University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland
School of Social Work

OST
Eastern Switzerland
University of Applied Sciences

StePLife

Perspectives of Young People in Residential Care on their Multilocal Residency Settings

Thomas Schmid, Tobias Kindler, Jana Osswald, Lukas Fellmann,
Stefan Köngeter, Dorothee Schaffner & Carole Zellner

14th September 2023, EuSARF 2023, University of Sussex, Brighton

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 focuse 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, physical and activity dimensions?

3) How do the various residential settings differ in the perspectives of the young people?

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
- Incentives: 15 Swiss Francs per participant

Research Instruments – Overview

- Places of residence (Where?)
- Three Dimensions of Housing (How?)
  - Emotional Housing Scale
  - Physical-Material Housing Index
  - Activity Housing Index

(Meuth, 2017)

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 – Emotional Housing 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 – Physical-Material Housing 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 – Activity Housing Index

Here, I can…

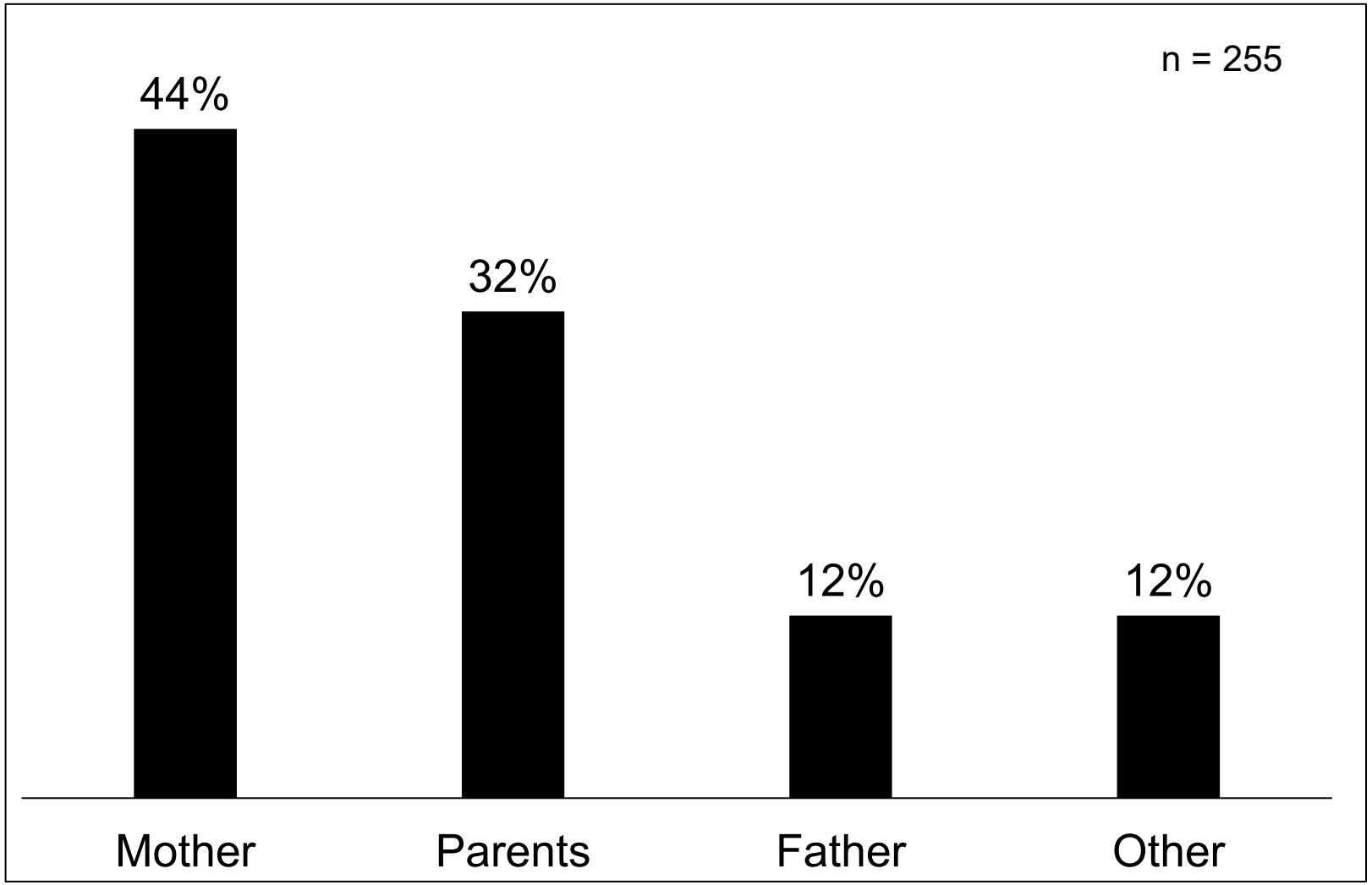
1. arrange my room the way I like it
2. decide who is allowed in my room
3. spend my time the way I want to
4. invite someone if I want to
5. have a say about the rules

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

Findings – Living Arrangements (Question 1)

Number of Places of Residence	*n*	%
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 – Emotional Dimension (Question 2 and 3)

Place of Residence	*M*	*SD*
Residential Care (n = 537)	3.10	1.13
Mother (n = 242)	4.46	0.86
Father (n = 107)	4.44	0.83
Both Parents (n = 112)	4.37	0.89
Grandparents (n = 33)	4.61	0.52
Other Relatives (n = 21)	4.03	0.99
Foster Family (n = 20)	4.04	0.96
Boyfriend/Girlfriend (n = 43)	4.42	0.72
Shared Apartment with Friend(s) (n = 15)	3.16	0.94

Findings – Physical-material Dimension (Question 2 and 3)

Place of Residence	*M*	*SD*
Residential Care (n = 537)	3.33	0.99
Mother (n = 242)	4.49	0.79
Father (n = 107)	4.43	0.78
Both Parents (n = 112)	4.53	0.60
Grandparents (n = 33)	4.38	0.62
Other Relatives (n = 21)	4.54	0.54
Foster Family (n = 20)	4.28	0.69
Boyfriend/Girlfriend (n = 43)	4.36	0.71
Shared Apartment with Friend(s) (n = 15)	3.49	1.04

Findings – Activity Dimension (Question 2 and 3)

Place of Residence	*M*	*SD*
Residential Care (n = 527)	3.37	0.94
Mother (n = 239)	4.24	0.89
Father (n = 107)	4.26	0.91
Both Parents (n = 110)	4.17	0.82
Grandparents (n = 31)	3.74	1.03
Other Relatives (n = 21)	3.26	1.06
Foster Family (n = 18)	4.02	0.85
Boyfriend/Girlfriend (n = 37)	3.60	0.72
Shared Apartment with Friend(s) (n = 15)	3.53	0.98

Conclusions

- 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
- 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

References

Clark, A., Cameron, C., & Kleipoedszus, S. (2014). Sense of place in children's residential care homes: Perceptions of home? Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care, 13(2), 1–13.

Corleis, T., & Keller, S. (2017). Fremdplatziertes Wohnen – Zwischen Möglichkeiten und Widersprüchen. Kindliche Perspektiven auf Aufwachsen am anderen Ort im Vergleich. In M. Meuth (Hrsg.), Wohn-Räume und pädagogische Orte: Erziehungswissenschaftliche Zugänge zum Wohnen (S. 149–170). Springer VS.

Hidalgo, M. C. (2013). Operationalization of place attachment: A consensus proposal. Estudios de Psicología, 34(3), 251–259. https://doi.org/10.1174/021093913808295190

Lewicka, M. (2011). On the Varieties of People's Relationships With Places: Hummon's Typology Revisited. Environment and Behavior, 43(5), 676–709. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916510364917

Magalhães, E., & Calheiros, M. M. (2020). Why Place Matters in Residential Care: The Mediating Role of Place Attachment in the Relation Between Adolescents' Rights and Psychological Well-Being. Child Indicators Research, 13(5), 1717–1737. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-019-09716-5

Mangold, K., & Rein, A. (2017). WOHNgruppe – Durchgangspassage vs. Daheim-Sein. In M. Meuth (Hrsg.), Wohn-Räume und pädagogische Orte: Erziehungswissenschaftliche Zugänge zum Wohnen (S. 221–244). Springer VS

Meuth, M. (2017). Wohnen – Gegenstand pädagogischer Praktiken, erziehungswissenschaftlicher Forschung und Theoriebildung. In M. Meuth (Hrsg.), Wohn-Räume und pädagogische Orte: Erziehungswissenschaftliche Zugänge zum Wohnen (S. 1–36). Springer VS.

Stedman, R. C. (2002). Toward a Social Psychology of Place: Predicting Behavior from Place-Based Cognitions, Attitude, and Identity. Environment and Behavior, 34(5), 561–581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916502034005001

Thank you!

Thomas Schmid[1], M.Sc.
thomas.schmid@ost.ch

Jana Osswald[2], M.A.
jana.osswald@fhnw.ch

Tobias Kindler[1], M.Sc
tobias.kindler@ost.ch

[1] Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences (OST), School of Social Work, Institute of Social Work and Social Spaces IFSAR

[2] University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, School of Social Work, Institut for Studies in Children and Youth Services