

# Attitude towards Migrant Peasant Workers

## from Different Social Groups in Cities

### – A Case Study of Nanjing

Liu Yujun

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Nanjing University

## I The Origin of the Problem

In order to investigate the evaluation and attitude of Nanjing citizens of migrant peasant workers, we carried out questionnaire survey in thirteen districts and counties in Nanjing from July to August in 2012.

There are numbers of researches which are about the problems of migrant peasant workers in China focusing on the institutional level. Many scholars have pointed out that the basic institutional environment which the migrant peasant workers faced is the dual structure of urban and rural in China (Su Dairui, 2001; CaiFang,2001;Sun Liping,2002;LiQiang,20002002;Yang Xiaokai,2003; Liu Linping,2004、2006; Chen Jinyong,2006). However, there were little attention on the effect of the dual structure of the urban and rural on the social psychology and the values of the citizens. According to our retrieval for China Academic Journal, we found that there were only a few articles paying attention to this theme.

## II Investigation Process and Sample Information

From July to August, 2012, we carried out questionnaire survey in Nanjing. Our survey object included Nanjing local permanent residents and non-permanent resident (who lived in Nanjing for more than half a year).The survey sample allocation based on the population information from the 2010 census and proportion of the population of thirteen counties and areas of Nanjing. In our survey, we controlled some indicators such as household registration, sex, industry and geographical distribution. We sent out 563 questionnaires and recovered 557 valid questionnaires. The ratio of valid recovery is 98.93%.

We used random sampling in this survey. The sampling design was based on the data from the 2010 census and statistical yearbook of 2011 of Nanjing. Firstly, the number of questionnaires which should be sent to 13 counties and areas was determined by the rate of the household and non-household population. Then we extracted some neighborhood committees according to the rate of the communities and neighborhood committees. After that we finally choose our survey object in the selected communities and neighborhood committees according to the population

ratio. When we selected one people, we would select another four people who lived around him as an alternative. In addition, we had a special control on the sex and the type of the professions of the survey objects.

This investigation was completed by 11 graduate students who were studying in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences in Nanjing University. Before the survey started, they all received the professional training. From July 28 to August 17, they were divided into seven groups and went to thirteen counties and areas. Under the coordination of the local neighborhood committees, they finished the household surveys in strict accordance with the requirements of the sampling plan.

In the process of recovering the questionnaires, we found that the retirees had a higher proportion in the sample. In order to avoid the high error appears, we sent 63 questionnaires again in the district which the retirees were relatively centralized as a remedy.

The regional distributions of the questionnaires are shown in Table 1:

**Table 1 Regional distribution of the questionnaires**

Region		Number of Questionnaires	Region		Number of Questionnaires
Urban Districts	Xuanwu	56	Suburban Districts	Pukou	44
	Baixia	53		Liuhe	56
	Qinhuai	26		Qixia	40
	Gulou	50		Jiangning	71
	Xiaguan	35	Suburban Counties	Lishui	26
	Jianye	40		Gaochun	27
	Yuhuatai	33			
Total:557					

The basic information of the valid samples are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2 Sample Information**

Option	Frequency(%)
Age (N=555)	15-88 (average age 44.45, standard deviation 13.84)
Sex (N=557)	Male 291 (52.24%) ;female 266 (47.76)
Household Size (N=556)	Urban hukou of Nanjing 325 (58.45%); rural hukou of Nanjing 154 (27.70%) ;hukou of other places 77 (13.85%)
Marriage status (N=556)	Married 464 (83.45%); unmarried 92 (16.55%) ;
Education Level (N=553)	Under the primary school 51 (9.22%) ;junior high school 150 (27.12%) ;senior middle school 139 (25.14%) ;Secondary vocational and technical schools 33 (5.97%) ;senior college 112 (20.25%) ;bachelor 64 (11.57%) ;master 4 (0.72%); average educational years: 11.81;
Politics status (N=557)	Party Member 167 (29.98%) ; Komsomolets 65 (11.67%); the masses 325 (58.35%)
Occupation (N=557)	Workers 154(27.65%);clerk 95(17.06%); senior management 71 (12.75%) ;Self-employed 54 (9.69%) ;peasants 93

	(16.70%); unemployment and others (16.15%) ;
Industry (N=557)	Agriculture 90 (16.16%) ; Industry, trade, service sector, transportation industry 299 (53.68%) ;Party and government organs, science, education, literature and community 104 (18.67%) ;unemployment and others 64 (11.49%)

As shown above, the survey sample aged from 15 to 88. The age is relatively uniform. The average age is 44 and the number of people who are under 50 accounts for more than half of the total number of samples. The sex ratio of the sample is 109.40. The proportion of the Party Members is 30%. The education degrees focus on junior high school, senior middle school and senior college. The average educated years are 11.81. The proportion of the respondents who are not of the Nanjing census register is 14%. Most of the research object is the people at the basic level.

### III Evaluation and attitude of citizens of migrant peasant workers

There were 11 statements in our questionnaire to investigate the attitude of Nanjing citizens to migrant peasant workers. For results, see Table 3:

**Table 3 Evaluation of Nanjing Citizens to Migrant Peasant Workers**

	Strongly Agree	Comparatively Agree	Generally Agree	Not Quite Agree	Strongly Disagree
1.Migrant peasant workers provided convenience for citizens' life	216 (39.27%)	229 (41.64%)	87 (15.82%)	12 (2.18%)	6 (1.09%)
2. Migrant peasant workers provided cheap services and reduce the cost of citizens' life	167 (30.09%)	209 (37.66%)	93 (16.76%)	70 (12.61%)	16 (2.88%)
3.Migrant peasant workers increased the consumption of Nanjing and stimulate the market	150 (27.08%)	179 (32.31%)	147 (26.53%)	67 (12.09%)	11 (1.99%)

4.The economic development of Nanjing cannot be separated from migrant peasant workers' endeavor	253 (46.00%)	215 (39.09%)	53 (9.64%)	22 (4.00%)	7 (1.27%)
5.Migrant peasant workers' tasks were dirty, heavy and dangerous which citizens would not to do	308 (55.50%)	173 (31.17%)	47 (8.47%)	17 (3.06%)	10 (1.80%)
6.Migrant peasant workers led to an increase in criminal phenomenon	31 (5.61%)	91 (16.46%)	161 (29.11%)	176 (31.83%)	94 (17.00%)
7.Migrant peasant workers affected the environment and appearance of the city	25 (4.53%)	76 (13.77%)	137 (24.82%)	181 (32.79%)	133 (24.09%)
8.Migrant peasant workers competed with citizens for jobs	26 (4.68%)	50 (8.99%)	104 (18.71%)	215 (38.67%)	161 (28.96%)
9.Migrant peasant workers exacerbated traffic congestion	16 (2.89%)	55 (9.93%)	129 (23.29%)	196 (35.38%)	158 (28.52%)

10.Migrant peasant workers sold fakes and disrupted the market order	30 (5.42%)	77 (13.90%)	143 (25.81%)	170 (30.69%)	134 (24.19%)
11.Migrant peasant workers corrupted the social atmosphere of the city	17 (3.06%)	26 (4.68%)	108 (19.46%)	192 (34.59%)	212 (38.20%)

At the same time, we assigned values to Table 3. The statements 1-5 are positive evaluation of migrant peasant workers. From “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, we assigned 1-5 points successively. While the statements 6-11 are negative evaluation to migrant peasant workers. So we assigned 5-1 points from “Strongly Disagree ” to “Strongly Agree”. Thus we can obtain the scores of 11 statements above, see Table 4:

**Table 4 Scores of the evaluation of Nanjing citizens of migrant peasant workers**

Options	Strongly Agree	Comparatively Agree	Generally Agree	Not Quit Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Average Score
1	1080	916	261	24	6	2287	4.16
2	835	836	279	140	16	2106	3.79
3	750	716	441	134	11	2052	3.70
4	1265	860	159	44	7	2335	4.25
5	1540	692	141	34	10	2417	4.35
6	31	182	483	704	470	1870	3.38
7	25	152	411	724	665	1977	3.58
8	26	100	312	860	805	2103	3.78
9	16	110	387	784	790	2087	3.77
10	30	154	429	680	670	1963	3.54
11	17	52	324	768	1060	2221	4.00
Total Average Sore							3.85

Table 3 and Table 4 shows that the evaluation of Nanjing citizens to migrant peasant workers is beyond the general level (the total average score is 3.85). Among this, the statement “migrant peasant workers’ tasks are dirty, heavy and dangerous which citizens would not to do” obtained great endorsement of Nanjing citizens. There were more than eighty percent (86.67%) of Nanjing citizens chose “strongly agree” and “comparatively agree”. Nanjing citizens also agreed the statement “the economic development of Nanjing cannot be separated from migrant peasant workers’ endeavor”, the proportion of citizens who chose “strongly agree” and “comparatively agree” is 85.09% of total samples. There were more than eighty percent of citizens chose “strongly agree” and “comparatively agree” about the statement “migrant peasant workers provide convenience for citizens’ life”. The choices of Nanjing citizens for these statements, such as migrant peasant workers “led to an increase in criminal phenomenon” “affected the environment and appearance of the city” “competed with citizens for jobs” “exacerbated traffic congestion” “disrupted the market order”, tended to “not quite agree” and “generally agree” . Among them, more than twenty percent of citizens chose “strongly disagree” for four statements except the statement “migrant peasant workers led to an increase in criminal phenomenon”. For the statement 11, migrant peasant workers corrupted the social atmosphere of the city, there were more than 70% citizens chose “strongly disagree” (34.59%) and “not quite agree” (38.20%).

We also had 10 statements about the rights and interests of migrant peasant workers listed in the questionnaires so as to obtain the level of agreement of citizens. For results, refer to Table 5:

**Table 5 Public views of Nanjing citizens for migrant peasant workers should enjoy the equal rights and interests with themselves**

Options	Strongly Agree	Comparatively Agree	Neutrality	Not quite Agree	Strongly Disagree
1.Migrant peasant workers should have equal employment opportunity with Nanjing citizens	255 (45.86%)	194 (34.89%)	72 (12.95%)	29 (5.22%)	6 (1.08%)
2.Migrant peasant workers should have equal unemployment	236 (42.52%)	182 (32.79%)	89 (16.04%)	40 (7.21%)	8 (1.44%)

benefits with Nanjing citizens					
3.Migrant peasant workers should have equal pension insurance with Nanjing citizens	245 (44.06%)	207 (37.23%)	74 (13.31%)	23 (4.14%)	7 (1.26%)
4.Migrant peasant workers should have equal medical insurance with Nanjing citizens	252 (45.32%)	214 (38.49%)	63 (11.33%)	19 (3.42%)	8 (1.44%)
5.Migrant peasant workers should have equal subsistence allowance with Nanjing citizens	211 (38.02%)	185 (33.33%)	90 (16.22%)	55 (9.91%)	14 (2.52%)
6.The children of migrant peasant workers have rights to receive equal compulsory education with the children of Nanjing citizens	303 (54.59%)	189 (34.05%)	46 (8.29%)	10 (1.80%)	7 (1.26%)
7.Migrant peasant					

workers should have equal rights to lease the low-cost housing provided by the government	243 (43.86%)	162 (29.24%)	98 (17.69%)	37 (6.68%)	14 (2.53%)
8.Migrant peasant workers should have rights to take part in the election of neighborhood committees in current residence	211 (38.02%)	175 (31.53%)	112 (20.18%)	48 (8.65%)	9 (1.62%)
9.Migrant peasant workers have rights to participate in the election of National People’s Congress in Nanjing	205 (37.00%)	163 (29.42%)	119 (21.48%)	52 (9.39%)	15 (2.71%)

In Table 5, we can see that the highly identified statement of Nanjing citizens is “the children of migrant peasant workers have rights to receive equal compulsory education with the children of Nanjing citizens”. There were more than ninety percent of the respondents choosing “strongly agree” and “comparatively agree”. Should migrant peasant workers have equal employment opportunity, pension insurance and medical insurance with Nanjing citizens? There were more than eighty percent of respondents choosing “strongly agree” and “comparatively agree”. In addition, there were more than seventy percent of citizens choosing “strongly agree” and “comparatively agree” for the statement that “migrant peasant workers should have equal unemployment allowance, subsistence allowance and low-cost housing provided by government with Nanjing citizens.”

We also assigned values for Table 5. “Strongly agree” was assigned 5 points, and “strongly disagree” was assigned 1 points in descending order. For results, see Table 6.



**Table 6 Scores of the Nanjing citizens' views about rights and interests of migrant peasant workers**

Options	Strongly Agree	Comparatively Agree	Neutralism	Not Quite Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Average Score
1	1275	776	216	58	6	2331	4.19
2	1180	728	267	80	8	2263	4.08
3	1225	828	222	46	7	2328	4.19
4	1260	856	189	38	8	2351	4.23
5	1055	740	270	110	14	2189	3.94
6	1515	756	138	20	7	2436	4.39
7	1215	648	294	74	14	2245	4.05
8	1055	700	336	96	9	2196	3.96
9	1025	652	357	104	15	2153	3.89
Total Average Score							4.10

From Table 6, we found that Nanjing citizens generally approve that migrant peasant workers should have equal civil rights with local residents because the total average score is greater than 4. They were inclined to agree the statements we listed in questionnaires. The statement “migrant peasant workers have rights to participate in the election of National People’s Congress in Nanjing” had the lowest score, but its score still exceed neutralism and tend to “comparatively agree”.

Do migrant peasant workers have rights to settle down in the city? We set up such a question in questionnaire: “Are you in favor of migrant peasant workers settling in Nanjing?” We have three options: unconditional support, conditional support and disapproval. Among the respondents, there were 323 people chose “unconditional support”, accounting for 58.51% of the total sample. There were 170(30.80%) citizens selected “conditional support”, and there were only 59(10.69%) citizens chose “disapproval”. The conditions put forward by those people who approved that migrant peasant workers have rights to settle down in Nanjing conditionally are: the migrant peasant workers should have special or outstanding contribution to Nanjing; They should have lived in Nanjing for some years; They might have the ability to work; Or they might have excellent quality. Those people who opposed migrant peasant workers to settle down in the city thought that the population of Nanjing is excessive. And there were housing difficulties and traffic congestion in Nanjing. There are also regional differences between urban and rural areas. If migrant peasant workers settled down in the city, they might not be well-adapted. And the young people would abandon the rural land and the aging in countryside will aggravate.

In the previous section, we got the evaluation of Nanjing citizens to migrant peasant workers and the scores of the evaluation. So, which factors affect the citizens' evaluation? What is the degree of their impact?

#### IV Relevant factors affected the citizens' evaluation

We handled following variables in such ways: sex, "female" was the reference; marital status, "unmarried" was the reference; education situation, "under the junior college" was the reference; household registration, the reference was "urban hukou in Nanjing"; occupation, "workers" was the reference; industry, the reference was "agriculture"; religion, "Buddhism" was the reference; party member identity, "not" was the reference; social worker identity, "yes" was the reference; the area of residence, the reference was "urban areas in Nanjing"; friends from other places, "no" was the reference; economic status, the reference was "under the middle class"; class situation, "peasant class" was the reference. After dealing with these independent variables, we carried out principal component analysis for those topics which involved the evaluation of Nanjing citizens to migrant peasant workers. Thus we obtained three new dependent variables: "migrant peasant workers should have equal rights and interests with Nanjing citizens" (hereinafter referred to as "the concept of equal rights"), "the positive evaluation of citizens to migrant peasant workers" (hereinafter referred to as "the positive evaluation"), "the negative evaluation of citizens to migrant peasant workers" (hereinafter referred to as "the negative evaluation"). Then we carried out the multiple regression analysis to obtain the results in Table 7.

**Table 7 Multiple regression analysis of evaluation of Nanjing citizens to migrant peasant workers**

Independent Variables	The concept of equal rights		The negative evaluation		The positive evaluation	
	Regression coefficient	Standard deviation	Regression coefficient	Standard deviation	Regression coefficient	Standard deviation
Sex(male)	-0.0294	0.0894	0.0492	0.0962	0.0849	0.0984
Age	-0.00249	0.00382	0.00395	0.00408	0.00126	0.00417
Marital Status (married)	-0.242*	0.126	-0.0583	0.137	-0.236*	0.140
Education Situation (above the junior college)	-0.0438	-0.120	-0.0300	0.127	-0.275**	0.130
Household Registration (rural hukou In Nanjing)	0.0208	0.136	-0.115	0.145	0.115	0.149

Household Registration (hukou in other places)	0.227	0.146	-0.227	0.156	-0.0593	0.159
Occupation (clerk and senior management )	-0.000403	0.143	0.138	0.153	0.0479	0.157
Occupation (peasants and self-employed)	-0.0715	0.151	-0.0543	0.161	0.197	0.165
Occupation (unemployment and so on)	0.0856	0.235	-0.0332	0.248	0.00908	0.254
Industry (industry, trade, service sector, transportation industry)	-0.226	0.183	0.114	0.193	0.176	0.198
Industry (Party and government organs, science, education, literature and community)	-0.0448	0.222	-0.0861	0.235	0.0869	0.240
Industry (unemployment and so on)	-0.247	0.312	0.126	0.330	0.324	0.338
Religion (Christian)	0.548*	0.289	0.275	0.307	0.396	0.314
Other Religions	0.249	0.175	-0.116	0.187	0.149	0.192
Party Member	0.0327	0.104	-0.00307	0.111	-0.212*	0.113

Social Worker (not be)	0.154	0.160	-0.0641	0.174	-0.182	0.178
Household Income in 2011	1.06e-06	6.73e-07	-1.53e-07	7.11e-07	4.47e-07	7.27e-07
Residence Areas(Suburban Districts)	0.708***	0.112	-0.639***	0.119	0.341***	0.122
Residence Areas(Suburban Counties)	0.599***	0.172	-0.428**	0.185	0.103	0.189
Friends from other places	0.307**	0.128	-0.132	0.136	0.187	0.139
Economic Status(under the middle class)	-0.0339	0.0918	-0.0910	0.0979	-0.0488	0.100
Class Situation(working class)	-0.00648	0.129	-0.180	0.140	-0.112	0.143
Class Situation(middle class)	0.0176	0.197	-0.280	0.210	-0.158	0.215
Class Situation(entrepreneurial class)	0.0514	0.184	-0.0226	0.192	0.0738	0.196
Constant	-0.324	0.385	0.486	0.407	-0.0563	0.416
Observations	479		462		462	
R-squared	0.186		0.120		0.120	

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

As can be seen from Table 7, the sex and age don't have a significant effect on the attitude of the citizens of migrant peasant workers.

Compared to the unmarried identity, when the significant degree is 0.1, the effect of the married identity to the concept of equal rights and positive evaluation is negative.

Education status don't have the significant effect on the concept of equal rights, but when the significant degree is 0.05, the education level which are above the junior college have negative effect on the "positive evaluation" relative to education level which under the junior college. That is people who received higher-education tended to make a negative evaluation to migrant peasant workers.

The household register, occupation, industry and household income do not have significant effect on the attitude of the citizens of migrant peasant workers. When the significant degree is 0.1, the concept of equal rights of citizens who are Christian were more stronger than Buddhist followers. Party membership and the identity of social workers don't affect the attitude of citizens of migrant peasant workers significantly .

Citizens' areas of residence have a significant impact in the evaluation of migrant workers. People who lived in the suburban districts and suburban counties had a stronger concept of equal rights than people who lived in the urban districts. For them, the possibility to give a negative evaluation of migrant peasant workers is lower. Especially for those who lived in the suburban districts, they were more likely to give a positive assessment relative to the people who lived in urban areas. Possible explanation for this finding is that the living and working environment of the people who lived in the suburban districts and suburban counties are similar to migrant peasant workers. So they may harbor the feeling of closeness and identity of migrant peasant workers.

It should be noted that having friends from other places or not has a significant effect on the concept of equal rights of citizens. As one of the independent variables, "friends from other places" referred to the non-local friends in Nanjing of the respondents. The concept of equal rights of citizens who have friends from other places is stronger than those who don't have friends from other places. This may be that the interaction with friends from other places will urge local citizens think and act from their friends' positions. When the citizens evaluate the rights and interests of migrant peasant workers, they might be more tolerance and understanding.

The self-evaluation of the economic status and class status don't have effect on the attitude of citizens of migrant peasant workers.