

The Interplay of Work and Family during Transitions



Bettina S. Wiese
RWTH Aachen University

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Examples from...

- I. ... adolescence
- II. ... young adulthood
- III. ... late middle adulthood

„Biographical transitions define points in the life course when roles are transformed, redefined, and left behind for new ones.“

Perrig-Chiello & Perren (2005)

Examples of age-graded transitions:

starting school, starting a vocational training, leaving home, getting married, having (grand)children, retirement....

Work and partnership/parenthood are central domains, in which transitions take place. Not surprisingly, therefore, they are also central domains in males' and females' goal systems (see Wiese, 2000) and regrets (see Roese & Summerville, 2005).

Regret Contents:

Summary of 11 studies (Roese & Summerville, 2005; p. 1274)

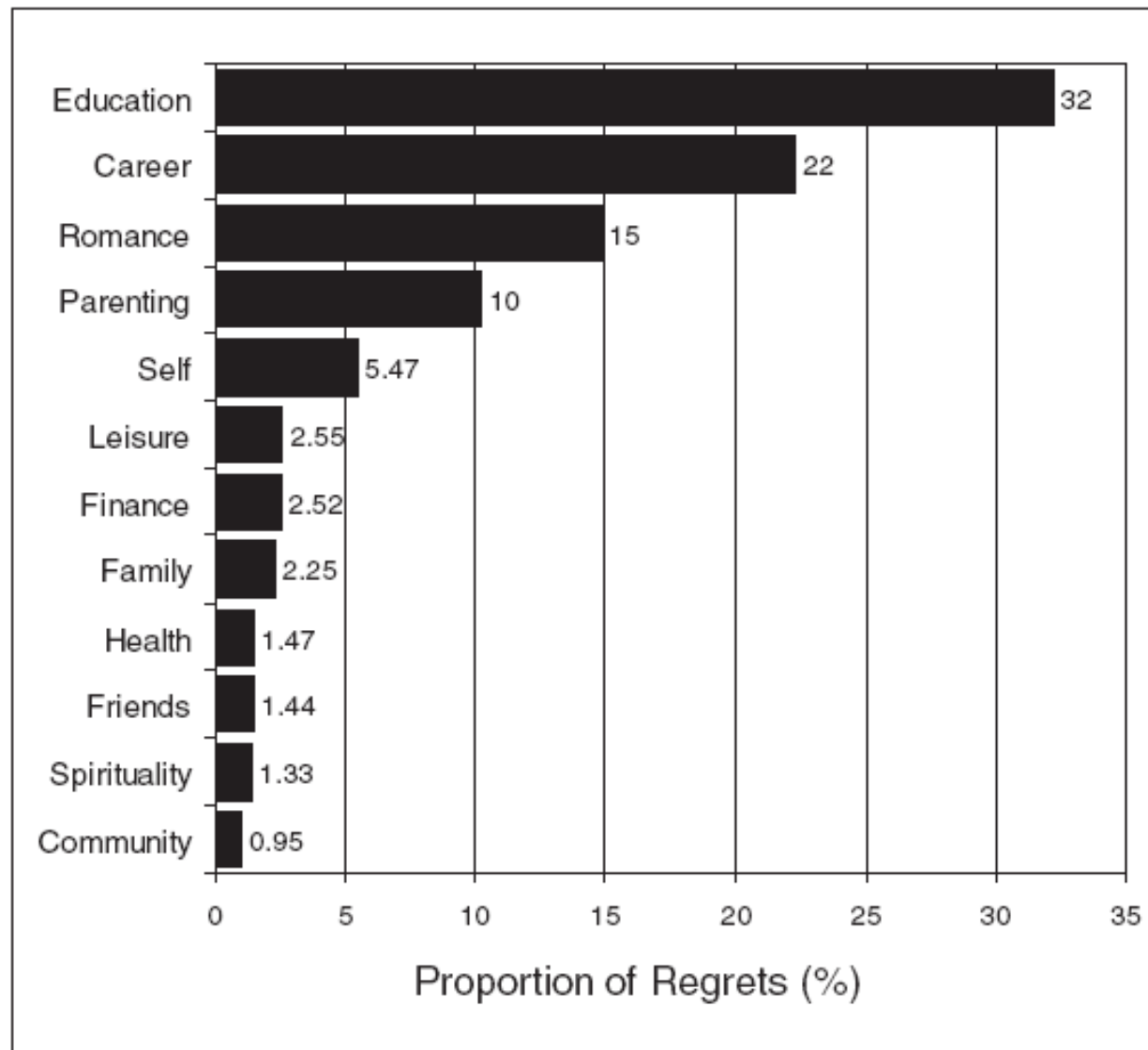
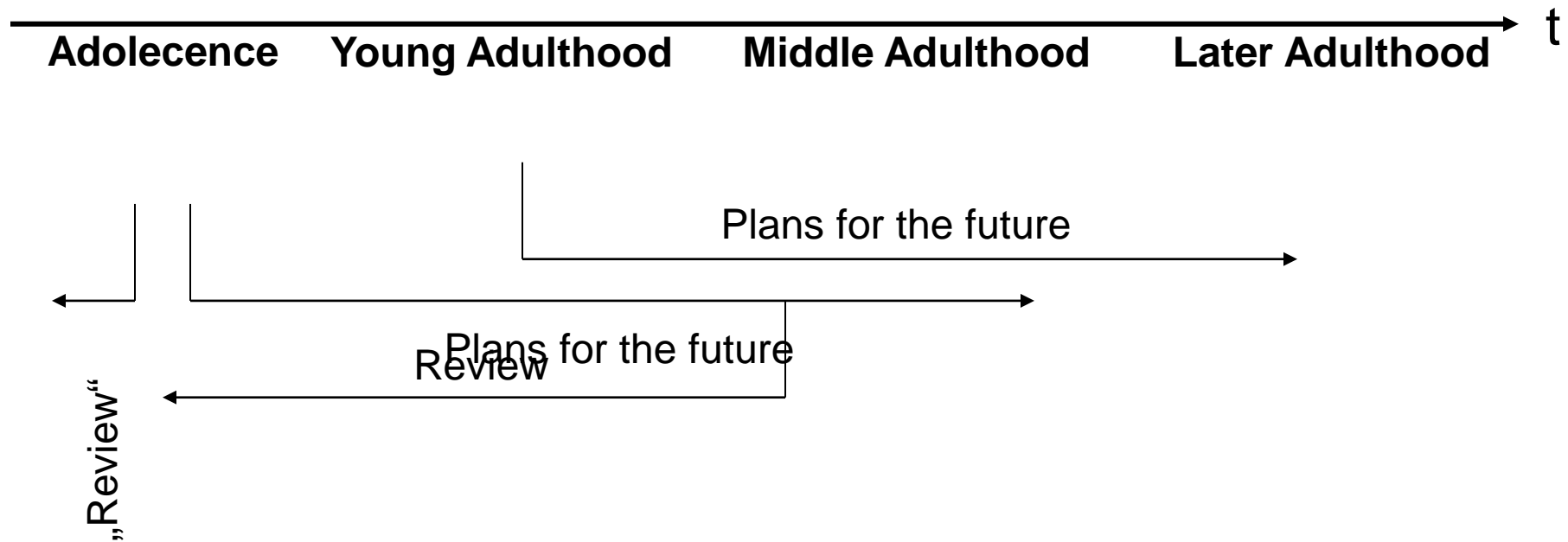


Figure 1 What we regret most (meta-analytic summary).

Life plans and reviews in the work and family domains



Examples from...

- I. ... adolescence
- II. ... young adulthood
- III. ... late middle adulthood

Work and Family: Adolescents' View

(Wiese & Freund, 2011)

$N = 520$ High-school students before their final exams¹
(64.1% female; Age: $M = 19.1$ yrs, $SD = 0.7$)

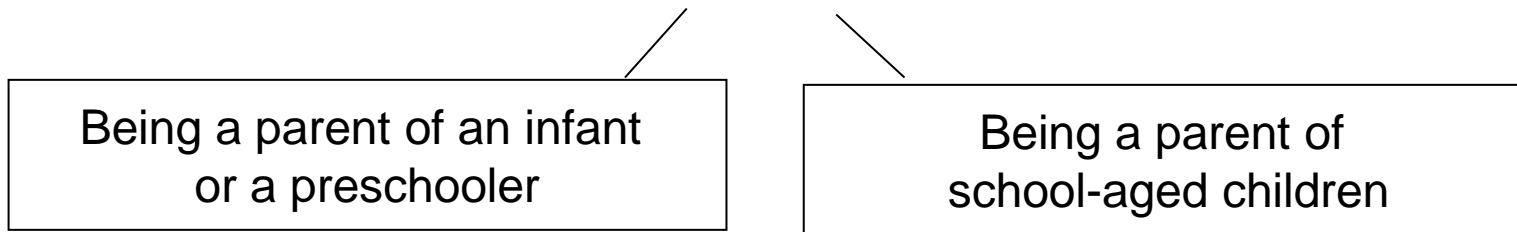


- Actual and ideal parental work participation
- Plans for own work participation when having children

¹part of a longitudinal project on the transition from school to university
(T1: 1-2 months before final exam, T2: 3-5 months after final exam, T3: 9-12 months after final exam)

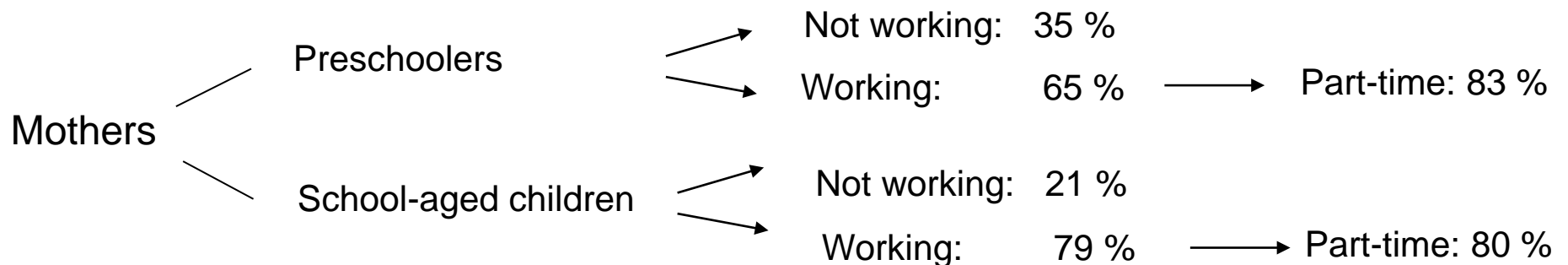
Background: Working parents in Switzerland

Selected phases of the family life cycle



Official Swiss Statistics (2006):

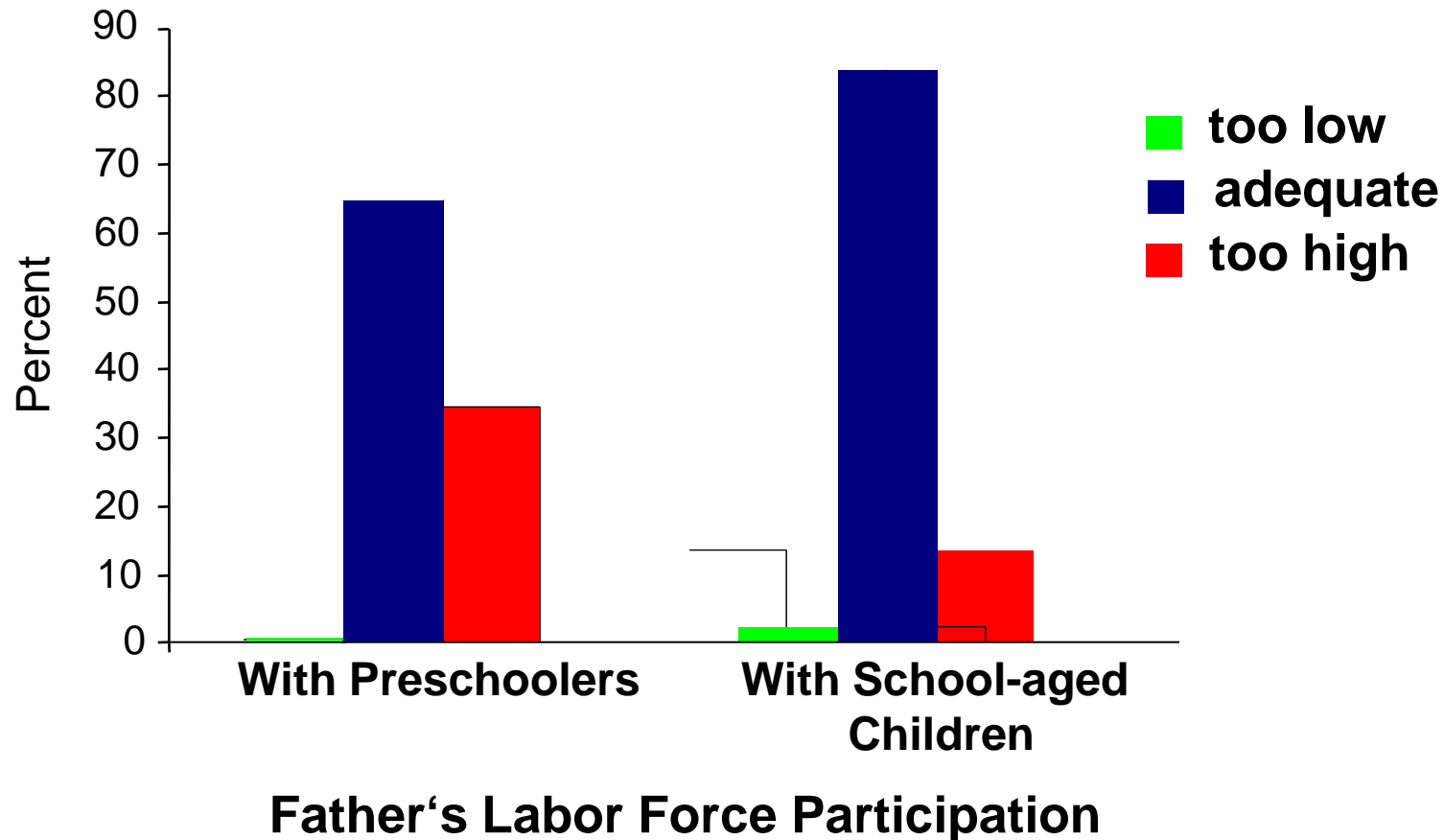
- Fathers: Full-time work is the rule for young and middle-aged males in Switzerland, regardless of the family life cycle



Father's Labor Force Participation: Adolescents' View

Discrepancies between Ideal and Reality

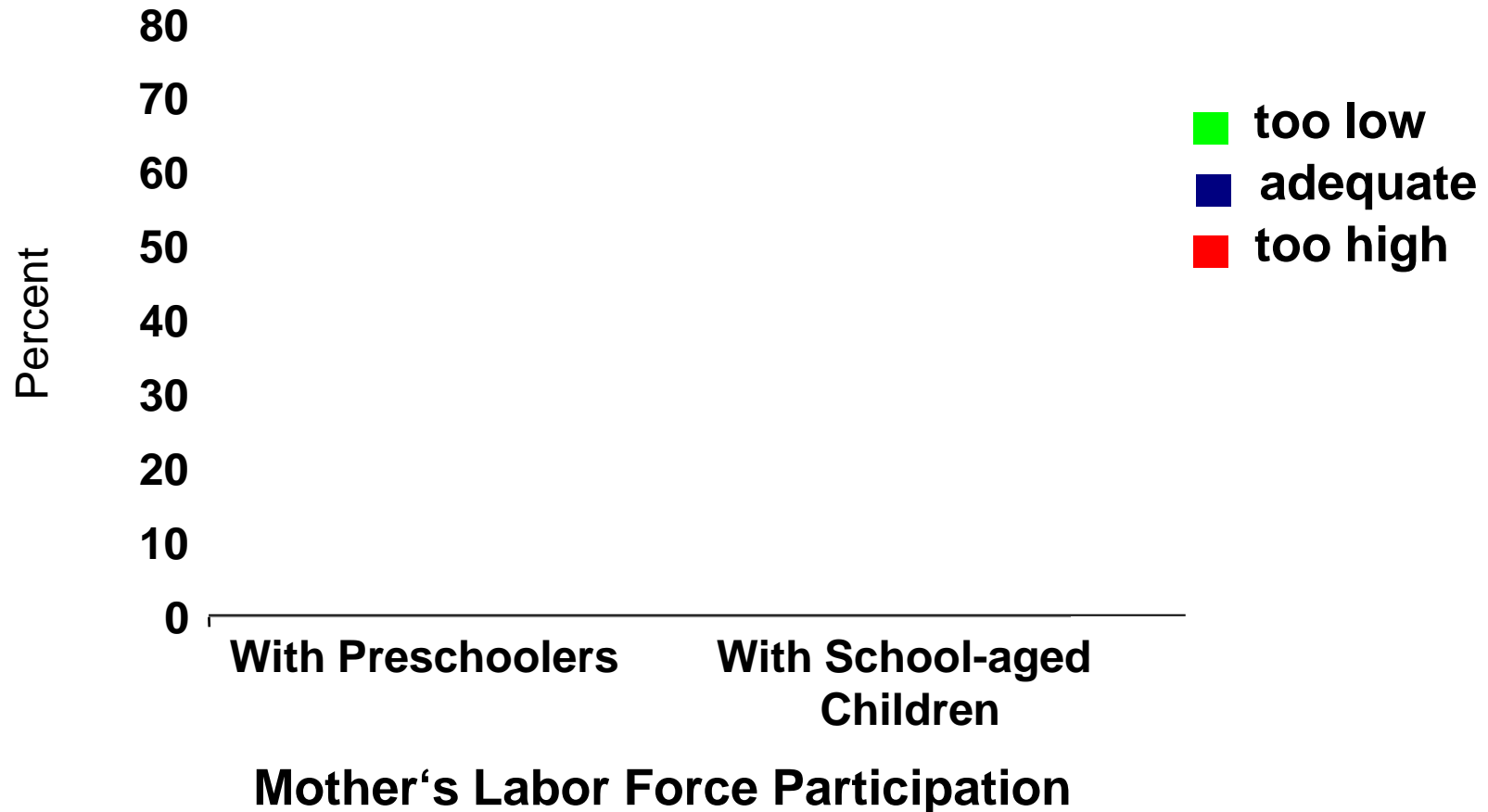
(N = 521; High-School Graduates, Switzerland; Wiese & Freund, 2011)



Mother's Labor Force Participation: Adolescents' View

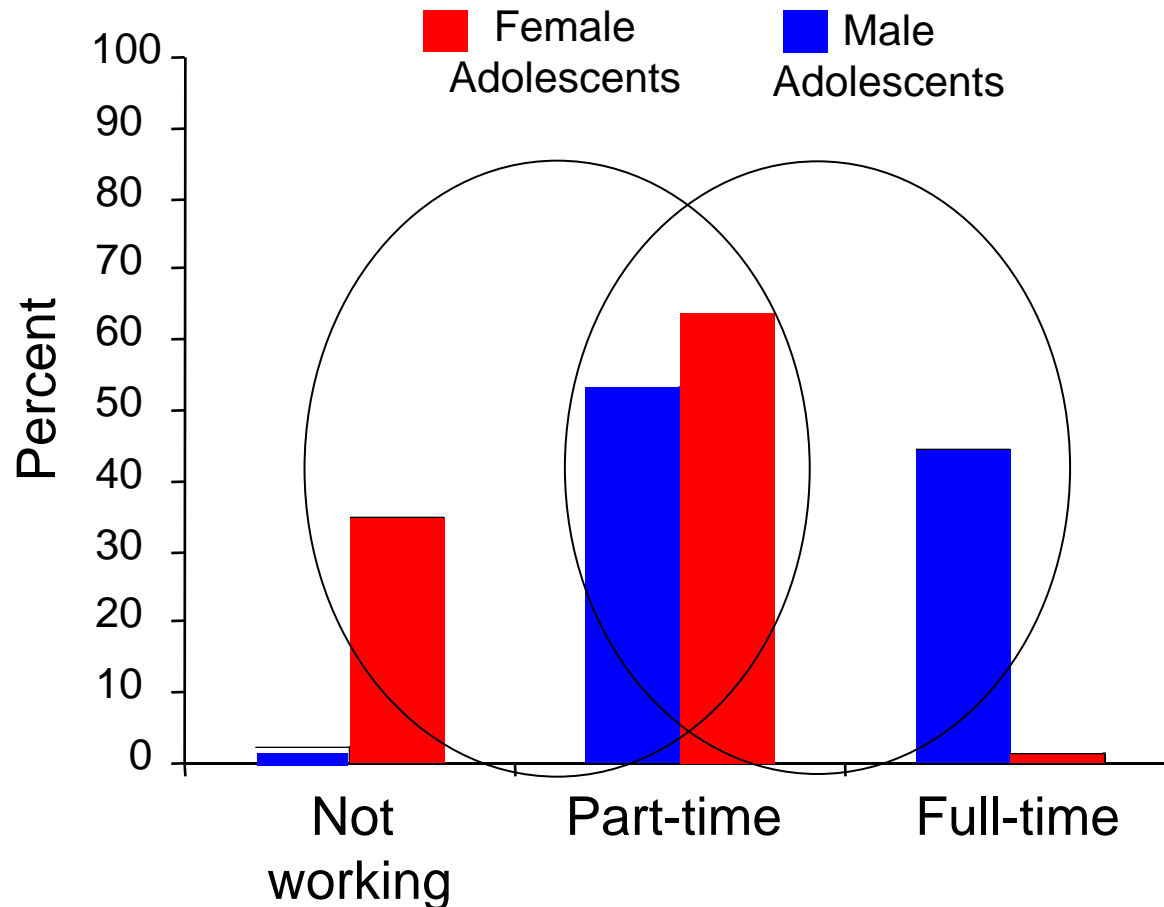
Discrepancies between Ideal and Reality

(N = 521; High-School Graduates, Switzerland; Wiese & Freund, 2011)



Ideal Own Workforce Participation With Preschool Children

N = 521; High-Schools Graduates, Switzerland (Wiese & Freund, 2011)



Ideal Own Workforce Participation

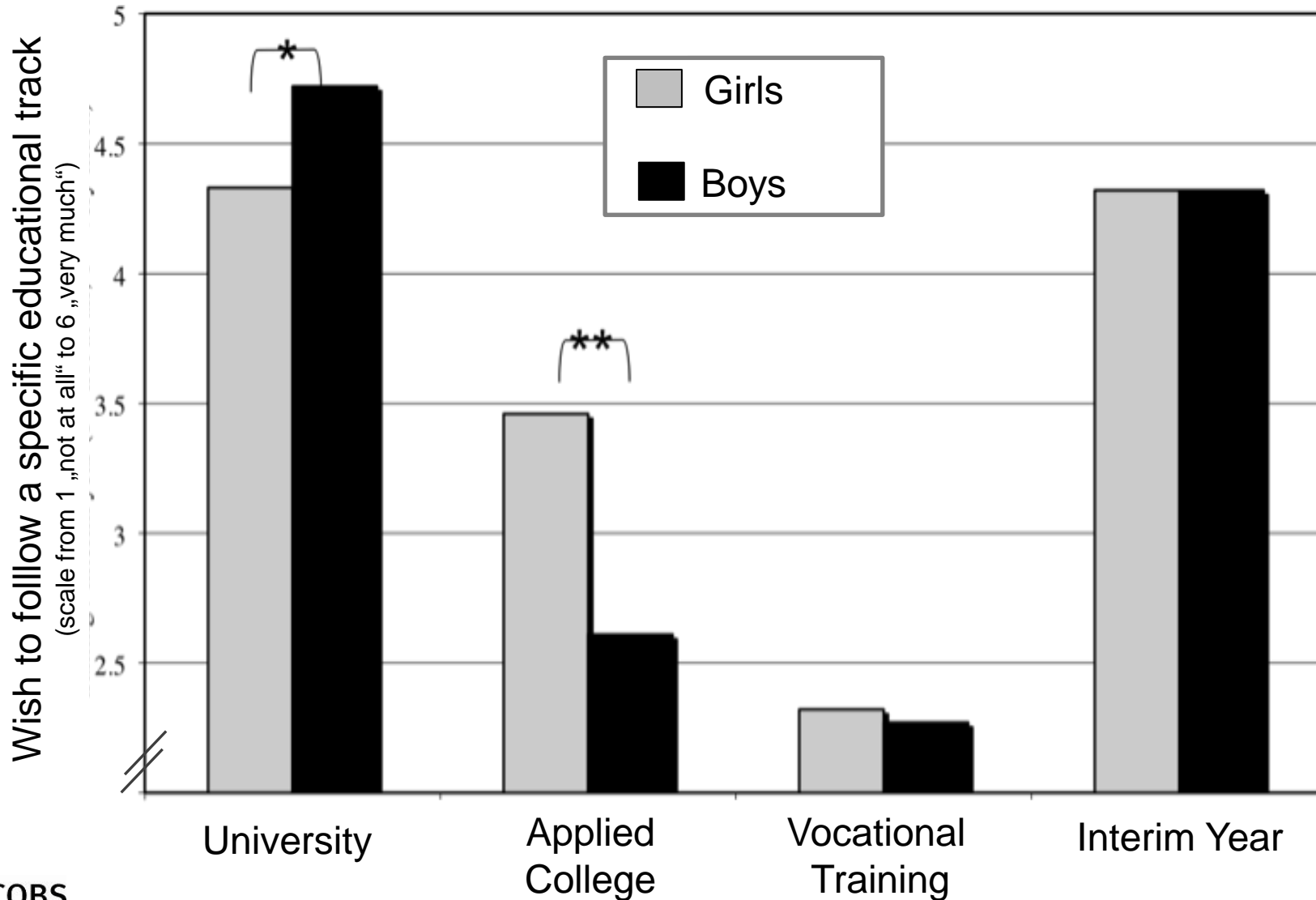
Modeling parents' work history ?

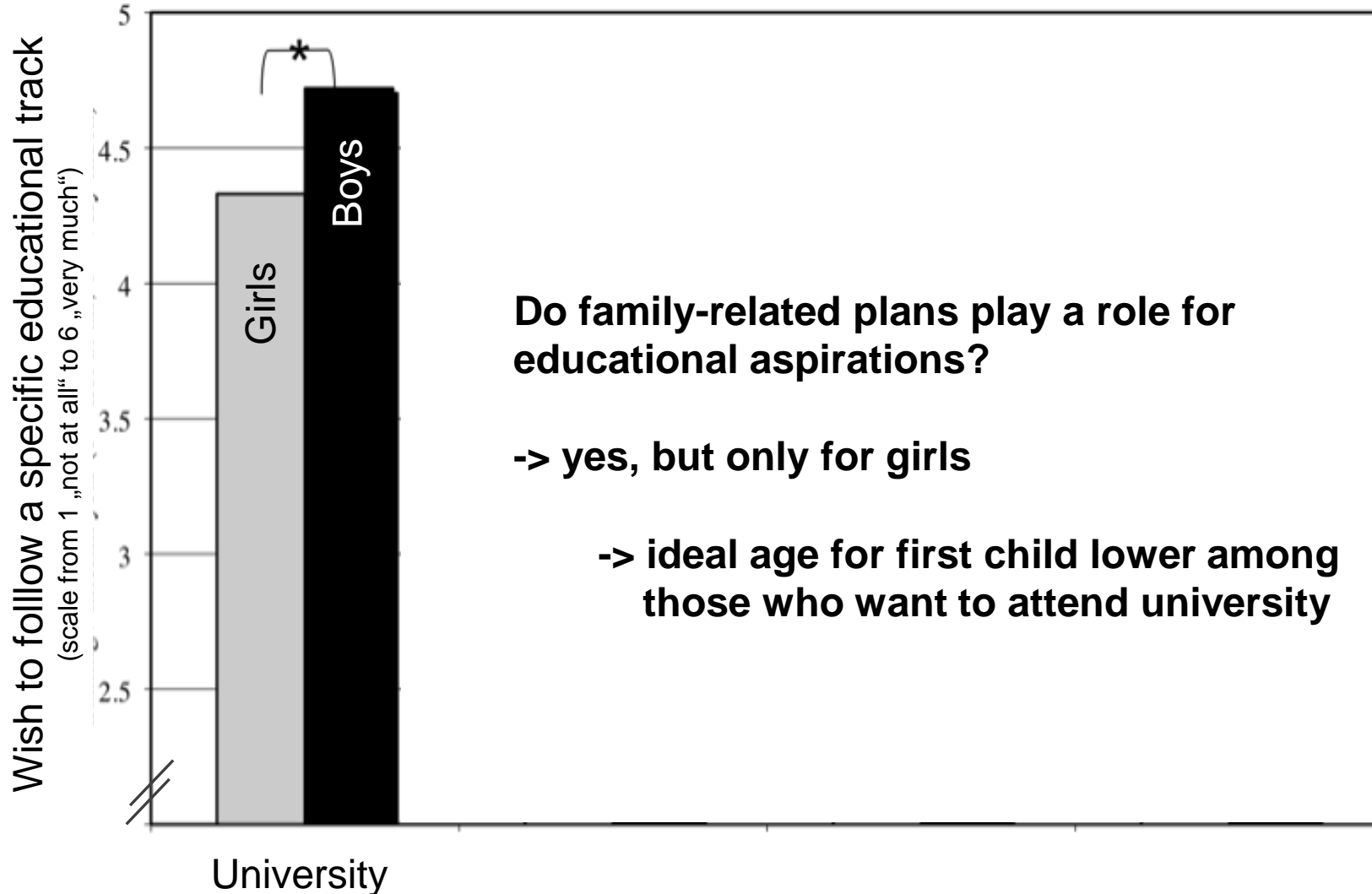
Adolescents' ideals of how much one's own parents should have worked are more relevant than actual work history.

Negatively toned parental conversation about work-family issues: negative association with adolescents' work-family self-efficacy.

Educational Aspirations

(Freund, Weiss, & Wiese, submitted)





Examples from...

- I. ... adolescence
- II. ... young adulthood
- III. ... late middle adulthood

Sharing Housework ?

Division of household labour in couples

(following Schulz & Blossfeld, 2006; German data)

	Marriage	Marriage Duration			
		2 years	4 years	6 years	14 years
<u>Housework Share</u>					
traditional	54%	69%	76%	81%	85%
egalitarian	44%	30%	23%	18%	14%
non-traditional	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<i>N</i> of couples	1'423	870	840	773	518

-> increasingly disproportionate share of housework duties

Becoming more traditional after childbirth?

Yes, parenthood predicts traditionalization (e.g., Gjerdingen & Center, 2005; Schulz & Blossfeld, 2006). Often, fathers are seen by both parents more as „helping“ than as „sharing“ (see Cowan & Cowan, 1992).

But: Childless couples also show a development towards traditional housework arrangements! (Schulz & Blossfeld, 2006)

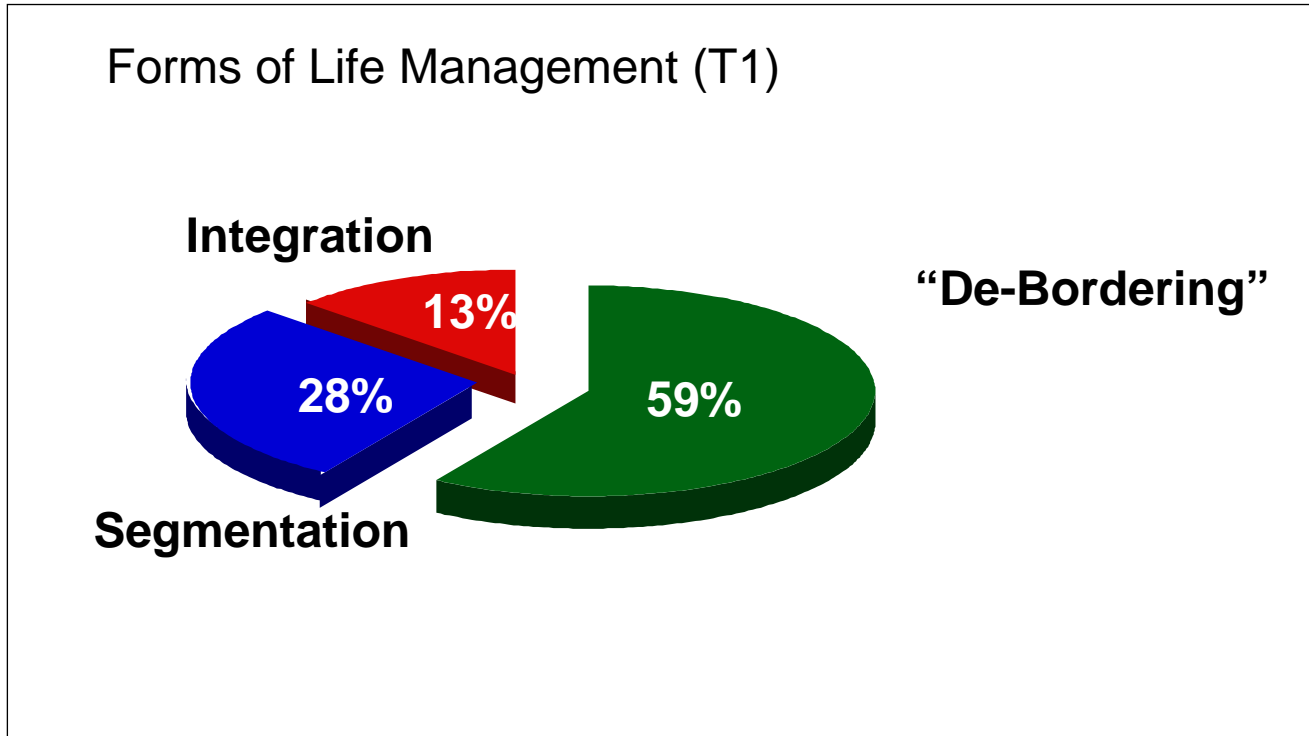
Satisfaction with unequal time investments for housework ?

Women are less satisfied than males ...

- ... with the amount of time they spent on housework (e.g., Sellach et al., 2006)
- ... with the way housework is shared (e.g., White, 1999)

Forms of Life-Management

(Ewers, Hoff, Geffers, Petersen, & Schrap, 2006)

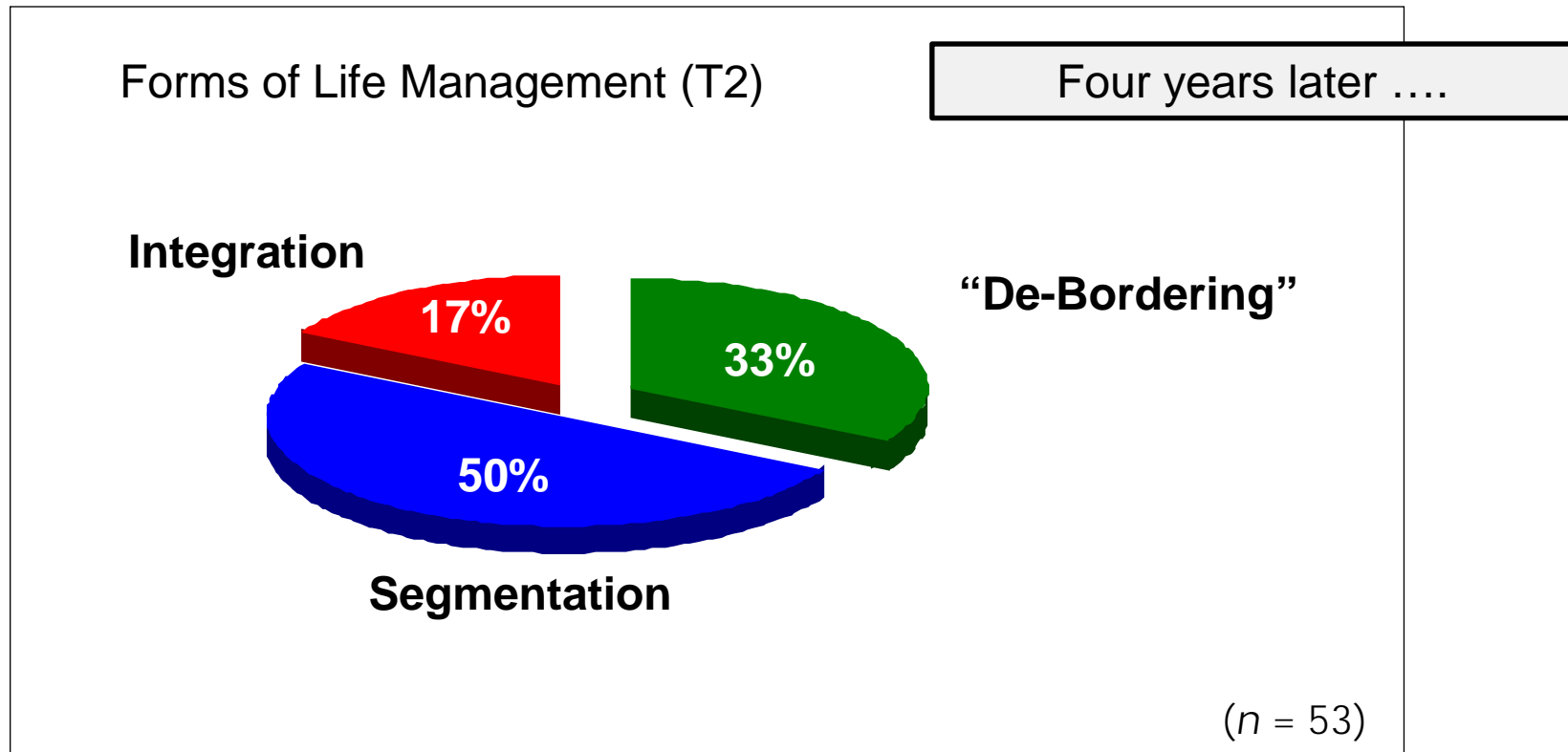


- 85 IT-experts
- 54 men, 31 women
- Mean age: 33 years
- interview-based

- high professional commitment and job satisfaction !
- long working hours

Forms of Life-Management

(Ewers, Hoff, Geffers, Petersen, & Schraps, 2006)



Reasons for Change:

health problems, having children, organizational change (new hierarchies)

Weekend Commuting



Couples with two households in different cities with one household only used by one partner for job reasons

-> inhibitory effects on founding a family (particularly if women commute)

(see Schneider et al., 2001)

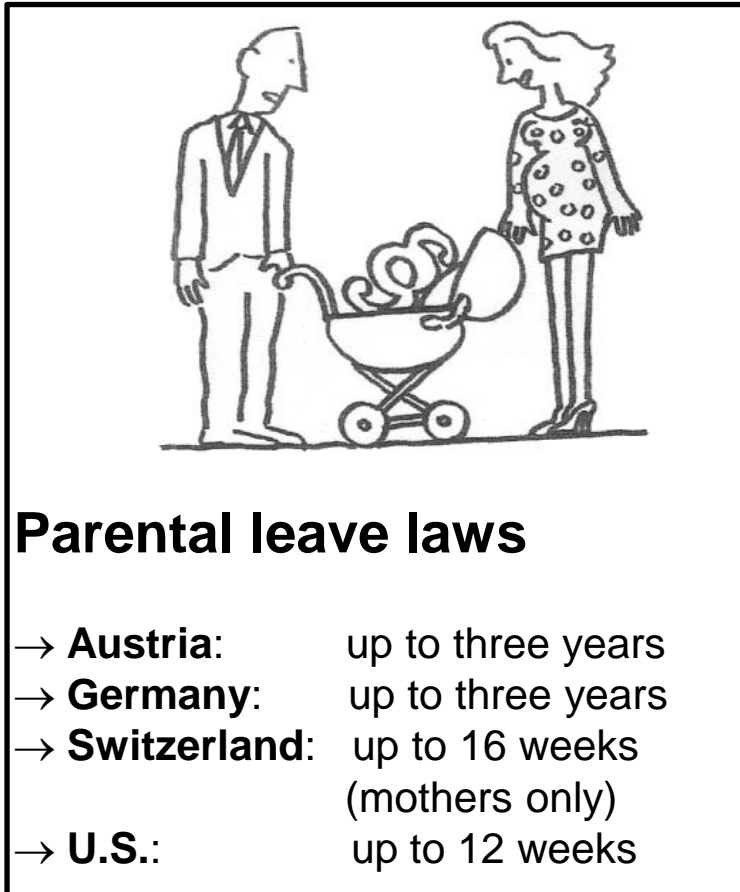
Parental Leave

= the time a parent takes off from work after childbirth or adoption

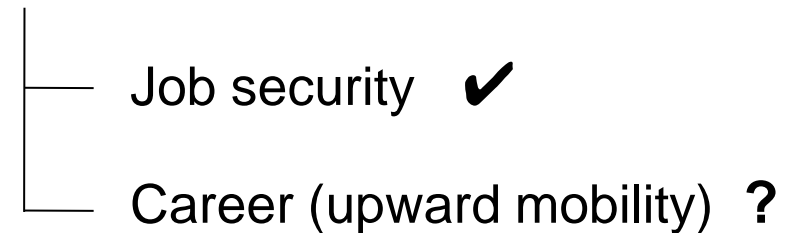


Parental leave laws

- **Austria:** up to three years
- **Germany:** up to three years
- **Switzerland:** up to 16 weeks (mothers only)
- **U.S.:** up to 12 weeks



Solution for coordinating work and family ?



Human capital theory (Becker, 1975)

- employees' skills and social networks will deteriorate or become outdated

Economic data (e.g., Gangl & Ziefle, 2009)

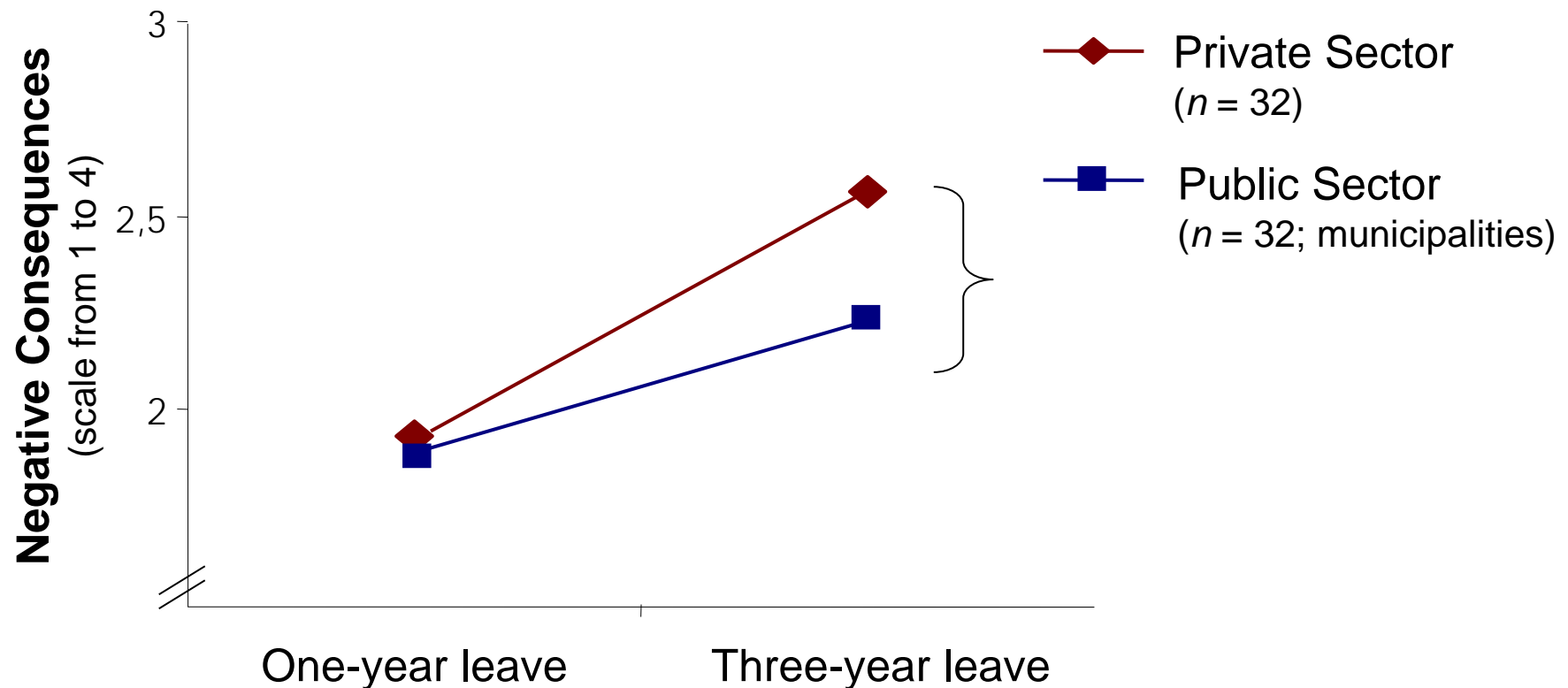
- maternity leaves negatively affect *subsequent* income development

Human Resource Managers' View (Wiese, 2004)

- longer leaves -> higher career risks (particularly in private companies)

Maternity leave as career disruption: Human resource managers' view

Expected Career Consequences¹ (Wiese, 2004)



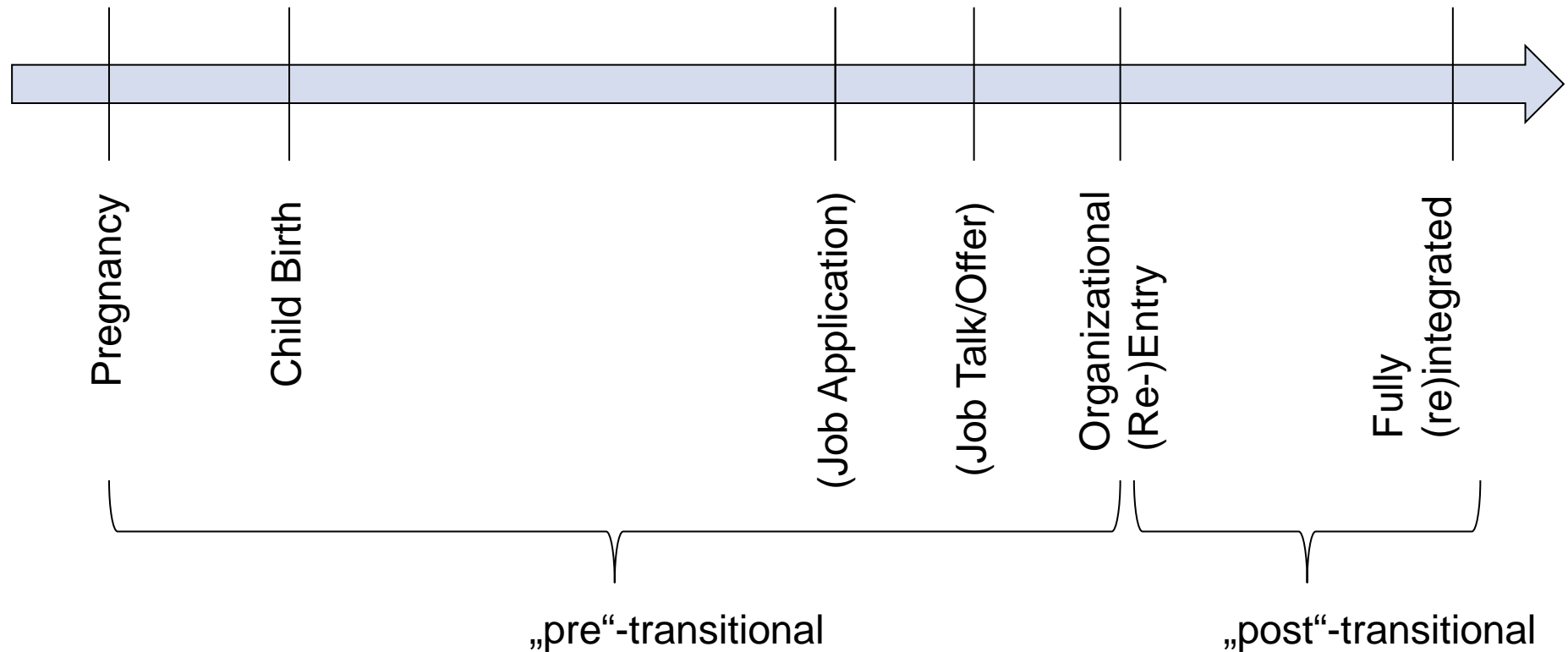
¹eleven risk judgements : e.g., loss of subordinates' acceptance, fewer project assignments, negative income development

Maternity leave as career disruption: Human resource managers' advice

	Frequency
Temporary part-time work	43.1 %
Organize childcare arrangement as soon as possible	39.7 %
Maternity leave should be as short as possible	27.6 %
Talk to your supervisor to find a suitable arrangement	32.8 %
Define your personal priorities	31.0 %
If maternity leave: Stay in contact with organization	27.6 %

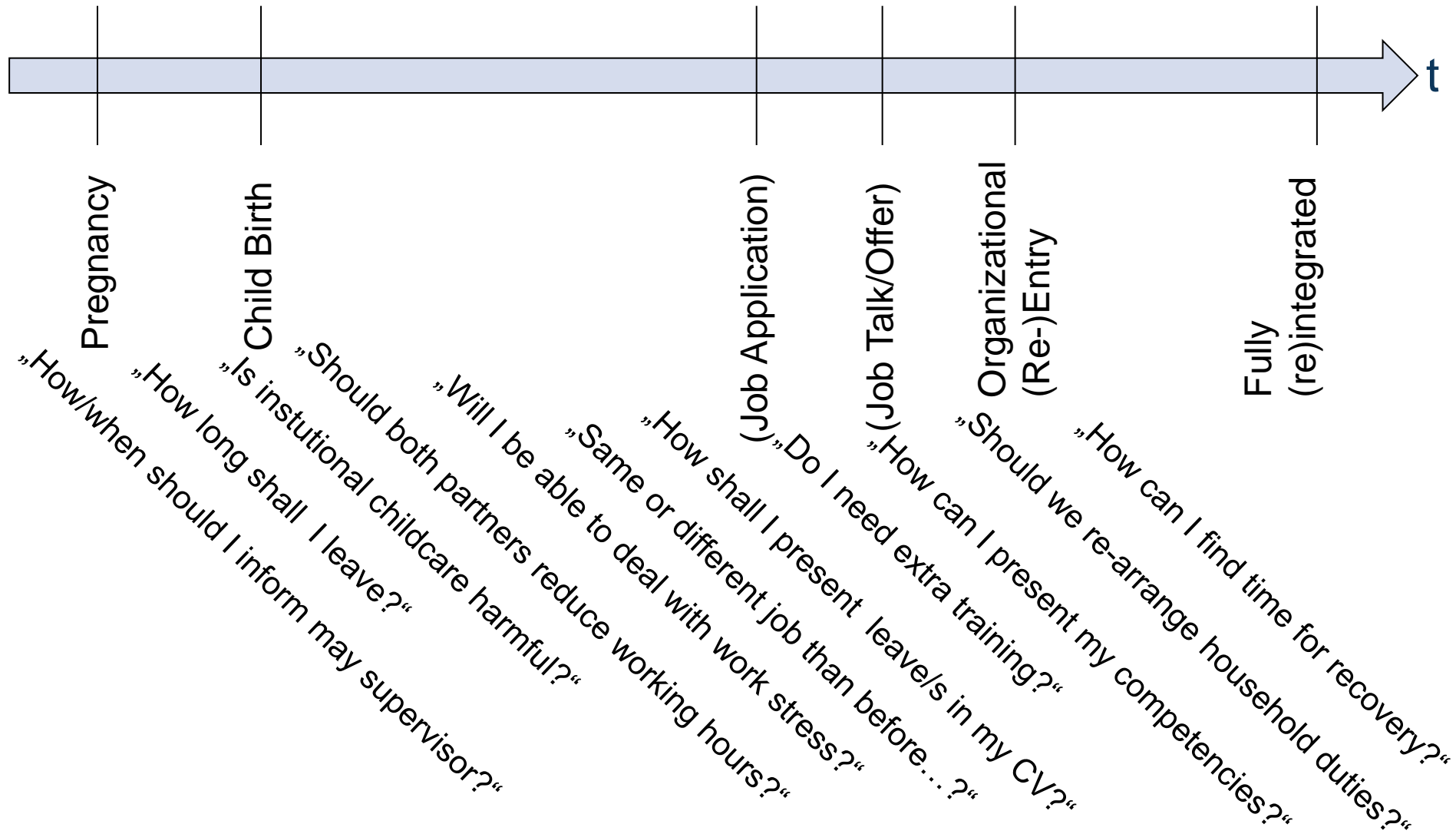
(*N* = 64 Human resource managers; Wiese, 2005)

Return to Paid Work after Maternity Leave: Process View

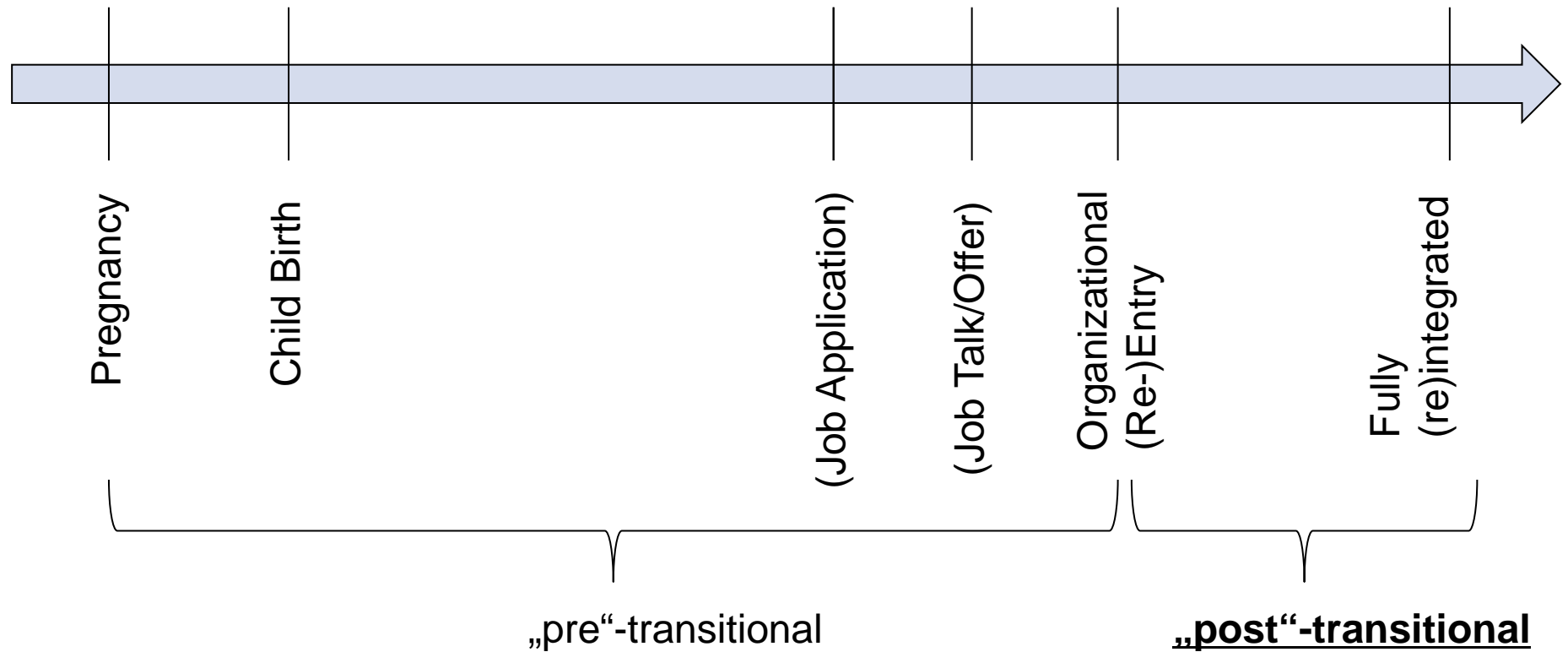


Women might be confronted with different questions depending on their status in the transition process ...

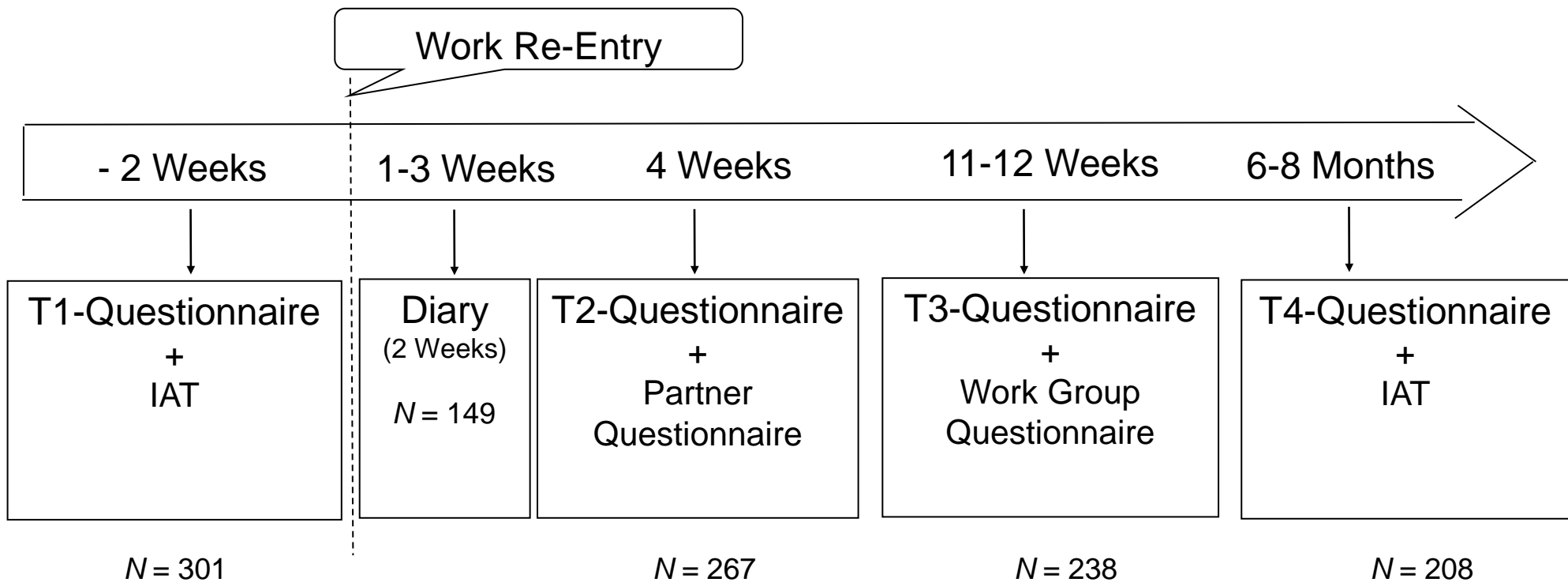
Women during the transition might wonder...



Return to Paid Work after Maternity Leave: Process View

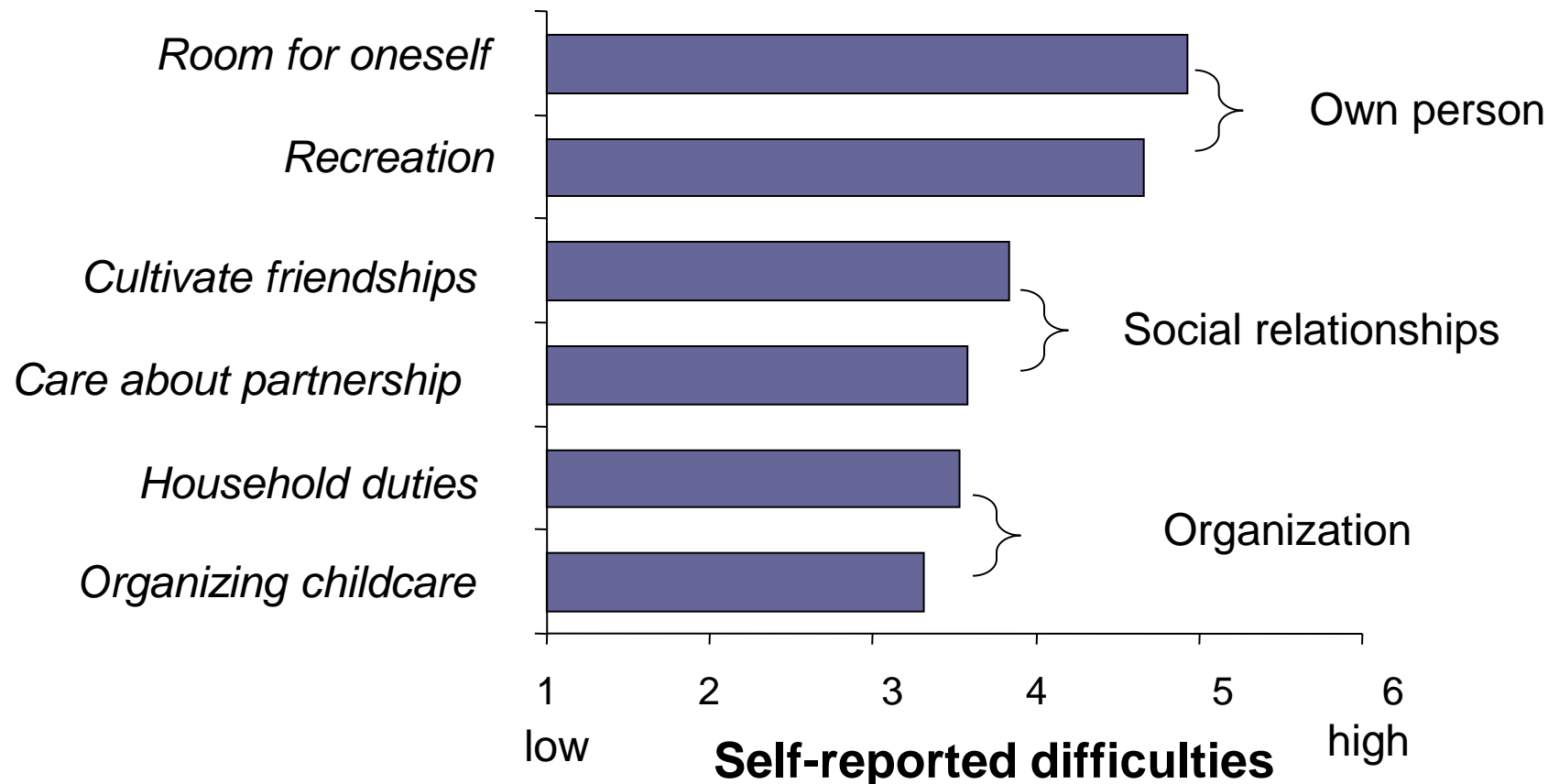


Longitudinal Project Design: „Mothers‘ Work Re-entry“



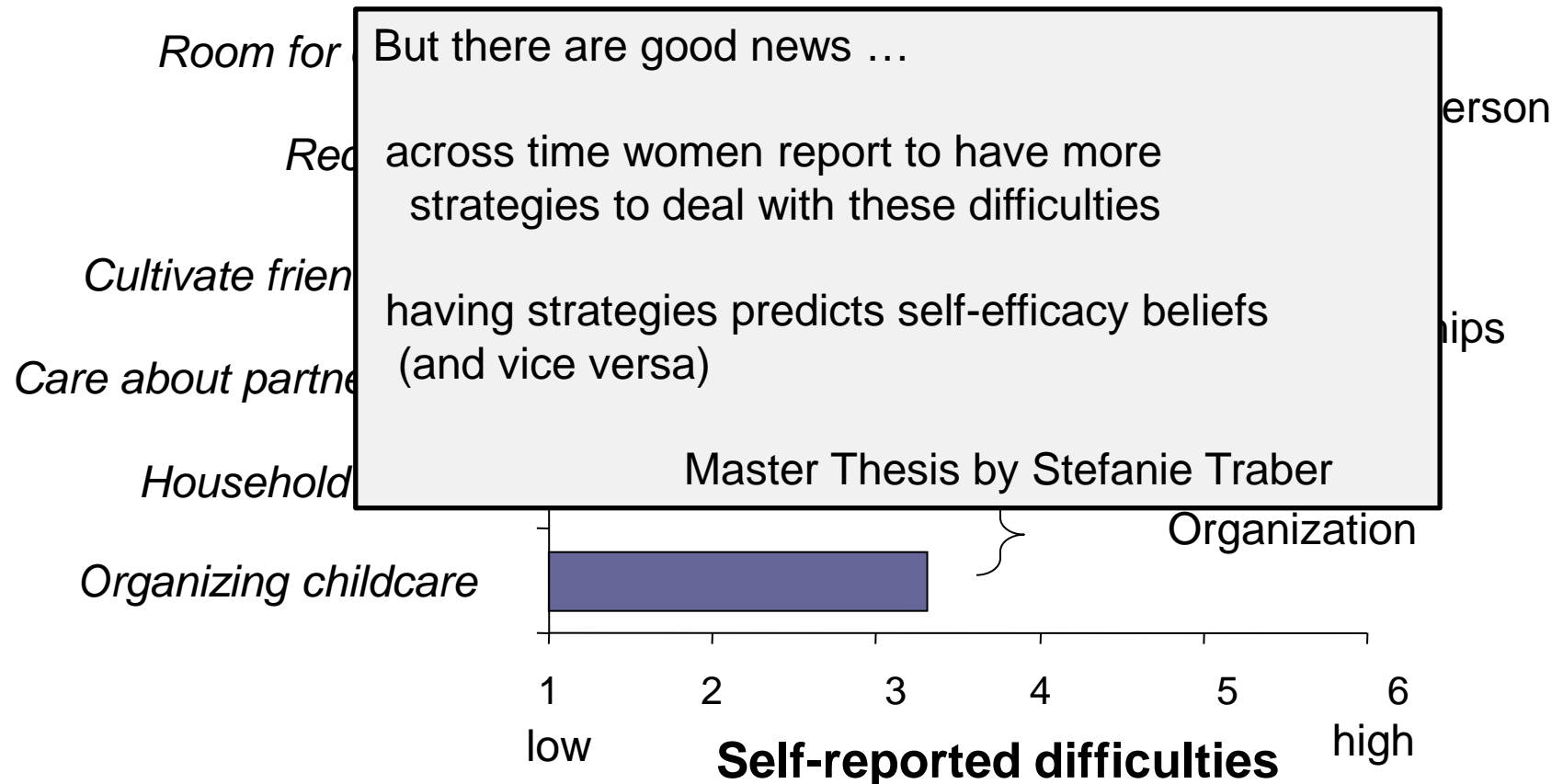
Potentially difficult fields of action

(N = 267, 4 weeks after reentry, T2)

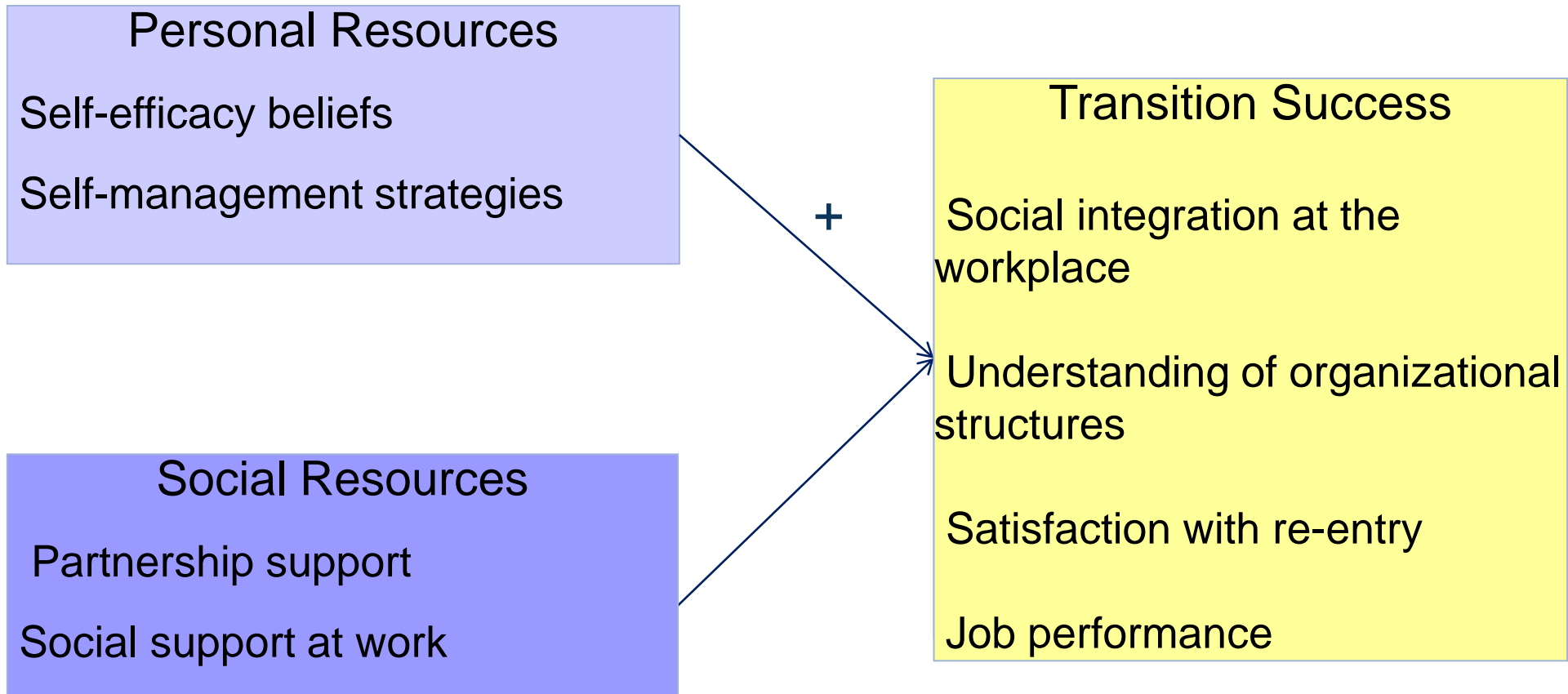


Potentially difficult fields of action

(N = 267, 4 weeks after reentry, T2)

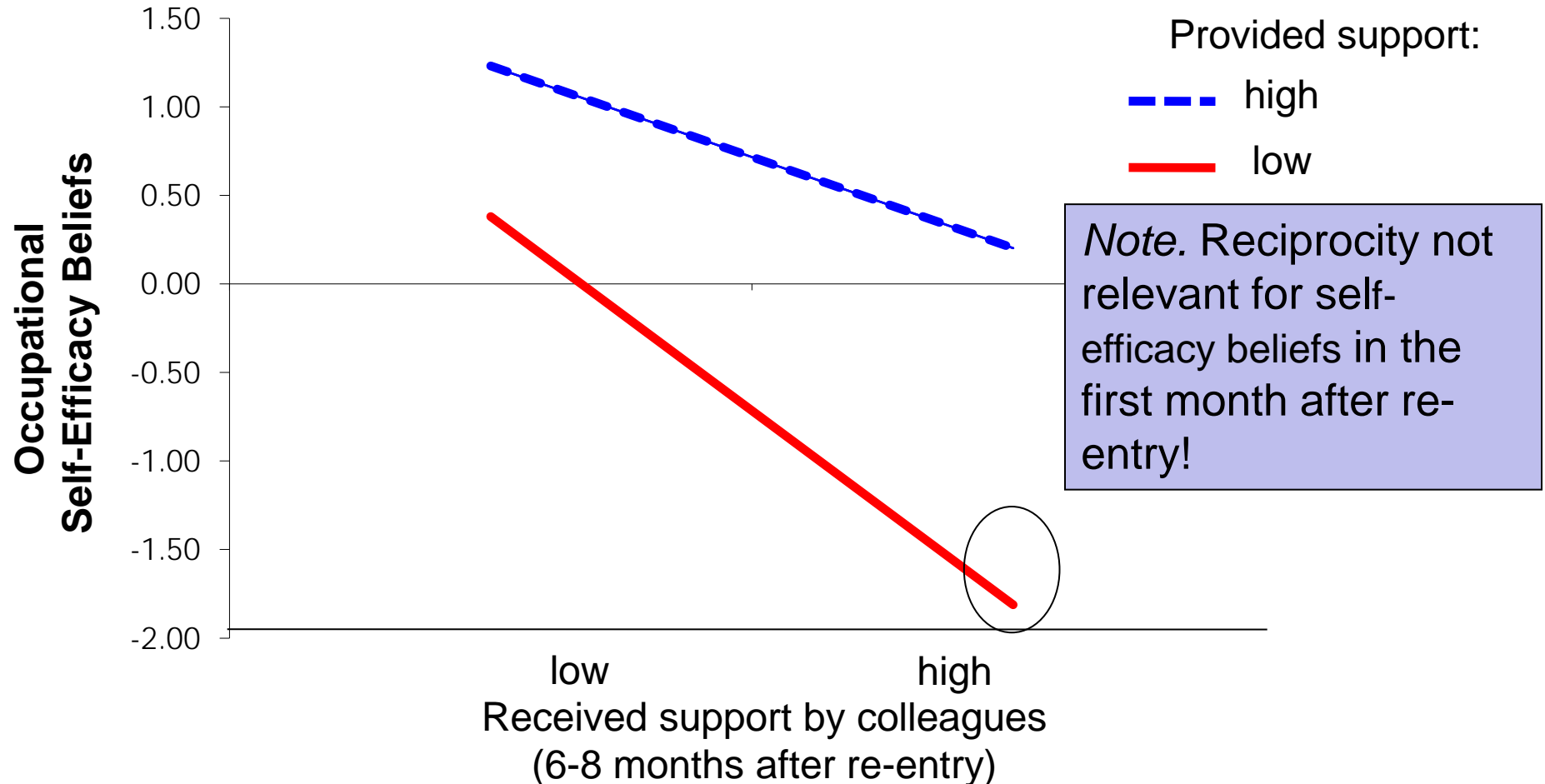


Predicting Transition Success



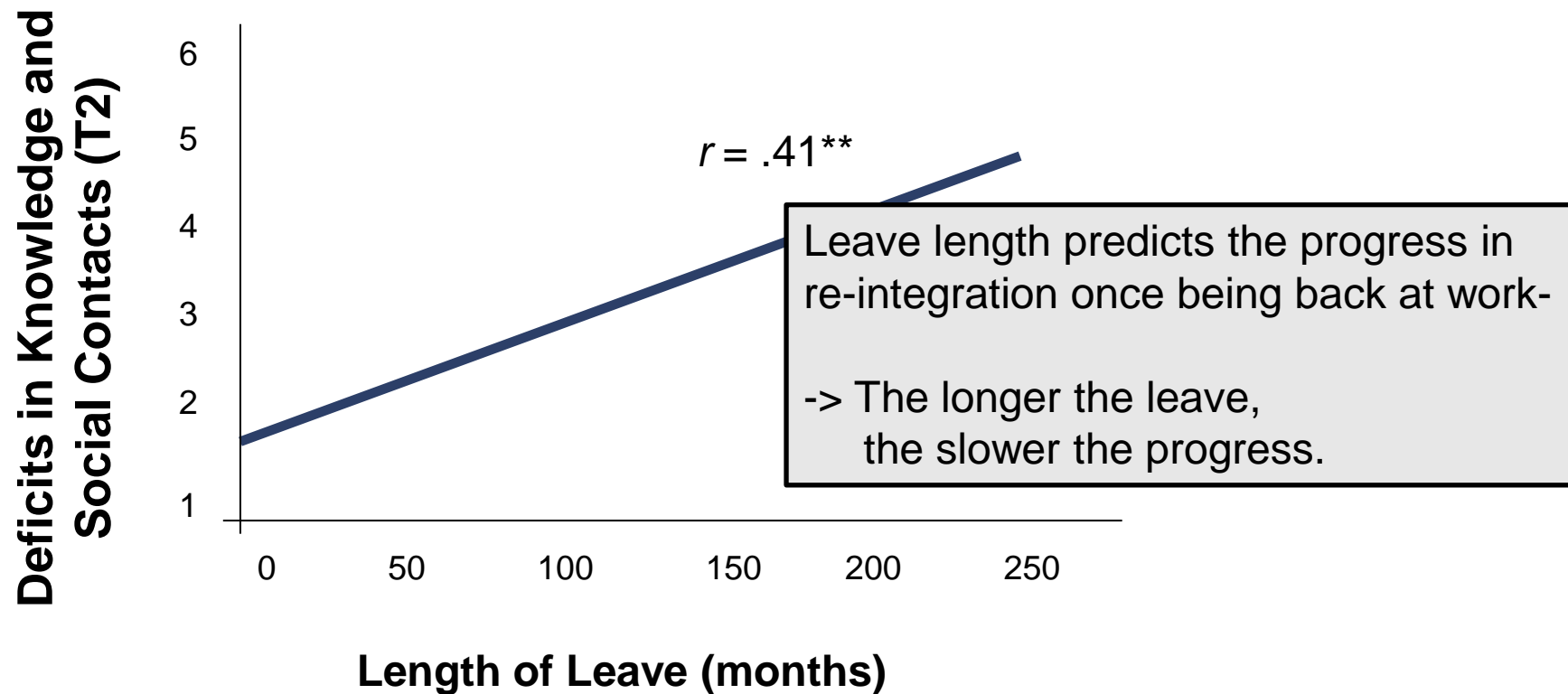
Social Support Reciprocity & Self-Efficacy Beliefs

N = 208 women who returned to work after maternity leave (Jäckel, Seiger, Orth, & Wiese, submitted)



Length of Leave and Perceived Deficits

$N = 267$ women, 4 weeks after re-entry



Length of Leave: The shorter, the better...?

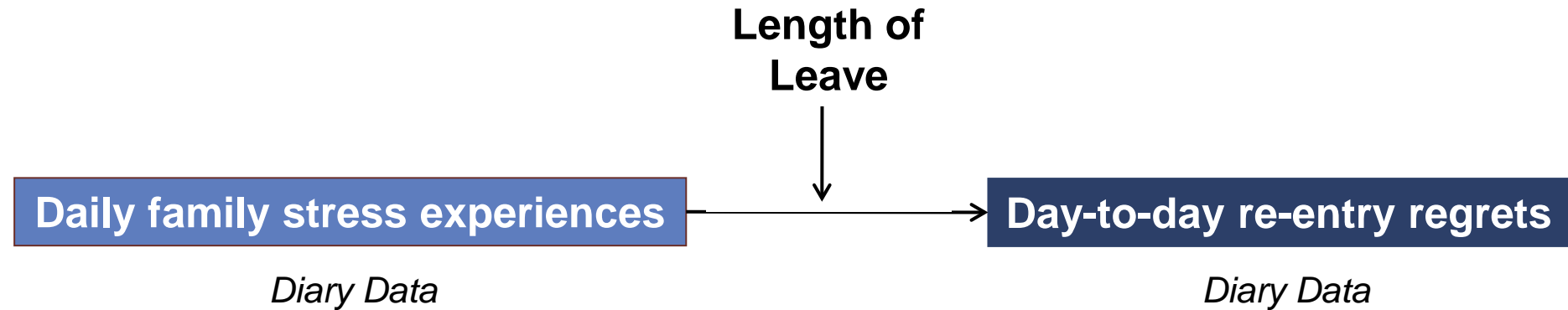
Health psychology has focused on the risks of short leaves:

- *Physical health*: higher rates of respiratory infections among mothers working in the first weeks postpartum than among homemakers (Gjerdingen et al., 1993)
- *Mental health*: findings are not unequivocal but higher probability of depression in case of short leaves (six weeks or less) if marital concerns are high and/or jobs are unrewarding (e.g., Hyde et al., 1995)

Very early return can be expected to be particularly problematic since many women are likely to still be in the process of physical recovery from childbirth (Tulman & Fawcett, 1991).

Leave Length and Working Mothers' Daily Re-Entry Regrets

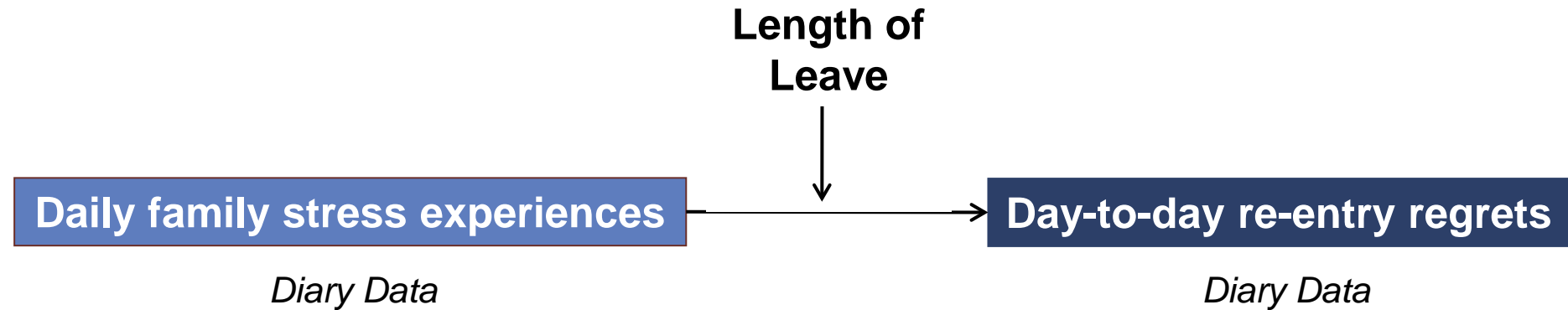
(Wiese & Ritter, submitted)



- 149 participants (97 % working part-time)
- standardized diary data completed for two consecutive weeks (starting one week after the return to work)
- hierarchically structured data
 - Level 1: return-to-work regrets, family-related stress experiences
 - Level 2: mother's age, age and number of children, preparedness, emotional stability, social support, education, paid support, financial and contractual constraints
- > hierarchical modeling approach (Mplus 5): leave length as predictor both of return-to-work regrets and of the random slope from family stress to regret

Leave Length and Working Mothers' Daily Re-Entry Regrets

(Wiese & Ritter, submitted)



- positive association between daily stress experiences and re-entry regrets
- stronger association between daily stress and re-entry regrets in women with shorter leave length (here: < 7 months)

Relevant Level 2-predictors (person-specific):

Personal resources in terms of preparedness and emotional stability led to lower levels of regret.
Financial constraints as reasons for the return to work led to higher levels of regret.

Examples from...

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Transition to grandparenthood

- example of a transition that is not initiated by the person herself/himself
- when the first grandchild is born, many grandparents are still of working age (see Perrig-Chiello & Höpflinger, 2001)
- in life reviews, grandparenthood turns out to be the most positive transition (Perrig-Chiello & Perren, 2005)



**Does this transition affect
grandparents' work-related plans?**

Transition to grandparenthood: Does it affect work-related plans?



New study in which we compare a group of (expectant) grandparents with a control group of persons of the same age not facing the transition to grandparenthood. All participants are still working.

First measurement (T1): Last trimester of the daughter's/daughter-in-law's pregnancy

$N = 199$ expectant grandparents from Switzerland and Germany

(69.8 % from the maternal line; 66.3 % grandmothers; $M = 55.93$ years)

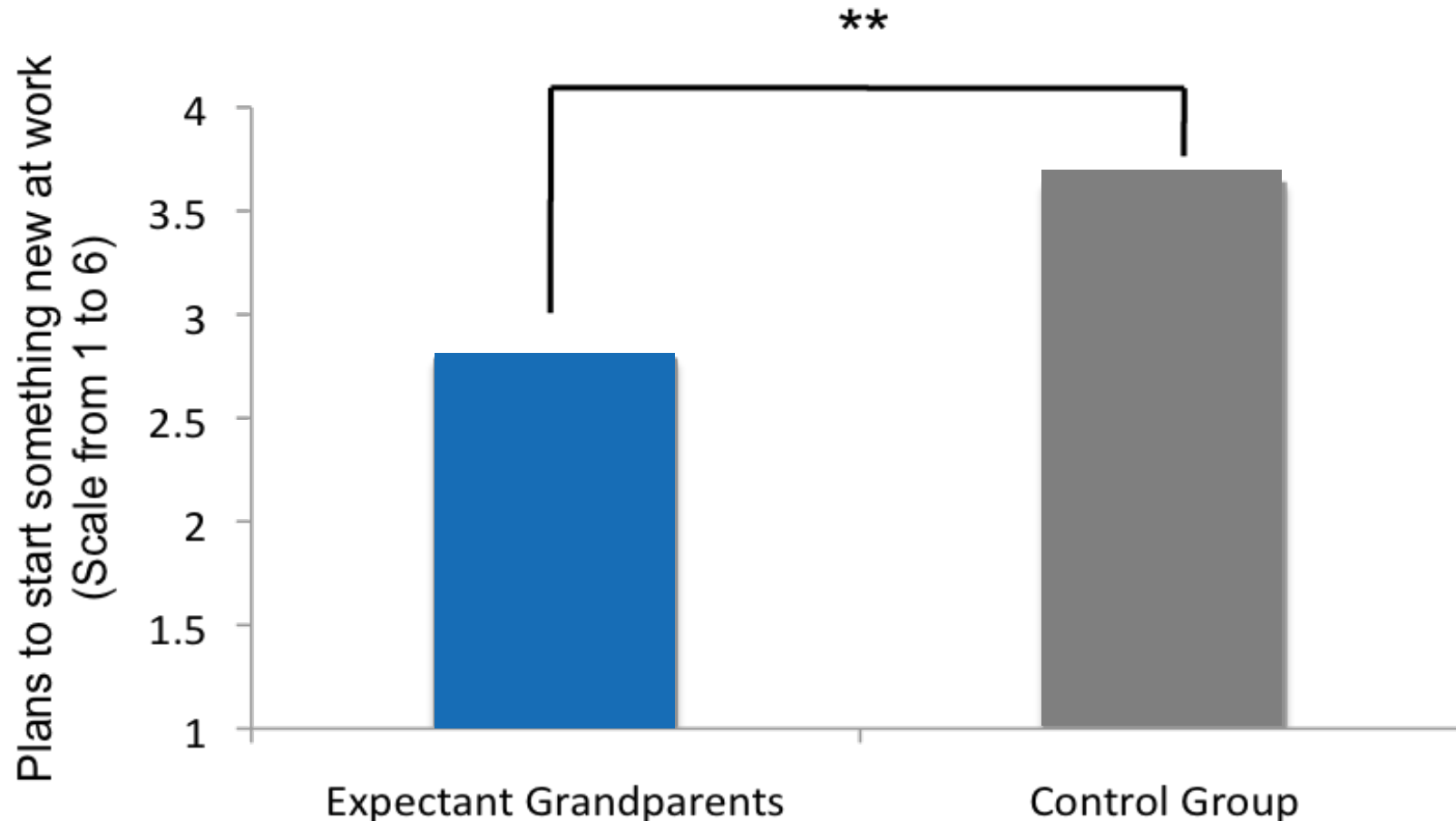
$N = 106$ control-group participants (ongoing data collection)

Second measurement (T2) : Six months after grandchild's birth

Ongoing data collection for both the grandparent group and the control group.

Wiese & Jäckel (in prep.)

Transition to grandparenthood: Does it affect work-related plans?



But: Expectant grandparents and the control group, however, did not differ in taking into consideration to work fewer hours.

To conclude ...

The work and family domains ...

- are interconnected on the level of day-to-day experiences and on the level of biographical decisions across different phases in the life course
- transitions in one life domain may affect functioning or transitions in the other domain
- the return-to-work transition after a maternity leave represents a prime example for cross-domain transition that has developed into a normative challenge in females' life-courses



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