

# Analysis of Poor Students and Related Concepts

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**Abstract:** The concept boundary theorem of "humble students" should be the logical starting point for studying the problems of humble students. At present, there is relatively little discussion on this concept in the academic community, and it is often mixed or confused with concepts such as rural students, impoverished students, and left behind children, resulting in a completely unrecognizable research on the issue of underprivileged students. Obviously, it is necessary to distinguish the relationship between "humble students" and these concepts.

**Keywords:** Underprivileged students, Rural students, Impoverished students, Left behind children.

## 1. Introduction

As a core concept in the study of the problems of humble students, the boundary theorem of humble students should become the logical starting point of the entire research. However, according to existing research, many researchers not only do not attach importance to the definition of "underprivileged students", but also often intentionally or unintentionally view rural students, impoverished students, left behind children, etc. as a group of underprivileged students and conduct research. As a result, the study of a problem involving underprivileged students has become a study of a problem involving non underprivileged students, greatly reducing the value of the entire study, Resulting in a significant waste of research resources. Therefore, it is very important to clarify the relationship between "humble students" and these concepts.

## 2. The Meaning of A Poor Student

At present, there is a phenomenon of mixed use of words such as "poor students", "rural children", "impoverished students", and "left behind children" in the academic community. This expands the concept of impoverished students and misleads people into misunderstandings about their conceptual understanding. Therefore, this article distinguishes and analyzes students from humble backgrounds and related concepts.

### 2.1. Ancient students from humble backgrounds

The concept of "humble students" is not new in recent years, and there have been theories of "humble" and "students" since ancient times. Among them, "Hanmen" originated from Qu Yuan's "Chu Ci: Far Journey" at the end of the Warring States period. "Shu Bingjie drove the flock, and the vast expanse surrounded the Hanmen." [1]Wang Yizhu, a famous literary figure of the Eastern Han Dynasty, [2]noted, "Hanmen is the gate to the North Pole." In other words, Hanmen originally referred to the extremely cold places in the north. In the Records of the Grand Historian of the Western Han Dynasty, Sima Qian wrote, "The so-called [3]Hanmen is also known as Gukou." In the [4]Tang Dynasty, Yan Shigu annotated here: "Gukou, also known as the Gukou of Zhongshan, was a county during the Han Dynasty, and now it is called Gukou.

To the north of Zhongshan is cold and cool, so this valley is called Hanmen." This indicates that Hanmen can also refer to ancient place names, such as Gukou. Therefore, early poverty did not refer to family background. From the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin dynasties, due to the rise of the feudal system, the distinction between scholars and commoners was strictly divided, and it was only then that the humble class officially formed a social class, corresponding to the aristocratic class. The humble family added the meaning of poor family background. For example, in the Southern Dynasty, Shen Yue [5]said, "Since the Han Dynasty, there was no distinction between scholars and commoners." He also said, "During the Wei and Jin dynasties, there was a distinction between scholars and commoners, based on their status and status." [4]; Pei Ziye of the Southern Dynasty also said, "There is no distinction between scholars and commoners in the Han Dynasty, [6]but there is no distinction between them." He believed that although there were differences between scholars and commoners in the Han Dynasty, there was no obvious difference in clothing and attire. It can be seen from this that the Han Dynasty saw the emergence of the commoner and scholar classes, but at this time, the class contradiction between the two was not obvious. Until the Wei and Jin dynasties, Liu Yi wrote in his memorial to Emperor Wu of Jin, "The highest rank has no humble family, and the lowest rank has no powerful family.". The term "humble" specifically refers to a humble family, that is, a lower ranked family, which is also the source of "humble" among the students from humble backgrounds discussed in this article.

The term "student" first came from Zheng Xuanjian in "Poetry · Zheng Feng · Zijin", who wrote "Qingqing Zijin": "Qingjin, Qingling, what students wear." "Qingjin, Qingling, what students wear." Here, students refer to students who study at school. Lin Jingxi of the Song Dynasty wrote in his poem "Rewarding Father Gao for Seeing and Sending": "A graceful hand fills the household with the shoes of a student." Here, the student refers to the person who followed Xie Ao to learn Confucian elegance, that is, the student.

Since modern times, Mr. Tang Changru (1957) was the earliest scholar to conduct research on ancient impoverished families. He believes that "some of the landlords from humble families were transformed by merchants, some were generated by wealthy farmers, and there were also many local tycoons who had not yet entered the ranks of the aristocracy."

[7]This is the most extensive method of defining the social group included in humble families. Mao Hanguang (1976) believed that the so-called "humble people" refer to those who come from a humble background and have no worldly wealth[8]. From this, it can be seen that the term "humble family" specifically refers to the common people whose ancestors did not hold official positions. But this is only a very small group, and many scholars distinguish between humble and noble families based on the size of their father's official rank. For example, Chen Changqi (1992) explained the concept of the humble family as a dynamic one, initially in opposition to the family of forces. The powerful family refers to those who occupy an important position in the state power organization, while the humble family does not occupy an important position in the state power organization. Over time, the humble family has evolved into two parts. One part is the secondary branch bureaucrats who hold lower positions than the aristocratic families, and the other is those who hold lower positions without official titles. The latter is called the Han people. [9]Through Chen Changqi's explanation in the book, we believe that in his view, the humble family should not only include the common people whose ancestors did not have official ranks, but also include the aristocratic families with lower status than the high-ranking ones. Xiong Deji (2000) shares a similar view with the former, believing that the humble belong to the lower class of the aristocratic family, while compared to the high-ranking aristocratic family, they are more humble or impoverished. Whether they are humble or humble, they belong to the humble family because they are both "door cold" or "ground cold". Li Qiongying (2002) expanded the main scope of the Han family and defined the concept of "Han family" as follows: during the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, it was referred to as "Han" and included two types: one was "Han family"; The second is "cold people". Li Qiongying believes that "humble families" not only include some aristocratic families who have lost power and ordinary people without ancestral funds, but also include landlords and tycoons who do not have political and economic privileges, as well as the household registration and Qi people who do not have political and economic privileges. In 2004, Zhang Xuhua divided the ruling class into aristocratic landlords and humble landlords. The humble landlords generally had lower rank in their rural areas and lower rank in their starting positions. He believed that the humble class belonged to the landlord class and were generally lower ranking officials. However, Ma Dongyu (2017) does not agree with the former viewpoint. In other words, Ma Dongyu believes that the humble family does not include wealthy merchants and local tycoons whose ancestors had no official status. In addition to Han Chinese landlords, Duan Yanan (2021) believes that local indigenous chieftains (mostly non Han Chinese) are also among the "poor families". The indigenous chieftains here refer to the leaders of ethnic minorities, in other words, ordinary ethnic minority people are not within the scope of the "humble family".

Therefore, in ancient feudal society, the power resources possessed by families were used as a basis to distinguish between the humble and aristocratic families. "Poor students" refer to scholars whose family power resources are relatively scarce.

## 2.2. Modern students from humble backgrounds

Although there is a large number of literature on the group

of modern underprivileged students, there is very little literature specifically defining this concept. At present, there are three representative views on the understanding of modern students from humble backgrounds: the first viewpoint emphasizes family economic difficulties; The second viewpoint focuses on highlighting the characteristics of underprivileged students achieving class crossing through personal struggle[10]; The third perspective views students from economic indicators and regional factors, namely students from less affluent families who come from impoverished rural areas. From this, it can be seen that research on defining the group of modern underprivileged students has mostly been proposed from the perspective of social class. This article explains the meaning of modern underprivileged students based on their family's ownership of social, economic, and cultural resources. Modern impoverished students refer to those who come from families with limited or no economic, organizational, and cultural resources in society, and are receiving education in schools, schools, and other learning places. The main characteristic of this group is the dual poverty of material life and spiritual and cultural aspects. The material poverty of underprivileged students comes from the scarcity of family economic resources, but with the help of the state and social forces, their material living conditions have been greatly improved; Spiritual poverty has a hidden and long-term nature, and its negative impact on the academic performance of underprivileged students is difficult to detect. It has only been proposed in recent years. The spiritual poverty of underprivileged students comes from the lack of family cultural resources and insufficient emotional support from their parents. At least one of their parents has a junior high school education or below, and the family lacks a strong cultural atmosphere. They are usually busy with work and have no time to consider their children's academic and emotional needs.

## 3. "Rural Students" and "Poor Students"

What is a rural student? To understand this concept, it is necessary to first clarify what rural areas are. In the dictionary, rural areas refer to the concept of region, which refers to densely populated areas dominated by agricultural economy. According to existing literature, there are mainly two types of definitions for "rural students". Some people prioritize the rural family background of students. For example, Han Zhirui emphasized that students were born in rural areas, while Cheng Meng focused on students' rural registered residence and at least one of their parents was a farmer or migrant worker[11]; Some people also emphasize that students have at least one rural education experience. For example, Zhao Jingwen believes that rural students have had village life experiences at least in primary school[12]. Although these interpretations are inconsistent, they do not mention the financial situation of student families. Therefore, rural students who come from rural families and have some educational experience in rural areas are not limited by their family economic conditions. Comparing the concepts of "rural students" and "impoverished students", it is not difficult to find that the meanings between the two are vastly different. Firstly, from a lexical perspective, the "rural" of rural students defines student groups from a geographical administrative region dimension, while the "impoverished" of impoverished

students divides student groups from a social class perspective; Secondly, in terms of family background, the economic, cultural, and political capital of students from humble backgrounds is relatively scarce; Rural students have rural registered residence, and family capital is not necessarily inferior to urban students (such as coastal towns); Again, from the perspective of educational experience, rural students may have at least one experience in rural primary schools, while students from humble backgrounds may not necessarily have any experience in rural life.

Obviously, rural students are not necessarily students from humble backgrounds, but some scholars believe that students whose household registration is in rural areas at the time of enrollment belong to the category of humble backgrounds[13]. Why have people long mistakenly believed that rural students are contemporary poor families? In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the policy of "scissors gap" in industrial and agricultural products was implemented domestically, forming a dual socio-economic structure between urban and rural areas. Most of the accumulated funds obtained free of charge from rural areas were invested in urban industrial construction, and a very small portion of the funds were returned to agriculture. Rural areas lack funds to purchase advanced agricultural machinery and equipment; The agricultural production mode is mainly collective operation, and the "big pot rice" ideology is prevalent; In addition, historical legacy issues have jointly formed a situation where the level of rural economic development in China is generally lagging behind. Therefore, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the average income level of rural residents in China was far lower than that of urban residents, and many farmers barely met the minimum living standard, unable to afford their children's education expenses. At this historical stage, the families of rural students were facing economic difficulties, and both or one of their parents were illiterate, belonging to the category of underprivileged students. Since entering the new era, the Party has led the people of the whole country to win the battle against poverty, remove the hat of all impoverished areas on the land of China, significantly increase the per capita income level in rural areas, basically achieve the popularization of compulsory education, and wireless networks have entered thousands of households. The characteristics of rural student groups in some areas (such as the southeastern coastal area) have also changed accordingly. The economic situation of rural student families has improved, and a massive amount of learning materials can be obtained through mobile phones. Compared to the last century, contemporary rural students generally have abundant economic and cultural resources, and do not possess the basic characteristics of dual poverty in terms of material and spiritual aspects among underprivileged students.

#### **4. "Underprivileged students" and "Poor students"**

Regarding the definition of "impoverished students", the first thing to understand is what poverty is. Poverty generally refers to the difficult living conditions of human beings in terms of material economy, which includes two types: relative poverty and absolute poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a state of survival in which human physiological needs (basic needs for personal survival, such as food, drink, and shelter) are not met. The definition of relative poverty in the domestic "Brief Dictionary of Sociology" is: "The standard of living of

an individual, a family, or even a special group is lower than the average level in the region." Therefore, it can be seen that the "poverty" of impoverished students refers to economic difficulties. There are currently multiple perspectives on the definition of "impoverished students": some scholars classify impoverished students based on the economic conditions under which their families bear the cost of education. Students who find it difficult to pay for education are classified as general impoverished students, while students who are unable to pay for education are referred to as extremely impoverished students; Starting from the evaluation criteria for impoverished students in universities, some scholars believe that "impoverished students refer to students who are recognized by various higher education institutions in accordance with the relevant documents and instructions of the education regulatory department, through the establishment of a fair, complete, systematic, and transparent evaluation system for impoverished students, especially those whose family economic conditions are evaluated and publicly announced without objection." [14]; Based on regional differences, some scholars point out that "impoverished students can be divided into two categories: one is those who meet the above standards of economic difficulties in developed cities, surrounding towns, and rural families; the other is those in impoverished areas where people's living standards are generally low, and almost all students in the school are impoverished students."; Scholars have pointed out in the "Guiding Opinions on Seriously Doing a Good Job in the Identification of Students from Economically Difficult Families in Universities" (Jiao Cai [2018] No. 16) [15] based on relevant government policy documents that "students from economically disadvantaged families refer to students who themselves and their families can raise funds that are difficult to pay for their basic learning and living expenses during their school years." According to this guiding opinion, In the process of defining impoverished students, two key points should be noted: first, "difficulties" refer to family economic difficulties; Secondly, the difficulty of students is measured by whether the funds they and their families can raise can cover their basic learning and living expenses during their school years[16]. Although these interpretations are inconsistent, they reflect some common characteristics of impoverished students: financial difficulties in families cannot support students to successfully complete their studies.

From the above, it can be seen that impoverished students are not necessarily students from humble backgrounds, mainly because they have different requirements for spiritual and cultural aspects. Poverty at the spiritual and cultural level is a fundamental characteristic of underprivileged students, which stems from the scarcity of cultural resources in underprivileged families; Although impoverished students come from families with poor economic conditions, they may not necessarily fall into difficulties in terms of spiritual and cultural aspects. They not only have the spiritual support of their parents as the psychological backing, but also can download high-quality learning resources for free through the Internet education platform, such as the national intelligent education platform for primary and secondary schools, MOOC of Chinese universities, learning power, etc. The spiritual world of poor students has a wide world.

## 5. "Left behind Children" and "Poor Students"

In the 1980s, China entered a period of social transformation, and with large-scale population mobility, the group of "left behind children" first emerged. The Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Care and Protection of Left behind Children in Rural Areas have clearly defined the concept of "left behind children". Children under the age of sixteen, who have been left behind for more than six months, and whose parents are both out of town or one of their parents is out of town but the other who remains at home has no guardianship ability, are considered "left behind children". This document does not consider rural children whose parents have been working or doing business outside for a long time to belong to the group of left behind children. However, both parents play an indispensable role in the healthy growth of their children. Whether both parents go out or one goes out, it breaks the complete structure of the family and has an extremely important impact on the daily life of children. Therefore, many scholars in the academic community have included one parent going out to work and do business as a "left behind child". For example, Wang Yi divided left behind children into two types based on the differences in the forms of their parents going out. The first type is completely left behind children, which refers to minors whose parents both go out; The second category is semi left behind children, which refers to minors who are raised, cared for, and managed solely by their parents when one parent is away[17]. Some people also classify left behind children into transnational left behind children, urban left behind children, and rural left behind children based on regional differences. Transnational left behind children refer to "children who stay in China because their parents go abroad to study or work", rural left behind children refer to "minors aged 6-16 years old who are raised, cared for and managed by their parents, elders or others or live independently in rural areas because both parents or one of them has been away for a long time", and urban left behind children refer to "children with non-agricultural household registration and living in cities and towns separated from their parents for a long time". The above classification method reflects the essential characteristics of "left behind children": firstly, left behind children are mostly under the age of 16 or 18; Secondly, both or one of the parents have been away for at least six months; Thirdly, families of left behind children are in a long-term state of parent-child separation, which can be divided into two situations: physical left behind and psychological left behind. Physical left behind refers to the time when both parents go out or one of them goes out to work or study, and can only be left alone at home or raised by grandparents, with other relatives or non relatives taking care of them for more than six months. Another state of parent-child separation is psychological left behind, where although parents and children are together every day, they lack care for their children due to their long-term busy work, social activities, and entertainment, which lasts for more than six months; Fourthly, the reason why children stay behind is closely related to the parents' planning for their own careers and their requirements for their children's academic performance. In the matter of being left behind, children are the ones who are forced to bear the consequences of being left behind, and parents are the decision-makers who consider all aspects and cause the phenomenon of parent-child separation. It is not

difficult to infer that the so-called left behind children refer to underage children in core families who have been in a state of parent-child separation for a long time (at least six months or more).

Comparing the concepts of "left behind children" and "underprivileged students", it is not difficult to find that there are two main differences between them. On the one hand, from the perspective of age characteristics, left behind children are limited to minors under the age of 16 or 18, while underprivileged students have no age limit, including both adult and underage school students. On the other hand, from the perspective of family background, the core characteristic of left behind children's families is that they are in a long-term state of parent-child separation, including two situations: physical left behind and psychological left behind; The main characteristic of families of underprivileged students is that they have extremely limited economic, power, and cultural resources in society.

## 6. Conclusion

Overall, students from humble backgrounds emphasize social class identity, which is the difference in family capital among students; Rural students emphasize the universal characteristics of the student population who reside and study in a specific geographical administrative area for a long time; Poor students emphasize that financial difficulties in their families prevent them from completing their studies; Left behind children emphasize that the parent-child relationship between minors and their parents is in a state of separation in the family. Although there are many similarities between concepts such as "impoverished students", "rural students", "impoverished students", and "left behind children", the differences between them are very obvious. Therefore, it is absolutely not possible to confuse and mix "impoverished students" with these concepts.

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