

Exploring the impact of multilocal housing arrangements on the well-being of young people in residential youth care

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Context of the Study

- Based on StePLife – a research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)
 - StePLife examines the personal lives of young people in residential care in German-speaking Switzerland
 - Panel Study with 3 research waves
- Today we focus on the multilocal residency settings of these young people using cross-sectional data from 1st research wave

Background

- In the field of child and youth care research, our understanding of the living conditions of young people in care is limited
- Previous research has focused on the residential care facility as an institutionalized place of residency (e.g. Mangold & Rein, 2017; Corleis & Keller, 2017; Clark et al., 2014)
- Emotional attachment with the residential care facility is significant for the young peoples' subjective well-being (Magalhães & Calheiros, 2020)
 - But the fact that many young people in residential care have multiple residences, in addition to their placement, has largely been overlooked

Research Questions

- 1) What specific living arrangements do young people in residential care have?
- 2) How do they evaluate their place(s) of residence in terms of emotional belonging, material resources and agency?
- 3) How do emotional belonging, material resources and agency affect the well-being of young people in RC?

Research Design and Sample

- Quantitative, cross-sectional online survey
- Sample (N=563)
 - Young people aged 12–17
 - Living in residential care facilities
 - German-speaking cantons
- Data collection between May–August 2022
- Incentive: 15 Swiss Francs per participant

Research Instruments – Overview

- Places of residence
- Ranking of places of residence based on the of nights per month
- Three Dimensions of Housing (Meuth, 2017)
 - Emotional Belonging → Scale
 - Material Ressources → Index
 - Agency → Index
- Well-being → Index

Research Instruments – Place(s) of Residence (Range 1-9)

1. RC (true for all respondents)
2. with my mother
3. with my father
4. with both my parents together
5. with my grandparents
6. with other relatives
7. with my foster family
8. with my boy-/girlfriend
9. in my shared apartment with friends

Research Instruments – Ranking of Places of Residence

Based on the number of nights per month

1. RC (true for all respondents)
2. 2nd place of residence where respondents spend most of their nights besides RC
3. 3rd place of residence where respondents also spend nights besides RC and the 2nd place of residence

Research Instruments – Emotional Belonging (Scale)

1. I feel good here
2. I feel safe here
3. I can be who I am here
4. When I am not here for a long time, I miss this place
5. I feel at home here

Answer options: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

(Lewicka, 2011; Stedman, 2002; Hidalgo, 2013)

Research Instruments – Material Resources (Index)

1. From here I can easily get to the places that are important to me
2. Here I have sufficient access to the Internet
3. Here the food tastes good

Answer options: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

Research Instruments – Agency (Index)

Here, I can...

1. arrange my room the way I like it
2. decide who is allowed in my room
3. spend my time the way I want to
4. invite someone if I want to
5. have a say about the rules

Answer options: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

Research Instruments – Well-being (Index)

- 16 Items covering different aspects of life
- How satisfied are you with...
 - ...the people you live with?
 - ...your life as a student?
 - ...how safe you feel?
 - ...the way you look?

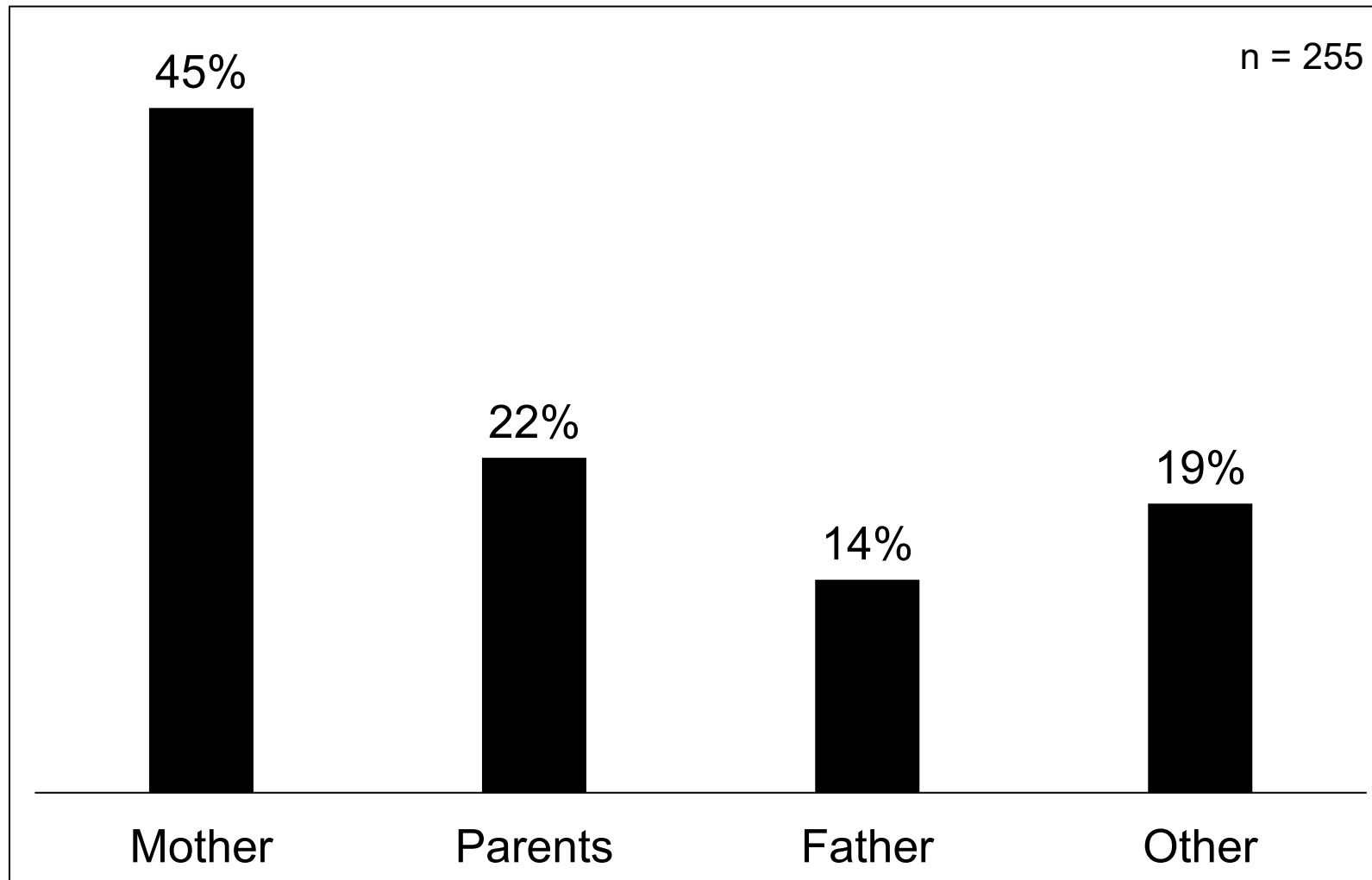
Answer option: 1= not at all satisfied to 10= very satisfied

(Cummins & Lau, 2005)

Findings – Living Arrangements (Question 1)

Number of Places of Residence	<i>n</i>	%
1 Place	94	17
2 Places	255	45
3 Places	119	21
4 Places	67	12
> 4 Places	28	5

Findings – Living Arrangements (Question 1)



Findings – Three Dimensions of Housing (Question 2)

Dimension of Housing	RC	2nd place
	M (SD)	M (SD)
Emotional belonging (n = 433)	3.0 (1.1)	4.4 (0.8)
Material resources (n = 433)	3.3 (1.0)	4.5 (0.7)
Agency (n = 425)	3.3 (0.9)	4.2 (0.9)

Paired sample t-test *** p < .001

Findings – Predictors of Well-being (Question 3)

Predictor	B	SE B	β
Material resources (RC)	.170*	.083	.106
Material resources (2nd place)	.075	.109	.033
Female gender identity	-.994***	.130	-.312
Time spent in RC	.045	.023	.073

adj. R² = 0.457, n = 386, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001,

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Conclusions and Implications

Question 1 – **Where** do young people live?

- Multi-local housing arrangements are very common among young people in residential care.
- The traditional nuclear family is still an important spatial reference point in the lives of young people

Conclusions and Implications

Question 2 – **How** do young people live?

- Young people feel less involved in shaping their housing environment at the residential care facility
- Young people feel less emotionally attached to the residential care facility than to other places of residence

Conclusions and Implications

Question 3 – Impact on **well-being**?

- Housing is a relevant influence on well-being of young people in residential care
- Emotional belonging is the dimension with the strongest influence on well-being
- In a multilocal setting well-being is influenced by living in more than on place of residence

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Thank you!

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