents, in relation to the women. Similar results are noticed in another studies in Greece (Galanaki & Leontopoulou, 2017; Petrogiannis, 2011), where the percentages of the women declaring emerging adults were higher than those of men. This difference in gender was also noted in another cultures (Doğan et al., 2015; Seiter & Nelson, 2011).

As mentioned many times in the text, Greece is undergoing a very difficult period, when the economic crisis has affected many aspects of social and economic life of the citizens. This fact maybe affects the relations of the young people with their families, making them more dependent to a family context.

## VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Evangelia P. Galanaki (Professor of Developmental Psychology in the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), for turning on the interest in Emerging Adulthood subject.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Arnett, J.J. (2000). Emerging adulthood. A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5, pp.469-480.

- [2]. Arnett, J. J. (2001). Conceptions of the transition to adulthood: Perspectives from adolescence through midlife. *Journal of Adult Development*, 8, pp.133-143. doi:10.1023/A:1026450103225.
- [3]. Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from late teens through the twenties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [4]. Arnett, J. J. (2007). Suffering, selfish, slackers? Myths and reality about emerging adults. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36, 23-29. doi:10.1007/s10964-006-9157-z
- [5]. Arnett, J. J. (2011). Emerging adulthood(s): The cultural psychology of a new life stage. In L. A. Jensen (Ed.), *Bridging cultural and developmental psychology: New syntheses in theory, research, and policy* (pp. 255-275). New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press.
- [6]. Arnett, J. J. (2015). Emerging adults in Europe: Common themes, diverse paths, and future directions. In R. Žukauskienė (Ed.), *Emerging adulthood in a European context* (pp. 206–215). London/New York: Routledge.
- [7]. Arnett, J. J., & Padilla-Walker, L. M. (2015). Danish emerging adults' conceptions of adulthood. *Journal of Adolescence*, 38, 39–44. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.10.011.
- [8]. Arnett, J. J., & Taber, S. (1994). Adolescence terminable and interminable: When does adolescence end? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 23, 517-537. doi:10.1007/BF01537734.
- [9]. Arundel, R., & Ronald, R. (2015), Parental co-residence, shared living and emerging adulthood in Europe: Semi-dependent housing across welfare regime and housing system contexts, *Houwel Working paper series, Working paper 5*.
- [10]. Atak, H., & Çok, F. (2008).The Turkish version of inventory of the dimensions of emerging adulthood (The IDEA). *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, Vol.2, Iss.3, pp.148-154.
- [11]. Baranowska, A., & Gebel, M. (2010). The determinants of youth temporary employment in the enlarged Europe: Do labour market institutions matter?.*European Societies*, Vol.12, Iss.3, pp.367-390.
- [12]. Billari, F., Rosina, A., Ranaldi, R., & Romano, C. (2008). Young adults living apart and together (LAT) with parents: a three-level analysis of the Italian case. *Regional Studies*, 42, pp.625-639. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00343400701543173>.
- [13]. Breen, R. (2005). Explaining cross-national variation in youth unemployment market and institutional factors. *European Sociological Review*, Vol.21, Iss.2, pp.125-134.
- [14]. Buhl, H. M., & Lanz, M. (2007). Emerging adulthood in Europe: Common traits and variability across five European countries. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 22, pp.439–443. doi: 10.1177/0743558407306345.
- [15]. Crocetti, E., Tagliabue, S., Sugimura, K., Nelson, L. J., Takahashi, A., Niwa, T., Jinno, M. (2015). Perceptions of emerging adulthood: A study with Italian and Japanese university students and young workers. *Emerging Adulthood*, 3, pp.229–243. doi: 10.1177/2167696815569848.
- [16]. Doğan, A., Yüzbaşı, D. V., & Demir, M. (2015). The transition to adulthood in Turkey: Views from university students and workers. In R. Žukauskienė (Ed.), *Emerging adulthood in a European context* (pp. 94-114). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- [17]. Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- [18]. Facio, A., & Micocci, F. (2003). Emerging adulthood in Argentina. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 100, pp.21-31.
- [19]. Facio, A., Resett, S., Micocci, F., & Mistrorigo, C. (2007). Emerging adulthood in Argentina: An age of diversity and possibilities. *Child Development Perspectives*, 1, pp.115–118.
- [20]. Ferrera, M. (1996). The 'Southern model' of welfare in social Europe. *Journal of European social policy*, Vol.6, Iss.1, pp.17-37.
- [21]. Fierro Arias, D., & Moreno Hernández, A. (2007). Emerging adulthood in Mexican and Spanish youth: Theories and realities. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 22, pp.476–503. doi: 10.1177/0743558407305774.
- [22]. Fuligni, A., & Masten, C. L. (2010). Daily family interactions among young adults in the United States from Latin American, Filipino, East Asian, and European backgrounds. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 34, pp.491-499. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0165025409360303>.
- [23]. Furstenberg, F. F. (2010). On a new schedule: Transitions to adulthood and family change. *Future of the Children*, 20, pp.67–87. doi:10.1353/foc.0.0038.
- [24]. Galanaki, E., & Leontopoulou, S. (2017). Criteria for the transition to adulthood, developmental features of emerging adulthood, and views of the future among Greek studying youth. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 13. doi: 10.5964/ejop.v13i3.1327.
- [25]. Galanaki, E., Sideridis, G., (2018), Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood, Criteria for Adulthood, and Identity Development in Greek Studying Youth: A Person-Centered Approach, *Emerging Adulthood*, First Published May 22, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818777040>.
- [26]. Galanaki, E., Kalantzi-Azizi, A., & Amanaki, E. (2008). Emerging adulthood: Student perceptions of their developmental characteristics and the criteria of adulthood. Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> Panhellenic

- developmental psychology conference. Hellenic Psychological Society, Developmental Psychology Branch, University of Athens, Athens, Greece. (In Greek).
- [25]. Gangl, M., Muller, W., & Raffe, D. (2003). Conclusions: explaining cross-national differences in school-to-work transitions.
- [26]. Georgas, J. (2001). "We the Greeks, we the Europeans" Ethnic and European identity: Opinions for Greece and the European Union. Athens: University of Athens-Department of Philosophy, Education, Psychology, Section of Psychology/Pedagogic Institute-YPEPTH (In Greek).
- [27]. Hill, J. M., Lalji, M., van Rossum, G., van der Geest, V. R., & Blokland, A. A. J. (2015). Experiencing emerging adulthood in the Netherlands. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18, pp.1035–1056. doi: 10.1080/13676261.2015.1020934.
- [28]. Iacovou, M. (2002). Regional differences in the transition to adulthood. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 580, 40-69. doi:10.1177/000271620258000103.
- [29]. Kins, E., & Beyers, W. (2010). Failure to launch, failure to achieve criteria for adulthood? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 25, pp.743-777. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558410371126>.
- [30]. Lanz, M., & Tagliabue, S. (2007). Do I really need someone in order to become an adult? Romantic relationships during emerging adulthood in Italy. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 22, 531-549. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558407306713>.
- [31]. Leontopoulou, S. & Triliva, S. (2012). Explorations of subjective wellbeing and character strengths among a Greek University student sample. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, Vol.2, Iss.3, pp.251-270. doi:10.5502/ijw.v2.i3.6.
- [32]. Leontopoulou, S., Mavridis, D., & Giotsa, A. (2016). Psychometric properties of the Greek Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA): University students' perceptions of developmental features. *Journal of Adult Development*, 23, pp.226–244. doi: 10.1007/s10804-016-9239-4.
- [33]. Lisha, N. E., Grana, R., Sun, P., Rohrbach, L., Spruijt-Metz, D., Reifman, A., & Sussman, S. (2014). Evaluation of the psychometric properties of the Revised Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA-R) in a sample of continuation high school students. *Evaluation & the Health Professions*, 37, 156-177. doi:10.1177/0163278712452664.
- [34]. Macek, P., Bejcek, J., & Vaníckova, J. (2007). Contemporary Czech emerging adults: generation growing up in the period of social changes. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 22, pp.444-475.
- [35]. Mendonca, M., & Fonaine, A. M. (2013). Late nest leaving in Portugal: its effects on individuation and parent-child relationships. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1, 233e244. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2167696813481773>.
- [36]. Moreno, A. (2012). The transition to adulthood in Spain in a comparative perspective: the incidence of structural factors. *Young*, 20, pp.19-48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/110330881102000102>.
- [37]. Munsey C. 2006, Emerging adults: the in-between age, *Monitor on Psychology*, 37, 6, 68.
- [38]. Negru, O. (2012). The time of your life: Emerging adulthood characteristics in a sample of Romanian high-school and university students. *Cognition, Brain, & Behavior*, 16, pp.357–367.
- [39]. Nelson, L. J., Badger, S., & Wu, B. (2004). The influence of culture in emerging adulthood: Perspectives of Chinese college students. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 28, 26-36. doi:10.1080/01650250344000244.
- [40]. Papadopoulos, N. T. (1998). Greek family policy from a comparative perspective. In E. Drew, R. Emerek, & E. Mahon (Eds.), *Women, work and the family in Europe* (pp. 47-57). New York: Routledge.
- [41]. Papataxiarchis, E. (2012). Shaping modern times in Greek family: a comparative view of gender and kinship transformations after 1974. In A. Diallya, & N. Maroniti (Eds.), *State, society and economy* (pp. 217-244). Athens: Metexmio.
- [42]. Paxson, H. (2004). *Making modern mothers: Ethics and family planning in urban Greece*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- [43]. Petrogiannis, K. (2011). Conceptions of the transition to adulthood in a sample of Greek higher education students. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 11, pp.121–137.
- [44]. Pnevmatikos D., Bardos A.N., (2014), Greek adolescents' intimate relations before their transition to adulthood, *Journal of Adolescence*, 37, pp.1475-1488.
- [45]. Reifman, A., Arnett, J. J., & Colwell, M. J. (2003). The IDEA:Inventory of the dimensions of emerging adulthood. Presentation at the 111th annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.
- [46]. Reifman, A., Arnett, J. J., & Colwell, M. J. (2007). Emerging Adulthood: Theory, assessment and application. *Journal of Youth Development*, 2(1).
- [47]. Seiter, L. N., & Nelson, L. J. (2011). An examination of emerging adulthood in college students and nonstudents in India. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26, pp.506–536. doi: 10.1177/0743558410391262.

- [48]. Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2015). Experiencing the transition to adulthood in Germany: Including emerging adults of the “forgotten half”. In R. Žukauskienė (Ed.), *Emerging adulthood in a European context* (pp. 79-93). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- [49]. Sirsch, U., Dreher, E., Mayr, E., & Willinger, U. (2009). What does it take to be an adult in Austria? Views of adulthood in Austrian adolescents, emerging adults, and adults. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24, pp.275–292. doi: 10.1177/0743558408331184.
- [50]. Stephanou., G., (2012). Romantic Relationships in Emerging Adulthood: Perception-Partner Ideal Discrepancies, Attributions, and Expectations, *Psychology*, Vol.3, No.2, pp.150-160 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/psych.2012.32023>.