



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT
HALLE-WITTENBERG

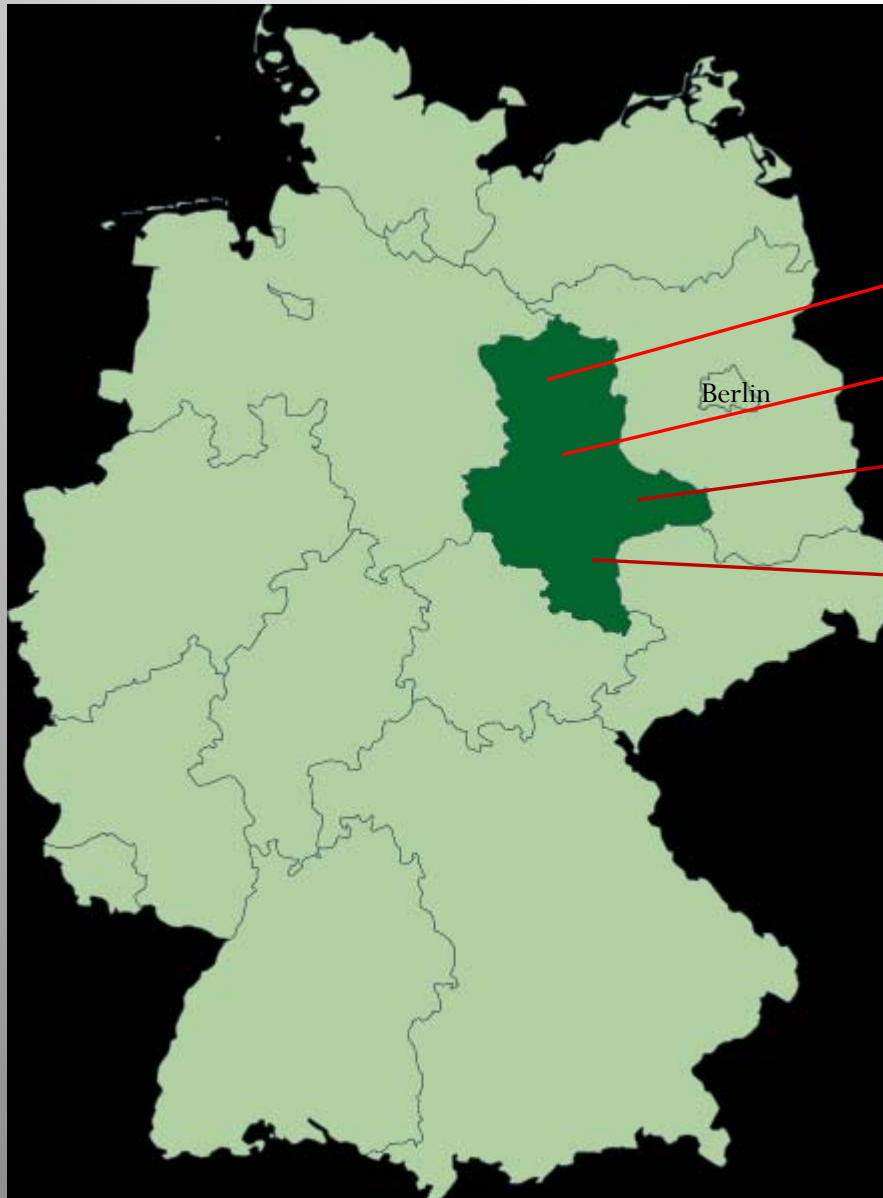


The Richness of Sibling Relationship in Families

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DAAS Seminar 28th November 2007

First: Regional Geography



Stendal

Magdeburg (Capital)

Lutherstadt Wittenberg

Halle(Saale) – largest
town with 230 000
inhabitants

**University of Applied Science
Magdeburg-Stendal** – Applied
Childhood Studies – first of its kind in
Germany
**Martin-Luther-University Halle-
Wittenberg** first European Masters in
Childhood Education and Care

Sibling rivalry

by Ann Davis

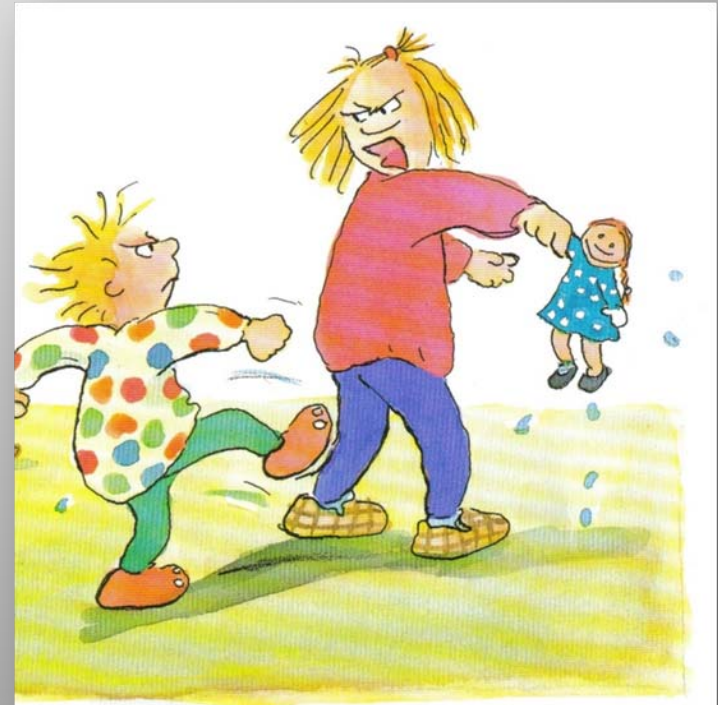
Once, just for a day,
The fighting stopped.
I still don't know why.
Siblings laid down their
arms
And played together.
And I, taken by surprise
Slowly unwound into peace.

In: JUNO, Issue 13, Winter 2007



Structure

- Introduction/Question
- Theoretical Framework/Methods
- Sampling
- Examples
- Results
- Parents and Children
- Conclusion
- Demographic Aspects



Introduction

The sibling relationship is the most long-lasting kinship relationship and the most intensive experience of closeness and intimacy during childhood.

For children growing up in families with siblings results in manifold bonding and communication experiences, relieving the strain on parents in many respects. Especially in large families we can observe the variety of relationships and the diversity of characters and temperaments which can enrich the quality of parent-child relations. The strengthening of social resources, solidarity and resilience will be explored.

Question



Main Focus is the impact of siblings' relationships on family dynamics.

How do the pre-schoolers with their outdoor experiences influence the development of all children in the family?

What kind of inner notions between the siblings and between the children and the parents are observable?

If there is a significant mutual interference between siblings on the one hand and the parents and children on the other hand in a family, how do the members of the family reproduce this in interaction dynamic in their attachment of each other.

Theoretical Framework

- **Grounded Theory** - systematic research methodology in the social sciences developed by the Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss† emphasizing generation of theory from data
- **System Theory of Families** according Helm Stierlin, Fritz Simon, Kurt Ludewig
- **Family Psychology** according Klaus Schneewind, Manfred Cierpka, Heidi Keller
- **Siblings' Research** according to Judy Dunn, Horst Petri, Hartmut Kasten

Conclusion: It is a thesis settled on the faculty of education with a sociological subject and question investigated with qualitative empirical methods and interpreted with the help of psychotherapy knowledge and a depth psychological and systemic approach.

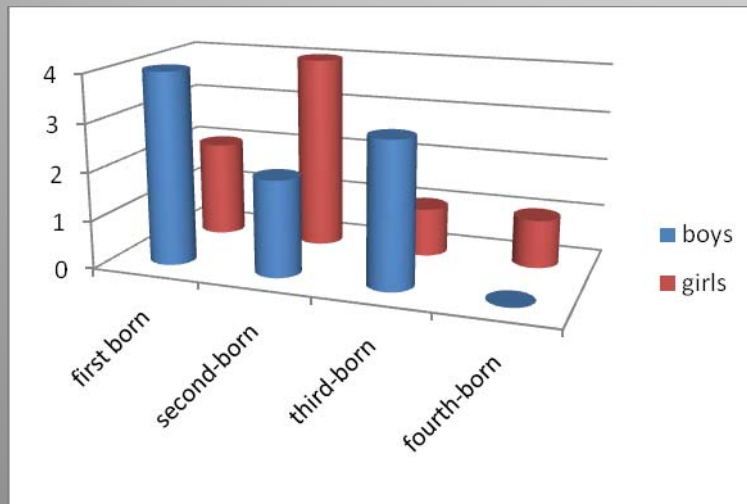
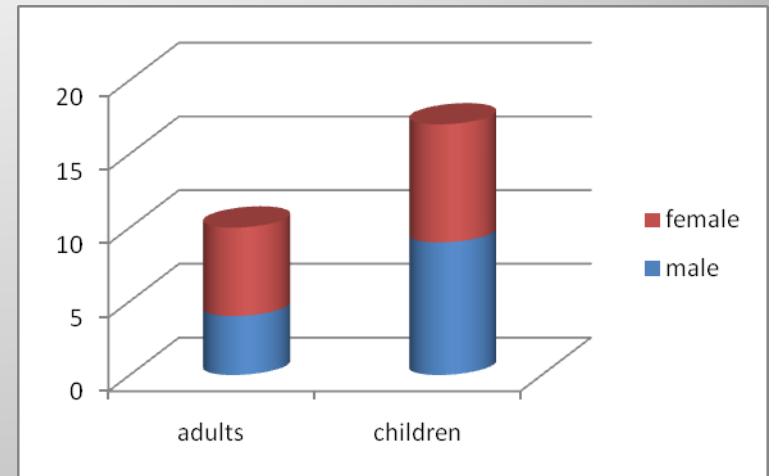
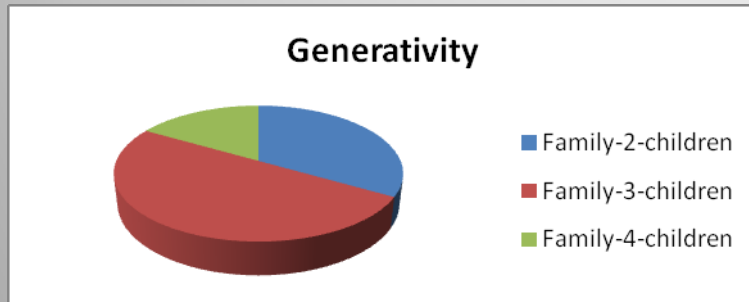
Methods

Qualitative case-study with triangulation of four empirical methods

- Genogram
- Children's drawings (*"Family in animals"- Imagine, I could conjure a blow of miracle cure on your family, which transmute everyone in an special animal, what do you think would your oldest brother be? What could he do best?*)
- Semi-structured interview with the parents
- Family board (project the inner notions of family relations in a simple order at a 50x50cm board of wood)

The results of these diagnosis instruments from family and children therapy are summarized in a so called Family Reconstruction. Afterwards the coding in the computer program MaxQda starts and helps to analyze the data.

Sample of the Family studies

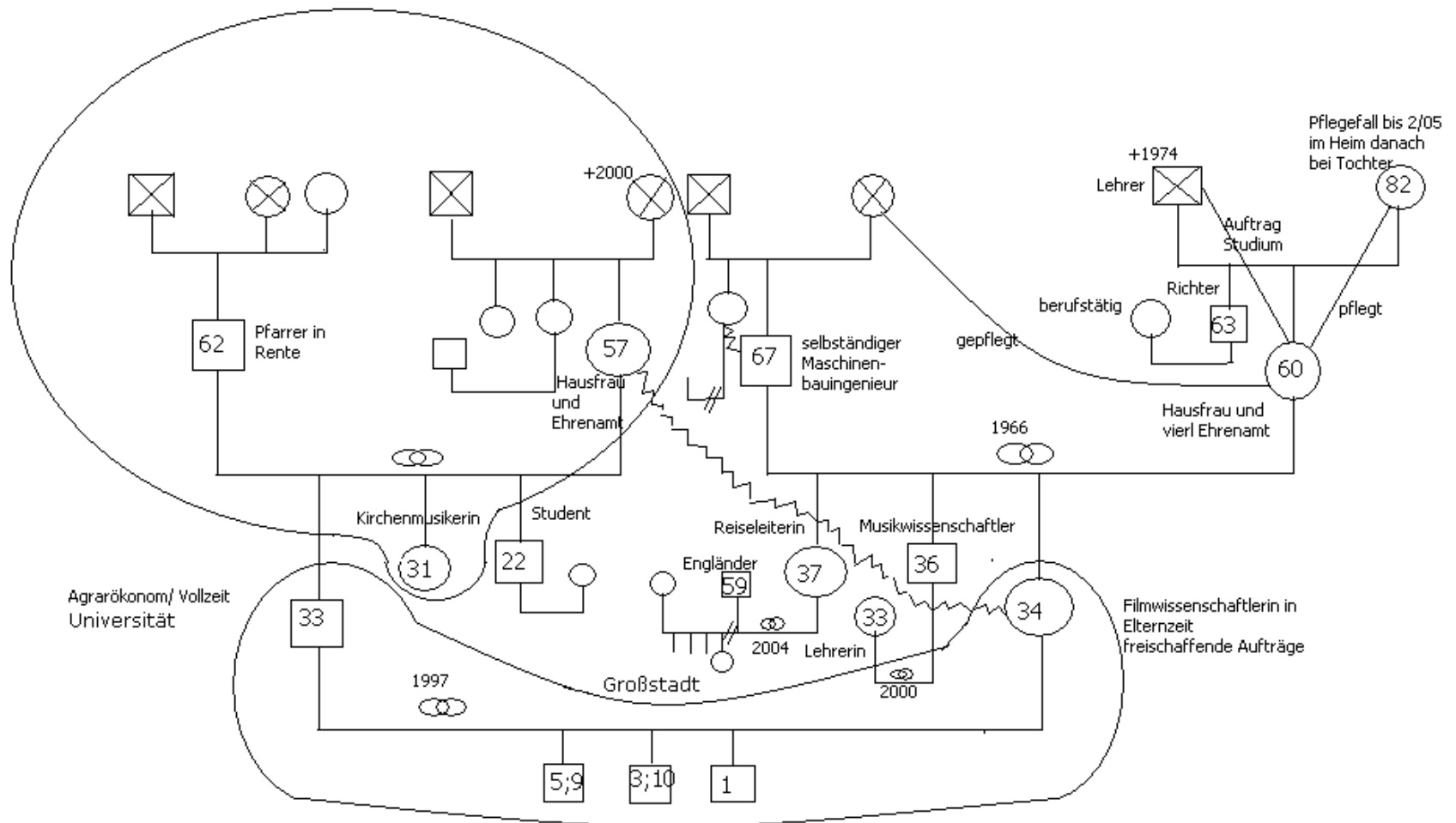


Theoretical Sampling

- Beginning with the first family
- Searching for the next family dependent on the issue
- Finish when there is no more new information in regard to the question

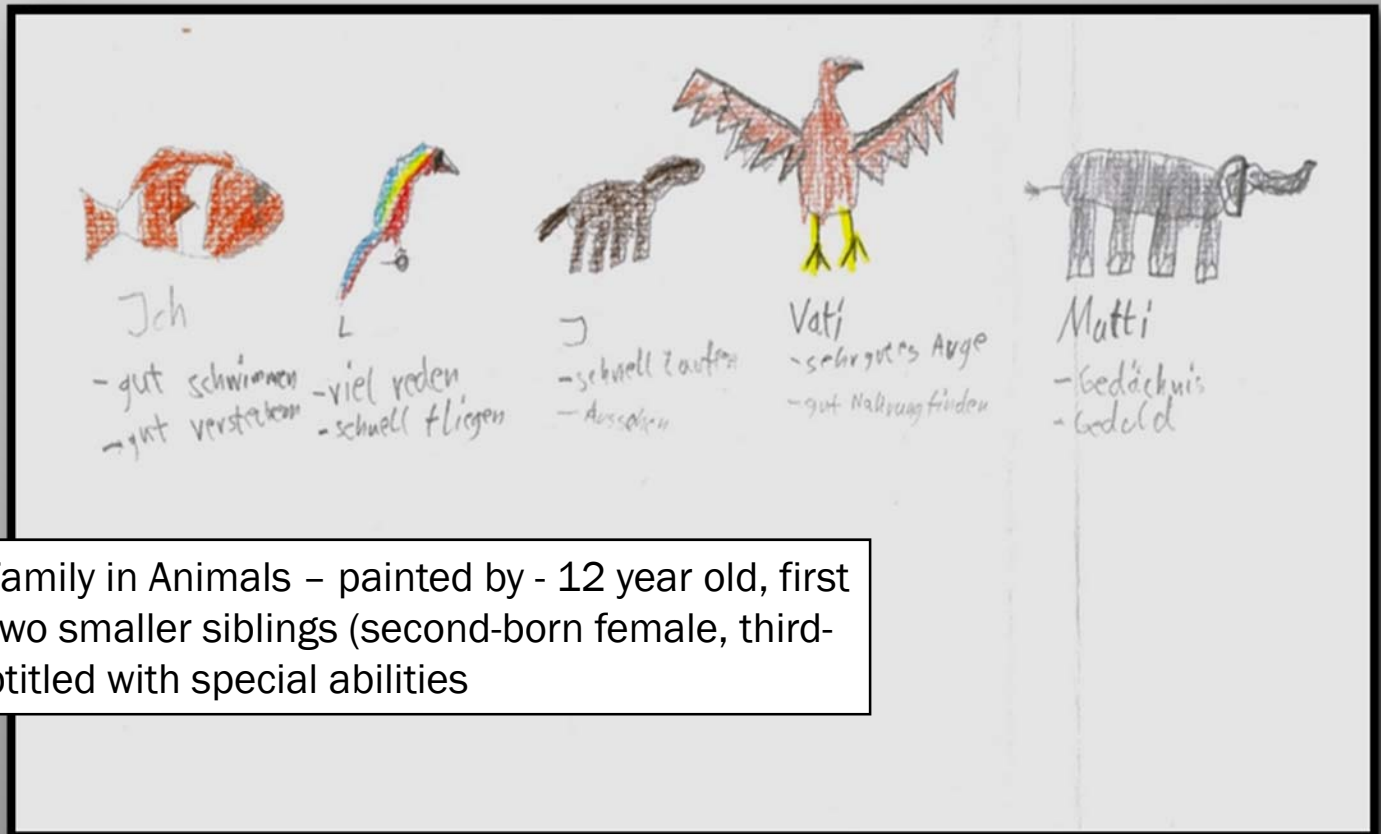
Example for Genogram

Familie V. Genogramm



Example for the Drawings

Research Method: Qualitative approach with nonverbal projective psychological method for younger children (to represent their inner notion of the family)



Picture of his Family in Animals – painted by - 12 year old, first born boy with two smaller siblings (second-born female, third-born male) subtitled with special abilities

Code: Integration of resources (Clara May 11;3 firstborn of three)
„The pattern of the snail, the streaks and the colour of the tiger, here the mane (on the tail), the ears and the eyes of the snail, also the face of the horse yet. And than even the tail of the monkey.”

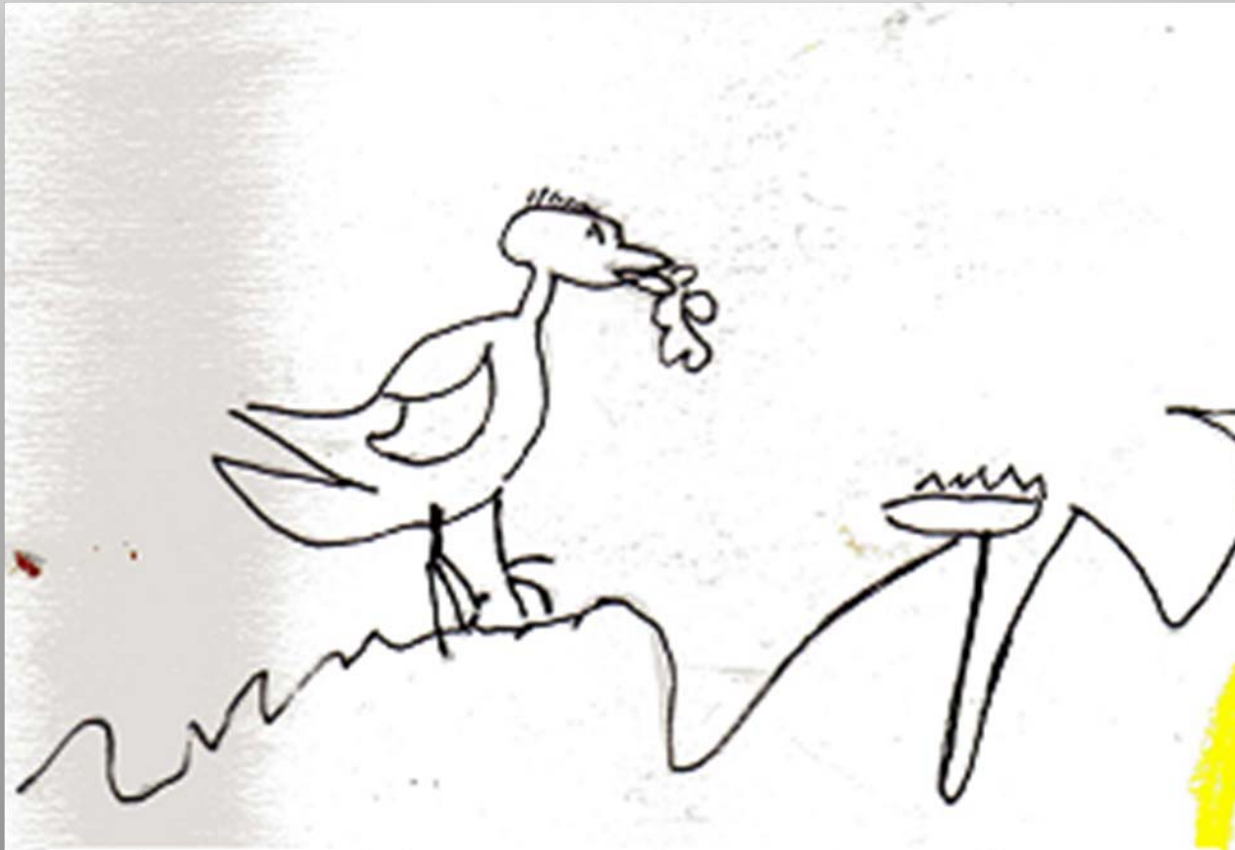
Ressoucosaurus Clara May



Code: Solidarity and Care (Lukas Schlosser 10;7 firstborn of four)

“The eagle brings worms for the peewees.”

In his drawing the other siblings also take food, bananas or money . The mum is breastfeeding and dad practice weight lifting.



Lukas Schlosser (7;10) Selbst

Code: Co-construction of reality (Vincent Victor 3;10 secondborn of three)

Vincent's painting is an expressive self-disclosure and during the design-process his older brother takes the dino-subject into his own drawing. Both of them create a dino-family with their own ideas.



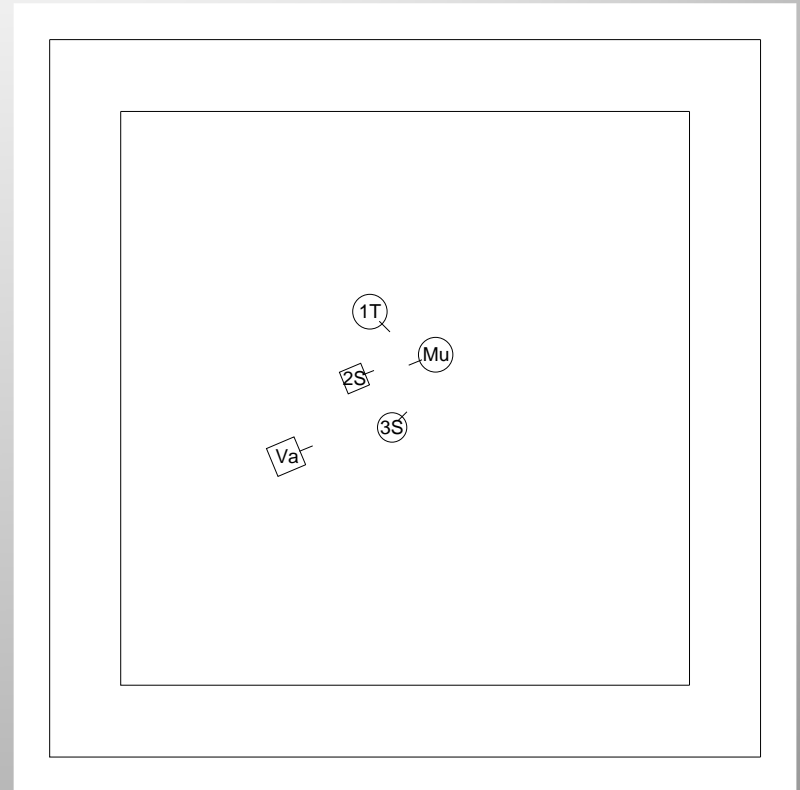
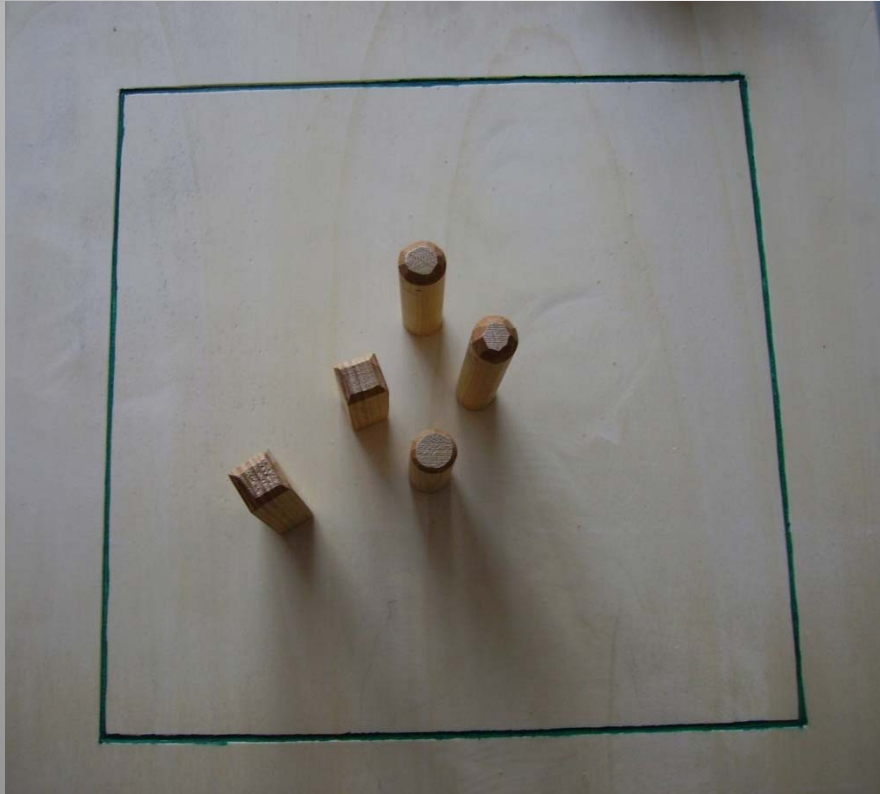
Example Interview-Sequences

“She was torn, she was very ambivalent. She has even so..., this little sister she found amazing, she was so happy about, even as she wasn’t born. Then she was there and she had recognized she took away some of her space. Then she was abrasive to her.” (Mother of two girls)

“Well, you have the feeling, they feed each other lines. And they need each other. I believe that Frank also needs Vincent the little one. In terms of ‘when you come with me then I also come. I’ll do that thing too’. Because, he is quite ingenuous. He goes more innocent into some situations when the greater one just slow down.”

(Mother of three sons)

Example for the Family Board

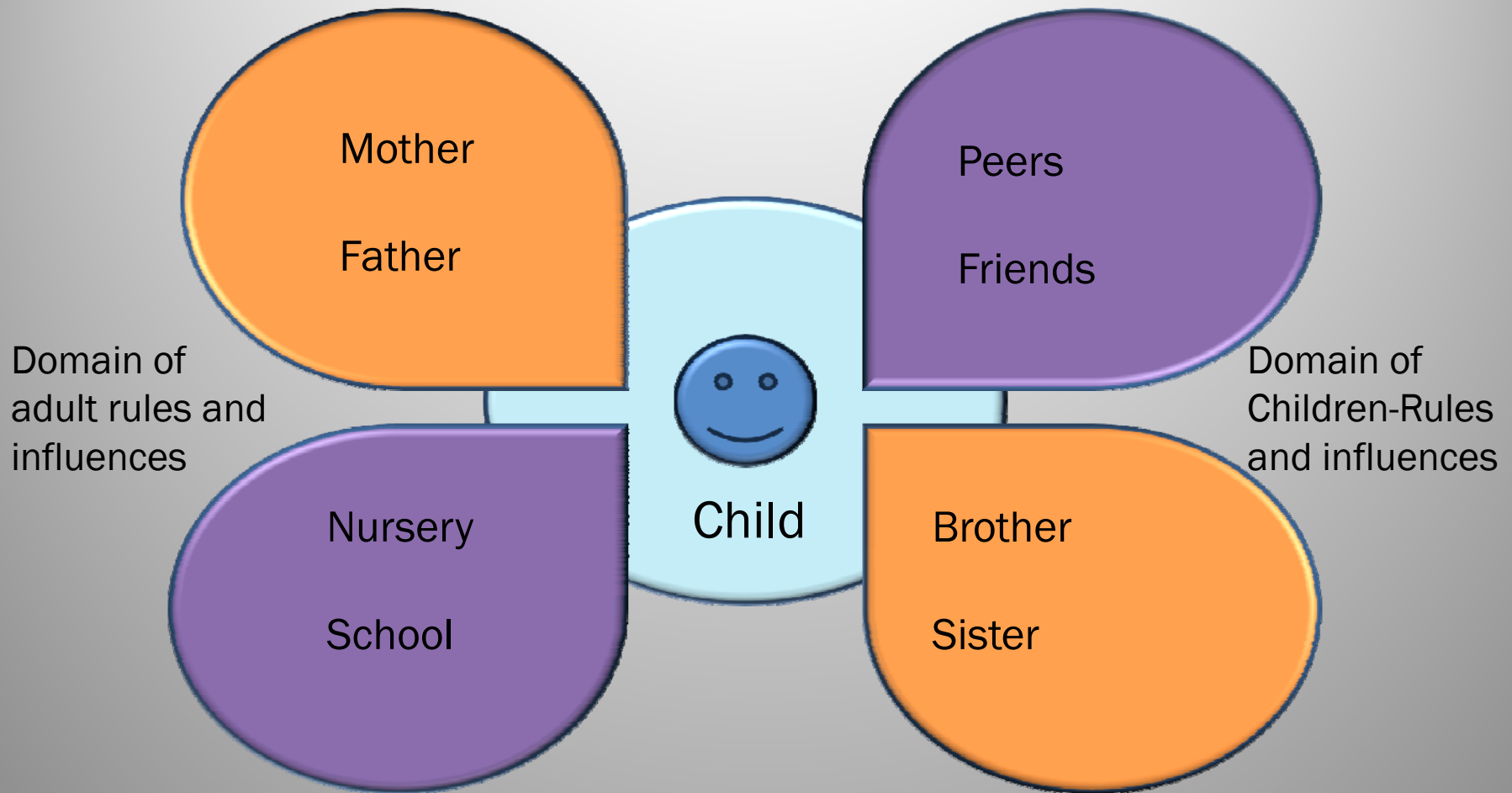


“Familienbrett” = Family Board as a structural projection to visualize relations inside the family,
Family work together in the process of positioning.

Results

- Growing up with siblings comprehends many special advantages which I call **Multiple Relationship Enhancement** (means Enrichment of interpersonal Relationships). This strengthening of resilience happens in a horizontal level between siblings as well as in the vertical connection between children and parents.
- **Multiple Relationship Enhancement** also occurs from a parental perspective. Families with many children (from 3 children up) show observable strengthening of their resources regarded in the vertical level. The richness of nurturing ability in large families can heighten the conscious experience of one's own effectiveness. It disburdens.

Socialisation Agents in Childhood



Parents

- **Optimized Time Management** – reduced concentration in dealing with one child, space for horizontal learning between children, accustom patterns of action, familiarity with everyday life episodes, habitualization of care procedures and shared attention
- **Mental Relief** – relaxed handling with subsequent children, practiced sequences of action, internalized the experience of child-rearing and communication patterns, ability to interpret children's signals and messages, development of routines
- **Motivational Strengthening** – reduced negative appreciation (themselves) of success of education, qualify one's sense of indebtedness, doubt and guilt, shared responsibility with the older siblings, because they influences the younger ones more intensive

Children

- **Learning:** Siblings orientate themselves on each other in acquiring of language, role-playing, and imitation learning
- **Social competence:** Siblings have got many benefits in development of empathy, and strategies of conflict resolution
- **Openness to experience:** Siblings' coexisting competition intensifies creativity and openness for new facts
- **Disposition to love:** Intimacy and love create affective closeness and manifold internal representation of attachment patterns (especially in the sib subsystem, in addition to parents-child-attachment)
- **Solidarity:** Children demand for justice in the family, gain frustration tolerance and knowledge of dependencies, behave with respect and ally themselves

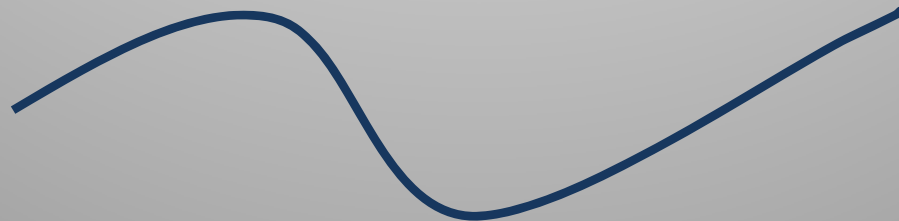
Conclusion

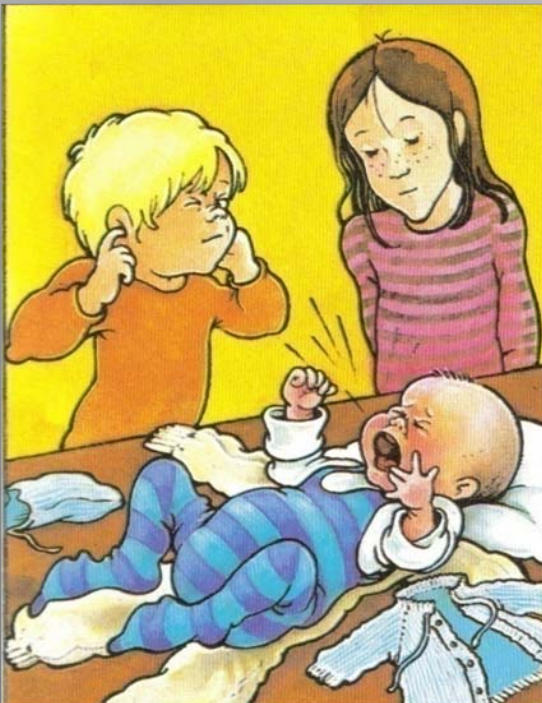
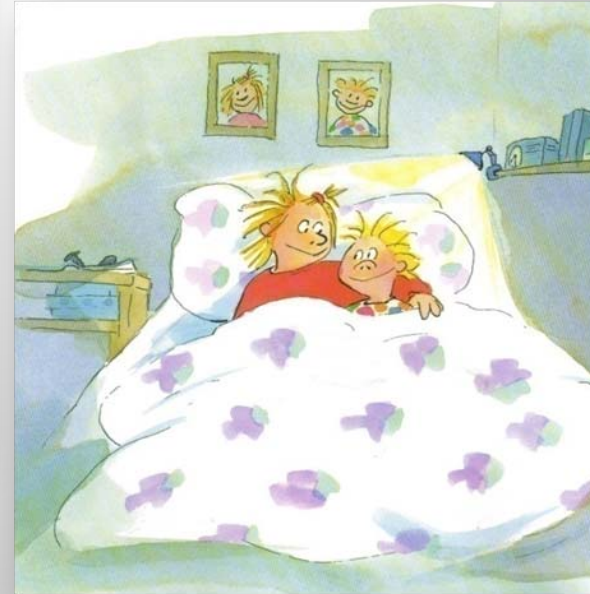
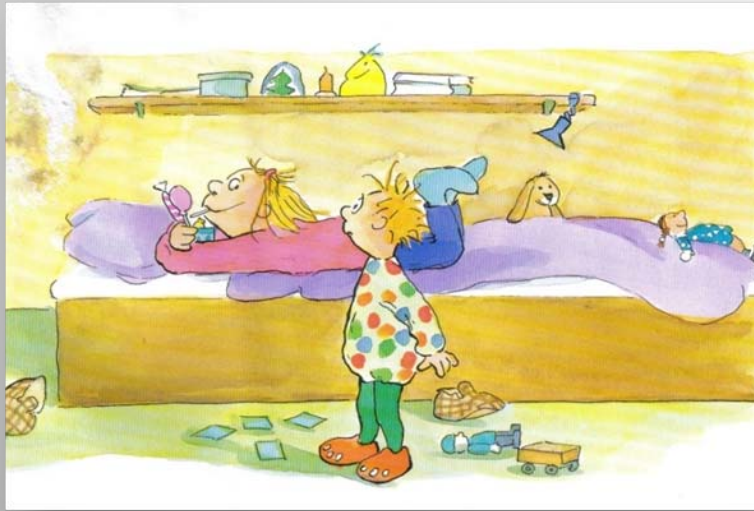
- When we realize that relationship enhancement had developed in larger families we have to recognize the prospect, that some of this cannot emerge in a society with a lack of siblings.
- Kinship will decrease in the further generations. This outlook for a society poor in siblings is bleak; a circumstance which has yet not entered discourse on population policy. The social capital of a society and the openness to experience is reduced when there no solidarity experiences could arise.
- Childhood as well as parenthood will be much more difficult and parents and children will lose self-esteem in managing social relations.

Demographic aspects

- Expecting the demographic development especially in Germany the lack of children tends to result in disappearing solidarity associated with a reduced ability of attachment and care.

Lifelong
dynamic of
closeness
between
siblings





May many
children can live
under such
conditions making
several nice
experiences!

