ISCTE ◈ IUL

University Institute of Lisbon

IUL School of Social Sciences
Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

Why do people become foster parents? from the literature to empirical evidence

Lucilina José Gouveia Freitas

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of

Master in Community Psychology and Protection of Children and Youth at Risk

Supervisor:

Doctor Eunice Vieira Magalhães, Assistant Professor

September, 2019

ISCTE ◈ IUL

University Institute of Lisbon

IUL School of Social Sciences

Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

Why do people become foster parents? from the literature to empirical evidence

Lucilina José Gouveia Freitas

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of

Master in Community Psychology and Protection of Children and Youth at Risk

Supervisor:

Doctor Eunice Vieira Magalhães, Assistant Professor

September, 2019

Acknowledgements

Resumo

O acolhimento familiar é uma medida de proteção preferencial, comparativamente ao acolhimento residencial, pois fornece um contexto de desenvolvimento familiar que suporta as necessidades das crianças. Foi realizada uma revisão sistemática (estudo 1), de modo a fornecer uma análise crítica da literatura sobre fatores que explicam a intenção de se tornar e continuar a ser família de acolhimento. Quarenta e nove estudos foram incluídos e os resultados revelaram que esta intenção decorre de fatores motivacionais, características pessoais e familiares, valores e crenças, influências do contexto social e familiaridade com o sistema. A retenção destas famílias está relacionada com fatores associados ao sistema de proteção, características pessoais ou familiares, características da criança acolhida e o próprio processo de acolhimento familiar.

Com base nos problemas de investigação identificados na revisão sistemática da literatura, foi realizado um segundo estudo (quantitativo empírico). O objetivo foi avaliar o conhecimento e as opiniões de uma amostra portuguesa sobre o sistema de acolhimento familiar e famílias de acolhimento, bem como explorar a sua intenção e respetivas razões para se tornar família de acolhimento. A amostra é composta por 177 adultos (80.2% do sexo feminino; com idades entre os 18 e 76 anos) e os resultados apontam para um reduzido conhecimento sobre o sistema de acolhimento familiar, embora os participantes reconheçam a sua importância e necessidade de melhoria. De salientar que somente uma pequena percentagem dos participantes pretende efetivamente tornar-se família de acolhimento (5.2%) e que as principais razões para acolher parecem ser intrínsecas.

Palavras-chave: Acolhimento familiar, Intenção, Retenção, Motivos

Domínio Científico (APA):
2956 Childrearing & Child Care
2900 Social Processes & Social Issues

Abstract

Foster care is a preferable child protection service compared to residential care, providing a familial context of development that support children's needs. A systematic review (study 1) was performed aiming to provide a critical analysis of the literature about factors that explain the intention of becoming and continuing to be a foster family. Forty-nine studies were included, and the results revealed that the intention to become a foster parent derives from motivational factors, personal and family characteristics, individual values and beliefs, social context influences and familiarity with the system. The retention of foster families seems to be related with factors within the child protection system, personal or family characteristics, foster child characteristics and foster care intervention.

Based on the research problems identified in the systematic literature review, a second study (empirical quantitative) was performed. We aimed to evaluate the knowledge and opinions of a Portuguese sample about the foster care system and foster parents, and to explore their intentions and reasons to become a foster family. The sample is composed by 177 adults (80.2% female; aged between 18 and 76 years old) and the results wield that there is reduced knowledge about the foster care system, although the sample recognize its importance and that improvements should be made. Besides, a small percent of our participants deeply intends to become a foster family (5.2%) and the main reasons to foster seem to be intrinsic.

Keywords: Foster care, Intention, Retention, Motives

Scientific Field (APA):
2956 Childrearing & Child Care
2900 Social Processes & Social Issues

Table of Contents

Index of Tables

Index of Figures

INTRODUCTION

Foster care provides better developmental conditions to young people growth compared to institutional care (Bick, Zeanah, Fox & Nelson, 2017). However, it is a complex process, as it involves several actors (foster child, foster family and biological family) and several challenges (e.g., Haight et al, 2002; Amorós & Palacios, 2004). For these reasons, there are difficulties in the recruitment and retention of foster families (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018b), which is a significant problem given that there are many children who need this protective service. As such, it is crucial to understand which factors might explain the decision to become and continue to be a foster parent. In addition, given that in the portuguese context the residential care is more prevalent than foster care (ISS, 2018), the recruitment of new foster families is even more critical. Therefore, it is important to explore the knowledge of the Portuguese adults regarding the foster care system, as well as the reasons that can led them to become a foster family.

To meet these purposes, this dissertation is organized into three parts. The first part describes a brief background on foster care, in order to contextualize the theme and the research problems of this dissertation. The second part concerns the first study, a systematic literature review that was conducted to understand the factors that explain the intention to become a foster family, as well as their retention. We describe the results of the reviewed studies, discussing them and identifying implications for research and professional practices.

The third part includes the second study, an empirical study, conducted with a sample of Portuguese adults in the community, through which we explored the knowledge and opinions about the foster care system, the behavioral intention for foster children and the reasons justifying this intention. Therefore, the research problems and aims are presented, as well as the description of the method (i.e., participants, instruments and procedures of data collection and data analysis). Then, the results are presented and discussed. Finally, a general conclusion is provided, summing up the main results and conclusions of this dissertation.

I. FOSTER CARE – GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Foster family care aims to protect children at risk, which is a preferable alternative considering the children and young people's developmental needs, compared to residential care (e.g., derived from factors such as the high child-caregiver ratio, staff turnover, low socio-emotional and cognitive stimulation; Bick, Zeanah, Fox & Nelson, 2017). Any child has the right to grow up in a family context, together with an affective and individualized care. If this is not possible in the biological family, an alternative should be found that safeguards these principles (Delgado, Carvalho & Pinto, 2014; ISS, 2017). Finding an adequate alternative is critical given that children and young people removed from their family and placed in the care system have an history of adverse experiences, including child abuse or neglect (Bass, Shields & Behrman, 2004; Vasileva & Petermann, 2016). These adverse experiences are related to a higher risk of developing mental health problems (e.g., mood and anxiety disorders), as well as cognitive developmental deficits (Heim, Shugart, Craighead, & Nemeroff, 2010; Sinclair, Wilson & Gibbs, 2005; Vasileva & Petermann, 2016). As such, the placement of a child in foster care can be a particular challenge, considering that foster carers need to be able to deal with child behavioral and emotional problems (Sawyer, Carbone, Searle & Robinson, 2007). Even though these vulnerabilities add significant complexity to the family functioning, evidence also suggests that those represent a valuable opportunity for intervention (Ciarrochi, Randle, Miller, & Dolnicar, 2012). Actually, the literature has been suggesting that foster care promotes an adaptive functioning of children and young people after their institutionalization (Ghera et al., 2009; Humphreys, et al, 2018; Kang, Chung, Chun, Nho, & Woo, 2014; Smyke, Zeanah, Fox, Nelson, & Guthrie, 2010).

For all these reasons, foster care is widely recognized and adopted across countries. In fact, in Australia and USA, only around 5% of out-of-home children are placed in residential care (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018a; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). Moreover, European countries like England and Ireland have been doing an effort of increasing the number of children and young people placed in foster care (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2018; Narey & Owers, 2018). On the other hand, countries from the south of Europe are known by greater residential care placements (e.g., Italy; Del Valle & Bravo, 2013), and in the

Portuguese context, national data shows that only 3.3% of children and young people that were removed from their homes were placed in foster care, which means that the majority of young people is in residential care (ISS, 2018). Regardless of the context, the recruitment of foster families is a particular challenge and the data shows that the number of foster families is smaller than the number of children that need a foster family. For instance, in the Australian context, available foster families are decreasing, with a reduction of around 13% since 2012 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018b).

This challenge derives from the complexity of all processes within the foster care system, and specifically related to the foster child's biological family, the foster child and the foster family. Regarding the biological family, besides all the circumstances that might have contributed for the child removal, the feelings of loss may persist (Haight et al, 2002), as well as the perception that this separation might be definitive and that the child does not want to return (Amorós & Palacios, 2004). Additionally, these families can encounter some obstacles in the relationship with the foster family; however, it is crucial for the child's well-being a harmonious relationship (Chateauneuf, Turcotte, & Drapeau, 2018; Fuentes-Peláez, Amorós, Mateos, Balsells, & Violant, 2013). Considering the foster child, he/she needs to adapt to a new family and caregivers (Maaskant, van Rooij, Bos, & Hermanns, 2015), which can be hindered by a feeling of loss (e.g., parents or siblings) (Affronti, Rittner, & Jones, 2015), and it may lead to loyalty conflicts (Lee & Whiting, 2007). Literature shows that these children might feel great levels of uncertainty and instability in terms of their future (Amorós & Palacios, 2004; Craven & Lee, 2006), as well as feel that they are guilty of their placement in foster care (Marinkovic & Backovic, 2007). Contacts are needed to prevent the loyalty conflicts, as well as to provide a sense of identity to the foster child and to increase the likelihood of family reintegration (Sinclair et al, 2005).

The placement in foster care calls for highly committed foster families who should be warm and affective with the child but also who effectively communicate with their biological family. As such, the foster family must adequately manage regular contacts with the biological family, which can be challenging (Hudson & Levasseur, 2002). Furthermore, foster families suffer a significant change in their dynamics, which implies also dealing with the relationship between the foster child and their family members (e.g., biological children; Amorós & Palacios, 2004). As mentioned, many

foster children show developmental problems (Dubois-Comtois et al, 2015; Hambrick, Oppenheim-Wellerm & Taussig, 2016; Turney & Winderman, 2016) that place additional difficulties to these caregivers and, for instance, to their own children (MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006). Considering foster children's developmental, social and health needs, foster families must develop skills and acquire specialized knowledge (Herczog, Pagée & Pasztor, 2001; Marcellus, 2010). These difficulties might be associated with higher levels of stress (McKeough et al, 2017), which can affect the foster families' satisfaction with their caregiver's role. The literature shows that parental satisfaction plays an important role in retention of foster families (Cleary, Barnett, Huckins, Butcher, & Jankowski, 2018). The placement stability is crucial and the placement breakdown might negatively impact child's behavior. Also, placement disruption can lead to greater behavioral problems which might lead to placements disruption, originating then a vicious cycle of disruption (Newton, Litrownik & Landsverk, 2000).

Moreover, not only the satisfaction with their role matters to maintain families' commitment with the foster system, but also the support from professionals (MacGregor et al, 2006). The lack of formal support in the foster care system might strain those perceived difficulties, particularly during specific crisis with the foster child (e.g., difficulties of control child's deviant behavior; Barter & Lutman, 2016). For these reasons, foster parents express that they need to be heard and that their opinion should be valued and respected, namely, in terms of decisions made about the foster child (Hudson & Levasseur, 2002).

For all these reasons, recruiting foster families that are competent, motivated to care for foster children, and who have adequate relationships with different elements of the foster care system (biological family social workers and other professionals) is a current huge challenge. Therefore, we need to develop effective recruitment mechanisms focused on the predictive factors to become and to remain foster families.

II. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Research problems and objectives

In order to recruit and retain more foster families, it is crucial to identify their motivations and understand which factors explain the intention of becoming foster parents, as well as their retention (MacGregor et al, 2006; Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006). The literature suggests that different motivations can explain the intention of becoming a foster family and their retention, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Sebba, 2012). Intrinsic motivation is described as the most enduring type of motivation and relates to individual strengths (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). This type of motivation is related to altruistic motives to foster and is positively associated to higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn is positively associated with the retention of these families (Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006; Sebba, 2012). Examples of intrinsic motivations of fostering children include helping children in need of care (e.g. Andersson, 2001) or protecting children from future harm (e.g. Rodger et al, 2006). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to rewards or expectations that yield to the subject by performing a certain task (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). It is viewed as less long-lasting and is related to lower retention. Examples of extrinsic motivations are a family wanting to fill the empty nest or wanting to give a brother to their biological child (Andersson, 2001). Foster parents can be motivated by a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons (MacGregor et al, 2006).

As such, realizing how to attract foster families is important to address the greater number of children and young people in care. This study aims to systematically review existing literature on the factors that explain the intention and retention of foster carers, providing insights about the context of that research, samples, measures, models and results that has been described across years. Lastly, we intend to provide a set of research and practice implications based on this evidence.

2. Method

2.1. Research question and search strategies

Our research question was defined considering the SPIDER method (*Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation and Research Design*; Cooke, Smith, &

Booth, 2012): a) *Sample:* Foster families and general population, older than 18 years old; b) *Phenomenon of Interest:* Foster care intention and retention predictors (i.e., explanatory factors of the decision to become a foster family or to continue fostering, including individual, social, institutional and macrosystemic factors); c) *Design:* All designs (except case studies) and methods were considered as long as they were empirical; d) *Evaluation*: Several outcomes were considered, in particular the decision of becoming a foster parent, the intention of becoming a foster parent, or the intention to continue being a foster parent. It can be measured in a dichotomous way (yes/no) or in a continuous measure of intention; e) *Research Design*: All types of studies, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.

The search was conducted past September 2018, in the following online databases: PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of science. The combination of the following terms was used in the search: (a) Foster care OR foster families OR foster parent* AND (b) Motivation* OR retention OR willingness to foster* OR motivation* factors OR motivation* foster OR reasons for fostering OR predict* foster* care. Specific restrictions were applied in all databases: (a) published in peer-reviewed academic journals; (b) in the English, Portuguese and Spanish languages. No restrictions were applied regarding the publication date, which means that the lower temporal limit defined by the databases was considered. A hand search based on screening reference lists of previous literature reviews, and of all the articles included in this review was performed. As such, papers that had not been found by our electronic search and that met the inclusion criteria could be included. Duplicate studies were verified and removed.

2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria are as follows: 1) empirical quantitative and/or qualitative studies; 2) studies including a community sample and that explored the motivations for becoming foster families (i.e., what would lead people to become a foster family); 3) studies with foster families that explore the reasons for becoming foster families; and 4) studies with foster families that explore the predictors of retention of foster families. Case studies and literature reviews were excluded. Also, studies that explored motivation to become foster parents of children with special needs (e.g. children with

8

special mental and physical abilities) or special characteristics (e.g. aboriginal children) were excluded.

2.3. Study selection and data extraction

This review was performed following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) checklist and guidelines (Liberati et al., 2009). The retention or rejection of the studies is based on the sequential examination of title, abstract, and full text. Inter-judge agreement was made by two independent coders. Initially, the search resulted in 3378 studies, and, after removing duplicates, a total of 2883 was further analyzed on title and abstract. In this phase, an inter-judge agreement of 880 papers (30%) was made, reaching 96.7% of agreement. All disagreements decisions were reviewed and discussed according the inclusion and exclusion criteria. After the initial screening, 87 articles were selected for full text analysis (eligibility). The next step included once again, an inter-judge agreement of 30% of studies, reaching 73% of agreement and 8% of disagreement. In 19% of studies, one of the coders was undecided about including or not the paper in the review. Disagreements and uncertainties were subsequently resolved by an in-depth discussion about the specificities of those studies, bearing in mind the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Then, a hand search was performed on the references of the identified articles, from which 42 studies emerged, which after analyzing the full texts were reduced to 3 articles. A total of 49 studies were included in this systematic review. The flow diagram of the study selection process is displayed in Figure 2.1.
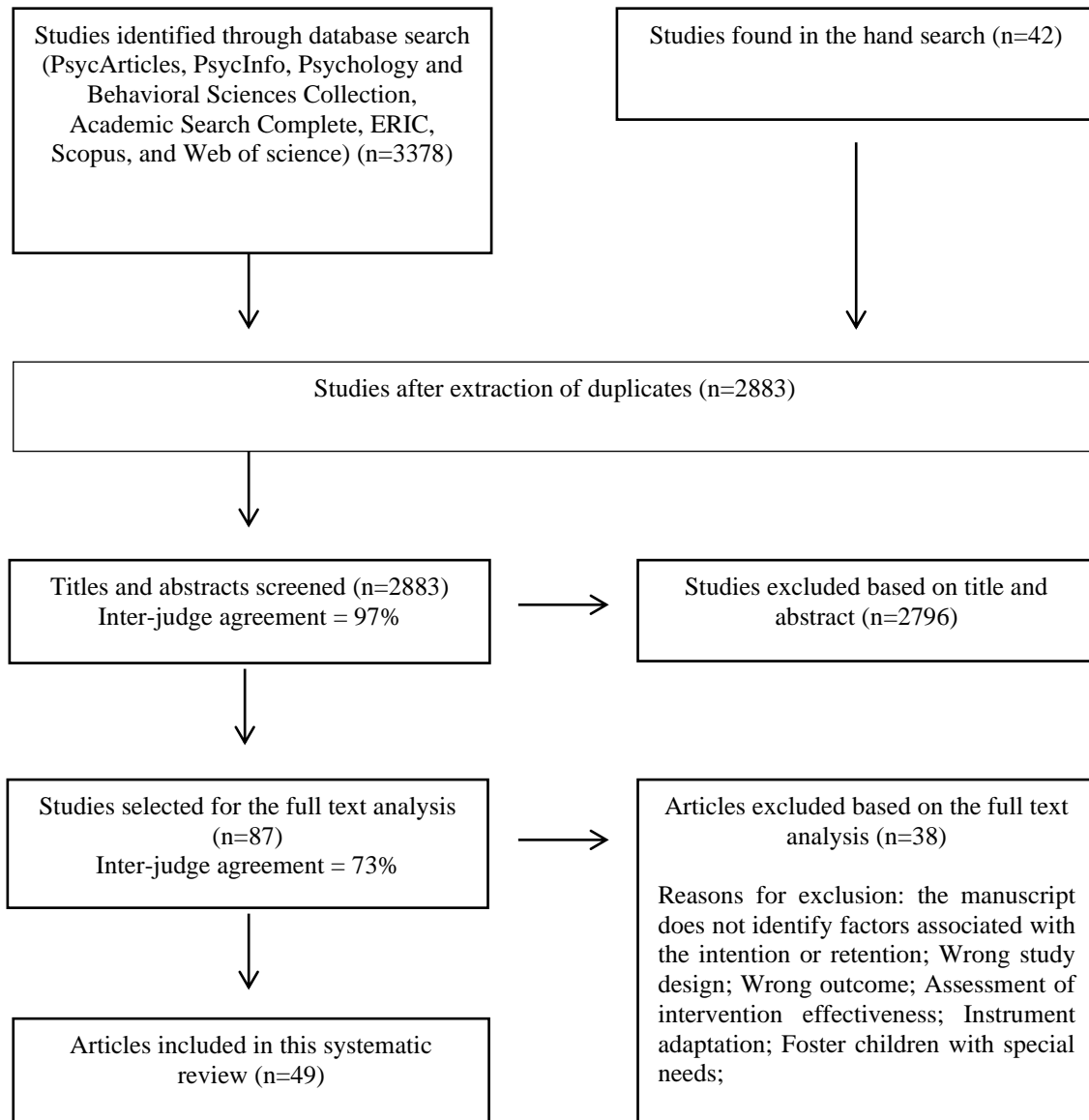
Figure 2.1. Flow diagram (based on PRISMA; Liberati et al., 2009)

3. Results

As mentioned above, 49 studies were included in this review. This section is organized in three sub-sections: a) Description of the studies' characteristics; b) Factors to become a foster family; and c) The predictors of retention of foster families. Detailed information extracted from the full-text review is presented in Table 2.1.. A qualitative analysis of the extracted information was conducted aiming to identify and categorize the factors underlying the reasons to become a foster family, and the same for retention (Tables 2.2. and 2.3.). We will present the number of studies that identified each factor

(*n*). When a factor influences positively the intention to become a foster family or their retention, a positive signal (+) appears in the table, and when the impact is negative, a negative signal appears (-). Note that the same article can identify more than one factor. All the indicators found in the reviewed studies are described in the tables to illustrate the factors that were identified.

3.1. Characteristics of studies

Looking at the context of these studies (Table 2.1), a considerable number were conducted in the American context (n=25), while other studies were from Europe (n=15), Australia (n=7) and Africa (n=2). Methodologically, the large majority of these reviewed studies were cross-sectional (n=45), and merely four were longitudinal. Twenty studies employed a quantitative design and seventeen employed a qualitative design. Twelve studies employed a mixed-methods design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Considering the data collection methods, most of the studies used questionnaires (e.g. Ahn, Greeno, Bright, Hartzel & Reiman, 2017) and interviews (in-person and via telephone) (e.g., Daniel, 2011). In fewer number, some studies used observation as a method - e.g., including clinical observation (Grigore, 2016) and ethnographic observation (Swartz, 2004) -, focus groups (e.g. Spielfogel, Leathers, Christian, & McMeel, 2011) and agency records (Triseliotis et al, 1998).

The sample size significantly varies across studies, ranging from 8 to 1974 participants. Most of the studies (92%) used a sample of foster families. Specifically, the majority (n=37) examined current foster families (e.g. Broady, Stoyles, McMullan, Caputi, & Crittenden, 2010; Doyle & Melville, 2013), whereas other studies (n=4) included both former and current foster families (Ahn, Greeno, Bright, Hartzel, & Reiman, 2017; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rhodes, Orme, & Buehler, 2001; Rindfleisch, Bean, & Denby, 1998). One study included only former foster families (Triseliotis, Borland, & Hill, 1998) and two examined future foster families (Baum, Crase, & Crase, 2001; Tyebjee, 2003). A very small number of studies included community samples (n=4) (Ciarrochi, Randle, Miller, & Dolnicar, 2012; Contreras & Muñoz, 2016; Goodman et al, 2017; Randle, Miller, Dolnicar, & Ciarrochi, 2012). Lastly, one study included both current foster families and a community sample (Kuyini, Alhassan, Tollerud, Weld, & Haruna, 2009).

Table 2.1.

Characteristics of studies – methodology and outcomes

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Ahn, Greeno, Bright, Hartzel & Reiman, 2017	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=385 (175 Former Foster Families; 211 Current Foster Families)	Interview and Questionnaires	Simple questions on retention (e.g., "how long were you a foster parent?") Sociodemographic questionnaire Six items on agency support	Bivariate analyses T-tests, Chi-square tests, Kaplan-Meier survival curves, Multivariate survival analyses	Retention
Andersson, 2001	Sweden	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N = 21 (Foster Families)	Interview	Interview-guide focused on the reason to become foster parents, family situation, work experiences	Not specified	To become a foster family
Baum, Crase & Crase, 2001	USA	Longitudinal, qualitative	N = 182 (Participants on Preparation for Fostering: Preservice Training for Foster Families)	Telephone interviews	Interview-guide about decision making (e.g., What about training helped you the most in making your decision to become or not become a foster parent? Why?)	Thematic analysis	To become a foster family
Blackburn, 2016	England	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N=55 (48 Foster Families; 7 Prospective Foster Parents)	Interview and Questionnaires	Online questionnaires (e.g., motivations to foster) Interviews (n=12 foster families)	Descriptive statistics Thematic analysis	To become a foster family and retention

12

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Broady, Stoyles, McMullan, Caputi & Crittenden, 2010	Australia	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=12 (Foster Parents)	Focus group and interview	Guides with four questions on motivations, conditions and competencies	Content analysis	To become a foster family and retention
Ciarrochi, Randle, Miller & Dolnicar, 2012	Australia	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=1098 (representative sample from general population)	Questionnaires	Socio-demographics details One behavioural and one self-report measure of foster care interest Two questions regarding wealth Ten intention questions (e.g. Do you intend to undergo training to become a foster carer?) Mutidimensional scale of perceived social support The life satisfaction scale Relationship quality scale Hope questionnaire Problem Orientation Scale Basic empathy scale One question: "Religion plays an important role in my life" (rated)	Correlations Chi-square analysis General Linear Model univariate analysis	To become a foster family
Cole, 2005	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=46 (Foster Families)	Observation and Questionnaires	Motivations for Foster Parenting Inventory Ainsworth Strange Situation Procedure	Logistic regression	To become a foster family
Contreras & Muñoz, 2016	Spain	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N=460 (University Students)	Interview and Questionnaires	Questionnaires (e.g., perceptions, predispositions and knowledge about foster care) Semi-structured interview (n= 9)	Chi-square tests Qualitative analysis was not specified	To become a foster family

13

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Dando & Minty, 1987	England	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=80 (Foster Mothers)	Interview	Closed and open-ended questions (concerning motivations, how fostering affected family life)	Thematic analysis	To become a foster family
Daniel, 2011	Canada	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=8 (Foster Families)	Telephone interview	Interview guide composed by questions on the personal experiences as foster parents (e.g., myths/misconceptions about being a foster parent; motivations, experiences and challenges)	Grounded theory approach	To become a foster family
Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=804 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic characteristics Family Foster Home Retention Survey	Descriptive statistics Analysis of variance Multiple regression	To become a foster family and retention
Denby, Rindfleisch & Bean, 1999	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N= 539 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic characteristics Questions about the foster care experience (e.g., motivations to become a foster parent, experiences with the agency, training experiences)	Descriptive statistics Multiple regression	Retention
Diogo & Branco, 2017	Portugal	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=11 (Foster Families)	Narrative interview	Open-ended question (e.g., "we would like you to tell us your experience as foster family…") Marital relationship, level of satisfaction and intention to quit was also explored.	Grounded theory approach	To become a foster family
Doyle & Melville, 2013	Australia	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=23 (Foster Families)	Interview	One question about why they had become foster carers.	Thematic analysis	To become a foster family

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009	Australia	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N= 185 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Foster Carer Locus of Control Scale (FCLOC) Foster Carer Significant Others Support Scale (FCSOS) The Foster Carer Satisfaction Scale (FCSS) Three open-ended questions	Regression analyses Qualitative analysis was not specified	Retention
Geiger, Hayes & Lietz, 2013	USA	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N= 649 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic questionnaire Foster Carer Satisfaction Scale (FCSS) Foster Carer Locus of Control Scale (FCLOC) Three questions adapted from Foster Carer Significant Other Scale Questions about the number of years fostering, perceived stress (5 questions) and foster parent intention to continue fostering Open-ended questions	Logistic regression Content analysis	Retention
Gilligan, 1996	Ireland	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N = 73 (Foster Families)	Postal questionnaires	Questionnaire on the foster care experience (33 statements, using a likert scale) Four open questions about the foster carers experiences Five questions concerning foster carers' reliance on informal (non-health board) sources of support, and nine on formal (health board) sources of support Questionnaire on motivation to foster (developed by Rowe et al, 1984)	Descriptive Statistics The type of qualitative data analysis was not specified	To become a foster family

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Gleeson, Wesley, Ellis, Seryak, Talley & Robinson, 2009	USA	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=207 (Foster Families)	Interview	Interview-guide about the child and family functioning, caregiver stress, social support, family resources, the strengths of their family and service needs	Grounded theory approach	To become a foster family
Goodman, Zhang, Gitari, Azubuike, Keiser & Seidel, 2017	Kenya	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=1974 (General population)	Interview	Questions about willingness to provide long-term foster care different profiles of children WHO's Adverse Childhood Experiences-International Questionnaire ACE-IQ General subscale of the McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) Perceived stress scale Measure of physical health	Logistic regression Survey-adjusted structural equation modelling	To become a foster family
Grigore, 2016	Romania	Longitudinal, mixed	N=300 (Foster Families)	Clinical observation method and questionnaires	Evaluation questionnaire of psycho-traumatic family history Genogram Grid of evaluation of the effectiveness of professional conduct of foster parents	Correlational analysis T-test	To become a foster family
Hendrix & Ford, 2003	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=82 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic questionnaire (namely the intention to continue to foster) Family Hardiness Index (FHI)	Logistic regression Chi-square	Retention

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Howell-Moroney, 2014	USA	Cross-sectional, quantitative	N=901 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents	T-test Chi-square test Logistic regression Binomial regression	To become a foster family
Inch, 1999	USA	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=15 (Foster Fathers)	Interview	Sociodemographic questionnaire One single question related to the perceived experience as foster fathers	Thematic analysis	To become a foster family
Keys, Daniel. Jennings, Havlin, Russell & Korang-Okrah, 2017	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=115 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Foster parent motivation (one single item) Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) The Coping Humor Scale Cognitive Flexibility Scale The modified version of the Turnover Intention Questionnaire (TIQ)	Multiple regression Descriptive statistics	To become a foster family and retention
Kirton, 2001	England	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N= 20 (Foster Families)	Interview	Interview-guide with questions exploring foster care experience	The type of qualitative data analysis is not specified	To become a foster family
Kozlova, 2013	Russia	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N = 350 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Questions about the reason for taking the child under their guardianship	The type of qualitative data analysis is not specified	To become a foster family

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Kuyini, Alhassan, Tollerud, Weld & Haruna, 2009	Ghana	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=26 (Foster carers) N= 21 (General population)	Interview	Interview guide (foster parents): Closed and open-ended questions about the care role and the challenges of their role. Interview guide (community adults): questions focused on their views about the traditional foster care practice	Descriptive statistics on closed questions Thematic analysis	To become a foster family
López & Del Valle, 2016	Spain	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N=200 (Foster Families)	Interview and Questionnaire	Ad hoc 11-item scale on satisfaction (likert scale) Interview-guide with questions related to motivation, sources of stress and reward, and the needs of the foster carers	Descriptive statistics The type of qualitative data analysis is not specified	To become a foster family
MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006	Canada	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=54 (Foster Families)	Focus group	Focus group-guide focused on four dimensions (e.g., Why did you enter fostering? What motivated you?)	Thematic analysis	To become a foster family and retention
Maeyer, Vanderfaeillie, Vanschoonlandt, Robberechts & Van Holen, 2014	Belgium	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N= 192 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic questionnaire Reasons for fostering Inventory	Descriptive statistics Linear regression Anova	To become a foster family and retention

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Martin, Altemeier, Hickson, Davis & Glascoe, 1992	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N= 64 (Foster Families)	Interview	Interview questionnaire (65 questions)	Qualitative information was transformed into numerical data Chi-square test ANOVA T-tests	To become a foster family
Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012	USA	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N= 37 (Foster Families)	Interview	Socio-demographic questionnaire Open-questions focused on the foster care experience	Thematic analysis	To become a foster family
Migliorini, Rania, Cardinali, Guiducci & Cavanna, 2018	Italy	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N= 33 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Ad hoc questionnaire on foster care experience (e.g. motivation for foster care) Family Environment Scale Attachment Style Questionnaire	T-test	To become a foster family
Mihalo, Stickler, Triplett & Trunzo, 2016	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=777 (Treatment Foster Parents)	Questionnaires	Scale (28-item) on foster experience (e.g., professional parenting role, treatment foster parent efficacy, support from staff, likelihood to continue as treatment foster parent)	Logistic regression	Retention
Nowak-Fabrykowski & Piver, 2008	USA	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N= 20 (Foster families)	Questionnaires	Open-ended questions on the foster care experience (e.g., the reasons to become foster parents, the problems that foster parents and foster children)	The type of qualitative data analysis is not specified	To become a foster family

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Ramsay, 1996	Scotland	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N=72 (Foster families)	Questionnaires	Instruments not specified	The type of data analysis was not specified	To become a foster family and retention
Randle, Ernst, Leisch & Dolnicar, 2016	Australia	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N= 205 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Questionnaire adapted from Satisfaction with Foster Parenting Inventory Foster Carer discontinuation based on Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Opened-ended questions	Chi-square test Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test Fisher test Analytic Qualitative Research method	Retention
Randle, Miller, Dolnicar & Ciarrochi, 2012	Australia	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N=897 (General Community)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic questionnaire List of reasons to become a foster family (yes or no) Open questions for not have been a foster carer	Chi-square test Qualitative analysis was not specified	To become a foster family
Rhodes, Cox, Orme & Coakley, 2006	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=876 (Foster families)	Questionnaires	Sociodemographic characteristics Questionnaire with reasons to become foster parents Questions about whether they had fostered children with various types of conditions (e.g. drug-exposed infant AIDS virus) and from multiple racial groups Question concerning their intention to continue to foster	Descriptive statistics Linear regression Logistic regression	To become a foster family and retention

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Rhodes, Orme & Buehler, 2001	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=86 former foster families N=252 (current foster families)	Questionnaires	National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents Sociodemographic characteristics Questions concerning their intention to continue to foster, the reasons to stop being a foster parent and the quality of training topics before licensure	Two-tailed tests Bivariate linear regression	Retention
Rhodes, Orme, Cox & Buehler, 2003	USA	Longitudinal, quantitative	N= 131 (Foster Families)	Questionnaires	Foster family resources (e.g. education, marital status, full-time work) Social support behaviour scale Dyadic Adjustment Scale Family Assessment Device - General Functioning Subscale Partner Abuse Scale Brief Symptom Inventory Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (4 subscales) Foster family retention	Descriptive statistics Binary logistic regression Two-tailed tests	Retention
Rindfleisch, Bean & Denby, 1998	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N= 539 active foster families; N=265 inactive (closed) foster families	Questionnaires	Questions about foster experience (e.g., reasons to become foster families, to consider quitting, the relation with the agency)	Logistic regression Chi-square tests	To become a foster family and retention
Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006	Canada	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=652 (Foster families)	Questionnaires	Socio-demographic information Foster Parent Satisfaction Survey Questions about foster experience (e.g. how long foster parents expected them to stay, how long they had been fostering)	Descriptive statistics Factor analysis	To become a foster family and retention

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
Spielfogel, Leathers, Christian & McMeel, 2011	USA	Cross-Sectional, qualitative	N=38 (Foster families)	Focus group and questionnaire	Sociodemographic questionnaire Focus Group Guide with questions focused on parent's perceptions about the management training	Grounded theory approach	Retention
Swartz, 2004	USA	Longitudinal, qualitative	N=42 (Foster Families)	Interviews and ethnographic observation	Questions about foster experience (e.g., motivations to become foster parent and challenges of state-supervised carework)	The type of qualitative data analysis is not specified	To become a foster family
Triseliotis, Borland & Hill, 1998	Scotland	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N= 97 (Former Foster Parents)	Postal questionnaires, agency records and interview (n=27)	Instruments not specified	The type of data analysis was not specified	Retention
Tyebjee, 2003	USA	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=1011 prospective foster and adoptive parents	Questionnaires	Socio-demographic information Questions about foster experience (e.g., the likelihood of considering to provide either a temporary home to a child as a foster parent or a permanent home to a child as an adoptive parent, and the reason behind their willingness)	Chi-square tests	To become a foster family
Whenan, Oxlad & Lushington, 2009	Australia	Cross-Sectional, quantitative	N=58 (Foster families)	Questionnaires	Socio-demographic characteristics Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Difficult Behaviour Self-Efficacy Scale Child-Parent Relationship Scale Depression Anxiety Stress Scale Satisfaction with Foster Parenting Inventory	Descriptive statistics Regressions	Retention

Authors	Country	Design	Sample (size, type)	Data collection methods	Instruments	Analytic strategies	Outcome
					Questions concerning the intention to continue providing out of home care		
Wilson, Fyson & Newstone, 2007	England	Cross-Sectional, mixed	N=69 (Foster Fathers)	Postal questionnaires and Interview	Ad hoc questionnaire on foster experience (e.g. motivation for foster experience, previous experience) Family Environment Scale Attachment Style Questionnaire Open-ended questions	The type of data analysis was not specified	To become a foster family

3.2. Predictors of becoming a foster family

Results from thirty-seven studies revealed that six main factors may affect the decision of becoming a foster family (Table 2.2.): 1) motivational factors, 2) personal and family characteristics, 3) values and beliefs, 4) social context influences and 5) familiarity with the system. Below, each of these factors is detailed described.

Motivational factors. This was the most frequent factor that was identified in the reviewed studies (n=29). This alludes to motives that guide individual behavior, ranging from self-centered motives to those one centered on others. Specifically, a set of motives was identified: a) The desire to care and love children (n=16; e.g., Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006); b) The desire to help children (n=14; e.g., López & Del Valle, 2016) c) Family expansion motives (n=14; e.g., Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012), d) Self-centered motivations (n=8; e.g., Martin, Altemeier, Hickson, Davis, & Glascoe, 1992), e) Financial reasons (n= 4; e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014) and f) Non-economic reasons (n=3) (e.g. Cole, 2005). All these sub-factors positively influence the decision to become a foster family.

Personal or family characteristics. This factor involves personal attributes or characteristics of foster families (n=24). Within this factor the following sub-factors were identified: a) Family functioning (n=11; e.g., Doyle & Melville, 2013), b) Failed family expansion (n=11; e.g., Rhodes, Cox, Orme, & Coakley, 2006), c) Personal experiences and attributes (n=5; e.g., Goodman et al, 2017), and d) Sociodemographic characteristics (n=5; e.g., Contreras & Muñoz, 2016). Specifically on the sub-factor sociodemographic characteristics, studies reveal inconsistent results on age, with some studies suggesting that older people are more prone to become foster family (e.g., Contreras & Muñoz, 2016), while others identifying younger participants as more prone to be a foster family (e.g., Ciarrochi et al, 2012; Randle et al, 2012). Personal experiences, attributes and family functioning have both negative and positive influence on becoming foster parent. All the personal experiences and attributes have a positive impact such as: having previous parental experience and have been a foster child, with the exception of experiencing abuse, neglect and violence during the childhood, which seems to prevent this decision. In respect to family functioning, having adequate financial resources (Migliorini et al., 2018) positively influence the decision to become a foster parent, while being busy either with work commitments or with their own children (Randle, et al., 2012) has a negative impact on becoming a foster parent.

Finally, failed family expansion processes positively affect the decision to become a foster parent.

Values/beliefs. This factor refers to the representations and attitudes that underlie the decision of becoming a foster family (n=20). The values and beliefs that were found in our review were: a) Moral or social responsibility (n=15; e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014), b) Religious motives (n=6; e.g., Tyebjee, 2003) and c) Family based values (n=5; e.g., Diogo & Branco, 2017). All these sub-factors positively impact the decision to become a foster family, which means that believing that this is a moral or social responsibility and that foster parents might positively influence the child is associated with becoming a foster family. Also, for those people who assign family-based values this option is more frequent.

Social context. The social context factor, which was found in seven articles, can be defined as a set of contextual or environmental circumstances that influence the decision to become a foster family (n=7). Sub-factors identified within the social context were: a) Social influence (n=5; e.g., Ramsay, 1996), b) Formal support (n=2; e.g., Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012) and c) Social commitments (n=1; Randle et al, 2012). Both first sub-factors positively affect the decision, which means that positive social influence and supportive formal relationship are associated with being a foster family. On the other hand, having other social commitments seems to prevent becoming a foster family.

Familiarity with the system. Finally, this factor was the least found in the analyzed studies (n=6; e.g., Wilson et al, 2007) and refers to knowledge about the child protection system and the context of foster care, which has a positive impact on becoming foster parent.

Table 2.2.

Factors to become a foster family

Factors to become a foster family	Sub-factors	Indicators
Motivational factors (n=29)	Desire to care and love children (n=16) [+]	Protect and prevent children from harm (Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006; Gleeson et al, 2009) [+] Provide home for a child (Andersson, 2001; De Maeyer et al., 2014; Howell-Moroney, 2014; Nowak & Piver, 2008; Rhodes, Cox, Orme & Coakley, 2006) [+] To nurture children (Dando & Minty, 1987) [+] Provide love for children (Swartz, 2004; De Maeyer et al., 2014; Baum et al., 2001; Rhodes et al., 2006; Daniel, 2011; Martin, Altemeier, Hickson, Davis & Glascoe, 1992; Grigore, 2016; MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006) [+] Provide children with a positive family experience (Tyebjee, 2003; Wilson et al., 2007) [+]
	Desire to help children (n= 14) [+]	Help under-privileged children (López & Del Valle, 2016; Gilligan, 1996; Swartz, 2004) [+] Help and make a difference (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012; Inch, 1999; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Help children with special problems (Howell-Moroney, 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006; Andersson, 2001; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] Help children in need (Keys et al, 2017; MacGregor et al., 2006; Tyebjee. 2003) [+] Help another child (Broady et al., 2010; Daniel, 2011) [+] Rescue abused or neglected children (Cole, 2005) [+]
	Family expansion (n=14) [+]	Desire to adopt (Rhodes et al., 2006; Nowak & Piver, 2008) [+] Wanted a larger family (Baum, Crase & Crase, 2001; Cole, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006; De Maeyer et al., 2014; Kozlova, 2013) [+] Desire to replace the role of their own child (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012; Martin, Altemeier, Hickson, Davis & Glascoe, 1992; Dando & Minty, 1987; Kozlova, 2013) [+] Opportunity to become a father, to re-do previous fathering (Inch, 1999) [+] Our family was grown, but still wanted to care for children (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Andersson, 2001; Rodger et al., 2006; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [+]

Factors to become a foster family	Sub-factors	Indicators
	Self-centered motivations (n=8) [+]	Needed something in my life (Broady, Stoyles, McMullan, Caputi & Crittenden, 2010) [+] Satisfy the ambitions and personal desires as a carer (Diogo & Branco, 2017) [+] Want to be loved by a child (De Maeyer et al., 2014; Macgregor et al., 2006; Martin et al., 1992; Migliorini, Rania, Cardinali, Guiducci & Cavanna, 2018) [+] For a sense of personal achievement (Martin et al., 1992) [+] Wanted companionship for myself (Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Adding meaning to life (Tyebjee, 2003) [+]
	Financial reasons (n=4) [+]	Allocated financial reward (Kirton, 2001) [+] Increase household income (Howell-Moroney, 2014; Swartz, 2004; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996) [+]
	Non-Economic reasons (n=3) [+]	Non- Economic reasons (Kirton, 2001; Cole, 2005; Inch, 1999) [+]
Personal/family characteristics (n=24)	Family functioning (n=11) [+ and -]	Having adequate financial resources (Ciarrochi et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2017; Migliorini et al., 2018; Tyebjee, 2003) [+] Family climate (Goodman et al., 2017) [+] High number of children at home (Goodman et al., 2017) - Have the time and the space to foster a young person (Doyle & Melville, 2013; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] Family changes (Grigore, 2016) [+] Financial challenges (Randle, et al., 2012) - Work-family challenges (Randle, et al., 2012) - Having own children (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016; Goodman et al., 2017) - To provide significant relationships to their own child (Wilson et al., 2007; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] Lack of space, time, home stability, or energy to share with a child (Baum et al., 2001)
	Failed family expansion (n=11) [+]	Childlessness/ Infertility (Kozlova, 2013; Tyebjee, 2003; Broady et al., 2010; Keys et al, 2017; Dando & Minty, 1987; Andersson, 2001; Rhodes et al., 2006; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] Wanted to adopt but was not able to (Rindfleisch, Bean & Denby, 1998; Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+]

Factors to become a foster family	Sub-factors	Indicators
	Personal experiences and attributes (n=5) [+ and -]	Child abuse and neglect (Goodman, Zhang, Gitari, Azubuike, Keiser & Seidel, 2017) [-] Empathic attributes (Ciarrochi, Randle, Miller & Dolnicar, 2012; Inch, 1999) [+] Self-determination (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) [+] Parental experience (López & Del Valle, 2016) [+] Have been a foster child (Martin et al., 1992) [+]
	Sociodemographic characteristics (n=5) [+ and -]	Gender (female) (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016) [+] Academic Social Sciences Background (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016) [+] Age (De Maeyer et al., 2014; Contreras & Muñoz, 2016) [+]; (Randle et al., 2012; Ciarrochi et al., 2012) [-] Retirement (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) - Widowed (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) [+] Higher educational status (Ciarrochi et al., 2012; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [-] Unemployment (Grigore, 2016) [+]
Values/ Beliefs (n=20)	Moral/ social responsibility (n=15) [+]	Social engagement/commitment (Cole, 2005; Doyle & Melville, 2013; López & Del Valle, 2016; Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012; Inch, 1999) [+] Help the community/society (MacGregor et al., 2006; Dando & Minty, 1987; Daniel, 2011; Nowak & Piver, 2008; Andersson, 2001; Swartz, 2004; Martin et al., 1992; Rhodes et al., 2006; De Maeyer et al., 2014; Howell-Moroney, 2014) [+] Social identity (Migliorini et al., 2018) [+]
	Religious motives (n=6) [+]	Fulfilment religious beliefs (Tyebjee, 2003; Howell-Moroney, 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006; De Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] Spiritual and religious calling (Rodger, et al., 2006; Nowak & Piver, 2008) [+]
	Family based values (n=5) [+]	To keep the extended family together (family union) (Gleeson et al., 2009; Kuyini et al, 2009) [+] The family context as a preferable development context (Swartz, 2004; Diogo & Branco, 2017) [+] Family responsibility/obligation (Lopéz & Del Valle, 2016) [+]
Social context influences (n=7)	Social influence (n=5) [+]	Being encouraged by intimate partner/relatives (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012; De Maeyer et al., 2014; Martin et al., 1992; Ramsay, 1996) [+] Being encouraged by acquaintances (friends, agency workers, fellow students) (Doyle & Melville, 2013; Ramsay, 1996) [+] Being introduced to foster care by other foster parents (Martin et al., 1992) [+]

Factors to become a foster family	Sub-factors	Indicators
	Formal support (n=2) [+]	Emotional support from social workers (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012)[+]
		Instrumental support (Blackburn, 2016) [+]
	Social commitments (n=1) [-]	I am too busy with family/friend commitments (Randle, Miller, Dolnicar & Ciarrochi, 2012)
Familiarity with the system (n=6)		Previous familiarity with fostering or with a foster child (Rhodes et al., 2006; De Maeyer et al., 2014; Wilson, Fyson & Newstone, 2007) [+]
		Newspaper or a television advertisement (Ramsay, 1996) [+]
		Direct or indirect contact with residential care or child protection system (Diogo & Branco, 2017) [+]
		Having knowledge about foster caring (Randle, Miller, Dolnicar & Ciarrochi, 2012) [+]

3.3. Predictors of retention of foster families

From this literature review, the predictors of retention could be organized in four factors that may affect the decision to continue fostering (Table 2.3.): 1) child protection system, 2) personal or family characteristics, 3) foster child characteristics and 4) Placement challenges. Below, each of these factors is described in more detail.

Child protection system. In the child protection system (n=15) four sub-factors were identified: a) Support (n=9; e.g., Geiger, Hayes & Lietz, 2013), b) Relational problems with professionals (n=7; e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996), c) Satisfaction as a foster carer (n=5; e.g., Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009), d) Bureaucracy (n=5; e.g., Rindfleisch et al, 1998). The sub-factors bureaucracy and relational problems with professionals have a negative impact on the foster families' retention, while satisfaction has a positive influence and support is identified as both positively and negatively impacting their retention.

Personal and family characteristics. Concerning personal and family characteristics of foster families (n=15), five sub-factors were identified: a) Personal attributes/ characteristics of the foster parents (n=7; e.g., Broady et al, 2010), b) Foster family functioning (n=7; e.g., Rhodes et al, 2003), c) Sociodemographic characteristics (n=6; e.g., De Maeyer, Vanderfaeillie, Vanschoonlandt, Robberechts, & van Holen, 2014), d) Personal or family changes (n=5; e.g., Geiger et al, 2013) and e) Experience as foster family (n=1; Hendrix & Ford, 2003). Concerning the sub-factors focused on personal attributes/characteristics, the studies revealed both negative and positive impact on retention. For instance, greater insecurity feelings (Broady et al., 2010) are associated with lower retention; whereas greater empathy, flexibility (Keys et al., 2017) and internal locus of control (Geiger et al., 2013) positively impact retention. All the sociodemographic characteristics have a negative impact in retention (e.g. employment, marriage status, single parenthood), except for age (De Maeyer, Vanderfaeillie, Vanschoonlandt, Robberechts & van Holen, 2014). Also, it must be pointed out that both white race (Rindfleisch et al, 1998) and nonwhite race (Hartzel & Reiman, 2017; Rhodes, Orme, Cox, & Buehler, 2003) have been identified as associated with lower retention, yielding a contradictory result in the literature. Personal or family changes and experience as foster family are negatively associated with the retention of foster parents. Regarding family functioning, this sub-factor impact both positively and

negatively the intention of continue to be a foster carer. If, for instance, having resources is positively associated with continuing as foster family (Rhodes et al., 2003), stressful experiences in the family (Geiger et al., 2013) or receiving inadequate financial reimbursement (Rhodes et al., 2001) are associated with lower retention.

Foster child's characteristics. Foster child's characteristics (n=7) was a predictor of retention, with the following sub-factors: a) Psychological problems (n=5; e.g., Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006), b) Problems with the child (n=1; Ahn et al., 2017) and c) Few child's improvement (n=1; e.g., Broady et al., 2010). Greater psychological problems and problems with the foster child are associated with lower retention, as well as few child's improvements.

Placement Challenges. This factor refers to aspects of the foster care process, (n=3). A sub-factor was identified: a) Reunification with biological family (n=3; e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996). The reunification with biological family impacts both positively (i.e., the integration in a disorganized family environment) and negatively the decision to continue fostering, namely, by the perceived difficulties associated with the child leaving (Rhodes et al.,2001).

Table 2.3.

Factors associated with families' retention

Factors of Retention	Subfactors	Indicators
Child protection system (n=15)	Support (n=9) [+ and -]	Telephone helplines (Blackburn, 2016) [+] Emotional, instrumental and organizational support (MacGregor et al., 2006; Mihalo, Strickler, Triplett & Trunzo, 2016; Geiger, Hayes & Lietz, 2013) [+] High levels of satisfaction with social work support (Ramsay, 1996) [+] Inadequate/lack of agency support and services (Rhodes, Orme & Buehler, 2001; Geiger, Hayes & Lietz, 2013) [-] Support from other foster parents (MacGregor et al., 2006; Rindfleisch et al., 1998) [+]
	Relational problems with professionals (n=7) [-]	Conflict with professionals (Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006; Ahn, Greeno, Bright, Hartzel & Reiman, 2017; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996) [–] Difficulties of communication with professionals (Spielfogel, Leathers, Christian & McMeel, 2011; Rhodes et al., 2001; MacGregor et al., 2006; Randle, Ernst, Leisch & Dolnicar, 2016) [-]
	Satisfaction as a foster carer (n=5) [+]	Satisfaction with foster experience and responsibility (Randle et al., 2016; Geiger, Hayes & Lietz, 2013; Denby, Rindfleisch & Bean, 1999; Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009) [+] Satisfaction with the service (Triseliotis, Borland & Hill, 1998) [+]
	Bureaucracy (n=5) [-]	Agency red tape (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rindfleisch, Bean & Denby, 1998; Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006) [-] Lack of involvement of foster parents in the permanency planning (Rhodes et al., 2001) [–] Lack of accurate information about the children (MacGregor et al., 2006) [-]

Factors of Retention	Subfactors	Indicators
Personal/ Family characteristics (=15)	Personal attributes/characteristics (n=7) [+ and -]	Empathy (Keys et al, 2017) [+] Flexibility (Keys et al, 2017) [+] Hardiness (Hendrix & Ford, 2003) [+] Insecurity perceptions (Broady, Stoyles, McMullan, Caputi & Crittenden, 2010) - Internal locus of control (Geiger et al., 2013) [+] Perceived self-efficacy (Geiger et al., 2013; Whenan, Oxlad & Lushington, 2009) [+] Internal and external locus of control (Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009) [+] Wanted to adopt but was not able to (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) –
	Family functioning (n=7) [+ and -]	Family resources (Rhodes et al., 2003) [+] Desire to replace the role of their own child (Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Closeness to the biological and foster child (Rhodes et al., 2006) - Lack of economic resources (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rindfleisch et al., 1998) - Receiving inadequate financial reimbursement (Rhodes et al., 2001) - Stressful experiences in the family (Geiger et al., 2013; Triseliotis et al., 1998) -
	Sociodemographic characteristics (n=6) [+ and -]	Age (De Maeyer, Vanderfaeillie, Vanschoonlandt, Robberechts & van Holen, 2014) [+] White race (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) - Non-white race (Ahn et al., 2017; Rhodes, Orme, Cox & Buehler, 2003) - Employment/ work challenges (Ahn et al., 2017; Triseliotis et al., 1998) - Higher educational status (Ahn et al., 2017) - Marriage status (Ahn et al., 2017) - Retirement or illness (Triseliotis et al., 1998) – Single parenthood (Geiger et al., 2013; Rhodes et al., 2003) -
	Personal or Family Changes (n=5) [-]	The impact of fostering on their own families (Triseliotis et al., 1998; Geiger et al., 2013) [-] Changes in personal circumstances (Ramsay, 1996; Ahn et al., 2017) [-] Adopted a child (Triseliotis et al., 1998; Ahn et al., 2017) [–] Conflict between foster children and their own children (Rhodes, Orme & Buehler, 2001) -
	Experience as foster family (n=1) [-]	More than two years as foster families (Hendrix & Ford, 2003) [–] Commitment to the children (Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009) [+]
Child's characteristics (n=7)	Psychological problems (n=5) [-]	Children's difficult behaviors (Triseliotis, Borland & Hill, 1998; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rhodes et al., 2001; Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006; Denby, Rindfleisch & Bean, 1999) [-]

Factors of Retention	Subfactors	Indicators
	Problems with the child (n=1) [-]	Lack of accurate information about child's needs (Ahn et al., 2017) [-] Conflict with the child (Ahn et al., 2017) [-]
	Few child's improvement (n=1) [-]	Few child's progressions (Broady et al., 2010) [-]
Placement Challenges (n=3)	Reunification with biological family (n=3) [+ and -]	The children return to bad situations (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996) - Seeing a child sent back to a bad situation (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) [+] Difficulty seeing the child leave (Rhodes et al.,2001) - Experiencing problems with the child's birth parents (Rhodes et al., 2001) -

4. Discussion

The current systematic review aimed to analyze the existing literature about the factors explaining the intention and retention of foster families, describing also the reviewed studies on samples and contexts, models and main findings obtained over the years. We found 49 studies focused on the intention and/or retention factors.

4.1. Predictors of becoming a foster family

Evidence indicated that the decision to become a foster parent is primarily related to parents' motivational factors. Motivation involves investing significant energy through a specific objective and different motivational factors might influence people to act/behave (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both extrinsic and intrinsic factors were found and although extrinsic motives like family expansion (e.g., Cole, 2005) and financial reasons (e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014) were reported, our findings showed that intrinsic motivations are primarily identified. They include self-centered motivations (e.g. Inch, 1999), religious motives (e.g. Rodger, et al., 2006), desire to care and love children (e.g. Rodger, et al., 2006) and desire to help children (e.g., Tyebjee, 2003). We know that being guided by intrinsic motivations - in the context of fostering young people - is more related with job satisfaction compared to extrinsic factors. This is even more important as greater levels of satisfaction are associated with greater retention (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Cleary et al., 2018). Besides that, it must be noted that the sub-factors desire to care, love and help children were the most identified within the motivational factor, and they might be framed on the literature about altruism (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012). Altruism is seen as a disposition to seek and increase another people's welfare (Batson & Powell, 2003). Some findings propose that altruism could be associated with greater prosocial behavior, and that prosocial behavior might significantly benefit others (Böckler, Tusche & Singer, 2016; Keltner, 2014).

Furthermore, we found that some personal and/or family characteristics are also important to becoming a foster parent. In other words, having adequate resources, time and space are imperative when considering either to become or not a foster parent (e.g., Migliorini et al., 2018). Foster care requires the foster family's ability to adapt their previous routines and functioning to receive a child. That means that if people perceive difficulties at these levels and think that they do not have the adequate resources, they will not be so prone to care for a foster child. In this sense, it must be ensured that the system is prepared to support

families who are highly motivated and meet the necessary conditions to foster. On the other hand, if failed family expansion, particularly, childlessness, infertility and unsuccess in adopting a child, can increase the individual prone to foster a child (e.g., Dando & Minty), having their own children seems to prevent individuals of becoming a foster family. As such, it seems that the intention to foster based on failed family expansion is more related with the fulfillment of individual needs than with the best interest of the child. This must be carefully considered given that the permanency planning should be guided by the child's needs and best interest.

Another interesting result suggests that adults who were once a foster child (e.g., Martin et al., 1992) are more prone to be a foster parent but experiencing adverse experiences in childhood predicted lower willingness to foster (e.g., Goodmanet al., 2017). We hypothesize that a positive experience within the foster care system (Vanderfaeillie et al, 2013) may promote further willingness of becoming a foster parent, which is congruent with the social learning theory. Actually, we learn from the interaction with others, reproducing their behaviors by observing (Bandura, 1971) and for that reason, a positive foster care experience might be associated with positive parenting behavior of fostering a child in the future.

An inconsistent result was found on age, with some studies finding that the older the people are, the greater the predisposition to become a foster family (e.g., Geiger, Hayes & Lietz, 2014) and with some others studies stressing the opposite result (i.e., when people are older their predisposition to become a foster parent diminish) (e.g., Randle et al., 2012). These divergent results could be framed on the family lifecycle (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). On one hand, younger people are more focused on tasks related with establishing a career and obtaining financial independence, which might undermine their ability to become a foster parent. Currently, family life cycles are changing (e.g., late home-leaving, delay in autonomy processes and the postponement family formation; OECD, 2011), which can weaken the willingness to become a foster parent. On the other hand, people in later life might need to take care of their grandchildren, deal with disabilities and with the decline of abilities (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989), which can negatively influence their time and capacity to care for a foster child.

Concerning the values and beliefs, the results suggest that becoming a foster parent could derive from moral and social responsibility perceptions (e.g., "wanted to do something for the community" or "wanted to fulfill a societal need"; Cole, 2005). Theoretically, this

sense of community includes the need to feel connected with others, doing something for the community as a way of one's social growth, which is also related with low levels of mental, social and health problems (Hyde & Chavis, 2008). Actually, evidence on social well-being proposes that individual well-being also comprises feeling accepted by others, contributing and feeling part of the community (Keyes, 1998). Furthermore, this finding is also consistent with the literature that suggests that psychological sense of community is positively related to prosocial behaviors (Hackett, Omoto & Matthews, 2015).

Moreover, this review suggests that social context factors may also influence the decision to become a foster parent, for example, knowing some foster family, or being encouraged from others, including a spouse (e.g., Doyle & Melville, 2013). Actually, not only the individuals' context plays a major role in one's behavior (Baez, García & Ibáñez, 2018), but also one's behavioral intention is influenced by subjective norms (i.e., the individual concern about if his/her behavior will or won't be approved by significant others; Ajzen, 1991). Finally, being familiar with the system (e.g., Ramsay, 1996) is a factor that might explain becoming a foster parent, which is consistent with the need of spreading adequate knowledge about the foster care system, given that misconceptions about the system may undermine the efforts of recruiting families (Leber et al., 2012).

4.2. Predictors of retention of foster families

The findings about foster family's retention highlight the role of child protection system. Retention seems to be lower when foster parents experience problems with the services/agencies (e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996) and foster care workers (e.g. poor communication and difficulty contacting). On the other hand, feelings of being supported by the agency or other foster parents (e.g., Blackburn, 2016), has a positive impact on foster families' retention. Given that foster care comprises a variety of challenges for the family of origin, foster child and foster family, these supportive practices are crucial (Canali & Vecchiato, 2013), and are associated with greater foster parents' satisfaction (Denlinger & Dorius, 2018). Furthermore, personal attributes (e.g., Keys et al, 2017) such as being empathic, flexible, with an internal locus of control and having a higher perceived self-efficacy are identified as being important for the retention of these foster parents. As seen before, foster families must have skills and specialized knowledge to take care of these young people (Herczog, Pagée & Pasztor, 2001; Marcellus, 2010), and to contribute to minimize their complex needs (Solomon, Niec & Schoonover, 2016). This result suggests that these

foster parents must have a specific profile to deal with the challenges of foster care (e.g., empathic skills, flexibility), and those people should be privileged in recruitment processes.

Besides that, some sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., Ahn et al., 2017), such as, being employed, a single parent, retired or having an illness has a negative influence on retention. That happens because these people already have many challenges that prevent them from continuing fostering. Work-family conflicts have been studied over the years and it is known that being employed can have implications in family functioning (Judge, Ilies & Scott, 2006). Depending on the flexibility, working hours and stress related to work, employment can limit the parental involvement with children (Fraenkel, 2003). Single parent families are characterized by not having someone to share parental responsibilities, and that can sometimes involve some challenges, like financial instability, lower social support and feelings of burden as a result of all the functions and tasks they need to fulfill (Alarcão, 2002). Finally, retirement and illness are challenging (Walsh, 2016) and they might undermine the willingness to continue fostering.

On the other hand, foster children characteristics can reduce the intention to continue fostering (e.g., Rhodes et al., 2001). This result is consistent with the literature stating the complexity of foster care, including children and young people's behavioral and emotional problems (Sawyer, Carbone, Searle & Robinson, 2007). Due to their adverse previous experiences (e.g., child abuse and neglect), foster children are more prone to develop negative developmental outcomes, namely, mental health problems (Heim, Shugart, Craighead, & Nemeroff, 2010; Sinclair et al., 2005; Vasileva & Petermann, 2016) than their peers. Specifically, externalizing problems are prevalent in this population (Vanschoonlandt et al, 2013) and it implies greater challenges to foster parents, which might originate increased disruptions in placement (Chamberlain et al., 2006). This result highlights the need of available supportive services to the foster families as well as to the foster children and young people, for instance, by helping foster parents to develop skills to handle and reduce negative outcomes (Solomon et al., 2016).

Lastly, the placement challenges also influence the retention of foster parents (e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996). Knowing that the child is going back to an environment that is negatively perceived is seen as a mixed result. Some evidence suggest that it undermines the foster parents' retention, and other revealing that this enhances their willingness to continue fostering. Some foster families do not have adequate information about permanency planning and reunification, and when reunification occurs, it is often experienced as undesirable.

Worries about the child returning to the same undesirable environment might lead to feelings of loss and grief. Moreover, worries about the child or young person's development may arise, nonetheless these families need to be able cope with these loss (Wolf, Reimer & Schäfer, 2013). Actually, the foster care intervention should promote a close and supportive relationship between foster and biological families.

4.3. Limitations and future directions

Even considering the important findings identified in this literature review, some limitations of the reviewed studies must be considered. Although most of the studies are quantitative, they are mostly descriptive, and they do not provide meaningful data about what factors are strongly associated with intention and retention to be a foster parent. Forty-six of the studies are cross-sectional, which means that the results should be carefully interpreted, avoiding causal inferences. Further longitudinal studies are needed. Moreover, most of the studies focused on female carers; however, evidence has been suggesting that father's involvement is important to young people's development (e.g., behavioral, social and cognitive) and their well-being (Allen & Daly, 2007). Fathers involvement in childcare has also long-term benefits, such as high levels of life satisfaction and fewer depressive indices (Furstenberg & Harris, 1993; Zimmerman, Salem, & Maton, 1995). This shows that it is important that foster fathers must be also involved in research and evaluative processes in order to obtain a reliable picture about motivations, feelings and experiences from different caregivers in the foster care system. Besides that, few studies included former foster parents, which may be an important population to consider when analyzing retention predictors. For that reason, future research should include foster families that quit, analyzing their reasons to discontinue fostering, which might inform foster family programs. Fewer studies were also focused on community samples, but it is relevant to provide innovative insights for recruitment purposes of foster parents.

Finally, this systematic review presents also some limitations. The results were not analyzed according to the type of family, neither to the characteristics of the foster children. Exploring differences from kinship families and non-kinship families might provide new insights and conclusions, namely derived from the strength of family ties. Also, considering that these children have some developmental and health particular needs, it would be important to explore factors explaining the willingness to foster children with specific needs (e.g., with HIV or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder).

4.4. Implications for practice in the foster care system

This systematic review offers some important insights for the recruitment and retention of foster families. On one hand, recruitment campaigns should emphasize the intrinsic motivational factors and the resources needed to provide quality foster care. Also, strategies appealing to the moral responsibility, as well as to the difference that individuals would make in children's life could be used in this context of recruitment. Considering that having adequate knowledge about the welfare system is important to make the decision to foster, efforts must be made to disseminate accurate information about the foster care system. As such, providing reliable information allows people acquiring in depth understandings of this public problem which may enable them to make informed decisions. Moreover, this process of recruitment might also be informed by the need to engage people who are empathic, flexible and exhibit mostly an internal locus of control.

Regarding the retention of foster parents, efficient support is needed from services and agencies. Not only, close and warm relationships between professionals and foster families are relevant to help them to adequately deal with those diverse challenges (e.g., children's behavioral problems, the relationship with biological family), but also specific training is needed. Initial and continuous training is crucial to prevent further difficulties, but empathic relationships are needed to prevent significant problems between foster families and agencies/services. Furthermore, efficient participation processes should be fostered. Not only continuous needs assessment with foster parents is important but also involving them during the placement is crucial. They should be informed and engaged in the planning permanency, being aware of the reunification process, as well as having adequate support to deal with their losses during this process. This support might reduce their willingness to discontinue fostering.

III. REASONS TO BE A FOSTER PARENT: AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH

1. Overview

The systematic review allowed us to identify factors related to become a foster family, and specifically intrinsic and altruistic motivations (e.g. Rodger, et al., 2006, Tyebjee, 2003). This evidence provides important insights to the recruitment of foster families (MacGregor et al, 2006; Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006). Actually, based on this evidence, being able to attract foster families is important to address the largest number of children in need. Further, as few studies were developed with community samples, additional evidence is needed. In addition to the motivations for fostering, it is important to have a more in-depth knowledge about the behavioral intention to effectively become a foster parent.

As it is well known, in Portugal the number of children in residential care currently reaches almost all of out of home placements, with only 3% in foster care. This is a significant problem, given the well-recognized negative effects of residential care on young child development (e.g., Bick et al., 2017). Although Portuguese legislation includes the preference of foster care over residential care, especially for children up to six years old, efforts to recruit foster families are not visible and the effective dissemination of foster care has not been made (Delgado, Lopez, Carvalho, & Del Valle, 2015). In addition, the visibility of the foster care system might be achieved by promoting accurate information about the system. If there is evidence about how people's knowledge and opinions are important variables when addressing the recruitment of quality foster families (Leber & LeCroy, 2012), there is a lack of evidence in the Portuguese context. Actually, to our best knowledge, merely one study was published (Negrão, Moreira, Veríssimo & Veiga, 2019), suggesting that Portuguese people has little knowledge about foster care, but is highly willing to become foster parents. Also, previous studies suggest the need to resolve negative stereotypes and to develop positive changes to attract more qualified families (Leber & LeCroy, 2012). If the population does not have in-depth knowledge or have misperceptions about foster care system and foster parents, then they are not fully aware of the children needs or the importance of implementing foster care in the country.

For all these reasons, this empirical study aims to 1) describe the knowledge and opinions of a Portuguese sample of adults regarding the foster care system and foster families, 2) identify the reasons underlying the willingness to become foster parents; and 3) describe

the association between sociodemographic data (e.g., age) and the reasons for fostering as well as between those different reasons and the behavioral intention to foster.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 177 participants, mostly females (80.2%), aged between 18 and 67 years old (M=33.75; SD = 12.68). They are mostly Portuguese (96.05%) and living in Lisbon (47.95%). Most of them are single (67.8%), 31.01% have children and have completed a graduation degree (55%). The majority of these participants (50%) are currently working and 30% are students (most of them as master students). Finally, considering that this study is focused on foster care as a protective service for children and youth at risk, it is important to describe the participants' contact with child protection system (CPS). Most of them never had contact with Portuguese CPS (68.9%) (Table 3.1.). When the participants were asked about foster care intention, 22% answered that they had already though about it and 23.1% replied that they would like to become a foster family. However, considering those participants who met the criteria for fostering (25-65 years old; n=115), merely 6.1% are willing to be a foster family soon, only 4.4% are planning to be a foster family and 5.2% said that they will make an effort to become a foster family shortly.

Table 3.1

Sample's sociodemographic description

Sociodemographic variables	Percent
Sex	
Female	**80.2**
Male	19.8
Nationality	
Portuguese	**96.05**
Brazilian	1.13
Portuguese-Brazilian	1.13
Angolan	0.56
Residence District	
Lisbon	**47.5**
Autonomous Region of Madeira	32.2
Santarém	6.2
Setúbal	5.1
Marital status	
Single	**67.8**
Married	20.9
Divorced	9.6
Widowed	1.1
Last degree completed	
9th grade	4.5
High school (12th grade)	17.5
Graduation	**55.9**
Master	18.6
PhD	2.3
Current school / professional status	
Worker	**50.8**
Student worker	6.8
Student	30.5
Unemployed	6.8
Retired	2.8
Household monthly income	
Up to 1000€	23.29
Between 1000€ and 1500€	18.08
Between 1500€ and 3000€	**36.16**
Between 3000€ and 4000€	6.21
More than 4000€	3.95
Contact with the system	
No contact	**68.9**
I had a child protection process	4.0
I know people who have had and / or whose children a child protection process	10.7
I know foster families	3.4
I have been institutionalized	0.6
I know people who have been in an institution	7.8
Current/past professional contact with child protection system	9.6

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. *Sociodemographic questionnaire.* In order to describe our participants, a sociodemographic questionnaire was filled out about information on individual (e.g. gender, age), academic (e.g. last degree completed), professional (e.g., professional status) and socioeconomic (e.g. household monthly income) information. A final question about if they have had contact with the child protection system was inserted.

2.2.2. *Behavioral intention to become a foster parent.* To assess the individual intention to become a foster parent, we adapted five items from Ru, Qin and Wang (2019). This adapted instrument assesses the intention of the participants to become a foster family through 5 items (e.g., "I am willing to be a foster family soon"), that are answered on a 7-point Likert scale (1 - strongly disagree; 7 - strongly agree). In this study, a global Cronbach' Alpha of .90 was found.

2.2.3. *Questionnaire about Foster care System Knowledge.* To assess the knowledge about the Portuguese foster care system, we adapted the 15 true or false questions from Leber and LeCroy (2012). It was necessary to adapt some items of the instrument, as some of the items did not fit the Portuguese context. Thus, 7 items were modified using the *Relatório Casa 2017* (ISS, 2018), which contains annual information on the characterization of the Portuguese Protection System. The items that remained exactly the same as the original instrument were item 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14. However, it should be noted that although item 6 "Foster parents are paid a salary for caring for foster children in addition to the money they receive to cover the children's daily needs" in the original instrument is a false statement, in the Portuguese context is true. The same happens with item 7 "Foster parents can sometimes adopt a child after serving as temporary caregivers", which in the original instrument is true, but in the Portuguese context does not occur that way. Thus, items number 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13 and 15 were modified for statements that make sense with the information from the Portuguese context.

2.2.4. *Questionnaire of foster care system and foster families' opinions.* This questionnaire was translated and adapted from the original version (Leber & LeCroy, 2012) allowing the assessment of people's representations of the foster care system (e.g., "Once a child is in foster care, he receives satisfactory case management from the workers in the foster care system."; "The foster care system deserves more national attention.") and foster families (e.g., "Foster parents sacrifice to help children in need."; "Most foster parents are competent

at foster parenting."). This instrument is composed by 27 items answered on a 4-point Likert scale (1 - Strongly Agree; 4 – Strongly Disagree).

2.2.5. *Questionnaire of reasons for fostering.* This questionnaire was translated and adapted from the original version (Orme et al., 2006) which allow to measure different reasons why people become/ want to become a foster family. It consists of 33 items (e.g., "I want to provide a child with love."; "I want to have a larger family") that are rated on a scale from 1 ("Not true for me") to 5 ("Very true for me").

2.3. Procedures of data collection and analysis

Prior to data collection, a pilot test of the protocol was conducted with a total of seven participants to improve the formulation and clarity of the questions, as well as formal aspects (e.g., the structure of the protocol). From this pilot test some changes were proposed, especially on statements structure and instructions, which were incorporated into the final protocol. Data collection was online using *Qualtrics* software. This collection was initiated by an informed consent, where participants were informed about the study objectives, all ethical issues that were ensured, including the voluntary nature of participation, the right to interrupt participation at any time, and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

Data analysis was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 24 software. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed. The results were divided into two sections: section one (whole sample; N=177), concerning the results about the knowledge about the foster care system, and opinions about the system and foster parents; section two, including the reasons to foster with the participants that met the age criteria for fostering in Portugal (25-65 years old; N=115).

3. Results

3.1. Section one

3.1.2. *General knowledge about the foster care system*

Results showed that our sample doesn't have much knowledge about foster care - of the 15 true or false questions asked, only five questions had more than 50% correct (Table 3.2.). Participants are unaware that most children in foster care are in the north of the country (22.6%). Only 40% know that time with foster families is usually longer than six years and a considerable part of the participants mistakenly believe that most children are placed with

relatives when removed from their biological families (only 42.4% know this is not true). Our participants also think that foster families can adopt the child they are fostering, which is not true in the Portuguese context (with only 24.3% knowing that this is not possible). However, there are some items with more than 50% of true answers. The sample seems to be aware that the number of children in foster care is very small compared to the number of children in residential care (57.1%) and that it is necessary training in order to become a foster parent (57.6%).

Although a considerable part of the sample is aware that behavioral problems are prevalent in this population (54.2%), their knowledge about the characteristics of the foster children does not seem to be deepened. For example, few are aware that 15% of foster children have clinically diagnosed mental disability (32.8%) and that there are more boys than girls in foster care (37.3%). More than half of the sample thinks that the foster children are under 5 years old, which is not true (only 44.1% correctly identified this statement as false). In addition, respondents are unaware that most children cease care and integrate a family with whom they have a significant relationship, but believe they leave because they turn 18 years old and are totally independent (only 9.6% of the sample identified the statement as false).

Regarding the reasons that lead to a foster care placement, the participants correctly identify neglect as the most predominant reason for this to happen (75.7%), however, a significant portion of the sample also believes that another reason is the fact that children were sexually or physically abused (44.1% of the sample correctly identified this statement as false). The results suggest that respondents often held some misconceptions regarding the foster care system.

Table 3.2.

General Knowledge about foster care

Questions	% of correct responses
Children are placed in foster care mostly because they were neglected by their parents. T	75.7%
Most children / young people are in foster care in the north of the country. T	22.6%
Of the universe of children removed from their families, only 3% are placed in foster care. T	57.1%
The majority of children who are removed from home are placed with relatives. F	42.4%
Most children stay with the foster families more than six years. T	40.1%
Foster parents are paid a salary for caring for foster children in addition to the money they receive to cover the children's daily needs. T	49.7%
Foster parents can adopt a child after serving as temporary caregivers. F	24.3%
There is training required in order to be a foster parent. T	57.6%
Most children enter the foster care system because they experience physical or sexual abuse. F	44.1%
Most children leave foster care because they turn 18 and can be considered legally independent. F	9.6%
The foster care system is governed by the Portuguese law of Children and Youth at risk. T	80.2%
Approximately 15% of children / young people in foster families have a clinically diagnosed mental disability. T	32.8%
Behavior problems are prevalent in foster children. T	54.2%
Fifty percent of children in the foster care system are 5 years of age or younger. (F)	44.1%
There are more boys than girls in foster care. T	37.3%

Note: T=True; F=False

3.1.3. *Opinions about the foster care system*

The opinions of the sample seem generally positive and appreciative of the foster care system (Table 3.3.). For example, a large portion of our participants assume that it is in society's best interest to provide quality care for foster children (87% agree/strongly agree), and that government should invest more to support foster care (71.7% agree/strongly agree). The sample supports the opinion that the foster care system deserves more national attention (82.4% agree/strongly agree) and 60% think that the foster care system is in need of some changes and improvements. Participants disagree that 18 years old is the appropriate age for young people to leave foster care (50.3% disagree/strongly disagree) and therefore consider that foster care should be extended beyond age 18 so that youth can be assisted in the transition to adulthood (74.5% agree/ strongly agree).

However, there are also some concerns. People's opinions about foster care system are critical on specific items, as 45.8% of the sample was unsure whether the foster care system protects the children in their care. The majority was uncertain regarding whether children get lost in the foster care system (53.7%), and a significant portion of them were unsure whether professionals in the foster care system manage their cases satisfactorily (63.8%). The data also indicated that most have doubts about if the people who work in the system have the training and resources necessary for their work (57.6%).

Table 3.3.

Opinions about the foster care system

Opinions	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Not Sure	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Changes and improvements need to be made to the foster care system.	26	46	39	69	1.7	3	1.7	3	26.6	47
The foster care system deserves more national attention.	42.9	76	39.5	70	0	0	1.1	2	11.3	20
The government should spend more to support the foster care system.	30.5	54	41.2	73	1.7	3	1.7	3	19.8	35
It is in society's best interest to provide quality care for foster children.	48.6	86	38.4	68	0.6	1	1.1	2	5.6	10
The government does not need a foster care system.	1.1	2	2.3	4	26.6	47	57.6	102	6.8	12
Churches and other private organizations should care for children who cannot stay in their homes rather than the foster care system.	1.7	3	9.0	16	26.0	46	29.4	52	28.2	50
The foster care system protects the children in its care.	5.6	10	31.1	55	8.5	15	3.4	6	45.8	81
Foster children get "lost" in the foster care system.	4.5	8	18.5	28	15.3	27	5.1	9	53.7	95
Once a child is in foster care, he receives satisfactory case management from the workers in the foster care system.	2.8	5	11.3	20	12.4	22	3.4	6	63.8	113
People who work within the foster care system have the training and resources they need.	4.5	8	14.7	26	13.0	23	4.5	8	57.6	102
Foster care should extend beyond age 18 because youth still need support as they transition to adulthood.	20.3	36	54.2	96	4.5	8	1.1	2	14.1	25
Eighteen is the right age for foster youth to transition out of the foster care system.	1.7	3	8.5	15	34.5	61	15.8	28	33.9	60

3.1.4. *Opinions about foster parents*

Concerning opinions regarding foster families (Table 3.4.), the sample agrees/strongly agrees that we should be doing more to support people who become foster parents (73.5%). A high proportion of respondents have positive views on the foster family's reasons for fostering, with 64.4% believing that they do it to make a difference and 55.7% agreeing that these families care deeply about children.

The remaining results seem to demonstrate again some particular concerns. Specifically, 61.6% of respondents state they are not sure whether foster parents are competent at foster parenting, and 59.3% being uncertain whether the foster care system is doing a good job in recruiting and ensuring quality of foster parents. Almost half of the sample is unsure whether the requirements to become a foster parent should be stricter (49.2%). A large portion of respondents are also unsure about the funds received by foster parents being enough to care and provide for these children (63.3%), nor are they sure if the reason for becoming foster parent is financial (around 60%). Although 38.5% of the sample has the opinion that it is not appropriate for financial compensation to be one of the factors that play an important role in the decision to become a foster family, 28.8% are unsure whether they agree or not with this statement.

Almost half of the sample strongly agree / agree that when children are removed from their homes it is better for them to be placed with relatives (46.3%), however, the percentage of those who are unsure is also high (33.3%). Finally, regarding whether foster parents should be paid or not to foster, the results vary, with 35% agreeing, 19.8% not agreeing and 36.7% not sure whether they should be paid.

Table 3.4.

Opinions about the foster parents

Opinions	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Not Sure	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
We, as a society, should be doing more to support people who become foster parents.	19.8	35	53.7	95	1.7	3	1.1	2	15.3	27
Foster parents sacrifice to help children in need.	7.9	14	30.5	54	18.1	32	4.0	7	31.1	55
People who become foster parents do it to make a difference.	14.1	25	50.3	89	0.6	1	1.1	2	25.4	45
People become foster parents because they care deeply about children.	10.2	18	45.2	80	2.8	5	1.1	2	32.2	57
Most foster parents are competent at foster parenting.	1.7	3	21.5	38	2.8	5	4.0	7	61.6	109
The foster care system does a good job recruiting and keeping quality foster parents.	5.1	9	19.2	34	4.5	8	3.4	6	59.3	105
There should be stricter requirements for people wanting to become foster parents.	13.6	24	26.0	46	1.7	3	1.1	2	49.2	87
The funds that foster parents receive from the government are sufficient to provide for the children in their care.	0.6	1	2.8	5	20.3	36	4.5	8	63.3	112
Most people are in foster parenting for the money.	2.3	4	5.6	10	20.9	37	2.8	5	59.9	106
People become foster parents because of the money they receive from the government.	1.7	3	9.0	16	20.9	37	4.0	7	55.9	99
Foster parents should be paid for caring for foster children.	4.5	8	30.5	54	13.0	23	6.8	12	36.7	65
It is okay for financial compensation to play a role in why foster parents choose to foster.	1.1	2	23.2	41	24.9	44	13.6	24	28.8	51
When children need to be removed from their homes it is better for them to be placed with relatives than in other types of foster care.	14.1	25	32.2	57	10.2	18	1.7	3	33.3	59

3.2. Section two

3.2.1. *Reasons for fostering*

The *Reasons for fostering* provided some insight on what motivations and reasons would lead this Portuguese sample to fostering. The most reported was wanting to provide a child with love (86.1%), followed by the reason to help a child who is less fortunate (82.6%). A significant portion of the sample is concerned about the children placement in residential care settings and reports that one of the reasons why they would foster would be to provide a home and prevent the children to go to an institution (72.2%). Also consistent with this idea was that most of the sample would foster because they want to provide a good home to a child (66.1%), and because they want to do something for the society (60%). Slightly above half the respondents want to help a child with special problems (50.4%).

Other reasons for fostering identified by the sample included wanting to be loved by a child (40%), wanting to have a larger family (31.3%), thinking of adopting a child, and thinking that foster parenting would be a good way to start (29.5%), not being able to have biological children (21.7%) and to know a foster child or a foster child's family and to want to help them (21.7%). Other reasons were identified, although less reported, and all of which are in the table below (Table 3.5.).

Table 3.5.

Reasons for fostering

	Completely false to me		False to me		True to me		Completely true to me		Neither	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
I want to provide a good home for a child.	6.1	7	7.0	8	33.9	39	32.2	37	20.9	24
I want to provide a child with love.	3.5	4	2.6	3	31.3	36	54.8	63	7.8	9
I want to help a child who is less fortunate.	5.2	6	3.5	4	36.5	42	46.1	53	7.0	8
I want to do something for the community/society.	7.0	8	7.0	8	37.4	43	22.6	26	24.3	28
I want to provide a home so a child won't have to be put in an institution.	3.5	4	2.6	3	40.0	46	32.2	37	19.1	22
I want to help a child with special problems.	3.5	4	13.0	15	40.0	46	10.4	12	30.4	35
I cannot have any, or anymore, children of my own.	40.9	47	15.7	18	10.4	12	11.3	13	18.3	21
I want to be loved by a child.	18.8	17	17.4	20	27.0	31	13.0	15	26.1	30
I want a larger family.	16.5	19	20.0	23	22.6	26	8.7	10	30.4	35
I thought about adopting and thought foster parenting was a good way to start.	27.8	32	21.7	25	22.6	26	5.2	6	20.9	24
I want a certain kind of child (e.g., a girl or a five-year old).	33.9	39	26.1	30	6.1	7	3.5	4	28.7	33
I know a foster child or a foster child's family and want to help.	34.8	40	18.3	21	16.5	19	5.2	6	23.5	27
My own children were grown and I want children in	38.3	44	27.0	31	10.4	12	0.9	1	21.7	25

	Completely false to me		False to me		True to me		Completely true to me		Neither	
the house.										
I want to care for a child but did not want permanent responsibility.	36.5	42	32.2	37	4.3	5	3.5	4	20.9	24
I want to fulfill my religious beliefs by caring for a child.	37.4	43	19.1	22	11.3	13	4.3	5	26.1	30
I was abused or neglected myself.	72.2	83	13.9	16	2.6	3	1.7	2	7.0	8
I am attached to a particular child.	67.8	78	13.0	15	3.5	4	4.3	5	9.6	11
I do not want to care for an infant.	59.1	68	16.5	19	7.0	8	2.6	3	12.2	14
I want to have company for my own child.	47.8	55	20.9	24	6.1	7	6.1	7	17.4	20
I want to provide a home for a child I knew.	41.7	48	20.0	23	13.0	15	5.2	6	18.3	21
I want to have more money.	55.7	64	14.8	17	7.8	9	7.8	9	12.2	14
I want to have company for myself.	43.5	50	12.2	14	17.4	20	7.0	8	18.3	21
I want to fill time.	53.9	62	15.7	18	10.4	12	1.7	2	16.5	19
I was a foster child myself.	74.8	86	13.0	15	2.6	3	2.6	3	5.2	6
I am single and want a child.	67.0	77	13.0	15	4.3	5	1.7	2	12.2	14
I want to adopt but cannot get a child or wanted to adopt but can't.	66.1	76	11.3	13	4.3	5	5.2	6	11.3	13
I want a child to help with chores or work in family business.	80.9	93	11.3	13	0.9	1	0	0	5.2	6

	Completely false to me		False to me		True to me		Completely true to me		Neither	
I had a child who died.	81.7	94	8.7	10	2.6	3	1.7	2	2.6	3
My spouse wants to be a foster parent, so I agree.	73.9	85	13.0	15	3.5	4	0.9	1	6.1	7
I am related to a child I want to foster.	70.4	81	10.4	12	7.8	9	3.5	4	6.1	7
I feel obligated to take a particular child.	68.7	79	16.5	19	4.3	5	0	0	8.7	10
I think a child might help my marriage.	76.5	88	12.2	14	2.6	3	0.9	1	5.2	6

3.2.2. *The relationship between reasons for fostering and the intention to foster*

The data revealed the existence of a negative correlation between age and wanting to provide a child with love (r=-.210, p=.024), wanting a larger family (r=-.190, p=.043) and being single and wanting a child (r=-.252, p=.007). This means that the older participants are, the less they report these reasons as reasons for fostering. In addition, there is a positive correlation between age and not wanting to care for a baby (r=.196, p=.038), meaning that the older participants are, the less they are willing to care for a baby.

We tried to understand if there was a relation between the behavioral intention of the individual and the identified reasons for fostering. In this sense, we found that the higher the intention of participants to foster, more often they reported the reasons wanting to provide a good home for a child (r=.268, p=.004), wanting to provide a child with love (r=.299, p=.001), wanting to help a child who is less fortunate (r=.271, p=.004), wanting to do something for the community (r=.296, p=.002), wanting to provide a home so a child won't had to be put in an institution (r=.295, p=.002), wanting to help a child with special problems (r=.220, p=.021) and wanting to adopt and thought foster parenting was a good way to start (r=.263, p=.005).

4. Discussion

The present study, conducted with a Portuguese community sample, aimed to identify the knowledge, perceptions and opinions about the foster care system and the foster families, as well as their motivations to foster and behavioral intention. Our results suggests that 22% of our participants has already thought about being a foster parent, but when considering participants who met the criteria for fostering (25-65 years old; n = 115), only 4.4% are planning to be a foster family and 5.2% said they will make an effort to become a foster family shortly. Considering that behavioral intentions involve different levels of commitment with the action, a higher commitment increases the likelihood of behavior (Ajzen, Czasch, & Flood, 2009). As such, our data suggests that the number of people who effectively make something to become a foster family is low (lower than 6%).

4.1. General knowledge about the foster care system

Regarding the true or false questions section, only five out of 15 questions had more than 50% correct, which means that there is a lack of significant and accurate knowledge about foster care system in the Portuguese context. This is consistent with previous findings

showing reduced knowledge about the foster care (Negrão et al, 2019), which demonstrates that this is not a widespread topic in our country (Delgado et al., 2015).

Participants have a reduced knowledge of how the foster care system works and mistakenly believe that children are mainly placed with relatives (i.e., kinship care) when removed from their homes, which is not true (10.8% are placed in out-of-home care or with a non-relative person and 9.3% with relatives from extended family; ISS, 2018). Participants are also unaware that most children in foster care are in the north of the country. Indeed, it was in the north of Portugal (Porto), that the *Mundos de Vida* association provides foster care services, recruiting and retaining foster families. Given that most foster care take place in the north of the country, a more homogeneous distribution of the foster families is needed to address the needs of all children who are removed from their families. According to the *Relatório Casa 2017*, Lisbon district has also a large number of children in need of an out-of-home measure. As there are no foster families across the country, these children have no available solutions to their needs, which is itself a problem. In addition, the participants assume that it is possible to adopt the foster child, which although possible in other countries, it is not true in Portugal (Decree Law 11/2008). Actually, as we found in the systematic review, there are some studies referring that wanting to adopt is one of the explanatory factors of becoming a foster family (Rindfleisch, Bean & Denby, 1998; Rhodes et al., 2006). However, in the Portuguese context it is not possible.

Slightly under half of the respondents didn't know that foster parents receive additional money to cover the foster child's daily expenses, in addition to a salary. Even considering that caution must be taken with purely economic motivations, as the best interest of the child should be the main reason to foster, having financial support might provide more security feelings in the decision-making process. The knowledge of the sample about foster children is limited, with no notion that 15% have clinically diagnosed mental disability, that there are more boys than girls and that most of the children in foster care has more than 5 years old (ISS, 2018). These results demonstrate that our participants have no in-depth knowledge about foster care. The lack of knowledge about foster care might negatively affect recruitment as well as the quality of the foster families. Not knowing the particularities of these children is sensitive because of their specific needs (e.g., externalizing problems; Vanschoonlandt et al, 2013). It is important to have adequate knowledge about the child needs to understand how to respond to these needs and make informed decisions (Solomon et al., 2016).

Regarding the reasons that justified the foster care placement, the participants correctly identify neglect as the main reason, but a significant portion of the sample also believes that it is due to sexual or physical abuse. This and other results show that respondents often hold some misconceptions regarding the children and youth in out-of-home care. This might be due either to the lack of social recognition of foster care (Delgado et al., 2015) or to the fact that when news of children at risk are reported, they relate to extreme cases of sexual or physical abuse. This also relates to the fact that abuse (sexual or physical) is perceived as more serious, even though neglect is more prevalent. Data shows that in 2017, neglect was identified n 71% of situations and sexual abuse in only 3% of situations (ISS, 2018). Indeed, mass media plays an important role in spreading information about country's social issues and problems (Riggs, King, Delfabbro & Augoustinos, 2009), which may influence the knowledge and representations of the population.

4.2. Opinions about the foster care system and foster parents

Our participants generally perceive the foster care system in a positive way, which agreed with the results obtained by Leber and colleagues (2012). They identify foster care as needing to receive more national attention, being essential more effective changes and improvements as well as benefiting of more government support. This recognition of foster care system as important could enhance participants' willingness to adhere to this service. Furthermore, our sample assume that 18 years old is not the appropriate age to cease care and that these young people should be supported in the transition to adulthood. One of the major challenges that children in foster care experience is the transition to adulthood (Rome & Raskin, 2017). Many are unsupported, have difficulties in their transition and, therefore, return to their families of origin, whose relationship can be problematic (Atkinson, 2008).

However, data shows a number of uncertainties regarding specific issues, such as whether the foster care system protects the children in their care, whether the children get lost in the system, whether professionals have good case management skills and if they have the training and resources to do a good job. It should be noted that the opinions of the American population differ with regard to these results (Leber & LeCroy, 2012), and they seem to be more certain of some aspects such as most of the population thinking that children get lost in the system, and that the care system protects the children in their care. In addition, they assume that children do not receive good case management and that system workers have the necessary training and resources (Leber & LeCroy, 2012). The uncertainties of the Portuguese population may relate to the lack of information about the foster care system.

Furthermore, participants have also positive perceptions about foster families, believing that people who want to become foster parents, should be supported, that they want to make a difference in the children's lives and that they care deeply about children. The sample is also unsure whether the reasons for becoming a foster family relate to financial factors. However, the data also shows that several uncertainties arise, such as whether foster families are competent and whether the foster care system is good at recruiting and ensuring quality of foster parents. All these uncertainties may be related to the lack of dissemination of foster care and foster families, and if information were available these uncertainties would not be so evident. Given that there is no easy access to this information, the population cannot have a correct perception of the topic. Thus, initiatives should be undertaken to increase the knowledge of the population. Examples of initiatives are disseminating information to the media, because as mentioned above, it is more inclusive, reaching a larger number of people. In addition, the dissemination of information should focus on a specific age group, those who can foster, that is, over 35 years old, because at earlier ages there are the questions of family life cycle challenges (e.g., establishing a career; Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). In addition to the media, this information could be disseminated by entities that are closer to families so that information may arrive faster (e.g., schools, autarchy).

4.3. Reasons for fostering

The motivations found, in this study, for fostering are similar to those reported in the literature, with the most frequent being wanting to provide a child with love, followed by the reason to help a child who is less fortunate. The motivations for fostering, in the Portuguese sample are then related to intrinsic and altruistic factors (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012). Also, they would foster to provide a home and prevent children placement in residential care as well as because they want to provide a good home to a child. In fact, residential care settings are not best suited for a child to grow up, derived from a high caregiver / child ratio, staff turnover, that is, an environment where more individualized care cannot be provided (Attar-Schwartz, 2008). This result suggest that the population is aware that residential care is a less favorable alternative for these children than foster care. In turn, this may mean that our participants might have more information about residential care but do not know other solutions for out of home placements, such as foster care.

Lastly, they would foster because they want to do something for the society. The relationship between the individual and society is known to be based on mutual dependence

which means that one helps the other grow (Hossain & Ali, 2014). Moreover, the social component is one of the most associated with the well-being of the individual (Teghe & Rendell, 2005). This highlights the importance that social connection has in the social development of individuals, which relates to the need to do something for society as a way of contributing to the development of the sense of community (Hyde & Chavis, 2008). The results of this study are in line with other studies on the subject, in which it is noted that social values, that is, moral or social responsibility, influence on the decision to become a foster family (Cole, 2005, López & Del Valle, 2016, Howell-Moroney, 2014).

Self-centered reasons are identified but are reported by less than half of the participants, like wanting to be loved by a child or wanting to have a larger family or not being able to have biological children. These reasons may go against the best interests of the child and that is why there is a need to evaluate motivations and explore them at recruitment so that the best for the child is always guaranteed. This result may relate to the age of the participants. Considering that the mean age of the sample is 33 years old and that in these ages people start to consider the family formation and having kids, from the point of view of the family lifecycle (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989), reasons like wanting to have a larger family, or not being able to have biological children might appear. It is important to point out that at this stage of family formation there must be a readjustment of the marital system at the financial and household level (Carter & McGoldrick 1989). Adaptation is required for the new member to be received and to take place within the family.

Our results on the relationship between age, reasons for fostering and the intention to foster revealed a negative association between age and wanting to provide a child with love, wanting a larger family and being single as well as wanting a child. This means that the older participants are, the less they report these reasons for fostering. In addition, there is a positive correlation between age and not wanting to care for a baby. This can be framed also in the family lifecycle (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989), considering that families in later life have usually dealt with the departure of their children from home and have other tasks such as taking care of grandchildren, which means they have less availability (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). In addition, it is natural that older people do not want to care for babies, either because of their life expectancy or the fact that babies need constant care which can be compromised by their ability to respond to their needs. On the other hand, families at an early stage will report more reasons associated with family formation, such as wanting to have a larger family or a child, as seen above.

We found that when participants report a higher intention to foster, they report more intrinsic and altruistic reasons to foster, like wanting to give love and a home to a child, help children with special problems and do something for the society. That means that intrinsic reasons might be related with greater likelihood to foster, and these reasons are viewed as more lasting, relate to more satisfaction with the caregiver role, and therefore with the retention (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Rodger, Cummings & Leschied, 2006; Sebba, 2012). Besides that, the social values emerge again as having an influence in the decision to become a foster parent. Given that the individual and society are mutually dependent (Hossain & Ali, 2014), this highlights the fact that the context in which the individual is integrated influences her/his decisions. This relates to the sense of belonging as well as values shared by the community (Hall, 2007), that is collective values (values common to all). If a collective value is to help society then the individual might have that in mind when making their decision.

The relationship between the individual and society is known to be based on mutual dependence which means that one helps the other grow (Hossain & Ali, 2014). Moreover, the social component is one of the most associated with the well-being of the individual (Teghe & Rendell, 2005). This underscores the importance that social connection has in the social development of individuals, which relates to the need to do something for society as a way of contributing to the development of the sense of community (Hyde & Chavis, 2008). The results of this study are in line with other studies on the subject, in which it is noted that social values, that is, moral or social responsibility, influence on the decision to become a foster family (Cole, 2005, López & Del Valle, 2016, Howell-Moroney, 2014).

4.4. Limitations, implications for practice and future directions

This study includes a small number of participants and a convenience sample, which does not allow many generalizations of the results found. Therefore, it would be important to explore the knowledge about the foster care system, the opinions about the system and about the foster families and the motivations of the Portuguese adults with a larger and representative sample. Another limitation is the gender unbalanced sample, with more females that males, what it consistent with research in these areas, where women participate more. Considering that fathers have an important role in the education and adaptive development (e.g., behavioral, social and cognitive) of children and youth (Allen & Daly, 2007), then it is important that males' knowledges, opinions and motivations are evaluated and considered. Furthermore, there is no published data on validity and reliability of the

instruments we have used, which calls for further studies providing evidence on the psychometric properties of these scales.

Even considering these limitations, some implications for practice can be identified. Having adequate knowledge about the foster care system is important for a variety of reasons, for example so that valid efforts are performed to make foster care a viable option in Portugal. If the population perceive the number of children in out of home placements as a social issue, and that foster care is an adequate temporary solution for them, then it is easier for this service to be supported and implemented. The results show the need for the dissemination of accurate information about the foster care system and foster care, specifically, the process and challenges involved, namely the children needs in care. Knowing about this will make it easier for foster families to be recruited, as potential prospects can make an informed decision more easily.

In addition, and considering the data on the motivations to foster, recruitment campaigns should highlight the intrinsic motivational factors and develop strategies that appeal to moral responsibility. Regarding the intrinsic motivational factors, campaigns that point out to the satisfaction felt when caring, giving opportunity, love and a home to children in need, could have a more direct impact. In addition, appealing to moral responsibility could be achieved by transmitting the negative impact that the alternatives (e.g., institutions) have for these children, calling for the need to have foster families in Portugal. Making people understand that caring and protecting children is a society duty could appeal to the moral and social values of the population.

CONCLUSION

The systematic review showed that motivational factors, particularly intrinsic and altruistic motivations, are the most recognized as guiding the intention to become a foster family. Also, personal factors (e.g., having space and time or failed experiences of family expansion) and values and beliefs of moral responsibility seem to have an important influence on this decision. In addition, positive relationships with professionals together with certain personal characteristics (such as empathy or being flexible) also play a major role in retaining these families. This review allowed to systematize the evidence on this topic, providing a more integrated framework about the intention and retention factors.

From this systematic review, we found that studies have been neglected community samples in order to understand what reasons might influence them to become a foster family. Taking this into consideration, an empirical study was carried out focused on the knowledge and opinions of a Portuguese sample regarding the foster care system and on their behavioral intention to effectively become a foster family. Also, the main reasons why they would decide to become a foster family were identified. This quantitative empirical study showed that the Portuguese population does not have much knowledge about the foster care system, despite recognizing its importance. In addition, we found that only a small percentage intend to become a foster family. Regarding the reasons that would lead them to foster, the results showed that, as identified in the systematic review, altruistic motivations stand out, as well as the feeling of social responsibility. Self-centered motivations also appear but to a lesser extent. The results also show that those participants who are more intent on becoming a foster family identify more altruistic reasons, which is promising because these are child-centered reasons and in their best interest.

In sum, both studies allow us to realize that the foster care need to be systemically disseminated, so that people can make informed decisions. It should be noted that upon recruitment, the system should focus on supporting these foster families as well as maintaining healthy and positive relationships between the foster families and case managers in order to increase the retention of these parents.

REFERENCES

Affronti, M., Rittner, B., & Semanchin Jones, A. M. (2014). Functional adaptation to foster care: foster care alumni speak out. *Journal of Public Child Welfare, 9*(1), 1–21. doi:10.1080/15548732.2014.978930

* Ahn, H., Greeno, E. J., Bright, C. L., Hartzel, S., & Reiman, S. (2017). A survival analysis of the length of foster parenting duration and implications for recruitment and retention of foster parents. *Children and Youth Services Review, 79*, 478–484. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.06.069

Ajzen, I., Czasch, C., & Flood, M. (2009). From intentions to behavior: Implementation intention, commitment and conscientiousness. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *39*(6), 1356-1372.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 179–211. doi:10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-t

Alarcão, M. (2002). (*des)Equilíbrios familiares: uma visão sistémica*. Coimbra: Quarteto Editora.

Allen, S. M., & Daly, K. J. (2007). *The effects of father involvement: An updated research summary of the evidence*. Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, University of Guelph.

Ambrose, M. L., & Kulik, C. T. (1999). Old friends, new faces: Motivation research in the 1990s. *Journal of management*, *25*(3), 231-292.

Amorós, P., & Palacios, J. (2004). *Acogimiento familiar*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

* Andersson, G. (2001). The motives of foster parents, their family and work circumstances. *British Journal of Social Work*, *31*(2), 235–248. doi:10.1093/bjsw/31.2.235

Atkinson, M. (2008). Aging out of Foster Care: Towards a universal safety net for former foster care youth. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, *43*, 183-212.

Attar-Schwartz, S. (2008). Emotional, behavioral and social problems among Israeli children in residential care: A multi-level analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review, 30*(2), 229-248.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018). *Child protection Australia 2016–17*. Child welfare series no. 68. Cat. no. CWS 63. Canberra: AIHW.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018b). *Foster care numbers*. Retrieved from https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/nfpac/contents/national-standards-indicators/12-2-foster-care-numbers

Baez, S., García, A. M., & Ibáñez, A. (2018). How does social context influence our brain and behavior? *Frontiers for Young Minds, 6.* doi:10.3389/frym.2018.00003

Bandura, A. (1971). *Social Learning Theory*. New York: General Learning Press.

Barter, C., & Lutman, E. (2015). A life less ordinary: Foster carers' views and experiences of negative peer interactions in fostering households. *Child Abuse Review*, *25*(4), 273–286. doi:10.1002/car.2377

Bass, S., Shields, M. K., & Behrman, R. E. (2004). Children, families, and foster care: Analysis and recommendations. *The Future of Children*, *14*(1), 4-29. doi: 10.2307/1602752

Batson, C. D., & Powell, A. A. (2003). Altruism and prosocial behavior. In T. Millon & M. J. Lerner (Eds.) *Handbook of psychology: Personality and social psychology, (*pp. 463-484). Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

* Baum, A. C., Crase, S. J., & Crase, K. L. (2001). Influences on the decision to become or not become a foster parent. *Families in Society*, *82*(2), 202-213.

Bick, J., Zeanah, C. H., Fox, N. A., & Nelson, C. A. (2017). Memory and executive functioning in 12-year-old children with a history of institutional rearing. *Child Development, 89*(2), 495–508. doi:10.1111/cdev.12952

* Blackburn, C. (2016). The role of a national fostering helpline in the recruitment and

retention of foster carers: implications for policy and fostering practice. *Adoption & Fostering, 40*(2), 167–178. doi:10.1177/0308575916640227

Böckler, A., Tusche, A., & Singer, T. (2016). The structure of human prosociality. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 7(6), 530–541. doi:10.1177/1948550616639650

* Broady, T. R., Stoyles, G. J., McMullan, K., Caputi, P., & Crittenden, N. (2009). The Experiment of Foster Care. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 19*(5), 559– 571. doi:10.1007/s10826-009-9330-6

Canali, C., Maurizio, R., & Vecchiato, T. (2016). Foster care: Motivations and challenges for foster families. *Social Work & Society*, *14*(2), 1-15.

Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (1988). *The changing family life cycle: A framework for family therapy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY, US: Gardner Press.

Chamberlain, P., Price, J. M., Reid, J. B., Landsverk, J., Fisher, P. A., & Stoolmiller, M. (2006). Who disrupts from placement in foster and kinship care? *Child Abuse & Neglect, 30*(4), 409–424. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.11.004

Chateauneuf, D., Turcotte. D., & Drapeau, S. (2018). The relationship between foster care families and birth families in a child welfare context: The determining factors. *Child & Family Social Work, 23*(1), 71-79. doi: 10.1111/cfs.12385

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2018). Foster Care Statistics 2016. Retirado de https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/foster/

Ciarrochi, J., Randle, M., Miller, L., & Dolnicar, S. (2011). Hope for the future: Identifying the individual difference characteristics of people who are interested in and intend to foster-care. *British Journal of Social Work, 42*(1), 7-25.

* Ciarrochi, J. V., Randle, M. J., Miller, L. M. & Dolnicar, S. (2012). Hope for the future: Identifying the individual difference characteristics of people who are interested in and intend to foster-care. *British Journal of Social Work, 42*(1), 7-25.

Cleary, S. E., Barnett, E. R., Huckins, J. F., Butcher, R. L., & Jankowski, M. K. (2018). A comparison of foster and adoptive parent satisfaction and commitment. *Children and Youth Services Review, 88*, 205-210. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.03.010

* Cole, S. A. (2005). Foster caregiver motivation and infant attachment: How do reasons for fostering affect relationships? *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 22*(5-6), 441–457. doi:10.1007/s10560-005-0021-x

*Contreras, A. U., & Muñoz, I. M. (2016). Conocimiento y predisposición sobre el acogimiento familiar en el alumnado universitario de Málaga. *Revista de Investigación en Education*, 14-30.

* Cooley, M. E., Farineau, H. M., & Mullis, A. K. (2015). Child behaviors as a moderator: Examining the relationship between foster parent supports, satisfaction, and intent to continue fostering. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 45*, 46–56. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.05.007

Craven, P. A., & Lee, R. E. (2006). Therapeutic Interventions for Foster Children: A Systematic Research Synthesis. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *16*(3), 287–304. doi:10.1177/1049731505284863

*Dando, I. & Minty, B. (1987). What makes good foster parents? *The British Journal of Social Work*, *17*(4), 383-399.

* Daniel, E. (2011). Gentle iron will: Foster parents' perspectives. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(6), 910–917. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.12.009

Del Valle, J. F. (2013). Out of home care in child protection: An international overview. *Psychosocial Intervention, 22*(3), 161–162. doi:10.5093/in2013a19

Del Valle, J. F., & Bravo, A. (2013). Current trends, figures and challenges in out of home child care: An international comparative analysis. *Psychosocial Intervention, 22(3), 251–257.* doi:10.5093/in2013a28

Delgado, P., López, M., Carvalho, J., & Valle, J. F. D. (2015). Acolhimento Familiar em Portugal e Espanha: Uma Investigação Comparada sobre a Satisfação dos Acolhedores. *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica, 28*(4), 840–849. doi:10.1590/1678-7153.201528423

Delgado, P., Carvalho, J., & Pinto, V.S. (2014). Crescer em família: A permanência no acolhimento familiar. Pedagogía Social. *Revista Interuniversitaria*, *23*, 123-150.

* Denby, R., Rindfleisch, N., & Bean, G. (1999). Predictors of foster parents' satisfaction and intent to continue to foster. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *23*(3), 287-303.

* Denby, R., & Rindfleisch, N. (1996). African Americans' foster parenting experiences: Research findings and implications for policy and practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *18*(6), 523-551.

Denlinger, M., & Dorius, C. (2018). Communication patterns between foster parents and case managers. *Children and Youth Services Review, 89, 329-339.* doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.04.034

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2018). *Coming Into Care/What to Expect*. Retrieved from https://www.dcya.gov.ie/docs/EN/Coming-Into-Care-What-to-Expect/3261.htm

* Diogo, E., & Branco, F. (2017). Being a Foster Family in Portugal—Motivations and Experiences. *Societies, 7*(4), 1-14. doi:10.3390/soc7040037

* Doyle, J., & Melville, R. (2013). Good caring and vocabularies of motive among foster carers. *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology & Sociology*, *4*(2), 71-90.

Dubois-Comtois, K., Bernier, A., Tarabulsy, G. M., Cyr, C., St-Laurent, D., Lanctôt, A.-S., …Béliveau, M. J. (2015). Behavior problems of children in foster care: Associations with foster mothers' representations, commitment, and the quality of mother–child interaction. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *48*, 119–130. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.06.009

* Eaton, A., & Caltabiano, M. (2009). A four factor model predicting likelihood of foster carer retention. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, *44*(2), 215-229.

Fraenkel, P. (2003). Contemporary two-parent families: Navigating work and family challenges. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity* (pp. 61-95). New York, NY, US: The Guilford Press.

Fuentes-Peláez, N., Amorós, P., Mateos, A., Balsells, M., & Violant, V. (2013). The biological family from the perspective of kinship fostered adolescentes. *Psicothema*, *25*(3), 349-354. doi: 10.7334/psicothema2013.22

Furstenberg, F. and Harris, K.M. (1993). When Fathers Matter/Why Fathers Matter: The Impact of Paternal Involvement on the Offspring of Adolescent Mothers. In A. Lawson, & D. Rhode, (Eds.) *The Politics of Pregnancy: Adolescent Sexuality and Public Policy* (pp. 189-215). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ghera, M. M., Marshall, P. J., Fox, N. A., Zeanah, C. H., Nelson, C. A., Smyke, A. T., & Guthrie, D. (2009). The effects of foster care intervention on socially deprived institutionalized children's attention and positive affect: results from the BEIP study. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 50*(3), 246–253. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.01954.x

* Geiger, J. M., Hayes, M. J., & Lietz, C. A. (2013). Should I stay or should I go? A mixed methods study examining the factors influencing foster parents' decisions to continue or discontinue providing foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35*(9), 1356–1365. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.05.003

* Gilligan, R. (1996). The foster carer experience in Ireland: findings from a postal survey. *Child: care, health and development*, *22*(2), 85-98.

* Gleeson, J. P., Wesley, J. M., Ellis, R., Seryak, C., Talley, G. W., & Robinson, J. (2009). Becoming involved in raising a relative's child: reasons, caregiver motivations and pathways to informal kinship care. *Child & Family Social Work, 14*(3), 300–310. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2206.2008.00596.x

* Goodman, M. L., Zhang, Y., Gitari, S., Azubuike, M., Keiser, P. H., & Seidel, S. E. (2016). Predictors of Child-Fostering Attitudes in a Large Cross-Section of Kenyan Women: Family, Health and Psycho-Social Factors and the Residual Presence of Childhood Adversities. *British Journal of Social Work, 47*, 1850-1869. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcw118

* Grigore, M. C. (2016). Psychotraumatology aspects highlighted in personal and transgenerational history of professional foster parents, in relation to career choice. *Journal of Experiential Psychotherapy*, *19*(4), 17-34.

Hackett, J. D., Omoto, A. M., & Matthews, M. (2015). Human rights: The role of psychological sense of global community. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 21*(1), 47–67. doi:10.1037/pac0000086

Haight W. L., Black, J. E., Mangelsdorf, S., Giorgio, G., Tata, L., … Szewczyk, M. (2002). Making visits better: the perspectives of parents, foster parents, and child welfare workers. *Child Welfare*, *81*(2), 173-202.

Hall, P. D. (2007). Symbolism, Tradition, Ritual, and the Deep Structure of Communities. In R. Cnaan, & C. Milofsky, (Eds.). *Handbook of Community Movements and Local Organizations* (pp. 34-59). New York: Springer.

Hambrick, E. P., Oppenheim-Weller, S., N'zi, A. M., & Taussig, H. N. (2016). Mental health interventions for children in foster care: A systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review, 70, 65–77.* doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.09.002

Heim, C., Shugart, M., Craighead, W. E., & Nemeroff, C. B. (2010). Neurobiological and psychiatric consequences of child abuse and neglect. *Developmental Psychobiology, 52(7), 671–690.* doi:10.1002/dev.20494

* Hendrix, S. K., & Ford, J. (2003). Hardiness of foster families and the intent to continue to foster. *Journal of Family Social Work, 7*(2), 25–34. doi:10.1300/j039v07n02_03

Herczog, M., van Pagee, R., & Pasztor, E. M. (2001). The multinational transfer of competency-based foster parent assessment, selection, and training: A nine-country case study. *Child welfare*, *80*(5), 631.

Hossain, F. and Ali, M. (2014). Relation between Individual and Society. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *2*, 130-137. doi: 10.4236/jss.2014.28019

* Howell-Moroney, M. (2014). The empirical ties between religious motivation and altruism in foster parents: Implications for faith-based initiatives in foster care and adoption. *Religions, 5*(3), 720–737. doi:10.3390/rel5030720

Hudson, P., & Levasseur, K. (2002). Supporting foster parents: caring voices. *Child Welfare*, *81*(6), 853-877.

Humphreys, K. L., Miron, D., McLaughlin, K. A., Sheridan, M. A., Nelson, C. A., Fox, N. A., & Zeanah, C. H. (2018). Foster care promotes adaptive functioning in early adolescence among children who experienced severe, early deprivation. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 59*(7), 811–821. doi:10.1111/jcpp.12865

Hyde, M., & Chavis, D. (2008). Sense of community and community building. In R.A. Cnaan & C. Milofsky (eds.) *Handbook of community movements and local organizations* (pp. 179-192). New York: Springer.

* Inch, L. J. (1999). Aspects of foster fathering. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *16*(5), 393-412.

Instituto de Segurança Social. (2018). *CASA 2017 - Relatório de Caracterização Anual da Situação de Acolhimento das Crianças e Jovens*. Lisboa: Instituto de Segurança Social.

Instituto de Segurança Social. (2017). *CASA 2016 - Relatório de Caracterização Anual da Situação de Acolhimento das Crianças e Jovens*. Lisboa: Instituto de Segurança Social.

Judge, T. A., Ilies, R., & Scott, B. A. (2006). Work-family conflict and emotions: Effects at work and at home. *Personnel Psychology, 59*(4), 779-814. doi:10.1111/J.1744-6570.2006.00054.X

Kang, H., Chung, I.-J., Chun, J., Nho, C. R., & Woo, S. (2014). The outcomes of foster care in South Korea ten years after its foundation: A comparison with institutional care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 39, 135-143.* doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.01.024

Keltner, D., Kogan, A., Piff, P. K., & Saturn, S. R. (2014). The sociocultural appraisals, values, and emotions (save) framework of prosociality: Core processes from gene to meme. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65*(1), 425–460. doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115054

Keyes, C. L. M. (1998). Social well-being. *Social psychology quarterly, 61*(2), 121-140.

* Keys, A. M., Daniel, T., Jennings, M. A., Havlin, T., Russell, R., & Korang-Okrah, R. (2017). Who are christian foster parents? Exploring the motivations and personality characteristics associated with fostering intentions. *Social Work and Christianity*, *44*(4), 67-82.

* Kirton, D. (2001). Love and money: payment, motivation and the fostering task. *Child & Family Social Work*, *6*(3), 199-208.

* Kozlova, T. Z. (2013). Motives for Taking Orphan Children into a Foster (Guardian) Family. *Russian Education & Society, 55*(9), 68–83. doi:10.2753/res1060-9393550904

* Kuyini, A. B., Alhassan, A. R., Tollerud, I., Weld, H., & Haruna, I. (2009). Traditional kinship foster care in northern Ghana: the experiences and views of children, carers and adults in Tamale. *Child & Family Social Work, 14*(4), 440–449. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2206.2009.00616.x

Leber, C., & LeCroy, C. W. (2012). Public perception of the foster care system: A national study. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(9), 1633-1638. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.04.027

Lee, R., & Whiting, J. (2007). Foster Children's Expressions of Ambiguous Loss. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 35*(5), 417-428. doi: 10.1080/01926180601057499

Liberati, A., Altman, D. G., Tetzlaff, J., Mulrow, C., Gøtzsche, P. C., Ioannidis, J. P. A., … Moher, D. (2009). The PRISMA Statement for Reporting Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of Studies That Evaluate Health Care Interventions: Explanation and Elaboration. *PLoS Medicine, 6*(7), e1000100. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000100

* López López, M., & Fernández del Valle, J. C. (2016). Foster carer experience in Spain: Analysis of the vulnerabilities of a permanent model. *Psicothema, 28 (2)*, 122-129. doi: 10.7334/psicothema2015.168.

Maaskant, A. M., van Rooij, F. B., Bos, H. M., & Hermanns, J. (2015). The wellbeing of foster children and their relationship with foster parents and biological parents: a child's perspective. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 30*(4), 379-395. doi: 10.1080/02650533.2015.1092952

*MacGregor, T. E., Rodger, S., Cummings, A. L., & Leschied, A. W. (2006). The Needs of

Foster Parents. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, *5*(3), 351–368.

doi:10.1177/1473325006067365

* De Maeyer, S., Vanderfaeillie, J., Vanschoonlandt, F., Robberechts, M., & Van Holen, F.

(2014). Motivation for foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 36*, 143–149.

doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.11.003

Marcellus, L. (2010). Supporting resilience in foster families: A model for program design

that supports recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of foster families who care for

infants with prenatal substance exposure. *Child Welfare*, *89*(1), 7-29.

Marinkovic, J. A., & Backovic, D. (2007). Relationship between type of placement and

competencies and problem behavior of adolescents in long-term foster care. *Children

and Youth Services Review, 29*(2), 216–225. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2006.08.004

* Martin, E. D., Altemeier, W. A., Hickson, G. B., Davis, A., & Glascoe, F. P. (1992).

Improving resources for foster care. *Clinical Pediatrics*, *31*(7), 400-404.

McKeough, A., Bear, K., Jones, C., Thompson, D., Kelly, P., & Campbell, L. (2017). Foster

carer stress and satisfaction: An investigation of organisational, psychological and

placement factors. *Children and Youth Services Review, 76*, 10-19. doi:

10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.02.022

*Metcalfe, W. A., & Sanders, G. F. (2012). Foster parent experience: the later years. *Child

Welfare, 91*(4), 127-145.

* Migliorini, L., Rania, N., Cardinali, P., Guiducci, V., & Cavanna, D. (2018). Motivations

and Family Functioning of Foster Families in Italy. *Journal of Social Service

Research, 44*(4), 509–517. doi:10.1080/01488376.2018.1477695

* Mihalo, J. R., Strickler, A., Triplett, D. R., & Trunzo, A. C. (2016). Treatment foster parent

satisfaction: Survey validation and predictors of satisfaction, retention, and intent to

refer. *Children and Youth Services Review, 62,* 105–110.

doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.02.001

Narey, M., & Owers, M. (2018). *Foster Care in England*. Retrieved from

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foster-care-in-england

Negrão, M., Moreira, M., Veríssimo, L., & Veiga, E. (2019). Conhecimento e perceções

públicas acerca do acolhimento familiar: Contributos para o desenvolvimento da

medida. *Análise Psicológica*, *1*(XXXVII), 81-92. doi: 10.14417/ap.1564

Newton, R. R., Litrownik, A. J., & Landsverk, J. A. (2000). Children and youth in foster care:

disentangling the relationship between problem behaviors and number of placements.

Child Abuse & Neglect, 24(10), 1363–1374. doi:10.1016/s0145-2134(00)00189-7

* Nowak-Fabrykowski, K., & Piver, P. S. (2008). Caring for Foster Children in the South.

Why They Did Not Have Even One Person to Care for Them. *Education*, *129*(2), 192-

201.

OECD (2011). *Doing better for families*. Retrieved from

https://www.oecd.org/social/soc/doingbetterforfamilies.htm

Orme, J. G., Cox, M. E., Rhodes, K.W., Coakley, T., Cuddeback, G. S., & Buehler, C. (2006).

Casey Home Assessment Protocol (CHAP): Technical manual (2nd ed.). Knoxville:

University of Tennessee, Children's Mental Health Services Research Center.

* Ramsay, D. (1996). Recruiting and retaining foster carers: implications of a professional

service in Fife. *Adoption & Fostering*, *20*(1), 42-46.

* Randle, M., Ernst, D., Leisch, F., & Dolnicar, S. (2016). What makes foster carers think

about quitting? Recommendations for improved retention of foster carers. *Child &*

Family Social Work, 22(3), 1175–1186. doi:10.1111/cfs.12334

* Randle, M., Miller, L., Dolnicar, S., & Ciarrochi, J. (2012). Heterogeneity Among Potential Foster Carers: An Investigation of Reasons for Not Foster Caring. *Australian Social Work, 65*(3), 382–397. doi:10.1080/0312407x.2011.574229

* Rhodes, K., Cox, E. M., Orme, J. G., & Coakley, T. (2006). Foster parent's reasons for fostering and foster family utilization. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, *33*(4), 105-126.

* Rhodes, K. W., Orme, J. G., & Buehler, C. (2001). A comparison of family foster parents who quit, consider quitting, and plan to continue fostering. *Social Service Review*, *75*(1), 84-114.

* Rhodes, K. W., Orme, J. G., Cox, M. E., & Buehler, C. (2003). Foster family resources, psychosocial functioning, and retention. *Social work research*, *27*(3), 135-150.

Riggs, D. W., King, D., Delfabbro, P. H., & Augoustinos, M. (2009). Children Out of Place. *Journal of Children and Media, 3*(3), 234 -248. doi:10.1080/17482790902999918

* Rindfleisch, N., Bean, G., & Denby, R. (1998). Why foster parents continue and cease to foster. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, *25*(1), 5-24.

*Rodger, S., Cummings, A., & Leschied, A. W. (2006). Who is caring for our most vulnerable children? The motivation to foster in child welfare. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 30*(10), 1129–42. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.04.005

Rome, S. H., & Raskin, M. (2017). Transitioning Out of Foster Care. *Youth & Society,* 1-19. doi:10.1177/0044118x17694968

Ru, X., Qin, H., & Wang, S. (2019). Young people's behaviour intentions towards reducing PM2.5 in China: Extending the theory of planned behaviour. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling, 141*, 99–108. doi:10.1016/j.resconrec.2018.10.019

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American psychologist, 55*(1), 68.

Sawyer, M. G., Carbone, J. A., Searle, A. K., & Robinson, P. (2007). The mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in home-based foster care. *Medical journal of Australia, 186*(4), 181-184.

Sebba, J. (2012). *Why do people become foster parents?: An International Literature Review on the Motivation to Foster.* Retrieved from http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/

Sinclair, I., Wilson, K., & Gibbs, I. (2005). *Foster Placements: Why They Succeed and Why They Fail*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Smyke, A. T., Zeanah, C. H., Fox, N. A., Nelson, C. A., & Guthrie, D. (2010). Placement in Foster Care Enhances Quality of Attachment Among Young Institutionalized Children. *Child Development, 81*(1), 212–223. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01390.x

Solomon, D. T., Niec, L. N., & Schoonover, C. E. (2016). The Impact of Foster Parent Training on Parenting Skills and Child Disruptive Behavior. *Child Maltreatment, 22(1), 3-13.* doi:10.1177/1077559516679514

* Spielfogel, J. E., Leathers, S. J., Christian, E., & McMeel, L. S. (2011). Parent management training, relationships with agency staff, and child mental health: Urban foster parents' perspectives. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(11), 2366–2374. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.08.008

* Swartz, T. T. (2004). Mothering for the state: Foster parenting and the challenges of government-contracted carework. *Gender & Society*, *18*(5), 567-587.

Teghe, D., & Rendell, K. (2005). Social well-being: A literature review. *School of Social Work and Welfare Studies,* CQU: Rockhampton.

* Triseliotis, J., Borland, M., & Hill, M. (1998). Foster carers who cease to foster. *Adoption & Fostering*, *22*(2), 54-61.

Turney, K., & Wildeman, C. (2016). Mental and Physical Health of Children in Foster Care. *Pediatrics, 138*(5), 1-11. doi:10.1542/peds.2016-1118

* Tyebjee, T. (2003). Attitude, interest, and motivation for adoption and foster care. *Child welfare*, *82*(6), 685-706.

Vanderfaeillie, J., Van Holen, F., Vanschoonlandt, F., Robberechts, M., & Stroobants, T. (2013). Children placed in long-term family foster care: A longitudinal study into the development of problem behavior and associated factors. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35(4), 587–593.* doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.12.012

Vanschoonlandt, F., Vanderfaeillie, J., Van Holen, F., De Maeyer, S., & Robberechts, M. (2013). Externalizing problems in young foster children: Prevalence rates, predictors and service use. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35(4), 716–724.* doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.01.015

Vasileva, M., & Petermann, F. (2016). Attachment, Development, and Mental Health in Abused and Neglected Preschool Children in Foster Care. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 1-16. doi:10.1177/1524838016669503

Walsh, F. (2016). Families in later life: Challenges, opportunities, and resilience. In M. McGoldrick, B. Carter. & N. Garcia Preto (Eds.) *The Evolving family life cycle: Individual, family, & social perspective*s (pp. 339- 359). New York: Pearson.

* Whenan, R., Oxlad, M., & Lushington, K. (2009). Factors associated with foster carer well-being, satisfaction and intention to continue providing out-of-home care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*(7), 752–760. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2009.02.001

* Wilson, K., Fyson, R., & Newstone, S. (2007). Foster fathers: their experiences and contributions to fostering. *Child & Family Social Work, 12*(1), 22–31. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2206.2006.00443.x

Wolf, K., Reimer, D., & Schäfer, D. (2013): Reunification, process of transformation, multiperspectivity, retro- & prospective. In: C. Canali & T. Vecchiato (Eds.) *Foster Care in Europe: what do we know about outcomes and evidence?* (pp. 27-30). Padova: Fondazione Emanuela Zancan

Zimmerman, M. A., Salem, D. A., & Maton, K. I. (1995). Family Structure and Psychosocial Correlates among Urban African-American Adolescent Males. *Child Development, 66*(6), 1598-1613. doi:10.2307/1131899