

The Conception of the Relation Between Child and Parental Well-Being within the Context of Poverty

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The reinvention of the social

“The transformation from the welfare state that provides (for people) to the activating and investing welfare state, [should be understand] as a fundamental shift of axes in the relation between the individual and society: as a *reinvention of the social.*”

Stephan Lessenich, URL: <http://www.transcript-verlag.de/en/978-3-89942-746-2/die-neuerfindung-des-sozialen>, last proofed 20.08.2015, my emphasis.

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How is *child well-being* and *children's vulnerability* spoken about within the *context of poverty*, and how are *child* and *parental well-being* thereby related?

The way the debate on child poverty relates child and parental well-being to one another but also to poverty, state and family in general is meaningful because

[1] it shapes how we think about poverty and well-being,

[2] who we hold responsible for it and, consequently,

[3] which political and pedagogical actions are required.

It is not unusual for parents to break during children's infancy, causing all the negative consequences for the child growing up. The effects are: stress, social exclusion, lack of family support, irritation because of changing new relationships.

The huge number of unemployed parents means plenty of difficulties for the children and adolescents: They often don't know a "natural" day structure; they don't experience the day as regularly structured and don't learn that you have to / can work to achieve goals. Commonly welfare benefits are not enough. The parents – first of all the mothers, rarely the fathers – take on jobs, for example cleaning and are therefore in the morning or in the evening detained to take care for the kids. Children's getting up and ready in the morning works on a telephone signal. In families with many children the older ones are supposed to look after their siblings, regardless of their own sensitivities.

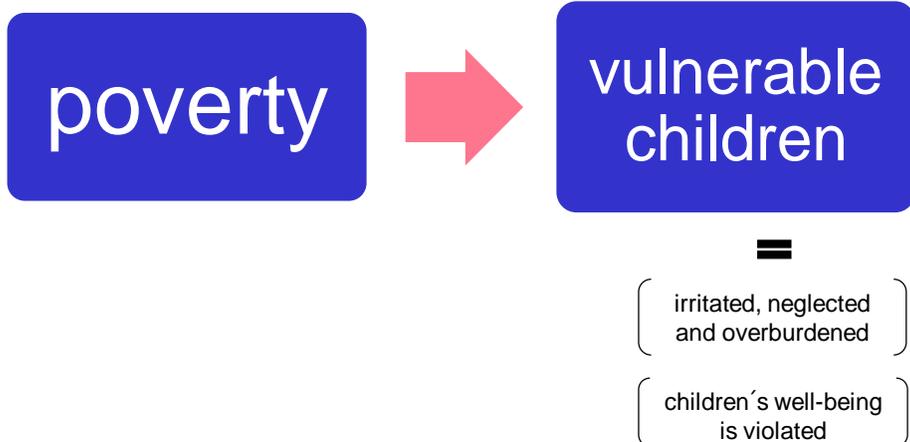
[...]

The children take all the psychological consequences of neglect, experiences with addiction, violence and mistreatment into school. Statistically every fifth child in our school is confronted with addiction, mostly alcoholism.

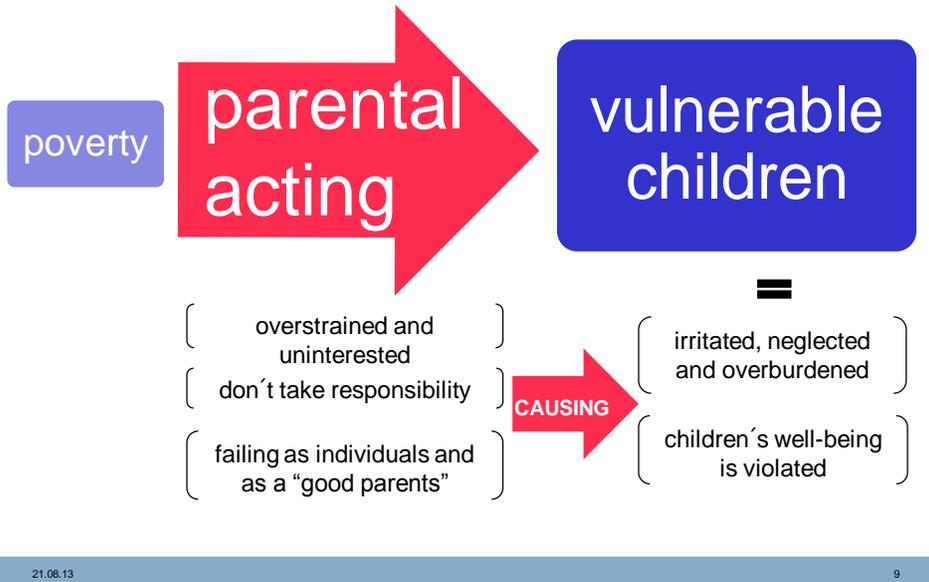
Children experience their parents as undependable and inscrutable in their reactions. Children's efforts and achievements are neither seen nor valued. Often there is a roll change within the family, children feel responsible for their parent's emotional safety – mostly the mother's –, even if they experienced a lack or abstinence of safety them-self.

How is the relation
between *child well-being*, and
poverty (re-)produced?

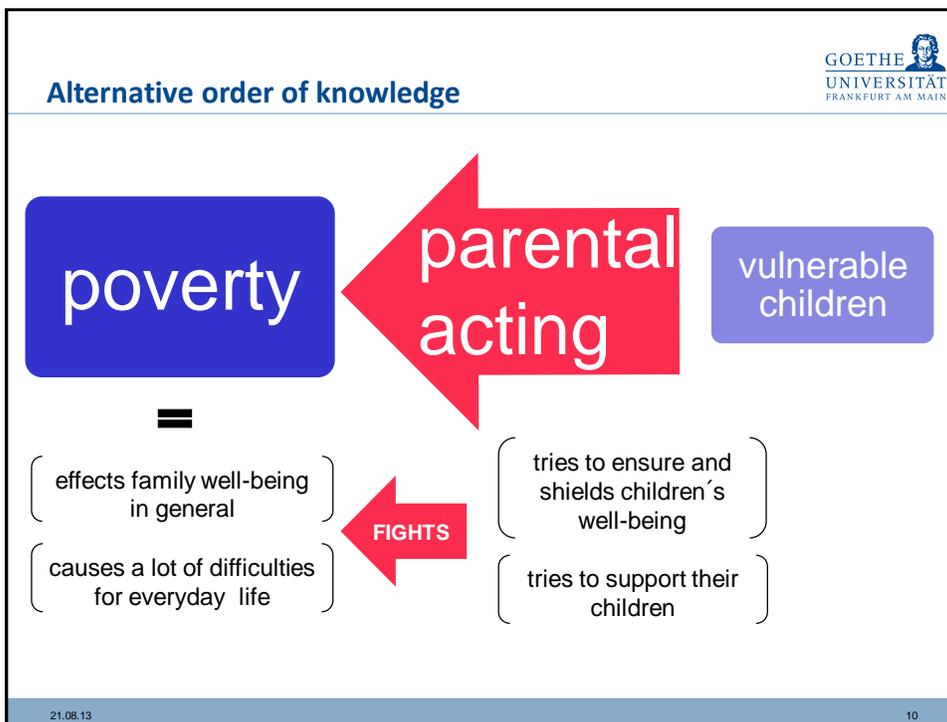
And how is this relation thereby
connected through *parental acting*?



Hegemonial order of knowledge



Alternative order of knowledge



Summary – hegemonial order of knowledge

[1] child well-being is perceived as threatened by “poor parents”

[2] children’s vulnerability is explainable by the parent’s lack of responsibility

[3] there is hardly any perspective on how to address the family’s vulnerability in general

Foucault on knowledge

“There is no [...] knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations”

Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.



**Thank you for your
attention!**

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