

Young Carers and the Need for Interdisciplinary Cooperation

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Young Carers

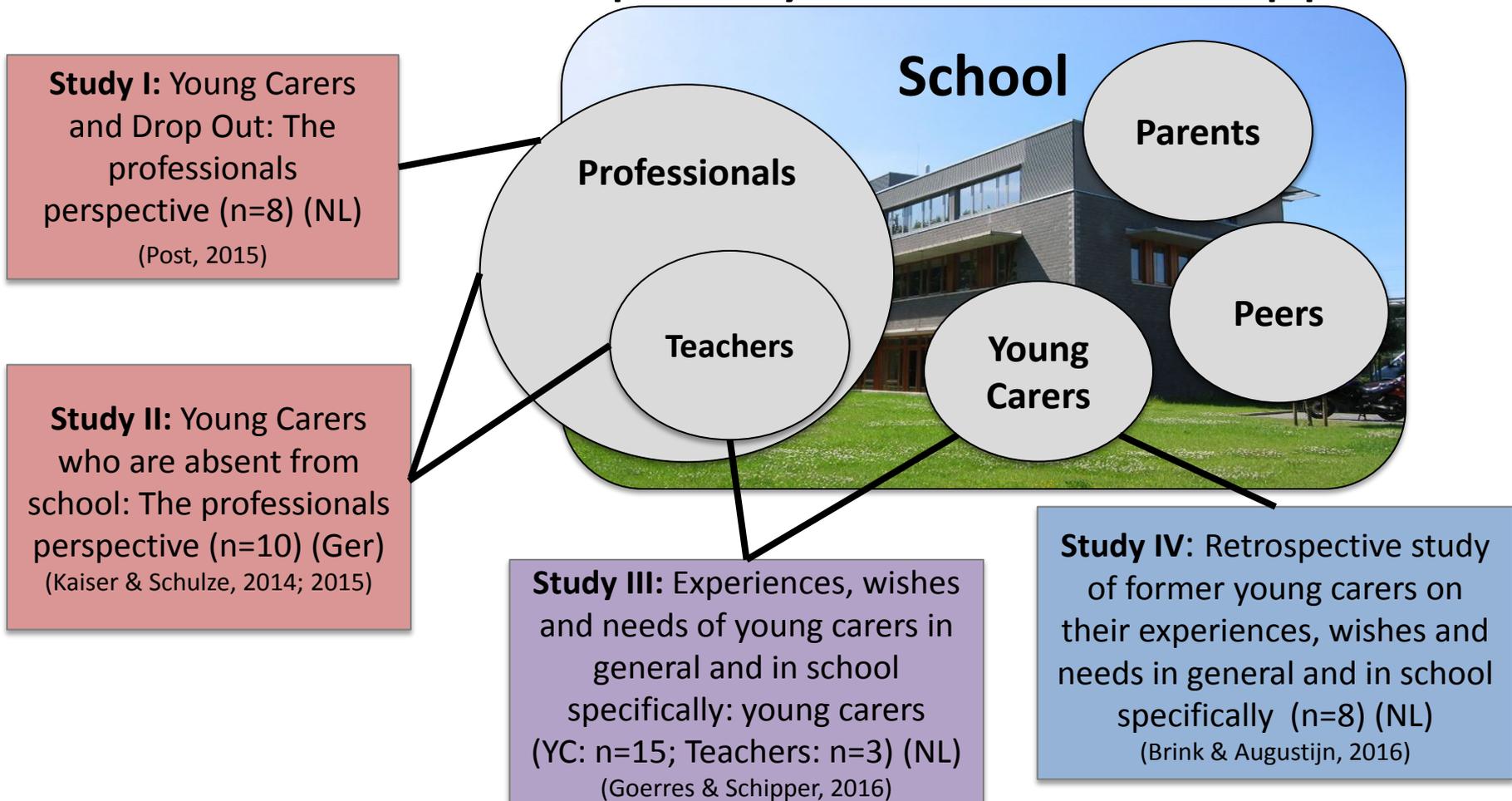
Young Carers in Germany and the Netherlands:

- awareness for and policy response to young carers are preliminary in Germany and emerging in the Netherlands (Leu & Becker, 2016)
 - little awareness of the phenomenon in public, research or practice
 - few specialized services and specific interventions for young carers and their families but other services may be applicable

Young Carers

- little recognition of children caring for relatives → young carers fall through gaps between different support structures and services (Aldridge & Becker, 1993; Leu & Becker, 2016)
- compulsory school attendance in Germany and the Netherlands: Schools are a central institution to get in touch with young carers

The Studies: Young Carers, their Situation in School and Interdisciplinary Professional Support



The Studies: Young Carers, their Situation in School and Interdisciplinary Professional Support

Central aim of the studies

- insight into the situation of young carers in school in Germany and the Netherlands → evaluating different perspectives and perceptions

Methods

- qualitative approaches: semi-structured interviews, in Germany and the Netherlands (Study I-IV; 2013 – 2015)
- mixed-methods design (questionnaire and in depth-interviews; Study III)

Key Results

Missing self-perception as a young carer: Caring as a regular part of growing up

'That you take on tasks of adults as a child' (former young carer, in: Brink & Augustijn, 2016)

'For me it was normal, you do that for your father.' (former young carer, in: Brink & Augustijn, 2016)

Missing flexibility and insufficient emotional support at schools

'Support from school, a mentor, who sits down with you. I didn't have that at all, I had to come up to them myself when I needed to catch up [with an assignment]'
(former young carer, in: Brink & Augustijn, 2016, p. 23)

'Emotional support is very important. You can never make up for that or catch up with it. I mean, when there is more money later, you can make the financial part whole again. The emotional part has such an impact. That is far more difficult to make up.' (former young carer, in: Brink & Augustijn, 2016, p. 24)

Key Results

The **definition of young carers varies**, every professional seems to have their own definition and perspective on it, the **existence** of young carers is sometimes **denied**

carers are only 18+ (general practitioner in: Post, 2015)

'No child has to care for a mother in Germany' (male social worker, in: Kaiser & Schulze, 2015, p. 324)

Young carers are hidden and **invisible** to professionals

'[...] especially single-mothers, they invited us when their children had been in school. And she said: Peter is caring. I have been really naive [...] even today I do not understand. At some point it got obvious that Peter is a boy of 12 years. This is the process. You need 2 years to understand who is caring' (female member of a nursing service and hospice, in: Kaiser & Schulze, 2014, p. 340)

'If no one knows you're taking care of someone, you can't signalise them.' (female general practitioner, in: Post, 2015, p. 17)

Key Results

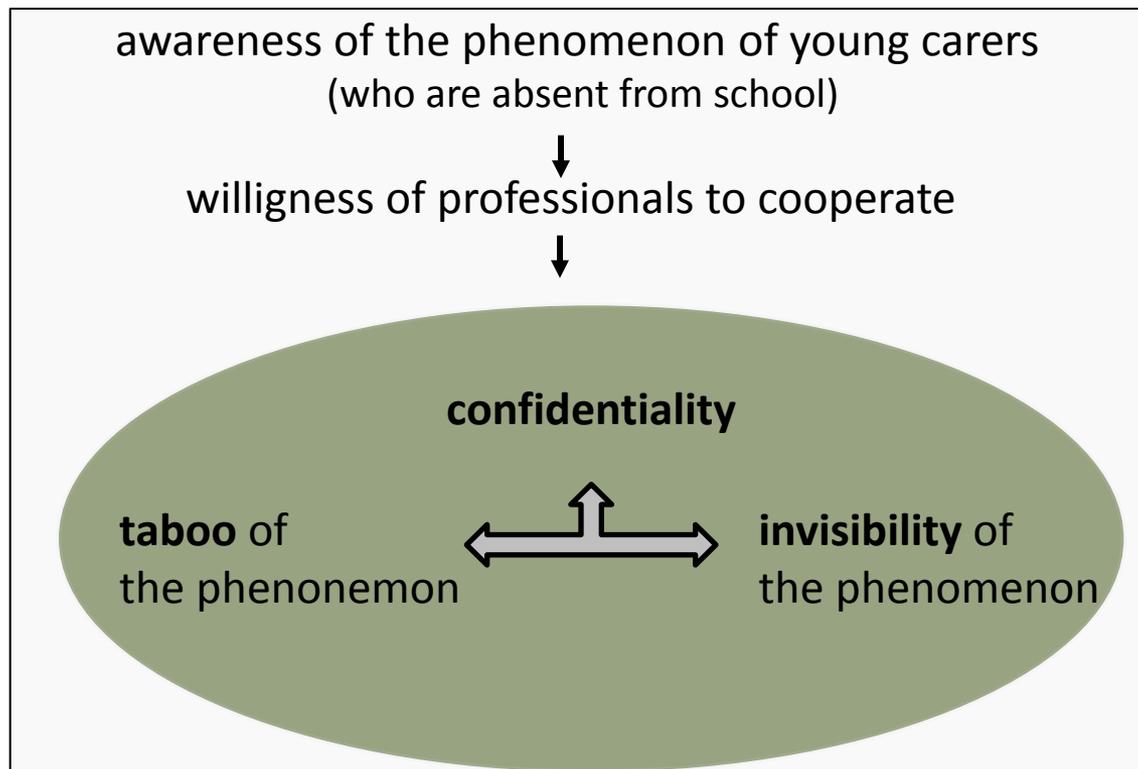
Missing structures or policies (in school) to support young carers

Professionals state that there are complex determinants and situations of young carers especially when they are absent from school

- professionals see the need for interdisciplinary cooperation
- cooperation is hindered by barriers (Kaiser & Schulze, 2014; 2015)

Key Results

facilitating factors and barriers in interdisciplinary cooperation



Conclusions

- **different perspectives** on the situation of young carers in school show different parts of the phenomenon and different strategies of support
- **no common definition** of the German and Dutch translation of young carers (ger. *pflegende Kinder und Jugendliche*, nl. *mantelzorgers*)
 - hinders awareness and identification of young carers
 - hinders self-identification
 - different terminology and descriptive frameworks lead to disjointed, uncoordinated support → seeing segments of the phenomenon
- **no structures or guidelines** to identify or support young carers

Conclusions

- professionals state the need for **parents to be involved to support** young carers (who are absent from school) → **whole family approach** (Frank & Slatcher, 2009; Kaiser, Schulze & Leu, forthcoming)
- **first diverse insight** into the situation of young carers in school by different perspectives
- **learning from** the experiences in research and practice from **other countries** (Leu & Becker 2016, p. 10)

Perspectives

- quantitative extent of the awareness of professionals working in education, health and social care on young and young adult carers (cooperation of Oldenburg University & Careum Forschung; completed July 2017: Rehder, Vagelpohl & Handelsmann)
- Young Carers and Education in Germany (PhD project, published July 2017: Kaiser; supervised by Schulze and Leu) → Young Carers, their Parents and their Teachers



Junge Pflegende in
 Deutschland

Aufruf zur Teilnahme an Online-Umfrage!

Gesucht werden Fachkräfte aus dem Bildungs-, Gesundheits- und Sozialbereich!

Ziel der Umfrage ist es, herauszufinden, wie und wie oft Fachpersonen jungen Menschen begegnen, die ihre Eltern, Geschwister oder andere Angehörige pflegen.

Auch wenn Sie bisher keinen Kontakt zu pflegenden Kindern und Jugendlichen hatten, können Sie an der Umfrage teilnehmen. Die Umfrage dauert etwa 5-10 Minuten. Alle Informationen werden anonymisiert.

Nähere Informationen & Online-Umfrage:
www.junge-pflegende-ol.de



Thank you!

Questions?



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