

# What a scary world for my kids

Parental climate change anxiety,  
threat beliefs and overprotective  
parenting



Bénédicte Mouton, Grégoire Zimmermann & Stijn  
Van Petegem

EASP 2023 – Blitz presentation

# Theoretical Background

## PARENT THREAT BELIEFS

- threat in children's current and future environment in terms of **scarcity** and **instability**
- culture of **fear**



@IndianExpress

# Theoretical Background

## PARENTS' CLIMATE CHANGE ANXIETY



# Theoretical Background

## OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTING

- excessive protection considering the child's developmental level
- negative outcomes for children



# Research goals

Parents' climate change anxiety

- related to threat beliefs?
- which, in turn, are related to overprotective parenting?



# Instruments

## 1. Climate change anxiety

*“When I think about climate change, I feel worried”* (5 items)

## 2. Threat beliefs

*“It makes me nervous to think about all the dangers kids are exposed to today”* (10 items)

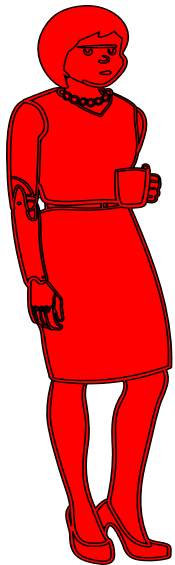
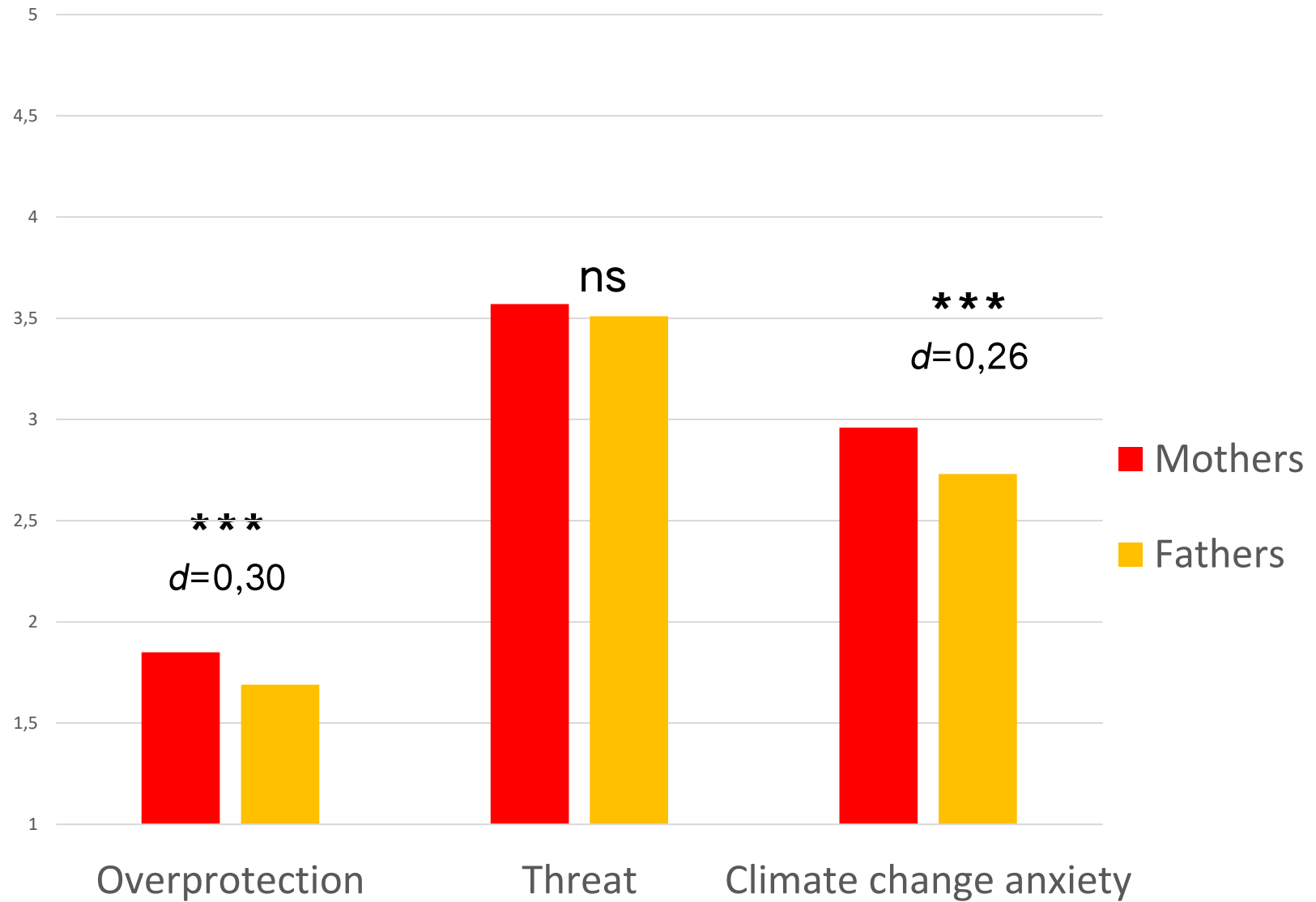
## 3. Overprotective parenting

*“I often take tasks out of my child’s hands without giving him/her the chance to try them by him/herself”* (10 items)



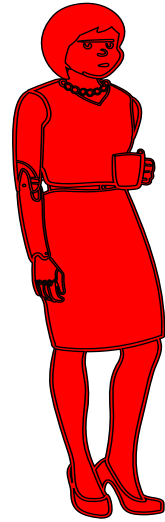
# Results

N=890 parents of adolescents



# Results

Climate change anxiety



0.04

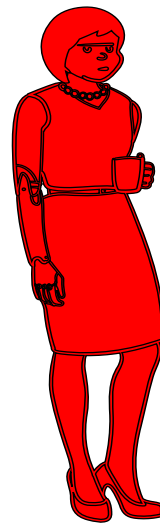
0.05

Overprotective parenting





# Results



# Take home

Climate change anxiety is related to threat beliefs

which in turn are associated to overprotective parenting.

-> for mothers and fathers

“

I don't care  
about my  
kids' future”

... said no one ever.

# Thank you



[benedicte.mouton@ulb.be](mailto:benedicte.mouton@ulb.be)

[www.safesorry.be](http://www.safesorry.be)

# Instruments

## Climate change anxiety

(5 items, adapted from STAI-short, Ogunbode et al., 2021)

- Negative feelings about climate change
- *“When I think about climate change, I feel worried”*
- $\alpha = .86-.87$  (M-F)

## Threat beliefs

(10 items, World Out There, Gurland & Grolnick, 2005)

- *“It makes me nervous to think about all the dangers kids are exposed to today”*
- $\alpha = .84 -.84$  (M-F)

## Overprotective parenting

(10 items, MOPS, Chevrier et al., 2021)

- *“I often take tasks out of my child’s hands without giving him/her the chance to try them by him/herself”*
- $\alpha = .82-.81$  (M-F)



# Sample

- N= 891 parents of adolescents in Belgium
- 514 mothers (58%) and 380 fathers (42%)
- Parents' age: M= 49,6 (5.14)
- Parent's education: 46,9% have a university degree
- Adolescents' age: M= 17,0 ( $SD = 0.93$ )
- 54,6% girls and 45.3% boys

