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2013

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Working Paper No 39
2013

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Abstract

58 million children in China are estimated to be 'left behind' in rural areas. Their parents are migrant workers who come home once or twice a year or less, and most of the children are in the care of grandparents or other family members and some live alone. On closer inspection, however, the term 'left behind children' turns out to be a global label for children affected by parental migration. Worldwide such children are classified as 'left behind' and according to the classification have a similarly defined set of social and emotional problems.

This working paper discusses the main ascertained problems of such-labelled children for China and puts them into relation to a discourse about 'left behind children' worldwide. It critically investigates the label 'left behind' based on Hacking's theory about classification as an interactive kind (1999), on Stephens' theory about children that are labelled as 'at and as risk' in capitalism (1995), and on Bauman's work about processes of wasting lives (2004). The paper critically analyses the label, which appears to have created one global type of 'the typical left behind child' who displays same social and emotional reactions regardless to his or her cultural context. According to previous findings about the cultural diversity of growing up and the importance of cultural context to emotional and social development of children, such a sameness of emotional and social reaction seems odd. This paper offers two possible answers for those similarities, based on a discussion on reliance on global expert language (especially psychology and medicine) and social relations in capitalism. These assumed reasons for global similarity of 'the left behind child' are exemplified by a discussion about two major reasons for parental migration: education and need for remittances. The paper ends with a brief presentation about how children themselves deal with the label in online sources and offers questions for further investigations.

As 'left behind children' are usually dealt with nationally, the global character and indeed labelling of millions of children has so far not been tackled critically. The aim of this paper is thus to raise awareness of the global character and offers a critical angle of talking about 'left behind children' in China and elsewhere.

Contents

Children left behind in capitalism

Marginalizing and labelling large groups of people as redundant is a crucial aspect of late capitalism (Bauman, 2005). Redundant people "are talked about as mainly a financial problem. They need to be provided for – that is fed, shod and sheltered. They would not survive on their own" (ibid, 12). Furthermore, marginalized people do not only need help but also surveillance because "the immediate proximity of large and growing agglomerations of 'wasted humans' […] calls for stricter segregationist policies and extraordinary security measures, lest the 'health of society', the 'normal functioning' of the social system, be endangered" (ibid, 85). Children are not excluded from being marginalized, and some children are approached as 'redundant' not only within the category 'children' but also within society as a whole. They are labelled 'as risk' and 'at risk' (Stephens, 1995). Such children, similar to adults who are declared redundant, have been identified "as people out of place and as excess populations to be eliminated, while others must be controlled, reshaped, harnessed to changing social ends" (ibid, p.13).

Right now, a large group of children worldwide finds itself marginalized and classified as 'left behind children'. 'Left behind children' is the label for those girls and boys up to the age of fifteen whose parents migrate for work and stay away for more than six months at a time. Taking the larger, international picture into account, these children are discussed and treated within the paradigm of social exclusion in capitalism and are indeed the manifestation of both 'at and as risk'. That label is applied to children worldwide and the number of children thus classified is increasing. For example, the number in China alone is currently estimated to be 58 million children. Other examples are Romania with approximately 350,000 such-labelled children, and Moldova where an estimated one third of rural children are 'left behind' (School and community (SOROS), 2011; Empowered to cope (SC), 2008). The number of 'left behind children' in Ecuador "increased from 17 to 150 thousand between 1990 and 2000" (Cortez, 2007, p.14), and 'left behind children' are also accounted for in other Eastern European and Latin American countries, Mexico, the Philippines and Africa among others.

In countries with large amounts of temporary migrants, 'left behind children' are found and often dealt with by international, national and regional NGOs, and philanthropic individuals. Interestingly, regardless of the different countries, reports from humanitarian organizations, accounts from individuals, and newspaper and journal articles point out similar if not the same problems that 'left behind children' experience. Accordingly, 'left behind' children in China and in Poland, for example, are ascribed with

similar or even the same experiences. That means the classification of those children in China is national in appearance and is dealt with on a national and regional level, like the dealings with 'left behind children' in Eastern European countries, while simultaneously the classification is global as well, which, however, goes undetected or unmentioned.

That raises several questions from social science's point of view: Can children experience, behave and feel so similarly as is discussed in the literature when they live in different cultural contexts? Thus, are the experiences actually alike or are the experiences 'constructed' on a global level and then implemented locally and therefore become similar? If the experiences of 'left behind children' as a category are, nonetheless, indeed similar, how could that possibly be the case considering the importance of cultural contexts in raising a child? This article traces these questions by pointing out how 'left behind children' are moulded into an international category and how such children are accordingly approached as a marginalized group. Based on the theories of marginalization in capitalism (Bauman, 2004; Stephens, 1995), this article furthermore examines the classification 'left behind children' against the background of theories that analyse capitalism from a social-economic and historical stance (Postone, 1993). This relation between the exclusion of children and capitalism is illustrated by focusing on those issues that are intrinsically linked with 'left behind children', namely 'remittances-for-development' and 'education' – both often used in combination as an explanation by aid and financial organizations to promote migration, and by parents – and children – for leaving children behind for paid labour.

'Left behind children' as a classification, I propose, is congruent with what Hacking calls an 'interactive kind', which is a classification that interacts "with people and their behavior" (Hacking, 1999, p.130). Hacking states that "classifications evaluate who is troubling or in trouble. Hence they present value-laden kinds, things to do or not to do. Kinds of people to be or not to be. […] Classifications can change our evaluation of our personal worth, of the moral kind of person that we are. Sometimes this means that people passively accept what experts say about them, and see themselves in that light" (ibid, p.131). The aim of this article is to provide a rough overview of the classification of 'a global left behind child', to show the striking resemblances between the global and national classification and question the legitimacy or possibility to do so.

Concentrating mainly on China, which houses the largest number of 'left behind children' and where government rhetoric openly applies the classification, this paper also resorts to secondary information about 'left

behind children' in other countries in order to point out the global similarities of the label. I will not so much compare the findings of different cultures as set them in relation with each other, focusing on parallels. Furthermore, this article mainly deals with a theoretical point of view by asking what happens with social relations in capitalism that treat 'left behind children' in particular as a problem of representation and discourse.

I purposely leave out discussing the findings of ethnographic fieldwork about fosterage and family adaption to global social change. Such research concerned with the careful study of small communities finds a plethora of reasons for fostering children and dealing with and arguing for and against it (see e.g. Notermans, 2008; Leinaweaver, 2007; Walmsley, 2008; Montgomery, 2009). However, a global process of the equalization of child emotions and the behaviour of children labelled 'problem children' cannot be overlooked and needs to be investigated. Thus, despite the reasonable and necessary efforts of anthropologists to point out locally unique practices in lieu of, despite of, or triggered by globalization and the spread of capitalism (Fox and Gingrich, 2002, p.5), in this paper I wish to concentrate on global labelling, as this has great effects on how children are talked about and dealt with worldwide. Using the category 'left behind children' as an example of how 'children at and as risk' are treated in an international context, this article wishes to contribute to the gradually growing literature concerning the limitations of the dominant economic practice when identifying marginalized groups, especially children, as 'unintended consequences of economic success'.

Other ways of analysing 'left behind children' are possible and necessary. This article, then, intends to critically analyse the phenomenon and practice surrounding the problems that are brought upon many children who are labelled 'left behind'. It shows that the contemporary way of discussing these children within an uncritically posed capitalist framework has great detrimental effects on children. Voices of children are only discussed briefly within the context of the labelling process. While it is absolutely necessary to gather more information from children themselves, it is simultaneously indispensable to be able to recognize how the label interacts with their self-perception.

'Left behind children' in China …

In China, the term 'left behind children' is not so much a translation than a rendering of the Chinese word composition *liushou ertong*, which literally means 'children who are left behind and cared for'. The people caring for the left behind children are mostly their paternal grandparents, sometimes aunts

and uncles, neighbours, maternal grandparents and some children are left by themselves or with other family members who are not of adult age (Zhu, 2010).[1] The arrival of the category in the official discourse about rural-to-urban migration and institutional inequalities in 2012 took nearly two decades, as the terms *liushou ertong* and 'left behind children' started to occur from the mid 1990s in China in scattered academic articles (Pissin, 2012). The three most important factors contributing to the labelling and marginalizing of *liushou ertong*, except for naming them, was juxtaposing them in a discourse of the paramount necessity of a biological mother in child rearing, the establishment of their numbers, and the application of an international professional dialogue about 'problem children'.[2]

While it was common until recently for children in Chinese families to be raised by people other than the biological parents (Unger 1993, Gates 1993 focusing on 1980s Taiwan and urban China), the perception about this practice changed dramatically within one generation (Nyland, et al. 2009), and now the physical presence of the biological parents, especially the biological mother, seems paramount in the upbringing of her offspring. The emphasis on the biological mother is not new, as it used to be a largely inaccessible ideal throughout imperial history (e.g. Pissin, 2009; Hsiung, 2005, pp.107ff). However, the actual presence of the biological mother in child rearing as well as the ideal of growing up in a three-generation household became achievable after 1949 (Evans, 2002, p.348; Harrell and Davis, 1993, p.2). Further stress on the importance of the biological mother and the undisputed care provided by grandparents, among others, is now disseminated in parenting journals in urban areas (Naftali, 2010). Such popular knowledge is not unknown in rural areas, working on the perception of women, and children whose mothers have left, as well as other rural dwellers (Murphy, 2002; Jacka, 2012). Normalizing the presence of biological mothers in the life of a child is one of the reasons why children who do not fulfil that ideal are marginalized.

The number of those children who are not within the norms of the contemporary family ideal is huge. However, at the same time, that number is left vague which is yet another tool for marginalization, as calculation is a significant part of the process of creating a classification (Hacking, 1999, pp.143 ff). In order to create a topic of significance, the important techniques are "the compilation, tabulation, and visual representation of data and

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[1] Also, children of whom only one parent migrates for work are included in the category. However, the discourse puts emphasis on children whose both parents are away.
[2] The sole importance of mothers is manifested in many policies concerning children and women. Fathers hardly any feature in those.

statistics" (Bakker, 2011, p.129, discussing remittances), techniques that are found to be of great use in the case of 'left behind children'. Approached in numbers, China counts by far as having the largest population of left behind children: since 2010, estimated numbers have settled at about 58 million girls and boys below the age of 18 and 40 million children up to the age of fifteen. However, the basis of these numbers is not clear and is obviously linked to the estimated number of 211 million adult migrants. This number implies that for each two migrant workers one child is impacted by migration – either the child is migrating with the parents (an estimated 51 million children) or he or she is left behind in the countryside (58 million). The further implication of this calculation then is that families have more than one child or that about half of the temporary migrants are estimated to be female, as 109 million children are directly linked to 211 million rural-to-urban migrant workers.[3] These numbers show that a full picture of such-labelled children has not yet been gained and might, in fact, not even be possible considering back-and-forth and changing forms of migration and a varying number of migrating adults. Thus, similar to other studies concerning migration, counting such huge numbers distracts from the actual problems and causes, and "normalize that which is profoundly abnormal" (Green, 2011, p.374), namely that parents expose themselves and their offspring to social exclusion in order to make a normal living.

In addition to applying the technique of defining a problem with numbers, how are 'left behind children' in China further approached as a group and a category? Not infrequently are they approached as 'the unintended consequences of economic boom' (e.g. Ye, 2011), which implies the assumption that the economic growth of a nation or region in question or a family especially in the form of 'remittances' causes negative effects on children.[4] The most common set of negative effects that have been identified are emotional and academic in nature. Accordingly, many projects of humanitarian organizations focus on implementing change in school facilities and on children's 'emotions' within the scope of their rapidly changing foci.[5] For example, the all-China Women's Federation reports of hundreds of projects that deal with facilitating schools to render them into 'child friendly schools' (see the many project descriptions on women.org). The enhancement

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[3] In 2000 the gender ratio of temporary rural-urban migrants was 112. See Fan, 2010, p.104; also Jacka, 2006, pp.6–7

[4] And which implies further that migration for eonomic growth as such is not negative.

[5] Until recently organizations mainly focused on 'reaching out to' and saving children, whereas now a greater emphasis is put on implementing children's rights in projects dealing with 'left behind children'.

of common schools with "a room where dozens of children learn life skills and attend group activities" (Stories (UNICEF), 2009) can also be rooms provided with telephones where left behind children can call their migrated parents (Pissin, 2012). Emotional problems are also part of a UNICEF China report, which states that "grandparents think it is fine to just give the children enough food and clothes, but ignore their psychological needs", according to an interviewed teacher (Stories (UNICEF), 2009). A problem that receives great attention in many reports about left behind children in China is their lack of academic skills, as their grandparents cannot help them due to their own inferior education. In many of those negative points, 'left behind children' are not alone, as 'left behind women' are portrayed in a similar way (Jacka, 2012, p.4 ff).

One important institution that has been established to answer the problems of emotions, and therefore academic problems, is the so-called 'acting guardian' or rather 'acting mother' (代理妈妈) or 'mental mother' (心理妈妈) who often consists of appointed teachers, mostly female, who 'care' for schoolchildren by, for example, having dinner or playing with them (Pissin, 2012). Such problems of 'emotions' in China, then, are mostly tackled within the professional realm of psychology, which dominates the discourse of 'problem children', as I will discuss further below.

'Left behind children' form, in fact, only one marginalized group in rural China next to 'left behind women' and 'left behind elderly'. Thus, the term *liushou* as 'left behind' is also used as a prefix for women and the elderly.[6] What these 'groups' have in common is that they are generally associated with western China's economically underdeveloped regions,[7] which basically means those parts of rural China that are (as yet) at a considerable distance from production centres and major cities – most of which are along the east coast of China (see e.g. Comparing Chinese provinces, 2011). Moreover, the problems ascribed to 'left behind children' or the other singled out, left behind categories are in fact not unique to these groups. Biao (2007) convincingly argues that there are no great differences between those labelled 'left behind' in rural areas and those who live together with three generations,[8] as he points out that the rural areas as a whole are 'left behind':

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[6] The elderly are also referred to as 'empty nest families' (Settles et al., 2009), and women as 'living widows' (see Lai, 29 January 2012).

[7] Economically underdeveloped within the dominant economic form, as people still manage to live based on their own economic practices.

[8] His argument has been slightly weakened by Jacka 2012, who points out that there are indeed some differences, at least concerning 'left behind women', caused by institutional (in the broader sense) drawbacks that prevent the equal development of women whose husbands are absent.

> …all three left-behind groups, namely wives, the elderly and children, do encounter various problems, but existing comparative studies show that in general their situation is not much worse than that of those living with other family members in the same community. Thus, the problems cannot be solely attributed to being left behind; rather, the fundamental point is that many rural communities as a whole have been left behind economically and socially, and the communities are no longer able to provide any support for those left behind there, (2007, p.180).

Despite such discussions, the term 'left behind' has become reinforced and Wen Jiabao's 'Report on the Work of the Chinese Government in 2011 and its Targets for 2012' mentioned all three 'left behind groups' under the heading of 'speeding up the transformation of economic development':

> [We should] strengthen the care and service of human affairs for the migrant workers and put an effort in resolving things such as providing service when searching for work, social security, childcare facility and school entries, house financing and more of these practical problems. And to work step by step to get the cities' and towns' basic public service to also cover the migrant workers.
> [We should] care for left behind children, left behind wives, and left behind elderly; and let farmers live and work in peace and contentment and let them have a happy life, whether they come to the cities or stay in the countryside (Report of the Government, 2012).

Now, with the elevation of the label 'left behind' into the Chinese national agenda, the process of the categorization and marginalization of this large group of children has become consolidated and solutions are officially sought in institutional change and social empathy.

… and representations of the global left behind child

Why is the term *liushou ertong* translated as 'left behind children' in English-language reports and articles when it could also be translated differently? The reason for this might be that 'left behind children' in English texts is already used as a concept with a similar background as *liushou ertong* in China.[9] And indeed, 'left behind children' usually denote girls and boys in rural areas

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[9] An additional meaning of 'left behind children' can refer to the idea of disadvantage in education as in the 'no child left behind policy' (2001) of the United States (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/states/index.html).

whose parents left them in the care of others in order to pursue paid work far away from where their underage offspring live. Furthermore, reports from humanitarian organizations show that similar approaches are proposed to deal with this category of children on a worldwide scale.[10]

'Left behind children' as a worldwide category have been discovered latest since the mid 1990s and in greater numbers since the 2000s.[11] Particularly within the context of migration from the Philippines and from Mexico, the impact of absent parents on girls and boys has been discussed broadly (e.g. Parreñas, 2001 and 2005; McCarty, 2007). Reported symptoms of being 'left behind' mirror the above-mentioned ones from China and Moldova. In 2010, Romania, for example, counted an estimated 350,000 'white orphans', another synonym for 'left behind children'. The result of parental migration on children in Romania was understood to "lead to the decrease of school performance and of school attendance. Some become involved in criminal activities. Emotionally, the minors are frustrated, feel guilty and are depressed. Sometimes this even leads to the extreme act of suicide" (Bezzi, 2010).

In addition to those negative academic and emotional outcomes of being 'left behind', and in relation to the connected discourse about remittances-for-development, in other instances explicit or implicit connections are drawn between 'left behind children' and 'broken homes'. For example, after expressing his concern about 'broken families' in the Ukraine, a Catholic archbishop also mentioned "the growing problems of 'euro-orphans' [another synonym for 'left behind children']: children who stay behind in the Ukraine when their parents go to the West to earn money" (Aid to the Church in Need, 2 March 2012). 'Earning money' in this case refers to the 'bad' side of remittances pointed out in the HelpAid/UNICEF report, which unequivocally leads to the above-mentioned social-psychological problems.

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[10] For example, a pamphlet from 2008 about a joint project of HelpAge international and UNICEF provides an overview of the problems of 'left behind children' and their grandparents in Moldova where about one third of all Moldovan children belong to that category. The pamphlet starts out by introducing remittances, which are understood as both 'good' and 'bad'. 'Good' in a financial and material aspect in that children of migrant parents have "better living conditions, mobile phone, computer, spending holidays abroad with their parents etc., in cases where parents have found a job and have maintained contacts with the family" (HelpAge, 2008, p.2). The 'bad' aspects of remittances in this report concern social and psychological problems: namely the deterioration of the relationship between the left behind parent and his or her children; symptoms of depression, feelings of loneliness and separation; old people who have the burden of bringing up children alone; and an "intergenerational gap appears in the communication of grandparents with their grandchildren". Another negative emotion that children experience is damage to their self-confidence. Children are thus discussed as emotionally unstable due to separation, and grandparents, the main caregivers, as unable to respond to their needs (HelpAge, 2008, pp.3–5). Similarly, a report from Save the Children about left behind children in Moldova states that "all of them have to bear new duties and often find themselves in psychological or emotional distress, despite the improved material situation that remittances and presents from their parents bring them" (Save the Children, 2008, p.9).

[11] Although, as I discuss elsewhere, this category was already in existence in 19th and 20th century industrialized areas.

These children are clearly represented in the category of 'children at risk', which reinforces the classification even more. For example, a UNICEF policy paper from 2007 presents the findings that, "UNICEF's research conducted in Moldova suggested that the increase of the juvenile crime rate between 1993 and 2000 is positively correlated to a rise in the number of left behind children, who accounted for nearly 60% of the offenders" (UNICEF 'children and migration', 2007).[12] The assumptions of that paper are either repeated or genuinely found to be true in reports from more countries than those I have mentioned.

Accordingly, focusing on the aggressive "dark side of emigration", an online-newspaper article about Ecuador's migration problem notes that: "a sharp increase in adolescent suicides as well as teenage pregnancies, alcoholism, car wrecks and declining school performance represent the dark side of Ecuador's migration phenomenon. Although the flight of as many as 20% of its citizens over the last few decades has created an economic windfall totalling $2 billion a year in remittances, the social costs have been high" (LA Times, 2007). Here again, this time in a media article, we find the juxtaposition of positive finance flow (remittances) with negative consequences for children and especially society (children as risk).

Despite constituting only a few examples, the reports and newspaper articles nevertheless sufficiently represent the global discourse about 'left behind children'. They allow a near comprehensive overview of the general 'knowledge' about the labelled children and their pathology: emotional deprivation which results in depression or aggression and criminal behaviour, problems in intergenerational communication between children, left behind mothers and grandparents, and in fact, the incapability of caring for grandchildren. Left behind children miss their biological mothers, they suffer from what most reports unanimously call loneliness, they generally have bad grades at school, they are more prone than others to becoming criminals and girls are at a higher risk of being raped. Moreover, the discussions display an uneasiness concerning remittances. Usually understood in terms of positive development factors for a nation's, community's and family's economic situation, they are here discussed as signs of material greed and as the cause of social and emotional distress in children. 'Left behind children' and their 'risks', in other words, are the 'social costs', the 'unintended consequences' of economic boom. The peak of this discourse, when it was carried out visibly in the media, occurred during the mid 2000s until the economic crisis in 2008 when it became subordinate to the discourse on remittances.

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[12] 'Moldova', and the percentage, can be exchanged for the name out of a pool of other countries.

This presentation of similarities in a global discourse about 'left behind children' then leads to the question: Where do these similarities come from? Assuming that labelled 'left behind children' worldwide are sincere when depicting their own feelings as 'lonely' and 'depressed' (and why should they joke about it?),[13] what could be the reason for this globally similar emotion and resulting behaviour?

Discourses and practices of wasting children's lives

Approached within a framework of anthropological studies on children or general historical works concerning the development of emotions, behaviour or memory over several generations, such striking similarities between members of different cultures should not be possible (see e.g. Elias, 1939; Halbwachs, 1925). Instead, precise identifiable emotions such as 'loneliness' or missing a certain person should be expected to be historically and culturally different. Thus, being able to refer to a specific emotion as 'loneliness', especially by children themselves, and expressing a particular desire for the biological mother only – including the biological mother who has left her offspring in the care of another woman when the child was an infant – should not be taken at face value. I do not deny that children find those terms the most appropriate, which accords with Hacking's theory of interactive classification that I have mentioned above. Notwithstanding that, those precise emotions are still contextual and not natural and require further research within cultural and social frameworks. Any such emotions and the arguable results of, put simply, depressive and aggressive children, ought to be questioned carefully against the specific cultural and historical background it is applied to (see e.g. Hays, 1996; also Kleinman and Kleinman, 1999).

The similarities in the description of the children's emotions and experiences in China, Poland and other areas are thus peculiar, and I want to discuss two possible reasons for this correspondence within the framework of social exclusion or 'wasting lives'. One is that the international approach of children and the family applies globally unified experts' language of law, medicine and psychology, which has in particular a great impact on issues concerning child-mother relations and children as and at risk. Another reason is the social-economic framework of capitalism, which causes a global equalization of social structures forming around capital, labour and commodity. These social relations are interdependent with social structures

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[13] Assuming further *that* they are asked.

such as the family and consequently, I suggest, cause an approximation of emotional expression on a global scale. The importance of two reasons in the context of ´left behind children´ cannot be overstated and their combined discussion, I believe, explains the processes of marginalizing certain children for a great part.

Furthermore, with regards to 'left behind children', practices such as applying a global language of children as and at risk, of 'quality' population or 'human capital', and the shifting emphasis of social relations from kin-based to capital-, commodity- and labour-based relations are accompanied by a set of powerful discourses. Most visible are the discourses about 'remittances' and 'education', which are on one hand used to support each other and on the other hand grossly oppose each other.

Global expert discourse on problem children

After the Year of the Child in 1979, children worldwide started to be viewed in certain ways that were different to earlier decades marked by a universalist approach. Moreover, ten years later after the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by nearly all states, critics recognized that "by setting universal standards for all children, and defining childhood so definitely as the period of life between birth and the age of 18, the UNCRC takes little account of cultural relativity, and anthropologists have regularly pointed out the discrepancies between the realities of children's lives and the universal ideals enshrined in the UNCRC" (Montgomery, 2008, p.8). This development furthermore concurred with "media representations of ideal childhoods [that] sharpen the experience of material poverty as inner deprivation" (Stephens, 1996, 20). Finally, at the same time, global similarities of children at and as risk are further enhanced by specific medical, psychological and child developmental arguments that in themselves are largely unquestioned, universalized and taken for granted (Bradley and Carter, 2011). This is an undertaking that, Bradley and Carter argue, not least for the sake of the market and psychology, is believed to have established "hegemony over the upbringing of 'problem children', concentrating particularly on the 'promotion' of CAMH [child and adolescent mental health] in the sense of marketing" (ibid., p. 306).

The discourse about child and adolescent mental health proves to be especially influential for the most invasive actions of government to rule over their populations, often referred to as social or human engineering. In China, science and technology for the purpose of human engineering are understood to be the "key to solving the domestic problems of a growing population […]

formation of new kinds of biocitizens in which identity is intimately linked to health status and to market consumption" (Greenhalgh, 2010, p.12).[14] This 'new kind of citizen', already created within the framework of the one child policy since the late 1970s, is to be further shaped by education. Family education plays a crucial role in human engineering, supposed to be carried out by (biological) mothers, who would consult women's magazines and television programmes. Such information sources warn "concerned parents to listen only to the experts – child psychologists, pediatricians, teachers, and so forth – the pedagogical materials sorted child intelligence into a series of specific abilities, listed games and exercises that encouraged the development of each, and laid out developmental milestones that parents could use to figure out where their child ranked on the ladder from 'backward' to 'prodigy'" (ibid., pp.60–1). Marginalization, as we can easily deduce, is a central feature of such a system of aspiring to one predetermined goal of 'quality'.

Despite the initial slow reception of the medical and psychological professions in particular (Kleinman and Kleinman 1999; Sim, 2010), Chinese authorities in charge of children increasingly rely on this discourse and the proposed psychological approach. Not surprisingly, in China as in other countries, one crucial measurement against the symptoms of being 'left behind' is the establishment of school psychologists and especially social workers (who, despite their differences, employ the same discourse) who perceive 'left behind children' from a certain stance (see Rural China (Documentary), 2007). I do not wish here to deny diagnosed psychological ailments, but rather want to refer to their broader picture in which (diagnosed) problem children are approached within one paradigm.

Social relations in capitalism

A universal application of expert language[15] is not the only possible explanation for the creation of the global label 'left behind children'. Therefore, approaching global capitalism not simply as a set of economic strategies but with an emphasis on changes in social relations illustrates its effect on children's experiences. Analysing childhood within the framework of cultural identities, Stephens suggests that "we need also to explore the global processes that are currently transforming gender, race, class, culture – and, by no means least of all, childhood itself" (1995, p.7). Some important global

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[14] Greenhalgh and others who investigate social engineering are inspired by Foucault's research on 'biopolitics'.
[15] And the rather one-sighted and uncritical dissemination of information by the media.

processes with direct impact on left behind children's experiences concern the shift in emphasis from kinship relations to capital, labour and commodity as the foremost social relations (Postone, 1993).

Social interdependencies on a global scale and the realization of a neo-liberal, neo-capitalist or late capitalist new world order since the 1970s, and more visibly so from the 1980s onward, have been discussed on numerous levels and from many angles (see e.g. Klein, 2007; Escobar 1995; Harvey 1989). Even though social interdependencies manifest on many levels, with regards to 'left behind' children labour migration impacts them most directly.[16] Globally, since the 1980s and especially the 1990s, the numbers of those people who are migrating for labour increased dramatically (Castles and Miller, 2003). The demand for female labour, which is much cheaper than male labour for the same work, increased even more (Koser, 2007, p.6; Fan and Sun, 2010, p.96). China became the centre of global labour since the 1990s, which happened jointly with increasing numbers of migrants and the shift to neo-liberalist capitalism in other capitalist countries (Walker, 2008, p.464; Stenning and Bradshaw, 1999, p.100). Although labour migrants in China are mostly Chinese, migration processes within China have been convincingly pointed out as comparable to international migrations in other countries, due to institutional misconstructions which make rural migrants quasi-illegal persons anywhere else than in their place of origin (Fan, 2002, p.107).

At the same time that migration grew drastically, from the 1980s and especially the 1990s, welfare state activities gradually declined, communist countries stopped to exist or changed fundamentally and national states ceased to be economically sovereign entities. Postone points out that "the general character of such developments indicates that they cannot be explained sufficiently in terms of contingent political decisions, and strongly implies the existence of general structural imperatives and constraints" (Postone, 2005). Here we should remember that geographical areas were treated separately or as path dependent due to a traditional view that divides the world into capitalist, non-capitalist and communist countries. According to this view, communist China, among others, was positioned as the opposite to capitalist countries. This view has long been criticized (Lefebvre, 1991; Postone, 1993). Basically, states started to recede from providing social security to a growing number of

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[16] Notwithstanding that labour migration is made necessary by the need for money and that the life of the left behind population is marked by commodities and great material changes with no small impact on their social, cultural and ecologoical environment.

people in various forms and with diverse justifications, and China was no exception in that development.

Finally, at the beginning of the 1980s, China commenced an influential project of human engineering, the one child family policy with its 'unintended consequences' (Kleinman, 2010; see also White, 2006; Greenhalgh, 2008). It was particularly influential regarding the way children are viewed but also to generational and kin relations. This intervention of the government into family structure and individual's bodies[17] occurred not only together with economic reforms and the increasing rural-urban migration but also with a strong emphasis on (institutionalized) education (e.g. Postiglione, 2006; Thøgersen, 2002). Implementing 'bio-politics' involves regulating the size of the population and monitoring especially women's bodies, and the creation of 'quality' in the population, which is to be specifically inculcated by family and institutional education (Anagnost, 2008). The global expert discourse as well as international market interdependencies, but in particular the accompanying changes in social relations in rural areas worldwide since around the 1980s, do not fail to produce changes in children's social relations, as well as the ways boys and girls are talked about and talk about themselves.

Because nowadays´ living children were born from the mid 1990s onwards, these discourses and events had an especially big impact on them, as global capitalist structures were far-reaching in the process of transforming rural Chinese social structures from an emphasis on kinship and family relations towards social relations around commodity, capital and labour. When analysing those childhoods it is therefore indispensable to consider the social dimension of capitalism, the framework in which children grow up: "the social relations that most basically characterize capitalist society are very different from the qualitatively specific, overt social relations – such as kinship relations or relations of personal or direct domination – which characterize non-capitalist societies […] what ultimately structures that society is a new, underlying level of social relations that is constituted by labor" (Postone, 2005, p.74). The importance of this analysis cannot be overestimated: it is not kinship

Certainly, from a family history point of view, Fass, relativizes those ruptures of social relations, and points out that international migrations, "as they accompany international capital and information as part of globalization today, just as in the past, do not take family preservation issues into account. And today, as in the past, families adapt and use the pressures and/or

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[17] Mostly female bodies are implicated, and increasingly children´s bodies who are closely monitored and nationally critizised in terms of lack of physical exercise and nutritional problems.

opportunities this presents" (Fass, 2005, p.942). Exactly how they adapt is a matter of local possibilities but also, in a broader sense, of the limited possibilities of social relations in capitalism. In China, for example, despite general cultural and social expectations of increasing lineage dependence or reliance on traditional networks after cutbacks in public services, "lineage resources appear to be available for only a tiny percentage of rural families [in Hubei]" (Davis and Harrell, 1993, pp. 18 and 19). Davis and Harrell, however, furthermore and in line with Fass's argument, highlight that under the influence of industrialization and state policies "today's Chinese mainland […] displays a variegated mosaic of family form and behaviors, each demonstrating the adaption of basic principles to differing conditions" (ibid, 21). The focus of state policies and family relations lies on the nuclear family. Again, in the case of family-child relations, it is important to keep the universalizing language of experts and the Convention of the Rights of the Child in mind, because the global discourse about family and children equalizes children's required social relations cross-culturally: "just as the Convention [on the Rights of the Child] relies on a naturalized and individualized vision of the child, so also does it imply that biologically based relations between parents and children are more fundamental and natural than other sorts of family relations" (Stephens, 1995, p.37).

It is not, however, necessary to burden the Convention on the Rights of the Child with the sole responsibility of only emphasizing an ideal of biologically based relations. As I have mentioned above, in China, for example, the bond between mother and child has been textually idealized throughout history – although the focus lay on the relation between a 'proper' mother (i.e. a woman who was bound to a man by marriage and not concubinage) and son (or daughter, who was not mentioned frequently), and the biological mother was not necessarily the proper mother. This ideal could only be realized for a few decennia from the mid 20th century (Harrell and Davis, 1995, p.2) and now seems reinforced and aligned with the ideal propagated by the Convention and State institutions.

Remittances

Whether or not mainstream middle-class social commentators condemn labour migration as materialistic or as altruistic because of the parents' sacrifice on behalf of their children (see above), children are at the centre of the reasoning behind migration much more than the provision for other family members and home construction. With respect to the labelled 'left behind children', migration, language and practices of the 'quality population'

are the most crucial pillars for marginalization. They enhance the discourses about 'remittances' and 'education', which not infrequently seem to be in opposition to each other. Parreñas provides several examples of remittance-sending mothers from the Philippines and finds that "parents do know that they owe children a great deal of emotional work. Yet, instead of paying children for their emotional debt with more time together they purchase love with American or Italian designer clothing and school supplies" (2001, p.124). Paying the expenses for school equipment, but mostly 'education', features greatly when children in China are asked why their parents migrated in China.

While 'left behind children' were much discussed in the media and NGO reports directly before the 2008 economic crisis, references to such children after 2008 often appear to be integrated as secondary themes in debates about remittances. For example, the blocking of Iranian banks in March 2012 from using the SWIFT service has compromised families living in Iran who are dependent on remittances sent to them from overseas (Melvin, 2012).

The discourse of the 'remittances-to-development' agenda as such has been analysed as highly questionable (Bakker, 2011). Despite little possibility of conducting research about the movements and the volume of remittances-to-development, a strong belief in its developmental abilities is strongly promoted by international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF for financial reasons that should benefit banks (ibid). However, while some literature attempts to point out positive correlations between remittances and social aspects, such as 'education', health and mortality, most positive effects of remittances are found in the financial sector only (see e.g. Aggarwal et al., 2011).

An assumption often taken for granted within the media discourse in particular is that children left behind, like migrant children, are depicted as 'social cost' (e.g. Yeoh and Lam, 2006; Ye, 2011). Discussing such children as the unintended consequences of migration infers that the intention of migration is positive. Indeed, the positive, intended part is argued to be the national 'economic boom', for example in China, or remittances that cause economic growth locally or at least help the rural left behind population with migrant connections, as well as help other remittance receivers to survive or, if nothing else, to compensate for the negative effects of absent parents (Hu, 2012).

In China, remittances are believed to be used, above all, for building new family homes and providing for school-aged and younger children as well as for other family members (Murphy, 2002). Providing for school education is

an often-heard argument in favour of migration made by the parents themselves. In ta report about Moldova, remittances are introduced as both 'good' and 'bad' with respect to the economic gains and emotional deprivations of those who do not actively produce remittances but merely use the payments and are in need of them. Remittances in some cases, furthermore, are pointed out as carriers of increasing social inequality. In other cases they are hailed as essential and needed for the upbringing of a child and the sustenance of a family. And yet, most reports about "left behind family members" mention food deprivation, poverty and bad academic achievements caused by the absence of the biological mother or financial means.

In addition to the numerous deliberations about whether remittances are good or bad, they have also been identified as volatile and nearly impossible to grasp either for a whole country or over a period of time (Bakker, 2011). Data and its interpretation most probably change considerably over a relatively short time – Snyder and Chern (2009) for example did not consider spending of remittances for children's education as noteworthy information. Different results of course might reflect the interest of the researchers, as well as regional and temporal differences, but nevertheless 'remittances' in the commonsensical opinion have been successfully identified as a construct. Thus, Page and Mercer question the very simple perception that "remitting is intrinsic to a diaspora lifestyle" (2012, p.3). Similarly, thus, the streamlined answers to what happens with remittances in the receiving localities should also be examined critically. Murphy detects, for instance, that the dualistic views on the outcomes of migration – remittances as primarily benevolent or malevolent to families and localities of origin – simplify "the explanation of how migration is changing the countryside: the core-periphery dualism […] and the dichotomy separating analysis into micro and macro levels" (2002, p.17) and alternatively suggests a multilevel analysis, which also takes into account non-economic and social factors. In fact, Page and Mercer point out that "the overemphasis on individual choice, decision-making and option-setting obscures the potential for simultaneous change in social structures and social practices" (2012, p.4).

However, this article focuses on mechanisms of the marginalization of ′left behind children, and the discourse of 'remittances and education' is a crucial part to understanding not only exclusion from the top-down, but also exclusion by the labelled children themselves. Therefore, in this case, whether remittances are primarily spent on education or not significantly so does not matter, because in media representations children are quoted as being aware

that their parents have left them so that they can have a good education. This then, one might argue, leads to academic pressure, which makes children miss their mothers the most as mothers are socially expected to be the responsible parent for homework and education. Furthermore, children might feel that they are responsible for their parents' migration, and they are quoted and shown as 'feeling left out' when they see their peers being collected from school by their biological parents. Due to the frequent repetition of this argument by experts, parents and children that parents migrate so that they can afford to pay for their offspring's education, the rural population is strongly singled out as 'poor' because it cannot afford to provide the basic 'quality' upbringing, which requires the full-on commitment of the biological mother.

Education

Biological parents, and occasionally older siblings, are expected to spend, and are often depicted as doing so, a large share of their wages on children's education. However, despite the argument in favour of education creating responsible citizens, some scholars have raised their concerns that 'education' is used as a valorizing tool for the benefit of the market. Valorizing practices have been pointed out by Bauman as essential to any social group, but especially those who are otherwise considered superfluous in a society that centres on capital, labour and commodity. Accordingly, those people who are members of non-working groups, such as the old, the disabled and children, are bound into the market in many possible ways. "The answer to redundancy is as financial as the definition of the problem: state-provided, state-legislated, state-endorsed or state-promoted and means-tested handouts" (Bauman, 2005, p.12). It appears that the answer to redundant children is, alongside other expenses, a certain implementation of 'education'.[18] Whereas until mid 2002 the Chinese government spent less than 4% of GDP on education and even less in rural areas, the availability of school education is much greater than ever before (Postiglione, 2006, pp.3–5). With increasing stress on the importance of education not least by migrated parents, then, private spending on education is paramount, especially for enabling girls to stay at school (Murphy, 2002, p.62).

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[18] Costs for education also increase other costs related to the upbringing of quality offspring. These started to rise rapidly in the 2000s, caused by purchases of commodities deemed "essential to ensuring the bodily and mental quality of the young: nutritional supplements, educational toys, piano lessons, and more" (Greenhalgh, 2010, pp.51–52; see also Hannum and Adams, 2005). Such costs, at least concerning 'snacks' (see Yan, 2003, p. 206), are not inconsiderably influenced by advertisements and created not least by peer pressure in schools (Jun, ed., 2000).

In other parts of the world, from the 1980s onward, Stephen detects that "radical changes are called for in educational systems, in order to prepare children for participation in a rapidly changing adult world and to insure a sufficiently flexible body of 'human capital' to society" (Stephens, 1996, 20). These educational systems, which mostly "refer to formal, Western-inspired, education in schools," (Montgomery, 2008, p.152) are radical because they happen to undermine other means of learning. "Children are expected to learn a curriculum that has limited meaning to them and they usually fail to reach a necessary level of skills and consequently drop out" (Montgomery, 2008, p.153). Although the latter quote describes the situation of the Kpelle society in Liberia it seems to also fit well into other contexts. Contemporaneous with this change, China also introduces radical changes and announces that education "should serve economic development rather than social revolution" (Thøgersen, 2002, p.202). However, despite this propagated view in China, Xiao (2006) finds that education is not so much implemented for the benefit of the local market but is a hindrance to developing independent, creative thinking and instead instils patriotism. He points out that education in rural areas is not economy-oriented at all and that "rural education bureaucracies representing the authority of the state in remote villages continues to indoctrinate the state's ideology" (Xiao, 2006, 112). These goals do not necessarily oppose each other as schooling teaches people to "put the nation's political goal of strengthening the country through economic modernization as the ultimate aim for which they are responsible" (ibid, p. 126).

In conjunction with the right to education, enhanced by the UNCRC, the above-mentioned advice by the World Bank has been pointed out as creating a contradiction. Müller highlights that although the ideal of education is to "reduce social inequalities at various levels and to advance people's personal aspirations" (Müller, 2011, p.254), the World Bank focuses on education as a tool for economic growth, especially since the 1990s. "In the age of EFA [Education for All] and the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals], education policy in developing or transitional countries is dominated by the poverty reduction imperative, and the right to education is being equated with the right to a certain type of schooling" (Müller, 2011, p.255). China's market-based education policy is thus very much in line with a global trend of developing (and developed) countries. Indeed, the World Bank also advised China about "further increasing enrolment in secondary and tertiary education, modernizing its curriculum, and reducing regional inequalities in educational opportunities" (Greenhalgh, 2010, p.72) in order to enhance

national competitiveness. This competitiveness in higher education apparently is not required to be carried out by rural students but by urban children whose academic outcomes are deemed more promising.

Consequences for children

The consequences of a discourse of normalized nuclear families and an emphasis on quality children as a means of economic progress to be inculcated by quality education through the biological mother, plus the stress on capital, commodities and labour, which is easily in conflict with the propagated family ideals and most visibly played out in the discourses regarding remittances and education, cannot be underestimated for those children who do not fit into that classification. The category 'left behind child' has indeed 'created a world of difference' (Hacking, 1999, p.160), with a direct impact on how children look upon themselves. Because this article mainly pays attention to how modes of representation, in the form of discourses and uncritical acceptance of normative practices, might contribute to the marginalization of children, children's opinions have not been sought directly. What I present here briefly, nevertheless, are 'children's voices', reported mostly by adults. Children, alongside grandparents as victims and teachers and psychologists as professionals, are interviewed on many occasions by NGO staff, journalists, academicians and private persons. Furthermore, children talk or rather write about 'left behind children' and perform for them. Needless to say, most opinions reflect the above-mentioned representations.

An interesting source of information about 'children's opinions' is the website *zuowenku* ('A Storehouse for Student Essays'), which provides templates for homework essays for students from elementary to secondary school level. *Zuowenku* offers eighteen essays related to 'left behind children' consisting of between 200 and 2,400 characters, which were placed online between 2010 and 2012, although some might have been written a few years earlier. The essays have titles like "The life of left behind children is really bitter" (500-character essay), written in the voice of a child who found information about the fate of some 'left behind children' on the internet; and "I do not want to be a left behind child!" (400-character essay), written in the voice of a child who has just become left behind. A common style is the letter, either addressing a 'left behind child' or written in the name of one of his or her parents. The latter letter-form essay is even more common and printed in numerous journals as well. Other titles are "left behind children need us" (500 characters) and "Listen to the voices of left behind children". A longer essay is

entitled "Regarding left behind children: building a harmonious campus". Most frequently occurring are the characters for 'lonely' (孤独) and 'suffering' or 'hardship' (苦). Furthermore, 'happiness' appears to be difficult to achieve for 'left behind children', and they are generally pitied.

In his speech in March, Wen Jiabao stated that the government wishes to address the problem of left behind children (as well as the elderly and women) with two approaches: one is institutional, by making it possible for the rural population to chose where they want to live and the other approach is emotional by 'caring' for the 'left behind'. 'Caring for' is a rather undefined, albeit well used, concept. In one of the school essay templates titled 'Care for left behind children', the author reveals how she saw in a television programme about ethnic minorities that there are numerous left behind children whose parents are working far away, and who therefore cannot see their parents for a whole year at a time, have to wear worn-out clothes, eat instant noodles and lead a very hard life, but have no more wishes than a new school bag and to celebrate New Year together with their parents. The author of this essay suddenly realizes that she and the other children with parents are not on equal terms with those left behind children because she has parents, tasty food, a great learning environment and school, and a daily hug from her parents. But those children do not even have a new school bag, the author laments, and ends her essay writing "I wish, I wish that I will now be able to study well, and help them fulfil their wish. Yes! Come on! Helping them accomplish their dreams will help me accomplish mine," (*Zuowenku*, 300-character essay).

A school essay should most probably not be taken at face value, and the existence of this essay website alone suggests that such essays might not necessarily reflect deep thoughts or concerns of the authors. However, taken as a representation of what 'children with parents' are supposed to think or how they are supposed to 'care for' 'left behind children', this essay affirms some of the above-mentioned ways of marginalization. Notably, the author distinguishes clearly between those who have parents and those who do not, and takes for granted the adult discourse of the lonely children, not paying attention to other possible loving relationships between the children and other care givers or ways how children and biological parents could communicate.

A newer trend in talking about left behind children, or left behind children talking about themselves, appears to emphasize that they are happy: "I am a happy left behind child" (1,500 characters, *zuowenku*). The emphasis on happiness seems to have increased in 2010/2011, just after the new number of 58 million left behind children had been announced in the media. The

website from Shiquan County (Shiquan County Cares for Left Behind Children) features the report of then eleven-year-old Yang Boqiang who writes beneath a picture of him in school uniform happily laughing: "I am a happy left behind child" (Shiquan County Net). Furthermore, in a private documentary about left behind children in a community in Guizhou, the interviewer asks the children directly whether they miss their mother and quite a few answer with 'no' ('A genuine picture', May 2011).[19] Those children, then, would refute the common view of the unhappy child, missing his or her mother. However, the interview technique, as well as the mode of representation poses several questions as to how illustrative such declarations really are.

Another instrument with which children are heard is through music. Perhaps the most well-known, and old, song is "Mother is the best", which exists in several versions but basically contains statements such as: "Children without a mother are the most pitiful, children with a mother are really lucky. I hope that my mother will always be by my side and I can enjoy the happiness of family bonds." The most watched music video on *youku* until August 2012 is the title song to the film 'Desires' sung by a six-year-old girl, Ma Ruoji. The film from 2012 is especially dedicated to 'left behind children', and the title song and accompanying video summarizes the life of a 'left behind' girl who grows up all alone, missing her mother.

Children are thus active participants in the discourse about the category 'left behind child'. However, while the symptoms of left behind children are taken for granted a critical analysis of the consequences of the discourse on children is as yet missing. In order to do that, an assessment of the political climate and an analysis of power relations between children and other actors would be paramount. For example, in 2007 in Moldova two journalists who have been working with children for over two decades and who planned to launch a radio programme for left behind children noticed: "that taboos and self-censorship have become less powerful […]. The Soviet tradition of preparing children for interviews or public appearance is gradually decreasing, so that they felt the radio programme to be developed in the framework of the project could reflect people's real needs and thoughts" (Save the Children, 2008, p.19). Statements from children in China, certainly in commercial songs or films should thus still be assessed with a consideration of self-censorship.

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[19] In August 2012, it had been accessed nearly 214,000 times.

Outlook

Two main suggestions of how to approach 'the problem' of 'left behind children' are put forth in most of the countries where such labelled children have been discovered. One is the 'emotional' solution. In China, this is expressed with the statement 'care/feel for left behind children' which might be advocated to spur on donations from philanthropists. Globally, this suggestion is followed by raising awareness about 'the problem', often with visual and audio material to evoke feelings of pity and loneliness. The other solution, again suggested in many countries that apparently are unaware of its global character, concerns the institutional framework of migration, which tackles the problems of illegality – be it illegal immigrants from Mexico in the United States of America or rural Chinese immigrants in Chinese cities. While this article was not concerned about those global and local solutions, it raised the questions of how a seemingly local problem in fact takes place globally. A neglect of this underlying global structure of 'left behind children', I argued, might lead to the further marginalization of such-labelled children.

Marginalization of Chinese children happens partly due to the dominant idea of 'the perfect citizen'. The creation of the quality child and adult comes at the expense of all those who do not fit into the description and especially those who cannot afford the costly inculcation of quality: "Given the moral judgments associated with conformity to the dominant norms, members of groups outside the norms have tended to live difficult and often stigmatized lives. Where the state has imposed economic political and/or legal sanctions on unapproved categories – a step it has rarely hesitated to take – the human and material costs of 'deviance' have been even greater" (Greenhalgh, 2010, 73 and 74). The idea of quality education and quality citizens, needless to say, is also strong in other national contexts also of developed countries.

Approached within the framework of understanding that the process of marginalization of 'left behind children' should take into consideration a more global point of view and that the label 'left behind' is an 'interactive classification' (Hacking, 1999), the above-introduced self-representation by 'left children' appears predictable. Researchers accordingly might doubt how much an interview or letter 'could reflect people's real needs and thoughts'. At this point, fieldwork with the aim to understand the commonsensical, to inquire about daily life without putting in question what the classification is made of (e.g. 'Do you miss your mother?'), without provoking the interactive classification to come to the foreground would thus be necessary.

Page and Mercer suggest taking the 'theory of practice' into consideration, emphasizing the importance of querying not only the immediate context of

people's behaviour and questions related to social memory, but also studying the embodiments of, in this case, being 'left behind'. Most importantly, they propose to investigate "the underlying organizing principle that exists beneath the surface of the practice" and point out that, "though practices are not consciously organized and are accomplished without conscious deliberation they do have a purpose for participants" (Page and Mercer, 2012, p.9).[20] Investigating further for what purpose, in this case, 'left behind children' are represented in such a way should also lead to some more crucial answers than merely accepting the discourse about them. While it is therefore indispensable to critically investigate daily life within the framework of theory of practice on a local level as Page and Mercer suggest, it is also paramount not to overlook underlying social structures on a global level, which certainly take place in China as well.

The category ´left behind´ is believed to be of relatively short duration in China, as common opinion in China has it that rural-to-urban migrants are believed to realize that living in cities is worse than living in rural areas. However, viewed within a historical context although the label has not been in use for longer than thirty years the discourse about these marginalized children is an intrinsic part of capitalism.[21]

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[20] While Page and Mercer show their indebtedness to Bourdieu and others, I would also mention Mary Douglas who was determined to go beyond the commonsensical and question everything that was taken for granted in communities.

[21] Pissin, 2012 (unpublished).

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