

Balance in the sibling-mother-sibling triad

Interdependence in family relationship quality, contact, and conflict

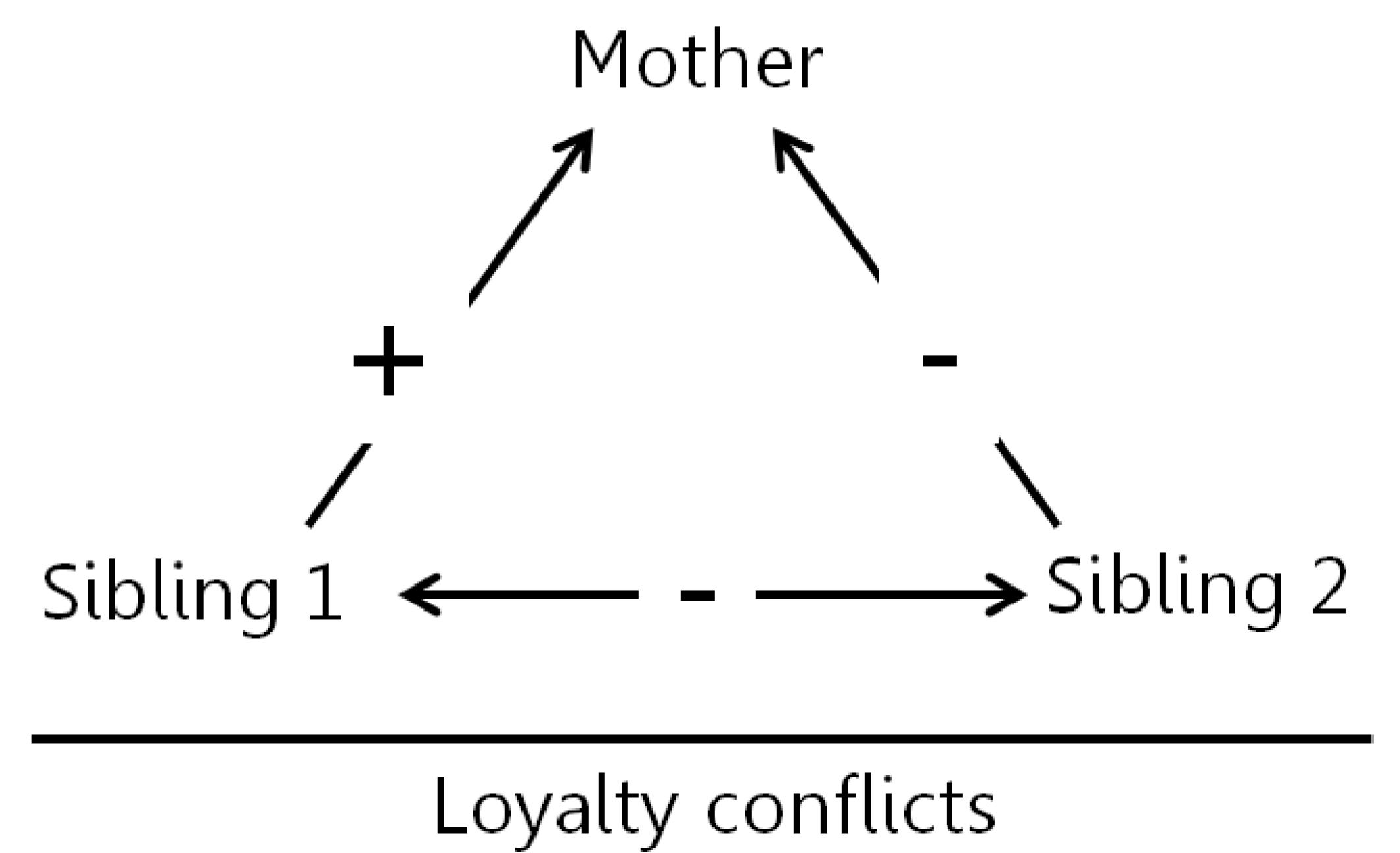
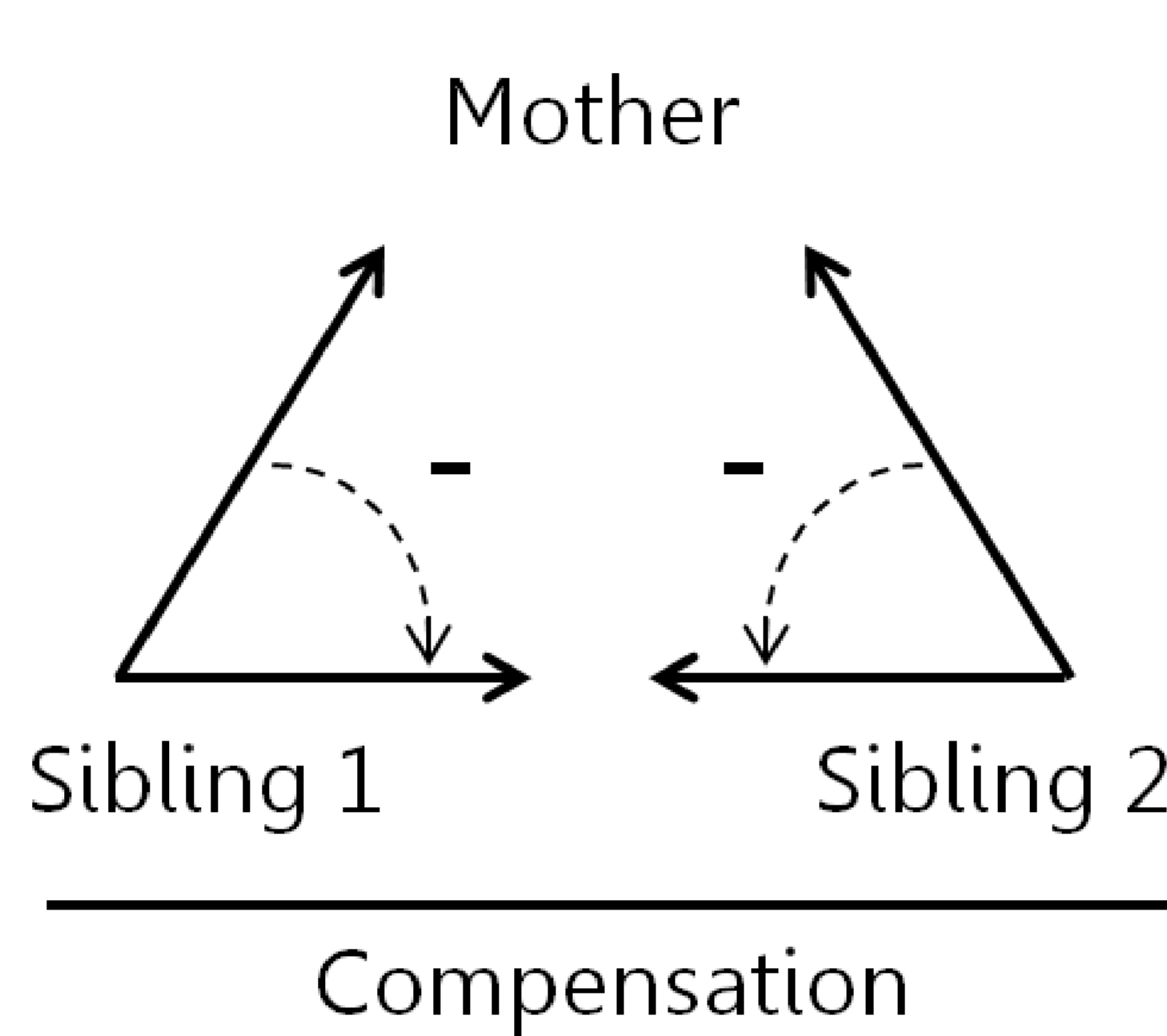
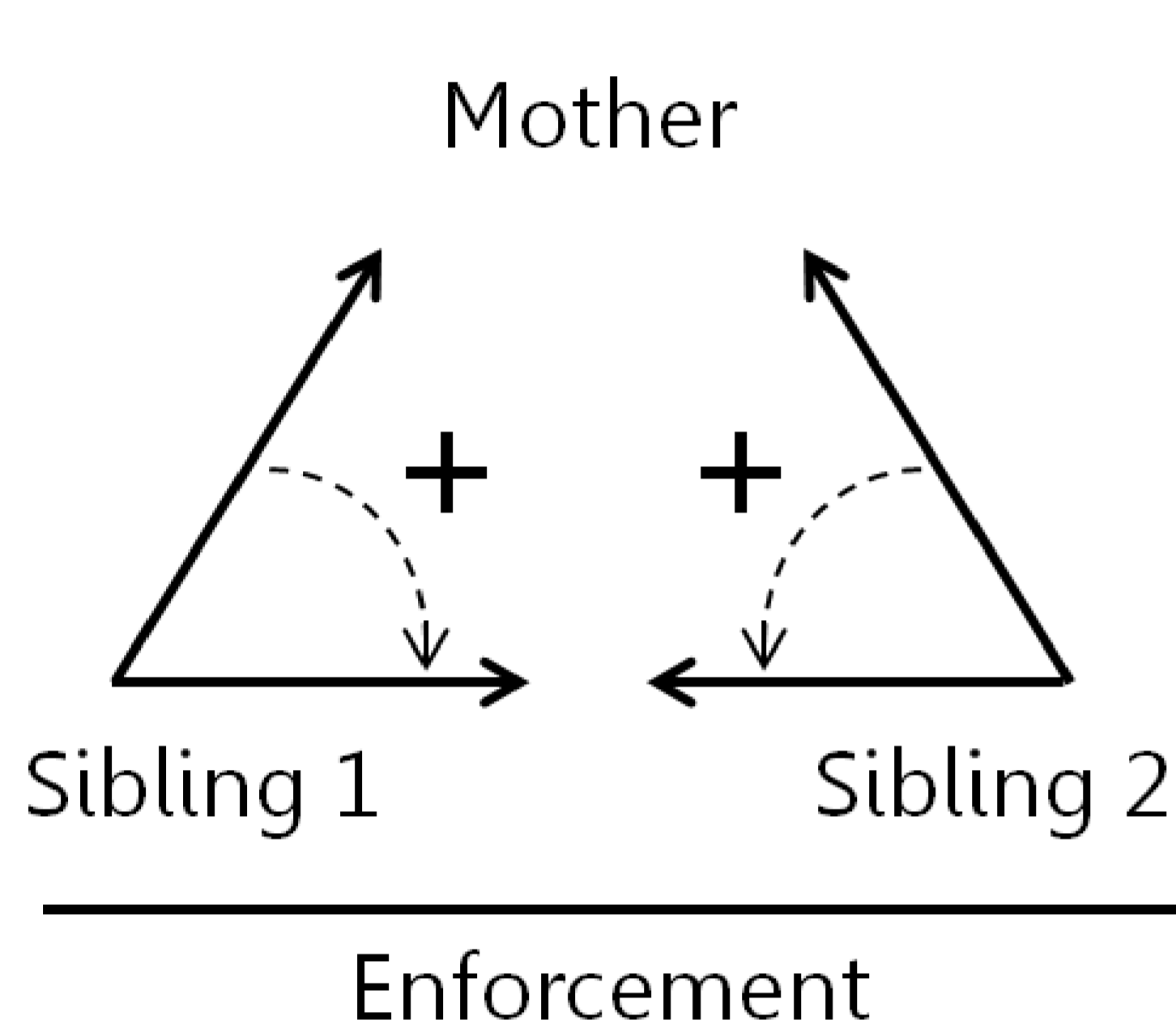
Authors: Vera de Bel MSc. & Matthijs Kalmijn Ph.D.



'How do (discrepant) intergenerational relationships affect the sibling dyad?'

Mechanism

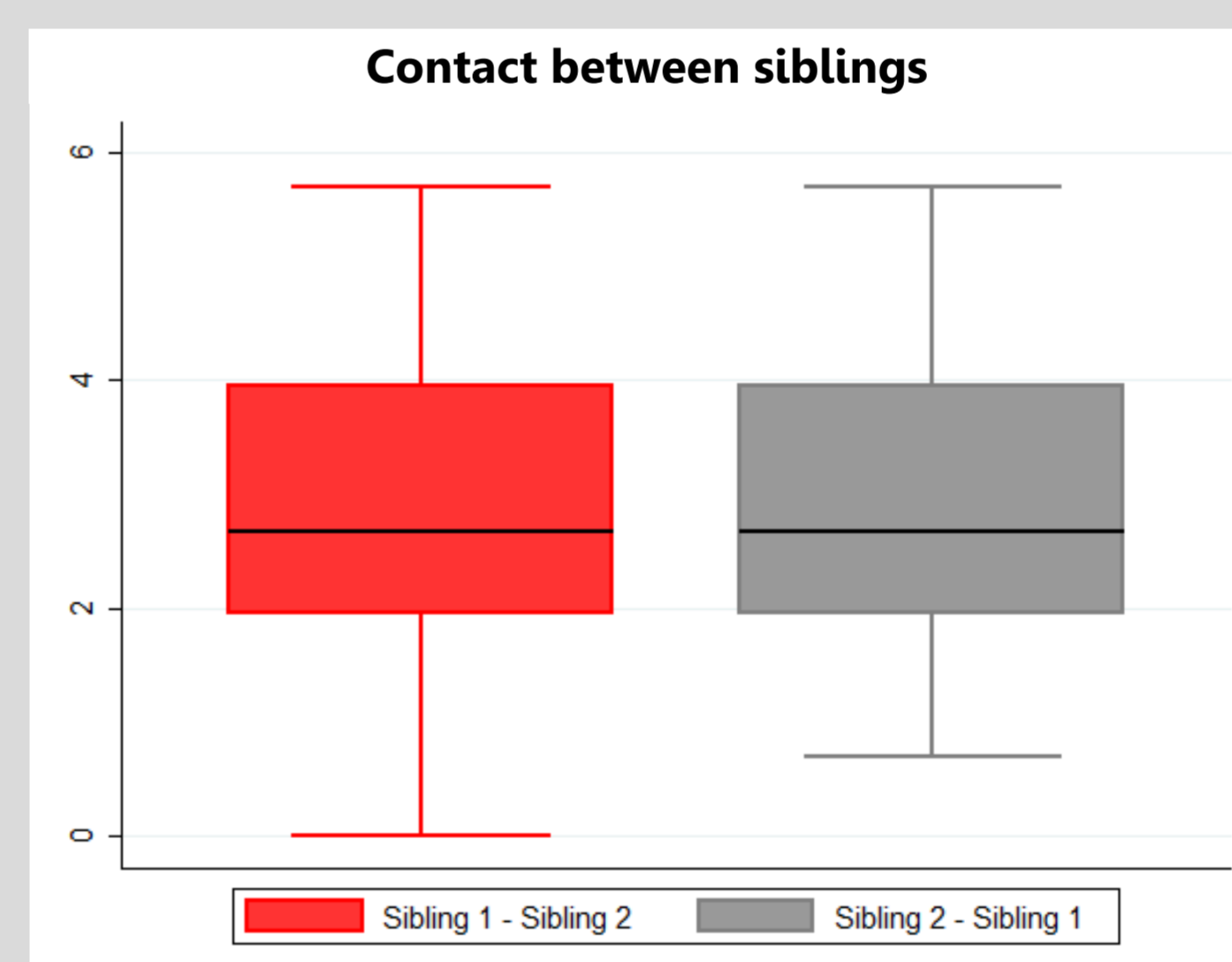
Based on assumptions of **family systems theory** and the **solidarity** perspective we study triads between two siblings and their mother to test **enforcement** and **compensation** mechanisms, as well as a **loyalty conflict** hypothesis based on **balance theory** (Heider, 1958).



Data

The Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS):

- First wave (collected in 2002-2004)
- 907 triads
- Relationship quality, contact, and conflict



Conflict between siblings	No conflict	Conflict
Sibling 1 - Sibling 2	97.7%	2.3%
Sibling 2 - Sibling 1	96.4%	3.6%

Correlations	Rel. quality		Contact	
	1. S1-S2	2. S2-S1	1. S1-S2	2. S2-S1
1. S1 - S2				
2. S2 - S1	.466*		.788*	
3. S1 - mother	.538*	.178*	.524*	.473*
4. S2 - mother	.186*	.428*	.381*	.496*

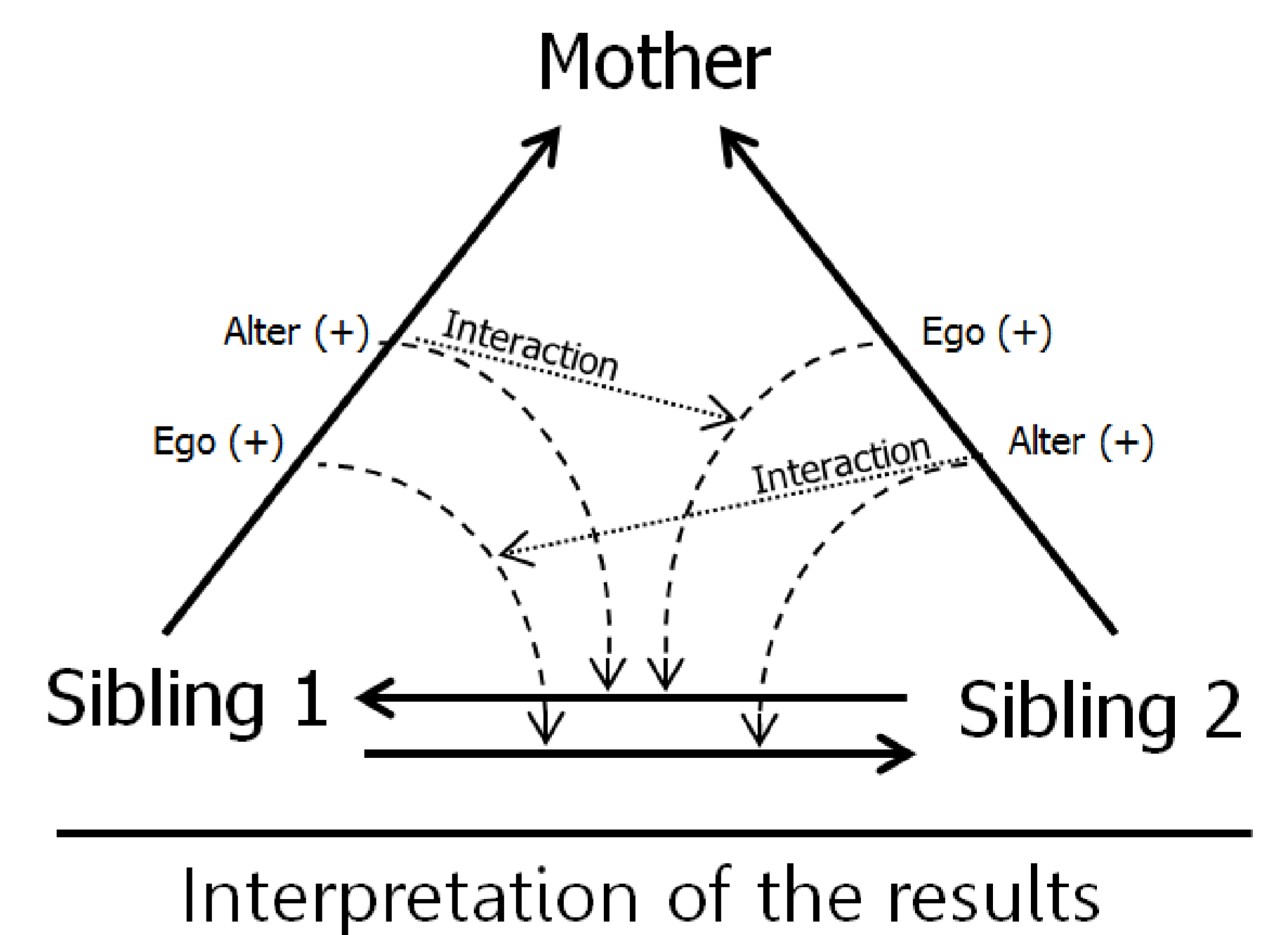
Analysis

Multi-level analysis (sibling relationships nested in families)

- Y = mutual sibling relationship (2 ego - alter relationships)
- X = sibling - mother relationship (ego - mother & alter - mother)
- Balance tested with interaction (EM x AM)

Results	Rel. qual.	Contact	Conflict
Ego - mother (EM)	+++	+++	+
Alter - mother (AM)	+	++	n.s.
EM x AM	++	++	n.s.

The number of plusses represent the size of the effect. Controlled for fam. background, age, gender, education.



Conclusion

- Relationship quality, contact, and conflict: **enforcement**
- Relationship quality and contact: **balance** in addition to enforcement
- Discrepant intergenerational relationships temper the strength of the sibling relationship

Future research

- Project family ties after parental divorce
- Longitudinal complete kinship network data
- Co-evolution of the kinship network and family members' well-being

