



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT  
HALLE-WITTENBERG



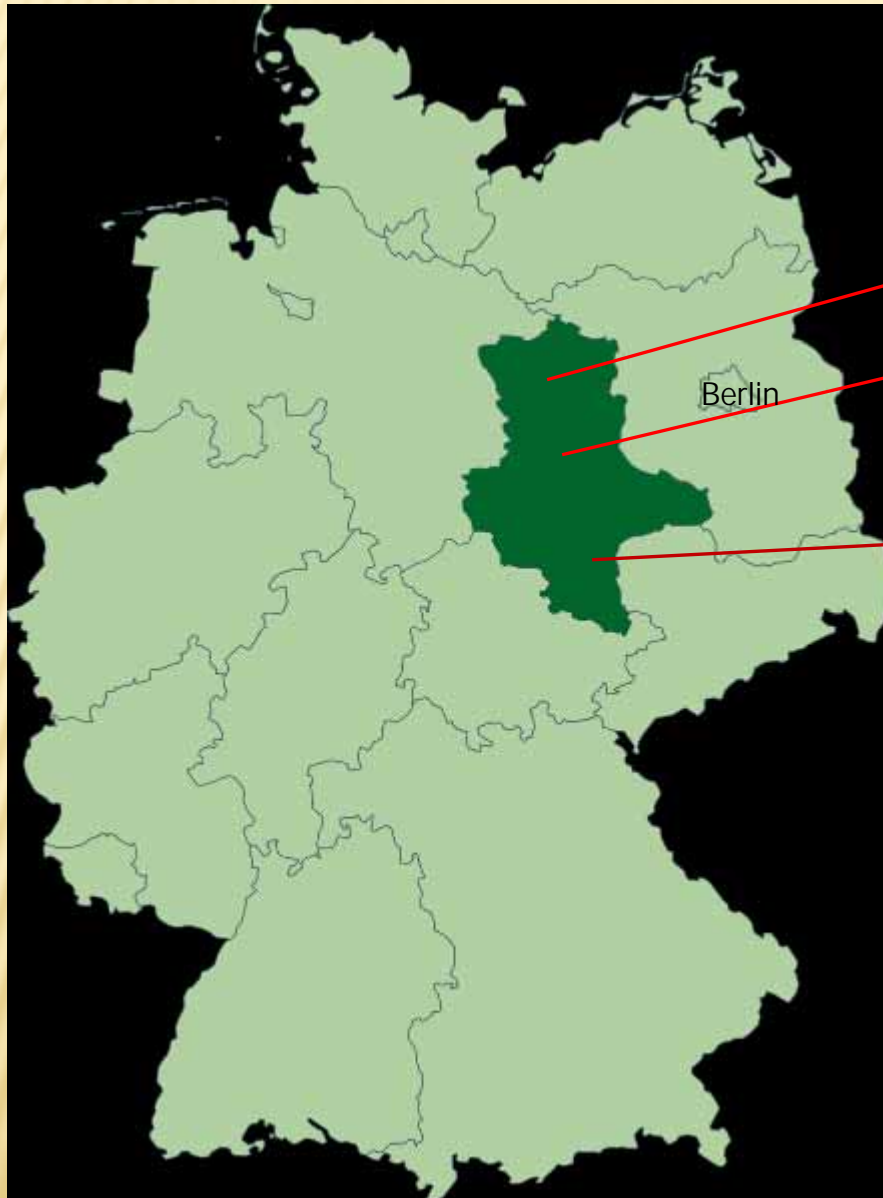
# SIBSHIP AS A HEALTH FACTOR IN FAMILIES

## ENRICHMENT OF SIBLING RELATIONSSHIP AFTER BIRTH

Inés Brock, Martin-Luther-University Halle-  
Wittenberg and University of Applied Science  
Magdeburg-Stendal , Germany

IIS World Congress Budapest 2008

## First: Regional Geography



Stendal

Magdeburg (Capital)

Halle(Saale)

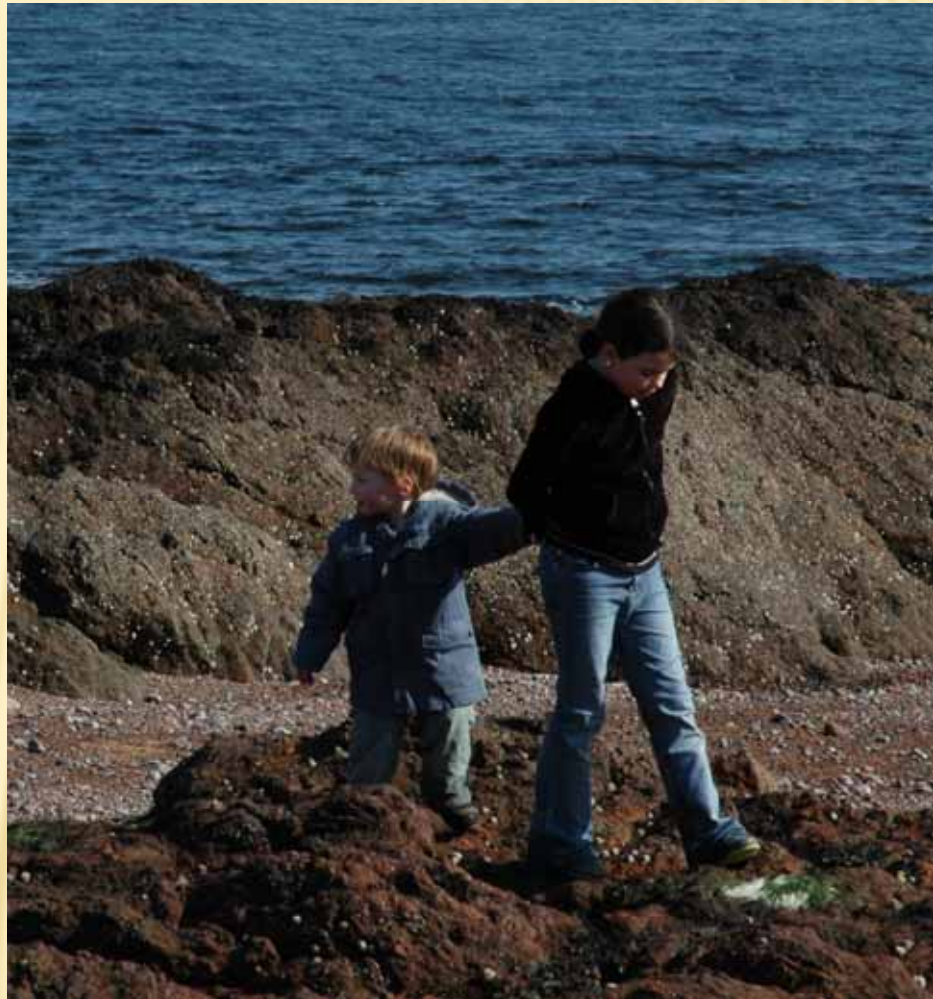
University of Applied Science  
Magdeburg-Stendal – Applied  
Childhood Studies – first of its kind  
in Germany  
Martin-Luther-University Halle-  
Wittenberg first European Masters  
in Childhood Education and Care

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

## **SIBLING RIVALRY**

**BY ANN DAVIS**





# MAIN RESULT OF MY THESIS:

An infants' arrival on earth is a tremendous experience for its older brothers and sisters *AND* promotes a healthy psychological development for both. Babies were influenced in their development as well as the elder ones. It can be called a mental capital which arises in families with more than one child.



# STUDY OF LITERATURE

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- ✘ Astonishingly there is hardly no empirical research about the transition after birth with regard to the older siblings.
- ✘ Sociology as well as other related disciplines like childhood studies, psychotherapy, midwifery and even family psychology do not pay attention on the positive aspects of the time of transition after birth especially for the older sibs
- ✘ Studying sibship-relations is not widespread

## SANDERS, ROBERT (2004) SIBLING RELATIONSHIP. THEORY AND ISSUES FOR PRACTICE

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„Interestingly, for some children there are positive changes associated with the arrival of a new baby. ... more surprisingly, nearly as many children go from having insecure attachments before the birth to having secure attachments after (26 %) ... That the transition from insecure to secure attachments may be a reflection of the total commitment of the mother's psychological resources to the impending arrival...“



# AIM OF THE STUDY – MY INTEREST

Focus on positive aspects for the older siblings after birth: Are there any consequences which arise beside the enthroning trauma?

How does the inner notion of their family change?

Which impacts do develop in the dynamic of their existential relevant affiliation system?

Attitude:

Look at the material curiously!



# DESIGN

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- ✘ Case Study with qualitative approach
- ✘ Triangulation of four diagnostic 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 younger brother be? What could he do best?*)
  - + Semi-structured interview with the parents/mother
  - + Family board (project the inner notions of family relations in a simple order at a 50x50cm board of wood with simple wooden stones/figures)

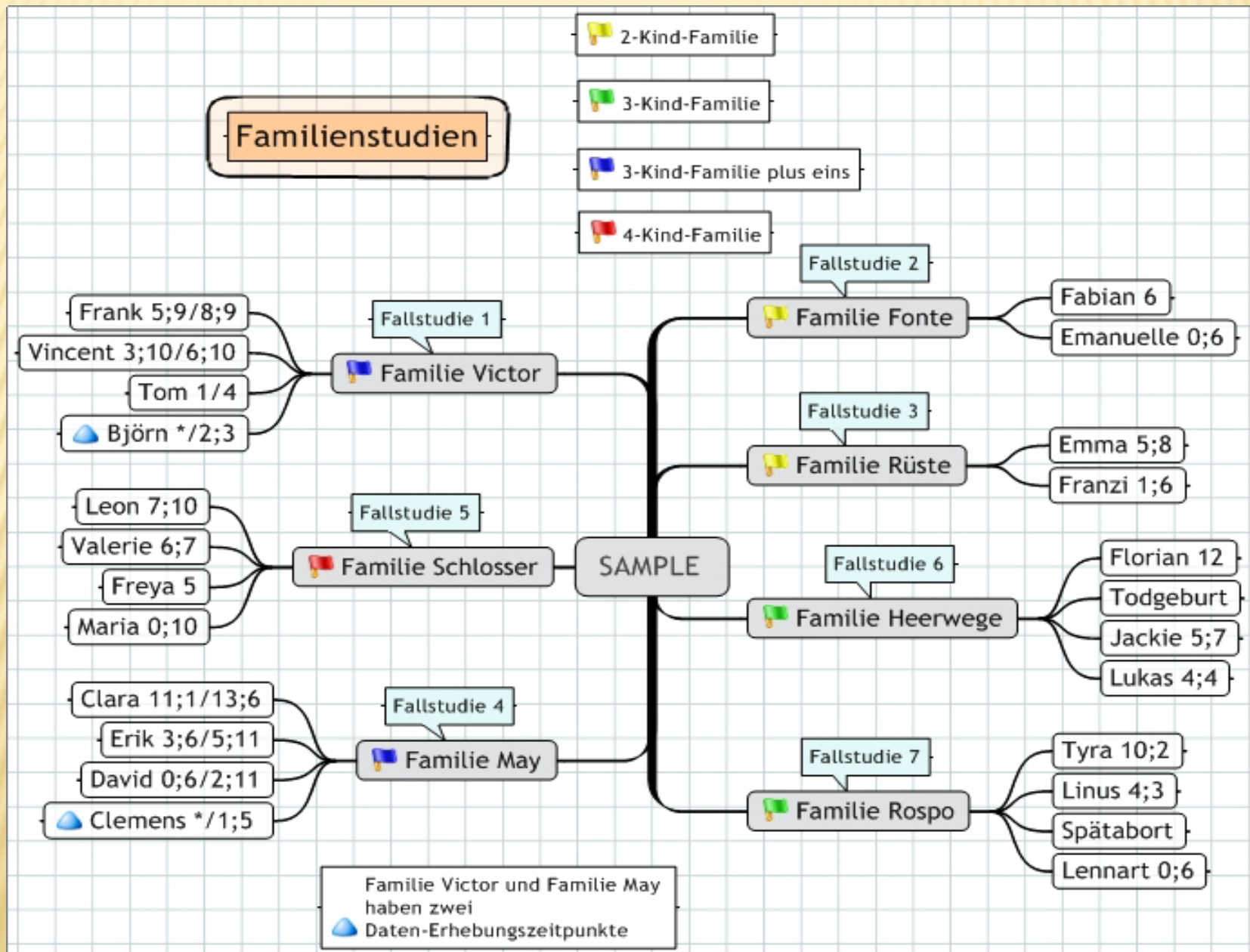


# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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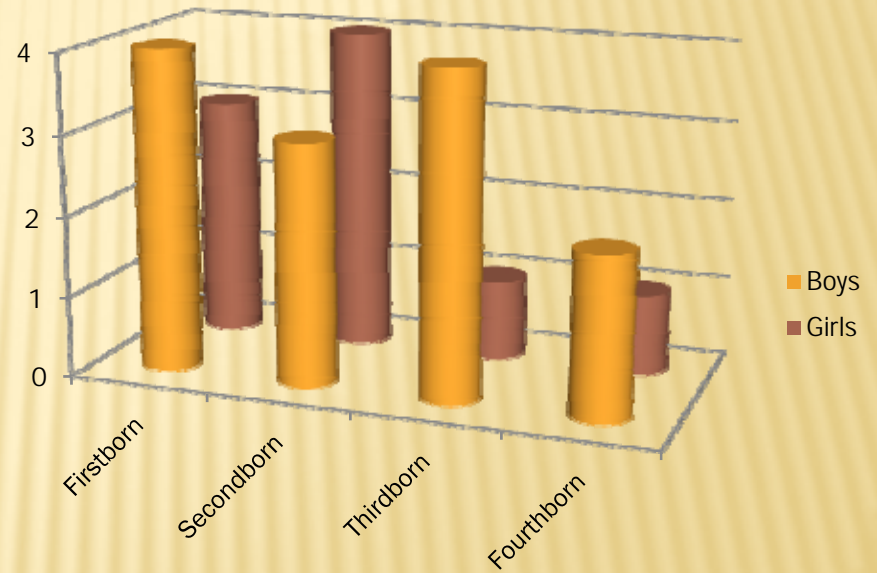
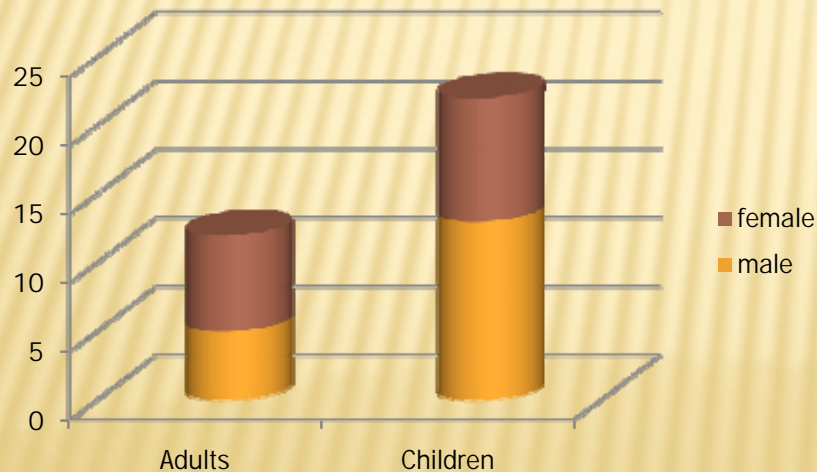
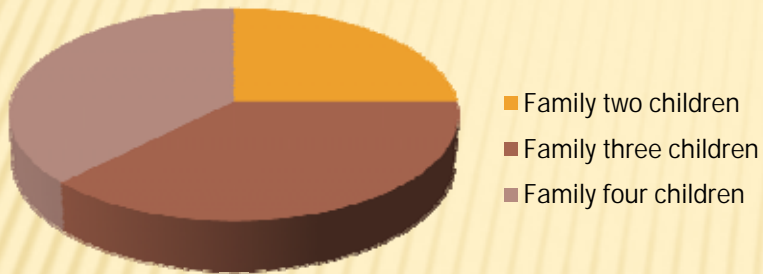
- ✘ **Grounded Theory** - systematic research methodology in the social sciences developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss† emphasizing generation of theory from data
- ✘ **System Theory of Families** according to Helm Stierlin, Fritz Simon, Kurt Ludewig
- ✘ **Family Psychology** according to Klaus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

# 7 Families – Qualitative Case Studies

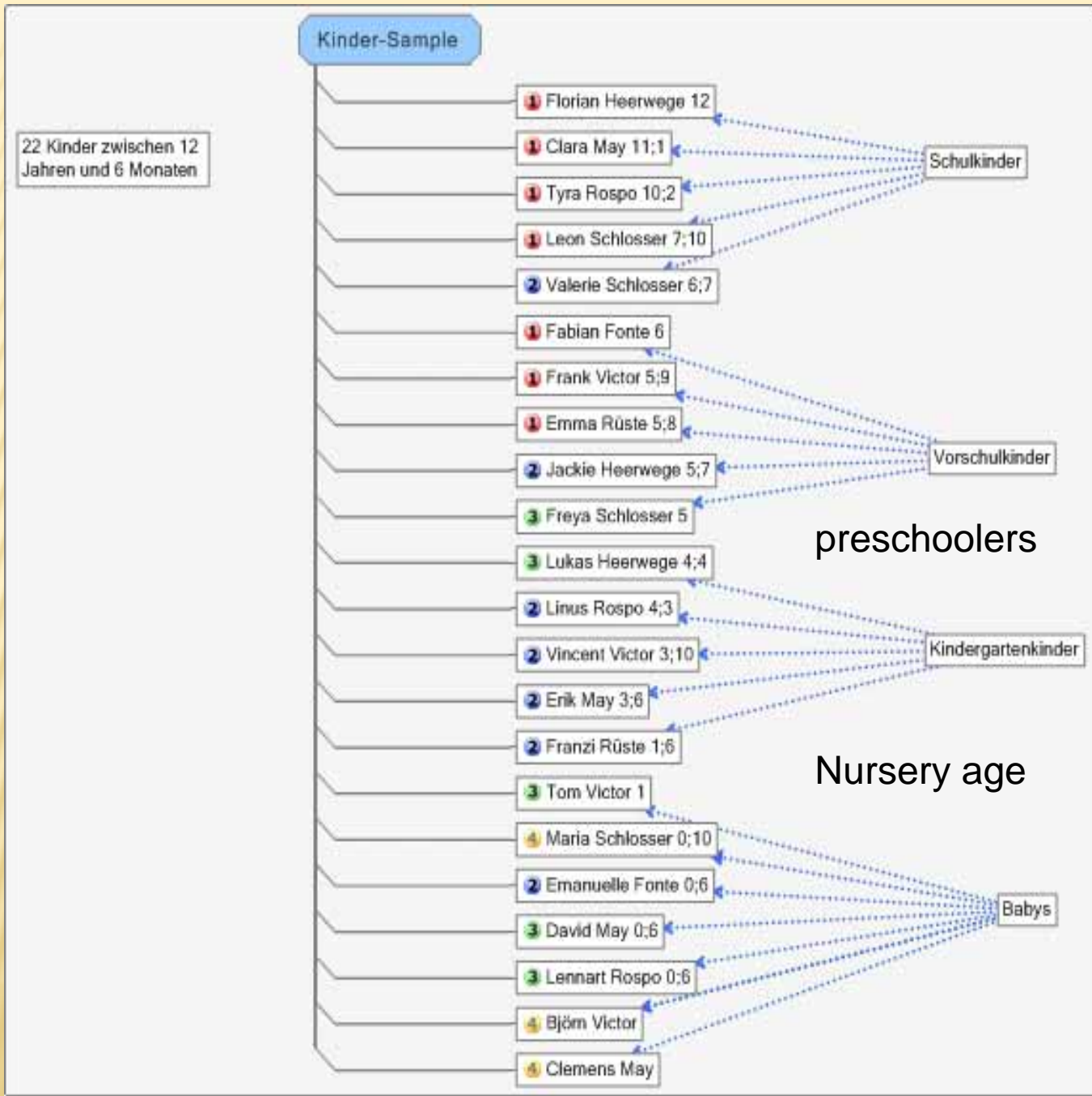


# SAMPLE – 7 FAMILY-STUDIES - N= 31

## Generativity





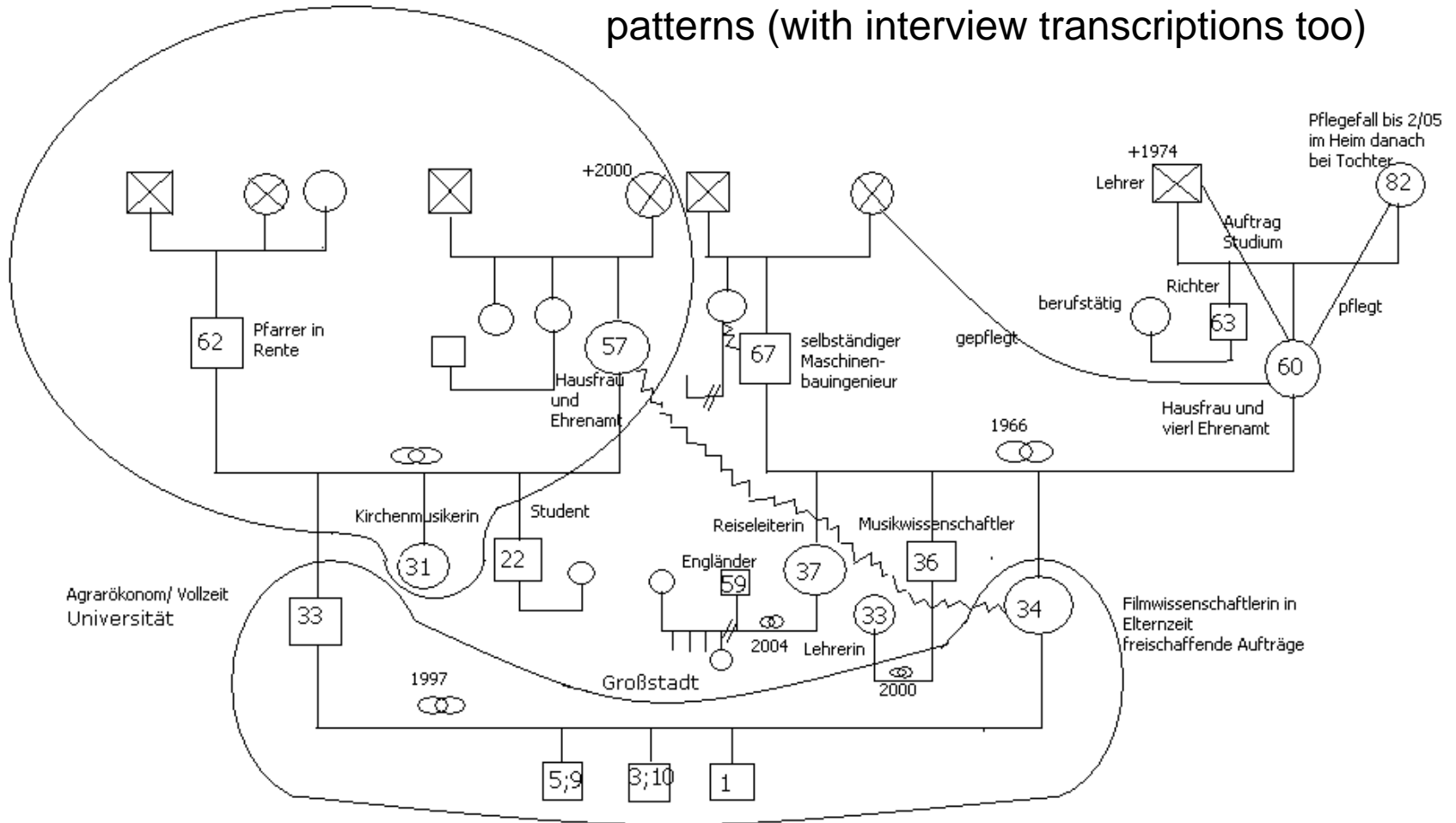


22 children  
 13 of them were included in data collection  
 7 of them were infants up to the first birthday

# EXAMPLE FOR GENOGRAM

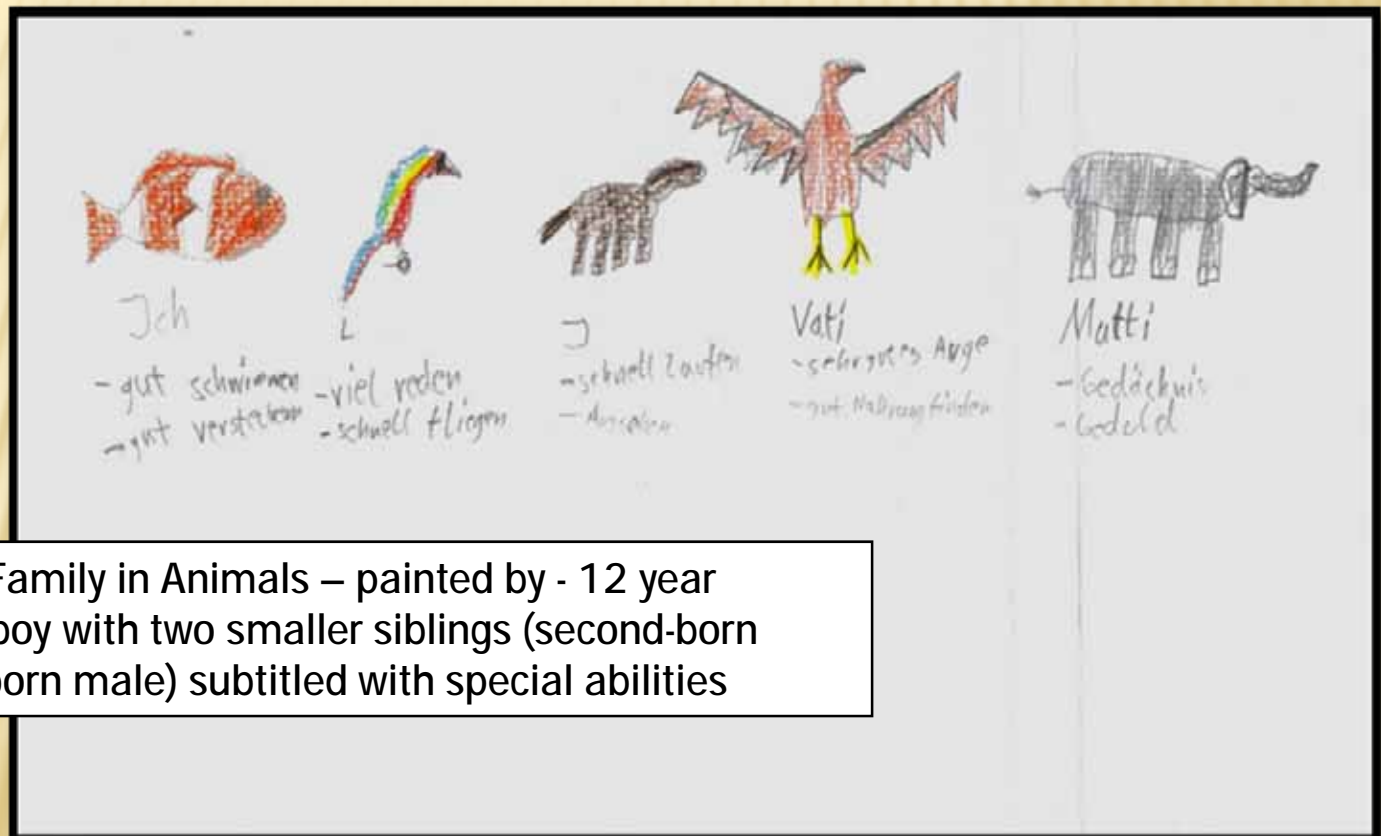
Familie V. Genogramm

Material for Reconstructing intergenerational patterns (with interview transcriptions too)



# 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.



incorporated little  
brother

internalized his own  
kind of pregnancy



# 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)

# QUOTATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Eric (secondborn) supposes he belongs to Clemens (baby), and Clara (firstborn) is with David (thirdborn). I think it's totally cute. I belong to dad, Clara belongs to David and he belongs to Clemens. Nobody ever told it before.

Now we pay attention that everything is regulated now, one thing after another. To get a fixed daily rhythm. I think that makes it easier.

And David (thirdborn), he was really a toddler at that time, it was so sweet how he took care of and was cautious too.

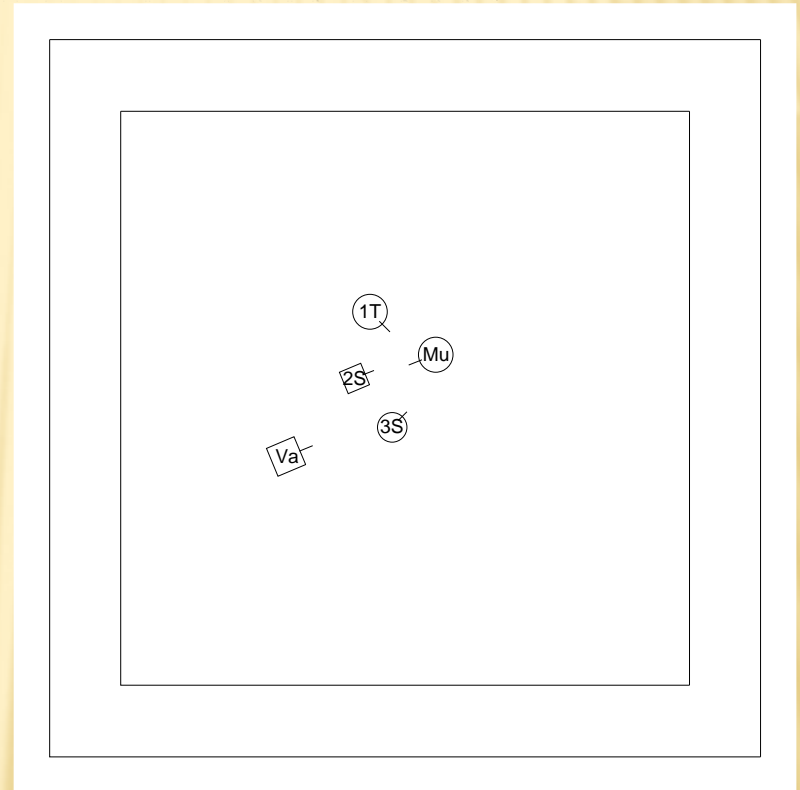
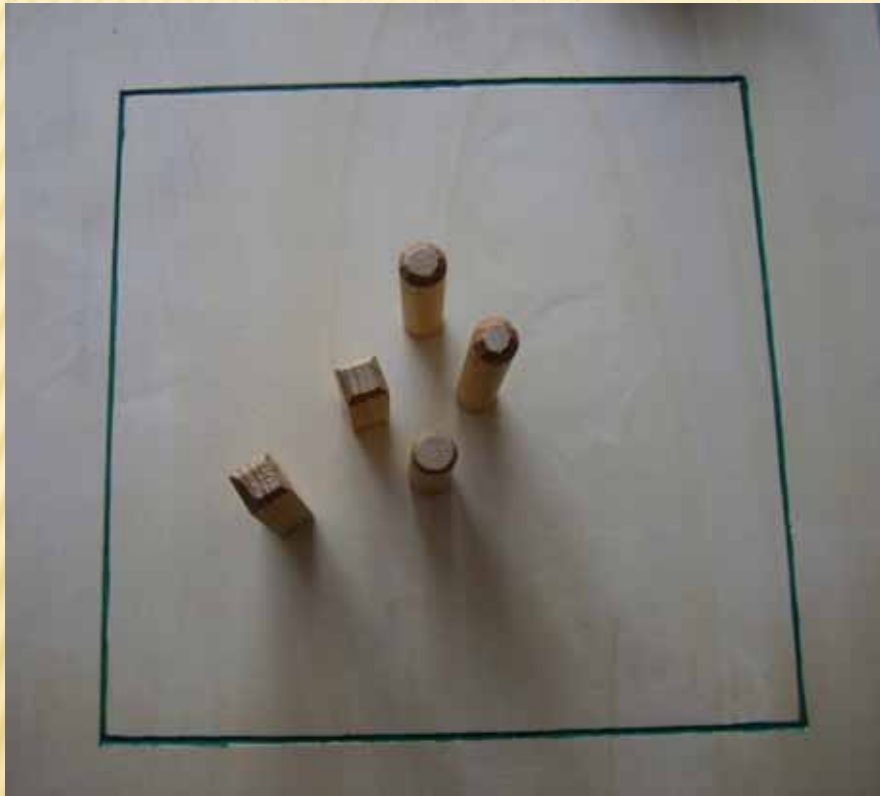
Mother of four (a girl and boys)

The most fascinating is that they are actually so different, quite unlike. This experience I think is simply unbeatable.

Well, to see, hey, wow, they all have their own character, yes, hardly anyone could imagine.

Mother of four boys

# EXAMPLE FOR THE FAMILY BOARD



“Familienbrett” = Family Board as a structural projection to visualize relations inside the family, notions of position of the members

Family work together in the process of positioning. The nonverbal representation allows to be equal during data collection independent of age.



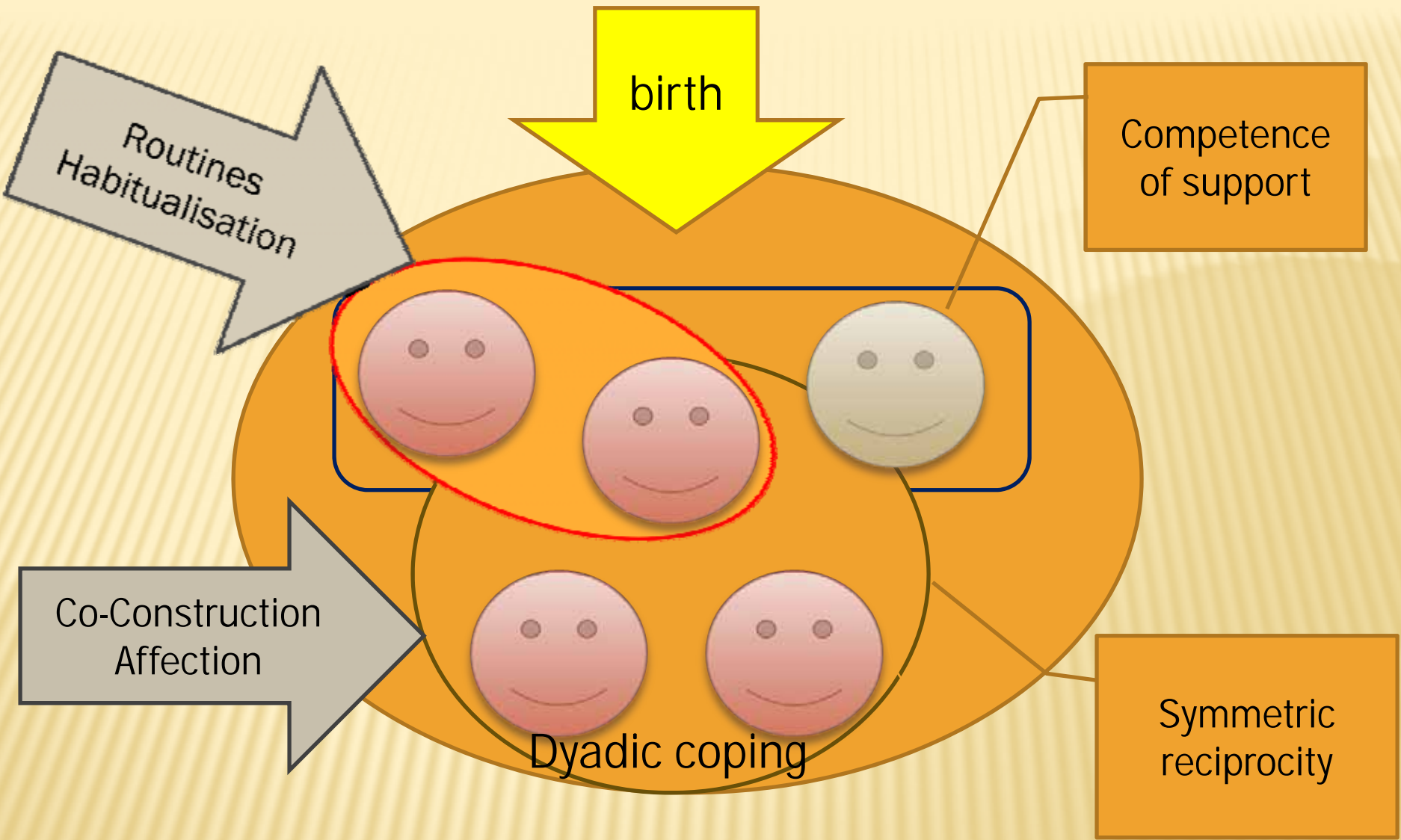
# OUTCOMES – HOLISTIC HEALTH FACTORS

## × Findings

- + Solidarity in helping each other
- + Learning by imitation, role-plays
- + Solving conflicts also physically
- + Unique intimacy

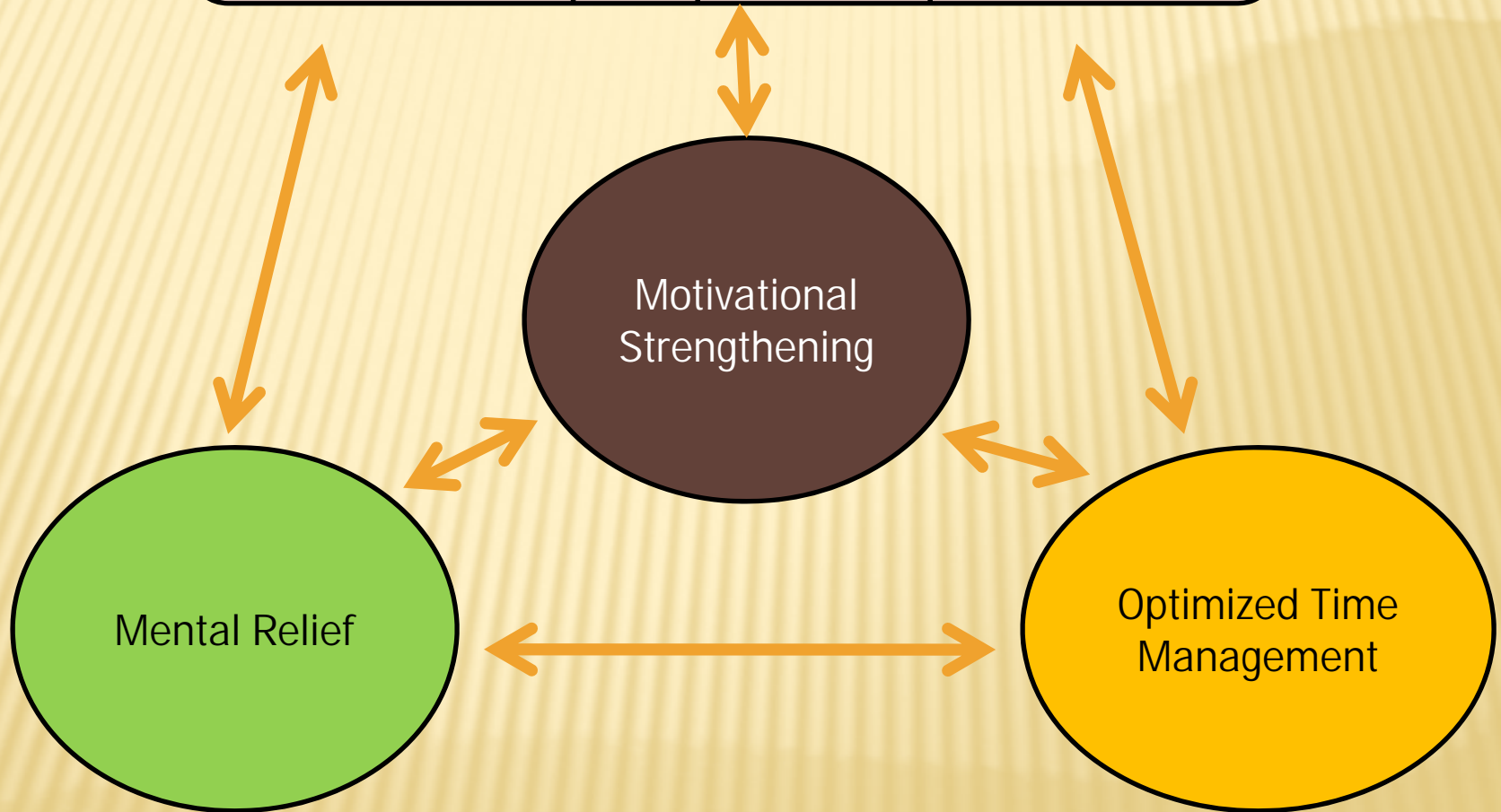
## × Results

- + The baby
  - × Stabilize the hierarchy in the family
  - × Relief the older sibs
  - × Extend the developmental conditions within the family



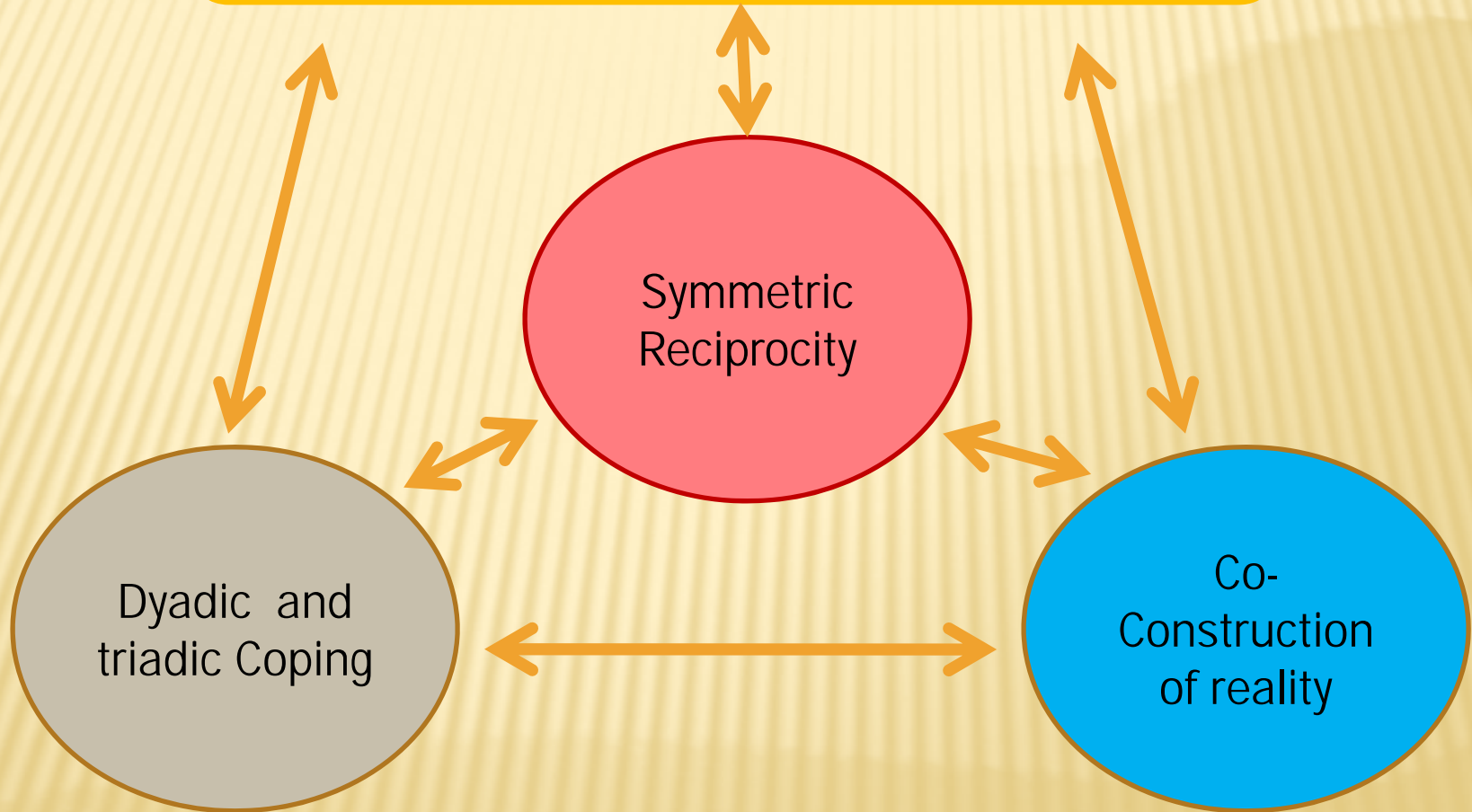
Time of transition after birth

Multiple Relationship  
Enhancement  
vertical perspective/parents





# Multiple Relationship Enhancement horizontal perspective/siblings



# KEY ISSUES

- Encounter with the natural needs of a baby who is not influenced by any educational regulations and restrictions – without curvature by culture
- Reflecting micro-cultural regimentations empowers the sibs in its self-assertion and self-confidence
- Further understandig of equivalence and reciprocity and justice within the family



Mental health  
promotion starts  
immediately after  
birth

# Family

Transformation process after arrival of a new member – two years needed for a new homeostasis/stability/balance

Changing dyades

System

## parents

Couple

Mother -  
Baby

## siblings

brother

sister

baby

Traveller between the subsystems  
Gate-opener for the childrens' needs



# IMPLICATIONS

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- ✘ The enormous impact that the baby has can be useful for many interventions of professionals in the field of family support
- ✘ Childrens` resilience can be strengthen if the baby is included (in the sense of with a view of this sibling)
- ✘ Competence of transition within the family can be utilized for non-normative transitions like into the kindergarten

# THANKS!

✘ There are any questions?

