

Women become mothers

The transition to motherhood from a biographical perspective

Background

Even if different studies worldwide refer to a link between the biographical background and satisfaction in parenthood, in Germany mainly quantitative studies were published over the last years, which could not solve how exactly biographical experiences influence the transition to parenthood. Besides, many studies within the last years only focused on partial aspects like the position of fathers or the reconciliation of work and family life. The doctorate wants to fill this research gap.

Qualitative Design

Sampling

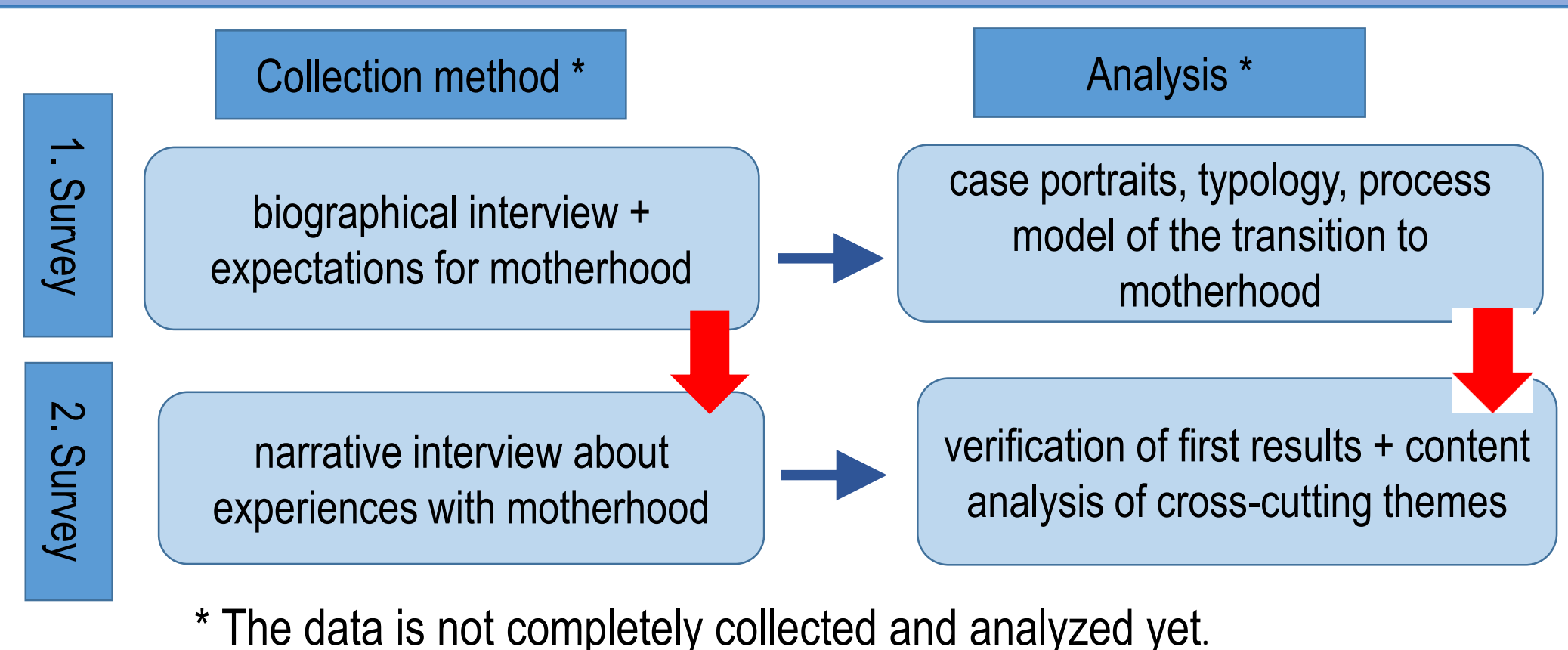
- 35 women in Northern Germany (ages 25-35)

Method

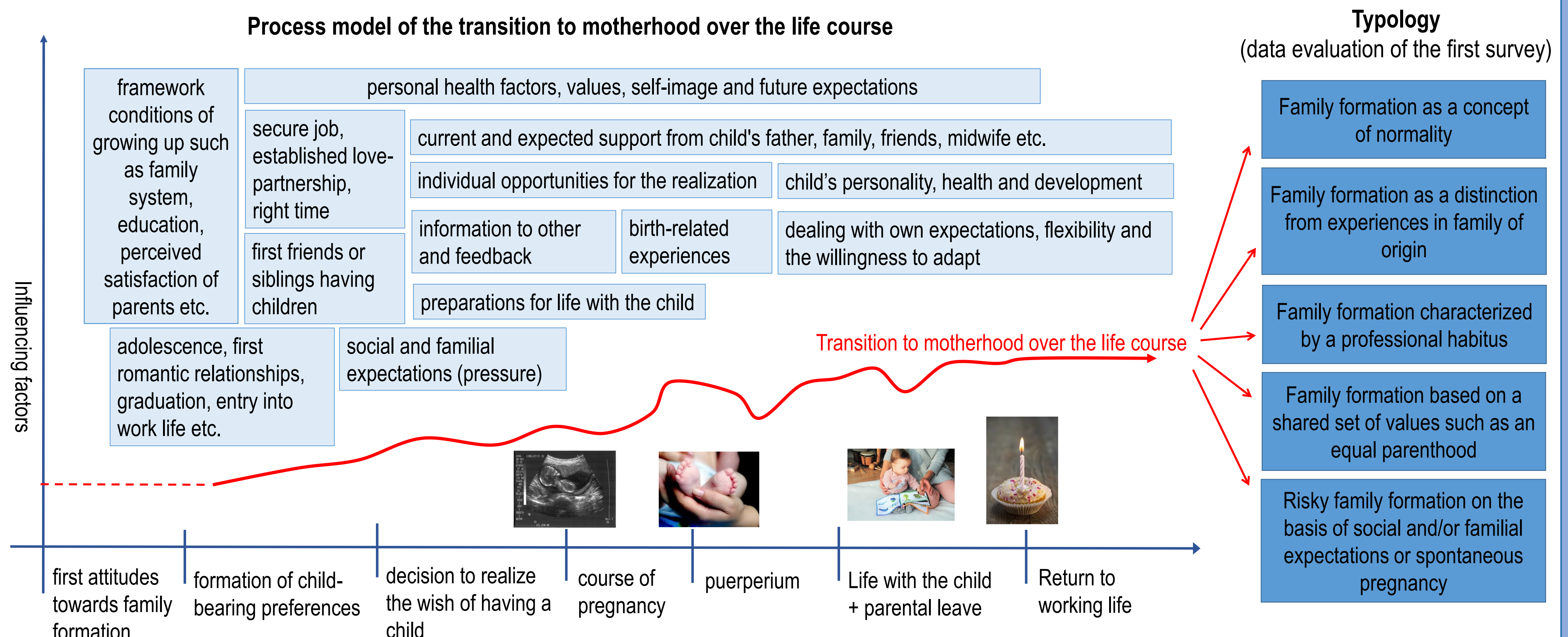
- biographical narrative interviews based on the method by Fritz Schütze (1983) at two survey periods (first: max. six weeks before childbirth; second: around child's first birthday)

Research Questions

- How does the biographical background and family socialization influences the management of the transition to motherhood?
- Which reference models and pictures of "good" maternity are the interviewees designing?
- How do the women's expectations for living with their child develop, implement or change during the first year with the child?



First results



Conclusion

The preliminary results underline the influence of the biographical background on attitudes and expectations towards family formation and a satisfying family life, the decision of having a child and the experience of maternity as well as dealing with one's own earlier expectations. Based on the study, the transition to motherhood can be interpreted as a process over the life course with a particular influence of one's own family socialization, biographically formed reference models and pictures of "good" motherhood as well as personal health factors, self-image, social and individual values, current life situation (e.g. partnership, professional activity, housing situation, social integration, leisure activities) and future expectations. Regarding this, the ideas of "good" maternity vary between concepts of intense, biologically founded motherhood or traditional notions and concepts of shared parenthood.

Literature

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