

# Influence of Identity on Development of Urbanization\*

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Based on the urbanization, this paper lists the identity of outsiders through the survey data of mega-cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, and analyzes the reasons for the gap in identity. To solve the problem of the identity of the outsiders, efforts to address the identity gap are an aspect that cannot be ignored in the current development of Chinese society. This is of positive significance to the urban issues under the aging society.

*Keywords:* urbanization, outsiders, socio-cultural identity

## Introduction

Urbanization is also referred to as townization and citization. It means that with the development of social productivity in a country or region, the advancement of science and technology, and the adjustment of industrial structure, the society has gradually changed from a traditional rural-based society that is mainly composed of agriculture to a modern society that mainly consists of industry (second industry) and service industry (tertiary industry).

Urbanization can be a process in which the population is concentrated from the countryside to the cities, and the cities absorb the agricultural population through the development of the secondary industry and the tertiary industry. It emphasized that the center of economic and social activities should be transferred from rural areas. The process of urbanization includes changes in the occupation of the population, changes in the industrial structure, and changes in the land and geographical space.

At present, Chinese and overseas scholars have elaborated on the concepts of urbanization from demographics, geography, sociology, and economics. In December 2011, when *Chinese Social Blue Book* was released, China's urban population accounted for more than 50% of the total population for the first time, indicating that China's urbanization exceeded 50% for the first time.

## Definition of Urban Identity

The sense of urban identity refers to the sense of belonging and pride of the people to the city. According to the survey report of the first large-scale urban identity survey conducted by Sun Yat-sen University's Big Data Communication Laboratory, among the seven largest mega cities in China, Chongqing has the highest urban identity index; Guangzhou gained the highest degree of residents' recognition of their status and recognized the most inclusive city among them.

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If the outsiders work in a city for a few years, when they return to their hometown the locals feel that they are urban residents because of the change of the life-style. But the city people still think of them as countrymen. In terms of identity, these outsiders are actually in an embarrassing situation where both urban and rural areas are not recognized. Many outsiders who had entered the city early had already settled in cities. They had become urban residents in a true sense. However, it is hard to obtain an urban registered residence for these outsiders; even if they got an urban registered residence by the law, they still lacked a sense of identity in the city actually.

### **Survey Data of Cities With About Ten Million Population**

On September 29, 2015, the Big Data Communication Laboratory of Sun Yat-sen University released the first survey report on the recognition of mega cities in China. This is the first domestic survey report on the identification of mega cities and is expected to provide social researchers and city administrators a new vision that is different from the real data of urban economic indicators. The survey distributed questionnaires to netizens across the country through the mobile Internet. A total of 150,971 valid questionnaires were collected, there are 22,991 valid questionnaires for millions of citizens in “super mega cities”.

The survey found that the level of the identity index of the seven mega cities is not exactly the same as the economic level of the city. The report shows that Chongqing citizens' urban identity is generally 76.24 points (standard point), ranking first in the seven major cities, and Shanghai and Guangzhou ranked second and third, respectively. Among them, in terms of status recognition and geographical recognition, Guangzhou and Shanghai ranked first among the seven major cities, while Chongqing took the top spot in socio-cultural identity.

Researchers measure status recognition through their perceptions of their social status and their satisfaction with the profession they are engaged in. From this point of view, Guangzhou's socio-economic status is highly correlated with the class. By comparing the urban identity gap between local and migrant populations in cities, the researchers believe that in a city where there is no difference between a local and an outsider, ideally, the gap between the two populations should be zero. The smaller the gap score is, the higher the acceptance degree of the city is, and vice versa. They found that Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Chongqing are the three cities with a high degree of acceptance. In these cities, the locals' urban identities were significantly higher than the outsiders. The average gap was 8.47 points, while Guangzhou's gap was the smallest with only 4.86 points. The city acceptance degrees of Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, and Wuhan are all lower than the average.

On December 10, 2015, the press conference of *Social Psychology Blue Book: A Study Report on the Chinese Social Psychology (2015)*, co-organized by the Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Social Science, was held in Beijing. The analysis in the book found that there was a significant difference in urban identity among groups with different educational levels. Respondents with a doctoral degree had a significantly lower urban identity than those with other qualifications. It also reminds city managers of the accumulation of talents. A group of talented people who do not have a strong sense of identity with the city may not be able to show creativity and make contribution that matches them.

### **Status Gap Reduction Benefits Sustainable Urban Development**

Through investigation, it is found that reducing the gap caused by status has a significant effect on increasing the sense of happiness. If the ratio of per capita income between people with different household

registrations falls by 1%, the increase in happiness brought by the increase is equivalent to an increase in household per capita income of 53.2%, which is calculated according to the annual growth rate of per capita income of urban residents in China by 9%. The effect is approximately equal to the increase in income of urban residents in five years. According to the annual growth rate of rural residents' per capita income of 6%, this effect is equal to the increase in income of farmers for 7.6 years. At the same time, the increase in happiness by a 1% decrease in the identity income gap is equivalent to an increase in the per capita housing area of 30 square meters.

If we do not pay attention to the social integration within the city as soon as possible, it will have a potential danger for the harmonious development of the city. China has begun to enter an ageing trend of the society. As a relatively developed region, the population has begun to show a declining trend. With the implementation of the second-child policy, the proportion of young people can be reduced to a certain extent, but in the long run this approach is not conducive to the long-term development of China's future.

### **Household Registration is an Important Source of Identity Gap**

According to traditional economic theory, social development is equal to urbanization and industrialization. In the process of urbanization in China, we simply put the traditional urban-rural duality division into the interior of the city, forming the so-called "new dual urban society". When society completely divides social groups according to a single identity, it will increase social conflicts. This situation may be happening quietly in China (Amartya, 2009).

According to the study, there is a clear income gap between the local household registration population and the migrant population in the cities. Not only that, there are gaps in the returns to education among people with different household registration statuses, and this gap is also gradually widening. In other words, people who hold an urban household register receive higher income than non-urban residents at the same level of education. In addition, some scholars have found through research that the non-urban residents population is relatively unhappy compared to the registered population, and their trust in the government, the public, and the residents of the community is even lower.

In Shanghai, the resident population of 2014 was close to 25 million, of which, the population without local household registration was about 40%. Similarly, in some cities in the Pearl River Delta, the proportion of permanent residents without a local household register has exceeded 50%. The proportion of permanent residents without a local household register has a lower income, happiness and trust, and their settlement is relatively concentrated. If the group continues to increase, then this will bring enormous challenges to China's future urban governance.

When the city's outsiders encounter unequal treatment because of the status gap, or when they are frustrated, they often ask themselves "who I am". In fact, identity anxiety has always existed among outsiders who actively integrate into urban groups. The first is social identification. Social identity means that the individual's behavioral thoughts are in line with social norms or social expectations. They are represented on three levels: value recognition, professional identity, and role identity. Value recognition refers to the individual's recognition of the basic principles and norms of society. Professional identity means that individuals not only regard the occupation they are engaged in as a means of earning a living, but also hope that the occupation can reflect its social value. Role identity refers to the process in which an individual recognizes the behavioral standards that a society assigns to a certain role, and acts according to this standard of behavior.

The relationship between the above three is that value recognition is the basis of professional identity and role identity. Professional identity and role identity are the expressions of value recognition.

Social identity also includes three structural dimensions: Attachment identity refers to the perception of their group society, and understands oneself as the identity process of one of the group members. Attachment emotion refers to the level of emotional involvement when individuals classify themselves as a group; attachment evaluation refers to understanding and sharing; ownership evaluation means understanding and sharing the meaning of social value evaluation of the group.

In China, this local identity will also suffer from two distinctly different directions and it will be even more embarrassing. From the “country” aspect, the value orientation with localism has never received any support. At the same time, some intellectuals have pointed out that this identity has become less important in a globalized times. They are more willing to be “global citizens” or purely “Chinese”, and regard local identities as a kind of narrow, petty-minded and even smaller-scale nationalism that runs counter to “universal values”. However, some scholars believe that it is precisely the starting point of a modern citizen that one person cultivates priority concerns about the communities, cities, and regions where he lives. Imagine a person living in a city living who does not agree that he/she belongs to this city from his/her heart. Mostly, he/she will not care about the future prospects of his/her city. He/She will only live like a nomad. Therefore, only when one person has a strong sense of identity with the city in which he/she lives, will he/she strongly hope that it will become better, and strongly oppose to making it worse. A person who has been indifferent to the environment around him/her will never become a good citizen or civics.

### **Conclusion**

In short, with the further development of the Chinese economy and the continued advancement of urbanization, cities such as Tianjin, Chongqing, and Wuhan have also entered the ranks of over a million super cities after Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. The process of urbanization has caused more and more rural people to migrate to cities, especially to these megacities. With the aging of Chinese society, the proportion of young people has begun to decline, and social problems, such as the huge gap in old-age pensions have begun to appear. It is not enough to encourage the fertility policy alone to increase the proportion of young people in order to alleviate the social problems caused by aging. Currently, due to the “urban dualization” of geographical status issues, such as household registration, a large part of the city’s outsiders are rejected from the “tax-paying groups”, creating a waste of “tax sources”. In fact, due to the lack of identity, outsiders are rejected even if they have the intention to participate in insurance and pay taxes. This is a “status gap” caused by policies. Properly, eliminating this gap will help solve the aging social problem. Economic development should not be at the expense of the sense of well-being of citizens, and the importance and matching of urban residents should be taken into account. The mega-cities that have developed rapidly since the reform and opening up were typical representatives of China’s modern metropolis and must have the typical symptoms of “urban disease”. Furthermore, from a socio-biological point of view, the quality of urban population is higher than that of rural areas, not only because of healthy diet, superior medical and health conditions and educational resources, but also the advantage of genetic exchange among distant relatives of the population. Therefore, from the point of view of the development of population quality, the city’s outsiders also have a positive role in ensuring the quality of the urban population.

China's drive for industrialisation and urbanisation is gathering pace. Under the general trend of urbanization, the number of rural residents entering the city to "get a living" has gradually increased, and corresponding social problems have also arisen. How the urban government effectively solves the problem of "identity" of foreigners can not only enhance economic growth, but also help cope with the problem of aging society, and can effectively reduce unnecessary waste of government financial resources.

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