

RESIDENTIAL (CHILD) CARE – INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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SOCIAL WORK FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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“THE PROBLEM”

- Many children across the globe cannot grow up with their biological families
- The reasons for out-of-home placement through the child welfare system are varied but are mostly related to child protection issues and/or risk factors related to the situation of the parents
- Modern child welfare systems are tasked with finding solutions for children and youth who cannot live with their families
- Residential care / group homes have a long history and have been a primary way of providing a (temporary) home for children in need

RISK FACTORS FOR OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

- Experiences of abuse and/or neglect
- Family and/or community violence
- Parental psychopathology (e.g., substance abuse, criminal behavior, psychiatric disorders)
- Harsh, unsupportive parenting
- Relational instability
- Other adverse life events
- Adverse environmental conditions (e.g., chronic poverty)
- Prior service histories

RESIDENTIAL CARE- WHAT'S IN A WORD?



Prof. S. James | Gdansk - Day 3 | 11-27 March 2024

Boarding Schools

RESIDENTIAL CARE TERMINOLOGY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

- Residential care (for children & youth)
- Residential treatment centers
- Residential group care
- Residential interventions
- Group homes
- Group care
- Residential youth care
- Children's homes
- Foster care
- Therapeutic residential care
- Residential education
- Congregate care
- Alternative care
- Substitute care
- Institutional care / Institutions
- Orphanages

THE CONTINUUM OF CARE IN CHILD WELFARE (and beyond)

Out-of-home care

“In-home” care

Inpatient psychiatric care

Closed residential care

Residential care /
Group homes

Treatment / Therapeutic
foster care

Nonrelative foster care

Kinship care

Home-, school-, and community-
based services and treatments

Closeness to family and degree of
structure and restrictiveness

Scaling down
Reducing, reshaping and improving residential care around the world

Positive care choices:
Working paper 1

EveryChild

Consensus Statement on Group Care for Children and Adolescents: A Statement of Policy of the American Orthopsychiatric Association

Mary Dozier
University of Delaware

Joan Kaufman
Yale University

Roger Kobak
University of Delaware

Thomas G. O'Connor
University of Rochester

Abraham Sagi-Schwartz

Stephen Scott



Institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation of children 2: policy and practice recommendations for global, national, and local actors

Philip S Goldman, Marian J Bakermans-Kranenburg, Beth Bradford, Alex Christopoulos, Patricia Lim Ah Ken, Christopher Cuthbert, Robbie Duchinsky, Nathan A Fox, Stela Grigoras, Megan R Gunnar, Rawan W Ibrahim, Dana Johnson, Santi Kusumaningrum, Ni Luh Putu Maitra Agastya, Frederick M Mwangangi, Charles A Nelson, Ellie M Ott, Sophie Reijman, Marinus H van IJzendoorn, Charles H Zeanah, Yuning Zhang, Edmund J S Sonuga-Barke

Summary

Worldwide, millions of children live in institutions, which runs counter to both the UN-recognised right of children to be raised in a family environment, and the findings of our accompanying systematic review of the physical

estimate is based on scarce data and might be an underestimate.¹ A December 2019 UN General Assembly Resolution on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children recognises that a child should grow up in a family environment to have a full and harmonious development of her or his personality and potential.



Lancet Child Adolesc Health 2020
Published Online
June 23, 2020
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30060-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30060-2)
See Online/Lancet Group

CSAC Issue Brief

Continuum of Care Group Home Reform

Background

Governor Brown signed AB 403 (Stone) in October 2015, eliminating most group homes starting in January 2017 and ushering in a foundational shift for the state's foster youth.

The goal of the bill, called "Continuum of Care Reform" (CCR), is to provide better, more appropriate care and services for foster children in home-based settings and to reduce the time spent in congregate care, or group homes. This will require investing in

AB 403 will require, at a minimum, funding for capacity building and new practice requirements in county child welfare services, probation, and mental health agencies.

The Governor has proposed \$96 million for foster family recruitment and probation services in his 2016-17 January budget. While the funding is welcome, it falls far short of what is needed for implementation and ongoing activities associated with AB 403—



Stockholm Declaration on Children and Residential Care

The second international conference on Children and Residential Care held in Stockholm 12 – 15 May, 2003, sponsored by the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the Swedish International Development and Co-operation Agency (Sida), has discussed the situation of children in long-term residential care. There is indisputable evidence that institutional care has negative consequences for both individual children and for society at large. These negative consequences could be prevented through the adoption of national strategies to support families and children, by exploring the benefits of various types of community-based care, by reducing the use of institutions, by setting standards for public care and for the monitoring of the remaining institutions.

The participants at the conference – more than 600 individuals from governments, civil society and the research community from 71 countries – have agreed on the following:

A GLOBAL PUSH TOWARD DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION

SCANDALS AND NEGATIVE IMAGE

- Ireland – Catholic sexual abuse scandals
- Canada – Residential School Scandals involving 1st Nation children
- Australia – “Stolen Generation”
- US – Native American boarding schools
- Switzerland – “Verdingkinder”
- France – forcible resettlement of orphans and poor children
- Holland – abuse in Catholic residential care institutions
- Romania – orphanages and chronic neglect
- Germany – “Heimkampagne” [Home Campaign] of the ‘50s and ‘60s; e.g., Odenwald Schule
- South Korea – “Brothers’ Home” abuse scandal

Failure option

Failing-up option

Warehouse for youth
who nobody wants

Pariah care

ARGUMENTS AGAINST RESIDENTIAL CARE

institutional,
hierarchical,
restrictive

potential for
abuse and
exploitation

un-/undertrained
staff

high staff
turnover

iatrogenic
effects

mixed outcomes,
weak evidence for
effectiveness

high cost

removed from
family and
community

lack of aftercare
and integration
with other
services

CONSEQUENCES OF DEINSTITUTION- ALIZATION

Various policy initiatives to reduce RC & documented reductions in RC

Growth of community- and family-based alternatives as well as prevention efforts

Reconceptualization of RC as 'treatment' only

RC as short-term or stop-gap option

Closure and/or diversification of RC programs

Increased clinical severity of youth in RC

Misplacement of children far away from their communities, in hotels etc.

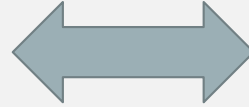
ARGUMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE

- ✓ a necessary element in the continuum of services for children and youth
- ✓ indicated for the needs of some children
- ✓ not enough alternative services (e.g., insufficient number of foster families)
- ✓ it's not about the setting but the quality (foster families can be problematic as well)
- ✓ not every child can be referred to a foster family
- ✓ placement disruptions frequently lead to eventual stays in RC anyway
- ✓ RCs are led by professional and trained staff
- ✓ RC has pedagogical/therapeutic potential that needs to be utilized

THE GLOBAL RESIDENTIAL CARE DEBATE

“AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE“

- RC is expensive, invasive and not effective; high potential for abuse and exploitation
- Closure of most RC programs
- If necessary, only temporary and as a stop-gap option
- Emphasis on home-based or family-based service options
- “Stockholm Declaration“ of 2003



“RC HAS POTENTIAL“

- RC has a function in the continuum of services for children
- Not having RC creates other problems
- RC has therapeutic/pedagogical potential
- Emphasis on the development of quality standards
- “Malmö Declaration“ of 1987



REVITALIZING RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

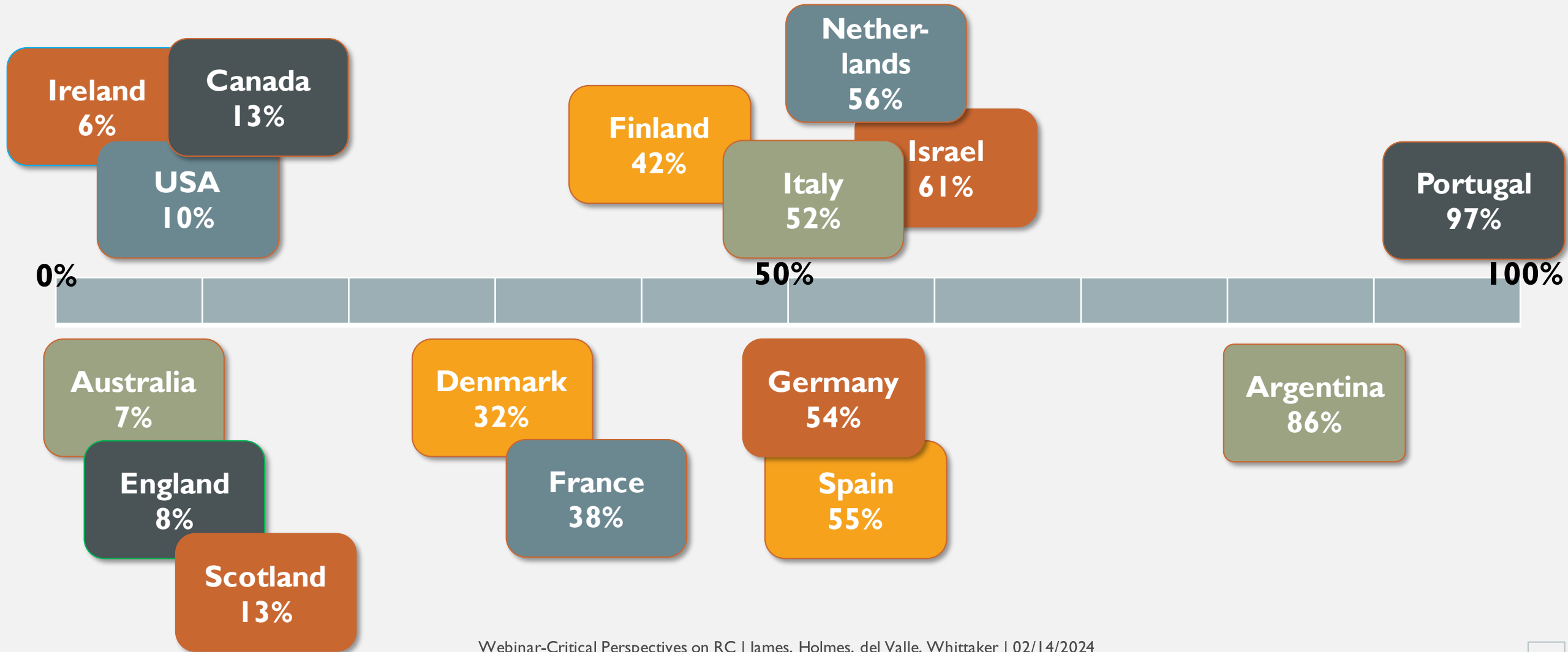
CROSS-NATIONAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

EDITED BY JAMES K. WHITTAKER, LISA HOLMES,
JORGE F. DEL VALLE, SIGRID JAMES

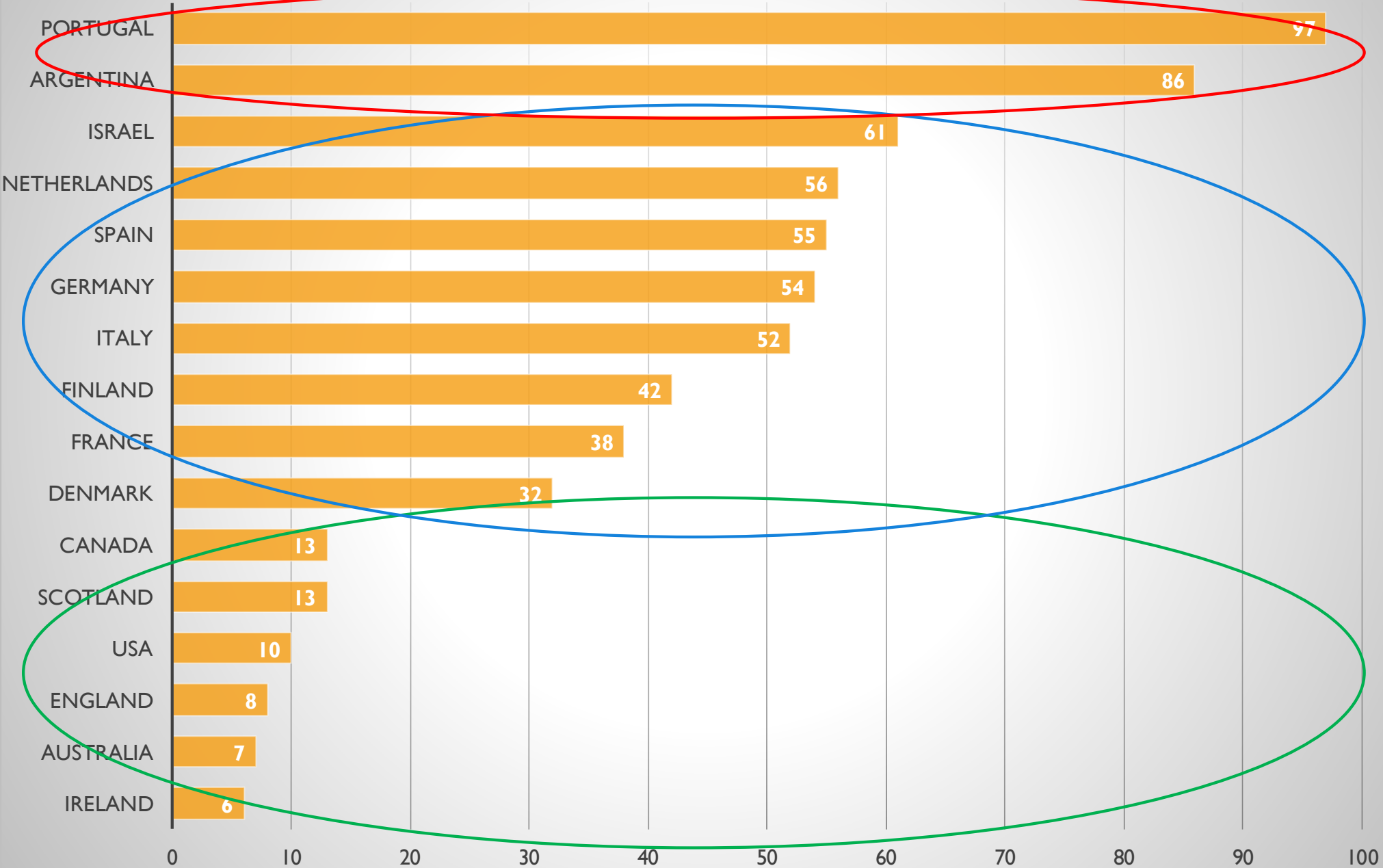
OXFORD

- Aim of the book:
 - To address “how societies with developed welfare and social service systems are assessing current needs and future directions in their residential child and youth care sectors” (p.3).
- Countries profiled:
 - England, Scotland, Ireland, United States, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Israel, Finland, Argentina

A CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISON OF UTILIZATION RATES OF RESIDENTIAL CARE (VIS-À-VIS FAMILY-BASED FOSTER CARE)



Utilization rates of residential care



HIGH

MEDIUM

LOW

Patterns,
distinguishing
factors,
hypothesis to
be tested etc.

Low

Recent administrative reviews,
legislative reforms

Search for alternative “best
practices;” emphasis on EBPs;
‘sanctions’ for use of RC

Program closures and
diversification

Shorter stays, treatment focus,
behavioral stabilization

Evidence of increased clinical
severity of youth

Evidence of “placement
exceptions”

Comparably less developed
workforce

Medium

Varied patterns – need for
subanalysis

Echo the logic of “family first”
but RC integral and/or equally
important part of OHC

Emphasis on improving quality
of RC and building a
professional workforce

Less clinical orientation; more
focus on RC “milieu” and social
pedagogy

In some countries, special
factors at play (e.g., UMRs)

Some evidence of a more
positive image of RC

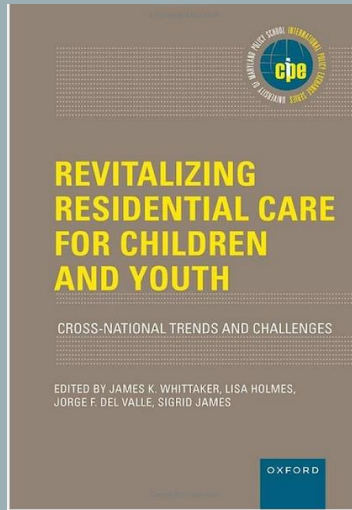
High

High usage is generally
recognized as a problem

Few alternatives

Long institutional histories

Cultural factors that make
family-based alternatives less
likely



FIVE LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR RC STAFF

1. No minimum qualification required

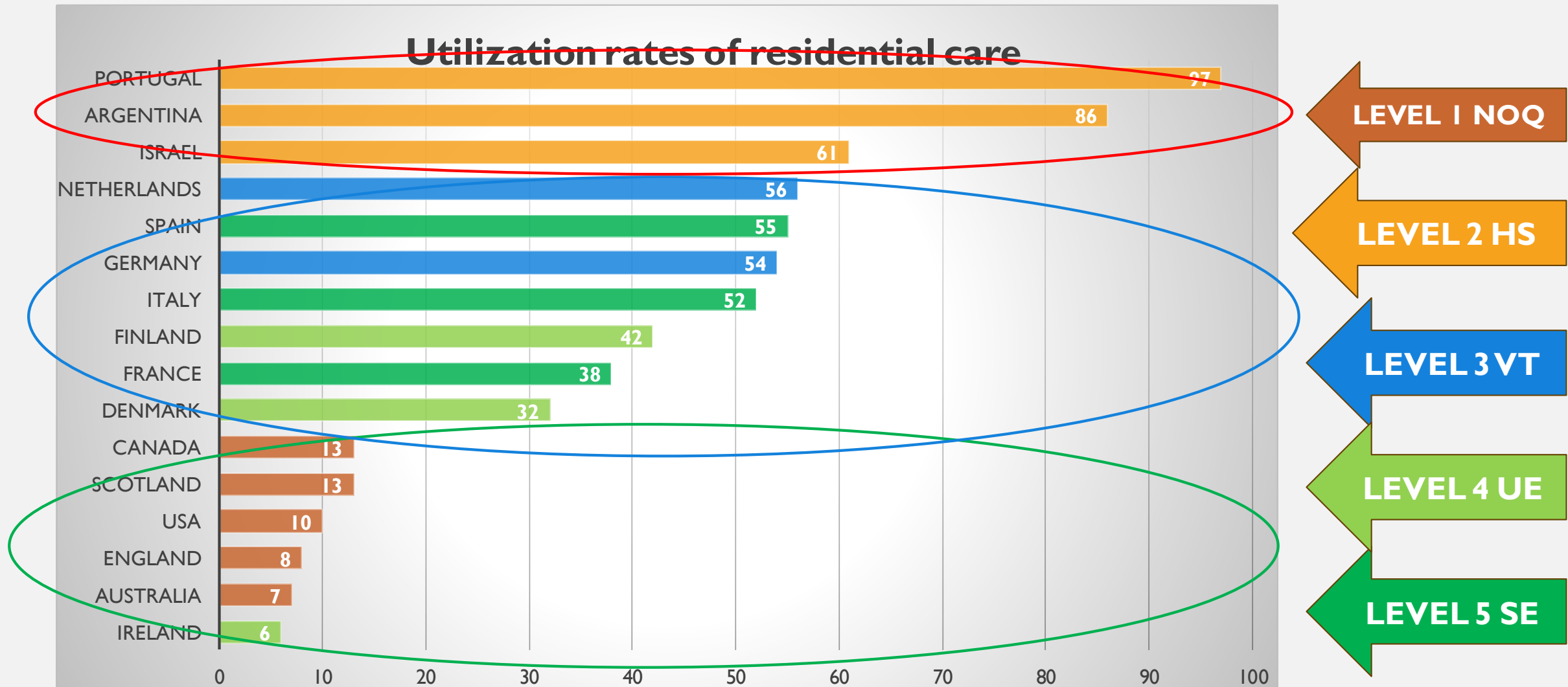
2. High school level

3. Vocational training

4. University education

5. University level with a specific
social education degree

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UTILIZATION RATE AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION





CONCLUSION

- Terminology matters – definitional vagueness and confusion have led to the ‘broad-brushing’ of RC
- Reduction policies in RC have resulted in many unintended negative consequences
- “A failure to recognize reality” (Schagrin, 2023, p. 3)
- “When society makes ... solutions unacceptable, it must provide alternative solutions” (Kadushin & Martin, 1988, p. 42)
- Need to sort out empirical evidence with regard to RC vs. ‘ideology’



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