

**Between the Imagination and the Reality -- Taking Guangzhou's  
"Henan village "as an example to explore the regional discrimination**

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Regional discrimination is an sensitive but cannot evasive problem, and the current regional discrimination has produced a deep effect to part of people's daily life. This paper is based on the network and the real world's spread of " demonizing the He'nan people " phenomenon. The writer will take the Guangzhou's "He'nan village " as an example, through depth investigation, the writer is to explore the mechanism of regional discrimination and a resolution of regional discrimination approach.

**Key Words:** Regional discrimination, dual community,

"Henan village"

The earliest time that people began to defame Henan people has not known to us now. However, the large-scale population of this phenomenon began from the middle of 1990s. At that moment, regional discrimination to Henan had become clear. Some articles with the titles like "How are Henan people" or "Why is Henan people again" appeared on the Internet frequently. Some people write article in such titles just for improving the popularity. News about Henan people, especially some of

the negative ones are also be highly concerned. In our daily life, this kind of phenomenon also brings many discomforts to other provinces' citizens. Those who do not know Henan people are likely to feel afraid of them. They are lack of the sense of safety when they make contact with Henan people, so they usually choose to reject Henan people and protect themselves. This kind of regional discrimination is very common nowadays, but so large-scale defamation is quite rare. The phenomenon has aroused the author's attention.

Pearl River Delta region is in the south coast of China, which is a plain area and rich in resources. The geographical environment is superior, and the population is concentrated. Local people have good management concept since ancient times. Meanwhile, this region is the earliest one that produced the seeds of capitalism in China. Especially since the reform and opening up, the economy of the Pearl River Delta region has achieved rapid development and the urbanization also greatly accelerates. In the process of urbanization, migrant workers from all the country began to come to Guangdong. According to relevant documents, the author found that majority of those workers are from underdeveloped areas such as Hunan, Sichuan, Jiangxi, Hubei, Guizhou, Henan and Jeyang, Shanwei. After referring some relevant documents, the author found that Henan people have several settlements in Guangzhou such as Shipai village, Dongpu, Chebei, Tangxia village and Tangdong village

and other villages in city. On that base, the author eventually chose Henan people that lies in Tangxia village, because it is regarded as the second hometown for Henan people.

## **I An Introduction to“ Henan village ”**

Tangxia village which is located in Guangzhou Tianhe District has been called the "second home" by Henan people who working in Guangzhou. Tangxia Village is located in the northern part of Tianhe District, Guangzhou, to the south of the Zhongshan Avenue. In fact, with the expansion of the city and its eastward shift, a lot of land in Tangxia Village has been expropriated by the state. Tangxia Village becomes an "unrecognizable". It is even a difficult thing for locals to define the boundaries clearly. In the early years of new China, Tangxia were in control of three villages: Dashan, Shangshe and Xinxu. In 1997, Tangxia Sub-district Office of Tianhe District established which means that Tangxia Village separated from the Dongpu town and became under the control of Tangxia Sub-district Office.

Tangxia people have done farming for generations. Before the founding of new China, only a few of them engaged in commercial things or worked outside, and most of them stopped to farm when the land reform occurred. After the founding of new China, the liquidity of Tangxia people gradually increased, and their career had also been

changed; especially since the reform and opening up, more and more farmers changed into citizens because of land expropriation.

Along with the urbanization of Tangxia village, more and more people began to flow into this area. According to the statistics, there were more than thirty thousand mobile population in Tangxia till 2000, which is five times the number of the local people. These people mainly came from Chaoshan areas, Sichuan, Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangxi. At that time, Henan people in Tangxia village is rare. According to "The recording of Tangxia village", only not more than 200 people from Henan lived in Tangxia village till 2000, accounting for only 6.07% of the total number of foreign population. In the process of the investigation, Mr. Wang, a taxi driver from Henan said that he came to Tangxia in 1999, when people from Henan could only have 20 taxis for most, and the driver is less than sixty Henan people. And it was a period that each taxi driver could earn almost four thousand RMB per month. However, because of the prosperity of taxi business, more and more people in Henan began to pour into Tangxia, especially in the year of 2002 and 2003. It seemed that people from Henan fulfilled Tangxia village. It was the fastest-growing period of the number of Henan driver in Tangxia, when Tangxia had at least 1500 taxis, with the meaning that one taxi can mean 8 Henan people in Tangxia. And then, there should be more than ten thousand Henan people living in Tangxia. "Henan village", second hometown for Henan

people” has become wide-spread.

## **II The explanation of regional discrimination**

It is not a strange word in the consciousness of Chinese people, but what is the meaning of “regional” and “discrimination” is a problem which is needed to be explained.

Let’s talk about “regional” at first. The first expression of “regional” is a region, a district, an area or a zone. The second expression is local. The explanation of region from Baidu Encyclopedia defines it as a certain regional space which is formed by the natural factors and human factors, with three characteristics in region, humanity and system. In simple terms, “region” is a concept that reflects the characteristics of time and space, as well as economic social and cultural characteristics. A significant regional concept must be an organic fusion of natural factors and human factors. Therefore, from this point, the geographical concept should be a kind of functional definition in people’s mind. However, in real life, we are inclined to define geographical limit as consciousness of division of different region or tools used to differ us from others, rather than a single administrative district, or a clear line of geographical unit.

Then let’s talk about discrimination. The word means difference. In ancient Chinese language, it means "not equal "; and definition in

"Modern Chinese dictionary" is that "the so-called discrimination, in short, not equal to see other people or things"; In the book Black Will Political Science Encyclopedia, " discrimination" is interpreted as: a difference and a sense of different treatment... David Bopno defined the discrimination in "sociology" as follows: be given unfair treatment because those people are a group or category members; The Black Law Dictionary regards discrimination as three meanings: firstly, in the constitution level, it points to the results of privilege given to specific class by the statute law or practice , and this particular class is unjustly selected from who should also enjoy these rights general hand-picked; And there is no reasonable difference between those who are given the privilege and has not been granted a charter. Secondly, people receive not equal treatment or deprived of their normal rights because of their race, age, gender, nationality or religion. Thirdly, not equal to all, and there is no reasonable distinguish standard between those who enjoy preferential and not enjoy preferential; David Bopno defined the discrimination in the book Sociology as "give not fair or unfair treatment for those who are a group or category members "; At present, academia generally accepted the definition of "the same group person (things) are not equal or different people (things) are equal."

Although a unanimous interpretation on discrimination has not been concluded yet by scholars, by the large, discrimination means that people

artificially make differences between themselves and treat others unequally, due to the differences among people which is caused by nationality, age, religious beliefs experiences and other factors.

This paper is designed to explain the definition of discrimination from the following aspects:

Firstly, discrimination is a kind of social behavior. It can be found among different groups, for example, the discrimination of the disadvantaged over the advantaged, or vice versa. It also exists in the individuals, representing the personal qualities of self-stiffness and self-discrimination.

Then, discrimination is kind of conscious behavior. And sometimes it may become unconscious as the complex of "group psychology" implies. In short, discrimination means a person or a group delivers unequal treatment to another person or another group, consciously or unconsciously.

In conclusion, the paper believes that regional discrimination is a common social phenomenon among individuals or groups in the process of social development, which is influenced by factors of the cultural differences, uneven economic development in different regions and the mental activities of individuals, a person or group could hold partial concepts and incorrect tendencies or behaviors to another person or group, which might cause actual harms to them, and then the regional discrimination appears.

### **III The explore and analysis on the causes of the phenomenon of discrimination upon Henan people**

In fact, the discrimination upon Henan has been existing since ancient times, as for the current movement of deionization on Henan, a lot of people think it begins from Xinjiang " Henan bad eggs " in the 1970's, since then, the Henan stigmatization has never been interrupted. After the reform and opening up, more and more people in Henan started to leave Henan for all parts of the country, therefore Henan became the big province with lots of migrant workers from the populous province, and from the middle of 1990's, the off-color gag on Henan is massive popular, which led to the explication of the region discrimination on Henan. Especially in the new century, a number of influential newspapers and websites have shown great interest in the negative news about Henan, and a series of Henan image problems in literature and film and television works have also made a stormy sea stormier, as a consequence the Henan image has fixed in the "corny, blow, false, cheat, steal " and so on. After going through the relevant literature and investigation, the author found that the discrimination on Henan resulting from the following reasons:

First: Regional discrimination is the consequence of distance between immigration culture and local culture



Of course, it is not appropriate to introduce the ethnic identity theory here, but it will undoubtedly help us understand the discrimination level. According to the relevant theories of ethnic identity, ethnic identity may not have retired in isolated populations, and only in the process of contacting with other ethnic groups, the differences and contrasts between ethnic groups owes to the heterogeneous culture's involvement, and then the ethnic groups start to classify and delimitate themselves, producing the ethnic identity which is the basic condition for identification. Correspondingly, in Henan Province, especially the rural people, The village people still live a traditional life, going out to work at sunrise and going back home at sunset, and they never feel what is regional discrimination, only when they go out of their hometowns and contact with other regional people ,and then they feel the regional discrimination. Moreover, they come to Guangzhou in the forms of wide fellow with fellow, friends with friends, and relatives with relatives. Therefore, we can also say that they have the same cultural origin, geographical and blood relationship and also in the language, religion, region, customs, cultural features. It is easy to form groups of identity when they are in the unfamiliar environment with different cultures, however, this identification aggravates the degree of regional discrimination on another level, which will be described in the following part and not repeat here.

However, this identification level will change with the context and

discourse right, which will lead to the problem of administrative levels of ethnic identity. Gu Dingguo depicted it more clearly in the study of ethnic identity hierarchy. He argues that the most basic of identity is class, kinship, the village, then the local town, county, city, province or region dialect community, the highest level is a social or ethnic region, such as the southwest and northwest.

In the course of investigation, another problem also appears, for example, a Henan may classify himself as the north people when he faces a south people, but when he faces a north people, he will tell you he is a Henan people. However, I find that in the contact between the Henan and other provinces' people, the so-called regional discrimination levels and group identity is just the opposite. As mentioned above, in real life, the local head of regional discrimination with such a sort: Northern Mandarin speakers -- -- Henan -- Henan -- some occupation in Henan, county -- specific to a part of Henan. What is more, this discrimination level is associated with the actual performance and virtual communities of some Henan in Guangzhou. The local people will have the impression from parts of Henan people, and then they will expand the impression to another one directly and construct the image of Henan between the "reality and imagination".

In fact, in the 1990s, because of the limited number of Henan people, and their emigration by themselves, a community of Henan has not yet

been formed. As a result, Henan people basically can follow the local habits. "At that time, there is not so much Henan food here. At the beginning, we ate fast food almost every day." later, however, with the rapid growth of Henan people, they began to establish their own communities surrounded by different culture, just like an independent city, Henan Kingdom ".”They are simply a group of barbarians living in dirty, small house, eating pie, mixed noodles, always drinking naked, crying the Henan dialect, but also being dirty, and hating to take a bath, doing dirty and tiring job, like a dog all day..... In fact, as the creators and heritage of culture, human beings themselves have a close relationship with the geographical environment. Every culture has obvious geographical indications, a geographically unique culture make people in the region easily feel a sense of dependence, thus easily derive from the cultural center of ideology. Therefore, when the Henan people came to Guangzhou with the Central Plains culture, the Guangzhou people start to use their own cultural standards to measure the Central Plains culture, which is bound to the discrimination of bearing body of Henan cultural. Moreover, the greater the cultural distance, the more serious the degree of discrimination is.

Second: Regional discrimination being the exclusive performance of the natives and mainlanders to Henan people and their culture

With the arrival and settlements of Henan people, they will occupy part of the surrounding environment, as well as resources. They have many impacts on the current society. Some are positive, and some are negative, such as the raising of local crime rates. The changes of environment as well as the re-allocation of resources have caused an enormous shock to the natives, who definitely will have advantages over Henan people in the game. For example, in some of the things in violation of the rules of the game, public security personnel employed by the local will make severe disciplinary to the outsiders, rather than the natives. In the game of the resources, the outsiders strongly protect their rights, however, the exclusion is an extreme way to protect resources. For example, the locals do not want to intermarry with outsiders, because of they are afraid of losing annual village dividends for one reason. Another reason is that the immigrant population are generally poor with less-paid work. Prohibiting intermarriage with the outsiders, as well as little communications with them, to a large degree, these make an obvious difference between the locals and foreign poor population.

Third: some local people hold the view of looking down upon the poor.

According to my observation, most Henan people living in Tangxia Village have such occupations: taxi driver, construction worker, waste

collector, trash picker, decoration engager that locals do not want to do, "They like a dog to work for continuing to live. In fact, the Central Plains culture pays attention to stable home rather than moving. So many Henan migrant workers leave their home because of economic reasons. And those low-wages, labor-intensive jobs which are not worth try for locals may be a better choice for Henan people to earn their lives than what they do in their hometown. And they live in narrow wet dark houses which are abandoned by the locals. What's more, their ways of life is not accustomed to Guangzhou's. So the locals will certainly discriminate against them, which is the reflecting of looking down upon the poor.

Fourth: Regional discrimination is caused by the "collective unconscious"

People who arrived in Guangzhou in early 2000 have lived here for more than 10 years, but few of them want to settle in Guangzhou. "We own nothing here, so there's no need for us to live here." They regard themselves as "farmers come from other rural", "we are farmers", "we are Henan people". These initiative words make them "alienated" and strange, so they collapse between the city and country, wandering into double "marginal man". Because of this kind of double marginalized role, they have double identity: in Guangzhou, they regard themselves as farmers, but when they return their hometown, the experience of so many years'

working outside has made them distant from rural society, and become a "quasi citizens" with the sense of city. Therefore, they have become "free city marginal man".

What's more, few people consider about how to improve this phenomenon. Some Henan people, seldom contact with their landlord, even their landlord lived in next door. And they even don't say "hello" to each other when they meet. But they also don't care others' prejudice. "We came here to seek living. We have no desire and spare time to care about others' prejudice." For their parts, Guangzhou is just a place to earn living. With this in their mind, it means nothing. They wander between urban and rural society by establishing their social relation network on the blood, geopolitical and work, and then they become the third kind of people at the edge between citizens and peasants.

#### **IV The disadvantages of the regional discrimination and some solutions**

In summary, in fact, the regional discrimination to Henan people is on behalf of the foreign population in many times. The reason of regional discrimination to Henan people, to a greater extent, is the cultural difference between the North and South, cultural conflict between urban and rural, as well as the sense of distance between immigrant culture and

the local culture. Of course, part of Henan people's low quality caused some bad effects on the image of Henan people's group, while the vast majority of people in Henan have no difference to the rest of China's people. But they are angry to the bad things done by their own fellows. So, this regional discrimination to Henan people is unfair for the vast majority of people in Henan, and the damage is extremely serious.

Nowadays, the discrimination to migrant workers has been more and more serious, especially to those who engaged in the occupation of the so-called "inferior". We may say that most villages inside the cities can be called dual Communities which is named by Dr. Zhou Daming. The formation of these communities has separated the locals and foreign workers in two relatively isolated communities. The formation of this community mode has great effect on foreign population. They live in two different kinds of life in one community: with different mentality, distribution system, career choices, as well as different ways of consumer and entertainment. Once the segregation community formed, the local people will serve as the dominant group, while the foreign people easily become the target of discrimination. In turn, as the target of discrimination, members of one group need obvious and true identity. Thus, a more differentiated, more identifying sub-groups will become the target of discrimination more easily. In some degree, discrimination and identity are mutually reinforcing, because the maintenance of ethnic

boundary is also to increase the distance of the cultural differences. More clearly the boundary with the surrounding communities, more serious this regional discrimination to Henan village is. Moreover, the regional discrimination also limits Henan people's access to resources. For example, many factories define that " there is no chance for Henan people " when they want to hire workers. Even a lot of the landlord do the same thing like that. These discriminations exacerbate their sense of identity, and so forth.

Of course, the regional discrimination does harm not only to the people of Henan, but also to the locals. Regional discrimination can easily lead the locals to a closed mentality when such a closed psychological ideas and egocentrism form. In the long run, it will restrict the development potential of this area, and lead to some destructive effects to its own development.

The development of dual community will lead to conflicts between migrants and locals. For example, a lot of parks in Tangxia only allow local people to go into for free, which have caused great psychological harm to the foreign persons. As a result, they may take some extreme action, such as destroying the village's public facilities. If it continues in this way, the conflict between locals and migrants will inevitably upgrade, and the consequences could be disastrous.

In order to eliminate the regional discrimination, many experts and



scholars have had many findings in this area, and they have put forward some proposals to dispel regional discrimination. I think, according to the discrimination of Henan people, we can dispel the regional discrimination through the following approaches:

First of all, we should perfect our laws and regulations about regional discrimination, and then we can use the relevant laws and regulations to restrain them when re-encounter regional discrimination cases, such as the case that occurred in Shenzhen's "against the Henan's thief "six years ago;

Secondly, we should promote the pace of " the rising of central China ", and then we can accelerate the development speed of Henan province to reducing the city gap; what's more, we should improve the household registration system in a deeper extent, so that the mobile population can enjoy more rights and security;

Of course, the cause of the regional discrimination is related to the imbalance of the regional political, economic, cultural, and so on. So, we hope the discriminator can be aware of the reality consciously, and can help the people from developing areas; It also need Henan people to do their best to improve their own quality, and then they can remodel the group image by virtue of practical action.

The regional discrimination to Henan people is not formed overnight. Then, of course, we can't eliminate it in a short time. However,

we need to remember that: as long as the direction is right, the road is no longer distant!