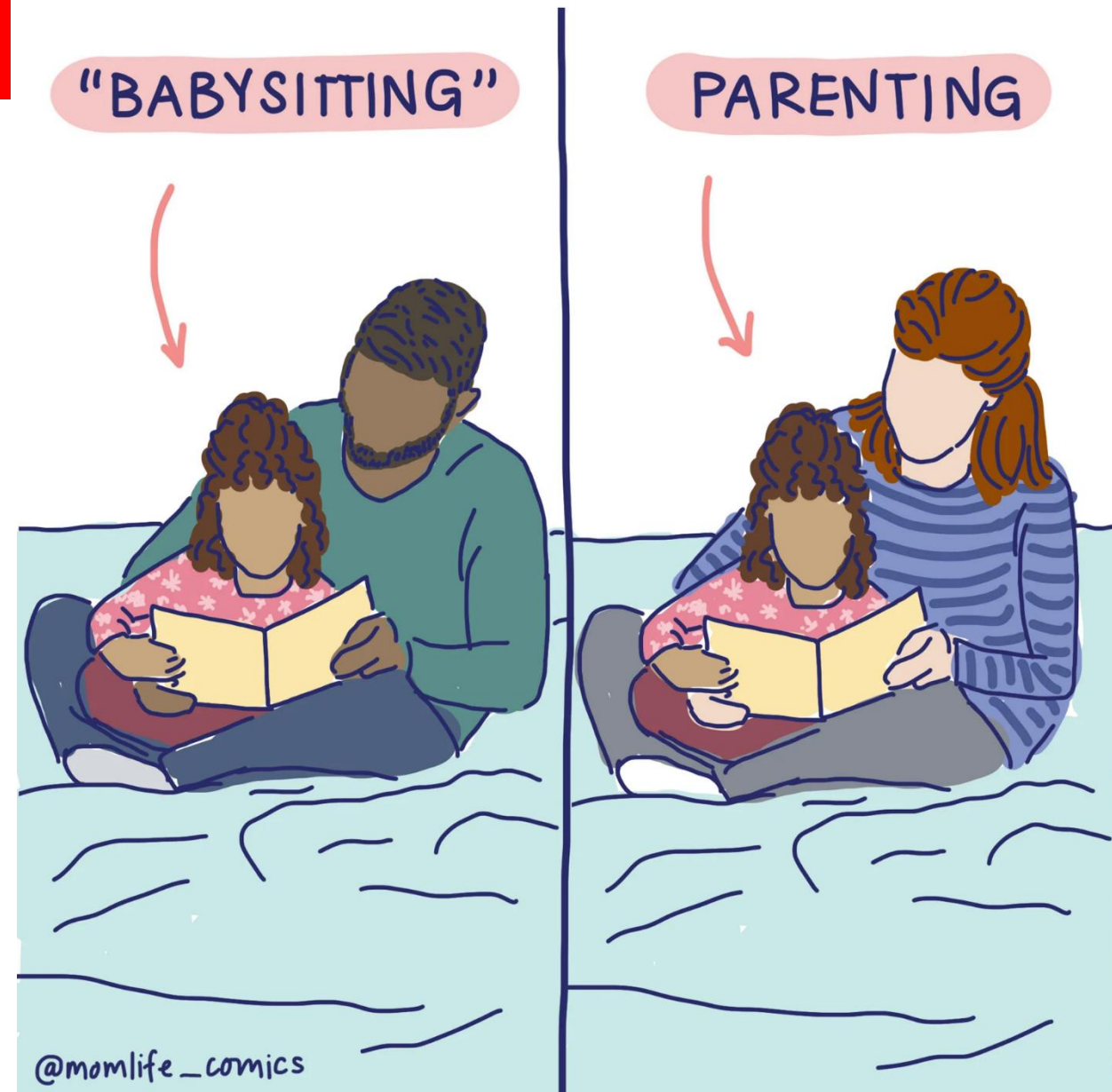


Fathers' Involvement and Mothers' Gender Essentialist Beliefs About Parenthood: A Longitudinal Study

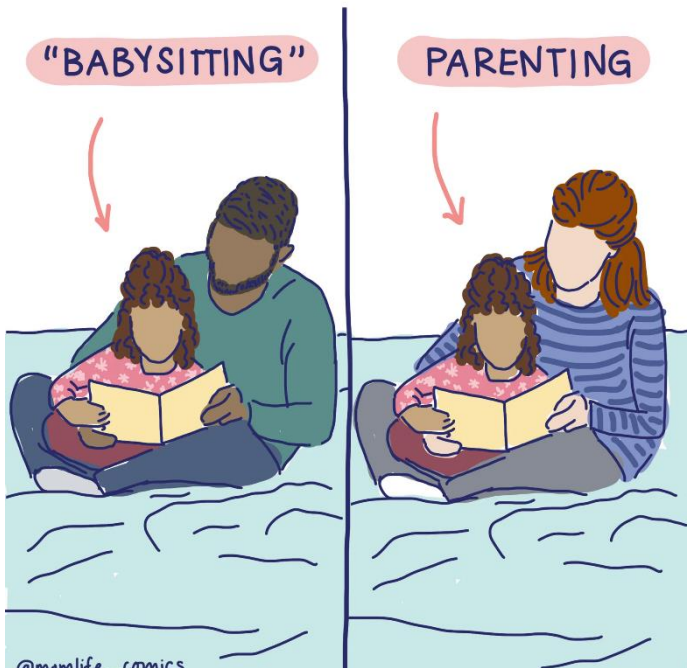
Cindy Eira Nunes, Elli-Anastasia Lamprianidou, Gaëlle Venard, & Stijn van Petegem

BAPS 2024



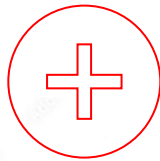
Fathers' involvement

- Modern families and new expectations toward fathers
- Studies on father's involvement (Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020)
- Despite changes,
 - Disparities persist
 - Double standard

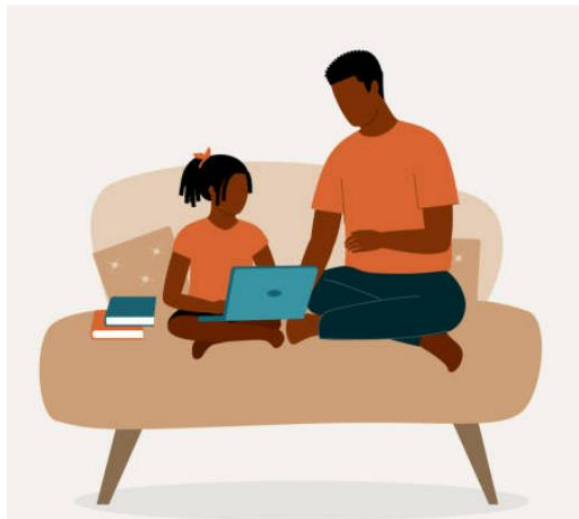


Fathers' involvement in parenting

- Understand the correlates of father's involvement in parenting?
- ! Focus on quality of involvement

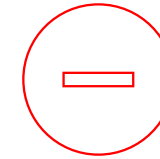


Responsiveness



Autonomy Support

Overprotection



Controlling parenting



Essentialism and dynamics between mothers and fathers

- Gender essentialist beliefs

“Fathers are biologically less suited to parenting than mothers ”

- Associations with lower fathers’ involvement (e.g., McBride et al., 2005; Pinho & Gaunt, 2021)

 Why? Test 2 hypotheses!

1) Gatekeeping Hypothesis

- Maternal Gatekeeping (Allen & Hawkins, 1999)

“Discourage and control the other parent’s involvement in childcare”

- Related to mothers’ traditional values (Zvara et al., 2013)



⇒ Essentialism => gatekeeping => lower paternal involvement

2) Cognitive Dissonance Hypothesis

- Traditional shift after transition to parenthood (e.g., Buchler et al., 2017)

Expectations



Vs. Reality



⇒ Paternal involvement lower than expected => mother's essentialist beliefs

Objectives

- Concurrently test 2 HYPOTHESES
 - 1) Mothers' essentialism <-> Fathers' parenting practices
 - 2) Maternal gatekeeping as a mediator

Sample

SAFE SORRY

N= 373 families

- Parents of adolescents in penultimate year of obligatory schooling
- 3 Assessments (every 6 months)



48.8 (5.1) years old
53% University degree
86% working (>1/3 part-time)



50.7 (5.5) years old
54% High education
91% working (1/10 part-time)

52% married couples (17% separated/divorced)

2.1 children

19% families < 2800 €/month

Fathers' Measures

T1 & T3

- **Responsiveness** (Schaefer, 1965; 7 items)
I give my child a lot of care and attention.
- **Autonomy support** (Cheung et al., 2016; 8 items)
I allow my child to make choices about his/her studying as much as possible.
- **Overprotection** (Chevrier et al., 2023; 10 items)
I give my child the impression that I don't want him/her to grow up.
- **Controlling Parenting** (Cheung et al., 2016; 10 items)
For things related to school, I'm usually in charge.



Mothers' Measures

T1 & T3

Essentialism (Liss et al., 2013; 6 items)
Although fathers are important, ultimately children need mothers more.

T2

Gatekeeping (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; 3 items)
I like to be in charge when it comes to childcare responsibilities.

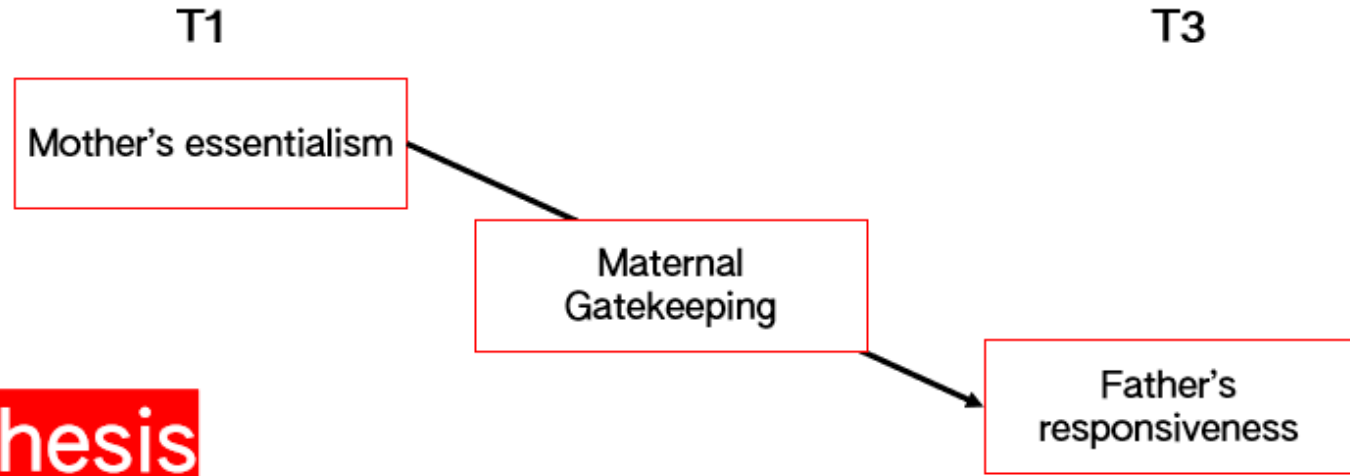


Method

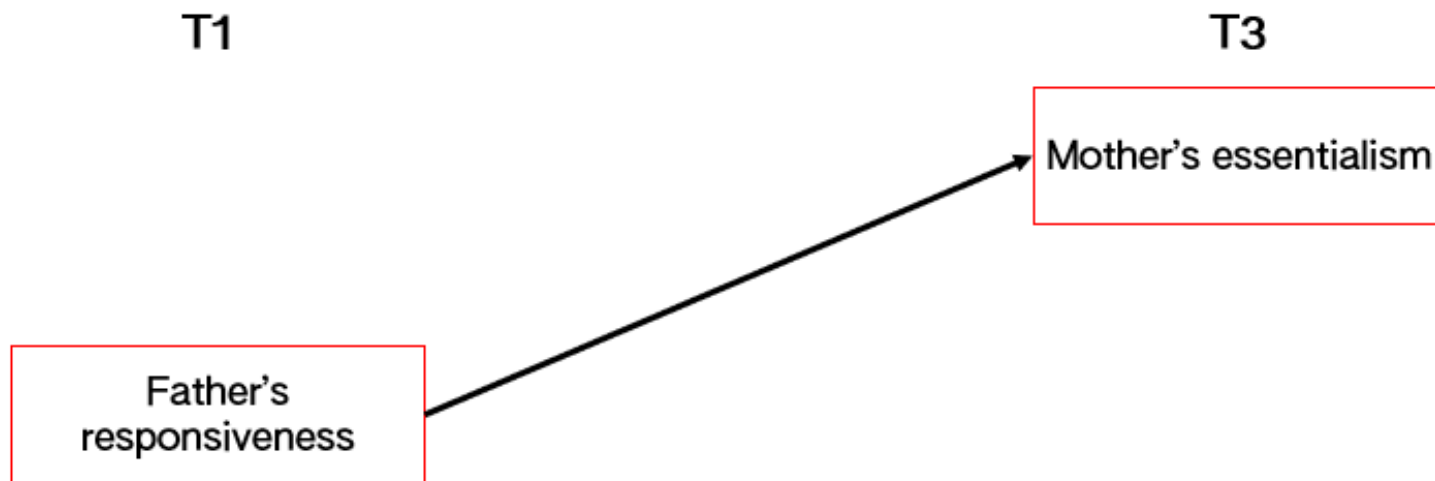
Cross-lagged

- Wave 1-3
- Mothers and fathers
- Fathers' practices separately

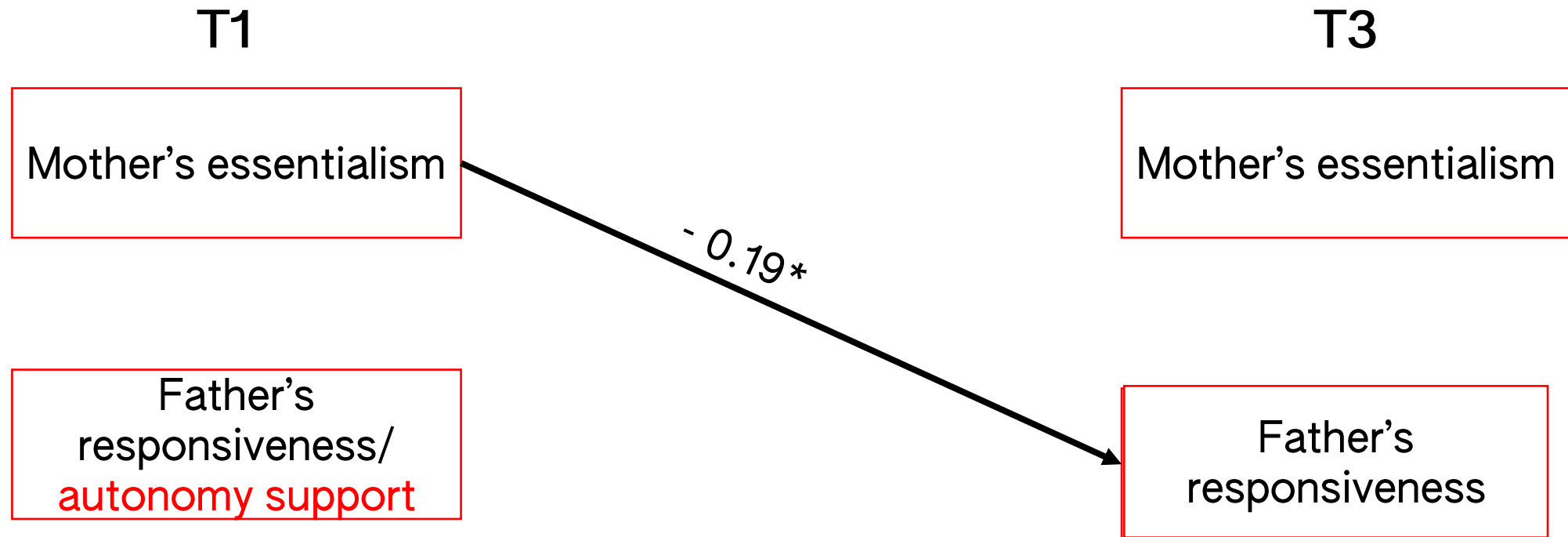
Gatekeeping Hypothesis



Cognitive Dissonance Hypothesis

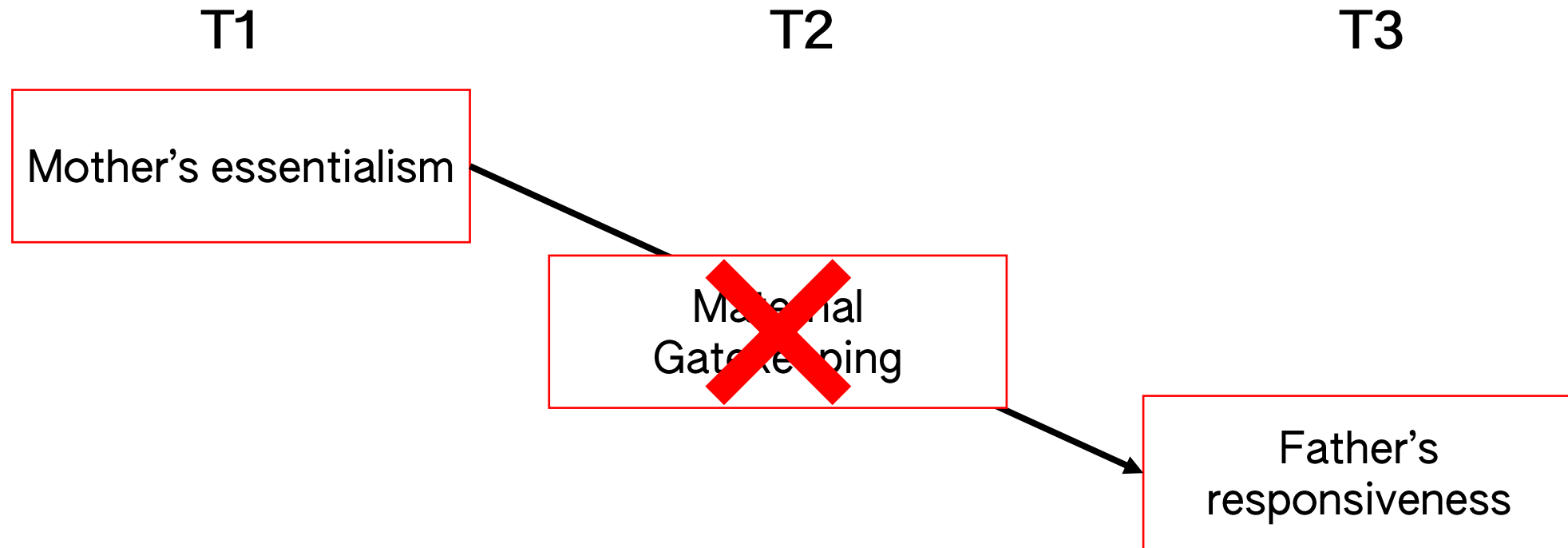


Responsiveness & Autonomy Support



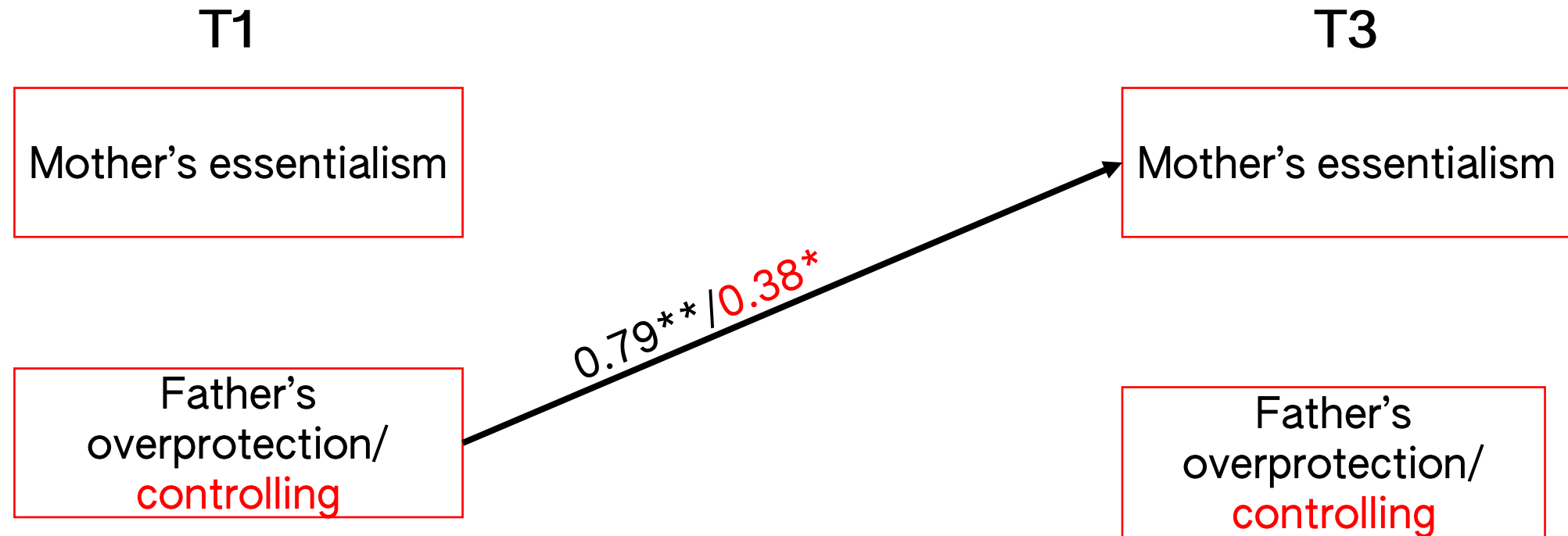
- No significant relationship for fathers' autonomy support
- Gatekeeping hypothesis?

Responsiveness & Autonomy Support (2)



- Mother's **essentialism predicts maternal gatekeeping, but** maternal gatekeeping does **not predict father's responsiveness**
- The link between mothers and fathers cannot be explained by gatekeeping

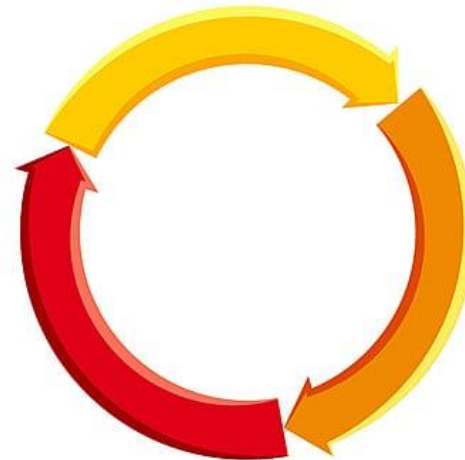
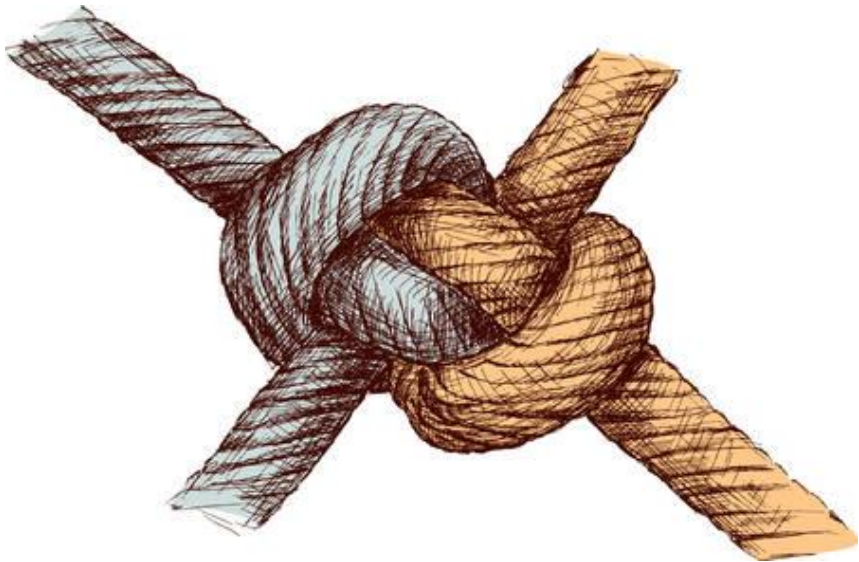
Overprotection & Controlling Parenting



- Evidence for cognitive dissonance hypothesis

Discussion

- Support for the **cognitive dissonance hypothesis** for less attuned parenting practices
- **No** evidence for the **gatekeeping hypothesis** with adolescents!
- Potential reinforcement between fathers and mothers



Thank you for your attention!



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