

Temporal aspects in DME

An application in Swiss child protection

Andreas Jud, Ph.D.

Washington D.C., August 30, 2011

Realised with the aid of the Swiss National Science Foundation,
Research Program 52: Childhood, Youth, and Intergenerational
Relationships in a Changing Society

Temporal aspects of the DME



Negative developments

Certain children keep staying in the CP system ...

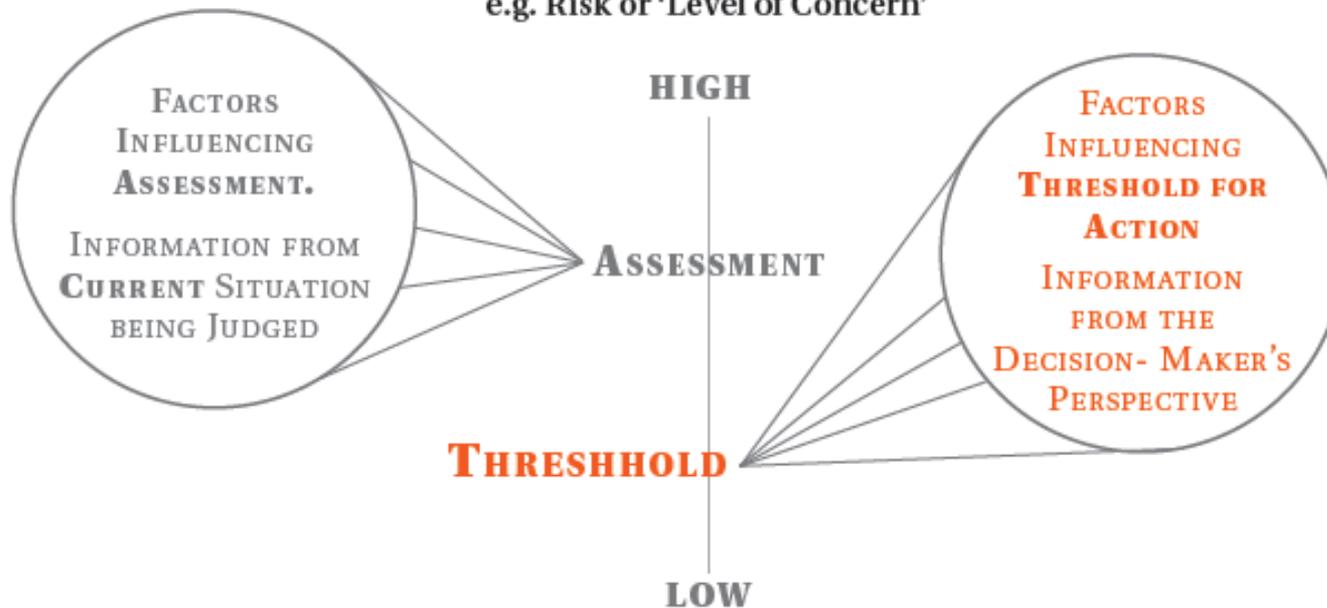
- Repeated referrals to CP
- Repeated removals and placements
- Variety of ongoing services

Changes in DME of CP workers repeatedly confronted with the same child

Prozessverläufe bei abnehmender Kontrollierbarkeit

A General Model for Assessing the Situation and **Deciding** what to do about it – *Dalglish*

Assessment Dimension:
e.g. Risk or 'Level of Concern'



If the **Assessment** is *ABOVE* the **Threshold**, the ACTION is taken.

If the **Assessment** is *BELOW* the **Threshold**, then NO ACTION is taken.

CP in Switzerland

- No mandatory reporting
- Differential response
- Institutional division between CP authorities and CP services
- Legal assistants to the child
- Fixed periodical reviews

Method: Analysis of dossiers

Sampling

Language / Type of authority	German	French
Professional / Judicial	„Stadt“	„Ville“
Lay people / Administrative	„Land“	„Campagne“

164 cases in four different Settings, stratified by legal base

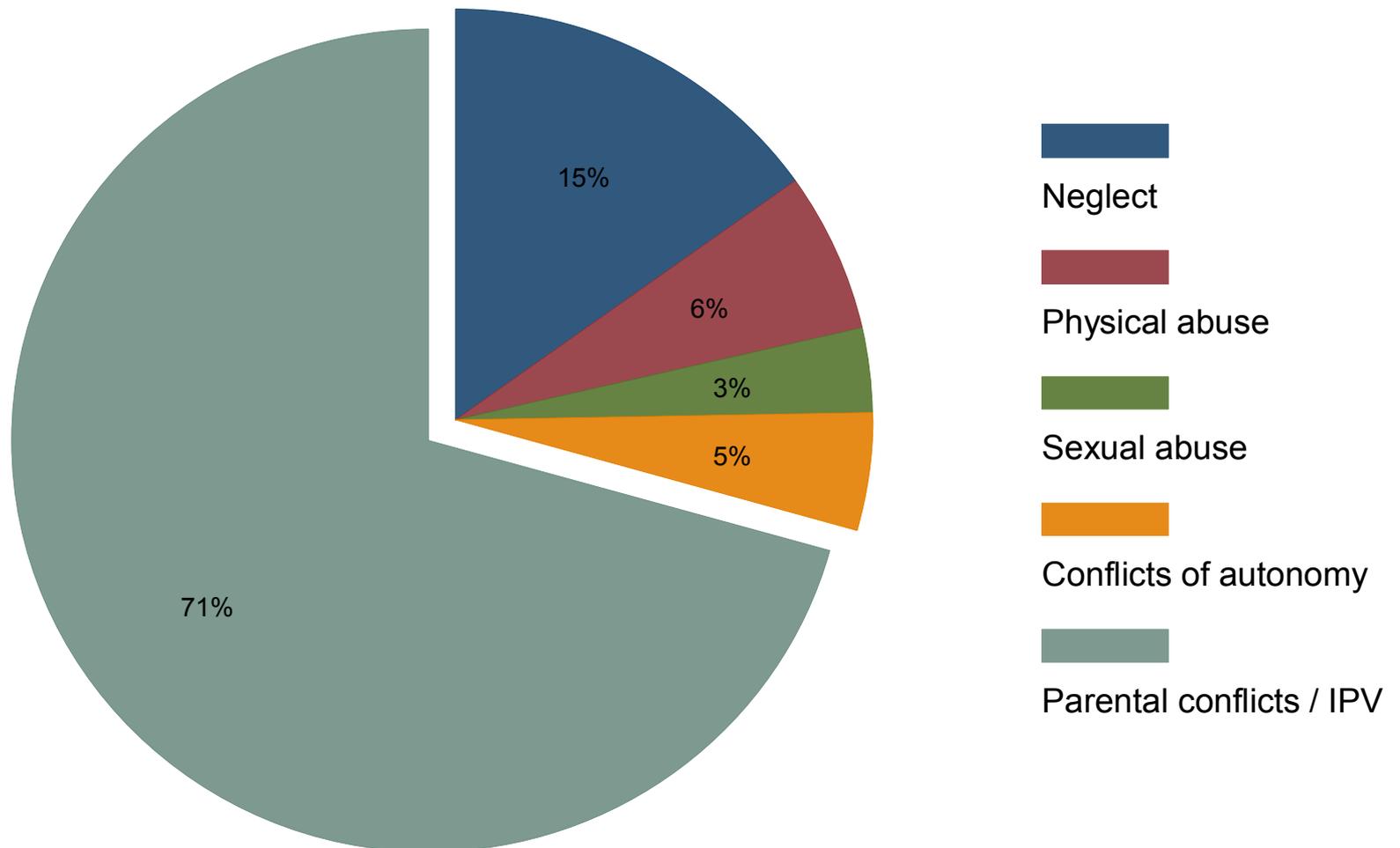
Analysis of Dossiers

Sample: Demographics

- 89 boys and 75 girls
- Mean age of 7 years for enactment of first child protection order
- 46% of children with one or both parents foreign nationals
- At the time of referral 26% of children lived with both parents, 62% with a single parent and 12% (already) out-of-home

Analysis of dossiers

Results: Situations of endangerment



weighted data

Analysis of dossiers

Numbers of professionals involved

A **total of 3,089 professionals** are mentioned in the dossiers on the 164 cases ($M_d = 15$ professionals).

The number of professionals is **correlated with:**

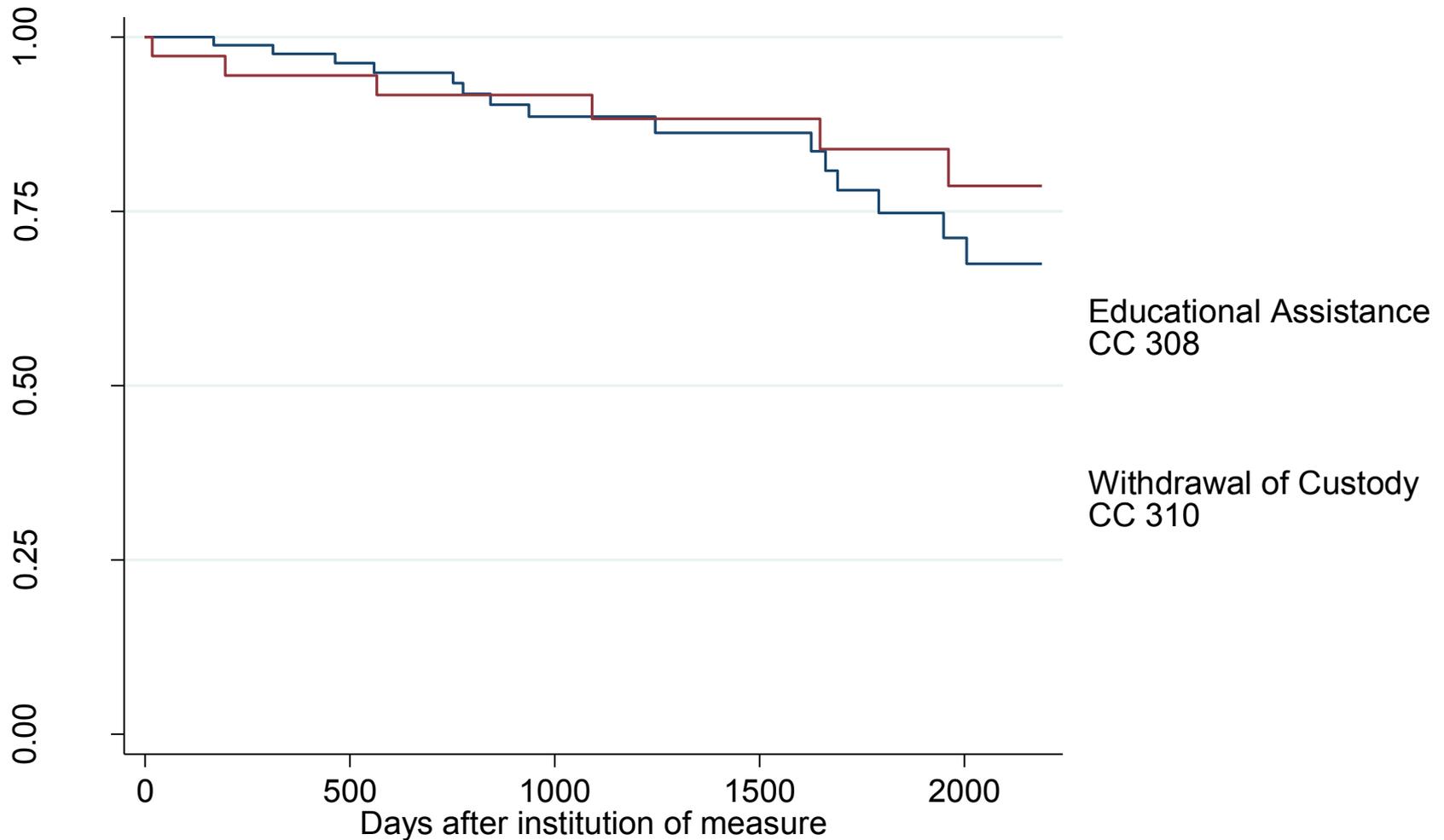
- intrusiveness of child protection order
- number of caregiver risks mentioned
- **number of victim's behavioural difficulties**
- the setting

Measure: Intensity of services

- Number of contacts between professionals
- **Number of contacts' pages**

Analysis of dossiers

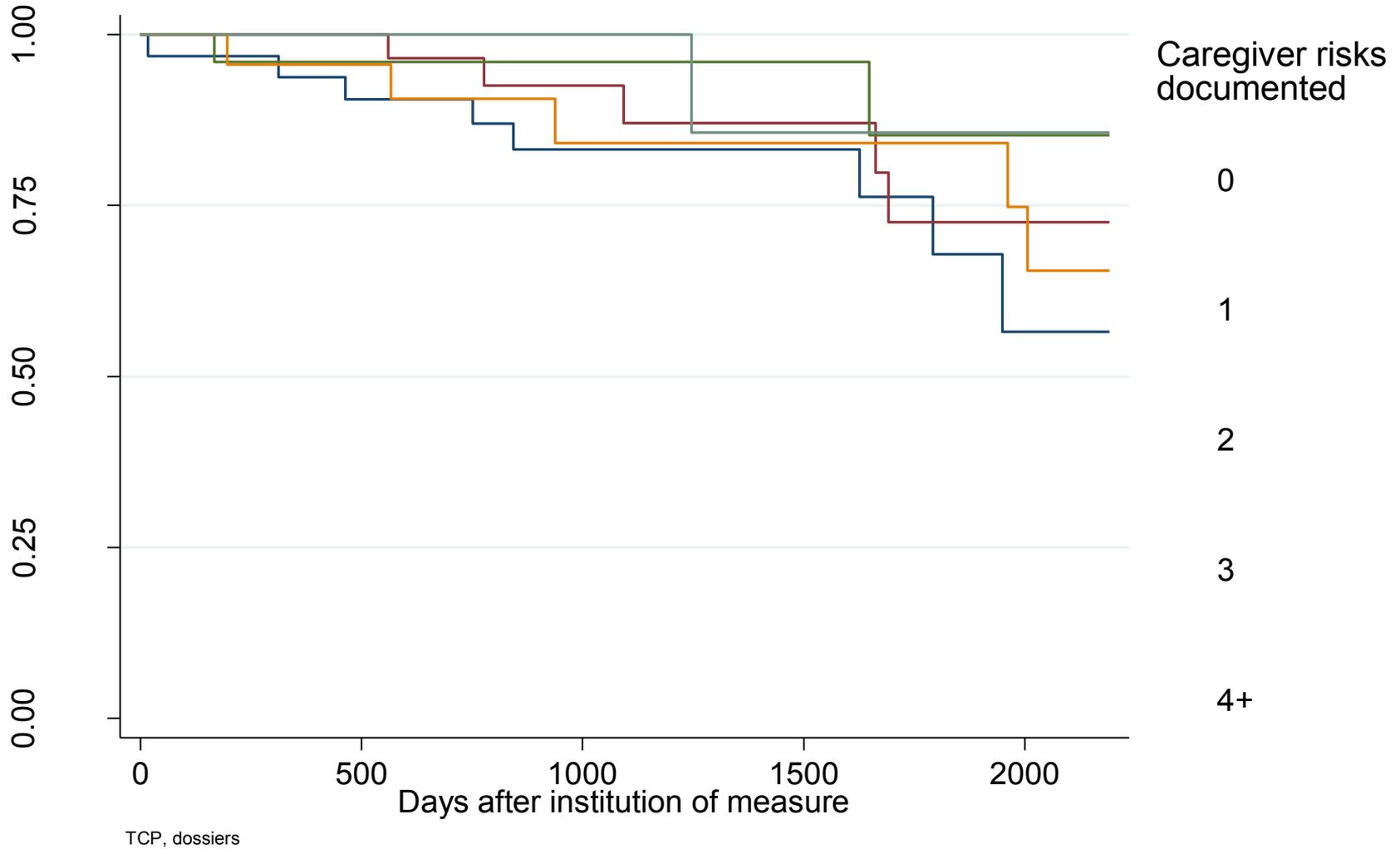
Results: Growing up protected?



TCP, dossiers

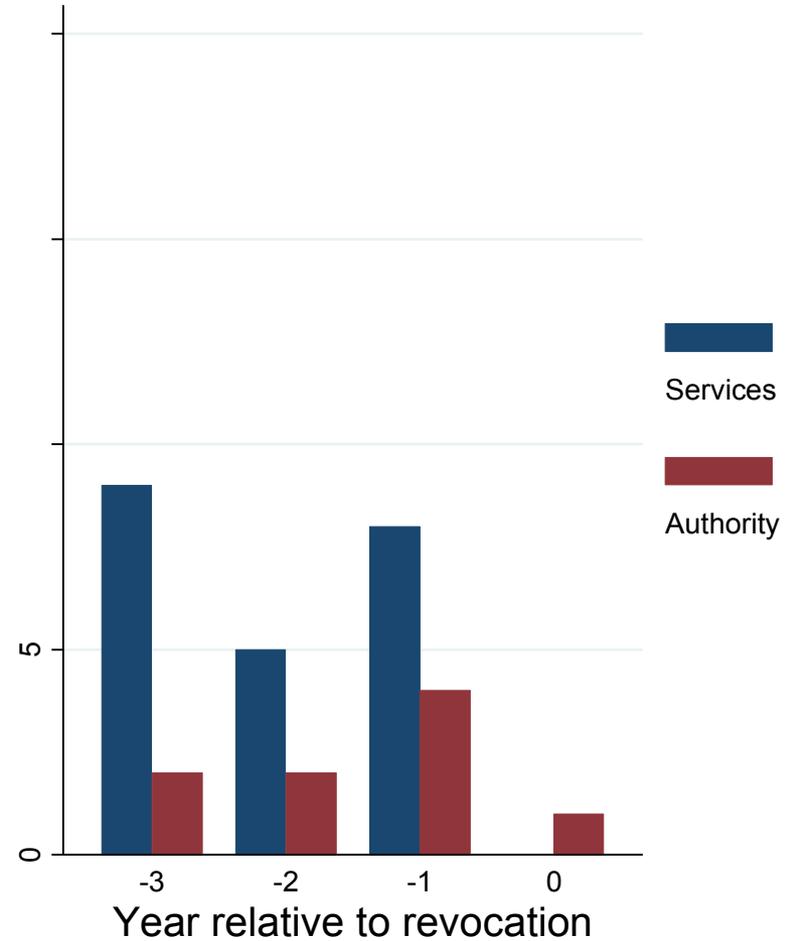
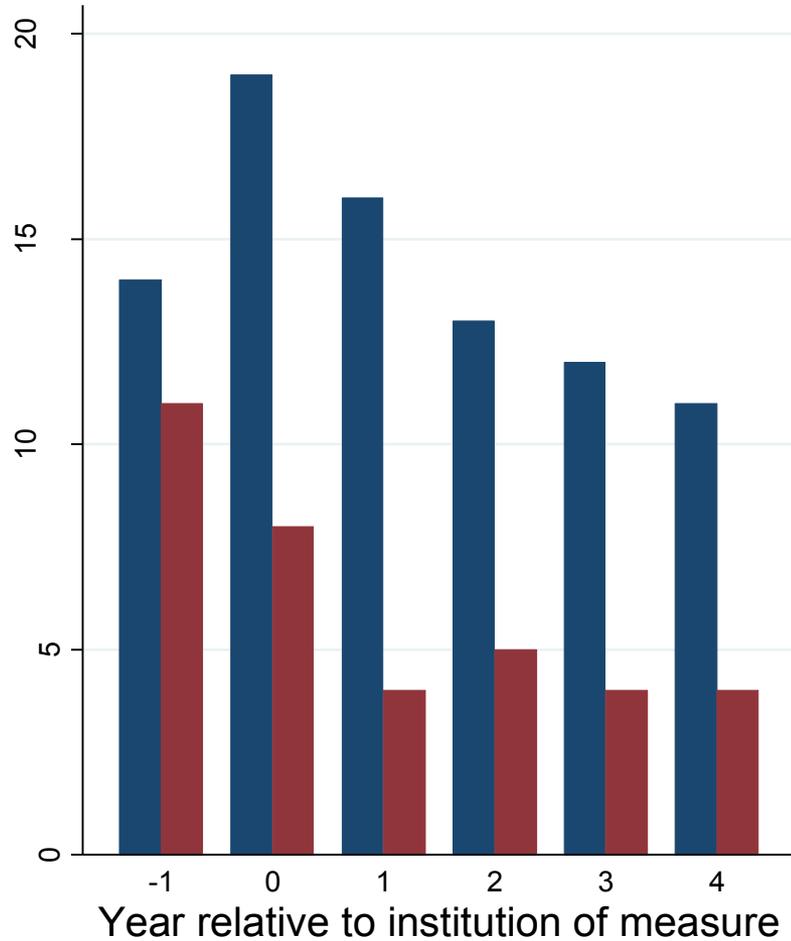
Analysis of dossiers

Results: Growing up protected?



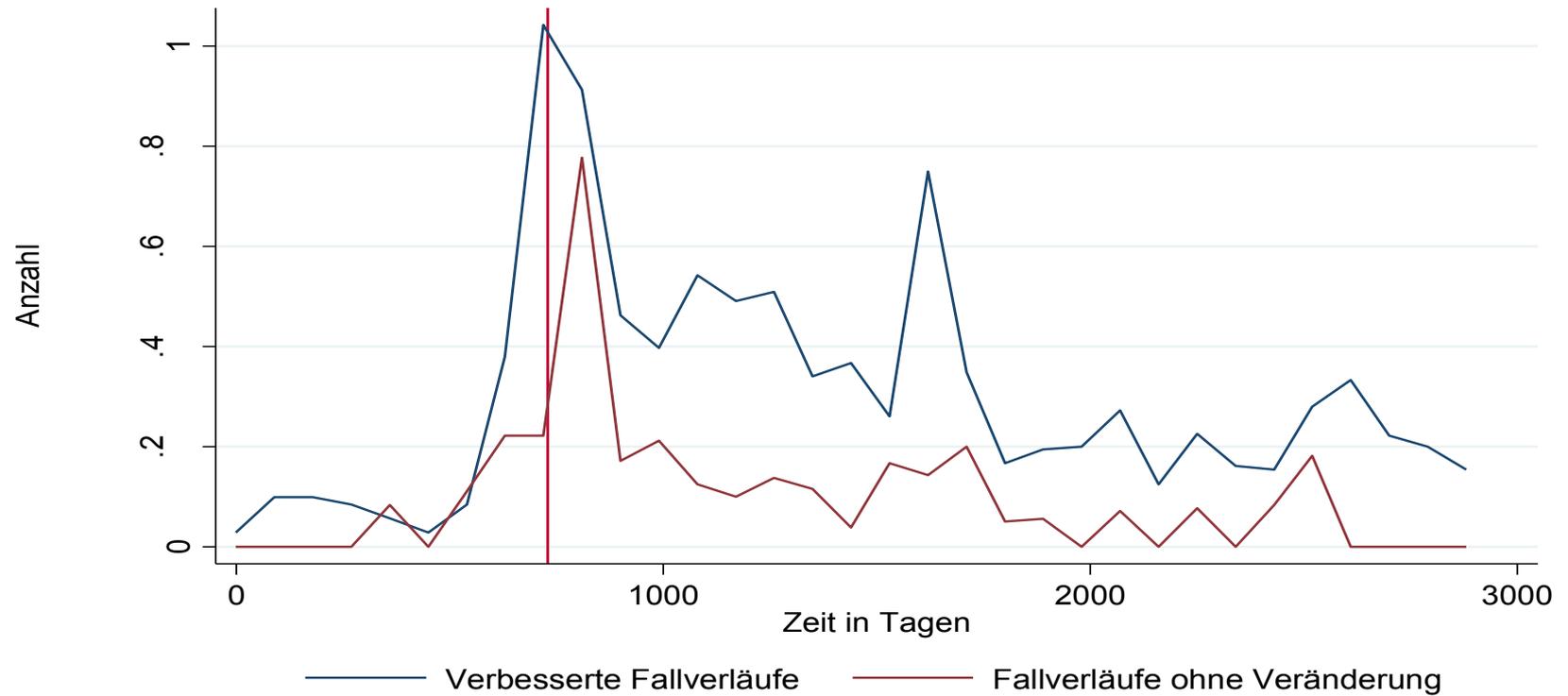
Analysis of dossiers

Results: The work of removing a measure



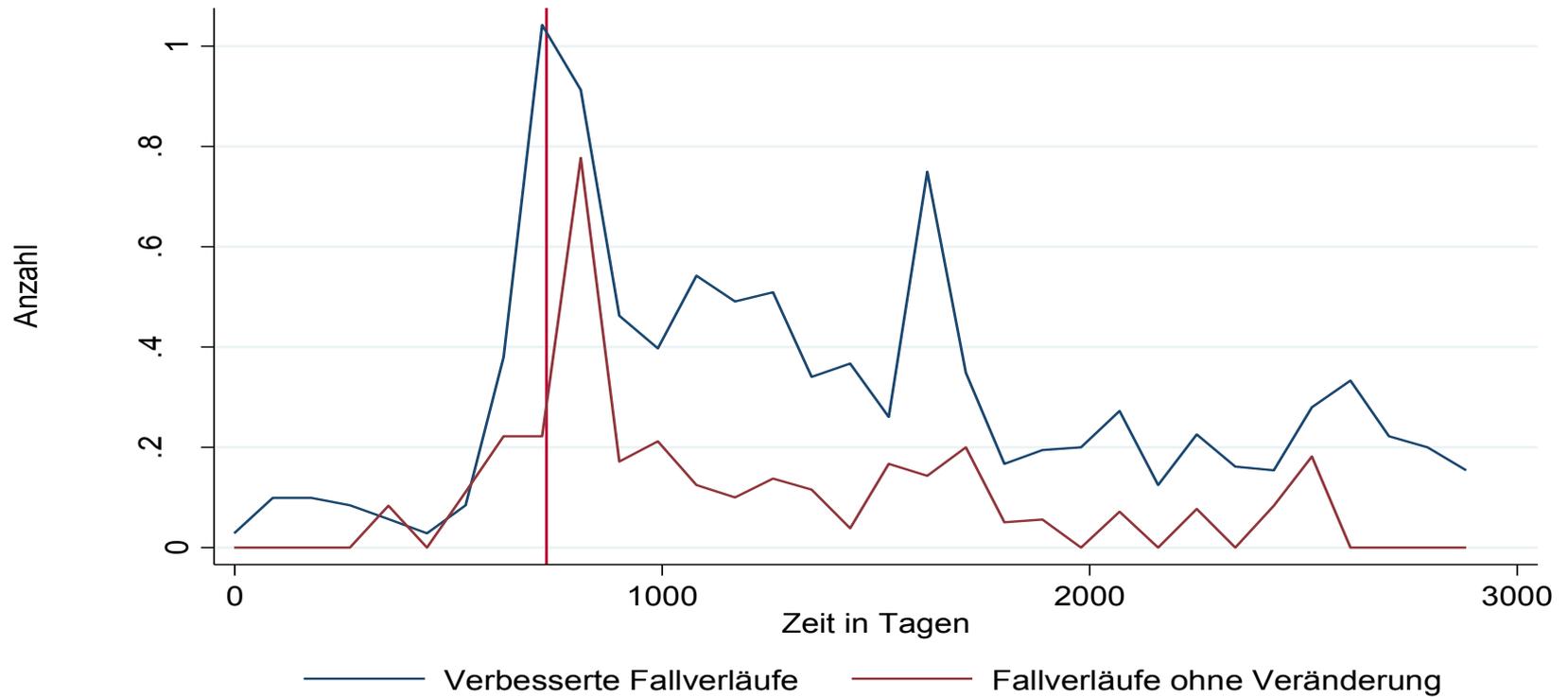
TCP, weighted data, CC 308 and 310 only

Resultate zu Hypothese 4



H4 - Split 90; alle Professionellen

Resultate zu Hypothese 4



H4 - Split 90; alle Professionellen

Conclusions

1. Professionals on different positions evaluate the same risk differently ...
2. ... according to the risk *they* run.
3. Talking about risk evaluation in child protection implies talking about the evaluator.
4. Decisions occur everywhere – they are as important at the end as they are at the beginning!

Practice implications

1. Adequate experience for authority members should be guaranteed to reduce decision bias.
2. The coordination of the various professionals involved in child protection could be improved via case management.
3. The opportunities of fixed periodical reviews should be expanded to control duration of the child within the child protection system.
4. A unification of assessment and mandated services improves continuation of services and – not least – helps to preserve scarce resources.

The risk of removing a measure

“The only thing you can be held responsible for [at the end], is not having continued”

Authority, legal assistant of the board