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Geography of Rural Households

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科学出版社
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内 容 简 介

本书以农户研究为主体,以农户与地理环境相互作用为切入点,以单一农户—农户群体为研究脉络,重点研究农户微观视角下农区发展中的若干理论问题。通过对农户农业生产空间、农户工商业活动空间、农户务工空间、农户居住空间、农户自主发展能力、农户对外部影响响应、农户群体经济空间行为的具体研究,提炼出农户与地理环境作用的一般理论和规律。

本书可供经济学、地理学、社会学和农区综合研究等相关领域学者和管理人员参考。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

农户地理论/李小建等著. —北京:科学出版社, 2009

ISBN 978-7-03-025951-6

I. 农… II. 李… III. 农户—研究 IV. F304.6

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2009) 第 200102 号

责任编辑:赵 峰 / 责任校对:朱光光

责任印制:钱玉芬 / 封面设计:耕者设计工作室

科学出版社 出版

北京东黄城根北街 16 号

邮政编码:100717

<http://www.sciencep.com>

中国科学院印刷厂 印刷

科学出版社发行 各地新华书店经销

*

2009 年 11 月第 一 版 开本:787×1092 1/16

2009 年 11 月第一次印刷 印张:19 3/4

印数:1—1 800 字数:468 000

定价:69.00 元

(如有印装质量问题,我社负责调换〈科印〉)

自序

(一)

在浓厚计划经济背景中成长的中国经济地理学，在 20 世纪下半叶相当长的一段时间内，比较关注和侧重于国家和大区域等相对宏观尺度的研究，如流域规划、资源调查、区域发展与规划、重大项目的战略布局、地区工业布局、国土整治与开发、国家或地区农业区划等。这些研究较好地与国家和社会的发展需求相结合，得到了各级政府及决策者的认同，为国家建设和社会经济协调发展做出了重要贡献。同时，在这种国家决策咨询的实践活动和大量科学研究基础上，中国经济地理学家进行了相关理论的总结和凝炼，发展了具有宏观特色的经济地理学。

相对于宏观层面的研究，中国经济地理学对经济活动参与者（个人、企业、农户、非政府机构等）微观视角的相关研究则比较薄弱。西方经济地理学 20 世纪以来形成的微观研究方向并未很好地在我国发展起来，小尺度的微观区域分析或点位分析也并未受到应有的重视。这种重宏观尺度研究而轻微观尺度研究的状况在形成中国经济地理学研究特点的同时，也在一定程度上限制了中国经济地理学者与国际主流经济地理学家的对话与交流。微观研究相对薄弱的状况，应该引起国内同行学者应有的关注，特别是随着中国社会主义市场经济体制的逐步完善，微观个体（个人、企业、农户等）在经济活动中的作用越来越重要，缺乏对这些经济活动基本单元的关注和研究，不宜于很好地揭示经济空间格局的形成机理。

微观研究比较薄弱的局面也在一定程度上制约着中国经济地理学的发展。因为微观是宏观的基础，宏观是微观的综合，宏观尺度的研究离不开对微观尺度地理事实的了解。尤其是在地理过程、区域发展动力、内部运行机理的研究中，微观层面的剖析更具意义。在经济地理学的理论构建中，国际学术界通过微观层面的精细研究，建立了农业区位论、工业区位论和中心地理论等古典区位论。在中国特殊的背景下沿着这一途径深入探究，可望在微观经济空间理论发展上有所建树。

(二)

为了改善中国经济地理学微观研究相对薄弱的状况，本人从 20 世纪 80 年代中期攻读博士学位至今，一直专注于从多个方面开展微观方向的经济地理学研究。就像化学紧紧抓住组成物质的化学基本元素进行研究一样，经济地理学的研究也应从经济活动的最基本的微观单元入手。我的相关探索包括从企业层面进行以工商业为主地区的公司地理研究，从农户行为角度研究中国欠发达农区发展，从全国县、乡镇、村域和点位（site）等单元研究区域经济的发展差异和可持续发展研究等。起初，我一直比较关注企业层

面，因为在以工业和商业为主的地区，经济活动以企业为基本单元，企业在经济空间格局的形成过程中起着关键作用。比如，基于对沿海地区外资企业的跟踪调查，可以剖析外部力量与当地的博弈关系以及外资对投资地经济发展的影响过程；对老工业基地地区国有企业的深入调查分析，可以揭示特殊的制度变迁与区域经济发展的关联；研究农区中小企业集群竞争优势的形成，并与世界其他国家产业集群相比较，可以展示特殊背景下产业集群的形成和成长机理，为国际上相关的理论研究做出贡献。我的博士论文“工业变化与工业活动的空间分析”（1990）就是在上述思路的指引下完成的，并在此基础上，把以往在企业层面的研究成果系统化，形成了专著《公司地理论》（1999年第一版，2002年再版），同时我主编的《经济地理学》教材（1999年第一版，2006年再版）也是首次按企业作为经济活动的基本单元来设计结构体系的。

随着研究的深入，我逐渐感觉到局限于企业层面的微观尺度研究并不全面。因为中国是个传统农业大国，农村人口占主体。在农业为主的地区，工商业比较落后，企业数量比较少，并且在家庭联产承包责任制的背景下，中国当前的农业生产以农户的小规模分散经营为主，并非美国等发达国家的大农业模式，农户之上的其他经济组织，如农场组织、农工商联合企业等也很少。农户不仅是一个家庭组织单位和最基本的社会单元，也是最基本的生产和消费单元。尤其受全球化影响较小且传统的家庭观念深厚的欠发达地区，这一特色更为突出。但是在农区发展的相关研究中，存在一个明显的缺陷，即大多数研究忽视了农区经济中这一最基本的单元——农户。与工业和商业为主的区域发展重视企业的作用类似，以农业为主的地区的区域发展必须重视农户的作用，没有农户的农区发展研究只能是一种黑箱分析。这是因为：①农户是农区最基本的微观经济单元，不考虑农户的农区发展理论，很难客观反映区域发展取向；②农户实际生活水平尤其是生活满意程度与以货币计量的GDP并不完全一致，不考虑农户状况，很难客观把握农区实际；③全面建设小康社会目标的实现重在“全面”，农区的整体状况并不能代表各个农户、尤其是弱势农户状况；④忽视农户的发展理论，在转变为政策层面时，难以体现当下国家政策一再强调的“人文关怀”的宗旨；⑤从可持续发展角度看，可持续标准的度量以及可持续发展目标的实现均离不开农户的参与。总之，从农户角度研究我国农区发展，对于农区发展现状分析、农区发展目标制定以及区域政策实施等均具有特殊意义。也正是因为如此，从20世纪末开始，我从基于企业视角的区域发展研究逐步转向基于农户视角的农区发展问题的探索和研究。

（三）

本书是我主持的国家自然科学基金重点项目“农户与地理环境相互作用下中部农区社会经济协调发展研究”（40535025）的阶段性成果。该项目设计以农户研究为主体，以农户与地理环境相互作用为切入点，以单一农户—农户群体为研究脉络，重点研究微观视角下农区发展中的若干理论问题。这种从新的角度对农区，尤其是具有地方文化和地理环境特色的中国中部农区发展的研究，可望对中国经济地理学理论建设以及国际学术界关于农区发展的研究做出贡献。同时，基于这些理论，从“以人为本”的农

区发展角度，可对中部崛起和全面建设小康社会提供发展思路和政策建议。

项目把农户、地理环境和中部农区社会经济协调发展作为三个研究支点，农户与地理环境的相互作用是主要研究对象，而关于这两者相互作用的研究则为研究中部农区社会经济的协调发展打下坚实基础。项目将农户与地理环境的相互作用关系作为关键问题，通过对有关部分的河南省农户调查数据和河南省乡镇级数据之分析，分层随机选取不同发展环境条件下的 11 个村进行 1251 家农户调查，选取 10 个类型 17 个专业村进行详细农户调查，选取外出务工、农业生产区位、居住区位的典型村进行深入调查，在此基础上完成论文近百篇，专著两部，分别侧重于理论研究和应用研究，呈现在读者面前的这本专著就是该项目的理论成果之一。

(四)

农户地理主要研究农户活动的空间结构及其与地理环境的关系，即通过农户活动的空间侧面来分析农户与地理环境相互作用关系。农户活动的空间研究包括农户个体和农户群体两个层面。农户个体活动的空间研究，主要通过农户的农业生产活动、工商业活动、务工活动和居住活动等方面进行分析；农户群体作为农户个体的组合，包括依靠血缘、亲情、地缘、经济联系等而形成的非正式农户群体组织和具有较好组织程度的农民经济协会和合作社等区域农户群体组织，农户群体活动的空间研究主要是在阐述农户活动的外部性与农户博弈的基础上，分析农户群的规模经济效应和农户经济组织的形成机理，进而研究农户群体行为与农区发展的关系。

农户活动的区位、空间结构与农户的自主发展能力、农户的外部响应能力密切相关。农户自主发展能力是指农户在经济利益驱动下，利用现有发展空间和发展机会，追求目标时展示一系列的行为决策能力，它反映了农户家庭人员发挥自身潜能，主动利用周围自然、经济和社会环境的综合能力。农户的外部响应能力是指农户对影响和制约自身发展的诸多外部性因素、条件做出反应的能力，这些外部影响主要包括工业化、城市化、农业产业化、市场化、全球化等。同时，农户自主发展能力和农户的外部响应能力又密切相关，自主发展能力决定了外部响应能力，外部响应能力又影响自主发展能力，两者相互作用共同决定了农户活动区位、类型、组织方式、空间范围，以及农户对地理环境的利用方式和强度。

无论是农户活动的空间结构还是农户的自主发展能力和外部响应能力，都要受农户所处地理环境的影响，同时他们也影响着地理环境的变化。也就是说，农户地理研究的基础或核心就是农户与地理环境的相互作用，只有注意到这一点，关于农户的微观尺度研究才能得以发生、发展。

(五)

本书共分九章。第 1 章绪论，基于中国特殊的经济社会背景，揭示农户研究在农区发展中的重要意义，进而在对国内外相关研究综述的基础上，确定农户地理研究的框架

和主要内容;第2章农户农业生产空间研究,在对杜能农业区位论进行述评的基础上,从农户视角分析在中国背景下耕作地块的决定因素和农业生产的空间特征,形成微观的农户农业区位理论;第3章农户工商业活动空间研究,基于我国农户工商业活动的特征,分析不同环境作用下农户从事工业活动、旅游产业活动和文化产业活动的空间结构;第4章农户务工空间研究,从农户务工特征着手,采取理论与实证研究相结合的方式分析农户务工的区位选择及其影响因素,并通过务工区位模型进行验证;第5章农户居住空间研究,阐述农户居住空间的类型和演变,从村域内和村际间两个层面分析农户居住区位的选择及其影响因素;第6章农户自主发展能力的地理研究,界定农户自主发展能力的内涵与评价指标,基于农户调查数据分析农户自主发展能力与农区经济发展的关系,揭示地理环境对农户自主发展能力的影响;第7章农户对外部影响响应的地理研究,从内涵界定和评价指标体系的构建入手,分析农户对工业化、城市化、农业产业化、市场化、全球化等外部影响的响应能力;第8章农户群体经济空间行为的理论研究,在阐述农户活动的外部性与农户博弈的基础上,分析农户群的规模经济效应和农户经济组织的形成机理,进而研究农户群体行为与农区发展的关系;第9章农户与地理环境相互作用理论研究,划分农户与地理环境作用的类型,在阐述人类与地理环境相互作用、农户空间场和农户相互作用理论的基础上,形成农户与地理环境相互作用的理论。


(六)

作为国家自然科学基金重点项目的理论研究成果,本书的完成是课题组成员集体智慧的结晶,参与人员除本人外,还包括河南大学乔家君副教授、李二玲副教授,河南财经学院周雄飞教授、高更和教授、樊新生副教授,鲁礼新副教授、罗庆讲师,云南师范大学李君博士,洛阳师范学院刘婷博士。全书构架及章节提纲由李小建拟定,撰写任务由李小建根据团队成员个人的专业和学术专长进行分配,具体分工如下:第1章由李小建、李君完成,第2章2.2节由李小建、高更和完成,其余部分由高更和完成;第3章3.1、3.2节由乔家君完成,3.3、3.4节分别由高更和、李二玲完成;第4章由高更和、李小建完成;第5章由李君、李小建完成;第6章6.1、6.2节由李小建、周雄飞、乔家君共同完成,6.3节由乔家君完成;第7章由李二玲、李小建完成;第8章8.1节由周雄飞完成,8.2节由樊新生完成,8.3、8.4节由刘婷、李小建共同完成;第9章9.1、9.4节由鲁礼新完成,9.2节由樊新生、李小建完成,9.3节由罗庆、李小建完成。统稿工作由李小建负责组织,除了三次集中统稿外,具体统稿由李小建完成。在本书撰写与统稿过程中,大家认真负责、精诚合作的态度,令人感动和难忘。尤其是乔家君、樊新生在统稿中协助李小建做了大量工作,保证了按期完稿。

经济地理学的微观研究和宏观研究相互关联,微观研究更有利于抓住经济地理现象的本质,通过微观视角更利于研究其内部运作机理,而宏观研究更利于对经济地理现象的综合认识,通过宏观观察更有利于研究发现其总体特色。两者之间,好似“树木”与“森林”的关系,经济地理研究应该“远观森林”与“近窥树木”并重,两者相辅相成,不可顾此失彼。只是感于中国经济地理学微观研究相对薄弱,本人才对此有所强调。

探求经济地理现象中的基本单元是一项艰巨的任务，本人及所在的研究团队朝这个方向研究探索的道路还很长，真诚希望能有更多的经济地理学家关注这一方向，并为之做出贡献。

农户地理研究无前例参考，研究涉及众多领域，相关理论构建难度很大。虽然课题组做出了很多努力，但限于研究水平及研究时间，书中定有一些不足之处，还恳望广大读者不吝赐教。



2009年8月

PREFACE

In the large part of the latter half of the 20th century, the Chinese economic geography, developing against a strong background of government-planning economy, paid greater attention to and gave more emphasis on the relatively macro-scale researches either of the whole country or of its large districts. These researches, for example, dealt with the planning of large river basins, resource investigation, regional development and planning, the strategic distribution of key projects, regional distribution of manufacturing industry, the management and exploitation of national territory, the regionalization of agricultural industry, and so on. Relatively well suit the national and regional developmental demands, such researches were appreciated by the governments and their decision-makers at various levels, and made significant contributions to the country's basic construction and brought about a better coordination in the socioeconomic development of the state. Meanwhile, on the basis of the rich empirical studies to serve the governmental decision-making, the Chinese economic geographers also made efforts in theorizing their empirical study findings and constructing their theoretical frameworks, and have developed an economic geography of macro-perspectives.

Compared to the macro-level researches, the Chinese economic geography paid relatively inadequate attention to the main basic actors of the economic activities, such as the individuals, industrial enterprises, rural households, non-governmental institutions, and so on. The micro-perspective approach, which had already taken shape in the Western economic geography in the 20th century, has not been paid enough attention or well developed in China. This unbalanced condition of giving more favorable attention to the macro-scale researches than to the micro-scale ones has gradually turned to be the research features of the Chinese economic geography. And this situation considerably limited the Chinese economic geographers to communicate with their academic colleagues in the mainstream of the world. Such an unbalanced condition of relatively weak micro-researches must arouse and receive deserved concern from China's domestic scholars. Additionally, with the gradual realization of the Chinese socialist market economy, the micro-level actors (individuals, enterprises, rural households, etc.) are playing more important roles in the economic activities. It is apparent that a lack of proper enough emphasis on these basic economic units will not at all help discover the built-in economic mechanisms.

To some extent, this state of relatively weak micro researches restricts the

development of the Chinese economic geography. The macro-scale researches can not be well done without a better comprehension of the micro-scale geographical facts. Especially in the researches on geographical processes, area developing forces and the built-in working mechanisms, the micro-level anatomy is of more value and significances. In the theoretical construction of economic geography, the world academia, by way of elaborate micro-level analysis, has established the agricultural location theory, industrial location theory, central-place theory in addition to some other classical theories of location. With the concrete Chinese conditions, a further research along with this world-prevailing academic trend will be able to make its new contributions.

In order to overcome the weakness of the Chinese economic geography in micro-studies, I have been devoted to the micro-perspective researches ever since the mid-1980s, when I was a doctoral student. Just as chemistry executes its research by focusing on the basic chemical elements (molecules) forming the matter, the research of economic geography should also set out from studying the most basic micro-units of economic activities. My major efforts largely consist of the explorations on the firm geography of the industrializing region, on the rural households in the development of China's undeveloped agricultural regions, and on the developmental differentiation and gaps between the regional economies and the sustainable development by investigating the whole country's counties, towns, villages, sites and some other units in the rural areas. At the outset, I was always quite concerned with enterprises, because in the industry-and-business-oriented regions, enterprises serve as the basic units of the economic activities, playing a key role in forming the spatial economic patterns. For instance, based on the tracking investigations into the foreign invested enterprises in the coastal region, I examined the bargaining relationships between the external capital and the native forces, and therefore the economic developing process of the foreign capital's influence on the invested regions. Moreover, the intensive analysis of the state-owned enterprises in the old industrial bases disclosed the relationships between the special institutional reform and the regional economic development; a survey on the formation of the competitive advantages in the rural mid-small industrial clusters and comparing these clusters with those in other countries of the world exhibited the formation and growing mechanisms of the industrial clusters with a special background. Just in the guidance of the above thinking, I completed my doctoral dissertation *Industrial Change and Activities of Firms: A Spatial Analysis in the Case of Southeast Australia* (1990). And upon this basis, I systemized my preceding findings at the industrial level and published my monograph *Geography of Firms* (the 1st edition in 1999, 2nd edition in 2002). Meanwhile, as the editor-in-Chief, I published the textbook *Economic*

Geography (the 1st edition in 1999, 2nd edition in 2006), which was designed for the first time in China with a framework that takes an enterprise as the basic unit of the economic activities.

With the deepening of my research, I gradually realized that the micro-perspective survey focusing only on the industrial enterprises is far from complete because China is a large traditional agricultural country, where the rural population constitutes the majority. In the agriculture-dominating regions, industry and business are comparatively underdeveloped with a small number of enterprises. Particularly, under the rural household contract responsibility system, the separate operation of small-scale households still plays a main role in the current Chinese agricultural production. Moreover, unlike in the USA and some other developed countries, there are very few big agricultural organizations, such as big farms and integrated agric-industrial-commercial complexes. A household is not only a social organization holding family members but also functions as the most basic producing and consuming unit. This feature is especially protuberant in the undeveloped regions, where there feels little influence of the globalization and still exist the profound traditional household ideas. However, in the research on the development of the agric-regions, there remains an evident lacuna, that is, most studies neglect the rural households—the most basic units in the agricultural economy. Similar to giving more emphasis on the role of enterprises in the industry- and-business-oriented regional development, as much attention must be paid to the role of the rural households in the agriculture-dominating regional development. Thus to say, any researches on the agricultural development without a focus on the rural households could be merely a sort of black-box analysis. This is firstly because the rural households serve as the most basic microeconomic units in the agric-regions. It is very difficult to objectively reflect the regional developmental tendency without proper considerations of the rural households in the regional developmental theory. Secondly, as the real standard of living of the rural households and especially the degree of their satisfaction on their living are not consistent with the GDP computed with currency, it's very difficult to objectively understand the reality of the agric-regions without knowledge of the state of the rural households. Thirdly, since the realization of building a well-off society in an all-round way focuses on the “all-roundness”, the overall condition of the agric-regions can not represent that of each household, especially the conditions of those disadvantaged rural households. Fourthly, when the development theories ignoring the rural households are turned into government policies, it is difficult that they can embody the tenet of “humane care” repeatedly stressed in the current policies of our state. Finally, in terms of sustainable development, the measurement of the sustainable standard and the realization of sustainable development are all inseparable from the participation of the rural

households. To sum up, the research on China's rural development from a perspective of the rural households is of particular significance not only for the scholars' analysis of the current developmental conditions but also for the government policy-makers to set up the development objectives and carry them out in the rural regions. It is with these considerations that I have gradually adjusted my research focus from the original enterprise-based regional development to the current exploration on the rural-household-based agric-regional development since the end of the 20th century.

This book is the stage-result of the key project (40535025) sponsored by the NSFC. This project is done under my personal direction. The design of this project sets the research on the rural households as its main target, chooses the interactions between the rural households and the geographical environment as its cutting-in point, and takes an examination on the individual rural household and the rural household groups as a "vein" of its research. One of the prominent features or focal points of this project is to try to solve some theoretical problems relating to the rural development from a micro-perspective. It could be expected that with a fresh analytical approach this research on the rural development of Central China, which has rich traditional cultures and unique geographical features, is promising to contribute both to the theoretical construction of an economic geography with the Chinese characteristics and to the agric-regional development research of the international academia. Based on these theories, and from the "human-oriented" agric-regional development aspect, it could also be hoped that this research is of value in generating trains of thought and policy suggestions for a rapid taking-off and development of Central China and for the creation of a well-off society in an all-round way.

This project takes the rural households, geographical environment, and the socio-economic harmonious development of the agric-regions in Central China as three research pivots. The interactions between the first two are the main study objects. And accordingly, the research of the interactions between these two pivots serves to lay a firm basis for studying the socio-economic harmonious development of the agric-regions in Central China. This project holds the interactions between the rural households and geographical environment as a key issue. In addition to the analyses of the partial data of the rural households at the levels of village and township in Henan Province, the project team also did an empirical study. By the means of purposive or random sampling of different developmental conditions, we selected 11 villages, carried out a survey on 1251 households, and chose 17 specialized villages in ten different types for our detailed studies. Moreover, we also conducted interviews with households in the typical villages featured respectively by their migrant workers, land-use types and locations, and dwelling sites. On the basis of these studies, nearly 100 academic articles and 2

monographs have been completed. These works either give more emphasis on theoretical creation or on the applied researches of the more practical matters. This monograph now in front of you is one of the theoretical results of this project.

The geography of rural households is devoted to the study on the spatial structures of the rural households' activities and their relations with the geographical environment. Put another way, it deals largely with the interrelationships between the rural households and the geographical environment through an analysis of the spatial profile of the rural households' activities. The spatial-profile research on the rural households' activities consists of the two levels of the individual rural household and the rural household groups. The spatial research on the individual rural households' activities is mainly carried out through the analyses of the agric-production activities, industrial-commercial activities, the off-farm workers' activities, dwelling activities and so on. As a combination of the individual rural households, a rural household group consists of informal organizations formed by blood relationship, kinsfolk, geo-neighborhood, economic affiliations, etc. , and the relatively better organized economic associations and co-operations, too. The spatial research on the rural household groups is devoted chiefly to construing the externality of the rural household activities and the basis of their competing games. This research also analyzes the effects of the rural household groups' scale-economy as well as the mechanisms of the rural household economic organizations so as to study the relationships between the behaviors of the rural household groups and the rural development.

The location and the spatial structures of the rural households' economic activities are closely connected with their self-developing abilities and their abilities to respond to the externality. The rural household' self-developing ability refers to a series of their behavioral decision-making capability. This ability is generated and could be well displayed when they make the use of their existing developmental space and opportunities in order to pursue their economic interests. It reflects the synthetic capability, power and skills of the members of a rural household, who actively make use of the natural, economic and societal surroundings as well as their own potentials. The rural households' responsive ability to the externality refers to the rural households' capability, power and skills to respond to the many external factors and conditions which may influence and restrict their development. These external factors mainly consist of industrialization, urbanization, agricultural industrialization, marketization, globalization, etc. In the meantime, the rural households' self- developing ability is closely linked with their external responsive ability; the former determines the latter; the latter also influences the former. It is this reciprocity that determines the location of the rural households' activities, their types, organizational modes, spatial extents, the

way in which the rural households make use of the geographical surroundings, and the extent to which the rural households make use of the geographical surroundings, too.

Either the spatial structures of the rural households' economic activities or their self-developing and external-responsive abilities are unavoidably influenced by their geographical surroundings. And in return, the rural households can also influence the changes of their geographical surroundings. Put another way, the core and basis of the rural household geography is nothing else but the interactions between the rural households and their geographical surroundings. Only with this case in point, can the micro-scale research on the rural households be better carried out and developed.

This book is divided into nine chapters. Chapter One is an introduction. Based on the Chinese special socio-economic background, it reveals the significance of rural households in the rural development. Furthermore, it delimits the framework and main contents of the rural household geographical research after a brief review of relevant researches both at home and abroad. Chapter Two examines on the space of rural households' agricultural production. Based on a comment upon von Thünen's theory of agricultural location, it analyzes, from the perspective of the rural household, the decisive factors of the farming plots and the spatial features of agric-production against the Chinese background so as to construct a micro-theory of agricultural location of the rural households. Chapter Three discusses the space of the rural households' industrial-commercial activities. Based on the features of the rural households' industrial-commercial activities in Central China, it analyzes the spatial structures of the rural households when they are engaged in the secondary industries, the tourist industry and the cultural industry with different environmental effects. Chapter Four explores the space for migrant workers. By the means of integrating theories with empirical studies, this chapter starts from a description about the off-farm workers' features and then goes to an exploration of the factors which influence the off-farm workers' selection of their locations. And finally, the findings of the exploration are tested with a model of the off-farm working location. Chapter Five investigates the dwelling space of the rural households. This chapter first explicates the types and evolution of the dwelling space of the rural households. Then, at both the intra- and inter-village levels, it turns to an analysis of the factors affecting the rural households' choices for their dwelling location. Chapter Six carries out a geographical survey on the rural households' self-developing ability. This chapter starts with a definition of the concept "the rural households' self-developing ability," introducing its connotations and the related appraisal indices for it. On the basis of the investigation data of the rural households, it first analyzes the relationships between the rural households' self-developing ability and the agric-regional economic development, and then discloses the influence of the geographical environment

on the rural households' self-developing ability. Chapter Seven studies the rural households' external responsive ability from a geographical perspective. Beginning with concept defining and the construction for an appraisal indexical system, this chapter gives itself to the analysis of the rural households' ability in responding to industrialization, urbanization, agric-industrialization, marketization, globalization and other external influences. Chapter Eight investigates the spatial economic behaviors of the rural household group. After explicating the externality of the rural households' abilities and their interactive games, this chapter analyzes the scale-economy effects of the rural household groups and the emerging mechanisms of the rural households' economic organizations. It discusses the relationships between the collective behaviors of rural households and rural development. Chapter Nine is a theoretical study on the functions of rural households and the effects of the geographical environment. Following a classification of the functional types of the rural households and the geographical environments, this chapter elaborates the interactions between the human beings and the geographical environments and the theory about the interactive functions of the rural households and their spatial fields. Based on this elaboration, this chapter constructs a theory about the reciprocity between the rural households and the geographical environments.

As a theoretical finding of the key project of NSFC, the completion of this book is the crystal of the group members' collective wisdom. Besides myself, the other participants of this project are Associate Professors Qiao Jiajun and Li Erling from Henan University, Professors Zhou Xiongfei and Gao Genghe, Associate Professors Fan Xinsheng and Lu Lixin, Lecturer Luo Qing from Henan University of Finance and Economics, Doctor Li Jun from Yunnan Normal University, Doctor Liu Ting from Luoyang Teachers College. The framework of the whole book and the outline of each chapter were proposed by Li Xiaojian. The composing tasks were distributed by Li Xiaojian according to each member's academic specialty. The distributions are as follows: Chapter One was completed by Li Xiaojian and Li Jun; the first section of Chapter Two by Li Xiaojian and Gao Genghe, the rest by Gao Genghe; the first two sections of Chapter Three by Qiao Jiajun, the next two sections respectively by Gao Genghe and Li Erling; Chapter Four by Gao Genghe and Li Xiaojian; Chapter Five by Li Jun and Li Xiaojian; the first two sections of Chapter Six were completed cooperatively by Li Xiaojian, Zhou Xiongfei and Qiao Jiajun, the third section by Qiao Jiajun; Chapter Seven by Li Erling and Li Xiaojian; the first section of Chapter Eight by Zhou Xiongfei, the second by Fan Xinsheng, the next two sections cooperatively by Liu Ting and Li Xiaojian; the first and fourth sections of Chapter Nine by Lu Lixin, the second by Fan Xinsheng and Li Xiaojian, the third by Luo Qing and Li Xiaojian. The draft was mainly

revised by Li Xiaojian. In the process of research and book writing, the members' attitudes of being earnest, responsible, faithful and cooperative are moving and unforgettable. Especially, Qiao Jiajun and Fan Xinsheng put great effort in assisting Li Xiaojian in editing of the draft.

The micro-perspective and macro-perspective of economic geography are interconnected. The micro-research is more helpful for grasping the essence of the phenomena of economic geography so as to explore its internal working mechanisms, while the macro-research is more suitable to synthetically understand the phenomena of economic geography so as to discover its overall features. Most probably, the relationship between these two can be likened to that between "a tree" and "a forest". Therefore, the research of economic geography should put "watching a forest afar" and "scrutinizing a tree closely" on equal weight. The two supplements each other. We can not just attend to one and lose sight of the other. The reason why I emphasize the micro-perspective of the Chinese economic geography is only because its research is comparatively weak in the over-all disciplinary construction of Chinese economic geography.

The exploration of the basic unit in the economic geographical phenomena is an arduous task. Our team still has a long way to go before we get to our destination. Hence, we sincerely hope that many more economic geographers will pay a good deal of attention to this academic direction and make their great contributions.

The geographical research on the rural households has no precedents to refer to. It involves numerous disciplines and some of its theories are difficult to construct. In this regard, it's indispensable for the book to bear some disadvantages although the project research members exerted themselves greatly. Therefore, any comments and suggestions from the readers are highly appreciated.

Li Xiaojian
August, 2009

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