Motivation for Foster Care

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Overview

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1. Background

- Problem:
  - Foster placements increases
  - Foster Parents (FP) increases not same rate
  - 57% of FP quit within 5 years

- Goal:
  - Information about motivation
  - Careful selection of FP
  - High potential
2. Foster care in Flanders

- Problematic educational situation
- Services Youth welfare agency
  - Foster care first choice
- 17 foster care agencies
  - Soon each province, 1 agency
  - Selection, training, support, monitor
- Criteria: >18 year, health, police clearance certificate
- Competencies:
  - Communicate openly and clearly
  - Collaborate in a team and share parenthood
  - Helping children in changing their behaviors and in developing a positive self-image
  - Aware of the impact on own family
3. Motivation for foster care

- Kinship ≠ non-kinship
  - Particular child, kinship network
- Important: decision-making process to start foster
  - Resource theory (Cox, Orme & Rhodes, 2003)
  - Resource: education, income, married, time, parenting experience, social support, helping profession
  - More resources more likely start to foster
  - Barriers! Tyebjee (2003)
    - Lack of resources
    - Life cycle, age, family size, finances, time, space,
3. Motivation for foster care

- Literature
  - 6.6 reasons (Rhodes, et al, 2006)
  - Clustering
    - Intrinsic vs extrinsic
    - Child-centered vs self-oriented
    - Child-centered vs affect individual vs environmental
      » Society-oriented reasons
  - Child-centered: help a child, provide a child with love and a good home, etcetera

- Knowing motivation
  - Predict success,
  - Relate to foster home utilization (# children, # as foster parents)
  - Associate with secure attachment
3. Motivation for foster care

- Intrinsic (loving parent, saving from harm) → continue fostering (Rodger, et al., 2006)
- Child-centered (give love) → placement duration, predicts satisfaction, continue (Kraus, 1971, in Rhodes, et al., 2006; Denby, Rindfleisch & Bean, 1999)
- Self-oriented (inability, own experience) → positive outcome children (Dando & Minty, 1987, in Cole, 2005)
- Increase family size → secure attachment (Cole, 2005)
- Self-oriented (companion, to be loved, needs) → less placements, more disruption, fewer children (Rhodes, et al., 2006; Miller, 1993, in Cole, 2005; Rhodes, et al., 2006)

Conflicting, scarce, inconclusive
In Flanders: unknown
4. Research

Inconclusive, unknown

Research questions:

- Reasons to become foster parent in Flanders?
- What reasons are associated with retention?
- What family characteristics are associated with motivations?

Research method:

- Foster parents reasons for fostering
  - Dutch, 24 items, 4-point scale, 3 subscales (child-centered, self-oriented, society-oriented) and 12 1-items scales
- Characteristics
  - Foster parents age, educational level, employment status/available time, marital status, biological children, foster children, total years as foster parents
4. Research

- Research Population
  - Part of larger study
  - Active non-kinship
  - Three month period
  - 200
    - 77.5% foster mothers
    - Mean age: 47.98 years (sd=8.62)
    - 25-69 years
    - 78.5% living together
    - 81.5% at least high school
    - 66.5% of partners at least high school
    - 59.5% part time/not working
    - 52.5 % of partners full time
    - 79.5% at least 1 birth child

- Similar to representative non-kinship foster group
5. Results

- Family characteristics
  - 52% at least 1 foster child
  - Average: 7.5 years experience (sd=6.24)

- Reasons for fostering
  - 8.95 reasons for fostering (t=12.933, p<.001)
  - Main reasons: child-centered
    - I want to provide a good home for a child: 99%
    - I want to provide a child with love: 98%
  - Society-reasons
    - I want to fulfill my (religious) beliefs by caring for a child: 72.5%
    - I want to do something for the community: 71.5%
  - Self-oriented
    - From 6 to 25%
  - More child-centered ($\mu = 10.88, sd = 1.22$) than self-oriented ($\mu = 9.66, sd = 2.86$) and society-oriented reasons ($\mu = 5.69, sd = 1.54$) ($F(2)=412.73, p<0.005$).
  - Best description: child-centered reasons
    - “I want to provide a good home for a child”
    - Never self-oriented reasons
5. Results

- **Other items**
  - ‘I want to provide a home so a child won’t have to be put in an institution’: 95%
  - ‘I know a foster child and want to help’: 85.5%
  - ‘I know foster parents and I think it suits us too’: 73%

- **Reasons associated total years**
  - Logistic regression
    - Linear regression not possible, residuals were not random, normally distributed \( KS(166)=0.079, p<0.001 \)
    - Total years dichotomized, cut-off 75%, 10 years
    - Block-wise
    - First block: age, gender, available time, educational, biological children
    - Second block: reasons for fostering

- **Family characteristics associated foster reasons**
  - Spearman correlation
    - Linear regression not possible, residuals were not random, normally distributed, \( KS \) (self-oriented)\((192)=0.127, p<0.001\); \( KS \) (child-centered)\((192)=0.101, p<0.001\); \( KS \) (society-oriented)\((192)=0.062, p<0.05\)
**Table: logistic regression analysis for total years as foster parent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step1</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>1.149</td>
<td>12.391</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td>1.599</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.365</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>1.075</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.631</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.999</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.863</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.106</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0.970</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.632</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step2</strong>&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-oriented reasons</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.969</td>
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<td>Child-centered reasons</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>1.103</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>0.560</td>
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<td>Society-oriented reasons</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>1.022</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Overall model Chi-square (df=5)=31.219, p<0.001, Nagelkerke $R^2=0.256$

<sup>b</sup> Overall model Chi-square (df=8)=31.708; p<0.001, Nagelkerke $R^2=0.260$

**Table: spearman correlation family characteristics and reasons for fostering**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self oriented</th>
<th>Child centered</th>
<th>Society oriented</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td><strong>0.030</strong></td>
<td>-.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td><strong>0.194</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.006</strong></td>
<td>0.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.134</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>-0.139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Conclusions

- Child-centered reasons
- More average (4-pointscale)
- Retention not explained by reasons, only age
  - Definition of retention
  - Foster care organisation
  - Selection process of foster care agencies
  - Decision process of foster care agencies
  - Further research: considering breakdown, succes, placement movement

- Few family characteristics
  - Resources no indication
  - More children: less self-oriented reasons
    - No children
    - To much children
  - More children: more society reasons
    - Taking care of child already fulfilled
  - More time: more self-oriented
    - Resource theory
6. Conclusions

- 66% to receive love
- 44% want to enlarge family
  - In contrast with screening and selection criteria
  - Incompatible reasons together with compatible

- Knowing a foster family helps recruiting
6. Strengths/Limitations

- First Flemish study
- Big participation foster care agencies
- Ordinal scale in measurement

- Lack of information respons/non-respons
- non-active foster parents?
- Foster fathers?
- Follow-up: motivations and succes

- Assessment of motivations is needed:
  - Goals of agencies
  - Predict succes
7. References


THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

QUESTIONS?