

Du, Jie, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Development or Devastation? -- The View of Home from a Young Female Migrant Worker's Perspective

Since the 1990s, with the deepening of the modernization process in China, many inland regions famous for their natural scenery and ecological environment can no longer keep their people and resources. Young persons are attracted to urban and industrial areas with dreams of not only earning cash but also enjoying a modern lifestyle. On the other hand, in the name of development, local resources are destructively exploited. When young persons go out as migrant workers, their "poor" and "backward" home village becomes a figure viewed from a distance. Yet, particularly for women, the home village is a place hard to escape from. Marriage and kinship is an invisible net that bonds them to their home, no matter how far they have gone. At the same time, the life in their home village is also greatly influenced by the modernization process, and may have dramatically differed from the image of the home village left in their memory. Where is the home to return to? Where is the destination of migration? This research follows a young female migrant worker from her work place in Guangdong Province to her home village in Guangxi Province, and investigates her steps in the process of going back home for marriage. The research will attempt to understand the idea of "home" from the perspective of a young female migrant worker, and to inquire how villages in inland provinces may be reconstructed ecologically and socially.