



Parents' Gender Beliefs and Their Parental Involvement Across 11 Countries: Untangling the Role of Gender Essentialism

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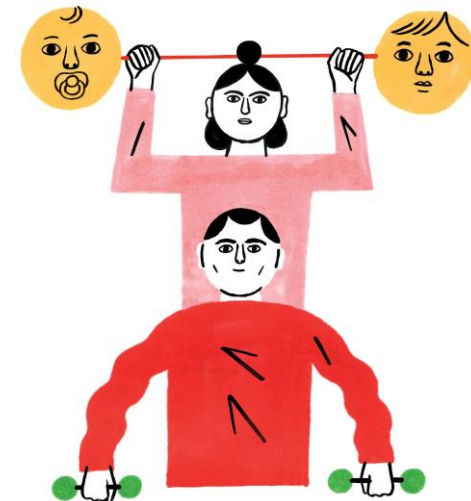
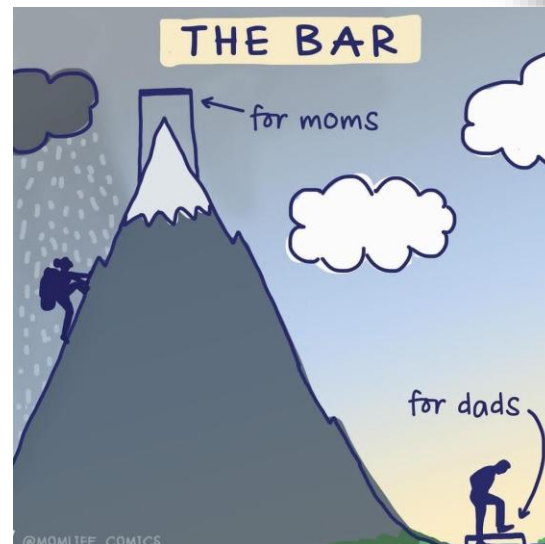
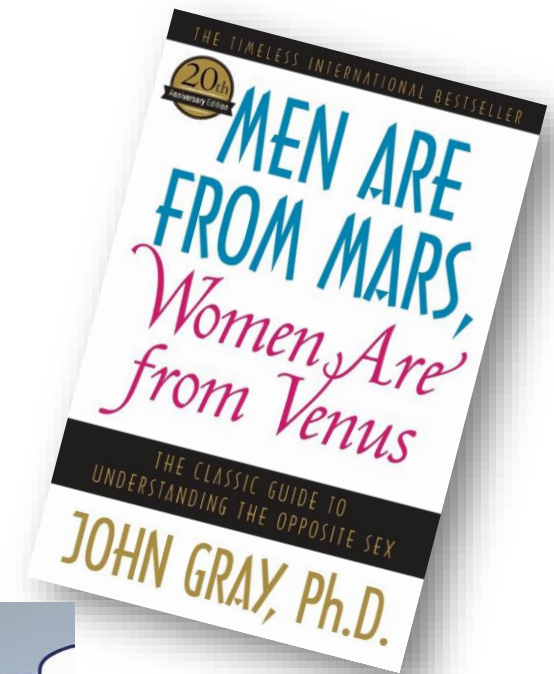
Gender Norms and Parenthood

- **Gender essentialism**

→ The belief that men and women are “better suited” for different societal roles, including **parental roles**

→ Link with **gender inequalities** in the family

- **Quantity vs quality** of parents’ involvement



Between Positive and Negative Involvement

- Involvement that is **attuned** / **not attuned** to children's developmental stage and needs
- **Responsiveness**



- **Overprotective parenting**

Deci & Ryan, 2012; Davidov & Grusec, 2006; Grolnick et al., 1997; Gutman & Eccles, 2007; Jeong et al., 2019

Gender Norms and Parenthood

- **Gender essentialism**





→ Important for **quality of involvement!**

→ **More negative involvement** for both mothers and fathers

→ **Less positive involvement** for fathers



“Momma Knows Best”: The Relationships Between Mothers’ and Fathers’ Gender Essentialism and Their Involvement With Their Adolescents

[Cindy Eira Nunes](#)  , [Elli-Anastasia Lamprianidou](#)  , [...], and [Stijn Van Petegem](#)  [View all authors and affiliations](#)

> J Fam Psychol. 2025 Jan 6. doi: 10.1037/fam0001283. Online ahead

**Intensive parenting among mothers and fathers:
Identifying profiles and examining differences in
parental involvement**

[Elli-Anastasia Lamprianidou](#) ¹, [Cindy Eira Nunes](#) ¹,
[Jean-Philippe Antonietti](#) ², [Stijn Van Petegem](#) ¹

Lamprianidou et al., 2025; Eira Nunes et al., 2025



Gender Norms and Cultural Context



→ Gender stereotypes stem from distribution of women and men into **social roles**



→ More **binary** division of roles = **higher essentialism** ↷



→ Division of social roles differs across **cultural contexts**

Research Goals



+ Positive

- Links **essentialism** – parents' **involvement**

— Negative



- Role of **gender inequality** on the country level as **underlying mechanism**



Method



- 11 different countries (i.e., Australia, Belgium, Croatia, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland)
- Country-level **gender inequality**
- Multilevel modeling






Participants



5728 parents of teenagers
($M_{age} = 17.35$, $SD = 1.10$),
71% mothers






$M_{age}: 47.43$ ($SD = 5.57$)

 78%
 67%
 83%



$M_{age}: 50.85$ ($SD = 6.27$)

 88%
 60%
 90%



Measures



- Two indexes of gender inequality

→ EVS2020, GGGI2023

- **Gender Essentialism** (Liss et al., 2013; 5 items; MIMI, Loyal et al., 2017; 1 item)

According to me, men do not naturally know what to do with children.

- **Positive involvement**

Responsiveness (Schaefer, 1965;
7 items)

I cheer up my child when they are sad.

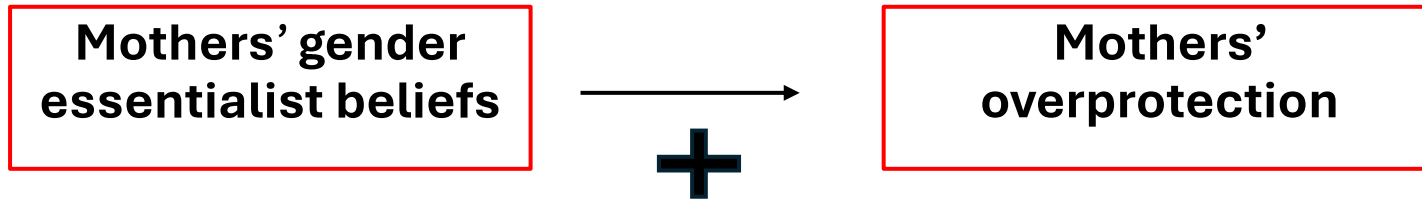
- **Negative involvement**

Overprotection (Chevrier et al., 2023;
10 items)

I immediately see danger whenever my child wants to do something new.

Results

Essentialism and Mothers' Involvement



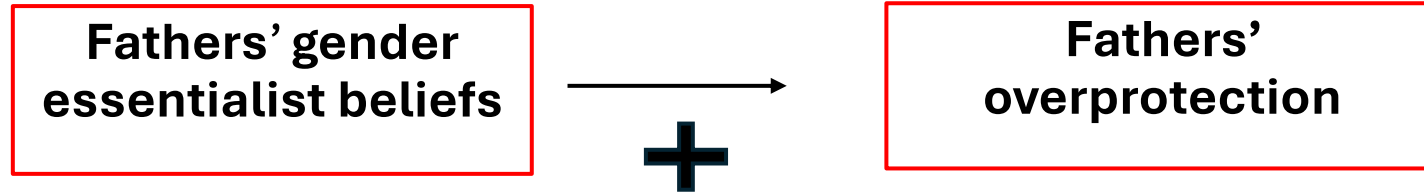
$B = 0.21, SE = 0.02, p < .001$



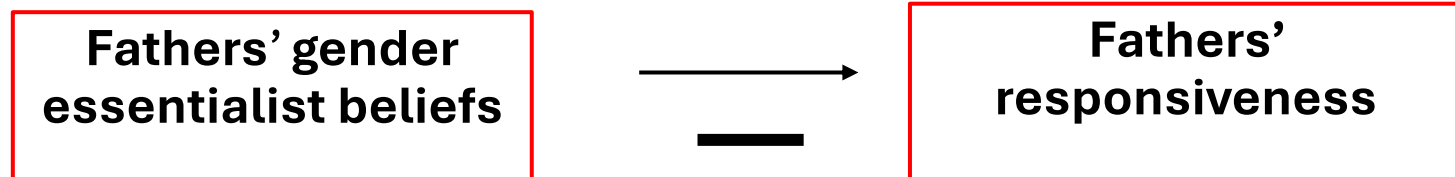
$B = -0.03, SE = 0.01, p = .018.$

Mothers endorsing **gender essentialist beliefs** reported **more overprotection** and **less responsiveness** across 11 countries

Essentialism and Fathers' Involvement



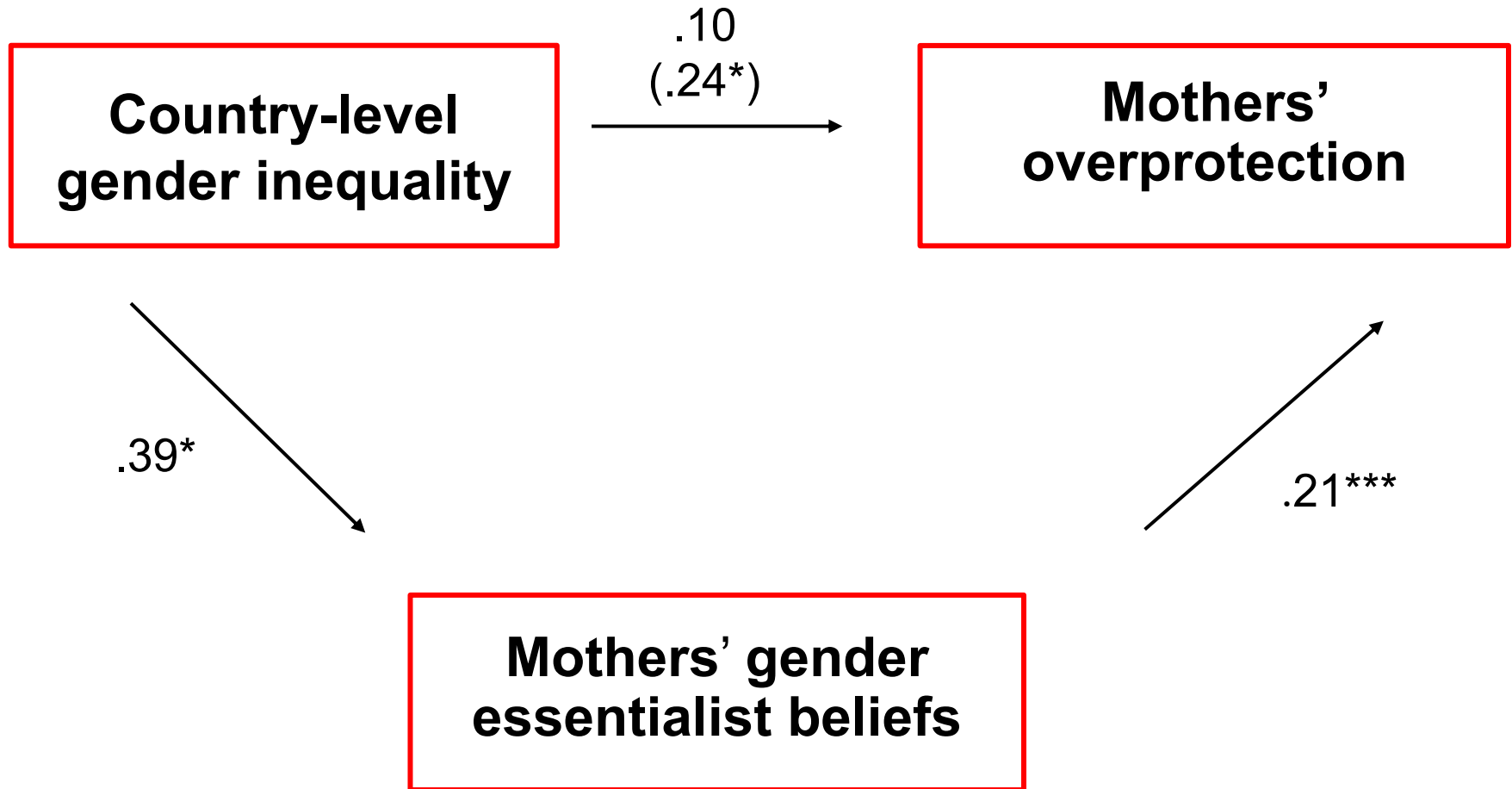
$B = 0.22, SE = 0.04, p < .001$



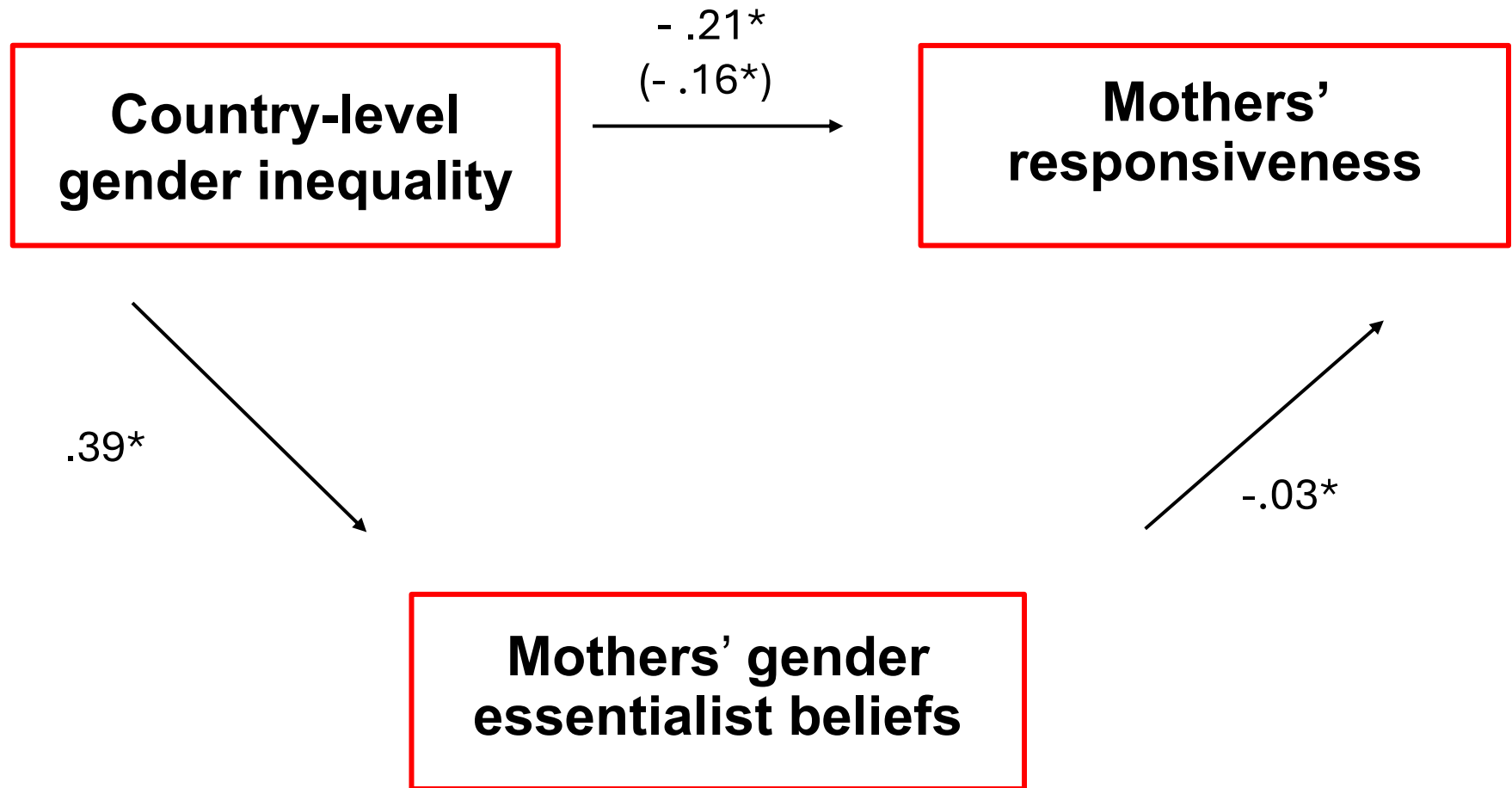
$B = -0.17, SE = 0.03, p < .001$

Fathers endorsing **gender essentialist beliefs** reported **more overprotection** and **less responsiveness** across 11 countries

Gender Inequality and Negative Involvement Mothers

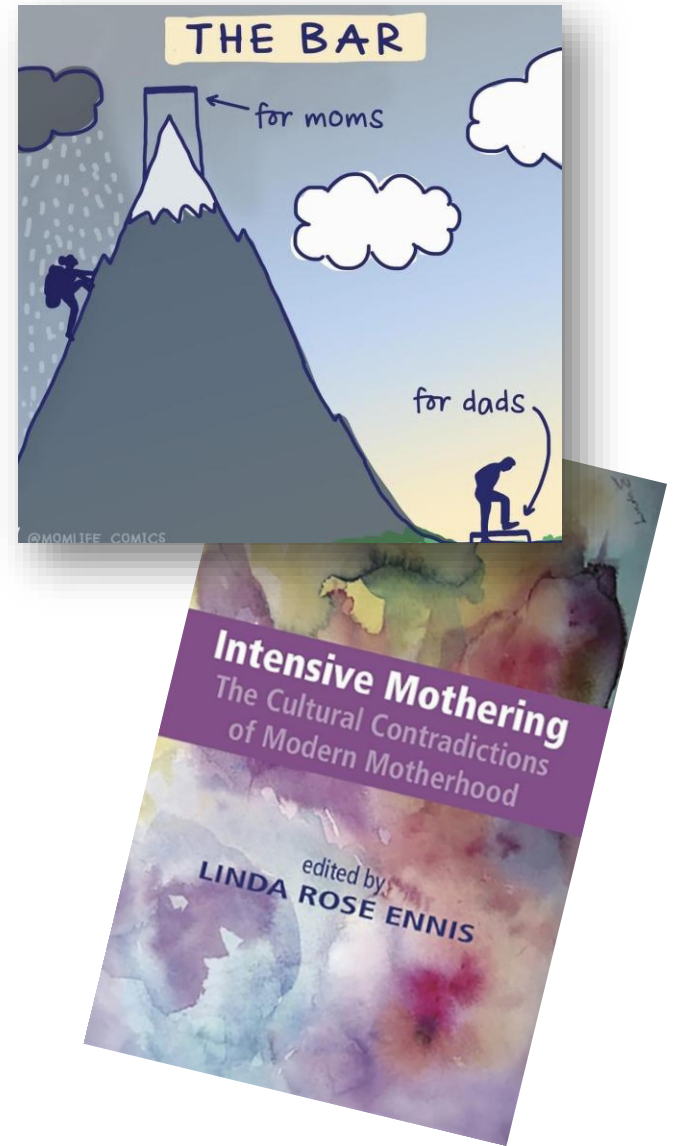


Gender Inequality and Positive Involvement Mothers



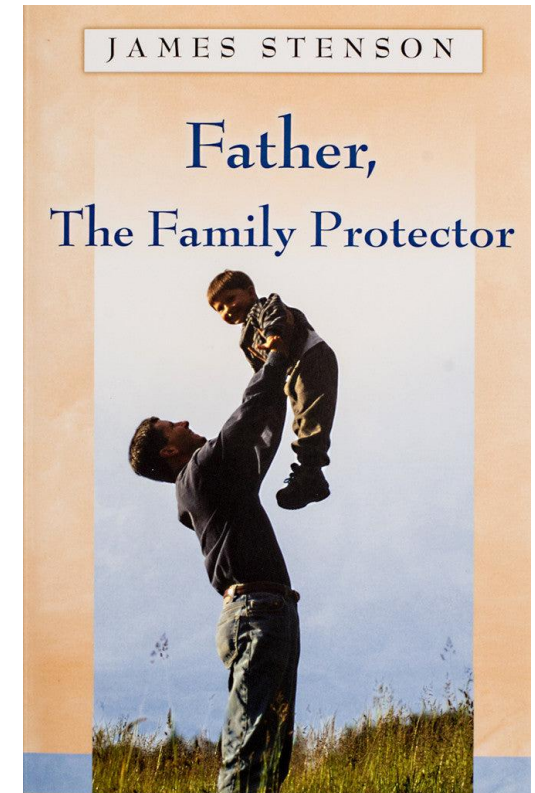
Gender Essentialism and Mothers' Involvement

- “**Intensive mothering ideology**”
women as “naturally” better caregivers
Backfire! → more overprotection
- Gender essentialism linked to lower **life satisfaction/more distress** for women
Backfire! → less responsiveness



Gender Essentialism and Fathers' Involvement

- **Traditional masculine father models:**
 - “family protector”
Backfire! → more overprotection
 - father lacking emotional expression
Backfire! → less responsiveness



Gender Essentialism Across Cultures

- **Cross-cultural support** for previous findings!
- **Country-level gender inequality matters!** → **underlying mechanism for mothers' involvement**





QR code preregistration!



Thank you for your attention!

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