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Xi Jinping's Effort to Improve China's Identity Through Chinese Dream Concept

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Abstract.

Chinese Dream is an idea made by Xi Jinping in his early leadership. Many parties articulate about *Chinese dream*, but what is certain is that *Chinese dream* is an effort to form China's image or identity, since Xi desires China to hold important role in the international world. This is certainly related to China's past history that it was the most civilized nation in its era and Xi is also inspired by Mao Zedong's governance, so that Xi always respects Mao Zedong's leadership principles which was be able to raise China from adversity. This history encourages the formation of *Chinese dream* where there are dreams regarding Chinese people's welfare and prosperity, realization of global peace, cooperation and development. In its implementation, Xi focuses on young generation and culture, as these two factors may help realize the *Chinese dream*, because the young generation is the successor of the nation and culture is the guide for the country. Therefore, the research was conducted to examine China's attempts and Xi Jinping's measures to realize the *Chinese dream*.

Keywords : *Chinese Dream, Identity, Xi Jinping, Young Generation, Culture*

1 INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the author attempts to explain President Xi Jinping's efforts to improve China's identity through his concept of *Chinese Dream*. (Qomara, 2015). After assuming the position as President in 2012, Xi Jinping immediately promoted his concept. He introduced it for the first time when he

attended an exhibition with a theme of the path to awakening on 29 November 2012 at the National Museum of China. In his speech in the first meeting of the 12th national people's congress of China in Beijing, Xi also explained more of the concept of Chinese Dream. The meaning of the concept is to realize China's great awakening and the concept does not belong only to China,

but the expected welfare is to be felt by the whole world since its process is performed peacefully (Nufus, 2014). Chinese Dream may become the base of ideology of Xi Jinping's leadership, therefore it is important to understand the meaning of the Chinese Dream in order to understand Xi Jinping's policies and government in the future (Wang, 2014).

China Government leaders always bring concept or slogan to achieve their objective. In China Government, the previous leaders had usually brought renewal concepts, almost all generations of the leaders used such concept, from Sun Yet-Sen and Chiang Kai Shek. It is not surprising when Xi Jinping still uses this concept in support of his leadership. The most important thing in a concept is to understand the base and context of the concept, thus it may be implemented in China's foreign politics and policies (Wang, 2014).

In maintaining socialist values in globalization era and to realize the Chinese dream, Xi encourages the young generation as the nation's successor to learn and help to spread of Chinese culture and not be afraid to dream. The young generation is an important actors in realizing social transformation and national rejuvenation, so Xi believes that the young generation is the hope of the nation and also culture to be able to guide the country to become a better country (Xinhua, 2013)

The author sees Chinese Dream, is government effort to raise China's economy and politics and make Chinese people prosperous as well as the world society. When the objective of China state is achieved through this concept, it will indirectly improve China's identity, and other countries' perspective of China will certainly be better in the world. Therefore, the author will employ the constructivist theory to help analyze what efforts have been made by Xi in improving China's identity.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

In the discussion, the author tries to see Xi Jinping's attempt to improve China's identity through Chinese Dream. The author used the evidences showing the efforts made by Xi Jinping to achieve the desired identity. Cresswell explains qualitative method as a type of method which finds a result which cannot be found using a statistical method or measurement way. This method may also be used to find and get an understanding of what is hidden behind phenomena which may be difficult to be understood satisfactorily. A qualitative approach is expected to create an in depth explanation of a remark, writing, and behavior observed of a certain individual, group, community or organization in a discussion studied with a comprehensive perspective. Qualitative aims to gain a

general understanding of social fact, and this understanding is not determined first, but the research must perform an analysis first and make it the focus of research (Rahmat, 2009).

3 THE CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY IN ANALYZING IDENTITY

The constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of state in terms of social ideas and discourse. Idea and identity owned by an actor will form state's interest and in process will change the norms, rules and international system institution. Alexander Wendt makes two basic principles of constructivism, (1) structures formed in any association is determined by exchange of ideas produced together instead of material power, (2) identity and interest which are actor's objective are built from joint ideas instead of nature based. This theory also explains that history has the function of natural change process forming state's identity and interaction between countries (Katzenstein, 1996).

Wendt said that international environment is created from interaction process. Likewise in identity, actor's identity is not given but developed and maintained and even changed in an interaction. In the international world, identity and interest are maintained with practice based on intersubjective,

depending on what is thought and done by the state, thus anarchy is also what is made by the state, not material aspect of structure but intersubjective which influences state's behavior and intersubjective structure formed by collective meaning. Identity is important in the international world. Wendt defines identity as international actor's property which produces in state's motivation and behavior or special attribute, thus identity is important since it is the base of interest and more fundamental (Wendt, 1992).

In international relation, Wendt categorizes 4 types of identity. First, personal identity, is state's attribute which can distinguish one state from the other, thus the state has a personal identity that is not owned by any other country. Second, type identity, is an identity classifying state into a certain category, and this category depends on the characteristics inherent in the state. Third, Role identity, is an identity which views state's position and role in international relation and regarding state's responsibility when faced with certain situation. This identity requires intersubjective to know actor's position. Fourth, corporate identity or collective identity, is an identity formed when the actors has similar interest, thus these actors will perform joint action. Constructivists see Identity as an attribute inherent in actor, and

it is fundamental for the meaning of actor to surrounding environment. Actor's awareness and understanding of themselves gives meaning in an action (Rosyidin, 2015).

4 DISCUSSION

The Concept of Chinese Dream in Xi Jinping Era

Xi Jinping starts his leadership by making a concept known as: 中国梦 zhōngguó mèng (Chinese Dream). The idea of 中国梦 zhōngguó mèng (Chinese Dream). There 5 point the meaning of of this concept.

- Manifesting prosperity. The Chinese Dream is based on the history of Chinese rejuvenation. This concept explains that people living today have a good chance of building and achieving success with the country.
- The Chinese Dream is the dream of Chinese society, which includes various aspects such as better education, decent work and income, social security, improved health, improved housing and a better environment.
- This concept is a universal concept, because it is not only the Chinese people who want peace, development, cooperation and beneficial reciprocity, but the whole world community.
- Chinese Dream was inspired by

the "American Dream". The two are indeed different from the comparative perspective, but the two's base of thinking is global development and world peace.

- Chinese Dream is considered a derivative of the three sources of belief, as the path of socialist development, socialist theoretical system and sociopolitical socialist system with Chinese characteristics (Li, 2015).

Chinese Dream is not only an idea, but a combination of two or more ideas and emerges as a sole idea where there is Chinese politics, Chinese philosophy, Chinese culture, modern Chinese people's interest, including Chinese history and Chinese people's collective memory, particularly memory regarding bitter times. We may state that Chinese Dream is a real representation of previous experience to help social development and transformation, and help China realize its development objective, national consensus and future prospect, all of which covering economic, political, cultural and social sectors (Civilization, 2013).

Concept like this has actually been a legacy and used from the end of 19th century, in which the culture and dark history encourage the revolutionists to use the concept to mobilize political and bring China back to its glorious times (Wang, 2014). In the 20th century,

China suffered destruction as the result of Western countries' expansion, The Chinese Revolution kept occurring until finally after half a century Mao and his generation used a collective socialist strategy, which was capable of building and prospering Chinese people and protecting the national sovereignty. The short revolution from 1949-1976 was the dream of all nations to make a big leap in changing their country to betterment. In addition, the rapid economic growth after Mao period became the source of development power of China and this was Chinese socialism's success in its big basic objective and entire achievement (Li, 2015).

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The formation of the Chinese communist party and the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the return of regions previously occupied by colonial nations are Mao Zedong's success, which may be felt by Chinese people until now and make China as a new economic power in the world. This is what encourages Xi Jinping to continue Mao's struggle to return China to its past glory, although in his leadership, Mao did not use any concept (Nufus, 2014).

The expected awakening and welfare emphasize that this dream is the dream for all Chinese people. The people's dream in association with the state's dream facilitates Xi Jinping's performance, since the people will

depend their dream on the government, who holds the power, thus the Chinese communist party's position is very important to the people. In addition, it awakens the sense of nationalism, which is also an objective of the Chinese Dream (Ratnasari, 2017).

Xi Jinping's Effort to Realize Chinese Dream

The awakening of China is proofed by development of one belt, one road, China changes its diplomacy direction and foreign politics. China's success in diplomacy is the result of formation of big strategy of China's new diplomacy which is certainly based on the vision of Chinese Dream. The awakening idea makes China more confident and open to the international world, thus its diplomacy gets more active. This is certainly different from Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping who tended to be low profile. China's active diplomacy conforms to what was delivered by Xi Jinping in a conference held by the Chinese communist party in discussion on foreign political development on 28-29 November 2014 in Beijing. Xi stated that China's relation with the international communities get closer than it was previously, and with this Xi felt that China was in a development era. Therefore, China must be capable of adapting to the global development in order to maintain or even improve its

development. Xi reminds the people that in facing global development, China does not ignore the views and values which have been China's characteristics.

China's new diplomacy also offers the cooperation concept of "win-win cooperation" in relations with other countries. This concept is implemented on the basis of friendship, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusivity and upholding law, respecting non-intervention principle in other state's internal affairs, and respecting other countries' choice. Settlement of problem with other countries in this concept should prioritize amicable method, and in any conflict, China will use dialogue or consultation (Kequiang, 2014).

In support of the development, China establishes an international financial institution serving to solve infrastructure project issue, namely the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The AIIB establishment is positively welcomed in ASEAN forum, APEC forum and some bilateral forums, in which AIIB covers transportation, energy, communication, industry and agriculture. Infrastructure development is an important issue in improvement of economic growth in Asia, considering the financial gap in Asia. Asian countries expect AIIB to develop the economy and integration of Asia through promotion of investment in infrastructure sector (Kemenkeu, 2015).

Personal Identity Built By China Through Young Generation and Culture

The author's analysis views that China uses the role of young generation and culture to build personal identity, young generation and culture which are an integral asset of a state, and young generation as the successor of state may help spread strong culture and culture as guidelines for the state to be a strong state, thus it is closely related to Chinese Dream. Young generation's interaction will affect China, how it behaves gives meaning to others, since identity depends on the meaning in actor's interaction process (Rosyidin, 2015).

Young Generation's Role

Young generation is the appropriate instrument to help develop a state, and a state will keep operating when there is young generation who will be the successor of the nation. Young generation has strong will, strong sense of responsibility and sense of competitiveness, thus Xi encourages Chinese young generation not to be afraid to have a dream, work diligently to gain their dream and help state revitalization, all of this is the expectation to realize Chinese Dream. In his visit to the China Academy of Space Technology, Xi stated that he had big expectation of the young generation to achieve innovation in science and technology, hone their capability and

skill needed for their career. With this, Xi asked party committee and the government to make a condition which might support youth's career (Xinhua, 2013). Youth urged to contribute to realization of 'Chinese dream', 2013).

In 2018, Xi as the secretary general of PKC in his meeting with the new leader of central committee of communist youth league of China (CYLC) in Beijing stated "a country will have a great future, and a nation will have full hope, when the young generation has strong ideals, capability and sense of responsibility". The youth of China must be brave to have a dream, since the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation will eventually be realized through the youth's efforts. Therefore, Xi will reform CYLC and emphasize that CYLC should focus on 3 matters, namely maintaining development and social movement successor, connecting and spread the base of government party to the young generation and serving state's interest in its entirety. In addition, CYLC should always follow the party, for a strengthened political combination for the youth and CYLC should have full faith in the theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese special attribute and uphold the authority of central committee of PKC (Ye, 2018).

CYLC is a mass youth organization established in 1920 and has 81 million members throughout the country.

CYLC will lead all of its members to strive for victory, which will determine community development for prosperity in all fields, build a modern socialist state and realize Chinese Dream for national rejuvenation. This league will promote the core socialist values to the youth, with guidance of revised constitution of CYLC and inserting Xi Jinping's ideas of socialism with Chinese special attribute (Xinhua, 2018). The youth is the future of the nation and the world and closely related to Chinese dream with world's dream and the Chinese people should contribute more to the world community. Therefore, Xi puts his hope and encourages young generation to serve the nation and humanity, not only struggle for rejuvenation of China but also work for sustainable development for a better future of mankind (CGTN, 2019).

Culture's Role

The author sees that the history of Chinese culture makes the best, rich history and culture for Chinese people, the link between history, culture and politics has formed and constructs China's identity. Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping are authoritarian figures who see culture as the means to implement the saying *jiyantang* "one voice room" to intellectuals and Chinese people. This belief grows after the big revolution of proletarian culture in 1966 and is the turning point of Chinese politics

and culture. The Chinese Government sees that cultural revolution is likely to reoccur. ³ Yu Youjun, former governor of Shanxi Province and secretary of Ministry of Culture party argues that “Land for cultural revolution is still fertile, especially when the people do not in-depth and reasonable knowledge of culture and fact explains that leaders greatly influence the people’s cultural and spiritual life.

After becoming President and secretary general of PKC, Xi campaigns that he invites all of Chinese people to “revive Chinese culture” bound to the concept he builds, Chinese dream. The cultural awakening plays a big role in achieving super-nationalistic objective of the birth of world’s spectacular values and view of China. Xi Jinping also sees the link between culture and national power, saying that “the power of a state and the people is supported by a strong culture. Therefore, the rise of a state requires Chinese cultural development and prosperity. According to the ministry of culture and department of PKC’s propaganda, culture may be used wisely and politically in improvement of the people’s trust in the socialist values and characteristics of China and PKC rules (Lam, 2016).

The other cultural policy made Xi Jinping is to promote “righteousness, kindness and beauty” cultures, and these 3 focuses are the objective of practicing

socialist values. The positive energy idea is taken from a British psychologist, Richard Wiseman, in which he states that there are 3 sets in positive energy, namely “righteousness, kindness and beauty”. The interesting thing is there is no cultural policy which displays these terms which is shown strikingly in China. To communicate this positive energy, based on PKC’s official policy, Xi asks artists and litterateurs to realize China’s awakening for Chinese culture to develop and prosper and may be achieved in 2049. They are encouraged to create excellent works in this era by maintaining its direction of creativeness and placing people pursuant to their place. Xi believes that the soul of Chinese people is that of socialist literature and art. This aims at strengthening and improving the party’s leadership in literary and art works. Xi also pays attention other big cultures and positions Chinese culture China as an excellent culture in international relation (ICS, 2016).

5 CONCLUSION

The research conducted by the author shows that Chinese dream may be achieved through the role of young generation and culture. Through young generation and culture, China attempts to build personal identity, which considers actor as a unique personality which distinguishes one actor from

the other. The two are interrelated actors in realizing Chinese dream, young generation has the role to learn, understand and spread and maintain the culture. Culture that has existed from the past and survived until now is a reliable culture, since a country is capable of becoming a big country when it has a strong culture.

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