LONGITUDINAL QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW DATA COMPARISONS WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUPLES OVER TIME

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INTRODUCTION

• more and more qualitative longitudinal research
• also more common multiple perspectives within one unit of analysis, e.g. one couple, over time
  – benefits: more perspectives and insights discussion processes
  – challenges: consideration of different points in time combining different perspectives
• previous analysing strategies often focussed on either the longitudinal dimension (e.g. Holland et al., 2006; Thomson & Holland, 2003; Hermanowicz, 2013; Saldaña, 2003) or the multiple perspectives within one unit of analysis (e.g. individual interviews: Peukert, 2016; Rüling, 2007; couple interviews: Peukert, 2016; Maierhofer & Strasser, 2016; Rüling, 2007)
PROPOSED DESIGN

• based on separate interviews with both partners of couples at two points in time
• analysis of interviews of first point in time
  – each individual interview
  – comparison of both partners in each couple
  – comparison of the different couples
  – comparison of the women’s and men’s interviews
• analysis of interviews of the second point in time
  – see above
• using the longitudinal design
  – comparison of both points in time, focussed on changes, persistency and inconsistencies
EXAMPLE OF USING THE PROPOSED DESIGN

- DFG-funded project: „The Household Division of Domestic Labour as a Process. How does the Division of Housework Change over the Course of Relationships?“
  - 14 couples: living together, expecting their first child and both gainfully employed at time of first interview, similar (and high) educational attainments
  - interviews at two points in time
  - interviews with both partners separately
  - topics in the interview guidelines: division of housework, paid work and childcare – past, present and plans
EXAMPLE OF USING THE PROPOSED DESIGN

- research questions: How did the couples plan to involve professionals into the care for their child and how did they realize it? What were the reasons for their? Did both partners in all couples have similar ideas and explanations? Were there gender-specific patterns?
- computer assisted analysis (MAXQDA)
- codes: partly derived from the interview guidelines, partly inductively from the interviews
- iterative processes
**Example of Using the Proposed Design**

- **first interview: individual level**

*Table 1*: interviewee’s plans and ideas for the use of professional childcare within the first year of the child’s life

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>informants</th>
<th>crèche</th>
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Note: alphabetic characters denote the interviewed couples; female partners are denoted with ♀ and male with ♂; no information on plans in the interviews of A♂, B♂, N♂
Example of Using the Proposed Design

- first interview: individual level

**Table 2**: reasons for the interviewee’s plans and ideas for using or not using professional childcare in the first year of the child’s life

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- first interview: informants’ sex

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- second interview: individual level

**Table 3**: interviewee’s information on the use of professional childcare at the time of the second interview

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- second interview: individual level

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- longitudinal comparison

*Table 5: comparison of the interviewees’ plans and ideas for the use of professional childcare during the pregnancy with the realizations one year afterwards*

<table>
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EXAMPLE OF USING THE PROPOSED DESIGN

• longitudinal comparison
  – partly different explanations: competence, feelings, family care
  – different explanations of the involvement or not-involvement of professionals compared to the explanations for the plans, e.g. financial reasons to feelings
  – fewer differences between men’s and women’s explanations
CONCLUSION

• qualitative longitudinal interview data with couples need adequate analysing methods
• proposed method compares
  – individuals
  – individuals within couples
  – between couples
  – between women and men
  – over time
**CONCLUSION**

• benefits:
  – findings show
  • that some partners have different plans
  • that even if two partners have the same plan, they do not necessarily explain it similarly
  • some explanations are more often used by women, others by men
  • in some cases, realizations differ from plans
  • explanations change with time
  – allows to focus on differences and similarities on different levels
REFERENCES


Saldaña, Johnny (2003): Longitudinal qualitative research. Analyzing change through time. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press.