

Do Internal Dialogues in Young Adults Depend on Mother-Father Incongruence in Parental Attitudes Assessed Retrospectively?

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Abstract

Mother-father incongruence in parental attitudes can cause conflict in the child. This may result in an experience of uncertainty that stimulates a person to engage in internal dialogues (IDs). Thus, we hypothesized that the greater the incongruence between the mother's and the father's parental attitudes, as assessed retrospectively by the child, the greater is the intensity of IDs in an adult offspring's life. Participants were 92 women and 84 men aged between 20 years and 32 years. We used two methods: the Questionnaire of Retrospective Assessment of Parental Attitudes and the Internal Dialogical Activity Scale. We conducted a response survey analysis. Our hypothesis has been fully supported with regard to non-adaptive confronting IDs and general internal dialogical activity: the less the mother protects, and the more the father is overprotective, the greater is the intensity of these IDs. Our findings are discussed in light of the broader literature on parental attitudes and IDs.

Keywords

internal dialogue, parental attitude, incongruence, protection, inconsistency, demands, acceptance

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According to the goodness-of-fit model of psychosocial functioning (Thomas & Chess, 1977), if environmental demands and expectations are consonant with the individual's capacities, abilities, motivations, and temperament, a person will present more adaptive functioning. This model has been positively verified many times, mainly in temperament studies (Lerner, 1984; Seifer, 2000) but also in other investigative contexts, for instance, parent-offspring personality similarity (Franken, Lacey, Van Aken, & Ormel, 2017) and expectation similarity (Juang, Lerner, McKinney, & von Eye, 1999). Such studies showed additionally that the person's perceived discrepancy between their own characteristics and social expectations is more predictive for their adaptive behavior than the actual discrepancy (Juang et al., 1999; Lerner, 1983).

All may agree that parents are usually the first exponents of social demands and expectations—expressed not only verbally but also nonverbally in, among others, their childrearing attitudes. However, there are different typologies of parental attitudes. For example, Roe (1957; Roe & Siegelman, 1963) proposed six parental attitudes: protecting, demanding, rejecting, neglecting, causal, and loving. Siegelman (1966), applying factor analysis, distinguished three main dimensions of parental attitudes—loving, demanding, and controlling—whereas Parker, Tupling, and Brown (1979; Parker, 1983) identified two aspects of childrearing practices—care and overprotection. In reviewing the typologies presented in the literature, Plopa (2015) concluded that the differentiated influence of parents on their children could be reduced to four basic dimensions: acceptance, protection, demands, and autonomy. On the basis of his own empirical research, Plopa identified an additional dimension: inconsistency. These five earlier-mentioned factors make up Plopa's typology of parental attitudes, which will be analyzed in the study presented further.

The attitude of *acceptance* towards the child is reflected in the child's assessment of the parent as accepting and as teaching trust in people and the world. Being raised by such a mother/father is pleasant, safe, supportive, and satisfying. This attitude is associated with the child's free expression of thoughts, feelings, and views as well as with the parent's interest in his/her child's needs and problems. The lack of acceptance of the child by the parent is understood as rejection. A rejected child, later in adulthood, remembers the relation with his/her parent as cold, distanced, and based primarily on satisfying material needs. An *excessive demand* means that the parent does not take into account the child's predispositions, interests, and needs; he/she usually requires actions far beyond the child's abilities. If a child is not unconditionally obedient to an overly demanding parent, he/she faces criticism, blame, and punishment. An *excessive protection* is

manifested in the treatment of a child as a weak person, requiring constant care. The parent constantly interferes in the child's affairs and personal problems; he/she does not believe in the child's abilities and does everything for the child. Such a parental attitude makes it difficult for the child to build his/her own identity, develop self-confidence, or acquire adequate self-esteem. The attitude of *autonomy* finds expression in a parent's flexible behavior adapted to the child's developmental needs. The parent understands and respects the child's need for some privacy, for deciding on his/her own matters, and establishing new interpersonal contacts. This involves not only approving the child's attempts to solve difficulties by him/herself but also helping, supporting, and pointing out alternative possibilities and solutions. Finally, a nervous parent, unstable in expressing feelings or opinions and in making decisions, adopts an attitude of *inconsistency* toward the child. Lack of stability in the parent's behavior can result in emotional distancing themselves from the child as well as hiding problems and difficulties. In addition, getting involved in his/her children's affairs can often be associated with screams and limitations (Plopa, 2015).

Regardless of the type of parental attitudes, they translate into the child's possibilities of functioning, his/her activity patterns, and defined requirements for his/her activity (Knopp, 2007). Assuming that social expectations and requirements are expressed in parental attitudes, what if these parental attitudes are inconsistent between the spouses? Simultaneous meeting of the divergent demands of both parents is impossible and is likely to cause a conflict in the child. One possible result might be the child engaging in internal dialogical activity in an effort to resolve or otherwise adapt to this discrepancy.

We assume that a person is engaged in an internal dialogue (ID) when he/she adopts (at least) two different viewpoints in turn, and the utterances formulated (silently or aloud) from these viewpoints respond to one another (Hermans, 2003; Puchalska-Wasył, 2016, 2017). The viewpoints adopted in IDs can represent personal perspectives (e.g., "I-as a good child" or "I-as a rebel") and/or someone else's perspectives (e.g., "my parent" position or "my imaginary friend" position). Consequently, an internal dialogical activity is defined as the following: (a) continuation or simulation of social dialogical relationships in one's own mind (e.g., "I-as a rebel" vs. "my mother" position); (b) confrontation of the viewpoints representing different I-positions relevant for personal and/or social identity (e.g., "I-as a good child" vs. "I-as a rebel"); and (c) engagement in imaginary dialogues with figures who are not part of our social environment (e.g., ID between my own and my imaginary friend's viewpoints; Puchalska-Wasył, Chmielnicka-Kuter, & Oleś, 2008).

Internal dialogical activity concerns mental processes that can be understood in light of Hermans' dialogical self theory (DST; Hermans, 2018; Hermans & Gieser, 2012; Puchalska-Wasył, Oleś, & Hermans, 2018). In DST it is emphasized that dialogical relationships exist, not only between the self and others but also within the self. The dialogical self is conceptualized as a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions representing different viewpoints available for a person. Each I-position, shaped within a particular social context, is endowed with a "voice" (the voice of a culture, a community, a significant other, or one's own voice) and intertwined with other I-positions resembling people in social relationships (Hermans, 2003). Consequently, not only external/interpersonal but also internal/intrapersonal dialogues are possible.

Across a life span, the dialogical self can gain new I-positions. For example, when a child goes to school for the first time, he/she meets a teacher ("my teacher" position) who allows him/her to experience the role of pupil ("I-as a pupil"). When a man establishes his family, he creates several new important I-positions, such as "I-as a husband," "I-as a father," "my wife," "my child," etc. According to DST, all the people we call "mine" are able to form I-positions in our self. In this sense, significant persons are introduced into the dialogical self (Hermans, 2001, 2003; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2001). The family environment is typically the first important social context, and parents are almost invariably the first significant others. Therefore, the parents, and more precisely their attitudes perceived by the offspring, are reflected in the child's dialogical self as the "father" and "mother" positions. In this manner, parents' demands on us become established and—in the case of their incongruence—an external conflict can be transferred into the self.

Difficulties in resolving such a conflict may result in an experience of uncertainty that, according to Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010), is a starting point for ID; at the same time, the process of interchange between I-positions aims to reduce such uncertainty. The authors claim that encounter of two or more I-positions in dialogue provides the opportunity to clarify or to overcome uncertainty by "integration of opposites" and creation of a new idea (solution of a conflict). Another option to reduce uncertainty, proposed by Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010), is giving the lead to one powerful position. This I-position becomes dominant and possibly uninterested in what the other I-positions desire. In the context of incongruence in parental attitudes, the latter option would mean that a child finally takes into account social demands expressed only by one parent. In fact, in both of the earlier-mentioned cases—"integration of opposites" and domination of one I-position—IDs seem not to be an activity undertaken in a long-term way;

they are rather conducted only until the conflict is considered resolved. It is possible that, in such cases, young adults asked to retrospectively assess their parents' attitudes do not declare a great incongruence in those attitudes as, even if the experience of conflict occurred in their childhood, it was short-lived and not too strong.

The findings of Puchalska-Wasył and Oleś (2013) support the views of Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) that the experience of uncertainty stimulates a person to engage in ID. This thinking is consistent with results (Oleś et al., 2010) that show positive correlations between general internal dialogical activity (measured by the Internal Dialogical Activity Scale) and anxiety ($r = .27, p = .05$; measured by the Spielberger Trait Personality Inventory) and negative correlations between IDs and self-concept clarity ($r = -.37, p = .01$; measured by the Self-Concept Clarity Scale) as well as between IDs and self-esteem ($r = -.32, p = .05$; measured by Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale). Puchalska-Wasył and Oleś (2013) also confirm the possibility that IDs eventually can result in reducing uncertainty. At the same time, they stress that such an effect is neither universal nor obvious. They are of the opinion that, when the conflict cannot be resolved by "integration of opposites" or by domination of one I-position, uncertainty increases, leading to the intensification of IDs. As a consequence, IDs become a constant activity that is sustained and strengthened by the permanent experience of uncertainty. Presumably, in this situation, young adults asked to retrospectively assess their parents' attitudes are aware of a large incongruence between them; moreover, the conflict between these attitudes is perceived as strong and long-lasting—even still ongoing.

In this theoretical context, we posed the general hypothesis: the greater the incongruence perceived between the mother's and the father's parental attitudes, assessed retrospectively, the greater the intensity of IDs in the adult offspring's life.

We would like to verify this hypothesis with regard to general (total) internal dialogical activity as well as some specific types of IDs: namely, confronting IDs, ruminative IDs, and social simulation IDs.

The first two types of IDs seem to be non-adaptive in light of their definitions. According to Oleś (2009), confronting IDs consist in playing internal conflicts in the form of a dialogue between two clearly separated parts of the self, and ruminative IDs focused on unpleasant topics lead to frustration and internal breakdown. Our thinking about their non-adaptive nature is confirmed by the fact that both these types of IDs correlate positively with anxiety, and additionally, confronting IDs correlate negatively with self-esteem (Oleś et al., 2010). As this pattern of correlations is similar to that of total internal dialogical activity, we are of the opinion that our general hypothesis

will be supported by both these types of IDs as well as internal dialogical activity in general.

The third type of ID, social simulation IDs, is defined as a continuing or imagining dialogical social relations: quarrels, discussions, or exchange of ideas (Oleś, 2009). If quarrels of our parents are still continued in our IDs, then such IDs seem to be non-adaptive. However, in line with ideas of Baumeister and Masicampo (2010), we are of the opinion that, imagining dialogues with other people can also prepare us for future social situations, and in this context, this type of ID can be seen as adaptive. Given that functions of this type of ID are more differentiated than functions of confronting and ruminative IDs, we think that our hypothesis is especially worth verifying with regard to social simulation IDs.

We are aware of the findings that suggest that fathers may respond differently to male and female children (Parke, 2002; Pleck, 1997). Several studies show a quite consistent pattern: fathers are more involved with sons than with daughters in engagement activities, and in affective and behavioral aspects of parenting (Harris & Morgan, 1991; Manlove & Vernon-Feagans, 2002; Marsiglio, 1991). Therefore, participants' sex will be taken into account as an additional variable in our analyses.

Method

Respondents and Procedure

The study was conducted in Poland. Data from 176 young adults (92 women and 84 men) were analyzed. Respondents were between 20 years and 32 years. The mean age was 23.39 years ($SD = 1.85$). Most participants were students of various majors (e.g., law, mathematics, mechanics and mechanical engineering, electrotechnics, animal behavior, and journalism) at four Polish universities. Table 1 presents additional characteristics of the participants. We used paper-and-pencil versions of two measures. At the beginning, the respondents filled in the Questionnaire of Retrospective Assessment of Parental Attitudes (first Mother version, followed by Father version). Next, the Internal Dialogical Activity Scale was completed. Counterbalancing was not used. Participants were recruited via word of mouth and were tested in several groups in suitable rooms on the campus. We did not control whether participant's parents lived together, were divorced/separated, or if one of them was deceased. However, when the respondent was not able to fill in a questionnaire concerning one of their parent, because the father or the mother was not remembered, according to the procedure, this participant's data was to be excluded from analysis. That

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of 176 Respondents.

Characteristic	N	%
Sex		
Female	92	52.3
Male	84	47.7
Job/Occupation		
Student	98	55.7
Worker	18	10.2
Student and worker	56	31.8
Neither student nor worker	4	2.3
Place of residence		
Village	46	26.2
City or town < 100,000 people	62	35.2
City > 100,000 people	68	38.6
Total	176	100.0

is why data from one person was discarded. The procedure was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of Psychology at the authors' university. The informed consent of the participants was implied through survey completion.

Measures

Questionnaire of Retrospective Assessment of Parental Attitudes (KPR-Roc). This measure by Plopa (2008) is used for retrospective assessment, by a child, of a parent's attitude. There are two alternative versions—the first is for assessing the mother's attitude and the second is for assessing the father's attitude. Each of the scales consists of 50 statements, to which responses are given using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *definitely he/she was and behaved like that* (a) to *definitely he/she was not and did not behave like that* (e). An adult child describes his/her relationship with his/her parent during childhood on the five dimensions (each represented by 10 items). They are as follows:

- (1) Acceptance: A high score indicates that in the past, the parent presented open, spontaneous, accepting behavior; created an atmosphere of safety; gave a sense of support; and was sensitive to the child's problems, worries, needs, and aspirations. A low score indicates rejection, that is, the parent was distant to the child and did not show

- a willingness to understand his/her needs (an example item: *He/she was interested in listening to my views and opinions*).
- (2) Demands: A high score indicates an excessive level of this attitude, which means that in the past the parent required absolute obedience even in trivial matters, and he/she applied bans, orders, and punishments; further, he/she did not take into account the child's capabilities. In retrospect, the parent is assessed as a cold person, acting inadequately, who wants the child to be someone according to the parent's vision (e.g., *He/she required of me strict obedience*).
 - (3) Protection: A high score indicates an excessive level of this attitude, which means that in the past, the parent interfered too much in the child's personal affairs, he/she wanted to know everything and advise about all aspects of offspring's life. The parent did not understand the child's growing need for autonomy and was afraid of his/her manifestations of autonomy and need for privacy. Excessive involvement in the child's affairs led to conflicts and rebellion or withdrawal of the child (e.g., *He/she tried to protect me from any difficulties*).
 - (4) Autonomy: A high score indicates that in the past the parent accepted the growing need of the child for autonomy; he/she tolerated mistakes made by the child, and respected the child's need for co-decision in his/her own affairs and his/her need for privacy. In a conflict situation, the parent did not impose his/her own opinion but showed alternative ways of acting and their consequences; he/she was willing to provide support and advice (e.g., *He/she trusted me*).
 - (5) Inconsistency: A high score indicates that in the past, the parent was a mercurial and nervous person who was inconsistent in expressing opinions and feelings and in making decisions. The child used various strategies of defense against such a parent, such as seeking support, understanding, and closeness in non-family structures or entering into a coalition with the other parent (e.g., *The punishment he/she was giving me often depended on his/her mood*).

The internal consistency of the KPR-Roc Mother version was established by Plopa (2008) on a sample of 1,552 Polish adults. Cronbach's alphas for the subscales ranged from .86 (Autonomy) to .93 (Inconsistency). The internal consistency of the KPR-Roc Father version was established by Plopa (2008) on a sample of 992 adults. Cronbach's alphas for the subscales ranged from .84 (Protection) to .90 (Demands). The internal consistency for the subscales established in the current study is presented in Table 2. The validity of the KPR-Roc subscales has also been confirmed (Plopa, 2008).

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations between Variables. The Diagonal Includes Internal Consistency Coefficient (Cronbach's α).

	mean	sd	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1. IDAS total score	3.02	0.59	.93													
2. Ruminative dialogues	2.83	0.66	.71***	.75												
3. Confronting dialogues	2.84	0.81	.81***	.63***	.72											
4. Social Simulation dialogues	3.39	0.75	.74***	.38***	.43***	.77										
5. Father's Acceptance	3.44	0.92	.14	-.01	-.04	.09	.92									
6. Father's Demands	2.87	0.89	-.10	.01	.05	-.05	-.62***	.89								
7. Father's Autonomy	3.50	0.79	.12	-.00	-.09	.08	.82***	-.67***	.88							
8. Father's Inconsistency	2.70	0.88	.09	.19*	.21**	.08	-.65***	.76***	-.62***	.87						
9. Father's Protection	2.89	0.70	.21**	.17*	.16*	.16*	.34***	.05	.11	.02	.77					
10. Mother's Acceptance	3.77	0.81	-.06	-.19*	-.23**	.06	.52***	-.36***	.49***	-.35***	.08	.89				
11. Mother's Demands	2.58	0.77	-.11	.09	.02	-.23**	-.29***	.41***	-.25***	.37***	.09	-.46***	.83			
12. Mother's Autonomy	3.62	0.75	.04	-.10	-.17*	.16*	.40***	-.39***	.51***	-.36***	.04	.68***	-.58***	.86		
13. Mother's Inconsistency	2.41	0.80	.10	.22**	.23**	-.09	-.33***	.36***	-.32***	.49***	.11	-.55***	.78***	-.56***	.85	
14. Mother's Protection	3.47	0.67	-.07	-.10	-.12	.00	.25***	-.10	.20**	-.07	.24**	.47***	.11	.08	-.03	.76

Note. N = 176; ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.

Internal Dialogical Activity Scale (IDAS). This questionnaire by Oleś (2009) is based on the assumption that the intensity of engaging in IDs is a trait-like personality disposition that can be measured according to the individual differences approach. The IDAS contains 47 items (including one buffer item, No. 1) rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from *I strongly disagree* (1), to *I strongly agree* (5). The IDAS consists of seven subscales measuring the intensity with which the respondent conducts seven different types of ID. They are as follows: (a) Pure Dialogical Activity concerns thinking and resolving problems in a dialogical form spontaneously; (b) Identity Dialogue aims at better self-knowledge and at answering identity questions; (c) Supportive Dialogue confirms the possessed beliefs, and provides support and a sense of being understood; (d) Confronting Dialogue consists in playing internal conflicts in the form of a dialogue between two clearly separated parts of the self; (e) Ruminative Dialogue, which focuses on unpleasant topics, leads to frustration and internal breakdown; (f) Social Simulation Dialogue means a continuing or imagining dialogical social relations: quarrels, discussions or exchange of ideas; (g) Perspective-Taking Dialogue results in objectivizing problems by looking at them from a different perspective. In Oleś's (2009) study, the internal consistency and stability of the IDAS total score, measured at a two-month interval, were high ($\alpha = .93$; $r_{tt} = .81$). Cronbach's alphas for the subscales ranged from .64 (Perspective-Taking Dialogue) to .82 (Identity Dialogue). The internal consistency for the total scale and subscales analyzed in the current study is presented in Table 2. The theoretical validity and construct validity of the IDAS has also been confirmed (Oleś, 2009).

Statistical Analysis

According to our hypothesis, the greater the incongruence perceived between the mother's and the father's parental attitudes, assessed retrospectively, the greater the intensity of IDs in the adult offspring's life. We decided to verify it with regard to general internal dialogical activity (total score of the IDAS), confronting IDs, ruminative IDs, and social simulation IDs.¹ In order to verify the hypothesis, we conducted polynomial regression for each of five pairs of parental attitudes. Polynomial regression allows for estimation of intercept (b_0), a linear (b_1), and quadratic (b_2) effect of the father's attitude, and a linear (b_3) and quadratic (b_4) effect of the mother's attitude as well as interaction between linear effects of the parents (b_5). We chose this approach because it allows both for testing potential curvilinear effects and for taking levels of attitudes into account, something that is impossible using the traditional difference score approach (Barranti, Carlson, & Côté, 2017). Using a response

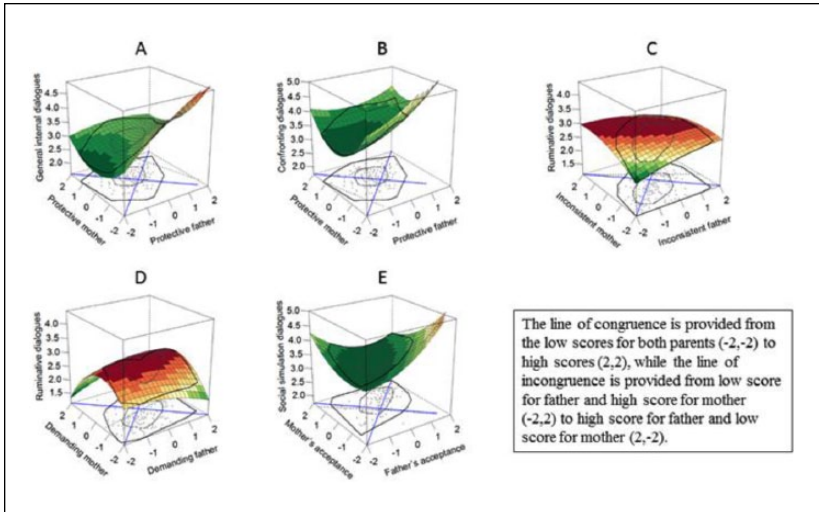


Figure 1. Full polynomial model of internal dialogues: A. Mother-father dissimilarity in protective attitude is predicting general internal dialogical activity; B. Mother-father dissimilarity in protective attitude is predicting confronting dialogues; C. Mother-father similarity in inconsistent attitude is predicting ruminative dialogues; D. Mother-father similarity in demanding attitude is predicting ruminative dialogues; E. Mother-father similarity in accepting attitude is predicting social simulations dialogues in women.

surface analysis (RSA; Edwards, 1994) to interpret results of polynomial regressions yields explicit information about similarity and dissimilarity effects of parental attitudes on their offspring's IDs. Information on similarity effects are provided by two parameters: linear (a_1) and quadratic (a_2) slopes of line of congruence (an imaginary line where both parents have similar scores on a given attitude scale; see Figure 1). The parameter a_1 , if significant, indicates that ID is higher or lower (depending on the sign of the parameter a_1) when the mother's and father's attitudes match at the higher levels. The parameter a_2 suggests that ID is higher when the mother's and father's attitudes match at the more extreme levels than at midrange levels (if $a_2 > 0$) or that ID is higher when mother's and father's attitudes match at the midrange levels than at more extreme levels (if $a_2 < 0$). Two other linear and quadratic parameters, a_3 and a_4 respectively, allow for estimating dissimilarity effects, that is, slopes for line of incongruence (an imaginary line where both parents have opposite scores on a given attitude scale; see Figure 1). If a_3 is significant and positive, then ID is higher when the father's attitude is higher than the

mother's attitude; the opposite interpretation is true when a_3 is negative. Parameter a_4 indicates that the higher the ID, the more the father's and mother's attitudes deviate from each other ($a_4 > 0$) or the more they match one another ($a_4 < 0$). We interpreted the significant parameters RSA only when R^2 (amount of explained variance) for the whole model was also significant.

Because we assumed that the participant's sex can play a different role in how father's and mother's attitudes are related to offspring's IDs, we also compared two versions of models for each of the parental attitude, that is, a model including sex as a moderator of linear and nonlinear effects of parental attitudes, and a model without interaction effects. In a case when the model including interaction effects fitted significantly better than the simpler model, we performed RSA for males and females separately.

All parameters were estimated using the RSA package (Schönbrodt, 2015) in R. To compute descriptive statistics and parallel analysis, we used psych (Revelle, 2018) and paran (Dinno, 2018) packages. All variables were centered around the middle point on the response scale (i.e., 3 on the scale from 1 to 5). Thus, positive scores reflect scoring higher than the midpoint on the parental attitude scale, while negative scores indicate scoring lower than the midpoint.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables are presented in Table 2.

Only one father's attitude correlated positively with total score of the IDAS, that is, protection. In other words, the more the father was assessed retrospectively as protecting, the higher the general level of IDs was reported by adult offspring. Although significant, the correlation was weak (.21). Social simulation, ruminative, and confronting IDs also significantly and positively correlated with father's protection (.16, .17, and .17, respectively). Ruminative and confronting IDs have a similar pattern of the relationships with the following: father's inconsistency (.19 and .21, respectively), mother's inconsistency (.22 and .23, respectively), and mother's acceptance (-.19 and -.23, respectively). Mother's autonomy correlated differently with confronting (-.17) and social simulation IDs (.16). Moreover, the latter IDs negatively predicted mother's demands (-.23). No other significant relationships between analyzed types of IDs and parental attitudes were observed.

Response Surface Analysis

Results of polynomial regression and RSA for general internal dialogical activity, three types of IDs, and each pair of parental attitudes are presented

in Tables 3 and 4, and in Figure 1. We used the IDAS total score for general internal dialogical activity as well as scores for confronting, ruminative, and social simulation IDs as dependent variables in subsequent analyses.

General Internal Dialogical Activity. For each of the parental attitudes, we compared models with and without an interaction term including participant's sex. Only in the case of acceptance, a comparison suggested better fit for the more complex model ($F(4) = 2.8, p = .027$). Therefore, for parental attitude of acceptance, we performed two RSA separately for males and females; whereas for remaining parental attitudes, we performed one model including data from all participants.

The only significant model with significant RSA parameters included the attitude of protection as a criterion variable. Here, we found the positive non-linear slope for line of incongruence to be significant ($a_3 = .55, SE = .193, p = .004$; see Table 4). This confirms our hypothesis and means that dissimilarity between parents in protecting attitude is related with intensity of IDs, but this dissimilarity is not symmetric. The less protective the mother and the more overprotective the father, the higher is internal dialogical activity in general (see Figure 1A).

Although several significant RSA parameters were observed also for demanding attitude, their interpretation is meaningless due to the lack of fit for this model ($R^2 = .04, p = .196$).

Confronting Dialogues. In the case of confronting IDs, we did not find any significant interaction effects of sex with parental attitudes. Therefore, we present the models using data from all participants without dividing them into groups of males and females. In confronting IDs we observed only one significant RSA parameter explaining protective attitude ($a_3 = .81, SE = .291, p = .005$; see Table 4 and Figure 1B). Results suggest that a particular kind of dissimilarity between parental attitudes matters: confronting IDs increase when father's protection is higher than mother's protection (compared to the opposite situation). This result is analogous to that for general internal dialogical activity. None of the remaining models with confronting IDs as dependent variable included significant RSA parameters.

Ruminative Dialogues. In the case of ruminative IDs, we found no significant moderation effect of sex for any of the parental attitudes. Therefore, all the models were estimated using data from all participants.

Only two of five models had significant R^2 and at the same time included significant RSA parameters—that is, models with attitudes of inconsistency and demands as independent variables. With regard to the first attitude we

Table 3. Polynomial Unstandardized Regressions Coefficients for Models with Parental Attitudes as Predictors and Internal Dialogical Activity as Dependent Variable.

Effect	IDAS Total Score		Confronting Dialogues	Ruminative Dialogues	Social Simulation Dialogues	
	all participants		all participants	all participants	all participants	
	males	females			males	females
Acceptance (R^2)	.14*	.11	.07*	.06*	.05	.13*
(Intercept b_0)	3.25	2.88	3.04	2.99	3.64	3.02
Father (b_1)	0.14	0.35*	0.15	0.18	0.09	0.24
Mother (b_2)	-0.21	-0.16	-0.30	-0.17	-0.34	-0.10
Father ² (b_3)	0.17	0.15	-0.01	-0.01	0.07	0.15
Father x Mother (b_4)	-0.05	-0.33*	-0.05	-0.10	-0.12	-0.09
Mother ² (b_5)	-0.12	0.15	0.01	-0.03	0.11	0.15
Demands (R^2)	.04		.02	.08*	.05	.12
(Intercept b_0)	3.07		2.93	2.99	3.51	3.21
Father (b_1)	-0.02		0.07	0.01	0.21	-0.06
Mother (b_2)	-0.13		-0.08	-0.07	-0.23	-0.34*
Father ² (b_3)	-0.08		-0.06	-0.05	-0.02	-0.04
Father x Mother (b_4)	0.07		0.08	0.09	0.09	0.12
Mother ² (b_5)	-0.09		-0.12	-0.20***	-0.08	-0.11
Protection (R^2)	.04		.09**	.07*	.08	.22**
(Intercept b_0)	3.09		3.01	2.87	3.57	3.10
Father (b_1)	0.29**		0.41**	0.19	0.32	0.01
Mother (b_2)	-0.27**		-0.40**	-0.25*	-0.40*	0.04
Father ² (b_3)	-0.05		-0.08	-0.01	0.12	-0.23
Father x Mother (b_4)	-0.13		-0.28	0.03	-0.23	0.26
Mother ² (b_5)	0.17*		0.18	0.15	0.19	0.33**
Autonomy (R^2)	.09**		.04	.04	.03	
(Intercept b_0)	3.05		3.04	2.98	3.31	
Father (b_1)	0.14		0.05	0.12	-0.03	
Mother (b_2)	0.06		-0.17	-0.01	0.27	
Father ² (b_3)	-0.08		-0.15	-0.12	0.04	
Father x Mother (b_4)	0.03		0.08	0.02	-0.02	
Mother ² (b_5)	-0.09		-0.04	-0.12	-0.10	
Inconsistency (R^2)	.02		.08*	.08*	.06	.12
(Intercept b_0)	3.06		2.99	2.99	3.49	3.10
Father (b_1)	0.05		0.11	0.02	0.21	0.08
Mother (b_2)	0.00		0.06	0.07	-0.00	-0.46*
Father ² (b_3)	0.04		0.03	-0.03	0.13	0.09
Father x Mother (b_4)	-0.02		-0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.24
Mother ² (b_5)	-0.06		-0.10	-0.06	0.01	-0.04

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; linear (b_1), and quadratic (b_3) effects of the father's attitude; linear (b_2), and quadratic (b_5) effects of the mother's attitude; interaction between linear effects of parents (b_4).

Table 4. Parameters of Response Surface Analysis (RSA) for Models with Parental Attitudes as Independent Variables and Internal Dialogical Activity as Dependent Variable.

RSA Parameter	IDAS Total Score		Confronting Dialogues	Ruminative Dialogues	Social Simulation Dialogues	
	all participants		all participants	all participants	all participants	
	males	females			males	females
Acceptance (R^2)	.13*	.11	.07*	.06*	.05	.13*
a_1	-.15	.34*	-.15	.01	-.25	.32*
a_2	.01	-.11	-.05	-.14	.06	.12
a_3	.39	-.10	.44	.35	.42	-.33
a_4	.04	.18	.04	.07	.29	-.10
Demands (R^2)	.04		.02	.08*	.05	.12
a_1	-.31***		-.01	-.07	-.35*	-.40*
a_2	-.27***		-.10	-.21	-.28*	-.03
a_3	.19*		.15	.08	.55***	.28
a_4	-.27*		-.25	-.38***	-.22	-.27
Protection (R^2)	.09**		.09**	.07*	.08	.22**
a_1	.02		.02	-.07	-.12	.06
a_2	-.01		-.18	.18	.08	.36
a_3	.55**		.81**	.44	.76*	-.03
a_4	.25		.39	.12	.54	-.16
Autonomy (R^2)	.04		.04	.04	.03	
a_1	.20		-.11	.11	.23	
a_2	-.15		-.11	-.22	-.08	
a_3	.08		.22	.13	-.30	
a_4	-.20		-.26	-.26	-.03	
Inconsistency (R^2)	.02		.08*	.08*	.06	.12
a_1	.05		.17	.09	.21	-.38
a_2	-.02		-.10	-.15*	.11	-.19
a_3	.05		.04	-.05	.21	.54*
a_4	.00		-.03	-.03	.18	.30

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; linear (a_1) and quadratic (a_2) slopes of line of congruence (an imaginary line where both parents have similar scores on a given attitude scale); linear (a_3) and quadratic (a_4) slopes of line of incongruence (an imaginary line where both parents have opposite scores on a given attitude scale).

found that ruminative IDs are highest when parental inconsistency match at midrange levels than at more extreme levels ($a_2 = -.15$, $SE = .071$, $p = .038$; see Table 4 and Figure 1C). In other words, when both parents presented medium inconsistency, the level of ruminative IDs increased. In the case of

parental demands we found significant and negative a_4 parameter ($a_4 = -.38$, $SE = .106$, $p < .001$; see Table 4 and Figure 1D). It suggests that ruminative IDs are higher the more demands of both parents match to each other, regardless of the level of this attitude.

Social Simulation Dialogues. Unlike in the case of confronting and ruminative IDs, for social simulation IDs, effects of all attitudes except of autonomy were significantly moderated by the participant's sex (significance of difference between simple and moderation model, for: acceptance, $F(4) = 3.99$, $p = .004$; demands $F(4) = 2.46$, $p = .047$; protection $F(4) = 3.72$, $p = .006$; autonomy, $F(4) = 3.85$, $p = .139$; and inconsistency, $F(4) = 3.18$, $p = .015$). None of the parental attitudes was a significant predictor of social simulation IDs in group of males (the lack of models with significant R^2). However, one significant model with a significant RSA effect was observed in the group of females. We found that in women, social simulation IDs are more frequent when father's and mother's acceptance match at the higher levels of this attitude than at lower levels ($a_1 = .32$, $SE = .155$, $p = .014$; see Table 4 and Figure 1E). No other significant model was observed in the group of females.

Discussion

The first aim of our study was to verify the hypothesis that the greater the incongruence declared between mother's and father's parental attitudes assessed retrospectively, the greater the intensity of general internal dialogical activity in their adult offspring's life. Taking this hypothesis into account, our research has shown that only one attitude, protection, is related to total score in the IDAS. We found that internal dialogicality intensifies when parental protective attitudes are discrepant. Moreover, the direction of this incongruence matters: the less mother protects, and the more the father is overprotective, the greater the intensity of IDs understood as a total score in the IDAS. Thus, our hypothesis was confirmed on the general level of analysis.

These results seem to be consistent with the current knowledge on IDs. As was stated in the introduction, research shows that general tendency to engage in IDs correlates positively with anxiety and negatively with self-esteem (Oleś et al., 2010). At the same time, different studies confirm the relationships between an overprotective parental attitude found to be significant in our main analysis and the earlier-mentioned correlates of internal dialogical activity. For example, the study carried out by Spokas and Heimberg (2009) showed a link between social anxiety of college students and their

recollections of overprotective parenting. Anxiety correlated positively not only with the mother's but also with the father's overprotection. Also, Mousavi, Low, and Hashim (2016), who studied different cultural groups (European/American, Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Arab), observed that parental overprotection correlated positively with different types of anxiety (separation anxiety, social phobia, obsessive-compulsive, panic/agoraphobia, physical injury fears, and generalized anxiety). Additionally, the authors found that although European/American adolescents rated their parents as the least overprotective, this attitude was significant predictor of anxiety. In another study (Jia, Zeng, Wang, & Yang, 2016), it was demonstrated that, among others, a father's overprotection was associated negatively with children's self-esteem. Similarly, parenting characterized by a high level of overprotection (and a low level of acceptance) has been found to be negatively related with adolescents' self-esteem (Herz & Gullone, 1999). In this context, it can be thought that an overprotective father, together with a nonprotective mother, can be conducive to anxiety, low self-esteem, and insecurity—that, in turn, stimulate general internal dialogical activity.

Our hypothesis has been supported on the general level. However, analyses of three types of IDs and their interactions with sex revealed more complicated results. Some of them confirm our hypothesis completely, others confirm it partially, while others do not confirm it at all.

We assumed that the perceived incongruence in parental attitudes, and consequently, experiencing divergent social expectations expressed by parents, creates conflict and uncertainty in the child. This, in turn, stimulates IDs as an attempt to reduce uncertainty and conflict. Indeed, as our study shows, conflict and uncertainty can be the starting point for IDs, but only for some types of IDs, namely, confronting and ruminative IDs. According to Oleś (2009), ruminative IDs always concern unpleasant topics and lead to frustration and internal breakdown, whereas confronting ID consists in playing internal conflicts in the form of a dialogue between two clearly separated parts of the self. Similarly to general internal dialogical activity both these types of IDs correlate positively with anxiety. Additionally, confronting IDs correlate negatively with self-esteem (Oleś et al., 2010). In light of their definitions the earlier-mentioned types of IDs can be treated as non-adaptive dialogues. Therefore, even if they are triggered by the experience of uncertainty and conflict, they probably cannot reduce this experience effectively and sustainably. As our analyses revealed, confronting IDs, analogous to general internal dialogicality, are related to dissimilarity in protective attitudes of parents. The less the mother protects, and the more the father is overprotective, the greater is the intensity of confronting IDs. Thus, we can say that our hypothesis has

been fully confirmed with regard to confronting IDs. When it comes to ruminative IDs, they are related to congruence between parents in their inconsistent and demanding attitudes. Such IDs most often appear when parental inconsistency matches at midrange levels and, at the same time, demands of both parents match to each other (regardless of the level of this attitude). On the first sight, this seems to be in contradiction with our hypothesis. However, an inconsistent attitude means in fact that parent's behaviors are changeable and internally incoherent. As a result, similarity between parents in their inconsistent attitudes can be perceived by the child as general incongruence between parental behaviors (expressing opinions, feelings, and making decisions). Even if the child permanently meets the parental requirements (congruence between parents in their demanding attitudes), the lack of stability in the parent's behavior means that the child cannot predict whether he/she will be punished or rewarded for it. It is also possible that he/she will be rewarded by one parent and at the same time punished by the other. Thus, regardless of coherent parental demands, similarity in parental inconsistent attitudes can be associated with conflict and uncertainty in the child. In this context, we can say that our hypothesis has been partially supported by ruminative IDs.

The third type of ID analyzed was social simulation dialogue. It is defined as a continuing or imagining dialogical social relations: quarrels, discussions, or exchange of ideas. Conducting such IDs can be very useful. Especially, if imagining dialogues with other people prepare us for future social situations, we can say that this type of ID is adaptive (cf. Baumeister & Masicampo, 2010). As our analyses show, social simulation IDs are mainly related to similarity in parental attitudes. Such IDs are more frequent when father's and mother's acceptance match at the higher levels of this attitude (rather than at lower levels). Thus, the high acceptance of both parents is conducive to social simulation IDs. However, this is true only for women, because in men we did not observe any relationship between similarity or dissimilarity in parental attitudes and social simulation IDs. This is puzzle for us, why we can observe such effect only in a female group, but these findings lead us to the interpretative hypothesis that adaptive IDs are related to similarity rather than dissimilarity in parental attitudes, or they are not dependent on congruence/incongruence at all. To sum up, with regard to social simulation IDs, which seem to be adaptive IDs, our general hypothesis has not been supported.

Many studies (Loos & Cassemiro, 2010; Plopa, 2015; Rosnati, Iafrate, & Scabini, 2007) confirm the thesis that mothers are more favorably evaluated by children than fathers. Similarly, in Plopa's research (2008), conducted in Poland with the use of the tool applied also in our study (KPR-Roc

questionnaire), it was found that both adult daughters ($n = 628$) and adult sons ($n = 537$) assessed their mothers in comparison with their fathers as more protective and, additionally, as more accepting, giving more autonomy, being less demanding, and acting less inconsistently. In this context we can say that it is quite typical for children to perceive some incongruence between mother's and father's attitudes. In light of our analyses, only dissimilarity in the protective parental attitude is relevant to general internal dialogical activity and confronting IDs. It should be stressed, however, that earlier-mentioned IDs intensify when discrepancy between protective parental attitudes occurs in reverse configuration than a typical pattern observed by Plopa. This suggests interesting interpretation of results obtained in the present study.

For non-adaptive confronting IDs, as well as for general dialogical activity that support our hypothesis, the crucial factor appears to be not so much the incongruence between the parental attitudes of father and mother per se, but rather the disparity between these attitudes and the offspring's expectation regarding these attitudes. In other words, the most important thing can be probably not that the mother's behavior towards the child is different from that of the father, but that the parents reversed their roles and behaved differently from a typical mother and a typical father. It is possible that such an expectation regarding the typical behavior of mothers and fathers arises from information about parental attitudes experienced by peers and becomes particularly significant in the adolescence period, when the opinion of peers is gaining in importance. Of course, this explanation is only speculative. Further empirical research is needed to answer the question of whether, and at what stage of development, a person acquires expectations concerning the configuration of socially desirable parental attitudes. It would also be worth checking whether such expectations will vary from culture to culture. If the answer were positive, it could be that in a non-Western culture, other parental attitudes, with a different direction of discrepancy, would be related to general internal dialogicality, adaptive, and non-adaptive IDs.

When thinking about further research on IDs, it is also worth paying attention to the relationship between incongruence in parental overprotection and children's internalizing and externalizing problems. For example, Berkien, Louwse, Verhulst, and van der Ende (2012) observed that father's overprotection correlated positively with externalizing problems of children. Additionally they found that perceived dissimilarity between parents' overprotection correlated positively with externalizing and internalizing problems in offspring. In this context, it would be worthwhile to carry out further research on dialogical activity among young people with earlier-mentioned problems. Since discrepancy in parental attitudes of protection coexists with offspring's internalizing and externalizing problems, and at the same time

this discrepancy is associated with general dialogicality and confronting IDs, the question arises as to whether IDs accompany such problems, or whether IDs do not co-occur with these problems, because those two phenomena are alternative forms of dealing with the discrepancy of experienced parental attitudes. Empirical verification of this issue could make an important contribution to the psychological knowledge that is put to practical use.

In future research on IDs and their relationship with incongruence between parental attitudes, a potential modification of the KPR-Roc might be worth considering: having participants compare whether their mother and father were similar or different on each individual item of the measure (rather than rating these items separately for mothers and fathers). Or even greater simplification would be possible if we asked participants to rate the overall level of agreement or disagreement between their parents in childhood on the five dimensions. Such a simple self-report might be just as effective as completing the full KPR-Roc.

Chen and Johnston (2012) found that interparent childrearing disagreement significantly correlated with the dissimilarity in parental behavior, but not with dissimilarity in the goals declared by parents. Therefore, when we think about further research, it would be worth studying actual conflict between parents and how it relates to IDs of children and their perception of parental attitudes. Another option of research is based directly on the DST, according to which paternal and maternal attitudes perceived by the child, are reflected in the offspring's dialogical self as the "father" and "mother" positions, respectively. In the case of parental incongruence, an external conflict is transferred into the self. Given that, it would be interesting to ask participants to conduct of an imaginary dialogue between his/her mother and father. Then we could explore IDs characteristics (e.g., integration and confrontation; cf. Puchalska-Wasył, 2017, 2018a, 2018b), and their links with (dis)similarity in parental attitudes as well as intensity of general internal dialogical activity and its different types. Additionally, as we know that fathers respond differently to male and female children (see the introduction), this should be taken into account in further research on IDs and their relationships with parental attitudes.

In future research, it is also worth considering whether incongruence between the attitudes of oneself and one's significant other is associated with increased internal dialogical activity. To the extent that one's parents might influence one's choice of a significant other, more complicated dynamics might be postulated and investigated.

With respect to limitations of our study, it should be emphasized that when using a cross-sectional, non-experimental design, we cannot draw causal conclusions about the findings. In order to solve the problem of

influence directions, further research is needed using an experimental design. For example, it would be worth checking whether the increase in children's internal dialogical activity is observed (immediately) after they have witnessed their parents having arguments about what the child should do or shouldn't have done. Another problem is that our study was based on individuals' self-reports and potential response bias was not controlled. On the other hand, the possible biased responses could have been tempered by the fact that participants completed the measures anonymously. Another shortcoming concerns the participant group. The sample consisted of adults from one country, mainly students. Therefore, the results need replication with larger samples that include people of different statuses and ages, and—as has been discussed previously—from different cultures.

Conclusions

Altogether, this study aimed to verify the general hypothesis that the greater is the incongruence perceived between the mother's and the father's parental attitudes assessed retrospectively, the greater is the intensity of IDs in an adult offspring's life. Our hypothesis has been supported with regard to non-adaptive confronting IDs and general internal dialogical activity: the less the mother protects, and the more the father is overprotective, the greater is the intensity of these IDs. Ruminative IDs are related to congruence between parents in their inconsistent and demanding attitudes. However, this type of IDs can be seen as partially confirming the hypothesis, because inconsistent parental attitudes are translated into changeable and internally incoherent parents' behaviors, which can cause uncertainty and conflict in a child. Finally, social simulation IDs, which seem to be adaptive, do not confirm the hypothesis at all. When father's and mother's acceptance match at the higher levels of this attitude, the intensity of social simulation IDs is the greatest; but it is true only in the group of women. The results should be replicated in research in which the limitations of the current study will be minimized.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Note

1. We also carried out analyses for the other types of IDs, but their results are presented in a supplemental material due to the limitations on the volume of the manuscript.

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