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走向更有共识的社会：
社会认同的挑战及其应对



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MOVING TOWARDS A SOCIETY WITH MORE COMMON CONSCIOUSNESS:
CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL IDENTITY AND COPING POLICIES

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Abstract

This book is Social Development Report of China 2008 of Renmin University of China, and its topic is social identity in fast transition period in contemporary China. Pushed by the reform-opening and development of socialist market economy, great social changes have taken place in many fields, such as interests relation, social stratification, identity status, institution system, inequality between rural and urban and regional development etc. All those changes inevitably cause to experience and think of any kind of social phenomena or social problems, and complex changes in social identity of people inevitably take place. Social identity is people's realization of ascription, approval and evaluation on social facts, social policy and social system related with own interests, status, power, and prestige. Differentiation and changes in social identity contact with social life harmony, social order stability and socio-economic sustainable development. Therefore, it has significant practical and theoretical meanings to fulfilling scientific development idea, constructing socialist harmonious society and achieving mid-wealthy society in studying and displaying social identity problems in fast social transition period, and giving deep theoretical generalization and



clear policy study.

This book consists of introduction, seven chapters and an appendix. The introduction is a general discussion on social identity of contemporary China in perspective of sociology. The author points out that China has great achievement in social construction, but there are many sharp challenges. These challenges can be divided into two types, one is human dilemma all countries in the world are facing, and the other is special social contradictions of our country. Challenges from outside and the domestic show that not only should social construction in China have strategic design in the background of globalization, but also should have specific risk consciousness, positively coping with social risks like US financial storm in 2008. Not only should we construct new community with harmonious relationships and inter-cooperation, but also should we improve common meanings and common values with high identity and strong ascription in the opening and plural value era. Not only should we carry out institutional innovation, but also should we reconstruct values. Not only should we develop hard strength, but also should develop soft strength. To accomplish all these tasks, we can not avoid issues of common meanings and common values, which is social identity.

The author clearly illustrates subject object of social identity, contents, types, basis, background and nature of social identity. The author also stresses four kinds of social identity from the scope of social construction in contemporary China, which are homeland identity, Chinese nation identity, Chinese culture identity and socialist road with Chinese characteristics identity. It is important to spread nation education with contents of stressing the 'Four Kinds of Identity'. The meanings are more than those, and the four kinds of identity are primary to every Chinese people. They belong to three different levels in universality. Identity of Chinese nation and Chinese culture is the most universal level, because Chinese, Chinese in foreign countries and foreigners can have this identity. Homeland identity has smaller scope than the former. Socialist road with Chinese characteristics identity has the smallest scope.



Social identity forms in specific condition. The differentiation of interests, social stratification and cultural tradition directly affects people's value and then social identity. Therefore, in differential and transitional China, it is the basic task in developing positive social identity to instruct people's thought and belief by using value system which represents basic interests and social development direction. The author points out that, as 'Great Tradition' of our era, and main stream of value system and main culture in our country, the nuclear value system of socialism is the most important basis in understanding relationships between individual and society, individual and state, individual and ethnicity, individual and culture, individual and environment, and in explaining life and death, life value, subsistence meanings, and in deciding value approach, behavior choice and right-wrong judgment on the basis of unifying scientific spirit and human concern.

The author also discusses how to make 'Great Tradition' more perfect. The nuclear socialist value system has space in promoting of strength, and has space in promoting in influential position. China is transforming from great regional state to great state in the world. As 'Great Tradition' of contemporary China, nuclear socialist value system should have higher influential position. Without higher influential position, the 'Great Tradition' can't have enough attraction and stronger competition ability. Though it is important to promote strength, it is more important to make influential position higher. Only through social construction and community construction, can we develop nuclear socialist value system into excellent great tradition, and transform this latent cultural soft strength into real cultural soft strength, and transform these soft strength into hard wealth. The new type socialism with Chinese characteristics can sustainably develop and become stronger. Revival and rising of Chinese nation is not only the revival and rising of economic hard strength, but also is the revival and rising of cultural soft strength.

Chapter 1 discusses tasks and policies in developing social identity in China, which concerns with the effects of social welfare and social security institutional changes on social identity. The author historically reviews



western and Chinese social welfare and social security system, and deeply analyzes the effects of changes in social welfare system on social identity. The author thinks that transition of Chinese social welfare system from 1978, which has central function of social security, passed through two stages, cleavage and reconstruction. The cleavage and reconstruction of social welfare system directly influence social identity. Although urban social security system with 'three-security-line' and workplace insurance, medical insurance as main contents has established up, and rural social security has developed a lot. But, we should be aware of problems in social welfare and social security system that affect social common sense forming. We should perfect social welfare system, and establish up unifying and all-sharing social welfare and social security system.

Chapter 2 illustrates issues of social identity from the scope of cultural diversity. As transition of Chinese society, globalization, industrialization and urbanization go on, modernity and tradition in society interplay. The practical system gradually goes to opening (for example, communication, knowledge and experiences, and choice go to opening). Furthermore, there are changes in economic system, social structure, interest structure, social belief and value. Interest boundary of individual, groups, strata, departments becomes more independent, while value approaches become more diverse. Therefore, cultural diversity is a natural trend. The diversity appears in cultural subjects, cultural forms, cultural contents and cultural structure. Cultural diversity inevitably leads to cultural identity diversity. Cultural identity is the centre or basic composition of social identity. So, cultural diversity inevitably causes the differentiation and individualization of social identity.

Chapter 3 discusses social identity from the scope of transformation of social ideology in China. Social ideology of China has transformed greatly with social structure and its factors since the reform-opening, which appears in ideology of the party-in-power changing in goals, practical functions and integration forms. In series of important belief, there are some adjustments. For those, folk social consciousness forms new trends of diversity,



multi-form and changing. As video media, digital information and internet technology develop, the form of ideology dissemination becomes imagery and sensibility, which broadens the range of ideology dissemination. Social ideology of China is entering into a active, blooming and healthily developing period. How to realize and evaluate the complex changes in ideology is that the ideology of the party-in-power and other ideology will be identified in what degree and what forms. The author gives a deep analysis.

Chapter 4 discusses social identity from the changes in organization structure. Changes in organization structure are the most apparent result of social transition, and are also the driving of further development. Changes in organization structure cause changes in interpersonal relationships, behavior, thought, social opinion. These changes lead to new situation of social identity. The author analyzes the contacting mechanism between organization structure and social identity, and then discusses main topics in organization structure of China and main newly changes in organization structure. The author discusses empowerment in organization structure, public production supply, relationships among occupations (can be extended to capital-labor relation, mass-cadre relation, and police-citizen relation) in organization, and newly changes in family structure, and also social identity in important social events such as ice-snow disaster, earthquake and Olympic Games.

Chapter 5 expounds discussion from the contacts between community construction and social identity. The authors point out that community construction is a respondent to economic transition and system reform, and is also a practical choice under plural penetration of modernity in globalization. Now that community is a dual respondent to economic transition and globalization wave, we will face two unavoidable issues: one is to change old unit consciousness, and to reconstruct community consciousness fitting with community construction, and then reconstruct social identity facing actively society; the other is to perfect organization and institution arrangement, making stable and harmonious daily life world, and to create condition for people to connect and balance among local sense, home sense, social sense



and global sense. Then, community construction and community order can continually operate and develop. In general, community construction will take reconstructing social identity as basic goal and precondition of next development. The authors give deep discussions on significance of social identity in community construction, social identity and social management system, social identity and coordination of social life world.

Chapter 6 discusses class identity and stratum identity in transitional China. The author points out great changes have taken place in Chinese class structure in the process of social transition. In class structure, class identity takes the media position. Through transition of class identity, the objective class can transform into class-in-action, or in Marx's words, from class-in-self to class-for-self. The social force that changes history is not objective class but class-in-action, not class-in-self but class-for-self. This chapter firstly illustrates the significance of class analysis to understanding transitional China, and composition, function and forms of class identity. Then, based on CGSS data, it describes the situation and changes of class identity in contemporary China, and analyzes their reasons, and forecasts the influence of class identity on social operation of China.

In Chapter 7 ethnicity identity in the background of globalization is talked about. Modernization and globalization are bringing opportunities for any country and any nation. Meanwhile, they are also bringing great challenges and problems, among which ethnicity identity crisis is one of most serious problems. For example, state identity consciousness is weakening, nationalism is rising, and problems of ethnicity become internationalization. All of those problems aggravate the complexity of ethnicity relation. How to strengthen state identity, establish up benign ethnicity identity, and improve equal, solitary, helpful and harmonious ethnicity relationships in the process of modernization and globalization. All these questions are significant to constructing socialist harmonious society in China. The author deeply discusses nature and forming mechanism of ethnicity identity, effects of globalization wave on ethnicity identity, and ethnicity identity problems in transitional China. Also, the author points out coping strategies on how to



improve ethnicity integration and strengthen state identity.

The last part of this book is about situation analysis on Chinese society in 2008. This analysis is based on data from China general social survey (CGSS) carried out by Department of Sociology, Renmin University of China in 2003, 2005 and 2006. This part includes three aspects: 1) Towards more opening society, which contains analysis on people's participation in political life, citizenship protection, social legality construction, information obtaining and trust; 2) Towards more healthy society, which mainly contains analysis on the condition of income-outcome in family life, social security, employment, income, leisure and health, happiness and life satisfaction; 3) Towards more harmonious society, which mainly analyzes the situation of social safety, social justice, social solidarity, social conflicts, environmental problems and protection, and individual and social development. The author also gives policy recommendation on how to resolve some social problems now.



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