

Overview for today

The background of the slide features a photograph of several people in winter clothing, including hats and coats, walking through a snowy landscape. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible over it.

- Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Altenburger, L. E., Lee, M. A., Bower, D. J., & Kamp Dush, C. M. (2015). Who Are the Gatekeepers? Predictors of Maternal Gatekeeping. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 15*, 166-186.
 - Lecture
 - Discussions

Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Altenburger, L. E., Lee, M. A., Bower, D. J., & Kamp Dush, C. M. (2015). Who Are the Gatekeepers? Predictors of Maternal Gatekeeping.

- **The aim of this study:**
 - To identify predictors of maternal gatekeeping at the transition to parenthood.
- **Sample characteristics:**
 - 182 couples from the 3rd trimester to 3 months postpartum.
 - Both partners work full time prior to child birth.
 - Both plan to return to work shortly after the birth.
 - Therefore, they are motivated to share childcare responsibilities.
 - Predictors were measured in the 3rd trimester
 - Outcomes were measured in 3 months postpartum.

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- **Definition of Maternal gatekeeping**

- A component of coparenting relationship
 - Aspect of interparental relationships focusing on parenting children.
- “a collection of beliefs and behaviors that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work”
- maternal behaviors and attitudes that may support or limit father involvement in childrearing

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- **Multiple aspects of gate-keeping:**
 - **Gate-closing behavior:** discouraging behavior; e.g., criticizing father's parenting, redoing childcare tasks fathers have already completed, taking control over parental decision-making
 - **Gate-opening behavior:** encouraging behavior; e.g., asking father's opinion on a parenting issue, arranging activities for father to do with child
 - **Gate closing attitudes:** they believe that women are ultimately responsible for setting the standards for successful completion of housework and childcare tasks. Performance of family work is an important validation of women's and mothers' roles.
 - These aspects of maternal gate-keeping were **reported by both parents.**
 - It is less biased.

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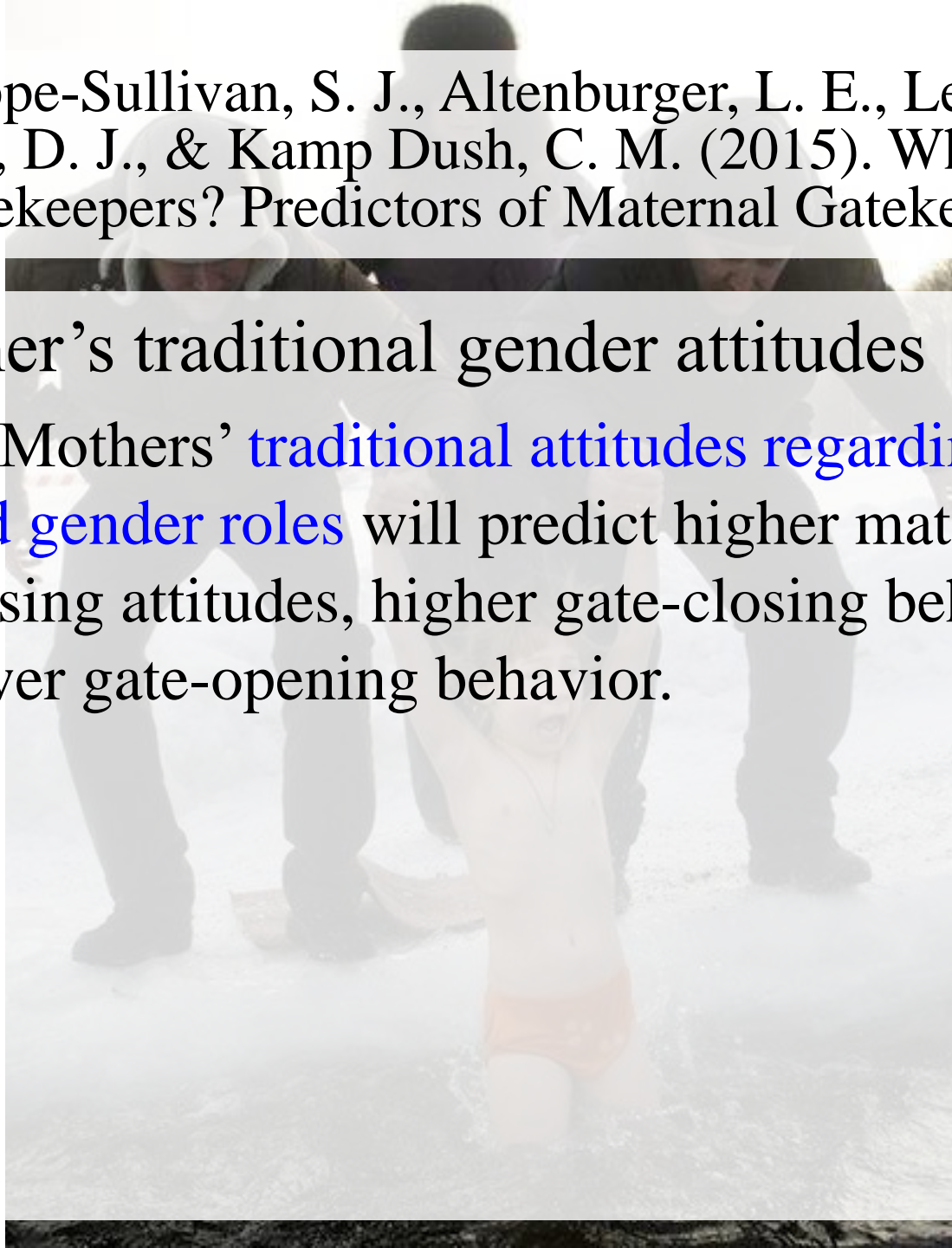
- Predictors of maternal gatekeeping:
 - **Mothers'** and **fathers'** **poor psychological functioning**: Neuroticism, anxiety, and depression.
 - **Mothers'** and **fathers'** **traditional gender attitudes**: Attitudes about parent and gender roles.
 - Ambivalent sexism (e.g., men should protect women), gender beliefs concerning parental roles, innate superiority of mothers as caregivers
 - **Mothers'** **partner-oriented parenting perfectionism**: “I expect my partner to always be a top-notch and competent parent”
 - **Mothers'** **relationship instability**: “How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?”
 - **Mothers'** **religiosity**: “How important is religion to you?”
 - **Mothers'** and **fathers'** **parenting self-efficacy**: expectations regarding their own parenting competence.

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- Psychological functioning
 - H: mothers with **neuroticism, anxiety, and depression** will be **less able to regulate negative emotions** in stressful coparenting contexts, and therefore more gate closing.
 - H: mothers with **neuroticism, anxiety and depression** will **lack energy and motivation** to actively encourage fathers to involve in childrearing.

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- Mother's traditional gender attitudes
 - H: Mothers' **traditional attitudes regarding parent and gender roles** will predict higher maternal gate-closing attitudes, higher gate-closing behavior, and lower gate-opening behavior.



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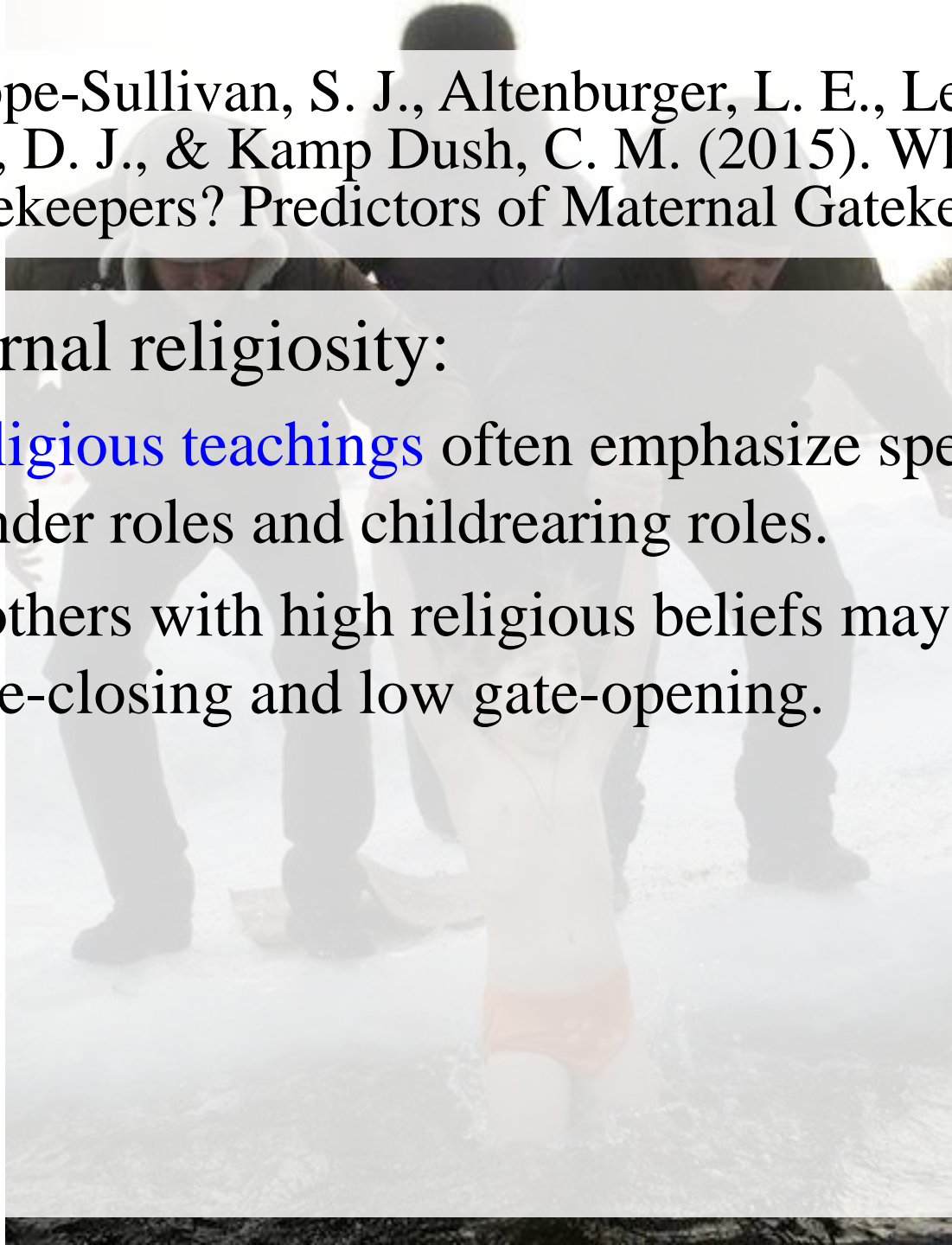
- Maternal expectations:
 - Evolutionary perspective: **females** are more invested in **parenting effort** than in **mating effort**, whereas **males** are opposite.
 - Mothers evaluate **fathers' motivation and fitness for parenting**
 - H: When mothers have **unrealistically high expectation for partner's parenting (perfectionism)**, they may show high gate-closing and low gate-opening.
 - H: Mothers may also evaluate **father's investment in couple relationship** as an indicator of his parenting.

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- Maternal expectations (cont.):
 - Mothers with **high self-efficacy** on own parenting **encourage** father's involvement.
 - Or those mothers experience frustration of parenting from fathers (who have less experiences) and therefore **discourage** father's involvement.

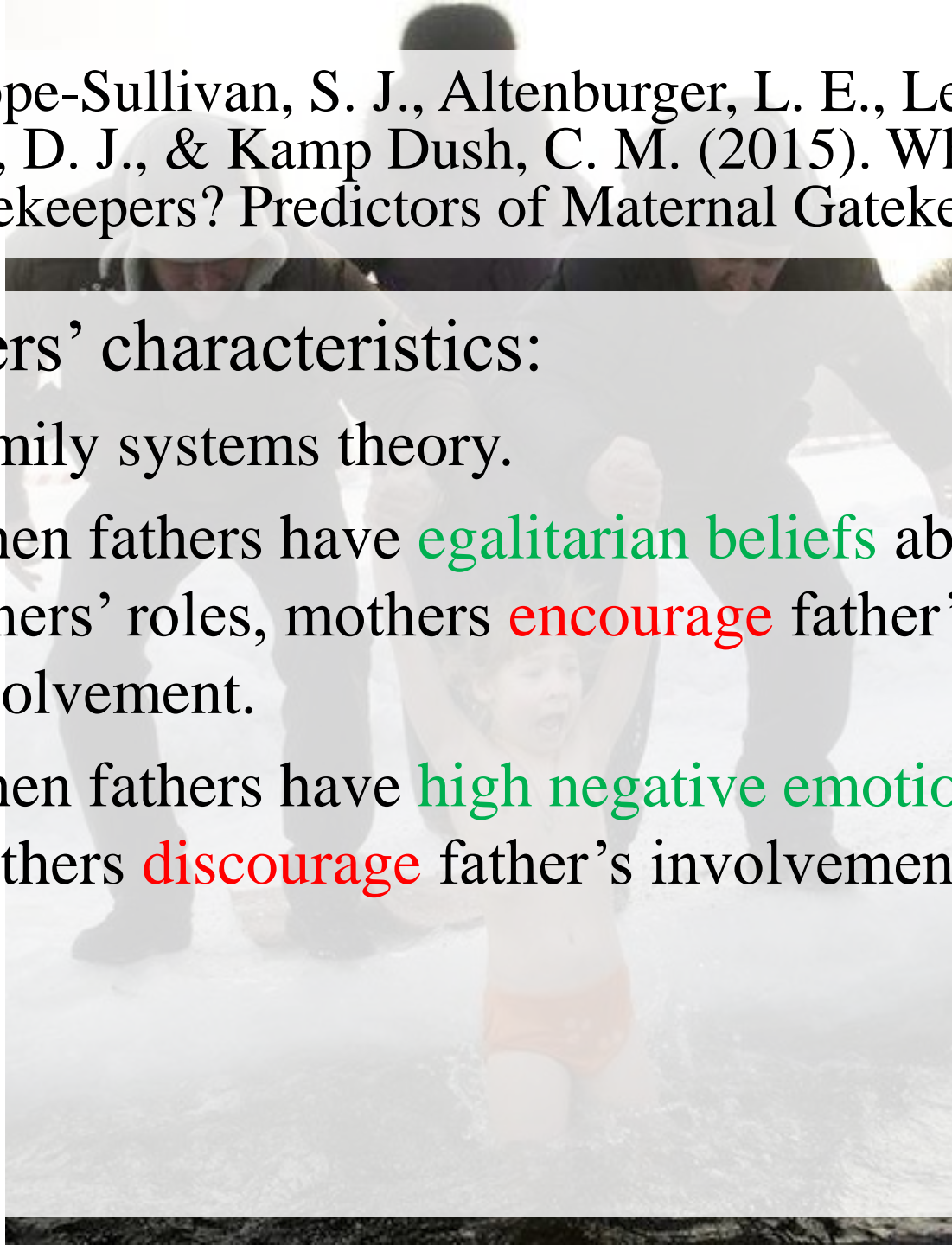
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- Maternal religiosity:
 - Religious teachings often emphasize specific gender roles and childrearing roles.
 - Mothers with high religious beliefs may have high gate-closing and low gate-opening.

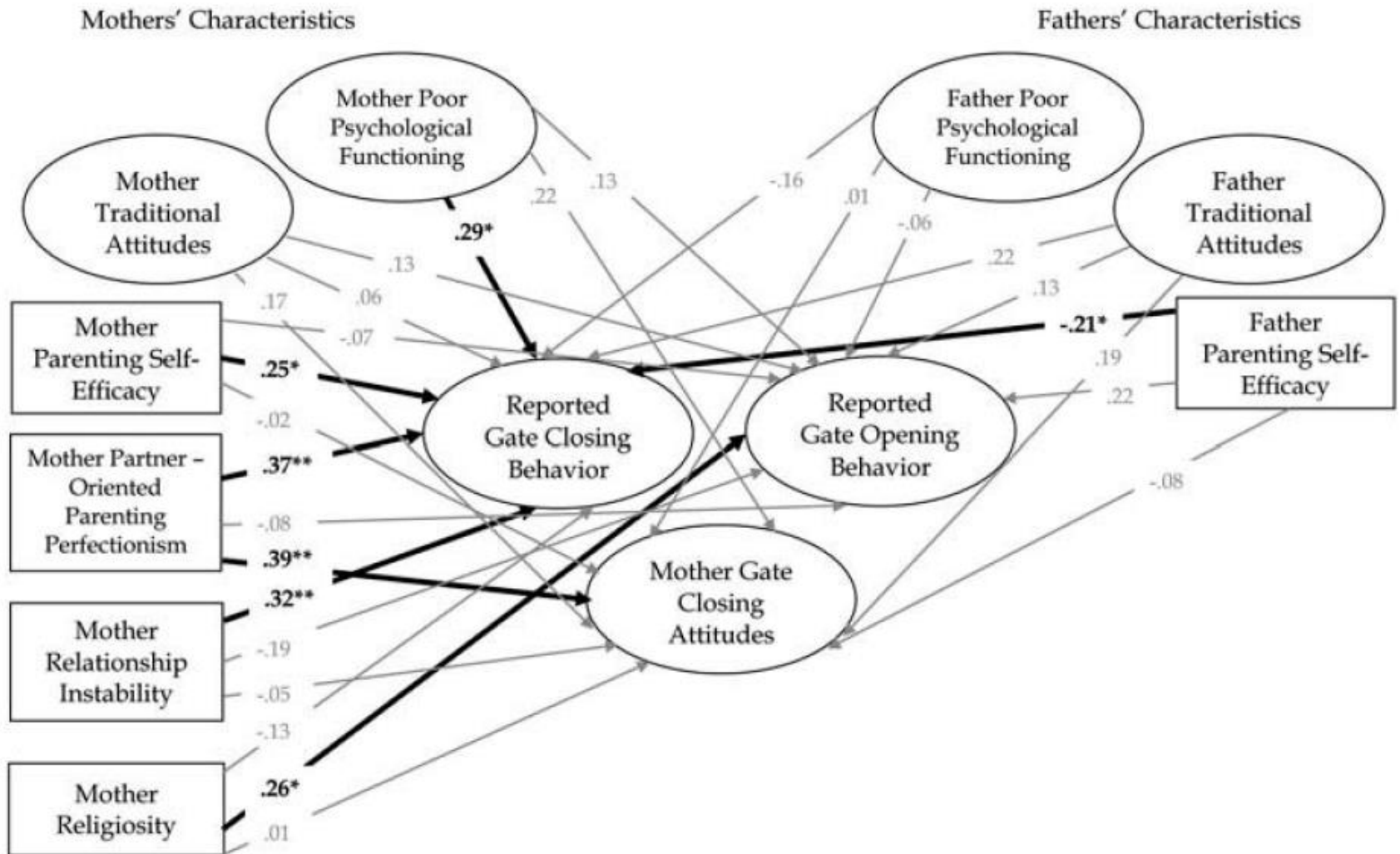


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- Fathers' characteristics:
 - Family systems theory.
 - When fathers have **egalitarian beliefs** about fathers' roles, mothers **encourage** father's involvement.
 - When fathers have **high negative emotionality**, mothers **discourage** father's involvement.

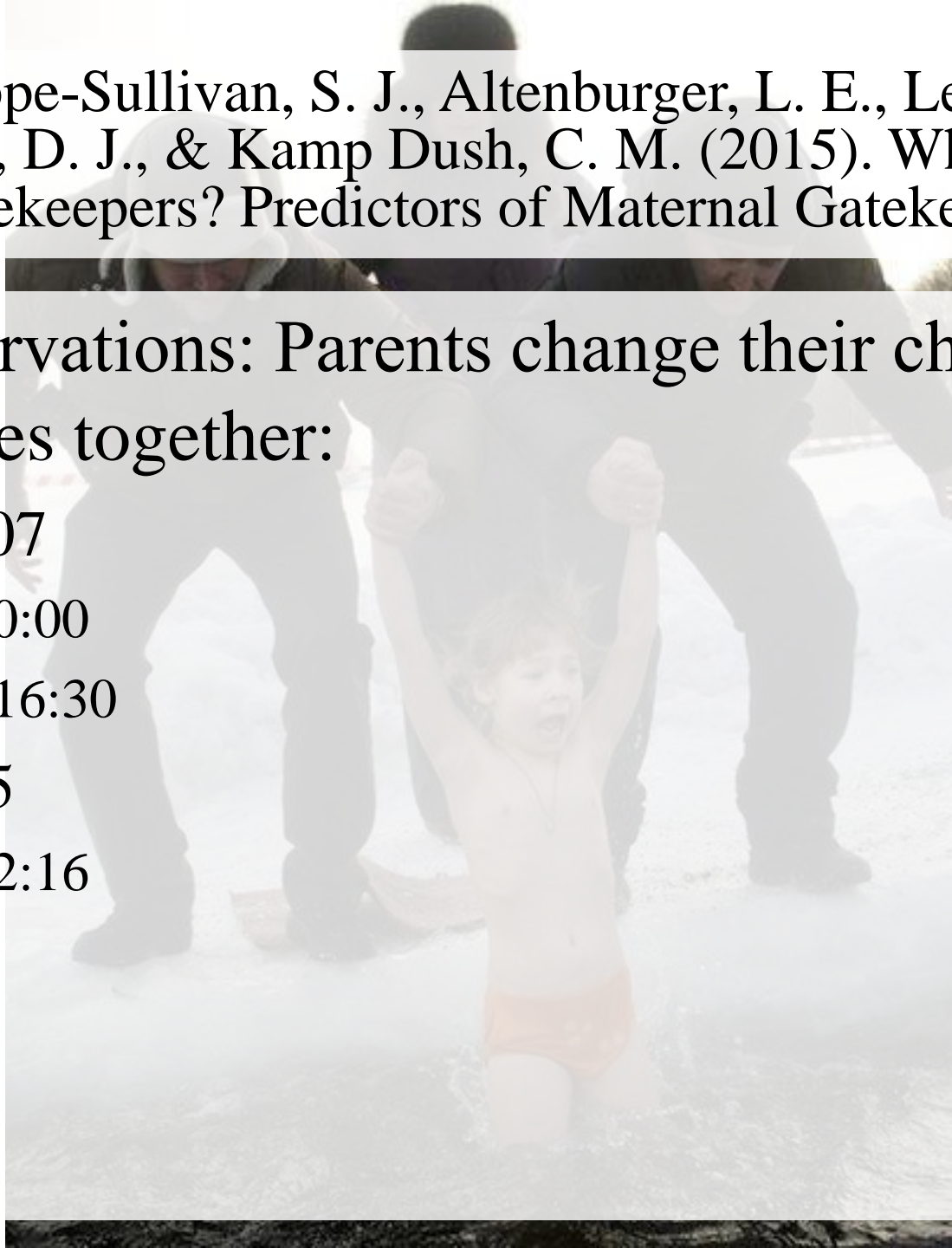


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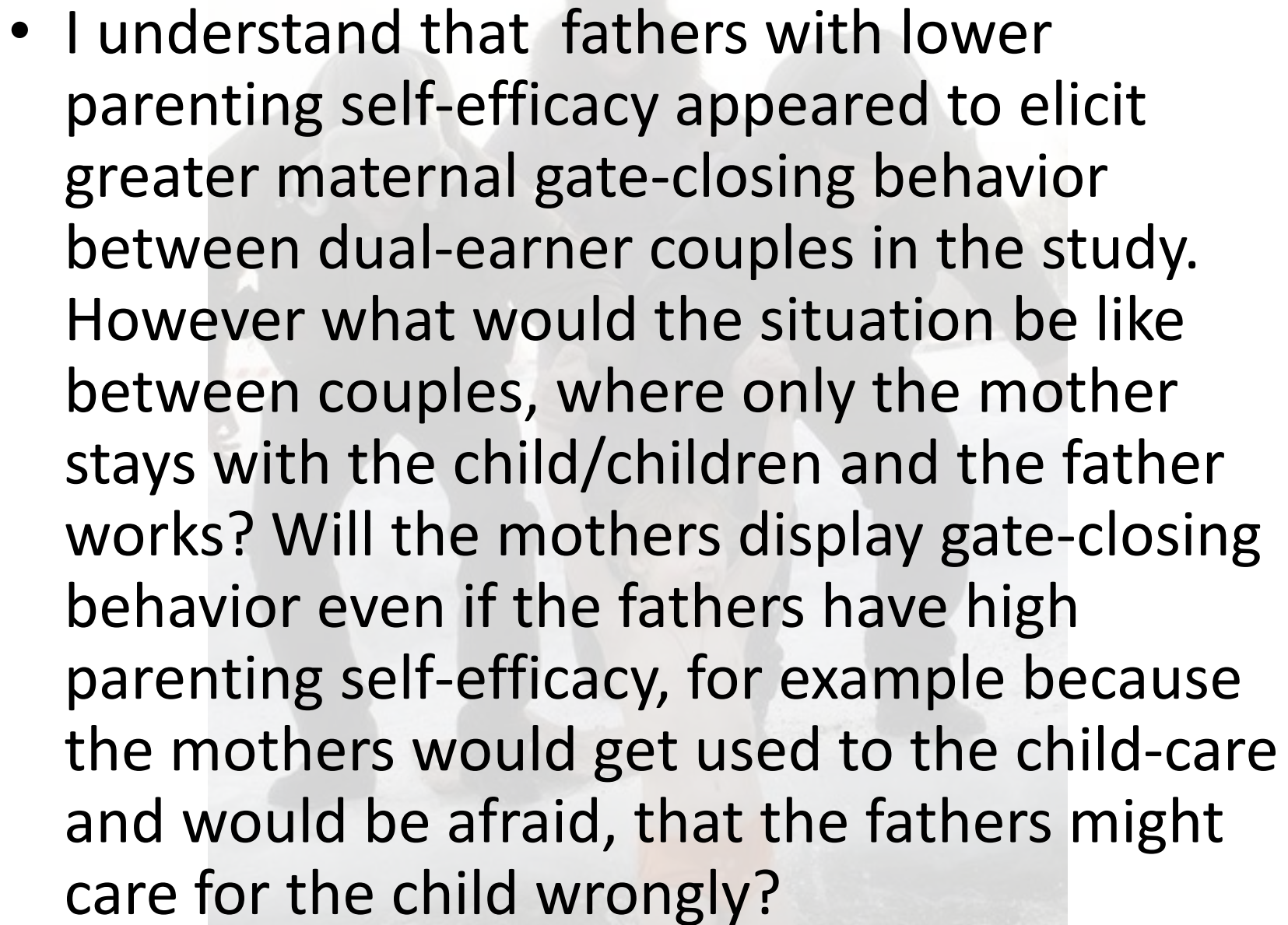


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- Observations: Parents change their children's clothes together:
 - #107
 - 0:00
 - 16:30
 - #85
 - 2:16



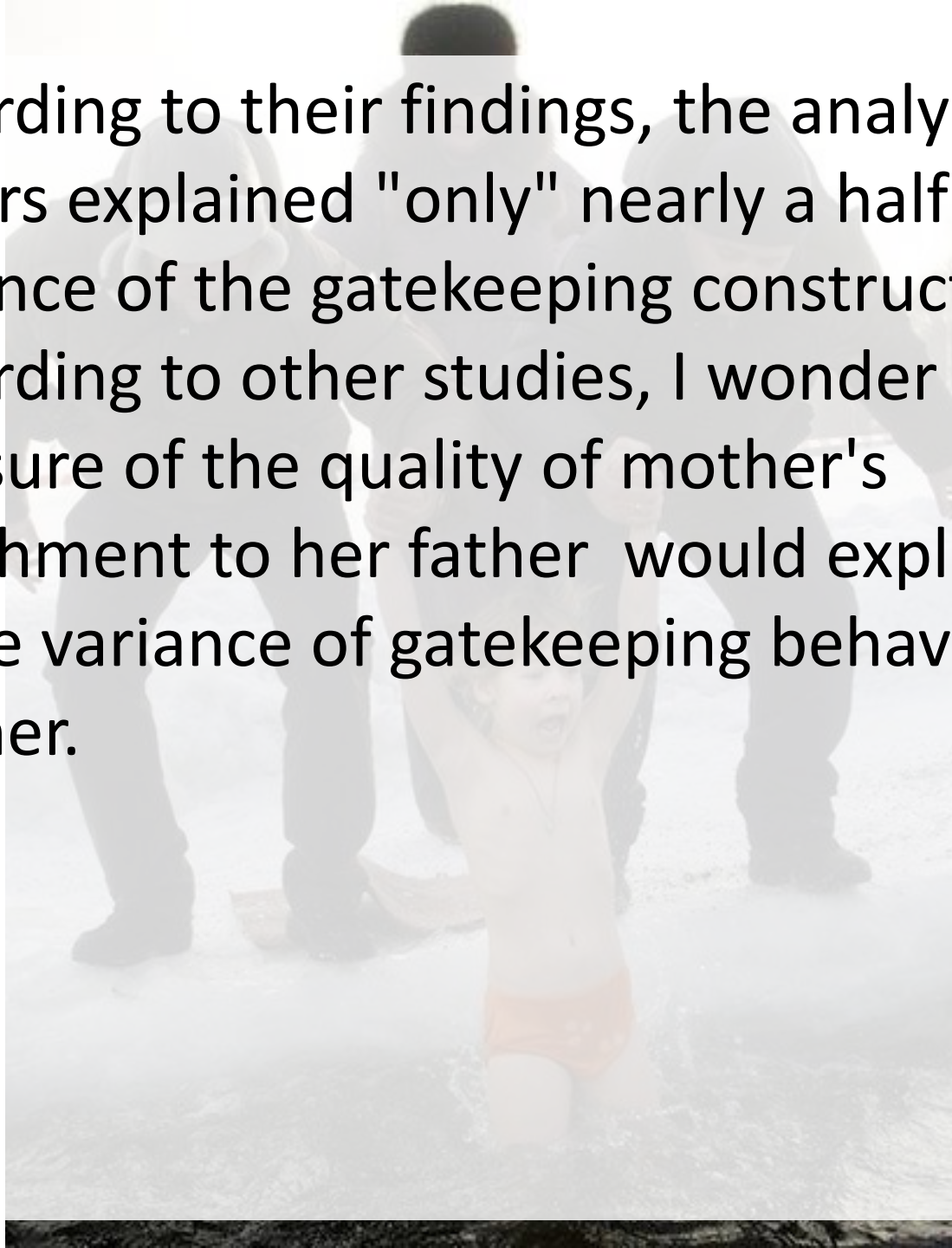
- Is it possible for the father to actively prevent the gateclosing behavior in any way, if he is really motivated to be involved in the childcare? Especially in the group of competent fathers with high levels of parenting self-efficacy I would expect that they would not let the mother discourage them so easily and keep the child to herself. After all they probably invested a big amount of resources to the infant too – money, work, energy.

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- I understand that fathers with lower parenting self-efficacy appeared to elicit greater maternal gate-closing behavior between dual-earner couples in the study. However what would the situation be like between couples, where only the mother stays with the child/children and the father works? Will the mothers display gate-closing behavior even if the fathers have high parenting self-efficacy, for example because the mothers would get used to the child-care and would be afraid, that the fathers might care for the child wrongly?

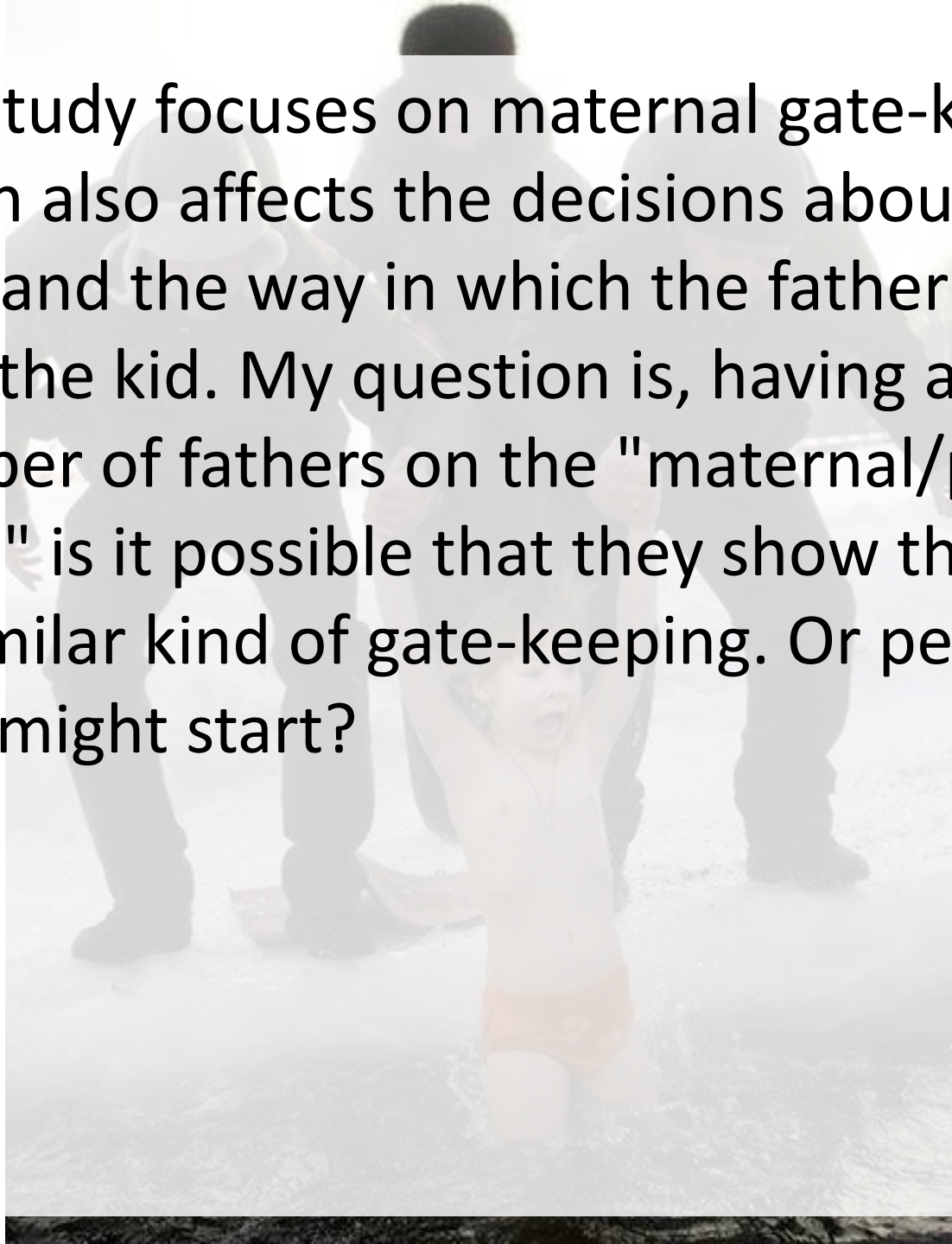
- Mother's gate-keeping is influenced by her previous expectations toward the man. This result is explained in the way that "mothers who held excessively high standards for their partner's parenting were more likely to scrutinize fathers' parenting." So the problem is mother's perfectionism. But isn't it possible the real father's parenting abilities be the matter as well? Maybe the woman starts to be perfectionist when she recognize her partner being less involved in (future) parenting, because she needs to counterbalance his lower involvement by her higher involvement. I thought that the real father's parental characteristics could be the common reason both for mother's expectations and father's parental self-esteem.

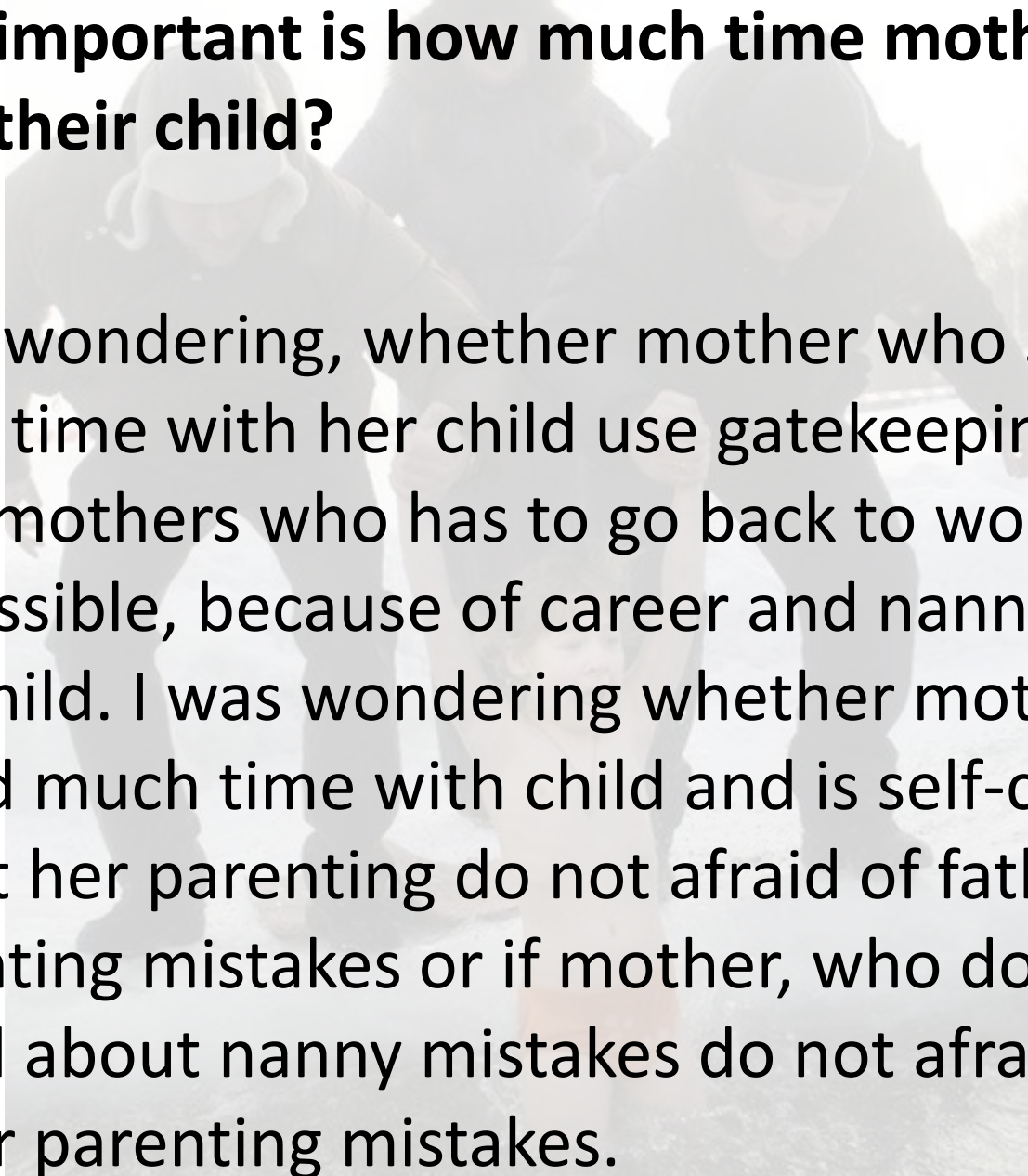
- According to Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2015) mothers with poorer psychological functioning tend to close the gate to fathers. But they measured the psychological functioning only in the third trimester and they made no measurement after the childbirth. I have been thinking, how gatekeeping works, when mothers have postpartum depression or postpartum psychosis. I think, that maybe in this case they can't fully take care of a child and they maybe have no energy to close the gate to father (redo things after him, control parental decision-making), so father has to take care in first place. Could this situation change roles and could be father the gatekeeper?

- According to their findings, the analyzed factors explained "only" nearly a half of variance of the gatekeeping construct. According to other studies, I wonder if the measure of the quality of mother's attachment to her father would explain part of the variance of gatekeeping behavior of the mother.

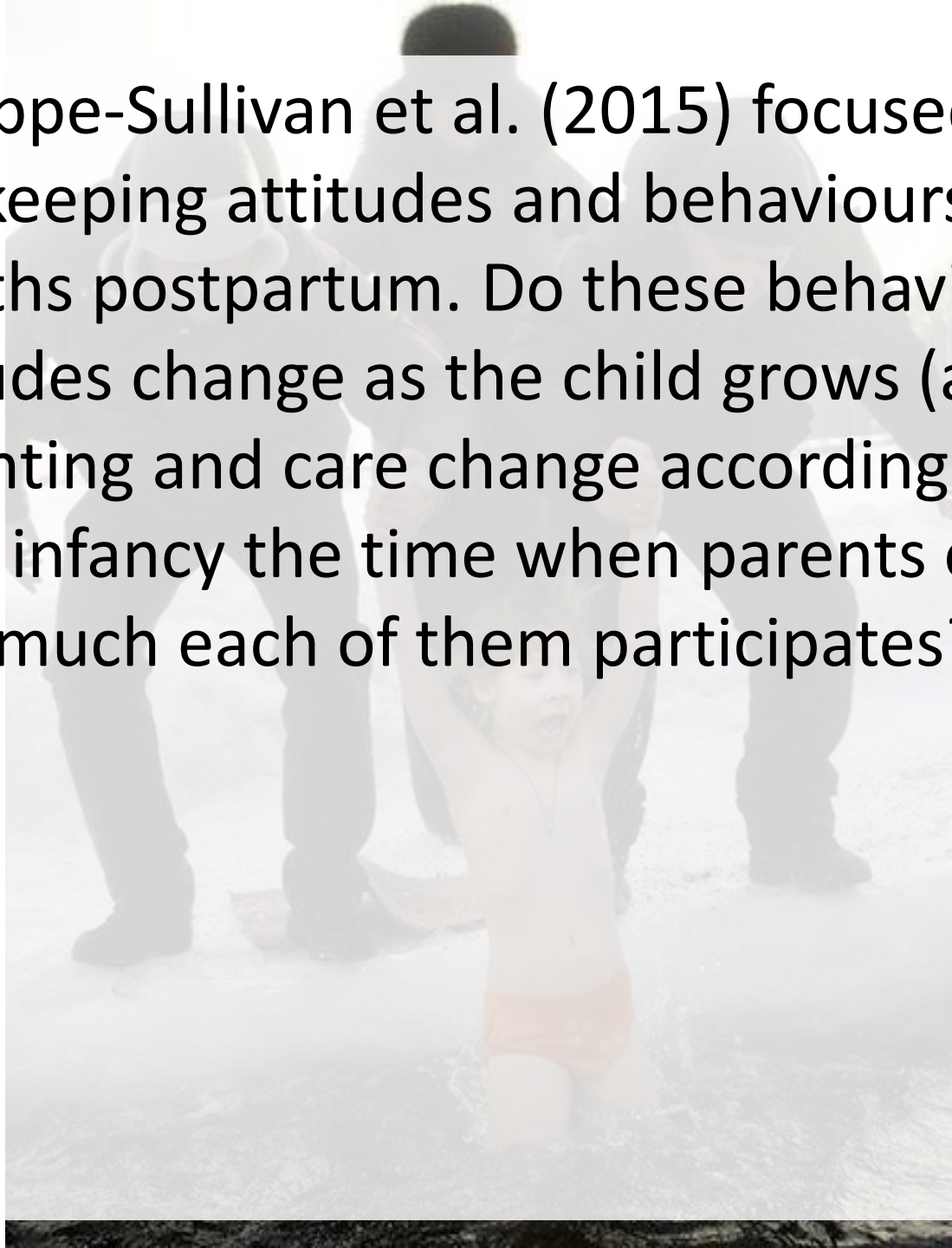


- The study focuses on maternal gate-keeping which also affects the decisions about the time and the way in which the father engages with the kid. My question is, having a raising number of fathers on the "maternal/paternal leave" is it possible that they show the same or similar kind of gate-keeping. Or perhaps they might start?



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- **How important is how much time mother spend with their child?**
 - I was wondering, whether mother who spend more time with her child use gatekeeping less than mothers who has to go back to work as soon as possible, because of career and nanny care of her child. I was wondering whether mother who spend much time with child and is self-confident about her parenting do not afraid of fathers parenting mistakes or if mother, who do not afraid about nanny mistakes do not afraid about father parenting mistakes.

- Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2015) focused on gatekeeping attitudes and behaviours 3 months postpartum. Do these behaviours and attitudes change as the child grows (and the parenting and care change accordingly) or is early infancy the time when parents establish how much each of them participates?



- mothers tend to close the gate for fathers when mothers consider their relationship with father of the child less stable. Is it because mothers don't want to invest in relationship which they find only short-standing (with the father) and prefer to invest in relationship with better future (with the child) so they don't need the father to involve? Or is it because they want to prevent the child from possible disappointment when the father will be less available after dissolution of the relationship between parents? Or is there any other explanation? The authors of this study give only vague explanation, that mothers want to protect their investments in offspring.