

Research on Migrant Left-behind Children Abroad and Implications for China

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Abstract: Left-behind children are not a unique social phenomenon in China, there are also a large number of left-behind children in other developing countries. The study on left-behind children of foreign immigrants reveals the challenges that left-behind children face in family affection, education, psychological and social adaptation, and also explores the ways to solve these problems. These studies have important implications for China.

Keywords: Immigrants; Left-Behind Children; Enlightenment.

1. Introduction

In the past three decades, the mass migration of people from rural areas to cities has become one of the most significant social phenomena in China. According to the Report on the Development of China's Floating Population, released by China's National Population and Family Planning Commission, the total number of migrants in China will reach 211 million by 2023. With the current relatively stable migration and migration policies, the floating population is expected to grow to about 350 million by 2050. This rural-urban migration of rural labor has not only contributed significantly to China's socio-economic development, but family migration faces many challenges due to the urban-rural dual structure and its related household registration system, resulting in the emergence of a huge group of left-behind children. Some left-behind children face increasingly prominent difficulties in education, morality, psychology and safety, which has triggered the in-depth research and attention of the academic community on the problem of left-behind children.

Driven by the tide of globalization, the problem of floating children has become an important issue faced by developing countries. "From other sources, we can attack the jade." The purpose of this paper is to systematically sort out the relevant foreign research on the left-behind children of immigrants, and provide useful reference and suggestion for in-depth understanding and effective solution of the problem of left-behind children in China.

2. Background of Research on Left-behind Children of Foreign Immigrants

With the continuous advancement of globalization, international exchanges and cooperation are becoming more and more frequent, and population migration has become a common phenomenon. In the process of modern European modernization, there was a large-scale migration of residents from the countryside to the city. However, the migrant farmers in the new place of residence could obtain the same employment, educational opportunities and social status as the local residents, and it was rare for parents and minor children to be separated for a long time. However, in

developing countries, the large-scale migration (both domestic and international) motivated by the search for economic income has made the problem of immigrant children a common issue faced by these countries. These immigrants often choose to leave home for economic, political or social reasons and go to other countries or regions in search of better life and development opportunities. During the immigration process, due to various reasons (such as visa restrictions, economic pressure, job demands, etc.), many immigrants are unable to take their children with them, resulting in the children remaining in their countries of origin, forming the so-called "migrant left-behind children". Often taken care of by relatives, friends or neighbors, these children are separated from their parents for a long time and lack direct parent-child care and education.

3. Foreign Studies on Left-behind Children of Immigrants

3.1. Research on the Number of Left-behind Children of Immigrants

The number of left-behind children affected by their parents' emigration is huge in the world. Due to the use of different statistical methods and caliber, there is no accurate international statistics on the scale of migrant left-behind children. Compared with China's national conditions, the proportion of left-behind children is relatively high, but there are also a certain number in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and other countries. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), between 2016 and 2021, a total of 134 million people were displaced worldwide, of which about 43 million were children, that is, an average of about 20,000 children were forced to leave their homes every day. It is expected that in the next 30 years, More than 113 million children will be displaced globally. The New York Post noted at the end of this year that nearly 7,000 unaccompanied children in the United States arrive in New York City each year. And in Oceania, Statistics New Zealand figures show that a total of 36,850 children and teenagers aged five to 17 arrived in New Zealand in the year to May. Statistics from these regions show that the number of left-behind children is large and rising sharply.

3.2. Research on the Plight and Causes of Migrant Left-behind Children

Immigration issues involve a series of complex relationships between immigrants and left-behind family members. With the spread of migration and mobility, the extensive influence of immigrants on left-behind children has attracted attention. There are a large number of studies abroad on the plight of left-behind children of immigrants and their causes.

In terms of causes, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) pointed out that war, conflict, violence and poverty are the main reasons for children to flee alone. Some scholars also found that the rise and survival of "unaccompanied children" immigration is the result of a series of political, economic, social, natural and other factors. Whether it is short-term or long-term displacement, this increases the risk that children may be separated from their parents or guardians, leading to multiple difficulties such as acculturation, trafficking or exploitation, discrimination, abuse, language barriers, identity, intergenerational mobility, medical and health care, education, psychological and social development.

4. Implications of the Study on Left-Behind Children of Foreign Immigrants for China

The research on left-behind children of immigrants in foreign countries started early, showing the characteristics of diversification of regions and research methods. These studies cover the background and scale of the left-behind children, as well as the impact on their daily life, education, medical treatment and health, psychology and behavior caused by their parents' emigration. There are many similarities between the left-behind children in rural China and the left-behind children in foreign countries. The relevant research provides important enlightenment for deepening the understanding and solution of the problem of left-behind children in rural China.

4.1. Attach Importance to Family and Social Support

Family is the basic environment for children's growth, while society provides a broad stage for them to realize their self-worth. Foreign studies on left-behind children emphasize the importance of family and social support for children's healthy growth. This finding reveals that in dealing with the problem of left-behind children in rural China, we must attach importance to the dual role of family and society, actively strengthen family education and affection care, and build a sound social support network to provide more comprehensive care and help for left-behind children.

4.2. Improve the Education and Psychological Intervention Mechanism

In view of the psychological and educational needs of left-behind children, foreign studies have emphasized the importance of establishing and improving educational and psychological intervention mechanisms. This mechanism should include the provision of stable educational resources and the formulation and implementation of service policies for mental health. China can learn from these international experiences, create more educational opportunities and resources for left-behind children through the collaboration of

the government, schools and social organizations, and further strengthen mental health education, so as to help them better adapt to the new environment and overcome psychological distress.

4.3. Promote Cultural Integration and Community Participation

Foreign studies have emphasized the importance of cultural integration and community participation for the development of left-behind children. Enhancing the sense of cultural identity and community belonging of left-behind children can effectively promote their better integration into the local society. In China, it is crucial to encourage left-behind children to actively participate in community activities, which will not only help them build closer ties with local society, but also enhance their social skills and sense of belonging. In addition, schools and social organizations should actively carry out colorful cultural activities to help left-behind children deepen their understanding of and integration into the local culture.

4.4. Learn from International Experience and Strengthen Transnational Cooperation

Foreign countries have accumulated rich experience in solving the problem of migrant left-behind children, which provides valuable reference for China. China should actively absorb these international experiences, enhance cooperation and exchanges with the global community, and jointly promote the effective solution of the problem of left-behind children. By sharing resources and experience, we can create a better growth environment and development opportunities for left-behind children.

5. Conclusion

Foreign research on migrant left-behind children provides valuable experience and inspiration for related fields in China. We should be deeply aware of the multiple challenges that left-behind children face, and respond to them in a comprehensive manner at the policy, social, family and individual levels. Through the concerted efforts of the whole society, we can create a better future for left-behind children.

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