



UNACCOMPANIED MINOR REFUGEES IN Brandenburg

Empirical findings from the perspective of the subject

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AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Research questions
3. Methods
4. Empirical findings
 1. Subjective perspective
 2. Institutional perspective
 3. Structural perspective
5. Conclusion



1. INTRODUCTION: FIELD OF RESEARCH

- 1500 minor refugees in Brandenburg
- Political climate: Culture of welcome & xenophobia
- Minors integrated into German youth welfare system
- Brandenburg as one of Germany's largest federal states



1. INTRODUCTION: DEMOGRAPHICS

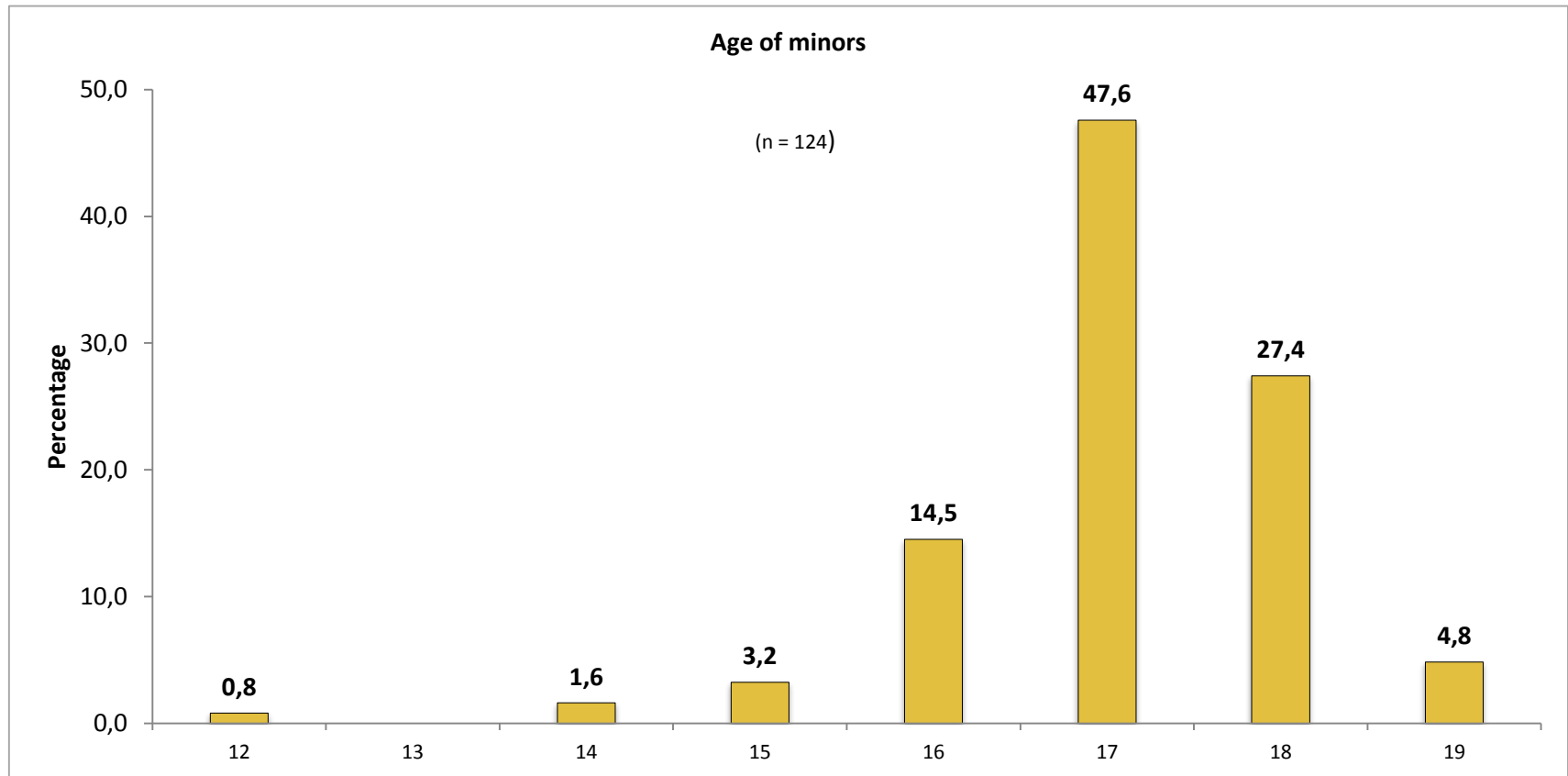


Fig. 1: Age of minors, source: own data



2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Subjective perspective: How is the situation perceived by the minors themselves?
- Institutional perspective: What are good practices in terms of organizational cultures?
- Structural perspective: Which structural problems do occur in the system of youth welfare?



3. METHODS

- Mixed-methods-design
 - Questionnaires, expert-interviews with the social workers
 - Questionnaires, group discussions, interviews and ethnographic participant observation with the minors
 - Peer Research together with the minors



4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

- Minors as normal youths

“Yes, it’s quite the challenge. At some point it’s another kind of challenge compared to working with Germans, but it’s not something completely new. We are in child- and youth welfare and in the end these are youths.”

(D18:23; own translation)



4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

- Arriving under the Damocles sword of deportation

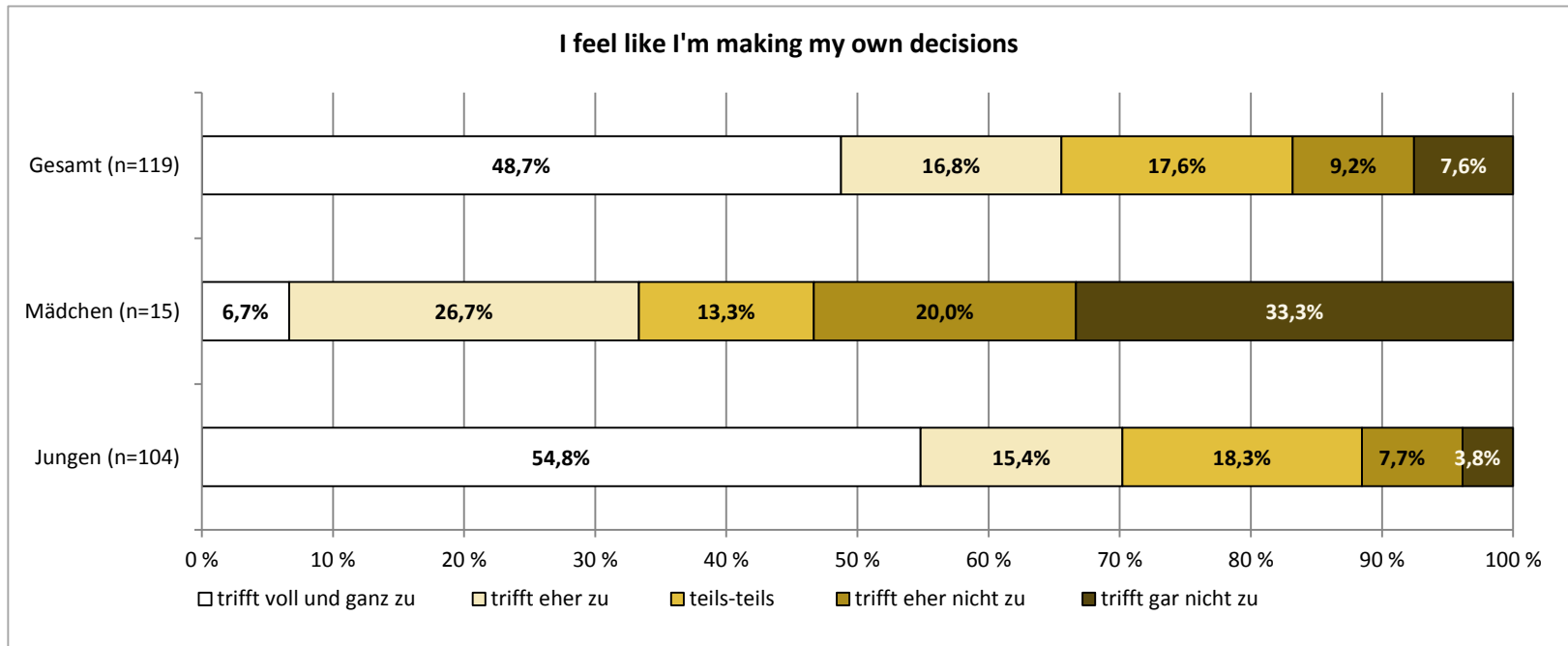


Fig. 2: Self-determination over life, source: own data



4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

“The motivation of those who are unaccompanied is still quite high at the moment ... The motivation declines as soon as the youths come to realize: ‘Okay, Germany says, I have to leave.’ The moment they receive their letter of rejection it’s like: ‘We are not welcome. Germany doesn’t want us here.’ And this is a point at which they are not able to differentiate ... and they are completely demotivated. Sometimes you stop going to school or you have unexcused absent days or threaten to start smoking and drinking. Although this has never been an issue before.”

(D18:3; own translation)



4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

- Difficulties to find German friends
 - “When we make contact with the German, difficult, very difficult.”
(D17:31; own translation)
- Longing for a “real school”
 - Frustration about not being taught together with Germans



4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

- The facility as the center of life

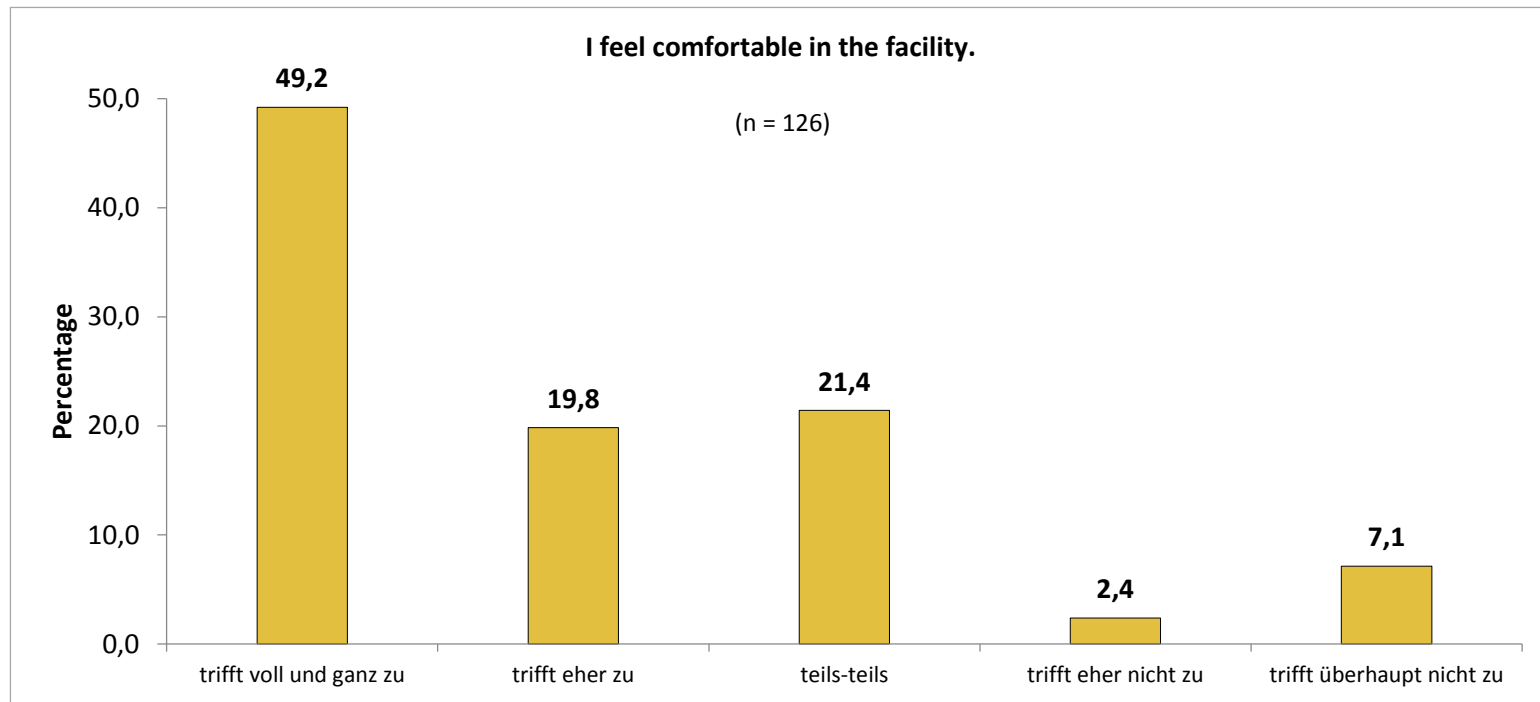


Fig. 3: Feeling comfortable in the facility, source: own data



4. EMP. FINDINGS: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- Organizational cultures
 - *Passivity/administration – openness/creation axis*
 - Administration culture: Job-by-the-book-mentality
 - Culture of creation: Policy of open doors; active support of minors' participation in society



4. EMP. FINDINGS: STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE

- Breaking up bonds within clearing
- Perspectives as Care Leaver

“And the moment they are out of youth welfare and the close ties are gone ... I don't know how they cope with this. And we observe this in those boys, who at the age of 18 say: ‘Ok no need for youth welfare anymore ... I go to the transition facility.’ Most of them want to come back. But then, technically this path doesn't exist anymore. Then they are simply out of youth welfare. Because it's only then that they realize what they actually have here ... due to these tight relationships and oppurtunities that we have here.”

(D7:29; own translation)



5. CONCLUSION

- Processes of acquisition of knowledge and experiences remain decisive
- All support systems must be taken into account
- Mere administration is not enough
- Learning from good practices of enabling minors to participate in society



Thank you very much for your attention!