



Limited Asylum and Family Risk Avoidance: Work Conditions and Career Choices of Dispatched Workers on the Edge of the Unit System

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Abstract. With the development of economy, social instability is increasing. Even within the unit system with Chinese characteristics, flexible employment mode has been introduced to improve efficiency. As a representative of unstable employment in the unit system with Chinese characteristics, the working situation of dispatch workers within the unit system is worth studying. Based on the basis of "clientelism" came up with by Walder, this study introduces the principle of family risk avoidance, and uses the method of empirical research to conduct the fixed field research on S unit. Walder believes that under the unique system of China, workers are fully attached to their work units. However, in the group of dispatched workers, the subject of asylum to them is usually not by colleagues with strong working relations, but by informal contacts, so this asylum is limited and different from economic benefits. Faced with the limitations of such asylum, non-regular employees in the system will make different career choices based on their family's ability to resist risks. Therefore, this study is important for understanding current social unstable labor relations and clientelism within the system of units.

Keywords: dispatched workers within the unit system, limited asylum, family ability to resist risks

1 Introduction

In the 1990s, when China's socialist market economic system was established, more and more short-term work could not be incorporated into the formal system, and needed temporary personnel to complete it, so informal labor relations emerged at the historic moment. By sending workers to work in government organs, the unstable labor relationship under stable unit system has become a labor system with Chinese characteristics. Based on this, this study took the S unit in P city H Province as the designated field, conducted empirical research by participating in observation and in-depth interviews, and interviewed three labor workers and three administrative

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staff, so as to find out the labor choice of dispatched workers under the unstable employment relationship within the unit system.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Unstable Labor Traceability at Home and Abroad

Since the development of capitalist economy fell into stagflation in the last century, the employment mode has entered the "post-Ford era", and the temporary and unstable labor came into being (Beverly J.Silver,2003)[1].Gathering Chinese academic circles, You Zhenglin (2022)analyzed the differences between Chinese industrial workers and the West [2], and Liu Aiyu (2012) focused on the treatment of migrant workers with "the same work with different pay"[3]. The 2008 financial crisis caused setbacks in overseas markets and increased labor costs. Regardless of the cost of the labor mode has been unable to support the operation of the unit, so the labor dispatch began to be implemented in the unit system. At present, the research of Chinese society on labor under unstable employment focuses on the market sector, and there is little research on unstable employment within the unit system.

2.2 The Study of Clientelism

Blau (2008) said: " Asylum is a direct social exchange dominated by material benefits and based on vertical control.[4]"The study of clientelism in Chinese academia has been continuing the new traditionalism. Walder believes that the essence of the power system of state-owned factories is the protection given by superiors[5]. At present, there are two views in the Chinese academic circle. One view is represented by Jia Wenjuan (2024)[6], who believes that the unit will tend to economic logic, while the representative figure of the other view is Li Lulu, who believes that even if the market-oriented employment enters the organization, its core is still clientelism.

2.3 Workers' Subjective Initiative under Unstable Employment

Marx believed that only when workers became revolutionary groups could they give full play to their initiative. After the World War II, all kinds of trade unions emerged, such as the British Federation of Labor[7]. However, as a socialist country led by the working class, the trade union organization in our country is a political organization.Therefore, how to play the initiative of Chinese workers is a question worth thinking about. The Chinese workers are involved in the traditional Chinese social ethics. The term "relationship standard" was put forward by Liang Shuming, who said that Chinese social relations are "we do not fix the focus on either party, but then exchange the relationship with each other"[8]. Relations standard is to resolve the contradiction between individual interests and social interests, so the Chinese workers are more inclined to take the relationship as the driving force of initiative.

Although some scholars believe that there is still asylum in Chinese units, there are limitations, but they do not point out the what the limitations exactly are. Among Chinese workers who rely on gender and household registration, the play of workers' initiative is usually regarded as the embodiment of common memory and worship of labor, but the factors behind it have been paid less attention to. Therefore, the study is conducted based on the above gaps.

3 Limited Asylum on the Edge of the Unit System

3.1 Loose Labor of Dispatched Workers in the Unit System

The labor process of S unit dispatch workers can be described as flexible time, good environment and loose labor discipline.

The unit regulations, work time is from 9 a.m.to 6p.m. After work, the dispatched workers will leave their office almost immediately, and even if they work overtime, they will not leave later than 7 p. m. At the same time, although the dispatch workers have not independent offices, one office contains only three people at most, and the office area is large. In terms of labor discipline, dispatch workers in the X department will do their own things in the time without work arrangement, and will not be supervised by formal employees in S unit. Unless they make mistakes, they will not be fired in principle.

It can be seen that the working hours and intensity of dispatch workers in the system are far lower than those of factory workers, and the assessment standards and supervision are not strict, and their labor belongs to a kind of "loose labor".

3.2 The Clientelism under Acquaintance Interaction

Different from previous studies on clientelism, in this study, the subjects of asylum are mostly clerks at the same level as dispatch workers. At the same time, the enthusiasm of dispatch workers in the system can not be stimulated by asylum, and excessive asylum may make their enthusiasm worse. In fact, in the protection of the system for the labor dispatch workers, the interaction of acquaintances based on interpersonal communication plays an important role, so the labor dispatch workers can get remarkable asylum sometimes.

Friendly Interaction and Coincident of Social Networks. During the time without work arrangement, dispatch workers and formal employees will chat, and dispatch workers will also help formal employees during non-working hours. Therefore, the section chief of X department has a good impression on them, and will give them benefits that other dispatch workers do not have.

"Our leader will also apply for benefits for me. For example, we leave work at five o'clock every night, but the leader said that I can go at 4:30p.m. And like some festivals, the leader also applied for a bonus for me."(Miss C, a dispatch worker)

In addition, the social network of formal employees and dispatch workers will also overlap.

"Because Miss Ke is not a few years older than my daughter, she and Miss Ke added WeChat, a few days ago they still played together." (He, Chief of Department X)

Conflict Mitigation by Informal Interpersonal Interaction. Dispatch workers will inevitably make mistakes in their work. According to the regulations of S unit, the mistakes will be included in the assessment. When the assessment score is too low, they will be dismissed. However, because of the human relationship between dispatch workers and formal employees, most of the time, even if they make mistakes, they are not included in the assessment. Sometimes, formal employees will plead with the leaders to keep the jobs of dispatch workers, which reflects that with the deepening of interpersonal communication, the asylum from formal employees for dispatch workers extends from giving rewards to avoid punishment.

"Last time, because I had a problem in polishing photos, the leader was very angry. He knew that this kind of work is usually done by us (dispatch workers), so he said I would be fired, our section chief said a lot of good things about me, and finally did not fire me." (Miss Le, a dispatch worker)

Thus, it can be seen that the communication of acquaintances in S unit derived a kind of asylum to help dispatch workers to get rewards and avoid punishment.

3.3 The Inherent Limitations of Limited Asylum on the Edge of the Unit System

In some cases, human-based asylum will fail.

The Subjects of Asylum Implementation has Limitations. In S unit, the dispatch workers obtain the protection from the clerks at the same level or from the small leaders higher than its level. This is mainly because it is difficult for the dispatch workers to communicate with senior leaders, so the scope of communication is very limited. Once they need asylum from people outside of their contacts, it is difficult to achieve.

"I once fired a boy. One day there would be a meeting, he told his section chief he wanted a day-off but forgot to tell the big leader. So the leader was very angry, giving him a phone call, maybe blaming on him. The boy was angry, and quarreled with the leader. His mother asked for an apology. With no ideas we could only dismiss him." (Miss Wang, cadre of personnel Department)

Because the above male dispatch worker only communicate with the personnel of his own department, so when his mistakes are beyond the scope of his own department, other personnel will not shelter him.

Interpersonal Cutting under Accountability System Pressure. In S unit, dispatch workers do not enjoy the benefits and treatment as formal employees, and are often

labeled as "poor working ability", because they do not enter the unit through the unified examination. As a result, formal employees and dispatch workers lack identity, even with informal interactions. So when formal employees face accountability, such informal relationships are scattered by formal workers to avoid taking responsibility . At this point, the asylum will also fail. Different from the cordial names of "Mr Wang" and "Mr Li", leaders call dispatch workers only as "labor dispatch", and such labeled dispatch workers are excluded from the unit system.

In the face of accountability, formal employees draw a boundary between themselves and labor workers. The section chief of the X department, He , recalled:

"If there was a problem, I thought it should be Miss Le's fault, our big leader also thought her ability was not strong. I went back to check, exactly, but this work needed people to take responsibility ."(He, Section chief of Department X)

In the face of accountability, He puts the responsibility on the dispatch workers, and the leader will think that the weak ability of the dispatch workers makes them take responsibility. This suggests that when someone needs to take responsibility, formal employees show the boundary between themselves and the dispatchers, even if they have informal interactions. In the face of the label of "poor working ability", it is reasonable for labor workers to be blamed on, and formal employees will also use the "poor working ability" label impression , so that dispatch workers become the people who take all the responsibility.

To sum up, although the asylum of the system for labor dispatch workers depends on informal communication and human relations, it cannot break through the limitations of interpersonal communication and label image, so it is a limited asylum.

4 Career Options Based on Family Risk Resistance Ability

Dispatch workers can use their subjective initiative to make different choices to deal with limited asylum. Their future careers are mainly in the following two types: participate in the Civil-service Examination and obtain the formation (represented by Miss Ke); continue to work as a dispatch workers (represented by Miss Le and Miss C). The author interviewed the representatives of the two choices and summarized them, as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Career choice and family risk resistance ability.

Name	Occupational planning	Family of origin	Marriage situation	Family ability to resist risk
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Miss Ke	Civil-service Examination	Parents for the rural households, less pension.	The spouse is outside the system, and the salary is small.	weaker
Miss Le	A dispatched worker	Parents for the urban households, retired cadres.	The spouse is within the system, and the salary is high.	stronger
Miss C	A dispatched worker	Parents for rural households, less pension.	The spouse is a military cadre with a high salary.	stronger

The future career choices can be classified according to family's ability to resist risks. Families working in the unit system tend to be more satisfied with their welfare benefits[9]. If it is not included in the system, the family welfare will be greatly reduced, and its children are required to enter the unit system and seek welfare protection. In terms of market risk, the M city where S office is located is underdeveloped, so the salary in the unit system is higher than that of the market department. From this point of view, families who do not work in the system will have less welfare and disposable income provided by family members, and are less able to resist risks.

4.1 Coping with the Risk of Separation from the Unit System

In China, having an status within the system means having pension, housing, stable salary and other benefits, and these preferential benefits undoubtedly enable regular employees in the system to have a stronger ability to resist the risks posed by uncertainty.

Miss Ke's original family's ability to resist risk from getting out of the unit system is poor. Her spouse and parents lack institutional welfare, making Miss Ke in the face of the pressure outside the unit system, so she can only choose to temporarily delay their family planning, but Miss Ke doesn't choose to stay with the risk and pressure. She struggles to enter the unit system, making up for the weakness that family cannot resist the risk of getting out of the unit system.

"My family has a self-built house in the countryside and lives with my parents. They are all retired. They used to work in a screw factory and took more than 2,000

yuan in their pension every month. So I want to prepare for the civil-service examination with my husband, if pass, I and my husband and two people at least one person is a fixed salary, can save the money, and there will be a lot of welfare, school district housing and provident fund, education this aspect is guaranteed, can consider the child's matter."(Miss Ke, a labor dispatch worker)

Miss Le's family is reversed:

"My husband usually lives in the unit dormitory, eat and take a bath does not spend money, so he gave me the salary card, he generally leave about a thousand for himself, the last day of each month, this money on time goes to my card, more accurate than the weather forecast, and my son is very small, his unit will give some subsidies."(Miss Le, a dispatch worker)

Miss Le's marriage and family have a very stable salary guarantee, in this case, the quality of life will be higher, also need not worry about if they are expelled by S office because of work mistakes, the family will lose stable economic source; plus his child is younger, Miss Le's spouse subsidies from the unit can be used as the education fund of the family.

"Sometimes my mother gives me subsidies. Anyway, they have pension every month, and the labor union often organizes activities for retired cadres. They have a good time and don't worry about me."(Miss Le, a dispatch worker)

Miss Le's parents have a rich life of old age for the activities organized by the labor union. This rich inner world can alleviate conflicts, and their parents' stable pension can be shared with them. So in Miss Le's career choice, his parents think ease and comfort are the most important,

According to Miss C's dictation, his family's ability to resist the risk of separation from the system is mainly reflected in the stable housing, no need to worry about the mortgage problem, so Miss C does not need to look for a job with a higher salary.

4.2 Coping with the Risks of Marketization

With the deepening of China's reform and opening up and marketization, it effects all aspects of life. Due to the different salaries and benefits of different work units, family members have different roles in guaranteeing the whole family. Due to the lack of economic pillar industries in the city where the S organization is located, the salary in the unit system is higher than that of market-oriented enterprises or departments. Therefore, if the family members work in a formal capacity in the system, the role of members in supporting and guaranteeing the family is also higher than that of the family members in other occupations.

"Now no children is also good. If having children, my salary is three thousand, my husband's is more than six thousand, adding up to more than ten thousand, If children go to cram school, the money is certainly not enough, if my salary doubled, my husband and I are now together, can achieve best, in this case, the economic burden of the home can reduce a lot."(Miss Ke, a dispatch worker)

Due to the low salary, Miss Ke's family cannot resist the risk of spending more on children's education, nor the risk that their parents need money. Getting in the unit system means the salary increase. If Miss Ke and his spouse are successfully admitted

into the unit system, it means that his family can obtain guarantee for resisting market risks.

"The army pays a pension, relatively high, and retired, to find a job, can also get a salary, plus a pension, almost can support the expenses of the whole family." (Miss C, a dispatch worker)

The purpose of some people working is to take advantage of idle labor dispatch work to obtain abundant time, while some people work to obtain welfare and higher income. Different people have differences in their planning and choice for the future career due to their family's different ability to resist market risks.

Behind the career choice, it actually reflects the different relationships between the individual and the family at different stages of his life. When a child is underage, mainly rely on the support and upbringing of the family of origin, this support is usually unlimited. Once the children established family, will be more energy into the construction of the new family, but it doesn't mean go away from native family, native family can give children and children to form a new family help, and due to the holdings of social capital is different, the struggle degree for small families is different, from S office dispatched workers in the face of limited asylum career choice can reflect the family standards characteristics of Chinese society.

5 Conclusions

This study is important to fill the gap of the study of initiative of workers. And this study found the family factors of labor's subjective initiative, which is conducive to the deep understanding of the strong relationship society of family standard.

This study finds that the labor dispatch workers in the system are loose, and the system will give them limited protection, but the core of the career choice of dispatch workers is the ability to resist risks of their family. Due to the strong relationship between the individual and the family of origin that is difficult to cut apart, the social capital of the family of origin or the newly formed family after marriage becomes the basis for its choice.

On the basis of selecting the X department of S unit as a case, this study also hopes to have a deeper study on the choice of dispatch workers in different economic development levels areas and draw more rigorous conclusions.

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