

# Exploring the Reasons for Rural Adolescents Dropouts in Huanggang to Enter the City for Work

## —Taking S Village as an Example

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**Abstract**—It is worthwhile to study the behavior of young people who drop out of school to work in cities. This article explores this problem based on fieldwork and attempts to explore the reasons why these teenagers drop out of school and go to work in cities. Through the analysis of the basic situation of young people entering the city, it is believed that the influence of village elites, the recommendation of friends and relatives, the change of ideas, the need to gain face, and the different interests between agriculture and industry and commerce are the main reasons for rural adolescents dropouts to work in cities. The paper further concludes that the behavior of entering the city will have a certain impact on the socialization and cultural adaptation of adolescents and their personality and psychology during puberty.

**Keywords**—Huanggang, adolescents' dropouts, come to work in cities, cultural adaptation, socialization

### I. INTRODUCTION

There have been many studies on the reasons why farmers go to work in cities. Scholars generally believe that the contradiction between people and land which leads to people leaving their home and forces them to make living is the main reason for farmers to go to work in cities. At present, the reasons for adolescents to drop out of school in rural areas and go out to work in cities are still only trying to survive? With such doubts, the author conducted an investigation in S Village, Huanggang in July 2018 and tried to use the anthropological theory to interpret the field materials.

### II. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF ADOLESCENTS WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL IN S VILLAGE

S Village is a village in the hilly area of Huanggang, 47 kilometers away from the city. The village is located in the mountainous area, mainly planting rice, rapeseed, cotton, corn, potatoes, etc., combining scattered and free breeding industry as well. There are 212 households in the village, with a total of 849 people, among which 138 people aged 65 or older and children (including children who come to the city to study with their parents). Since the reform and opening up, there have been 412 people working in cities, accounting for more than half of the total labor force. From the view of age, there are 147 dropouts born after the 1990s, accounting for the 35 percent of

total migrant workers. The basic situation of school dropouts in S Village who come to work in cities is as follows.

#### A. The Occupation and Marital Status of Adolescents who Drop out of School

The vast majority of migrant workers are away from home all year round, so they do little or no farm work. According to statistics of the survey, 147 people who were born after the 1990s dropped out of school and worked in the city. They were concentrated in Wuhan, Huangshi, Yichang and the local in Hubei province (37 people), Dongguan, Jiangmen, Huizhou, Shenzhen in Guangdong province (46 people), Xiamen, Quanzhou in Fujian province (25 people), Shaoxing, Wenzhou, Jiaxing, Jinhua, Xiaoshan in Zhejiang province (39 people). Because this group is not highly educated, they are mainly engaged in labor-intensive industries in the city. Men are mostly in the construction and decoration industry, and women are mostly in the service industry such as catering, beauty and hairdressing. They are the main force of work, of whom 86 are married and 61 are unmarried.

#### B. The Dropout Adolescents' Opinions on Working

During the investigation, nine young migrant workers returned to their homes for various reasons, so we interviewed these young people. When asked about the reasons for their work in the city, four of them said that they chose to go out to work in order to see the world, because they think that there are more employment opportunities in the city and the development prospects are better; two of them want to learn a skill in the city so that they can have a space for survival in the city; Three of them think that working in cities is to earn money to support themselves, to gain economic independence and to reduce the burden on their family. Obviously, their idea of working in the city tends to be diversified, not just for the sake of survival.

#### C. Worldview of Adolescents who Drop out of School

Most of these adolescents were born after the 1990s who did not receive adequate basic education. They were not able to get into the ideal school to be talented persons because they did not have good grades in school. The survey of migrant workers shows that 95% of people yearn for living and working in the

city, and they are not willing to work at home like their parents. They also realized that the cost of urban fast-paced life is high and the pressure of competition is great. Some people are still willing to work hard and make a living in the city.

Teenagers can see the hard work and the tight living conditions of farm work from their parents. They hope to get out of the countryside and work and live in the city. Young people prefer lifestyles in the city such as recreation, more job opportunities, better infrastructure and public services. During the interview, some teenagers talked about their experiences of being not accustomed to the lifestyle at their home because they stayed in the city for a long time. For example, they think that the life at home is tedious and incomparable with the colorful life in the city.

Young people are indifferent and even dismissive of the farm work, believing that it doesn't matter whether they can do it or not. They think that they can live in the city very well through non-agricultural labor such as learning skills. It's easy to understand that comparative benefits make it easier to earn more in the city than in the countryside under the same working conditions. Moreover, the level of infrastructure and public services in the city is higher than that in the village, and life is more convenient and comfortable.

### III. ANALYSIS ON THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF THE YOUNG STUDENTS WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL TO WORK IN CITIES

The author made a detailed understanding to some young people and their parents about the reasons for dropout teenagers to work in cities in S village, and believed that the main factors affecting dropout teenagers to work in cities were the recommendation of relatives and friends, the change of ideas, the need to gain face, and the different interests between agriculture and industry and commerce.

#### A. *The Influence of Village Elites and Recommendation of Relatives and Friends*

The economic talents who have made great achievements starting from nothing in the city after years of hard work have naturally set a good example for people to work in cities. Economic experts are the so-called village elites, who play a decisive role in leading villagers to get rich together. These successful people give people glimmers of hope, so villagers are eager to try their best to live a better life. Although in the current internet era, rural information access is also very convenient, but most of the young people who are out of school in S villages are introduced to work in the city by their relatives and friends. Fei Xiaotong once said in "Native China" that the local society is an acquaintance society established on the basis of kinship, geography and business relationship, that is, the pattern of difference sequence [1]. It is still common for relatives and friends to help students who drop out of school to find jobs in cities. If a person comes to a completely strange city to find a job, the probability is not high, because they have no obvious advantages in the labor structure, and guard them against the risk of being deceived. For example, in the interview, Liu dropped out of a junior high school without being admitted to an ordinary senior high school. His family

asked him to study as a fending and warping worker in a warp knitting factory in Shaoxing through his relatives, so that he could have a special skill to make a living. In this way, with the help of relatives and friends in the city, they can adapt to the city life as soon as possible, and their parents can also avoid a lot of cares and worries.

#### B. *The Change of Ideology*

In the traditional Chinese society, people are attached to their native land and unwilling to leave it, the cultivation of agriculture is the foundation for peasants to settle down. With the changes of the social environment, people's attachment to the land is gradually dissolved, and they have more life choices. In remote rural areas, life is hard and income is low. It is often heard that after one year's hard work to plant one mu of farmland at home, only a few thousand yuan of income, which just enough to make ends meet. The income of a few thousand dollars a year in the family can be earned in the city for only one month. This comparative advantage undoubtedly tells parents that migrant workers can not only survive, but also enjoy a higher standard of living. Parents are more likely to let their children venture out. As long as the young people work step by step in the city, most of them have broadened their horizons, increased their knowledge, earned some money, and even contributed to their family economy. Therefore, the status of the younger generation in the family has been greatly improved, and they have the right to speak when making decisions on important matters such as human relations and buying houses, which has led to the fact that many families have reversed the main body of power [2]. However, the traditional social and cultural inheritance model is to impart survival skills, life experience and ethical values from the elder generations to the younger generations, so that the cultural system can be accumulated and the social life can continue to move forward. Based on this, the older generation has a higher status in the family and has the power to make decisions on family affairs.

#### C. *The need to Gain Face*

When people gather together in groups, one of the most important things between people is that face is affecting them. Face exists and influences people in different societies. It is particularly important in understanding people's behavior in village society. It is often closely related to prestige, status, and honor [3]. People can gain face through the success of their careers, the acquisition of wealth and their ostentation. Li in S Village has been working hard in the city for many years, engaged in the construction industry, contracting several large and small projects, with tens of millions wealth. During festival he returned to the village with glory. He thought that he had a good face in front of everyone and that they all respected him very much. He was treated enthusiastically and invited to drink and eat. Every coin has two sides. Since you earn face, you will lose face. People are reluctant to talk publicly about losing face. For example, three older girls in S village, such as Wan, are not married, which also arouses the discussion of villagers and makes their parents easily get angry and annoyed.

In rural society, there are still many occasions to keep face. People's comparison, vanity, and conformity have triggered

competitive pressures on many things, such as, children's academic performance, the quality of their children's job, how well girls marry and the construction of houses, all of which can win or lose face. From this point of view, it is a very important way to gain face that young people who drop out of school come to the city to work and get rich. The village cultural environment is the key reason for rural dropouts to work in cities.

#### *D. The Different Interests between Agriculture and Industry and Commerce*

There is a large gap between agriculture (planting and scattered breeding) and industry and commerce. As the saying goes, agriculture depends on the weather, which requires higher natural and climatic conditions, and has a long production cycle. Therefore, agricultural production benefits are relatively low and unstable. Different from the plain area, S village is hilly and mountainous, with slopes, and the mechanization operation is difficult. It is impossible to intensively plant, so it will not bring more benefits. The comparative value of agricultural and sideline products is significantly lower than that of industrial products. There is a big gap between the input and output of the same labor. Consequently, dropouts are more willing to go the city to participate in commercial production.

#### IV. CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE BEHAVIOR OF WORKING IN THE CITY

Bourdieu, an anthropologist, said: "Field refers to a network or configuration of objective relationships that exist among various locations." Social actors are often in a specific field, and habitus is an important factor affecting their participation in practical activities. Bourdieu believes that "habitus is an open system of dispositions, which can be constantly changed with experience, so as to continuously strengthen or adjust its structure under the influence of these experiences.[4]" In the traditional rural society, people stick to their native land and get used to working when sun rise and resting when sun falls, and living the life of spring planting and autumn harvesting. This is the habit of fathers' actions.

With the development of urbanization, the field of people's life has changed, which undoubtedly affects people's behavior choices. In the new field, the actor found a way of action that fits the field and created new habitus. Influenced by the pioneers in the villages, under the influence of comparative interests and the conformity psychology, most of the teenagers who drop out of school will choose to engage in non-agricultural labor in the city.

When the so-called successful people who had previously smashed a piece of heaven and earth in the city returned to their hometowns, they naturally won a lot of envious slights of others, but they struggled hard and suffered a lot of hardships outsidess for many years, which is impossible for their villagers to empathize with them. Indeed, these people gained material wealth and social status through hard work. Examples of forerunners who have done well in the city make people realize that their lives will be better if they venture into the city. It is precisely because of their strong influence that when the road

to success in school is not going well, a large number of teenagers who drop out of school will subconsciously take urban migrant workers as the primary choice, which is a new habitus of teenagers' action gradually formed in the field of current urbanization development and local social changes. Bourdieu's field theory and habitus theory can help explain how working in the city become a new life choice in the subconscious of teenagers who drop out of school.

In the mountainous S Village, the radiation function of the city is very weak, and the dual structure difference between urban and rural is more obvious. The traditional rural society relies on the differential order pattern to form the orderly operation of social norms, while the city is a heterogeneous stranger society, which is maintained by contract. After dropping out of school and entering the city, they found that the original indigenous knowledge system could not be well connected with urban life. They needed to learn urban culture to adapt to the survival and development of the new environment.

Teenagers who drop out of school are bound to encounter many setbacks when they go to cities for work, far away from their familiar hometown and well-cared parents. It is precisely because of such life experience in the city that their personality has grown and improved, their behavior is more mature and prudent, and their independent ability has been constantly enhanced. In the interview, it can be found that the young people in the city are more talkative, and few of them are introverted. Parents generally believe that their children have become more sensible. It can be seen that the living environment has a profound impact on people's growth.

Young people who drop out of school to work in the city are in the threshold. On the one hand, they have been far away from the countryside and farm work, working and living in the city, is not a veritable identity of peasants; on the other hand, because they do not have the identity of urban people, they can not enjoy the welfare benefits of the urban citizens, but the city can not do without them, they quietly contribute their own strength to the development of the city. Between rural and urban areas, they are in awkward situations and with lower social status, which can be called the border groups. In other words, they do not have a clear social structure and identity. For this reason, they may have to bear certain psychological pressure, such as not being accepted and respected by urban people. The strategy of urbanization has brought about the labor mobility in rural society. The implementation of modern industrial civilization requires labor, especially when the economy is running well, it requires a large amount of labor, but when the economy is in recession, they will face unemployment. Migrant workers in cities play such a role. In the threshold, their previous social norms and thinking patterns need to be changed and adjusted, and new cultural systems need to be absorbed to adapt to urban work and life.

Seeking a livelihood in the city can be a tough growth experience, like going through a ritual, while teenagers who enter the city are in the transition of two identities. It is through such a threshold process that these young people's characteristics are getting better and better, the social relationship network is established, the living space is found in

the city and even a good life is possessed. Some of them actually settle down in the city and obtain the citizenship different from that of peasants. Even if many people will return to the village society in the future, their life experiences in the city will teach them knowledge and gain face in front of the neighbors.

Adolescents who work in cities improve their quality and adapt themselves to urban life in the process of accepting the influence of urban culture. Meanwhile, it will also accelerate urban civilization, such as competition, independent consciousness and struggle spirit, time concept, to spread and penetrate into rural society and promote the construction of rural spiritual civilization. The development of urbanization requires not only the improvement of the material living standards in our countryside, but also the establishment of its spiritual civilization. Our local culture will absorb the nutrients of urban civilization to innovate and develop continuously, which will help urban and rural cultures integrate and develop, and move towards the integration of urban and rural.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the young people who drop out of school and go to work in cities are closely related to the development of urbanization and the changes of local society. This paper holds that working in cities will have a certain impact on the socialization, cultural adaptation and their adolescent personality psychology. Young people complete their socialization process in the village society and carry the basic skills of rural culture. After coming to the city, their original local cultural system can not be well docked with urban life, and they are confronted with the conflict between tradition and modernity. To better adapt and integrate into urban life, young people need to complete the re-socialization process, that is, to

learn new value systems and lifestyles, and to identify with urban civilization. The dropout adolescents who have not been included in the statistics of urbanization rate actually have an urbanization lifestyle. It is through such a suffering process of life that although they suffer from psychological pressure, their personality can grow, their psychology can experience and their ability can improve. At the same time, taking this group as the carrier and bridge, urban civilization has spread and penetrated into rural society, and rural society has gradually moved towards modernization, which in turn promotes the process of urban-rural integration.

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