

**“WE’VE BEEN VERY CLEAR
ON WHAT WE WANT”**

**ANALYSING PROCESSES BEHIND PARENTAL
LEAVE DIVISION AMONG SWEDISH PARENTS**

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BACKGROUND

- 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.

AND MORE SPECIFICALLY...

- Challenges in choosing analytical strategy to study...
- ...how parents decide upon and realise division of parental leave
- First-time parents in Sweden

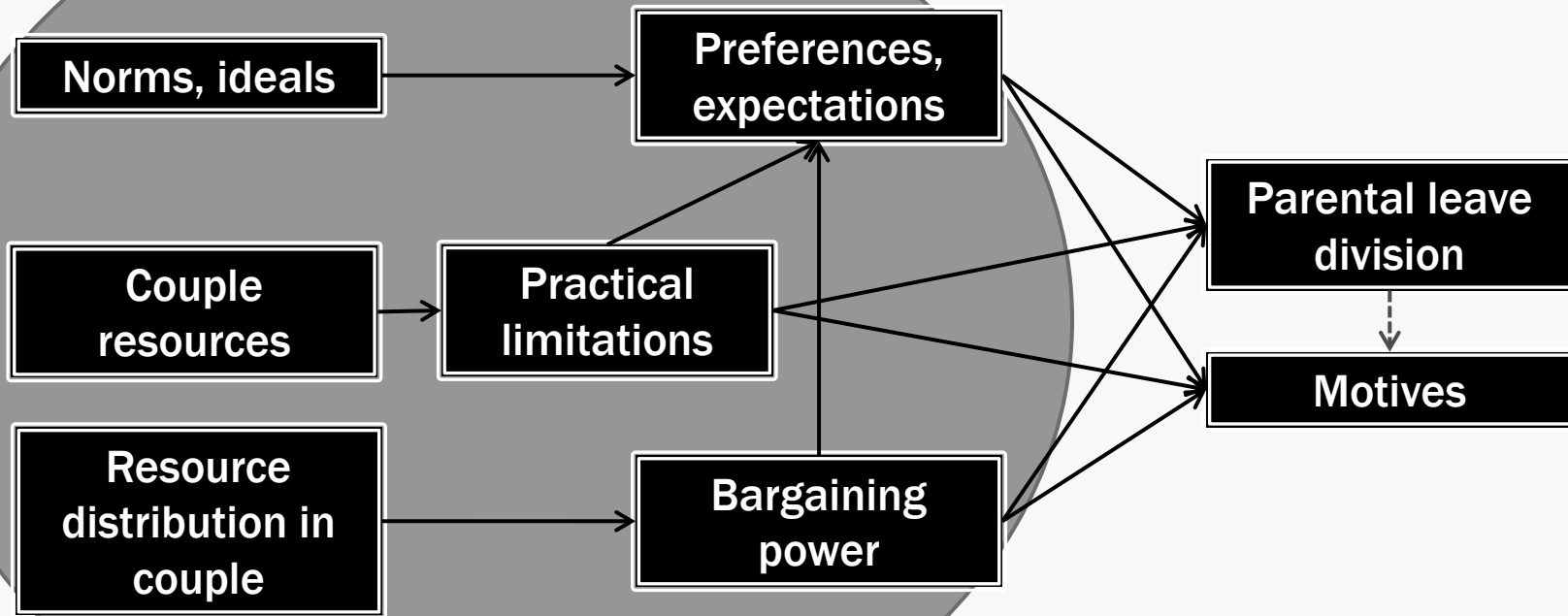
DATA

- 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

THE STUDY

- **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



Couple dynamics...

ANALYTICAL CHALLENGES

- 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

(Inspired by Thomson, R. & Holland, J. (2003) “Hindsight, foresight and insight: The challenges of longitudinal qualitative research”, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6:3, 233-244)

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