

On the Cultural Differences between American Dream and China Dream

Fengxiang Lin, Kui Zhu *

College of Humanities, Sichuan Agricultural University, Ya'an 625014, Sichuan, China

*Corresponding author: zk7660@126.com

Abstract American Dream and China Dream have become the most important two terms, for they reflect the culture of America and China, the two leading powers in the world. The two dreams are greatly influenced by many cultural factors. Therefore, the authors try to make a contrast between them in terms of their origins, development, goals and ways to realize the goals as well as the status quo and then summarize their characteristics and experiences in the hope to offer enlightenments for the improvement of American Dream, the total realization of China Dream as well as all the people's desire for good things in the future.

Keywords: American dream, China dream, differences

Cite This Article: Fengxiang Lin, and Kui Zhu, "On the Cultural Differences between American Dream and China Dream." *World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2017): 8-14. doi: 10.12691/wjssh-3-1-2.

1. Introduction

American Dream originated from the period when colonies were set in the new continent and was reiterated in 1931 by an American historian James Truslow Adams. His American Dream is "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement." Labels have been conferred on it both positively and negatively since its birth. For example, Lincoln, Rockefeller, Theodore Roosevelt are regarded as representatives of American Dream; and a lot of searches have been carried out into its connotation and current situation, such as: *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 1925); *Martin Eden* (Jack London, 1905); *What America can Learn from China* [1], etc. American Dream has gained great popularity in the whole world, and has attracted people in many other countries to immigrate to America and achieve their Dream there. China Dream was put forward by General Secretary of China in 2012. As is known, China has made great progress in all aspects and becomes the second economic giant in the world after the efforts of decades. However, as the biggest developing country in the world and an ancient civilization, China has faced serious problems in some aspects. Consequently, China Dream was raised in order to achieve the greatest rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Just like American Dream, China Dream has attracted much attention since its birth and many articles have been written to analyze the concept of China Dream both at home and abroad like *The Chinese Dream in Western Eyes* and *Potential of the Chinese Dream* [7], etc. Therefore, the authors think that it is of great necessity to study American dream and China dream, especially a contrast between them in aspects like their origins, their development, their goals and ways to achieve the goals as well as their status quo.

2. Differences in Origins of American Dream and China Dream

2.1. Different Social Background

As is known, America and China are two different countries. The former is a capitalist county with a history of less than three hundred years while the latter a socialist country with a history of more than five thousand years. They have different history, different social environment and different lifestyles even if they may share the same interests under the globalization. Hence, it is certain that American Dream and China Dream, as their typical concepts, are coincident with their own social backgrounds.

2.1.1. Origin of American Dream

Although American Dream was coined in the 1931 during the Great Depression by James Truslow Adams in his book *The Epic of America*, it was in embryo when the Protestants began to seek freedom in the New World. Since Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492, immigrants from Europe gradually arrived in and colonized the New World, which was full of gold and opportunities in their eyes. Later in 1497, Italian sailor, John Cabot, who was in the service of the English king, arrived in today's Canada and the English king claimed that the whole territory of North America belonged to England. And the Englishmen began to establish permanent settlements in North America at the beginning of the 17th century. By early the 1760s, the 13 English colonies in North America had developed a similar America pattern in politics, economy and cultural life and enjoyed the same frontier environment. The English people and Europeans became Americans and they were ready to separate themselves from the Old World. [13]

And then, the American Revolution officially proclaimed the birth of a new country of America.

In 1775, the Continental Congress began to assume the functions of a national government and finally adopted *The Declaration of Independence* drafted by Benjamin Franklin, which solemnly declared: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all man are created equal; that they were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these, are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” All of those are the dream of Americans for their personal rights and personal life. Besides, *The Declaration of Independence* also explained the philosophy of the government: “to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”; “whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety of happiness.” [13] For American people, this is the dream of their nation and government.

From then on, this new-born nation and its people start to struggle for their dreams and for their innate rights: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for each individual and their country. These rights and their related aspects constitute the core of the American Dream.

2.1.2. Origin of China Dream

Compared with American Dream, China Dream is really a new concept for all the people both at home and abroad. In November of 2012, soon after the conclusion of 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping put forward, for the first time, the idea of the China Dream on his visit to “The Road to Rejuvenation” exhibition at the National Museum of China, and said that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation “is a dream of the whole nation as well as of every individual”. Although China Dream has been raised for just a few years, it is not passing idea. Instead, it was raised at the proper time and after the careful consideration of the country’s past, present and the future. As is known to all, in the past hundreds of years, colonized by many western countries, China, has lost its lands and dignity because of some unequal treaties and colonial domination. After decades of hard struggle led by the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people have become their own masters since 1949, when the People’s Republic of China was founded. The CPC and the Chinese Government have consistently striven to achieve socialist democracy under the guidance of many national goals and strategies like Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, Three Represents and Scientific Outlook on Development. However, with the economic improvement and a higher status in the world, these thoughts and theories fail to solve problems like people’s indifference to the weak or the old, a great gap between the rich and the poor, excessive pursuit for money and craze about western culture, etc. In this case, to awaken all Chinese people and their concern for their traditional culture, Xi Jinping, the new leader of China, formally put forward the concept of China Dream. This concept points out the way for the future development of Chinese people and China.

2.2. Different Cultural Values

Mao Zedong once said that certain culture is a reflection of certain social politics and economy, and also greatly influences them. There’s no doubt that a dream, especially a national dream, being given some political and economic colors, must be a reflection of the culture.

2.2.1. Cultural Values of American Dream

Of all the cultural values which contributed to the birth of American Dream, religion and Renaissance are the most important. In 16th century, some new and powerful social forces began to emerge, leading to the awakening of Europe and the discovery of America. Such powerful forces include religious reformation and Renaissance. On the one hand, the Renaissance challenged the God-centered concept by the great progress in natural and social science. People began to be more confident of themselves and show more interest in the world around them, and they were willing to observe, experiment and test truths for themselves. On the other hand, people like Martin Luther and John Calvin launched the Religious Reformation challenging the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church which controlled people’s religious beliefs and the political affairs of the nation. Besides, those religious reforms reflected the rise of nationalism in Europe, represented the demand of the bourgeois class for free development and expressed the desire or ordinary working people, especially the serfs’ desire for the liberation from the feudal control [13].

To escape from the persecution, many Europeans especially Britons, left for America where they might find an opportunity for a happier living and also worship of the God as they pleased. When those Protestants arrived in America, they brought the new ideas to the New World, for most of them were affected by the capitalism, Renaissance and the Religious Reformation. Among all the Protestants, who occupies 60 percent of American population even nowadays, puritans had the greatest influence on American culture. In the eyes of the Puritans, everyone must work hard, spend little and invest more in business. Most important of all, education is a must for Puritans so that they can read the Bible and make their own contact with the God. The Puritans hoped to build “a city upon hill”—an ideal community and they believed that hard work is one of the most important ways for people to realize their American Dream. Besides, although Puritans in the original sense are no longer in existence, their legacies are still felt in American society and culture. For instance, Americans have viewed their country as a great experiment, a worthy model for other nations. This sense of mission has been very strong in the minds of many Americans. [13] And the American values such as individualism, hard work and respect for education owe much to the Puritan beliefs.

2.2.2. Cultural Values of China Dream

“Modern China is the continuation and development of historical China, and hence, the modern Chinese thoughts and culture are the inheritance and sublimation to the traditional Chinese thoughts and culture.” Xi Jinping said, “it’s quite necessary to look into comprehend the cultural environment and soil which feeds Chinese people.” [12]

Consequently, it is worthy to investigate the culture behind China Dream which is an expression of Chinese culture.

It is extremely difficult or impossible to calibrate to what degree culture has played a role in China's development, but culture has undeniably been an influential factor in motivating over a billion people toward their shared national goals. China is a well-known eastern civilization under the influence of Confucianism. It is safe to assume that China's cultural fabric is heavily steeped in Confucian philosophy after thousands of years of Confucian education and upbringing. [1] Around B.C. 134, an official of the Han Dynasty Dong Zhongshu proposed "proscribing all non-Confucian schools of thought and espousing Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology" (罢黜百家, 独尊儒术). This proposal became the statecraft of ancient China since Emperor Wu of Han carried it out in the whole country. Different from that in Spring and Autumn Period, the Confucianism was then an updated thought absorbing some other thought like Taoism and Legalism. It safeguarded the rule of feudal order, apotheosized the despotic kingship and was recommended by the ancient Feudalists so that it became the legitimate and mainstream ideology of Chinese traditional culture for two thousand years. Owing to this, Confucianism has a great influence on Chinese culture as well as Chinese ordinary people, and brought those ideologies such as collectivism, benevolence and integrity which are still cherished today. So after the proposal of China Dream, it was dissected in 12 phrases in accordance with the core socialist values, they are: prosperity(富强), democracy(民主), civilization(文明), harmony(和谐); liberty(自由), equality(平等), fairness(公正), rule by law(法治); patriotism(爱国), dedication(敬业), integrity(诚信), amicability(友善).

3. Differences in the Development of American Dream and China Dream

Because of their different backgrounds and cultural values, American Dream and China Dream develop in a different way and their development as national Dreams is closely related to the development of their own countries.

3.1. Developing from Bottom to Top in American Dream

With the clear statement that "all men are created equal; that they were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable right; that among these, are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." [13] The next centuries witnessed the great efforts Americans have made to realize their dreams and to build a strong and powerful country. With the famous one-century-lasting Westward Movement, millions of Americans gradually moved to the west and got great chance to gain extensive lands and great fortunes. Westward Movement was therefore thought of as the microcosm of American character and American Dream.

In 1861, with the election of President Lincoln, American Civil War broke out. Finally, after four years' fighting, the capitalist North defeated the plantation-economic South and the United States was kept

as a unity. Institutionally, the Emancipation Proclamation marked the abolishment of slavery and the realization of racial equality, which was quite important for the African-Americans. From then on, the U.S. as a unified nation, stepped to a completely capitalist road.

Since America became the world's first economic power in 1894, American economy kept developing at a high speed. However, the rapid economic development under private economy and free competition led American economy in the tight control of trusts such as the standard Oil Trust, Beef Trust and Steel Trust at the beginning of 20th century. Those rich people, who occupied only 2% of American population, owned 60% of American wealth, heavily undermined the equality of American society. The outbreak of Great Depression in the 1930s crippled American economy and caused people to be doubtful about the principles they had hold and the dreams they had owned. As a result, James Truslow Adams raised the idea of American Dream in his book *The Epic of America* in 1931, American Dream developed from a shared unwritten thought to a well-known concept, thus strengthening Americans' confidence in the future. When this concept of American Dream became popular among the people, it was gradually accepted as a national dream not only by Americans, but also by people of many other countries, especially in poor countries.

3.2. Developing from Top to Bottom in China Dream

China, as an ancient civilization, has been influenced by the Confucianism for thousands of years. One of the influential tenets of Confucian philosophy is the need to create harmony in society and only when there is social harmony, can individuals shine and thrive. Just as Ann Lee put, without this collective determination to serve the greater good of the community, societies will fall apart [1]. Owing to this, the only dream for the ancient Chinese people is to live and work in peace, that is, males cultivate and females weave. But this dream was destroyed in 1840 with the breakout of Opium Wars: Great Britain vs. China. Britain won the war mainly because of its advanced technology and Chinese's scorn for the outside world. [3] So with the humiliating "Treaty of Nanking" signed between the Qing Government and the British Empire, China gradually became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and a colony of many western countries that captured its resources and market.

In order to awaken people to the national crisis and strengthen the country and enrich the people, those educated people made great efforts and launched movements like Westernization Movement, the Revolution of 1911, New Culture Movement and the New-Democratic Revolution. However, most of those efforts didn't succeed despite their contribution to the development of China. Luckily, in 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded and people regained their dream of living happily and enjoying equal rights in all aspects. But their dreams were ruined again, this time by great leaders' mistakes such as the Great Leap Forward and the Great Cultural Revolution.

Although China's Confucian culture comes from the ground up, it also spreads from the top to bottom. Since

Dong Zhongshu proposed “proscribing all non-Confucian schools of thought and espousing Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology”, Confucianism, as a national concept, gradually spread from ruling class to civilians, played a key role in Chinese feudal society and deeply affected the thought and mode of thinking of Chinese people. China Dream, as a national concept, follows the same way as Confucianism. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping put forward the policy of reform and opening-up to the outside world and indicated to build a socialist road with Chinese characteristic, finding an opposite way for China to develop and to realize the dream of enforcing the country and enriching the people. And the Confucius-style harmony has been articulated in the CPC’s Twelve Five-Year Plan and was inherited by the present official Thirteen Five-Year Plan. Then in 2012, General Secretary of China Xi Jinping introduced the concept of China Dream based on the predecessors’ theoretical achievements, designed to achieve the greatest rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Nowadays, this overarching vision of the China Dream has become a grand driver of China’s continuing reform and development and been popular among the Chinese people and many other countries. [7]

4. Differences in Their Goals and the Ways to Achieve the Goals

4.1. In Terms of Their Goals

Originating from different social backgrounds and developing in different ways, American Dream and China Dream are different in their goals and the ways to achieve the goals.

4.1.1. Goals of American Dream

As is described in Adams’ book *The Epic of America*, the American Dream of a better, richer, happier life for all the citizens is the greatest contribution made to the world of thought and welfare. Having developed for such a long time, the American Dream now has become a world-spread concept and many people are eager to go to America to pursue their dream in America and many countries learn from America about its development pattern. Affected by individualism, people pay much attention to personal American Dream with little mention of it as a national dream, and this dream can be concluded in those words—fortune, opportunity, liberty, equality and “a city upon the hill”.

Fortune is the most important sign of American Dream for many people. American Dream is based on the assumption that each person has the same chance to create wealth and success through their own efforts. Therefore, many Americans work very hard and do whatever they can to earn money. A typical example is the founder of Standard Oil Company Rockefeller who became a business tycoon from an ordinary people. America even built an impregnable Fort Knox to store gold bar and the most valuable of the country.

Opportunity is another sign of American Dream. Nowadays, many foreigners immigrate to America where they think they probably have more chance to gain what they want. This kind of thought was born with the

discovery of the continent of America and was strengthened with the development of America. The pioneers of America who established this country and expanded the territory set good examples for Americans and people in other countries. Benjamin Franklin was born in poverty but became a success in printing, thus becoming one of the representatives of American Dream. So did John D. Rockefeller, founder of Standard Oil Company and Barack Obama, the American President-in-office. There are so many stories of this kind in America, thus making people believe the well-known saying—everything is possible.

As for equality and liberty, earlier settlers experienced them during their survival in America and found them mentioned in *The Declaration of Independence*. Before that, *The Stamp Act* made thousands of Americans acutely aware of their rights. As John Adams wrote, people were “more attentive to their liberties, more inquisitive about them, and more determined to defend them”.(Wu, et al) Actually, equality and liberty are always symbiotic. The Statue of Liberty was widely believed as the symbol of American liberty. Equality means that everyone has the same chance to realize his or her American Dream while liberty implies that they have limitless room for their self-development. A good case in point is Hamill Brothers, who found the biggest oil field.

Nationally, America wants to build “a city upon hill”. In 1630, seventeen ships brought a thousand men, women and children to America. “We shall be as a city upon the hill,” this group knew their errand into the wilderness would have world significance: “The eyes of all people are upon us.” Before they set foot in the New World, these Puritans were convinced that their view “Bible Commonwealth” would make them the center of attention of the world. They hoped to build “a city upon hill”—an ideal community. Since that time, Americans have viewed their country as a great experiment, a worthy model for other nations. The sense of mission has been very strong in the minds of many Americans.(Wu, et al) Nowadays, America has actually become the strongest and most powerful country in the world, a truly “city upon hill” and it’s quite active in all the important international affairs.

4.1.2. Goals of China Dream

Different from the American Dream, China Dream expresses China’s collective aspirations—“the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (in Xi’s words) and it differs from the China dream in Chinese history by embracing the personal dreams of individual Chinese people for attaining happy, healthy, abundant and productive lives. [7]

In March of 2013, Xi Jinping further elaborated the China Dream in his speech at the closing ceremony of the First Session of the 12th NPC. He emphasized that the China Dream in essence means the dream of the people and it is a dream of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit for all. China Dream is connected with the beautiful dream of the people in other countries; The China Dream will not only benefit the Chinese people, but also people of all countries in the world. (2014)

At the same time, Xi proposed taxonomy of five dimensions that composed the China Dream, among them are national, personal, historical, global and antithetical.

The National China Dream is the collective vision to achieve the “Two 100s”: first, the material goal of China becoming a “moderately well-off society” by about 2020, around the CPC’s 100th anniversary (2021); second, the modernization goal of China becoming a fully developed country by about 2050, around the New China’s 100th anniversary. [7]

In detail, the National China Dream aims to build a strong China, stable China, generous China, harmonious China, civilized China, beautiful China, and creative China.

The Personal China Dream is composed of two parts—physical and mental well-being. Physically, every individual in China can enjoy safe food, decent housing, personal security, quality education, modern healthcare and secure retirement, and so forth. Mentally, each individual can be more resilient, rewarded and fulfilled, thus making a more stable and thriving society.

As for its historical sense, China Dream is going to satisfy Chinese people’s yearning for the stability and transformation of new China, which is independent, strong, and free from miseries of all kinds. Besides, the Historical China Dream is also a reflection of the changing nature of the China Dream over time.

In addition, China, who occupies 20 percent of the world population, is the biggest developing country and has become the second largest country in the world GDP. The development of China is closely related to the whole world and continuously makes great contribution to the development of the world under the globalization. Hence, the development of China and the realization of China Dream would benefit the world and set a good example for the Third-world countries. This is what China Dream means in the global sense.

In antithetical sense, China Dream reflects the normal tradeoffs that all societies face and the tradeoffs mean the contradiction and tensions among competing goods and policies. This allocation conflict can be characterized by the classic “guns versus butter” aphorism—how to apportion national resources between military requirements and social necessities. For China, the primary tradeoff is between economic development and its unintended byproducts like income disparities and environmental degradation rather than that between military and social conflicts.

4.2. In Terms of Ways to Achieve the Goals

4.2.1. Ways to Achieve American Dream

As a young country with only 240 years, the development of America is considerably miraculous. America spirit—being courageous and adventurous accelerated its growth and was reinforced during the American development progress. In order to reach the goals of American Dream, Americans tried their best and tapped all their potentials. For example, farmers and townspeople in the East sought for land or fortune on western frontiers at the risk of their lives. Besides, America waged the Mexican-American war and won the lands in southwest.

Opportunity, equality and liberty are closely related goals of America. The realization of one of them always means the implementation of others. It takes quite a long time for Americans to realize true opportunity, equality

and liberty and they still need to make great efforts even today. In 1776, when the United States was founded, it won the freedom and opportunity to develop as a nation, and the Declaration of Independence claimed the liberty and equality of people. But this kind of liberty and equality is only confined to certain people, with the Africa-Americans and indentured servants excluded. Worst of all, the Africa-Americans were even ill-treated. Only when the Union Army won the Civil War in 1865 and Emancipation Proclamation was signed, did Africa-Americans win their rights of equality, opportunity and liberty in the legal sense. And the Black Riot in 1919 made a further step for Africa-Americans to win equality with the white in work field. The Feminism Movement in the 1920s and 1930s helped win women’s right. Till then, America basically achieved racial equality and gender equality, while racialism and feminism continue to be buzzwords in America.

As for its national dream of building “a city upon hill”, America has gone through ups and downs. Politically, as the only super-power in the world, America has the absolute say in international affairs. But when the America was established, the federal government had only little power to govern the country until the ratification of *The Articles of Confederation*, which also established the principle of the tripartite political system. The victory of the Civil War protected America from division and the total victory of Cold War showed its vitality. Economically, after suffering economic crisis like Great Depression, Americans found its shortages and took steps to save the economy from crisis and kept sustainable growth in economy and has become the only super-power in the world. In its development, innovations have made great contributions, leading to the birth of car, electric lamp, assembly line and so forth. Culturally, under the globalization, American Dream and even American culture have spread to all the countries with the popularity of its commodity. Besides, more and more personal exchanges, international tourism and immigration have intensified the globalization of American Culture and American Dream.

4.2.2. Ways to Achieve China Dream

Before the birth of China Dream, many measures have been carried out to meet people’s growing needs in both material and spirit. For instance, in the past decades, the reform and opening-up has hugely raised the level of Chinese material life; the Western Development has narrowed the gap between the East and the West; the strategy of invigorating the country through science, technology and education has improved the quality of the people; hospitalization insurance and all kinds of welfare systems have ensured the basic life of people; and all of those make China Dream possible.

As for the goal of building a “moderately prosperous society” (xiaokang) before 2021 to coincide with 100th anniversary of the CPC, the best way to this is “comprehensive and deepening reform and opening-up” and the reform and opening-up is being carried out and will never be put to an end. Just as Political Bureau says, there is “only a progressive tense, no perfect tense”. “There is no way for China to reverse or even stop the process.” (Chang, 2013)

Chinese government has set clear goals and suggested the most appropriate ways to attain the goals. However, it would take a long time to realize the China Dream and requires following principles. Firstly, the CPC's leadership must be upheld to realize the China Dream. China Dream shows the attitude of CPC and it is the solemn promise of CPC to the future of Chinese nation. [5] Secondly, the realization of China Dream depends on socialist theories with Chinese characteristics. As Zhang Chuanjia, a member of expert consultation group in CMC Reform Leadership Group said, socialist theories with Chinese characteristics solve the problem by adhering to the centralized and unified leadership by the CPC, by respecting the people, by developing advanced Marxist culture; by promoting comprehensive social progress according to the general goal of modernization, and by safeguarding world peace and promoting common development. [11] Thirdly, the socialism with Chinese characteristics is the business of millions of people and China Dream in the final analysis is the dream of these people and it can't be realized without their efforts. [8] Fourthly, empty talk would lead China astray, but hard work can rejuvenate it. That is, China Dream can come true only when people really work hard; keep seeking for the truth; have the courage to overcome difficulties; and are good at exploration and innovation. [10] Last but not least, endeavors should be made to practice specific tasks instead of empty slogans. After all, China Dream is embodied in the details of daily life as well as in the construction of environment, culture and civilization. Only when people witness the change in all these aspects, can they believe that China Dream is worth pursuing. (2013)

5. Differences in the Status Quo of American Dream and China Dream

5.1. Status Quo of American Dream

After the development of 240 years, now American Dream has become a world-known concept and America has become an ideal society as American Founders wished. Today America is the only super-power and the leader in the world and keeps a comparatively steady growth in economy. However, more and more people begin to worry about the future of American Dream, for many problems of American Dream have appeared in America. Firstly, too much freedom and liberty create new problems. A good case in point is the Gun Policy. According to *The American Constitution*, American citizens could own their own firearms to protect themselves. With the flooding of gun and popular culture of violence, there comes a lot of shootings and deaths. On April 16, 2007, the most serious shooting at campus in American history took place at Virginia Tech, killing 33 persons and hurt quite a lot. Coincidentally, another shooting happened on June 12, 2016, killing 50 people and injuring 53. Under individualism, 201 million Americans over 15-year-old own 235 million guns. Those people have the freedom to own and use guns, but become a threat to others, hindering the liberty and even endangering the lives of others. Monopoly is another example. Before the New Deal was carried out, monopolies once tyrannized a large part of the

American economy. Actually, the free development of monopolies seriously impeded the development of many small businesses and caused the bankruptcy of those peanuts. Liberty and equality are the cores of American Dream, but the breach of liberty and equality certainly would break the balance of American society and trigger reforms such as Gun Ban (in plan) and the New Deal.

Secondly, American Dream has been misinterpreted as fortune and money and many people are unscrupulous in their efforts to amass fortune and money. This can be found in books like *Martin Eden*, written by Jack London in 1909; and *The Great Gatsby* by Fitzgerald in 1925. In the books, the chief characters are keen on becoming rich and getting their lovers as well as realizing their self-values. But they end in tragedy, which proves that the American Dream will inevitably collapse. From the two books, it can be concluded that the only way to make American Dream come true is to make all the Americans more equal [2].

Last but not least, the "show political elections" is another problem in America. On the one hand, general election is held every four years, in which huge sums of money are invested to support the candidates' various activities. Before the general election, the candidates give stirring speeches and make bright commitments to win the votes. However, when one of those candidates become the President, few of his promises come true. A good case in point is Barack Obama, who had promised to improve infrastructure, planned to bring America out of financial crisis and get out of Iraq, but all these are empty promises. On the other hand, the election this year is really a political show, where the candidates have revealed the scandals of each other instead of their policies to improve people's living standard, better the country or bring peace to world, for example, the Hillary Clinton's Email Controversy and the sex scandal of Donald Trump. Besides, the American Democracy does not mean voting a president they want. Before the final vote, both candidates got a satisfaction rate lower than 50 percent and on December 1, 2016, the counting of election restart in Wisconsin, which prove many Americans are quite dissatisfied with the election. As for its racial discrimination, it can be found from the accidents caused by the white policemen.

America was and is the vane of people both at home and abroad. It may be strong and thriving if it can solve those problems. The most important thing America can do is to remold itself, treat people equally and make people more confident about it.

5.2. Status Quo of China Dream

If American Dream is compared to present perfect tense, China Dream is surely present progressive tense. Being put forward for three years, China Dream has now been known not only by all the Chinese people, but also by all the people in the world. In the past years, China has made huge achievements in all respects. For instance, China's industrialization is completed in only decades of years, which takes hundreds of years in many western countries. China has become a well-deserved leader and the second economy in 2012 in the world, and has played a more and more important role in international affairs.

Like a growing child, China Dream is energetic and promising but may make mistakes, such as the uneven development; the big gap between rich and poor; the serious environmental pollution, unsound warfare system and so forth. The Chinese government has carried out and is carrying out many measures to remove those deficiencies and some of them work well. Most importantly, Chinese people are very confident about the future of their own and their country and willing to make contributions to their country. In addition, until September, 2014, 457 Confucius Institutes have been built in 122 countries and many foreign teenagers also have their China Dream and some of them have realized their China Dream through platforms like Chinese Bridge, and Challenging the Impossible, etc. China Dream is of global significance. Hopefully, China Dream will come true in the near future.

6. Conclusions

America and China are the major concerns with many differences in the world. Through the contrast between American Dream and China Dream in their origins, development, goals and the ways to realize the goals as well as their status quo, it is believed that as the most important two countries, their development may make contribution to the civilization of human beings, that the ways they strengthen themselves may set good examples for other countries and that both American Dream and China Dream are unique but may be beneficial to people all over the world.

Yes, Americans have fulfilled their national dream, making America the only one super-power and the strongest nation in almost every aspect and that China and its people are striving hard to realize China Dream, thus offering the peoples all the world great opportunities, however, we still have doubts: when Americans can improve their democracy and freedom by avoiding verbal attacks against each other like Hillary and Trump, by allowing their citizens to choose the President they want and need rather than making a choice between “the two bad apples”, or by reducing or eliminating so many shootings in campus; for China and its people, when they can finally deal with the conflicts between economic development and environmental protection, between rich material life and poor personal quality, or between prosperous cities and remote poverty-stricken countryside.

We think people in other countries also have the right to enjoy beautiful things like democracy, freedom, equality,

peace, happiness and etc., hence, under the globalization, not only America and China, but also all countries, can learn from each other in many aspects and be complementary so that American Dream can be renewed, China Dream can come true in the near future and all people’s desire be satisfied. For America and China, it is especially important for them to equally treat all the countries, and try to be the best cooperative partners instead of competitive opponents. Only when the win-win cooperation between them is achieved, can they realize their national dream and people’s dream and promote the international and global development and prosperity.

References

- [1] Ann, Lee. What America Can Learn from China [M]. p: 26-27, p: 28.
- [2] Ji, Shengfen. (2016). On the Ruin of the American Dream in The Great Gatsby and Martin Eden. *Qingchunsuiyue*. 1, 39-40.
- [3] Liu, Debin. (2010). The Road of BRICS—Peaceful Rise of China. Changchun: Changchun Press, 1.
- [4] Lu, Dejian. (2013). Fostering Value is the Key to China Dream—a talk with Lu Dejian, Director of Literature Institute of China Academy of Social Sciences. *Newspaper of China Academy of Social Sciences*. 2013-02-08.
- [5] Song, Weiqiang. (2013). Realizing the Chinese Dream of Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese.
- [6] Nation—The historical Mission and Responsibility of the C P C. *Guangming Daily*. 2013-02-04.
- [7] Robert, L. Kuhn. (2014). The Chinese Dream in Western Eyes and Potential of the Chinese Dream. *China Daily*. Updated 2014-04-17.
- [8] Tang, Zhouyan. (2013). Building the China Dream with United Efforts. *People’s Daily*. 2013-03-28.
- [9] Wu, Junzan, et al. (2011). America in the Past. 16, 9.
- [10] Xin, Ming. (2013). China Dream: Connotation, Road and Guarantee. *Journal of Socialist Theory Guide* (5), 40.
- [11] Zhang, Chuanjia. (2013). The Great Road to Realizing China Dream. *Guangming Daily*. 2013-03-22.
- [12] Zhang, Qizhi. (2016). Cultural Confidence from Deep Historical Heritage. *People’s Daily*, 2016-09-03.
- [13] Zhu, Y. T. & Wang, L. L. (2011). The Society and Culture of Major English-speaking Countries an Introduction Beijing: Higher Education Press, 41, 42, 35, 37.
- [14] 22 December 2016. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2014-04/21/content_17449219.htm.
- [15] 1 December 2016. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-04/17/content_17465392.htm.
- [16] 1 December 2016. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014npcandcpc/2014-03/05/content_17324203.htm
- [17] 1 December 2016. http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-01/25/content_17257856.htm.
- [18] 1 December 2016. http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2013-09/27/content_16999422.htm.