Adolescents and Emerging Adults in Family Relationships

Children versus parents in adolescence : Problems on both sides

- Q: Compared to childhood: Is adolescence rather conflict period in terms of relationships between children and parents?

- *Adolescents may see their parents as having turned harsh, controlling, and irrational.*

- *Parents may wonder why their formerly cooperative and responsible children now seem hostile and destructive.*

- *These perspectives often feed on one another, increasing misunderstanding on both sides. Many parents and adolescents report a decrease in closeness during this time.*

Adolescents versus parents : Problems on both sides

Adolescents change greatly as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood, but their parents also change

- In one study, 40 percent of parents of adolescent children reported two or more of the following difficulties during a child's transition to adolescence: lowered self-esteem, decreased life satisfaction, increased depression, increased anxiety, and more frequent negative thoughts about middle age (Steinberg, 2001).

- The parents of adolescents are usually in midlife, when they face the prospect that their future lives may not get a lot better than the present. Just as their children are bursting with idealism, they may feel increasingly pessimistic.

- Similarly, middle age can bring declines in physical vigor and attractiveness, which can seem all the harder to bear when one's children are blooming.

- More difficulties for both sides, however, they want to see it?

- Adolescents' myth about adulthood:

  Adults are totally ,,free" , they can do anything (drinking alcohol, driving car, travelling, indenpendent decision making etc…)

- Adults' myth about adolescence:

 Adolescence is the best period of life, without any serious worries. Adolescents are happy/should to be/must be happy. Teenagers prefer leisure and entertainment only.

Adolescents versus parents

- Traditional view – adolescent protest against authorities is necessary for development to autonomy

- Positive relations with parents, mutual trust and mutual respect to psychological needs of both improve autonomy and decision making in adolescents

- Parents – if they want to understand their children, they have to take seriously their opinions, wishes, and problems.

- *Task: When you was 13 years old,*
- *what did you like /dislike by your parents*
- *(which their characteristics in regard to you)*

Parent–Child Conflict in Transition to Adulthood

- Parent-child conflict
  - Highest during early adolescence (more frequent conflicts regarding everyday life experience and activities)
  - Somewhat smaller but still intense during middle adolescence (but sometimes more serious – drinking, drugs, sex etc.)
  - Diminish substantially during late adolescence and emerging adulthood (but, if not...).

The Amount of Family Activities in Transition to Adulthood

- Mothers and fathers each averaged about 1 hour/day spent in shared activities with their adolescents (Larson et al., 1996).
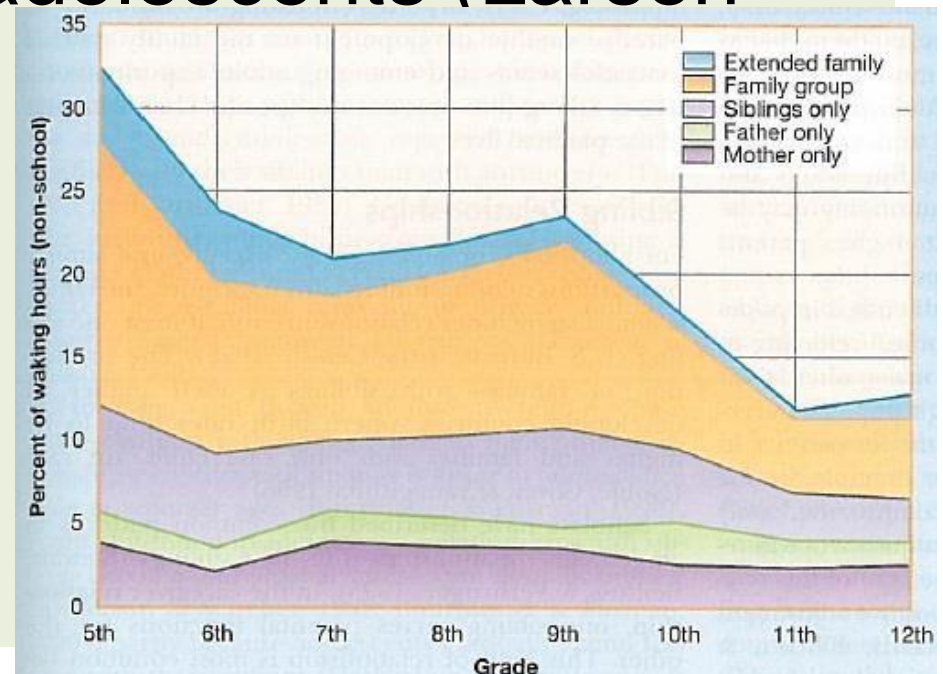 - Mostly watching TV

FIGURE 7.1 Changes in time spent with family members during adolescence.
Source: Larson et al. (1996).

The Amount of Family Activities in Transition to Adulthood

- Adolescents must stay at home, whereas emerging adults can leave home.
- Girls spend more time and more activities with their mothers than with their fathers
- However, girls report negative feeling toward their mother.
  - Close feeling: 68% in 5th grade -> 28% in 9th grade
- Fathers are "shadowy presence."
  - One data show that only 12 minutes/day spending with adolescents
  - 40% of this time watching TV together
  - Fathers still report good feeling during spending time together with their adolescents.
  - However, adolescents tend to resent fathers' dominant ways of communications.

Cultural Differences
in Transition to Adulthood

- West
  - In the U.S., leaving home typically around ages 18 to 19.
  - In EU, emerging adults are more likely to stay at home.
    - Financial difficulty (e.g., affording apartment)
    - European culture emphasizes mutual support within families
    - Concluding that "young Europeans find that they can enjoy a higher standard of living by staying at home rather than living independently, and at the same time enjoy substantial autonomy."
- East
  - Levels of conflict are low
    - High cultural beliefs about parental authority
    - low appropriate degree of adolescent independence

Youth in Family Relationships

Three theoretical approaches to understanding family
    interactions

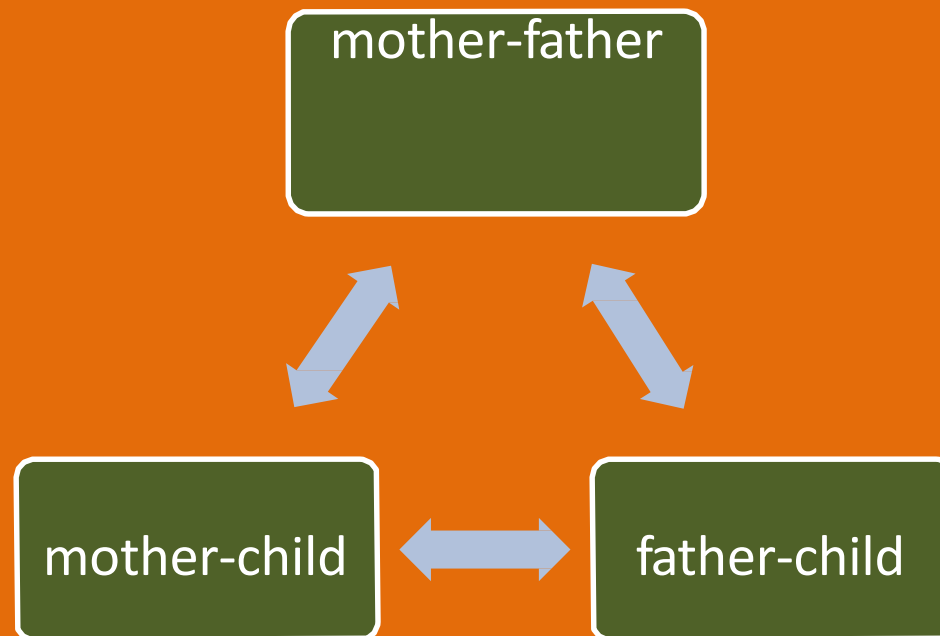- Family Systems Approach
- Attachment Theory
- Parenting Styles

– Focusing on differences of families

- Across cultures
- Across developmental periods
- Across types of families
    – (e.g., divorced vs. non-divorced families)

Approach # 1: Family Systems Approach

Each relationship within a particular family influences the family as a whole.

– Mother-child, father-child, mother-father, etc.

– E.g., mother-father -> mother-child

– E.g., mother-child -> mother-father

```
              mother-father
                 ↙      ↘
        mother-child ↔ father-child
```

Approach # 1: Family Systems Approach

2. Families need to keep balance
   - Adolescents become more cognitively and physically mature.
     - E.g., Explanation about adoption.

   - Interesting empirical findings about "midlife crisis":
     - Empty-nest syndrome – parents need to make adjustments when their youngest child leaves home.
     - When parents typically have adolescents, parents report their lives are happier and more satisfying (Feldman, 2003; Galhagher, 1993).
       - Better job status and more power -> financial stability
       - More tolerance in family
       - Marital problems decline and marital satisfaction increases
     - When emerging adults leave home, their relationships with parents become better (Arnett, 2003; Garber & Dubas, 1996).

     - Are these positive transitions true in your family?
     - How did your family adapt to your developmental changes?

Approach # 1: Family Systems Approach

2.   Parental conflict – when is destructive for adolescents

-    when adolescents perceive and interpret this conflict as a danger for them
-    when this conflict is perceived without any solution for parents
-    when conflict produce agressive behavior of parents
-    when they feel guilty for it

Approach #2: Attachment Theory
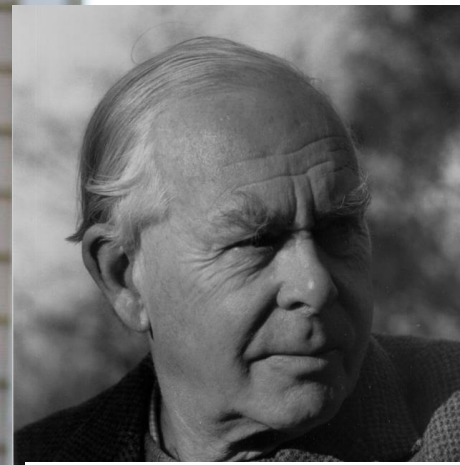
John Bowlby

Secure vs. Insecure attachment

- When parents are sensitive and responsive to their children's emotional needs, the children develop secure attachment with their parents.

- Secure children trust their parent's availability when
children need them.

  - "My parents are always there and I feel I can always go to them and they always say something that will make me feel better." (17-year-old girl)

Secure vs. Insecure

- Because insecure children have not met their needs when needed, they do not trust their parents.

- Insecure children tend to avoid seeking help from others and/or hostile toward others.
  - Avoidant style
  - Resistant style

- If children are physically/emotionally/sexually abused by their parents, they feel frightened and show dissociate behavior.
  - disorganized style

Attachment security in adolescence

- Research indicates that a secure attachment to parents in adolescence is related to a variety of favorable outcomes.
  - High self-esteem
  - Low psychological problems
  - Closer relationships with friends and romantic partners
  - High educational and occupational attainment
  - Better physical health
  - Low drug use problems

Approach #3: Parenting Styles

- 2 dimensions of parenting
  - Demandingness (control)
    - The degree to which parents set down rules and expectations for behavior and require their children to comply with them.
  - Responsiveness (warmth)
    - The degree to which parents are sensitive to their children's needs and the extent to which they express love, warmth, and concern for their children.

Parenting Styles

- Dianna Baumrind's 4 patterns of parenting styles

	Demandingness (Control)	
Responsiveness (Warmth)	**High**	**Low**
High	Authoritative	Indulgent
Low	Authoritarian	Indifferent

Parenting Styles

- Authoritative Parenting Style
  - Parents are willing to answer questions.
    - They are more democratic in the way they deal with their children.
    - They are assertive but not restrictive.
    - They are more forgiving, less punishing than the authoritarian parent.
  - If the child does not meet parents' goals, it is not the end of the world.
    - Parents will have a conversation.
    - Parents and the child will work together to have their successes.

Parenting Styles

- Authoritarian Parenting Style
  - Parents have very strict, rigid rules.
    - They're not very interested in what the child thinks or feels.
    - No conversation.
  - No warmth and nurturance.
    - They expect the child to be mature.
  - Parents want compliance.
    - They want to control over their children.

Parenting Styles

- Indulgent Parenting Style (permissive)
  - Parents have an excessive amount of warmth and nurturance.
  - They are lighter on the rules and regulations.
    - Parents allow for a considerable amount of self-regulation.
  - No rules.
    - Parents are more reactive in terms of placing demands on their children.
    - It's really more "parenting when necessary."
  - Parents have lower expectations for maturity and self-control in the child.

Parenting Styles

- Indifferent Parenting style
  - Parents are somewhat neglectful.
    - They are not aware of the child's needs.
    - There is very little communication.
    - Parents place few demands on the child.
    - They are not involved in their life.
  - Parents are relatively detached from the child's mental/emotional needs.
    - They will provide the basic needs.
    - But after that, there is not much connection there.

Parenting Styles

- Identify the following parenting styles.
  - My parents are never home. They are off on a trip or away at work. They don't show up at my games or band concerts.
  - My father is so strict. If I look at him funny, he knocks me under the table.
  - My mother told me I could not go with a guy in a car until I was in my senior year of high school. I argued with her about that. We ended up compromising, and she said I could ride with someone as along as she knew who the person was.
  - My parents usually let me do whatever I want, but I know they love me. I really love my parents, too.

Parenting Styles across Cultures

America
- Over 4,000 American adolescents aged 14 to 18 (Lamborn et al., 1991)
  - Working class and middle class
  - Urban, suburban & rural communities
  - European American (65%), African American (9%), Asian American (14%), and Latinos (12%).
    - Authoritative style (37%)
    - Indifferent style (32%)
    - Authoritarian style (15%)
    - Indulgent style (15%)

Outcomes of Parenting Styles

Authoritative	Authoritarian	Indulgent	Indifferent
Independent	Dependent	Irresponsible	Impulsive
Creative	Passive	Conforming	Delinquent
Self-assured	Conforming	Immature	Early sex, drugs
Socially-skilled			

- Why does authoritative parenting promote adolescents' autonomy and independence?
  - **What are your ideas?**

Outcomes of Parenting Styles

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Independent	Dependent	Irresponsible	Impulsive
Creative	Passive	Conforming	Delinquent
Self-assured	Conforming	Immature	Early sex, drugs
Socially-skilled			

- Why does authoritative parenting promote adolescents' autonomy and independence?
    - "A balance between allowing enough autonomy for adolescents to develop their capacities and at the same time requiring them to exercise their autonomy in a responsible way."

Parenting Styles across Cultures

Asia

- Authoritative parenting has been considered rare in Asian cultures such as China, Japan, Vietnam, and South Korea.
  - "Filial piety" – children are expected to respect and obey their parents throughout life.

    Think and discuss with your classmates about what are a common parenting style in your culture and why.

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Parenting Styles across Cultures

Asia

- Authoritative parenting has been considered rare in Asian cultures such as China, Japan, Vietnam, and South Korea.
  - "Filial piety" – children are expected to respect and obey their parents throughout life.
    - Low explanations
    - High academic achievement

    Think and discuss with your classmates about what are a common parenting style in your culture and why.
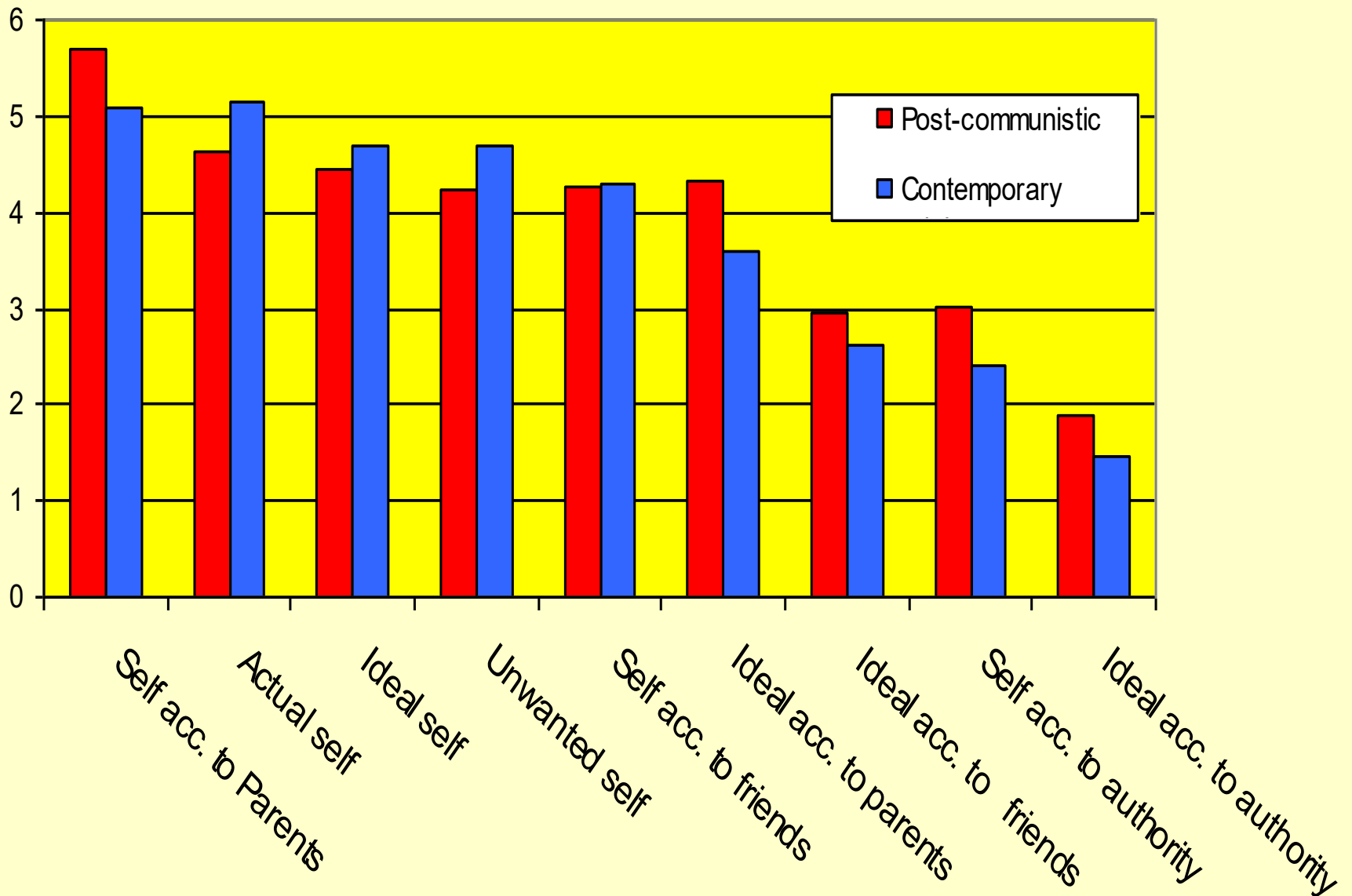
The role of parents and family in adolescents' self-development

Generally, the process of separation and striving for autonomy of young individuals is strongly based on the negotiation with their parents.

As many current studies show, parents remain significant others not only in adolescence but also in the third decade of life

The importance of parents is related **to adolescent self-development**

Differences of importance of self-representations

Legend: Post-communistic (red), Contemporary (blue)

Categories: Self acc. to Parents, Actual self, Ideal self, Unwanted self, Self acc. to friends, Ideal acc. to parents, Ideal acc. to friends, Self acc. to authority, Ideal acc. to authority

Self-concept – cognitive aspect of self-reflection

Self-concept or self-representations:
    It is everything individuals/adolescents know and believe about themselves

This includes characteristics related to:

-one's physical appearance and attractiveness (**physical self-concept**)

-one's performance and competencies (**competence self-concept, academic or professional self-concept**),

-social relationships both in the wider meaning (social self-concept) and in specific social settings (e.g. **family self-concept**) or specific interpersonal relationship or role (**partnership self-concept, parental self-concept).**

An another important aspect of self includes traits (e.g. true-heartedness, responsibility) through which we define ourselves in the context of moral rules, norms and values (moral self-concept).

Self-esteem

It is global self-evaluation, one's evaluations of one's worth as a person or human being.

The level of self-esteem is to a high extent related to the global emotional disposition and the overall wellbeing.

Amongst other things, this feeling also depends on how competent and successful we consider ourselves.
It also works the other way around: someone who accepts himself/herself and is aware of his/her value is usually more satisfied in life, healthier and more successful.

On the other hand, someone who sees himself/herself negatively experiences more often failure, anxiety, depression and his/her view of the future is pessimistic.
No doubts, the adolescent self-esteem is related to perceptions and evaluations of parents.

Self-esteem scale
(Rosenberg, 1974)

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.				
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities..				
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.				
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.				
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.				
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.				
9. I certainly feel useless at times.				
10. At times I think I am no good at all.				
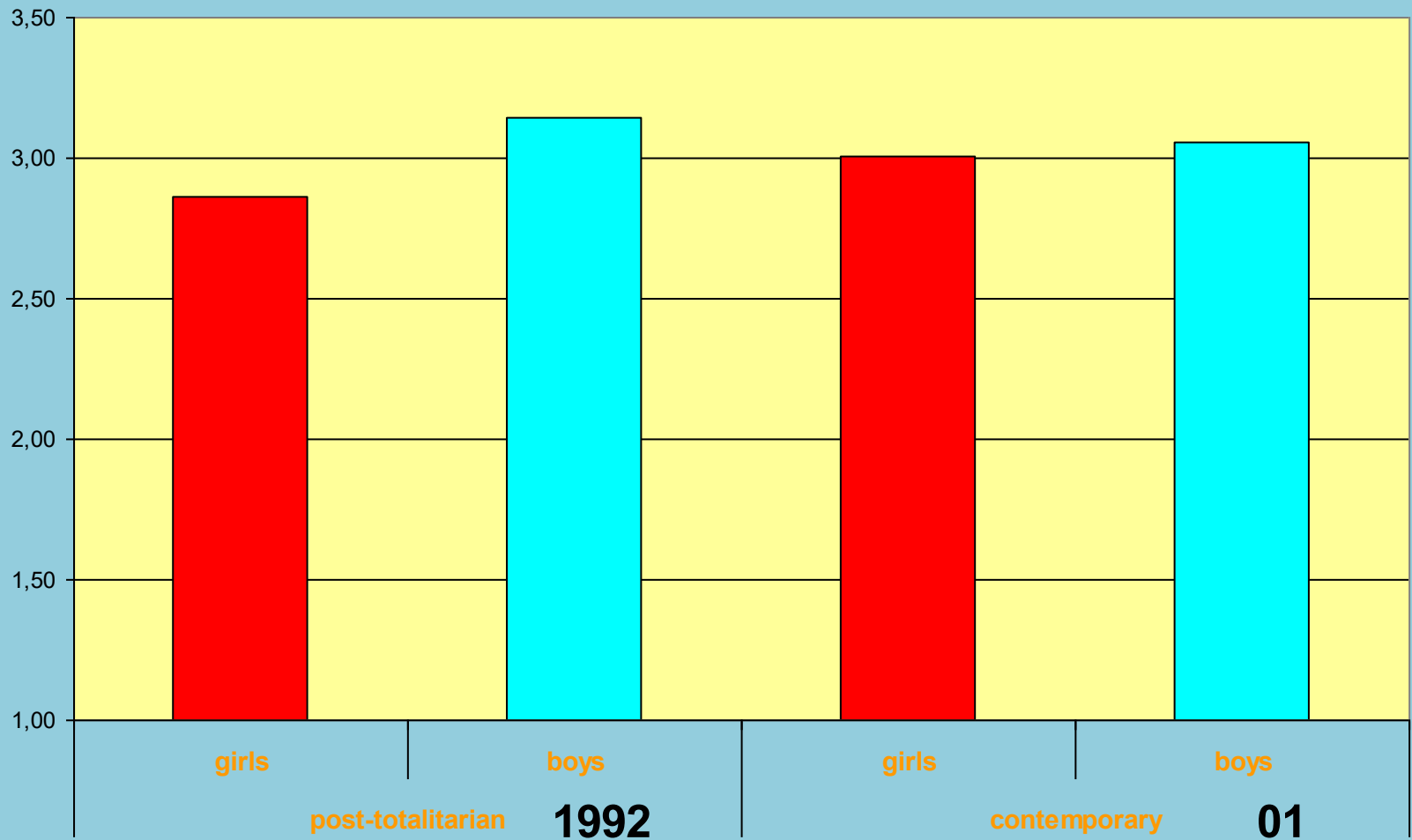
Study I: Perceived parenting and self-esteem

First results: Parental love supports self-esteem

Baumrid (1971) proposed two dimensions of parenting behavior which can have specific influences on child and adolescent self:
    - parental responsiveness (warmth)
    - parental demandingness (control)

Question:

Is there relationship between reported mother's and father's parental rearing practices and self-esteem of young adolescents?

| Reported parental behavior at the age of 11 | → | Reported parental behavior at the age of 13 | → | Adolescent´s self-esteem at the age of 13 |

Sample

We use data from Czech part of longitudinal study
ELSPAC (European Longitudinal Study of Pregnancy
and Childhood).

 In regard to purpose of this study, our sample consists
of 148 boys and 136 girls with their parents. We
respected these two criteria:
-both parents are present in a family,
-both children and their parents completed all
questionnaires.

Parental rearing practices were measured by using Parent style questionnaire (Čáp & Boschek, 1994).

Two factors were extracted – **Parental Warmth** and **Parental Control.**

This instrument was completed repeatedly by both children and their parents. Mothers and fathers assessed their rearing parental practices when their children were 11 and 13 years old.

In regard to children, they completed this questionnaire separately for perceived mother's and father's parental behaviour at the age of 11 and 13.

Adolescents´ self-esteem (at the age of 13) was measured by the Czech version of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI, Coopersmith, 1981).

The CSEI includes 50 items that concern attitudes toward the self in the areas of social, academic, family, and personal experience. Respecting psychometric criteria, we used only two subscales for next analyses:

-Self-Confidence

-Perceived acceptance from others (Social Self)

Self-confidence:

Can be seen as more general aspect of self-esteem. To have high level of self-confidence means to have positive attitudes towards one's own self, to be stable in self-evaluation, to like one's own self, and also to believe in own skills and abilities

Acceptance from others (Social Self):

Adolescent sees himself/herself as a person who has a social prestige and who is an attractive person, especially for peers
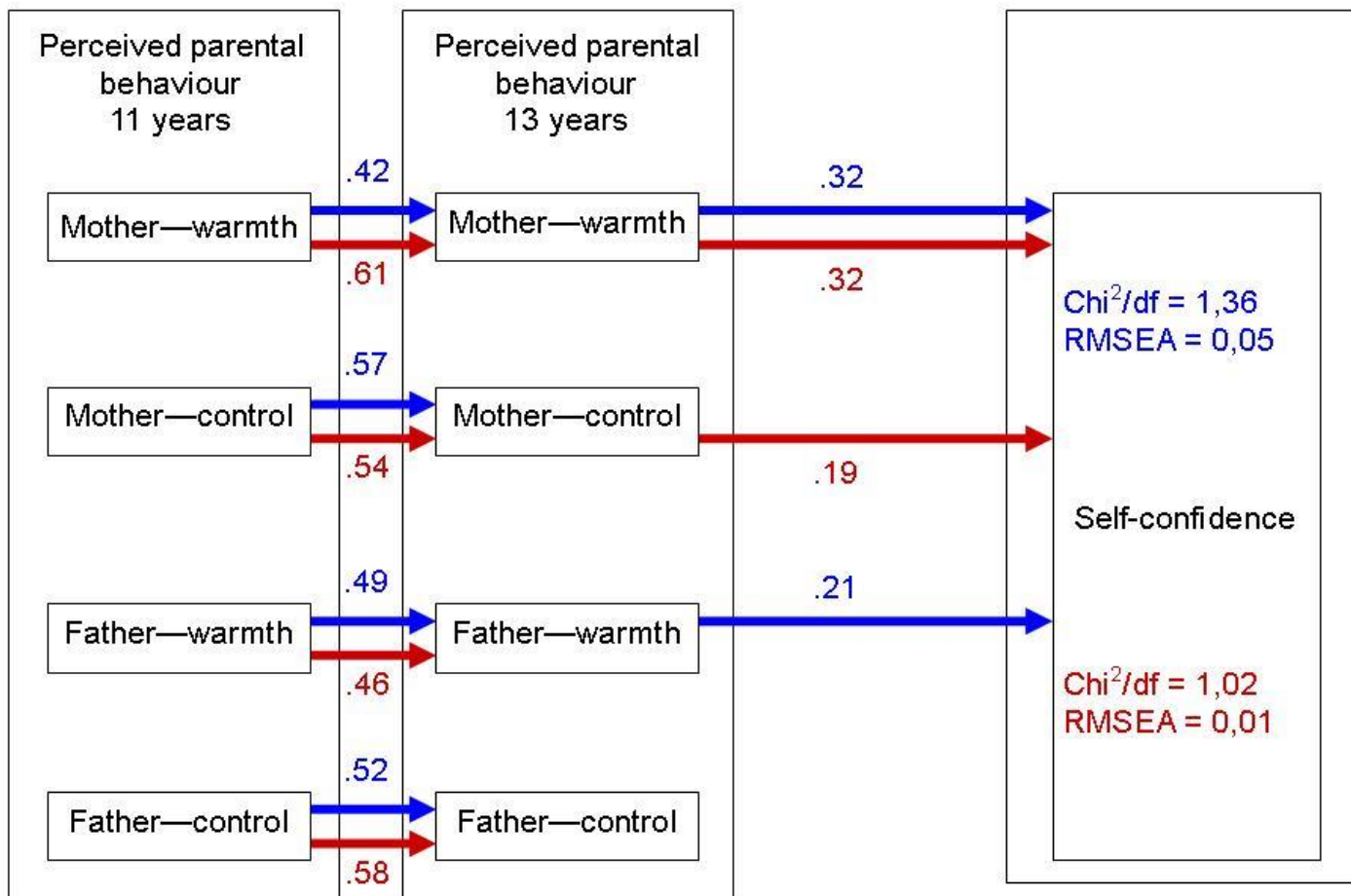
Results

When analysing the models based on data obtained from parents, we did not found acceptable fit – in all cases, the free regression weights were close to zero.

We can state that there are no significant relations between parents' report about their parental behaviour and self-esteem of the child

Blue lines for boys, red for girls…
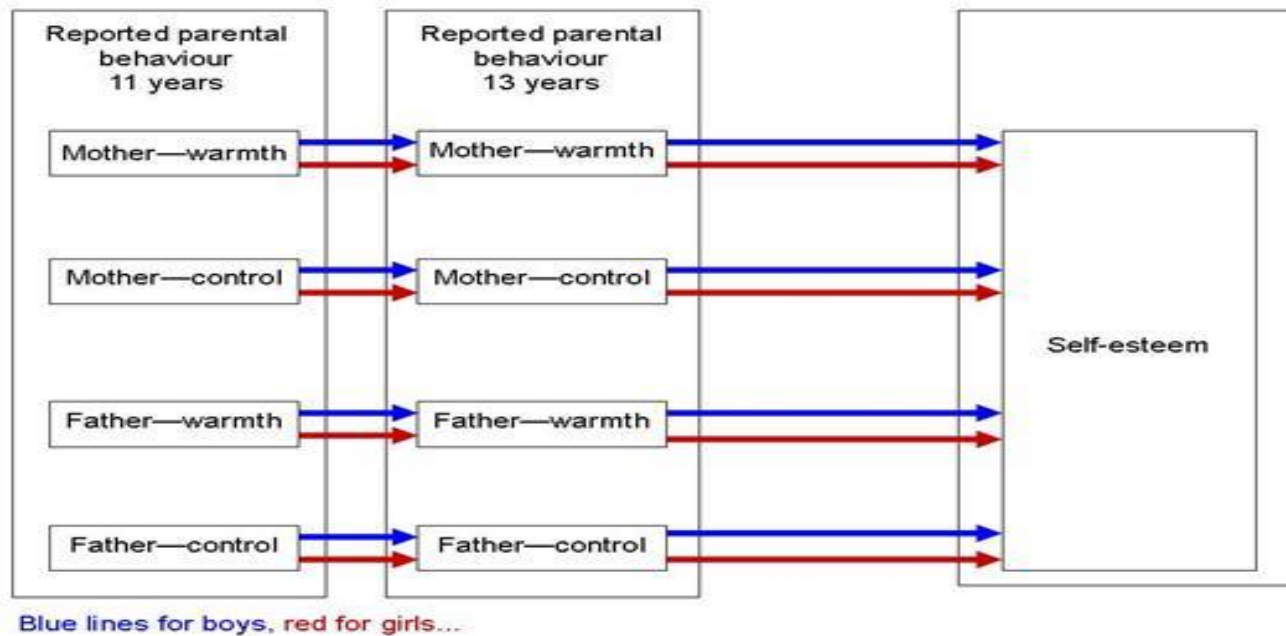
More results proved models with data based on the child's report about behaviour of parents.

Blue lines for boys, red for girls...

Results

It is evident, that perceived warmth of mother is a good predictor of adolescent's self-confidence for both girls and boys. **The mother's warmth, represented by her interest, her emotional support and presentation of positive feelings is related to high positive self-feeling**.

On the other hand, **when mother is perceived as a person who expresses often negative feelings, who reproaches and talks often about child's mistakes and insufficiencies, then child's self-confidence is lower.**

Regarding **the perceived father´s warmth, we identified it as a significant predictor for boys only; we did not find direct influence of fathers on girls´ self-confidence.**

Perceived mother's control is another significant predictor of girls´ self-confidence. More concretely, self-confidence is higher when demands, expectations are going parallel with the warm, responsive, and supportive behavior.

We can suppose, that the control is in this case perceived as mother's not only emotional but also "cognitive support" by which we mean the help to find and to see some structure or to differentiate, what is important and what is not.

However, why is this result valid for girls only?

This result can be also considered in the context of different parental stereotypes about young adolescent girls and boys.

Transition from childhood to a period of early adolescence is traditionally connected with a higher differentiation of gender stereotypes, with imagination what is "correct" and what "is not correct" for each sex.

According to these stereotypes, girls in early adolescence need more control and more "parental care" then boys. Boys should be more independent, more assertive and courageous, and they do not need so much parental control.

Self-esteem, parents and peers during adolescence
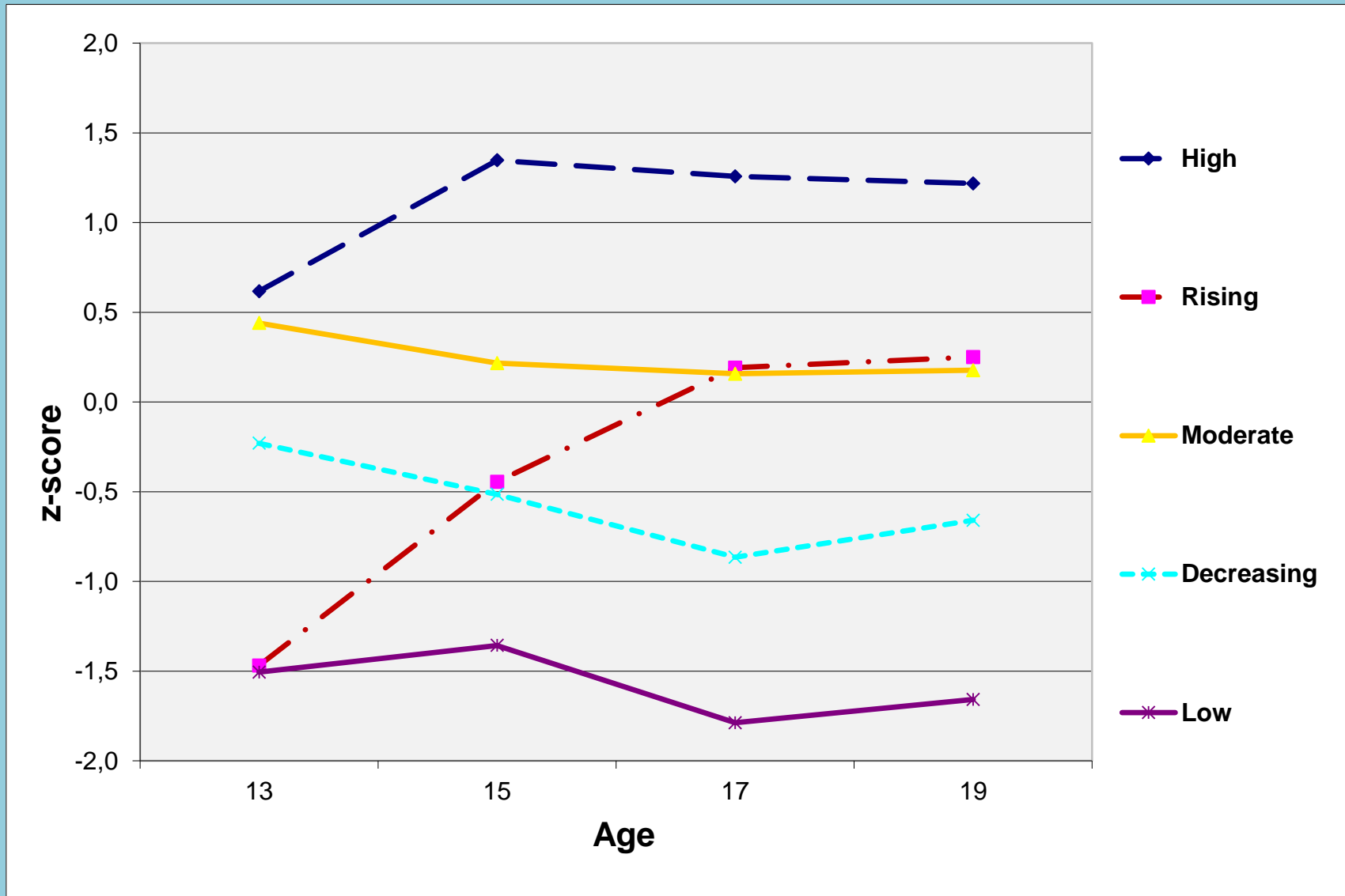
MASARYKOVA UNIVERZITA

Current Czech emerging adults and their parents: a generation growing up in the time of social change

Petr Macek &
Lenka Lacinová, Stanislav Ježek, Ondřej Bouša, Jan Širůček, Lucie Lomičová

Institute for Research on Children, Youth, and Family
Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic

Our current study on emerging adults and their parents

Based on data from ongoing longitudinal research "Paths to Adulthood"
2011 – 2016, 1 664 respondents aged 18-23 in Wave 1, 1073 in Wave 4 (2013)
and 690 respondents in Wave 8 (2015)
Sample characteristics:
     75% females
     16% graduate school; 57% college; 4% community college; 10% grammar
     school; 8% specialized secondary school; 10% work (6% study&work); 3%
     unemployed
     Living with parents (41%), living with partner (15%), living with friends (41%)

The follow-up research of EA respondents´ parents (in June 2015).
This sample consists of 234 mothers and 141 fathers and their data are paired
with the data of their children.

Methods:

Autonomy scale: The 7-item subscale of autonomy from the general version of the Basic Psychological Needs Scale based on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci, Ryan, 2000). It measures the general feeling of self-governance or agentic autonomy currently perceived by the respondent. Items like "I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life." use a 7-point response scale from *not true at all* (1) to *very true* (7). ($a = 0.70$)

Identity Style Inventory IV, (Berzonsky, 2003). Czech version: Informational style, Normative style, Diffusion Style.

Subjective developmental status: I feel as: teenager/adolescent, "in-between" (not adolescent not adult), adult.

Experiences in Close Relationships (Relationship Structures questionnaire of the Experiences in Close Relationships—Revised ; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Participants assess their attachment orientation in close relationships: with mother and with father. They assess two fundamental dimensions underlying attachment patterns:
Anxiety - it represents the extent to which people tend to worry about attachment-related concerns, such as the availability and responsiveness of an attachment figure.
Avoidance - this dimension represents the extent to which people are uncomfortable opening up to others and depending on them.

Decision-making autonomy: How much are parents involved in emerging adult's everyday decision-making?
    What to wear, eat, read, watch. Whom to go out with….   18 items,
     Options*: (a) my parents tend to get very involved (forbid, press), (b) my parents state their opinion but let me decide, (c) my parents leave the decision up to me, (d) my parents do not care about this*

Method for parents
(separately for mothers and fathers)

Assessment of the level of adulthood (ad hoc inventory inspired by the study of M. Kloep & L. Hendry (2010). Six items, e.g. „My son/daughter is taking responsibility for his/her life" were assesed on four point scale (alpha .83).

Parental perception of subjective developmental status: „I see my son/daughter: as adolescent, not fully adult, fully adult"

Emotional closeness (adopted for parents according to Aquilino, 1997). Six items regarding global relationship quality with child (rated from 0 = really bad to 10 = absolutely perfect, alpha .81) .

Autonomy in decision-making (adopted for parents according to Qin, Pomerantz, & Wang, 2009), 15 items, alpha .88.

Parental support and assistance (adopted according Fingerman,Miller, Birditt, & Zarit, 2009). Practical support (household, living situation), financial support, sharing in communication. Three items for each domain.

Other questions regarding an assitance and support of their children

Which of the following do you think is most important for becoming an adult?
Reports of mothers (n = 225) and fathers (n = 135)
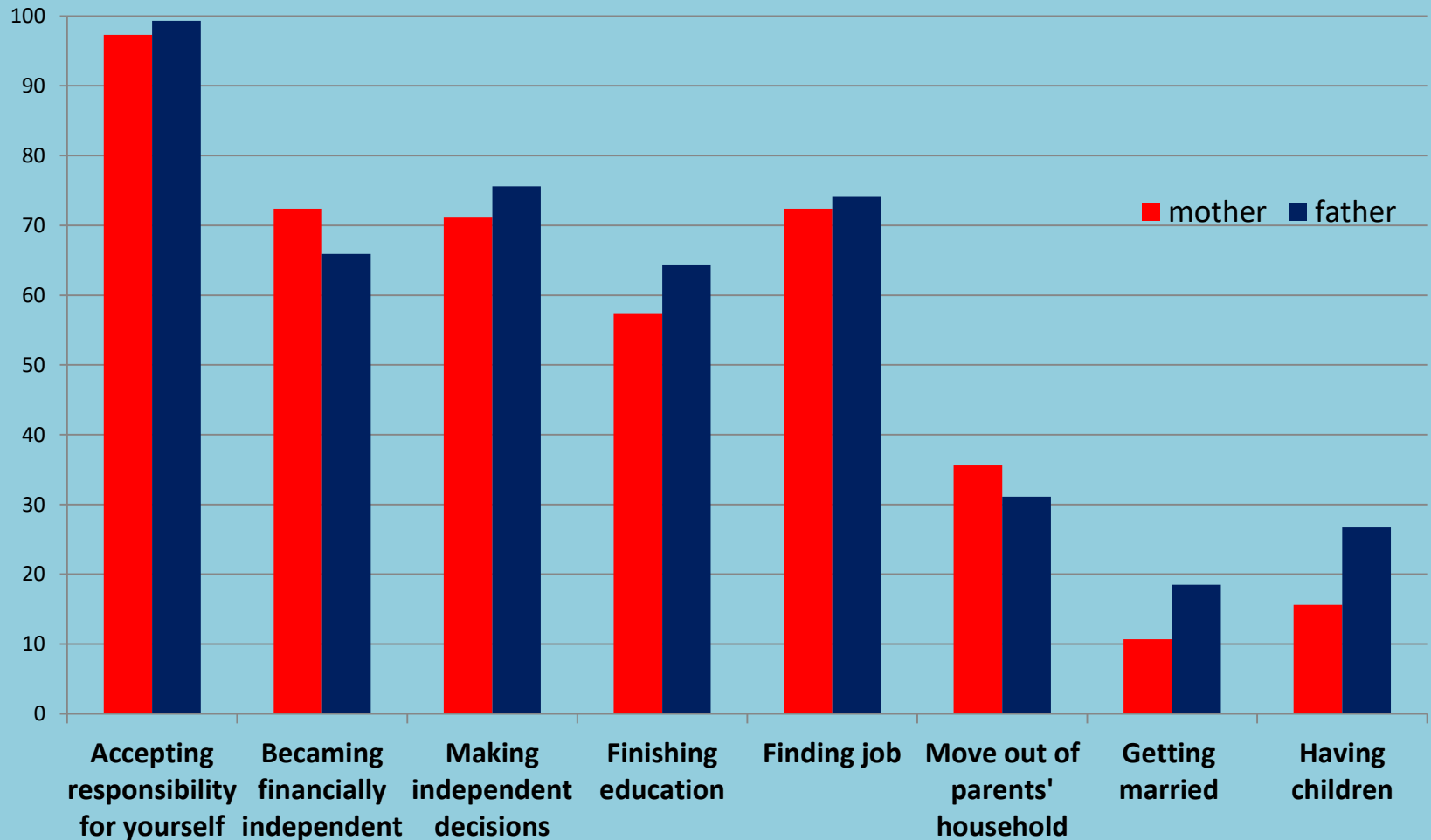
With the exception of the item „having children", no significant differences between mothers and fathers were found

A perception of parental support and assistance

Parents: When you look back over the past year, how would you describe the support or assistance you provide to your son/daughter?
Children: When you look back over the past year, how much support or assistance you received from your parents?
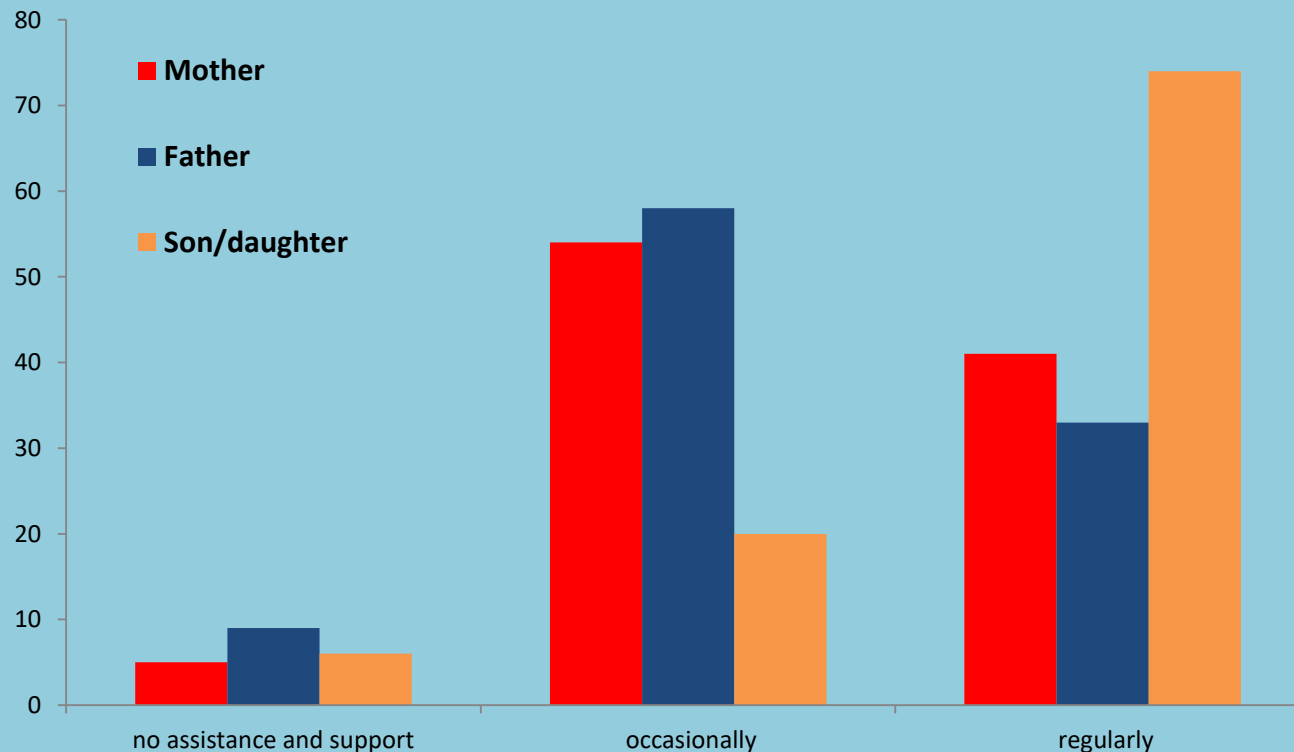
Assessments of parents and children are different
However, no relationship between parent's view and child's was found.

A perception of parental support and assistance

It is evident that parents and emerging adults both perceive high importance of support and assistance. However, based on the inspection of our data, it seems these supporting activities of parents are not directly meant to support to the identity formation and autonomy of their children (no significant relationsips were found). To help adult children and to accept such help seems to be a generally accepted cultural standard in Czech society.

Summary: Parental support

We found only a few associations between the parent reports of support and EA reports.
More generally, parents' assessments and support are not directly proportional to the youth's transition to adulthood and autonomy development.

It appears that the psychosocial development of emerging adults is more closely related to how they themselves assess their current situation and parents.

Study 2: Perceived parental characteristics as predictors of autonomy of emerging adults

 We predict the level of autonomy (Autonomy subscale of BPNS, Deci, Ryan, 2000). It measures the general feeling of self-governance or agentic autonomy currently perceived by the respondent. Items like "I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life."

Predictors:
- socio-demographic characteristics (living with parents, financial support from parents, status of a student, status of an employee)
- relevant psycho-social characteristics (identity styles, subjective developmental status, attachment to mother/father;
- decision-making autonomy/parental control in everyday life

Study 2: Parents as predictors of autonomy

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to predict the subjective perceived feelings of autonomy in emerging adulthood (age M = 21.4, SD = 1.37).

In the first step, socio-demographic variables (gender, working status, financial support from parents and living with parents) were entered into the model.

In the second step, the psychological variables (three identity styles, attachment (anxiety and avoidance of mother and father) and subjective status were added.

 In the final step three, the decision-making autonomy entered the model.

Study 2: Parents as predictors of autonomy

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Autonomy

Step and predictor variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.03**	
Living with parents	-.28	.07	-.15**		
Step 2				.17***	.14***
ISI normative	-.23	.07	-.14***		
ISI informational	.24	.07	.13***		
Anxiety - mother	-.02	.00	-.19***		
Avoidance - mother	-.03	.01	-. 11**		
Subjective status	.17	.07	.10**		
Step 3				.24***	.07***
Decision making autonomy	.91	.12	.27***		

**p < .01. *** p < .001.

Study 2: Parents as predictors of autonomy

	B	SE B	β	
Gender	.46	.082	.020	
Living with parents	**-.163**	**.067**	**-.087****	
Financial support	-.042	.100	-.017	
Status student	.170	.128	.053	
Status working	-.010	.091	-.004	
Avoidance - mother	**-.016**	**.004**	**-.164*****	
Anxiety - mother	**-.026**	**.012**	**-.093****	
Avoidance - father	-.006	.004	-.058	
Avoidance - father	-.013	.009	-.061	
Informational oriented	**.275**	**.068**	**.148*****	
Normative oriented	**-.203**	**.058**	**-.125*****	
Diffusion oriented	-.110	.065	-.063	
Subjective status	**.147**	**.063**	**.083****	
Decision-making autonomy	**.899**	**.121**	**.266*****	

Study 2: Parents as predictors of autonomy

Summary

The degree of autonomy is associated with both socio-demographic indicators and psychological characteristics.

Financial support and working status do not relate to the degree of autonomy. A higher degree of autonomy is predicted if the EA does not live with his/her parents

Relationship to mother (anxiety, avoidance) affects the degree of autonomy; relationship to father is not a significant indicator.

With respect to the style of self-definition, looking up new information corresponds with higher autonomy; orientation towards norms and significant others reduces autonomy.

A higher degree of overall autonomy is supported by self-reliance (independence from parents) in making decisions about everyday things.

Conclusions

In the Czech society, there is a long tradition of close relationships between members of the original family and parental support in the process of transition to adulthood.
It can be said that most parents accept the life style and needs of current emerging adults.
As is evident also from the results of our research, relationships between parents and children are more symmetrical and the role of each parent is becoming more specific.
Direct influence and parental control are decreasing in various domains of the lives of emerging adults (romantic relationships, study and work). However, their influence still remains important for self-development and autonomy development. Perceived closeness to mother has been a long-time factor affecting autonomy .
The role of father is rather unclear. As preliminary data inicated, the basic role plays a perception of trust to father and opened communication with him.