

The "Alienated" Farmers: Livelihood Choices and Psychological Changes in Zhuang Villages on the Sino-Vietnamese Border

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Abstract: *Based on a field study, this paper explores the phenomenon of "alienation" of farmers in the Zhuang village of Puzhai, Pingxiang City, Guangxi, on the border between China and Vietnam, and focuses on the internal logic and external manifestations of their livelihood choices and psychological changes. In the context of globalisation and localisation, the border people in Puzhai are faced with unprecedented livelihood challenges and opportunities, and have flexibly adjusted their livelihood strategies according to their own resource endowments and market opportunities, so as to achieve the diversification and modernisation of their livelihoods, which not only affects their material standard of living, but also profoundly touches their spiritual world. Through an in-depth analysis of the livelihood choices and psychological changes of smallholder farmers in the Zhuang villages of Puzhai, this paper reveals the complexity and diversity of smallholder farmers' lives in the context of globalisation and localisation, and provides new perspectives and empirical materials for ethnographic and anthropological studies on smallholder farmers' livelihoods and psychological changes. At the same time, this paper also has important theoretical and practical significance for understanding the social change and cultural adaptation of ethnic areas in the process of globalisation.*

Keywords: *China-Vietnam border, livelihood choices, psychological change, identity*

1. Introduction

Livelihoods are a set of ways of life adopted by human beings to adapt to different environments, and the choice of livelihoods is influenced by the natural and social environments in which people live. Traditional livelihoods and local social life of ethnic minorities are one of the important areas of ethnographic anthropological research. Marx once put forward the significance of "production" in the development of history, "In order to be able to 'make history', people's prerequisite is to be able to survive and live. I have come to the border ethnic areas of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region many times to carry out fieldwork, and has become interested in the study of this issue. The border is located at the edge between the nation and the state, and with the acceleration of the globalisation process, despite the fact that the living environment and living standards of the border people have brought about certain improvements, and that the economic, cultural and social structure of the Sino-Vietnamese border area has undergone profound changes, poverty still plagues the development of the border people and the nation. For the southwestern border ethnic minority areas, which are in a "backward" state in terms of all economic and social development indicators, accelerating urbanisation is also regarded as an important development strategy to change their "backward" outlook.^[1] The rise of border trade, the advancement of modernisation and the influx of external cultures have brought unprecedented livelihood opportunities and challenges to the border people of Puzhai. On the one hand, the border people have been able to improve their material life and diversify their livelihoods through participation in border trade, development of rural tourism and other diversified livelihoods; on the other hand, this change in livelihoods is also accompanied by the phenomenon of "alienation", i.e., farmers have gradually moved away from the traditional farming culture and community life in the process of pursuing modernised livelihoods, resulting in the blurring of their identity. On the other hand, this change in livelihood is also accompanied by the phenomenon of "alienation", i.e., in the process of pursuing modernised livelihoods, farmers have gradually moved away from traditional farming culture and community life, leading to blurred identity and psychological confusion. In this paper, we will take the Zhuang village of Puzhai as a field site, and through field research and interviews, we will reveal the internal logic and external manifestations of farmers' livelihood choices and psychological changes, so

as to improve our understanding of the social life of the border people, and to provide new perspectives and empirical materials for ethnographic and anthropological studies on the livelihoods of farmers and their psychological changes.

2. Livelihood choices and changes among border peoples

2.1. Traditional "Na"-based livelihoods of the Zhuang people

The farming civilisation of the Zhuang people is mainly based on the rice culture. The basis of the rice culture is the rice field, which is called "Na" in the Zhuang language, so the rice culture of the Zhuang is also called "Na" culture. Puzhai is a village inhabited by Zhuang people, located in the southwest of Pingxiang City, Chongzuo, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Puzhai Border Crossing is situated at Boundary Marker No. 15 on the China-Vietnam border, bordering with Vinh Long District, Lang Son Province, Vietnam, which is an important node of economy and trade between China and Vietnam. It is located in the subtropical monsoon climate zone, with abundant rainfall and fertile soil, providing unique natural conditions for traditional agricultural production. The paddy fields and traditional livelihoods of the Zhuang border people are closely linked, together constituting the unique lifestyle and cultural characteristics of the local Zhuang people. Rice cultivation not only meets the basic needs of the Zhuang border people, but also becomes an important source of their economic income. In their spare time, the Zhuang border people also make use of the paddy fields to grow other crops, such as vegetables, beans, potatoes, etc., in order to increase their family income. In addition, they are also good at making use of the natural resources around the paddy fields, such as breeding fish and collecting wild plants, forming a diversified way of livelihood. In terms of cultural traditions, the Zhuang border people have formed a unique farming culture and festival customs centred on rice cultivation. For example, the "Zhuang Mountain Song Festival" is held on the third day of the third lunar month, the "Dragon Boat Festival" on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, the "Tantou Festival" on the sixth day of the sixth lunar month, and the "Beggar's Harmony Festival" on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. "These festivals celebrate the harvest of rice, pray for the protection of ancestors, and reflect folk beliefs and customs. The distinctive Zhuang cultural festivals have not only enriched the spiritual life of the Zhuang border people, but have also strengthened their sense of national identity and cohesion.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, livelihoods in Puzhai were mainly based on traditional rice agriculture. During this period, the Zhuang border villages remained relatively closed and stable in their livelihoods, despite dramatic changes in the outside social environment. After the land reform and co-operative movement, the locals began to engage in agricultural production in a collective manner, but also still took the rice field as the centre of their lives, and maintained their livelihoods by growing rice and breeding poultry and fish. During this period, the social structure of Puzhai was also relatively simple, and mutual assistance and cooperation within families and villages became an important part of the Zhuang people's way of livelihood. Between the 1980s and 1990s, with the deepening of reform and opening up and the development of the market economy, the traditional way of livelihood in Puzhai began to undergo profound changes. On the one hand, with the progress of agricultural production technology and the improvement of agricultural production efficiency, the border people began to have more spare time and energy to engage in other economic activities. On the other hand, with the development of the commodity economy and the opening up of the market, the Zhuang began to come into contact with more commodities and information, and their lifestyles and values began to change. During this period, some Zhuang people began to experiment with economic activities such as growing cash crops, developing farming and engaging in border trade. These new livelihoods not only brought the Zhuang more economic gains, but also changed their lifestyles and social structures. After entering the 21st century, with the acceleration of globalisation and the development of information technology, Puzhai has become more and more closely connected with the outside world. In agriculture, the local Zhuang people have improved the efficiency and profitability of agricultural production through modernised agricultural techniques and facilities. On the other hand, with the development of border trade and the rise of tourism, people began to make use of local natural and cultural resources to develop economic activities such as tourism and border trade. During this period, the social structure of Phu Thoi also underwent great changes, with local people's household economic income increasing and their material living standards being raised to a greater extent. With the rise of new livelihoods and the movement of people, the traditional family and village structure began to be impacted. However, despite the changes in the social structure, the traditional livelihood of the Zhuang people, based on the "Na" (rice paddies), carries a rich historical and cultural heritage, and the Zhuang people's deep

affection for the paddies and their love of life remain unchanged.

2.2. "Eating on the sidelines" as a "way of making money"

With the deepening development of globalisation and the gradual establishment of the market economy system worldwide, the traditional small-farming economic model has been subjected to unprecedented impacts. Although Puzhai, a village located in the Sino-Vietnamese border area, is remotely situated, it is difficult to avoid being caught up in this historical torrent. The introduction of modern production methods, technological innovations and market mechanisms made the traditional farming lifestyle gradually lose its competitiveness, and farmers began to seek new ways to make a living. As Puzhai has many mountains and little land, and flat land resources are scarce, agricultural production is not profitable in the area. However, due to its special location, Puzhai, which was originally a small and unknown village, has been transformed into the largest border trade port along the Sino-Vietnamese border in Guangxi. Puzhai is not only an important land route from China to Vietnam and Southeast Asian countries, but also a bright pearl on the Sino-Vietnamese border. Puzhai has a long history of border trade, which is both the inevitable product of geographical location and the inevitable result of historical development. Border people of the two countries have long had the tradition of exchanging goods and trading with each other. With the normalisation of Sino-Vietnamese relations and the relaxation of border trade policies, border trade in Puzhai has gradually become formalised and scaled up.

Due to the long period of closure, the poor conditions of transport and communication infrastructure, and the backwardness of people's ideological concepts, etc., the economic development of frontier ethnic areas has been lagging behind compared with that of the developed regions in the east. Facts have proven that vigorously developing border trade is an effective way to revitalize the economy of minority ethnic group areas in border areas.^[2] Before the 1980s, the border trade of Puzhai was mainly based on the private small trade, and the transaction scale was relatively small. However, with the deepening of reform and opening up and the development of market economy, the border trade of Puzhai began to rise rapidly. In the process of the development of border trade, Puzhai gradually formed a border trade model with its own characteristics. Border people import Vietnamese agricultural products, daily necessities and other commodities to China through the mutual trade, and then export Chinese industrial products, agricultural products and other commodities to Vietnam. This kind of mutual trade not only meets the living needs of the border people, but also brings them considerable economic benefits. With the development of border trade, the scale of border trade in Puzhai has been expanding and the variety of commodities has become richer and richer. From the initial agricultural products, daily necessities and other small trade, gradually developed to the present industrial products, electronic products, furniture products, agricultural products and other commodities trade. At the same time, the main body of the border trade has also gradually developed from the initial individual border people to the current foreign capital stationed, enterprises, co-operatives and other forms of business subjects.

The world system established by modern society, while achieving a high degree of economic integration, has also brought about greater division and alienation of human beings and has "diverted man from his true purpose" and "impeded his growth".^[3] The modernisation of livelihoods has had a profound impact on the border people of Phu Thoi. By participating in border trade activities, the border people have gained more employment opportunities and sources of income, and improved their quality of life. On the other hand, it has also contributed to the change of mindset and improvement of quality of the border people. However, the change in livelihoods has also brought some challenges and problems. Some border people face difficulties and challenges in adapting to the nascent livelihoods, such as lack of skills and capital. At the same time, with the intensification of market competition and the lowering of trade barriers, some border people are also facing greater pressure and risk of market competition. In addition, the fast-developing border trade model has violently impacted the traditional economic structure of the border people in China, and the poverty and "backwardness" of the less developed ethnic minority areas have not yet been effectively solved, and the "alienated" farmers have not yet been able to survive and survive under the challenges of the capital impact and the market economy. Under the challenge of capital impact and market economy, how to survive and develop the farmers is a question worth pondering. From the depths of history, Puzhai's border trade has experienced a development process from scratch, from small to large. Driven by the border trade, the livelihood of local border people has undergone profound changes, and they are facing more opportunities and challenges. In the future development, how to make better use of the advantages of border trade, to cope with the challenges and to achieve sustainable development will be an important

topic to be explored by the border people in Puzhai.

3. Alienation of the border population from the native society

3.1. Inferiority complexes within the confines of traditional rural culture

While bringing advancement and affluence to the countryside, urbanisation has also transformed and deconstructed the cultural values of the rural society with its strong force, impacting on the spiritual world of the peasants and bringing about a profound cultural conflict. While enjoying the affluence, civilisation and progress brought by the modern urban culture, the villagers are also suffering from the uncertainty and insecurity brought by the cultural and value conflicts.^[4] As a typical border village, Puzhai's unique geographical location and multicultural background have made the changes in its vernacular society particularly significant. The agglomeration of urban life and the concept of "city-centrism" in the mass media have continuously penetrated into the rural society, making the villagers in the Zhuang villages gradually lose the sense of home given by the rural world in the past, and the villagers begin to envy the convenience and abundance of the urban life, and become suspicious of and dissatisfied with their own rural way of life. This impact is not only reflected in the change of material life, but also profoundly affects the farmers' recognition of their own rural lifestyle, traditional customs and religious beliefs, which have been inherited for thousands of years. For a long time, under the influence of traditional small peasant consciousness, the peasants in Zhuang villages have shown a certain degree of ignorance and numbness in their cultural personality. Lacking a deep understanding of and pride in their own culture, they are often prone to lose their way under the impact of external culture and develop an inferiority complex. With the acceleration of the modernisation process, the cultural needs and values of villagers have also undergone great changes, and villagers are pursuing a higher level of spiritual life and cultural experience, while the traditional village culture is difficult to satisfy these needs, which undoubtedly further aggravates their sense of inferiority to their own culture. Firstly, the retreat of traditional moral values. In order to pursue the maximisation of material interests, the sense of cultural inferiority will make village residents gradually give up traditional moral values. This concession of values not only affects the harmony and stability of village society, but also hinders the inheritance and development of village culture. Secondly, the lack of ethics and the dilemma of village governance. The sense of cultural inferiority also leads to the lack of ethics in the village society, which makes the village governance face difficulties. Villagers ignore collective interests in the process of pursuing personal interests, which makes it difficult to effectively manage village public affairs and affects the overall development of the village.

The traditional rural culture of Zhuang villages is characterised by its vernacular, closed and relatively static nature, which to a certain extent limits the innovation and development of village culture. In the process of modernisation, when the urban culture shows strong attraction and vitality with its openness and dynamism, the village culture appears relatively lagging behind and conservative, which makes the village residents feel inferior in comparison. They begin to doubt their own cultural traditions and values, believing that village culture is backward and ignorant, and cannot be compared with modern culture. This sense of inferiority not only affects villagers' self-confidence and sense of belonging, but also leads to the marginalisation and decline of village culture.

3.2. Anxiety about the identity of modern farmers

For generations, Zhuang farmers in Puzhai have made their living by farming, and the land is the basis of their survival. However, with the advancement of modernisation, the traditional way of farming has been gradually marginalised. The younger generation of farmers are no longer satisfied with the traditional farming life, they are eager to integrate into the modern society and pursue a higher quality of life. However, in their pursuit of modernisation, they find themselves neither belonging to the traditional group of farmers nor being able to fully integrate into the living circle of city dwellers. This conflict between tradition and modernity makes the identity of farmers vague and anxious. For example, a villager surnamed Wang in Puzhai used to be a hardworking farmer in his youth, making a living by growing rice. However, with the rise of border trade, he saw the huge business opportunities brought by cross-border trade and began to try his hand at border trading. Although his income has increased dramatically, he feels less and less like a farmer. He missed the simple and pure farming life in the past, but could not part with the material benefits brought by modern business. This conflict of identity has plunged him into deep anxiety. Besides, the urban-rural dichotomy is a distinctive feature of Chinese society, and Puzhai is no exception. Although Puzhai is blessed with a unique geographical

location, the villagers still face the troubles caused by the urban-rural gap. On the one hand, they aspire to enjoy modern living facilities and services like city residents; on the other hand, they are unable to fully enjoy the rights and treatment of city residents due to the restrictions of the household registration system. This dilemma of the urban-rural dichotomy has made the farmers' identity more complex and anxious. Take Li Villager from Puzhai as an example, who used to work outside when he was young and accumulated a wealth of experience in urban life. However, when he returned to his hometown, he found that he could not fully integrate into the rural society. He aspires to a city lifestyle, but at the same time cannot part with his attachment to his hometown. This sense of tearing between urban and rural areas puts him in an identity dilemma.

Through fieldwork and analysis, we can find that the identity anxiety of the Zhuang farmers in Puzhai is a complex and profound social phenomenon. It is both a product of the modernisation process and a bottleneck in the farmers' own development. In the context of globalisation, modernisation and urban-rural integration, farmers' identity faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, the anxiety of identity makes peasants feel lost and confused in their pursuit of modernisation. They are eager to integrate into the modern society, but at the same time they are unable to part with their attachment and dependence on tradition. On the other hand, identity anxiety also intensifies farmers' sense of social exclusion and loneliness. They are neither able to fully integrate into the living circle of city dwellers nor into the rural society. Economic development must at the same time deal with the adjustment and development of national culture. If the result of national economic development is the eventual loss of the nation's cultural identity, so that those who have "developed" economically begin to wonder "who I am", the essence of such economic development is open to question.^[5]

4. Psychological Confusion of Borderers in the Context of Change

In the wave of globalisation and modernisation, Puzai Village in Pingxiang City, Guangxi, a Zhuang village on the Sino-Vietnamese border, has experienced a profound change from a traditional farming economy to a border trade economy. This change has not only reshaped the livelihood of the villagers, but also touched their psychological structure at a deeper level, triggering multiple psychological perplexities, such as the helplessness of livelihood change, the discomfort of ethnic cultural transformation, and the worries about the development of ethnic areas. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the psychological world of the border villagers in Puzhai Village under the context of change through fieldwork.

The "helplessness" of changing livelihoods. Puzhai Village was originally a Zhuang village with a traditional farming economy, but with the deepening of the market economy and the rise of border trade activities, the traditional farming economy was gradually marginalised. The villagers had to give up their familiar farming life and turn to border trade activities or other non-agricultural industries. In the market economy, although Puzhai villagers are faced with more choices of livelihood, they are also faced with greater risks of livelihood, and they feel more confused and helpless in changing their livelihood. Although border trade activities have brought certain economic gains, they are affected by a variety of factors such as the international political and economic situation, policy adjustments, exchange rate fluctuations, resulting in price fluctuations and fierce competition. Villagers often find it difficult to earn a stable income in border trade activities, and even face the risk of losing money. Some villagers have to return to the countryside to engage in traditional farming activities after failing in the border trade, but at this time the land can no longer meet their livelihood needs. Lao Li, an old generation farmer from Puzhai Village, used to be a hardworking rice farmer when he was young. However, with the boom in border trade, he had to give up the hoe in his hands and instead ran a grocery shop of Chinese and Vietnamese specialities. Although his income has increased, Lao Li feels lost and helpless like never before. He misses the farming life of the past, the days when he lived in harmony with nature and was self-sufficient. Now he faces daily market fluctuations, backlogs of goods and fierce competition, which puts him under pressure. The shift in livelihoods has left many Puzhai villagers, like Lao Li, in a state of deep helplessness. They can neither return to the farming life of the past nor fully adapt to the new border trade economy. This helplessness stems not only from the instability of their livelihoods, but also from their sense of uncertainty about their future lives.

The "discomfort" of national cultural transformation. Mr Fei Xiaotong once pointed out that we need to be "culturally conscious" of our own culture, that is to say, we need to be self-aware of our own traditional culture. Only by maintaining a highly sensitive "self-awareness" of our national culture can we correctly address the development of our own society.^[6] The border people of Puzhai have long

relied on the traditional farming economy to sustain their livelihood. However, with the rise of border trade and the advancement of modernisation, they have begun to participate in border trade, develop rural tourism and other diversified livelihoods. While these new livelihoods have brought about improvements in material life, they have also broken the original rhythm of life and community structure, causing psychological confusion and discomfort among the border people. Firstly, the transformation of livelihoods has led to farmers facing a blurring of their identity. In the traditional farming culture, farmers lived off the land and worked as a family unit, forming close social ties and a sense of community. However, with the introduction of modernised livelihoods, farmers have gradually moved away from the land and the family and started to compete in the market on an individual or family basis. This transformation not only broke the original social structure and family ties, but also led to the blurring and confusion of farmers' identity. Secondly, the difficulty of cultural adaptation aggravates the psychological confusion of farmers. The Zhuang villages in Puzhai are rich in ethnic cultural traditions, such as Zhuang mountain songs, ethnic dances, and traditional festivals. However, these traditional cultures have gradually been marginalised under the impact of the modernisation process, and the locals' sense of identity and belonging to traditional culture has weakened. The discomfort of national cultural transformation is not only reflected in the younger generation's sense of alienation from traditional culture, but also in the older generation's concern about the inheritance of traditional culture. In addition, the discomfort of psychological change is also reflected in the farmers' cognitive adjustment to the outside world. With the acceleration of globalisation, foreign cultures continue to pour into Puzhai. In the process of contacting and understanding the outside world, farmers began to doubt and be dissatisfied with their own way of life and cultural traditions. They begin to desire to integrate into the outside world and pursue modern lifestyles and values, but at the same time face conflicts and contradictions with traditional culture and community life. This discomfort of psychological change not only leads to psychological confusion and anxiety among farmers, but also intensifies their struggles and contradictions between globalisation and localisation.

The "worries" of the development of ethnic areas. The development of Puzhai Village is not only a process of individual economic and social psychological evolution, but also a microcosm of the "worries" facing the development of ethnic areas. The first is the problem of cultural conflict and integration. With the influx of foreign cultures, Puzhai's traditional culture has been seriously impacted. How to maintain the national characteristics at the same time, to achieve effective integration and inheritance of culture, has become an important issue for the development of Puzhai and the entire ethnic areas. Secondly, although the development of border trade has brought about economic growth, it has also aggravated the uneven distribution of resources and widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and the lifestyles and values of the villagers in Puzhai have also changed significantly. People began to pursue material enjoyment and monetary benefits, while the traditional Zhuang culture and moral concepts gradually faded. This psychological change not only affects the villagers' spiritual life, but also intensifies the tension and conflict in social relations. How to formulate reasonable policies to protect the legitimate rights and interests of villagers and promote common prosperity is a serious challenge for the development of ethnic areas. Finally, with the increase of foreign population and the complexity of social relations, Puzhai's social governance and community building are facing unprecedented challenges. Puzhai villagers are in a vulnerable position in the border market and are often exploited and oppressed by foreign capital. The rights and interests of the border villagers are not well protected, and they are full of worries and uneasiness about the future development. This sense of "alienation" makes the villagers doubt and confuse about their own identity and belonging. How to strengthen social governance, build a harmonious community environment and enhance the villagers' sense of well-being and belonging is an important task for the development of ethnic areas.

5. Conclusions

In the tide of globalisation and market economy, farmers in Puzhai village have experienced a shift from traditional farming to diversified livelihood patterns. The rise of border trade has provided unprecedented economic opportunities for villagers, prompting them to adapt their livelihood strategies to market demands. However, the modernisation of this economic logic has not been easy. As competition in the market intensifies, the uneven distribution of resources and the widening gap between the rich and the poor have become more pronounced, and smallholder farmers are faced with the challenge of sustainability of their livelihoods while pursuing economic efficiency.

The indifference of farmers to innovation and development, or their habit of adhering to old patterns of production, cannot be attributed to a sense of tradition, a mentality of old-fashionedness, etc., much less to the intrinsic characteristics of the small-scale economy, but derives mainly from economic

realities arising from a low productivity base. The choice of farmers' economic behaviour depends to a large extent on the institutional support provided by the society, as well as the reasonable sharing of development risks; the key to farmers' economic development is to give them a higher level of production technology base.^[7] In the face of the predicament of farmers in Puzhai Zhuang villages in the transformation of livelihood and psychological change, the support of social policies and systems is particularly important. First of all, the government should introduce more accurate and effective poverty alleviation and rural revitalisation policies to help farmers improve their livelihood capacity and reduce economic risks by providing technical training, financial support and market information services. Laws are a powerful weapon to protect farmers' rights and interests. The government should strengthen legislation in the agricultural sector, clarify farmers' rights and obligations, and provide legal protection for farmers. It should also increase the supervision of the agricultural sector, and strengthen the supervision of agricultural production and distribution to prevent farmers' interests from being infringed upon. Secondly, the social security system should be improved to ensure that farmers can receive timely and effective assistance when facing emergencies such as diseases and disasters, so as to reduce their psychological burden. Government departments also need to further strengthen policy and financial assistance, encourage the economic development of co-operatives, the formation of scale effect to grasp the market initiative, strengthen the construction of the agricultural sales chain, smooth agricultural sales channels. In addition, policymaking needs to pay attention to the cultural needs of farmers, encouraging and protecting the inheritance and development of traditional farming culture and minority cultures, so as to strengthen the cultural identity and sense of belonging of farmers, which is of great significance to the maintenance of national unity and cultural diversity.

Under the influence of globalisation and the market economy, the border people of Puzai Zhuang villages have experienced a shift from traditional farming to diversified livelihood patterns. They have actively utilised emerging industries such as border trade, tourism services and speciality agriculture to seek economic breakthroughs and development. However, this modernisation and transformation has not been a smooth transition. While pursuing economic benefits, the border people also face challenges such as intensified market competition, increased pressure on resources and the environment, and cultural homogenisation. These challenges not only test the economic wisdom of the border people, but also have a far-reaching impact on their psychology and social relations. The change from "survival rationality" to "economic rationality" indicates that farmers are making more horizontal comparisons in their lifestyles and values, and that the purpose of their behaviour has become more diversified, while the prerequisite for satisfying farmers' diversified cultural needs is the establishment of a suitable mechanism for participation and expression, i.e. a mechanism that is mainly concerned with farmers' needs. The prerequisite for satisfying farmers' diversified cultural needs is the establishment of a suitable mechanism for participation and expression, i.e., institutional arrangements mainly involving the expression of farmers' needs, participation, and how the government absorbs public opinions and transforms them into public policies. At present, the institutional construction in this area is still relatively weak, and farmers rarely have a say in the process of cultural construction, and their subjective status and role have yet to be upgraded.^[8] To address this problem, on the one hand, through policy guidance and support, farmers can pursue economic benefits while maintaining respect for and inheritance of traditional culture, and achieve both economic and cultural prosperity. On the other hand, according to Samuel Popkin's theory, farmers, as rational problem-solvers, their interest-seeking and bargaining abilities are the key to solving the problems of resource distribution, authority, and conflict.^[9] Therefore, policy makers should respect farmers' intellectual and creative abilities in practice and encourage them to participate in the modernisation of traditional agriculture. By enhancing the subjective status and role of farmers, they will be able to face the challenges of globalisation and modernisation with greater confidence, make use of their own resources and advantages, and explore a sustainable development path that meets their own characteristics.

The livelihood choices and psychological changes of the border people in Puzai Zhuang villages in the context of globalisation are a complex and profound process. Through this study, we not only understand the adjustment and integration between "economic logic" and "social rationality", but also see their wisdom and courage in facing challenges. In the future, we hope that more scholars and practitioners will pay attention to this topic, and through interdisciplinary research and practice, we will jointly explore a development path that meets the characteristics of the Border People, and contribute to the revitalisation of the countryside and the rejuvenation of the nation. At the same time, we also hope that the border people in Puzai Zhuang villages can maintain their cultural characteristics and social rationality in the tide of globalisation, and achieve both economic and cultural prosperity. To promote the sustainable development of border areas, it is necessary to fully respect the subjective status and role of farmers, strengthen the support of social policies and systems, and promote the harmonious

coexistence and sustainable development of farmers between tradition and modernity. At the same time, attention should also be paid to the protection and inheritance of the ethnic culture and ecological resources of the border areas, so as to achieve prosperity, stability and long-term peace and security in the border areas.

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