“WE’VE BEEN VERY CLEAR ON WHAT WE WANT”
ANALYSING PROCESSES BEHIND PARENTAL LEAVE DIVISION AMONG SWEDISH PARENTS
Processes underlying changes in work division, ideals and identity during the transition to parenthood require...

...analyses of longitudinal, qualitative data.

Need to take into account
- time
- couple dynamics

→ Analytical methods to handle the complex data structure inherent in studies focusing on changes within couples.
Challenges in choosing analytical strategy to study...

...how parents decide upon and realise division of parental leave

First-time parents in Sweden
DATA

- 20 different-sex couples

- Man and woman interviewed separately
  - During pregnancy (2009)
  - Approx. 1.5 years after birth (2010-11)
  - Semi-structured interviews

- Middle-class
  - Man and woman similar labour market situation
  - Egalitarian
Aim: To understand mechanisms that facilitate a gender-typical and an equal division of parental leave, respectively

Strategy:
- Relate parental leave plans and motives before the birth of the child to the realised outcome. The importance of
  - Work characteristics and work commitment
  - Ideals: Gender, motherhood, fatherhood and parenting
  - Distribution of resources between the woman and the man
- Changes between the two interviews particularly important
MODEL

- Norms, ideals
- Couple resources
- Resource distribution in couple
- Preferences, expectations
- Practical limitations
- Bargaining power
- Parental leave division
- Motives

Couple dynamics...
How do we analyse

- individual motives, preferences, expectations, practical limitations

- couple dynamics (relations between the above)

- at each point in time

- changes in this for individuals...

...and for couples,

- e.g., how the interviewees, as individuals and couples, cope with changed external conditions

- differences and similarities between the interviewed mothers and the interviewed fathers?
SUGGESTED ANALYTICAL PROCESS

- **Thematic content analysis** – theoretically and empirically derived themes
  - Intense mothering, new fatherhood, gender construction, explicit and implicit negotiations, relative resources

- **Summaries**
  1. For each individual and each couple at first interview
  2. For each individual and each couple at second interview
  3. “Case profiles” – summing up a) individual and b) couple temporal processes (change and continuity)
  4. “Group profiles” – summing up the experiences of women and men, respectively

RISKS, CONSIDERATIONS

- Losing context
  - Always go back to transcripts (possibly by using functions in Nvivo)
  - Circular rather than linear process

- Drowning in data
  - The summaries
    - Analysing well-defined questions
      - e.g., what facilitates an equal/traditional division of parental leave
    - Analytical process tested on two couples first
Thank you