

# Attachment can help explain individual differences in adolescents' experiences of conflict with their mothers.



## Attachment and adolescents' experiences of conflict with their mothers: a daily diary study

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### INTRODUCTION

- There is an average **increase** in the **number of parent-adolescent conflicts** during adolescence. (Branje, 2018)
- **Individual differences** in how adolescents **experience conflicts** have been observed and are **related to adolescent development**, adjustment or relationship satisfaction. (e.g., Branje et al., 2009; Huey et al., 2017; Lichtwarck-Aschoff et al., 2009; Missotten et al., 2017)

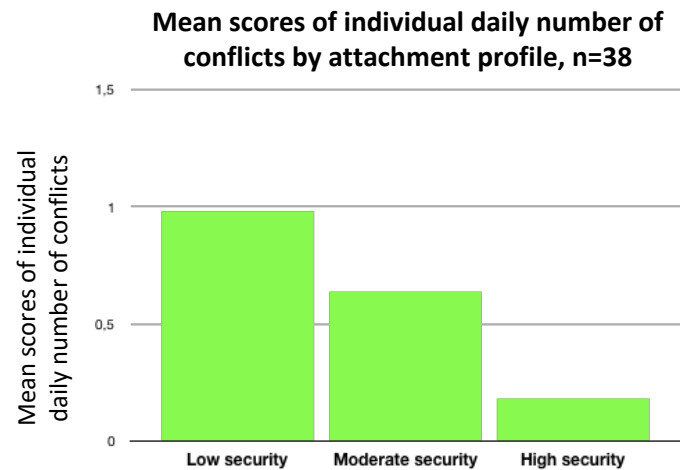
### AIM

- To investigate the **influence of attachment on adolescents' experiences of daily conflicts** with their mothers.

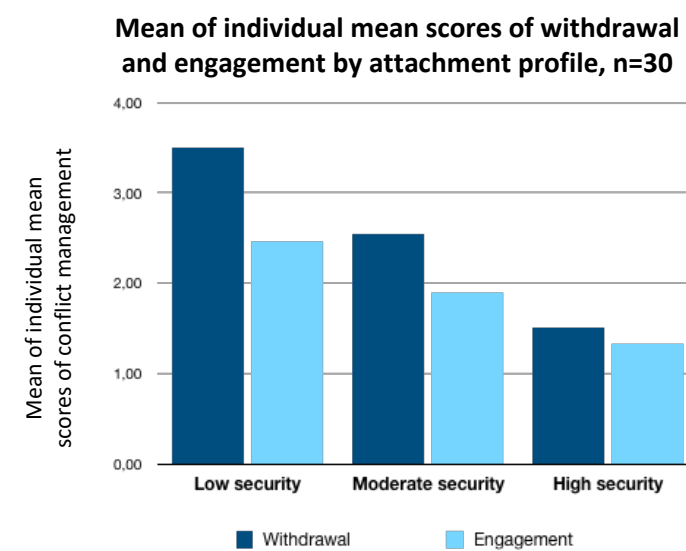
### METHOD

- 38 French adolescents took part in a one-week **daily diary study**. (M=13,73 years; SD=0,74; 60 % girls)
- Everyday, if one or more conflicts were encountered, **each conflict was described** separately from the others : **subject, emotional incidence, conflict management** (i.e., positive problem solving, withdrawal, conflict engagement, or compliance (Kurdek, 1994) ).
- A **person-centred approach** was used to identify attachment profiles and **compare adolescents' conflicts experiences** (i.e., daily number of conflicts, conflict management, emotional incidence) **considering their attachment profile**.

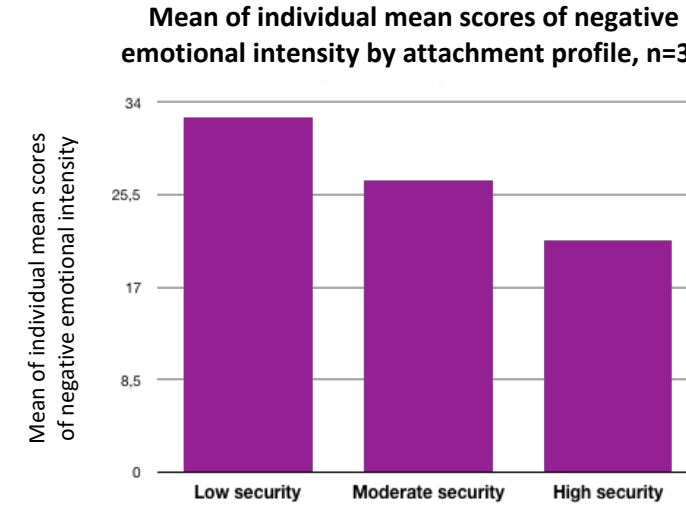
### RESULTS



- Significance of the linear contrast ( $p < 0.05$ )
- Adolescents with **low security** attachment profile had **more daily conflicts**.
- Adolescents with **high security** attachment profile had **less daily conflicts**.



- Significance of the linear contrasts (*withdrawal* :  $p < 0.01$  ; *engagement* :  $p < 0.05$ )
- Adolescents with **low security** attachment profile relied more on **unconstructive conflict management**.



- Significance of the linear contrast ( $p < 0.05$ )
- Adolescents with **low security** attachment profile had the **highest negative emotional intensity**.
- Adolescents with **high security** attachment profile had the **lowest negative emotional intensity**.

Adolescents with **low attachment security** seem to have **difficulties in dealing with conflicts**, and thus may not take full advantage of the benefits of conflicts for autonomy development.

**High attachment security** seems to play a protective role in adolescents' experience of conflict.

