Tattooing Family – doing and displaying family through tattoos by young people in residential care

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1 Introduction

The present paper focuses on young people in residential care contexts as actors of doing and displaying family. Despite their heterogeneity, young people who grow up in residential care settings temporarily or long-term are united by the fact of their living (at least for some time) spatially separate from their "family of origin" as part of the foster care system. A glance at the biographies of these young people reveals that it is not uncommon for them to repeatedly (have to) change their place of residence during their time in care: for example, they might move into different group homes, foster family structures, back to their family of origin or into supervised housing. Their biographies are characterized by transitions between different settings, meaning that they grow up "in between" public institutional and private familial care arrangements. Accordingly, they (must) also produce "family" in a processual and interactive way at the intersection of the institutional and the familial (see for instance Schäfer/Thole 2018). For the young people, residential care is also associated with a constant grappling with their own ideas, needs and practices with respect to the concept of "family": what is family to them and who exactly do they count as part of their family – their biological parents, their foster parents, their caregivers in the group home, their biological siblings, the other children in the group home and/or other significant people in their life? To whom do they feel they belong and what practices are linked to this?

Prior studies in the field of residential care research have shown that young people's grappling with their familial belonging can also change over time. Thus, from a praxeological perspective, family must be understood not as something static and predetermined, but rather as 'doing family' in everyday interactions and 'displaying family' to others (cf. Jurczyk 2020a; cf. Finch 2007). Following the Doing Family concept, family can be understood as something that is "flexible (changeable), contingent (always possible in a different way) and gradual (more or less)" (Jurczyk

2020b: 14[1], see also Jurczyk et al. in this volume). This includes understanding family as something that does not end "at the household boundary of the so-called nuclear family" (Jurczyk et al. 2014: 10), but also, for example, thinking of friends or elective relatives as actors in the doing of family (cf. Jurczyk 2020c: 40 ff.). Against this background, family is understood in terms of how the actors produce and understand it in each case. Conversely, this means that it is worthwhile for social work in residential care to focus on young people as actors in the doing of family – this also involves understanding their lifeworld and their independence of thought in the doing of family.

However, little is known about how young people performatively structure their consideration of these questions and how they produce, maintain and live out familial relationships in everyday life and across their life course. Fundamentally, we know that young people frequently express their perspective on their (life)world and their place in it in creative ways (Maurer 2017), such as by writing song lyrics (Wresnik 2015), making creative photo collages (Eßer/Köngeter 2015), doing graffiti (Schnoor 2009) – or even by getting tattoos (Groß 2022). Photo collages, tattoos, etc. are to be understood as artifacts in which social relations materialize (Lueger/Froschauer 2018). Artifacts also play a role in Doing and Displaying Family and are understood in this context as "tools for display" (Finch 2007: 77). In the course of addressing the potential for further conceptual development, however, Jurczyk (2020c) points to the research desideratum that the significance of artifacts in Doing Family practices is still not sufficiently taken into account (cf. ibid.: 37).

Tattoos can be understood as a unique point for accessing the subjective lifeworlds of their bearers because these artifacts are directly connected to their bearers' bodies. In my exploratory, qualitative dissertation (Groß: 2022), I analyzed the linguistic, embodied and visual dimensions of family tattoos as a way of gaining access to the familial lifeworlds of young people in residential care settings in Germany. The study examined the role played by tattoos, which are becoming increasingly popular with adolescents in general, in doing and displaying family and how tattoos can be fruitfully brought to bear for social work research and practice in residential care contexts, in which understanding clients' own lifeworlds is seen as a core aspect of professional practice (cf. Galuske 2013: 57).

In my contribution to this volume, I will present those results from my dissertation that are particularly interesting with regard to the topic of the edited volume. To this end, I will first unfold the theoretical perspective of understanding tattoos as artifacts in Doing and Displaying Family practices, before going on to examine the methodological approach – here in particular the inclusion of artifacts in a study applying grounded theory. Subsequently, using excerpts from the empirical material, I will point in particular to two aspects that are especially exciting with regard

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1   All translations of German quotations are the author's own.

to the topic of "young people in/out of residential care as actors in Doing/Displaying Family": first, Doing Family in the absence of family and second, UnDoing Family in fragile and fluid (quasi-)familial relationship dynamics. Abstracting, I will then address what is at the core of Doing and Displaying Family with tattoos by young people in/out of residential care. In the process, I will demonstrate that this core revolves around the (re)presentation of familial belonging over time. Finally, at the end of the paper, I will again tie this in with the theme of the book and discuss what the results mean for our common cross-cutting topic of "The making and doing of family in, through and with education and social work".

2 Tattoos as artifacts in practices of doing und displaying family

A very obvious feature of tattoos is their close connection to their bearers. This is apparent in relation to three important characteristics of tattoos: first, the tattooed symbols are meant to be permanent; second, they cannot be easily 'taken off' (unlike jewelry, for example); and third, it is possible to interweave the tattooed symbols with a unique subjective meaning in connection to one's personal lifeworld (cf. Bammann 2006: 36). Think, for example, of tattoos with the names of one's children or tattoos that express one's music preferences, hobbies or scene affiliation. These subjective attributions of meaning certainly do not apply to all tattoos, and in the words of Bammann (2008), sometimes a tattoo "is simply a tattoo, gotten for the sake of getting a tattoo" (ibid.: 264). Nevertheless, the question 'What does the tattoo mean?' seems to be omnipresent in both everyday empirical and scholarly work on tattoos. A review of the literature on tattoos (Groß 2022) reveals that few scholarly publications explicitly address references to the family in tattoos – despite the fact that from an everyday empirical perspective, these seem to be quite widespread in society: think, for example, of tattooed names or birthdates of newborn or deceased family members or different ways of inscribing 'family'.

However, what has been a strong focus of the previous literature on tattoos and can serve as a point of departure are examinations of the production of belonging through tattoos. This has typically concerned group or scene affiliation (cf. Hertrampf et al. 2003; cf. Bammann 2008; cf. Sanders/Vail 2008). In this context, tattoos can be understood as a "feature of subcultural belonging" (Lobstädt 2005: 234). However, belonging to the family 'group' is seldom mentioned in this context. With regard to family and tattoos, Sanders and Vail (2008) come to the following conclusion:

> "One of the most common responses to my question, 'How did you go about deciding on this particular tattoo?' was a reference to a personal associate with whom they had a close emotional relationship. Some chose a particular

tattoo because it was like that worn by a close friend or a member of their family. Others chose a design that incorporated the name of their boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse or child or a design associated with that person." (Ibid.: 45 f.)

As Lueger and Froschauer (2018) argue, "social relations are not only anchored in specific forms of relationships, they also become manifest in the artifacts that express these relationships and indicate to others what they are dealing with" (ibid.: 31). In this sense, "many artifacts are positioned at the intersections between people, set them in relation to one another and thus modify structures and processes within society" (ibid.: 25). Artifacts also play an important role in the concept of 'displaying family', where they are understood as "tools for display" (Finch 2007: 77). In this sense, a theoretical question concerns to what extent tattoos emerge as 'tools for displaying family' – particularly in connection with "narratives" (ibid.), another tool in processes of displaying family.

Sanders und Vail (2008) speak of "displaying tattoos" (ibid.: ix), referring conceptually to processes of making tattoos visible and placing them in the limelight. Accordingly, 'displaying family with tattoos' involves both depicting family in the sense of a visualization and/or verbalization as well as making family visible to others and oneself. Gabb (2011), who studies family relationships as well as "troubling displays" (ibid.: 38), likewise refers to displays in tattoos and discusses – citing Back (2007) – tattooed names of partners or children as "displayed upon the skin" (Gabb 2011: 49).

3 Methodological approach

According to Normann (2003), the strength of qualitative research approaches lies in their ability to capture the "idiosyncrasies of subjective utterances" (ibid.: 9) and facilitate "meaningful access to the patterns of interpretation applied by children and adolescents in their respective life circumstances" (ibid.). Normann (2003) and other primarily biographical studies of residential care communities focus on the narrative dimension. With regard to qualitative social research more generally, one might speak here, in the somewhat provocative words of Eisewicht (2016), of a "language-obsessed and object-neglecting social science mainstream" (ibid.: 115), even though this is somewhat less true of research on residential care settings. Indeed, a few studies in this field do examine artifacts, such as Eßer and Köngeter (2015), who investigate photo collages in group homes, or Keitsch and Pooch (2017), who conceptualize "artifacts as an empirical point of access to studying living spaces within residential care settings" (ibid.: 195). Returning to the potential of this approach, examining artifacts – and especially tattoos, as artifacts particularly close to the body – enables us to take into account visual and embodied dimensions of expression in

addition to the narrative dimension. Nevertheless, doing justice to the multidimensional nature of the close, lifeworld-based connections between tattoos and their bearers poses a significant challenge in terms of identifying an appropriate methodological approach.

The exploratory qualitative study examining the tattoos of young people in residential care settings took an object-related methodological approach based on a constructivist reading of grounded theory (Charmaz 2014). Proceeding from the core assumption that tattoos are unique in their direct connection to their bearers, data collection took the form of tattoo-focused, photograph-supported interviews. This form of interviewing made it possible to focus the data collection process on both the bearers of the tattoos and on the artifacts themselves (by taking pictures of the tattoos). The interviewees were free to decide whether and which of their tattoos to show in the interview situation. A total of 16 people (9 female and 7 male) aged 18–25 were interviewed. All interviewees in the sample have at least one tattoo. At the time of the interview, some were still living in residential care, while others were no longer. As indicated in the interview transcripts, the period of time during which they lived in residential care ranged from one year to eighteen years. The dataset for the dissertation study encompassed a total of 16 interviews and 57 photographs of 58 tattoos. All 16 interviewees had at least one tattoo that referred to family.

At the beginning of the dissertation study, the focus was not yet on family tattoos, but on tattoos of young people in residential care and the general (and rather methodological) question as to what extent tattoos provide access to the lifeworlds of their wearers. The dissertation's later focus on the production and representation of family with tattoos emerged in the course of the analysis of the first interviews and the result that family becomes thematic in at least one of the tattoos of each interviewee. In the interviews, no exmanent questions were asked about the topic of 'Doing and Displaying Family'; instead, inquiry focused more generally on the tattoos and the stories behind them. If the interviewees addressed family themselves in the course of the interview, follow-up questions were asked where appropriate.

The Doing Family concept as a theoretical approach sensitized the analysis of the empirical material to understanding the family as the interviewees themselves understand it. The analytical distinction between Doing, Undoing, and Not Doing Family (cf. Jurczyk 2020b: 10) helped with the borderline question of which of the tattoos had a family connection and were thus analyzed in greater detail within the framework of the focused codings. Doing Family is understood as the production of family with the tattoo, Undoing Family as processes of distancing or detachment from family with the tattoo, and Not Doing Family can be understood as tattoo-related practices in which family does not play a role or does not become thematic. Thus, tattoos without family references can also be found in the data corpus, such as the tattoo of a cannabis leaf, tattoos related to music preferences, etc. Among the family tattoos, there are tattoos that have an immediate family reference, such as

the tattoo "Mom" and other tattoos where the interviewees make a family meaning visible in the narrative about the tattoos. For example, the tattoo of a rune that the interviewee got with a peer from the residential group, whom he describes as his "quasi-sister".

There are a total of 28 tattoos in the sample in which references to family were produced. These ranged from tattoos of family members' names or birth dates, to stuffed animals, cars, or flowers that respondents associated with specific family members, to tattooed images representing significant times with their family, and symbols such as a heart or, as mentioned above, a rune – to name just a few examples (Gross 2022). The interviews were fully transcribed and anonymized. Sketches of the photographs were made for publication in order to obscure personal data in the tattoos (such as birthdates or names) as well as the body parts involved. In applying this methodology, it became apparent that this research approach must be understood as exploratory not only on the empirical level, but also from on a methodological level due to its linking of textual and visual material. The examination of visual material has long been rather marginal within the grounded theory tradition, although work on visual grounded theory by Konecki (2011, 2019) as well as Mey and Dietrich (2016) opens up a possible way forward here. The data analysis involved linking constructivist grounded theory (cf. Charmaz 2014) with visual grounded theory (cf. Konecki 2011; 2019; cf. Mey/Diedrich 2016). This made it possible to analyze the different types of data in relation to one another and still take into account their unique intrinsic logics. The interview materials were analyzed on the basis of the steps of 'initial, focused and theoretical coding' recommended in Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach. The visual materials were analyzed complementary to and in connection with the interview materials in a manner fundamentally rooted in visual grounded theory (cf. Mey/Dietrich 2016).

In the following, I will present excerpts from my dissertation (Groß 2022). First, I will use empirical material to spotlight Tattooing Family, focusing in particular on two findings that I think are particularly exciting with regard to the book and the topic of "young people as actors of Doing/Displaying Family": first, on Doing Family in the absence of family and, second, on UnDoing Family practices of young people with their tattoos in the midst of fragile and fluid relationship dynamics. While I unfold this close to the empirical material, on an abstact level the following chapter seeks to describe what the young people are expressing with their family tattoos. Here the focus is on the (re)presentation of familial belonging over time.

4 Tattooing Family as inscribing, showing, (re)presenting and interpreting family

Getting a tattoo generally can be understood as a biographical event that is literally 'inscribed' on the body. Asking the interviewees *when, from whom* and *with whom* they got their tattoos revealed highly divergent dynamics. For example, P (the first letter of her pseudonym) got a tattoo of the names of her sister and her cousin from and with peers from her group home (secretly, without the knowledge of the educators in the room), meaning that her tattoos arose from a peer-group-related dynamic. However, there are other examples in the data in which family relationship dynamics were the occasion for practices of doing and displaying family via tattoos. For example, the death of her grandmother initiates T.'s wish to have her name and her favorite flower tattooed. I., meanwhile, has seven birds tattooed on her, representing the seven worst years of her childhood and adolescence. And O., together with a peer from the residential group, gets a tattoo of a rune connecting the two of them. Thus, biographically significant times evoke practices of doing and displaying family in specific ways (cf. Finch 2007: 72 f.).

The tattoos are part of this particular doing and displaying family in the sense of inscribing, showing, (re)presenting and interpreting family (Groß 2022). They do so by creating a representation that remains on the skin and can thus be "preserved." This can be illustrated with the example of T's tattoo (Groß 2022: 164 ff.).[2]

Interview T (lines 13–21, Groß 2022: 164):
"T: And so here's one [shows her tattoo, rolls up her clothes somewhat to do so]. This is my grandma, she raised me (.) and I always said, when my grandma passes away, then (.) she is definitely (.) coming under my skin. Now my grandpa has just recently passed away, now he will be added as well. (.) Yeah. That is actually / so that is actually really important to me. Not that I would forget them / God's, I would never / just (.) yeah so this feeling of always having them with me. Yeah. Exactly.(.)"

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2   The name in the original tattood was pseudonymized in the printed sketch of the tattoo, all sketches from Groß 2022.

Here, T's tattoo is a form of symbolic expression that creates a form of physical closeness to physically absent people and displays her connection to them in a way that is visible to herself and to others. The discussion of the absence of family can be seen in the data material not only in relation to the loss of a family member, but also in relation to a separation from the family during their time in inpatient care. For example, C., another interviee, had the character "Mama" tattooed on her during a phase in which communication with her mother broke off (Groß 2022: 167).

An experienced absence of certain family members is the reason for this specific drawing and interpretation practice for both T. and C. In the process, family members who are experienced as physically absent and not 'tangible' are brought closer again with the tattoo. In a way, the bearers of the tattoos use their tattoos to dissolve the distance to family members caused by their physical absence. At the same time, they establish with the tattoo the presence of the family members bound to their own body. Family is (re-)presented here with the tattoo. Doing family emerges in the young people's practices with respect to tattoos in that family is either literally depicted on the skin and inscribed on the body as part of the tattooing process, and/or it is verbalized in the form of narratives and subjective interpretations. Moreover, these practices of tattooing and displaying one's tattoos can also elicit care practices related to protecting the young person's bodily integrity in interactions with family members or residential caregivers.

Given that the audience to whom something is signified as family is particularly relevant for 'displaying family' practices (cf. Haynes/Dermott 2011: 155), displaying family through tattoos is particularly evident when the tattoos visually depict 'family' to oneself and others. However, practices of doing and displaying family in relation to tattoos cannot be clearly distinguished from one another – instead, they can be understood as interwoven and in interaction with one another. The same is true for practices of 'doing' and 'undoing' family. Undoing family can be understood as a "counter-movement to the production of family, but nevertheless still in relation to it" (Buschmeyer et al. 2020: 114) that can find expression in the form of an "active distancing" (ibid.). While "not doing family" makes no reference to the family at all (cf. Jurczyk 2020c: 36), processes in which tattoos address the topic of family, but in a way that produces and depicts distance and dissociation from the family, can be

described as 'undoing family'. Thus, in processes of undoing family through tattoos, family is not produced, but is rather symbolically dissolved, or one symbolically distances oneself from it. This process of dissolution and distancing is expressed in a unique way via the tattoo.

The dataset also includes tattoos that make visible practices of "undoing family" – in the sense of detaching and distancing oneself from family – as is the case with I., who got a tattoo of seven birds and discusses in the interview that these birds stand for the seven worst years of her life (Groß 2022: 190 ff.).

Interview_I. (lines 94–110, Groß 2022: 190):
"I.: So yeah that began um (.) so um (.) I had a difficult childhood. And um (.) so starting at age 10 or so / so when I was 10 it began / so that was actually, starting at that moment, the worst period (.) so / until now actually / it's never been better / and I just thought to myself with these birds, just um that I would at some point get this / this same freedom, I thought that, so / so this just stands for those years as a whole and just (.) as I said, previously I didn't / so yeah previously I didn't have any freedom and um (.) yeah I don't know how I can explain it exactly. It's just difficult, I think, also something like that, because a person themselves knows best why they did something like that, but sometimes it's just / it's difficult to put into words. (.) So you put it into a picture, right?"

The example of the tattoo of the 'seven birds' also makes apparent how harmful practices of 'doing family' (cf. Kindler/Eppinger 2020: 141 ff.) during the period before foster care can lead to a subsequent 'undoing family' in the sense of an explicit distancing and dissolution from the family, which is then expressed in the tattoo. While in the above example of the "mom" tattoo, an attempt is made to bring the family or the mother bring closer, here the tattoo is used to distance the bearer from her family. It is characteristic here that for her, tattoos are connected to her experiences and she uses tattoos as means not only to record "stupid times", but also to let these negative experiences appear in "positive pictures". Here the tattoo thus also functions as a coping strategy by means of which the distancing is accomplished.

Moreover, the tattoos referring to the death of a family member demonstrate how a termination or dissolution of physical contact due to death, which might at first glance be understood as 'undoing family', can actually lead to a more intense production and depiction of family connection in/despite physical absence and thus to practices of doing and displaying family. Here, the tattoo serves as a means of expression, as a way of bringing absent persons physically closer to oneself in a symbolic way by getting tattoos of their names, by immortalizing them on one's skin and thus displaying to others the connection despite absence.

Both interview excerpts demonstrate that doing and displaying family through tattoos primarily takes place via (re)presentation and interpretation of significant familial relationships. However, there is great diversity within the sample as to who is counted as family in each case – members of the 'family of origin', or sometimes also fellow group home residents, who are (re)presented as 'quasi'-family – as is the case with O (Groß 2022: 156 ff.).

Interview_O (lines 14–38, Groß 2022: 157):
"Um for me, the thing with the tattoos is just that I wouldn't want to um just simply get any old one, but rather it should just have a deep meaning for me. And um yeah this meaning doesn't need to be in the past but can also maybe have to do with planning for the future or just simply a deeper meaning for ME. And um (.) yeah so I got one (.) um around two years ago with a friend of mine together. Um so we have the same one. […] And we both got this as just a kind of bonding rune because I've known her now for (.) almost 11 years. We grew up together in the group home (.) um and yeah never drifted apart. We are practically brother and sister and thus we thought about it for a long time and then did it."

Interview_O (lines 656–670, Groß 2022: 158):
"I: // Can you say more about this, how did you get the idea, did you draw it yourself, or what?
O: Um no it was just always clear to us, even though a lot of people said that yeah we should have a go at being in a relationship, um it was always clear to us, "no we don't want to", we instead just want a more familial connection, simply because that is always usually more sustainable in the long run than those relationships always are. And um particularly as there was just never / never really love involved either, but rather always a kind of brother-sister behavior. And um that's why we thought, yeah um since we are not actually blood relatives and that's easy to say, we want to um deepen it kind of a little more and um so that our connection will be really clear. And even though she isn't actually [related] by blood, um then by tattoo."

Here, O's tattoo serves as a symbol of a 'quasi'-sibling relationship that is expressed through getting the same tattoo and the associated representation of physical similarity. An attempt is made here to compensate for the lack of a blood relationship, which is often cited within society as a powerful point of reference for the constitution of family (cf. Jurczyk/Thiessen 2020: 116), through the embodied dimension of the tattoo. At the same time, this tattoo sensitizes us to two specific characteristics of peer relationships within residential care that have largely been neglected in previous research on such facilities. First, for some young people, whether peer relationships in residential care facilities are friendships, sibling relationships, or romantic relationships is subject to interpretation and negotiation. Second, the tattoo also makes clear that peer relationships do not necessarily end when young people leave the facility, but can continue and become familialized. They are sometimes far less temporally limited than the young people's relationships to the staff at these facilities.

The biographies of young people with experience of residential care are characterized by transitions between private familial and institutional care structures. For them, the question of what 'family' is, who belongs to it and who does not is particularly critical. In this context, constellations of family relationships can be characterized as fragile, precarious, uncertain or even (with respect to care relationships in residential care facilities) as temporally limited and subject to change over time.

Two central conclusions emerge from this chapter in particular: first, family is present even when it is supposedly absent (due to a spatial separation, a break in contact or death). Or to put it differently: Doing Family works even in the absence of family. And second, the question "who belongs to your family?" is one that can be answered in many different ways for young people in/out of residential care, and for each individual the answer can sometimes change over time. Some include their birth parents and birth siblings, others deliberately do not include them, some include foster parents, affirmers or residential peers, deceased family members, spatially absent family members, etc. In this context, family tattoos can be understood as creative signs of expression that represent family affiliation.

5   Tattooing family means tattooing belonging

The essential *core* of the reconstructed practices of doing and displaying family through tattoos in the residential care context involves the *(re-)presentation of familial belonging across time* (Groß 2022). The young people interviewed do and display family through their tattoos as a way of constructing belonging in constellations of fluid or fragile family relationships. The primary aim of their tattoos is to re-assure themselves of their familial belonging across time and make it visible to others. An examination of the time points they select to get tattoos shows that this happens to an increased extent whenever what is being tattooed (such as a certain level of connection to the family) was previously in question in some way or when familial relations have changed. For example, as explained above, C. gets her tattoo during the break in contact with her mother and T. after the death of her grandmother. Constructions of belonging can thus be understood as production and representation processes involved in doing and displaying family. In this way, familial belonging cannot be understood as a given, but is "made" into such (Jurczyk 2018: 144) and can change in a processual way, leading to the emergence of "dynamic forms of belonging" (Eßer/Köngeter 2015: 122).

Another particularly relevant aspect with respect to tattoos is negotiation of the "plural forms of family belonging" (Schäfer 2020: 339) or "multiple belongings" (Täubig et al. 2015: 220) characteristic of the residential care context, which arises with respect to tattoos in various ways: for example, via negotiating forms of belonging to the family, the group home community as 'quasi-family' (see here Finkel 2004: 227) or peers as 'quasi-siblings', but also via ensuring the survival or preservation of the forms of family belonging inscribed in the tattoo. Due to their longevity and proximity to the body, tattoos make it possible to reinforce and stabilize subjective positionings of belonging at the intersection of private familial and institutional care arrangements in a particularly inscriptive way. The empirical results from the dissertation study overall show how young people use a durable tattoo to create permanence within fluid, fragile and/or absent relationships or express their striving for freedom and detachment from family care structures, in the sense of undoing family.

6   Obtaining an image of young people as actors in doing and displaying family

Taking up the title of the edited volume by Jurczyk, Lange and Thiessen (2014), which implies that family in general must be understood as something that is not (or no longer) self-evident, that seems to require greater and greater legitimization the less it corresponds to the societal image of the family or the more dynamic and fragile

familial relationships become (cf. Jurczyk et al. 2014: 22 ff.), we might say that the tattoos of young people in residential care settings make reference to this non-self-evident nature of family by depicting in visual form, interpreting and displaying to themselves and others family as they understand it.

Tattoos can be understood as artifacts tied to specific meanings and conveying specific symbols that are deeply interconnected with their bearers and their life-worlds. The study data summarize and capture how family is interpreted ("interpretative work of the actors", Morgan 1996: 192) and symbolically visualized by the bearers through their tattoos. The tattoos, which always have a preservative nature, also reveal how constructions of meaning in relation to the family can transform across the life course. This in turn confirms the processual and dynamic understanding of the production of family essential to the 'doing family' concept (cf. Jurczyk 2020b: 13 f.; cf. Schneider 2014: 208).

Jurczyk, Lange and Thiessen's (2014) thesis that family "represents a joint achievement by the actors involved with respect to themselves and to others, with an identify-forming character" (ibid.: 11) could be confirmed in the empirical analyses. While the authors use this term primarily to draw attention to the inner-familial and the public spheres, it takes on another connotation with respect to tattoos: examining tattoos in which family is produced shows that, on the one hand, family is inscribed on the body as a way of assuring oneself of one's familial belonging (in the sense of 'doing family' internally, Jurczyk 2020c: 30). On the other hand, in that the tattoo is made visible to others, family is also produced externally, for the outside world. Another distinction in this context refers to whom the tattoo is shown: family members ('internally') or non-familial actors ('externally') – even though here the boundaries between 'internal' and 'external' must be understood as fluid and dynamic and are (re-)produced in social interactions (see also Eßer/Krinninger in this volume).

With regard to the overarching theme of this volume, "the making and doing of family in, through and with education and social work", this paper investigates young people in residential care as central actors in practices of doing and displaying family. The study showed that examining the tattoos of young people in residential care contexts can create a point of access to these young people's subjective interpretations of their lived experiences. This perspective follows the principles of lifeworld-oriented social work, which is characterized by understanding the "stubbornness" of clients' lifeworld-related meaning-making (Thiersch 2020: 40) and taking their subjective perspectives on their own lives "seriously" (ibid.).

Overall, while the study of tattoos is a mostly new and perhaps very specific perspective for residential care research, some of the reconstructions generated confirm previous findings, such as the fundamental importance of family in the residential care context in general (Sievers et al. 2015), and doing and displaying family in particular (McIntosh et al. 2011; Eßer/Köngeter 2015; Gwenzi 2018; Schäfer 2020),

as well as – more specifically to this context – constructions of belonging and relationships of closeness and distance to the institution and the family (Göbel et al. 2020). At the same time, the results introduce new nuances to the discourse regarding practices of doing and displaying family – such as the significance of bodily artifacts for practices of displaying, (re)presenting and interpreting family. With respect to implications for residential care practice, it can be said that social work professionals seeking to take the premises of lifeworld-oriented practice seriously face the challenge of obtaining an 'image' of their clients' lifeworld perspectives. Alongside narratives, forms of creative expression like photographs, drawings or even tattoos can be understood as points of access to young people's lifeworlds and should receive greater attention both in social work practice and on the level of research methodology.

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