

Minority Education in China

Balancing Unity and Diversity in an Era of Critical
Pluralism

Edited by James Leibold and Chen Yangbin



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Introduction

Minority Education in China

Balancing Unity and Diversity in an Era of Critical Pluralism

James Leibold and Chen Yangbin

The People's Republic of China (PRC) promotes itself as a harmonious, stable multicultural mosaic, with fifty-six distinct ethnic groups, or *minzu* (民族) as they are termed in China, striving for common prosperity. It's an image we remember well from the 2008 Beijing Olympics. But beneath the rhetoric and the carefully orchestrated displays of harmony, interethnic discord and hostility continues to flare cyclically, with Lhasa (2008), Ürümqi (2009), Shaoguan (2009), and other cities witnessing the latest episodes of conflict, violence, and unrest. Like other culturally diverse countries across the globe, the Chinese Party-state must balance the political and economic imperatives of national integration with the pluralistic realities of its diverse ethnocultural communities. This high-wire act is never easy.

The state education system is a key battleground in the Chinese Party-state's efforts to contain this simmering tension, while it seeks to transform its goal of ethnic harmony into reality. Education curricula and policy initiatives look to cultivate a sense of shared national belonging through specially designed programs targeted (often separately) at ethnic minority and Han majority citizens. These include history and geography courses emphasizing the natural, long-term fusion of the Chinese geo-body and its people; civics lessons outlining the state's ethnic policies and system of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities; specially designed classes, schools and universities for minority training; and a series of preferential treatment policies aimed at promoting equal educational opportunities for minority students (Postiglione 1999a; Information Office 2009). According to Gerard Postiglione (this volume), China has entered an era of "critical pluralism," an uneasy pivot between interethnic conflict and harmony, where

the state schooling system is now the frontline in the battle to push Chinese society towards a “harmonious multiculturalism.”

This edited volume brings together twenty-one experts to explore a range of crucial issues confronting minority education in China’s new millennium: the challenges associated with bilingual and trilingual education on the frontier; Han Chinese attitudes toward minority students and their education; the hegemonic role of the Chinese written and spoken language; dislocated inland boarding schools for minority students; the mediation of religion, language, and culture in minority schools; among other topics. It covers these themes from a range of diverse ethnic perspectives—Korean, Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Han—with the authors themselves representing a range of different national, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. The volume combines empirically grounded field studies with more theoretically informed chapters.

Taken together, the chapters in this book probe the specific policies and the cultural/political setting of minority education in the PRC, casting a critical gaze over current approaches in order to identify areas of success and nagging problems of design and implementation. An important starting point for these chapters is the complex intellectual and policy debates surrounding the value, nature, and specific import of cultural pluralism in Chinese and Western educational settings. By way of introduction, we begin by sketching out the parameters of this cross-cultural dialogue, exploring the relationship between the liberal tradition of “multicultural education” in the West and the unique form of pluralism that underpins what we term “multi-*minzu* education” in the PRC, before outlining some of the hurdles associated with promoting genuine ethnic and cultural pluralism in China.

Multicultural Education: Western Origins, Global Implications?

Despite some recent interest among Chinese scholars, multicultural education (as a normative and policy framework) is alien to the Chinese tradition. The term and the set of values associated with it arose alongside the Civil Rights and “ethnic revitalization” movements in North America during the 1960s and 1970s. According to James A. Banks, educators were responding to parallel processes of decolonization and the increased global flows of peoples and goods, and

sought to address the following problems: 1) the perceived gap between social inequalities and democratic ideals; 2) an identity and community void left by the rapid rush towards modernity; and 3) global movements for ethnic and national self-determination (Banks 2009b: 11–15). Banks provides the following definition: “Multicultural education is an approach to school reform designed to actualize educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social-class, and linguistic groups. It also promotes democracy and social justice” (Banks 2009b: 13). The aim is educational reform—deep structural changes to pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, teaching styles, and school culture—that will provide not only equal learning opportunities but, perhaps even more importantly, equal learning outcomes for a whole range of diverse students.

Yet, from its inception, multicultural education in the West, like the broader discourse of multiculturalism, has been a contested concept and project, as it rests on a set of rigorously debated assumptions at the heart of Western liberalism. First, there is disagreement over the relative place of the individual and the group within democratic societies. Classic liberalism attests to the supremacy of the individual within society and seeks to guard against the ability of the state or community groups to limit the rights and freedoms of the individual (Kukathas 1995; Barry 2001). The ideal here is a “color-blind constitution” which protects the rights and freedoms of each citizen regardless of their cultural or ethnic attachments. Neo-liberals like Will Kymlicka (1995) and Charles Taylor (1992) argue for the importance of collective rights in democratic societies and contend that mere tolerance of diversity is not enough. They argue that past and present inequalities merit a set of “group-differentiated rights,” which range from self-government and legal protections to financial compensation and political secession, depending on the specific situation of each group. Only by active intervention and positive accommodation can democratic states promote genuine cultural diversity, equality, and tolerance. Yet, critics of multiculturalism in North America and Europe warn that this celebration of difference undermines national cohesion and the shared cultural values that are central to the inner workings of liberal democracy (Schlesinger 1998; Huntington 2004; Ash 2008; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), while others suggest that redistribution is more important than recognition, and the symbolic “politics of recognition”

fails to address the deeper structural, political, and economic barriers to group and individual equality within society (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

Second, there is little agreement over the very nature of “culture” at the center of the multicultural project. Both the liberal and neo-liberal positions tend to treat cultural groups as *sui generis*: pristine and unchanging communities fixed by birth. The essentialism of this “epistemology of entitativity” has come under fire from postmodern and neo-Marxist critiques (Handler 1988: 6–8). In today’s globalized world in particular, identities are fluid, multiple, and situational, they stress, and any attempt to fix diverse peoples into a set of static communities rests on a reified and unsustainable notion of culture. Rather than viewing cultural communities as endangered species in need of preservation, “critical multiculturalism” takes “culture as a terrain of conflict and struggle over representation” and seeks to uncover the broader material and structural barriers to social, political, and educational equality (May 2009: 36 and *passim*). Many now view multicultural education as a global project, one aimed at producing “cosmopolitan citizens” equipped with a set of transferable skills and values necessary to successfully navigate the diverse global community—the sort of fluid hybridity necessary to feel at home in a range of different cultural milieus (Banks 2009a; Waldron 1995; Appadurai 1996).

James A. Banks and other neo-liberals claim that multicultural education has spread transnationally, and is today relevant to different countries and cultures across the globe (Banks 2009a; 2009b; Kymlicka 2004b). Yet, the cultural relativism at the core of the multicultural project presents a range of problems for any uncritical application of Western-style multiculturalism to non-Western cultures and societies like China. As discussed below, the normative values and ideological precepts that structure the place of ethnic and cultural diversity in the People’s Republic of China represent an eclectic, and one could argue inarticulate, mixture of Chinese and Marxist assumptions that do not necessarily accord with Western liberalism. It is important to remember that China’s own unique civilizational context continues to shape and mediate ethnic and cultural diversity within the Chinese schooling system, and any promotion of “multicultural education” in China must both adapt and find new roots within this context.

Multi-Minzu Education: Confucian Assumptions, Marxist Framework?

China's past is a complex patchwork of different philosophical and religious cosmologies, yet it is widely accepted that Confucianism has helped to mold the way ethnocultural diversity is viewed today. Confucianism, while far from a uniform or stagnant body of thought, has a great deal to say about what we today call "minority" groups and cultures. He Baogang (1998: 31) argues that Confucian communitarianism "seems to provide strong support for state's provisions to protect minorities," through a paternalistic, duty-bound commitment to the harmonious coexistence of diverse cultural communities. Yet, what others have termed "Confucian culturalism" is also rigidly hierarchical and potentially repressive in nature, making a stringent yet fluid distinction between *Xia* (夏, Chinese, central, civility, orthodoxy) and *Yi* (夷, non-Chinese, peripheral, barbaric, heterodoxy); with the *Xia* believed to be responsible for retaining order and stability, and determining what is best for the *Yi*, be it temporary exclusion and autonomy or eventual inclusion and assimilation.

The malleable nature of the *Xia/Yi* divide meant that non-Chinese groups, such as the Mongol Yuan and the Manchu Qing imperial courts, could assume the position of *Xia* by adopting its normative structures and behaviors. But once they assumed this mantle of dominance, they too were responsible for policing the barrier between *Xia* and *Yi* and ordering society (He 2005; Leibold 2007). Over time, the innate superiority of *Xia* civilization, it was expected, would transform different cultural and ethnic communities into a single, organic whole: what was traditionally known as a state of "Great Unity" (*datong* 大同) or "All Under Heaven" (*tianxia* 天下), and today inside the PRC, as the bounded, territorialized national subjectivity of "Chineseness" (*Zhongguoren* 中國人) or the "Chinese nation/race" (*Zhonghua minzu* 中華民族) (Wang 2012). Unlike Western liberalism, Confucianism lacks a tradition of individual or group rights per se, meaning that minority groups and their members are expected to remain loyal to the state, with disloyalty and the refusal to submit viewed as grounds for punishment (He 2004; He 2005; Yi 2008: 19–39).

With the establishment of the PRC in 1949, China gradually adopted a new, equally complex—albeit alien—system of Marxist-Leninist thought on minority

issues, what came to be termed the “national question” (*minzu wenti* 民族問題). On the one hand, Marxism-Leninism posits the supremacy of class loyalties over ethnic and national attachments, yet historical materialism, as interpreted by Lenin and Stalin, also stipulates that different ethnocultural communities proceed from a state of barbarism to Communist utopia at their own pace, and it is the responsibility of the Communist vanguard to protect and promote the independent development of “backward” ethnic minority groups (He 2005; Zhou 2009).

While Lenin and Stalin spoke of national self-determination and federalism as the most effective protection, Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China (CPC) adopted a suite of slightly more circumscribed policies: 1) group recognition and legal equality for the fifty-six *minzu* communities identified by the state; 2) an extensive patchwork of regional ethnic autonomous units that now covers 64 percent of PRC territory; and 3) a system of preferential treatment policies aimed at fostering the equal yet differentiated “development” (that is Han-defined social and economic advancement) of minority groups (Leibold 2010b: 5–6). This mix of state/Han-led protection and development is riddled with contradictions, but shares the same paternalistic, communitarian logic as the Confucian tradition, with the gradual fusion (*ronghe* 融合) of the Han majority and the fifty-five minority groups into a single “Great Unity” remaining the ultimate goal: what Sun Yat-sen and Liang Qichao described as “the fusing together in a single furnace” (*rong er ru yu yi lu* 融而入於一爐), and is today idealized as a uniquely Chinese version of the “melting pot” (*da ronglu* 大熔爐) (Leibold 2007; Yi 2008; Leibold 2012).

The dichotomy between unity and diversity that runs throughout Confucian and Marxist-Leninist philosophy is reflected in the PRC’s system of minority education. In order to achieve equality between *minzu* groups and promote their development, the PRC education system is premised on treating individual groups differently. Yet, in reality, it makes a meta-distinction between mainstream education for Han students, so-called standard education (*zheng-gui jiaoyu* 正規教育), and a special “ethnic education” (*minzu jiaoyu* 民族教育) stream for most of the non-Han minority groups. As a part of the ethnic stream, non-Han minorities are provided with a range of protections and special benefits: first, there is a distinct budget, set of laws, and bureaucratic provisions

for promoting and implementing minority education; second, there is a range of specialized minority schools and educational institutions that offer (in theory at least) a modified curriculum, which allows successful minority students to learn in their own language from primary to tertiary level; third, minority students are provided with preferential access to higher education by either lowering the cutoff level or providing bonus points for minority applicants on the university entrance exam (*gaokao* 高考) and access to special remedial classes or dislocated schools to boost their educational outcomes (Borchigud 1994; Postiglione 1999a).

The implementation of these policies is often patchy and market forces continue to undermine minority protections. Yet, at the same time, the ethnic education system has also provided a degree of cultural autonomy for non-Han peoples and strengthened their sense of ethnic and national belonging. Here resources are increasingly abundant, but creating a culturally relevant, high quality, and practical curriculum remain key challenges. At present, pedagogical outcomes can best be described as mixed, with increased minority access to higher education but continued high rates of truancy, failure, and dropouts at all levels, especially among less developed minority groups and those in remote and nomadic regions, where families still question the value of education (Yi 2008; Postiglione 2009a; Wang 2009; Postiglione et al., this volume).

In understanding the position of the mainstream and ethnic school systems in China, it is important to note their relative size. Despite possessing one of the world's largest minority populations (Postiglione 2009b: 501), the PRC exhibits a remarkable degree of ethnic homogeneity, at least at the level of state discourse. In contrast to the over 30 percent of Australians, 25 percent of Americans and 20 percent of Canadians who fail to identify with the majority "White," "Caucasian" or "Anglo-Celtic" identity (Price 1999; Day 2011; Statistics Canada 2008), over 91 percent of PRC's citizens are officially classified as members of the Han majority. This Han super-majority rests uncomfortably on a series of diverse cultural and linguistic communities that share a common written language (Mullaney et al. 2012). But the relatively small populations of those deemed "ethnic minorities" (*shaoshu minzu* 少數民族) by the Party-state has important implications for the way ethnocultural diversity is viewed and discussed within Chinese society as a whole. In other words, size matters and can easily render diversity

nebulous (if not invisible) when overshadowed by the Han behemoth, and when viewed within the self-limiting parameters of state discourse and categories, the promotion of ethnocultural pluralism and tolerance in China can appear a Sisyphean task.

Unlike the mainstreaming of multicultural education in the West, ethnic education in China is viewed as something for a select, remedial few, with the values and promotion of cultural pluralism and ethnic tolerance largely neglected in the regular state schooling system. Furthermore, the increased pace of market forces in China, as several of the chapters in this volume clearly demonstrate, are encouraging more and more minority students to opt for a mainstream education conducted in the “national language” (Putonghua 普通話). Market unity, many in China believe, will ultimately bring cultural and political unity (Ma 2012), with the CPC identifying “leap-frog development” (*kuayue shi fazhan* 跨越式發展) of minority regions as the best method for securing social stability and “Great Unity.” That said, China’s demographic profile is slowly altering as it expands its presence in the global marketplace. The latest census revealed that over one half a million “foreigners” (*waiguoren* 外國人) now call China home (a figure that many believe is widely underreported), and China’s booming economy and the increased flow of people and goods across the globe will surely bring more diverse faces and cultures to Chinese cities, campuses, and factories in the future (Strickland 2011; Khanna 2013). In light of this trend, Chinese scholars have begun to rigorously debate the relevance of Western notions of multicultural education and its relationship to both minority and mainstream education in contemporary China.

Debating and Defining Minority Education in the PRC

Not surprisingly, Chinese educators and academics offered a range of theoretical and practical interventions in the global debate over multiculturalism and multicultural education, embracing a common desire to “indigenize” (*bentuhua* 本土化) foreign concepts while evaluating their relevance for a rapidly modernizing China. Opinions range widely, with some championing James A. Banks’ model of multicultural education as the best solution for China’s problems (Lin 2008; Yi 2008), while others reject it as largely irrelevant to China’s indigenous

traditions (Yang et al. 1998). Furthermore, many of those that employ the term “multicultural education” (*duoyuan wenhua jiaoyu* 多元文化教育) use it in ways that Banks and other Western practitioners would find surprising, as this and other Western idioms take on different meanings when employed within a Chinese context. Take, for example, the concept of bilingual education (*shuangyu jiaoyu* 雙語教育): most scholars and state officials stress the importance of bilingualism, but there is little agreement on its form and significance. As indicated by the different ways authors in this volume employ the term, bilingual education can be viewed as either a transitional tool for promoting Putonghua and national integration, or a strategy for preserving linguistic and cultural diversity. Furthermore, despite the fact that many Han are technically bilingual (if not trilingual), speaking Putonghua and at least one “dialect” (*fangyan* 方言), and increasingly English, the discourse on bilingual and trilingual language learning has traditionally been limited to the minorities, where it is viewed as a problem specific to the ethnic education stream.

As China re-emerged following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, intellectuals on the Chinese mainland experimented with different theoretical formulations to legitimize the reform and opening-up process. Drawing on both Chinese and Western concepts of identity, the eminent sociologist Fei Xiaotong (1989) proposed a new paradigm for thinking about ethnic relations in the post-Mao era. Adopting a broad, historical perspective, he argued that Chinese civilization exhibits a unique *duoyuan yiti* (多元一體) pattern, a deeply polysemic expression which literally means “multiple origins, one body,” but which is often rendered into English as “pluralistic unity.”¹ Over the course of several millennia, Fei wrote, different groups who were active across the Chinese geospace:

... mixed, aligned, or integrated, while others were divided and became extinct. In time the groups which consisted of a number of subunits that kept emerging, vanishing, and re-emerging, so that parts of some subunits became a part of others, yet each retained its individual characteristic. Together they formed a national entity which was at once pluralistic and unified (Fei 1989: 168).

It should be noted that when Fei first proposed this framework at a public lecture in Hong Kong, plurality was placed before unity. With Fei describing the lengthy historical processes by which different ethnic groups interacted and then

integrated into a single Chinese nation/race (*Zhonghua minzu* 中華民族). For Fei, the Han majority functioned as a “nucleus of integration,” like a dynamic yet impure “snowball” (*xueqiu* 雪球), drawing together diverse peoples and communities into an eclectic whole (Fei 1989). Some non-Han intellectuals contended, however, that minority groups, like the Mongols and the Manchu, also served as the nucleus of ethnic fusion during different historical periods, and there was little consensus on the place and value of diversity within Chinese society (Zhou 2007).

In time, Fei’s formulation was applied to the field of education in the PRC, with a number of Chinese scholars and officials debating its relationship to minority education and the Western discourse of multicultural education. In an influential 1998 article in *Ethnonational Studies* (*Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究), Professor Teng Xing systematically analyzed a series of indigenous and foreign terms for *minzu* education in China, before proposing his own neologism: “multicultural integration education theory” (*duoyuan wenhua zhenghe jiaoyu lilun* 多元文化整合教育理論). This closely paralleled Fei Xiaotong’s idiom, but placed a distinct emphasis on integration over diversity, or the process of literally bringing different cultures “into conformity” (*zhenghe* 整合). The state schooling system, regardless of whether it is the mainstream or *minzu* stream, “serves a conservative function by defining and reproducing a national culture that bolsters dominant social structures” (Postiglione 1999b: 3). Diversity is something that can only be tolerated within a state of unity, as held by the popular Confucian maxim “harmony without uniformity” (*he’er butong* 和而不同).

Over the last decade, multicultural education (*duoyuan wenhua jiaoyu*) has become a popular buzzword among liberal segments of the PRC academy, part of what two critics have termed “the flood of trendy theoretical thought streaming into China” (Wan and Bai 2010). Yet, despite some uncritical usages of the term, most scholars writing inside the PRC tend to stress the differences between this alien Western concept and *minzu* education, with one group arguing “the biggest difference between Chinese multicultural integration education and western multicultural education is that unity or integration education is the core. In other words, it is an integration-centered multicultural education” (Wang et al. 2007: 146).

That said there is also an interesting spatial pattern to the intellectual responses to the Western discourse on multicultural education in the PRC, with scholars operating in or near the frontier adopting a more conservative approach than their counterparts on coastal, metropolitan campuses. Among the former group, there is concern about a more liberal, open model of multicultural education and its implications for maintaining unity and promoting integration among the diverse populations of the frontier. Meanwhile, in the eastern cities of Beijing and Shanghai, Western-style multicultural education is viewed more favorably, as a progressive model for embedding pluralistic tolerance across the educational curriculum in ways that would apply not only to ethnic minorities, but also to other culturally and socially disadvantaged groups, such as women and urban migrants.

Sticking closely to Fei Xiaotong's theoretical framework, a group of scholars at Northwest Normal University in Lanzhou warn that multicultural education theory must be sinicized and cannot be allowed to "transform China" (Wang et al. 2007 and Shao 2010). Two other academics in Lanzhou, Wan Minggang and Bai Liang (2010: 1), question whether multicultural education theory and practice in the West, which they admit is "an influential trend in world ethnic education thought," should replace the rich, indigenous theoretical basis for minority education in China. There is concern here about discursive hegemony and the need to uphold China's own unique cultural heritage and locate the "China model." To what extent, they ask, does western multicultural education theory possess universal significance? And is it really a panacea for solving all of the problems faced by minorities in China today? In summarizing the fundamental differences between the two, they point to: 1) their different historical origins, with the North American Civil Rights movement contrasted with China's constitutional protections for minority education; 2) their distinct social and political context, with significant differences in political and cultural appeals, ethnic origin, composition and geographic distribution, and existing educational policies; and 3) their contrasting educational goals, with different pedagogical and implementation aims. They urge a sharply critical approach to Western-style multiculturalism, and stress the importance of upholding Chinese discursive power. Similarly, Tang Qixiu and Pan Guangcheng (2006) of Southwest University and Southwest Normal University in Chongqing call for the careful localization of multicultural

education in China. The authors state that multicultural education is a discourse embedded in a Western political context, and does not reflect the unique demographic and social context of China. They thus warn of the dangers of any uncritical and wholesale adoption of multicultural education in China.

On the other hand, some educators in coastal China have adopted a more open-minded view of the value of multicultural education as it operates in the West. Zheng Xinrong (2004; 2010) at Beijing Normal University suggests that multicultural education should be extended to other disadvantaged groups, beside ethnic minorities. In Shanghai, Zheng Jinzhou (2004) argues that multicultural education, in both research and practice in China, narrowly focuses on ethnic minorities while in the West it has been broadened to apply to other marginalized and disadvantaged groups. In spite of their own efforts to indigenize Western multicultural theory, Teng Xing (1998) and other academics operating in coastal cities stress the importance of broadening the focus on multicultural education to include not only the minorities but also the mainstream Han community. The positive values of pluralism and integration should be simultaneously transmitted at the level of a common human culture, the mainstream national culture, and throughout multiple minority cultures.

In the realm of public policy, there have been some modest, albeit encouraging, signs of progress. While the term multicultural education is not deliberately promoted, policy documents issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC) make frequent reference to the importance of “cultural pluralism” (*wenhua duoyuanxing* 文化多元性). Like in the West, the key arena for implementing cultural pluralism lies at the school level, especially in building a curriculum that promotes understanding and tolerance of diverse cultural and knowledge systems, and here the ongoing process of curriculum reform is a key avenue for advocates of multicultural education in China. Both the 2001 Draft Outline of Curriculum Reform in Basic Education and the 2008 Draft Guideline of School Ethnic Unity Education provide an institutional basis for strengthening and broadening ethnocultural pluralism in the state education system, with the former regulation allowing for greater flexibility in using different cultural and curriculum models and materials at the local level in ethnic minority regions, and the latter for a greater focus on minority cultures and the importance of ethnic harmony among the Han majority (China Education and

Research Network 2001; State Ethnic Affairs Commission of PRC 2008). As one of the major facets of curriculum modernization, the previous emphasis on a unified national curriculum has been relaxed and decentralized into a three-layer system: national curriculum, local curriculum, and school-based curriculum. It is at the local (provincial) and school levels that the values of cultural diversity can perhaps be most effectively implemented. Jin (2004) calls for the incorporation of these values as a part of ongoing curriculum reforms, arguing that the diverse cultures of Chinese minorities can enrich the local and school curriculum, while suggesting that equal access to educational opportunity is a prerequisite and basis for curriculum reform. Therefore, educational reform in minority areas, particularly in western China, should be the main focus.

Balancing Diversity with Unity: The Dangers of Plural Monoculturalism

As should be clear now, multicultural education is a contested philosophy of education and society that has no specific parallels in Chinese tradition. Rather it rests of a series of nested and asserted assumptions that are deeply embedded in Western liberalism and do not easily translate into the Chinese context. In this sense, it is more accurate to speak of minority or multi-*minzu* education in China. As Naran Bilik (this volume) argues, the Chinese term *minzu* has multiple glosses, but is often used today as a synonym for “minority,” especially when contrasted with the mainstream Han education system. But this does not mean that there is no normative commitment to tolerance, or a moral basis for actively promoting cultural pluralism in China. Chinese society, like other societies around the globe, has an unequal terrain of power relations, and the recognition of diversity in education and the wider society seeks to empower the disadvantaged and rebalance power by promoting the equality of educational opportunities and outcomes.

In advancing cultural pluralism, we need to not only take as our starting point China’s unique cultural and demographic situation, but also recognize the ways in which the current *minzu* system and other sociopolitical structures create barriers to meaningful ethnocultural interactions. Ma Rong (2012: 168–191) argues that a shared civic identity has been stymied in China by the existence

of a “dual structure” (*eryuan jiegou* 二元結構) that creates separate institutional and cultural spaces for the Han and minority communities. There are a growing number of scholars and officials in China who are starting to question the value of *minzu* categories and argue that these hinder the development of a shared sense of national belonging while pigeonholing more fluid, grassroots and individual forms of ethnocultural diversity. For example, the Executive Director of the United Front Work Department of the CPC, Zhu Weiqun, recently called for the removal of *minzu* status on national ID cards, a freeze on minority autonomous regions, and more integrated schooling for Han and minority students (Zhu 2012). Others, however, like Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Hao Shiyuan (2005; 2012) argue that the current system is still necessary to protect ethnic minorities, preserve cultural diversity, and foster a harmonious society.

As discussed above, the PRC provides legal equality to all ethnic groups and specific protections for their cultures and languages through autonomous regions and ethnic schools. One could dismiss these protections as either superficial or ineffective; but the problem could also be more systemic in nature—relating to the way ethnocultural diversity is conceptualized and articulated in modern China. China’s ethnic policies foster an environment that on one level looks like multiculturalism, or what we might call “multiculturalism with Chinese characteristics,” but in reality functions more like what Amartya Sen calls “plural monoculturalism” (Sen 2006; see also Postiglione, this volume). In this structure, China’s rich ethnic and cultural communities are reduced to fifty-six distinct and rigid *minzu* boxes, with each category possessing its own cultural straitjacket: ethnonym, history, beliefs, festivals, customs, and costumes. These categories are displayed and propagated throughout the educational and propaganda systems, taking the form of polystyrene dolls, playing cards, statues, and singing and dancing actors. In terms of education, one’s *minzu* category (among other factors, obviously) can predetermine the range of a student’s opportunities—language of instruction, type of school, and even schoolyard playmates—which can in turn constrain one’s chances in the job market after graduation. When conceived of as a singular, fixed category, *minzu* identity can take on what Sen (2006) calls “the illusion of destiny,” rather than a flexible category of self-actualization.

Social identity hasn't always operated like this in China. During the imperial period one's identity was defined by a fluid notion of civility, with so-called "barbarians" adopting a sedentary lifestyle and becoming Chinese and central plain dwellers going "native" on the frontier. As recent as the 1950s, Chinese ethnographers recorded over four hundred self-designated "*minzu*" groups in Yunnan Province alone, including one individual who self-identified as "Japanese" (Mullaney 2010: 36). But today, state officials find it hard to contemplate ethnic identity outside the fifty-six *minzu* categories, as evident by the stilted response of an official from the SEAC when questioned about the *minzu* identity of foreign residents of the PRC:

In the over 60 years since New China was established, we haven't faced this sort of question, as they [foreigners] are not a *minzu* that is native to our history and locally born and bred . . . currently we do not recognize them as a *minzu* but rather can only treat them as a group of foreigners (*People's Daily* 2009a).

Quotidian life is full of cultural and ethnic diversity in China: the "Koreatowns" of the Wudaokou and Wangjing neighborhoods in Beijing; the large African migrant community in the southern city of Guangzhou; Kashgar's kaleidoscopic old-town; and the ancient Tunbao villages of Guizhou, to provide but a few examples. Yet state categories can hamstring and even reify this diversity in unnatural ways, not only hindering a shared sense of national belonging but also the appreciation of ethnocultural pluralism at the scale of the individual and local communities. Here hundreds of different (many mutually unintelligible) topolects (that is, regional speech) serve to highlight the rich diversity that underpins mainstream Han culture, even though they are often considered mere "dialects" of a unified Putonghua (Mair 1991).

Like religious, racial and civilizational groupings that operate in the West, China's own *minzu* categories rest on what Amartya Sen calls a "solidarist approach to human identity," one that renders "us into inmates rigidly incarcerated in little containers" that belie the multiple, fluid, situational, and dynamic ways in which social identity operates in everyday life (Sen 2006: xiii, xvii). One might have a single *minzu* category stamped on their ID card in China, but this doesn't mean that Chinese citizens possess only a single ethnic and/or social identity. While *minzu* categories in China have taken on a life of their own and

inform state policies and the ways in which ethnic identity is often performed in China (Gladney 2004; Harrell 2001; Mackerras 1995), they can also retard the sort of multicultural interactions and tolerance that are central to our shared yet differentiated humanity, and even worse create a false sense of destiny. What Ghassan Hage (1998: 105–116) calls “ethnic caging”: the creation of closed discursive and social spaces for the ethnic Other, which prevents it from “roaming freely” and interacting with mainstream society, in order to prevent the development of a counter-national will.

Does genuine cultural pluralism necessitate “impact integration” (Postiglione, Zhu, and Jiao 2004), or even conflict, or is it possible for a harmonious multiculturalism to evolve in a carefully controlled or compartmentalized environment? Do cultural and ethnic protections preserve diversity or lead to social isolation and even atomization in today’s world of rapid mobility and global informational flows? In order to fully embrace differentiated humanity, don’t people need to “peer over the fence” and more closely interact with their neighbors, tolerating their differences while searching for common ground? Finally, can we depend on market forces alone to harmonize interethnic relations, or do state and civil society actors have a major role to play in actively regulating, nudging and promoting peaceful and meaningful interactions? The individual chapters in this volume do not put forward any single, unified answer to these difficult questions. Rather they interrogate the implications of these larger issues for the processes and practices of minority education in contemporary China, and some of the difficult challenges associated with balancing unity and diversity at a national level while also improving the educational outcomes for all Chinese citizens.

Volume Overview

In contrast to previous scholarship, which has explored the pedagogical and policy challenges of minority education in China, this is the first volume to recast these problems in the light of the Chinese Party-state’s efforts to foster cultural pluralism and national stability through a shared sense of national belonging. Shunning polemics, it fashions a new agenda for a critically informed yet practically orientated approach to these complex and controversial issues. The volume

is divided into four separate parts, each tackling specific aspects of minority education in China from a range of different perspectives.

Setting the stage for the more empirically informed chapters that follow, Part I offers three theoretical interventions on the difficulties associated with balancing unity and diversity in Chinese minority education. As a leading pioneer in the field, Gerard Postiglione opens the volume by reflecting on the progress since his pioneering 1999 volume on the topic, and his years of experiences both as a scholar and advocate of improved educational outcomes for Chinese minorities. Deeply informed by Western scholarship on multicultural education, Postiglione argues that China is at a crucial turning point as the rapid pace of economic and social reforms opens up new divisions and ethnic tensions within Chinese society. He puts forward two possible directions: the sort of plural monoculturalism discussed by Amartya Sen or a more harmonious, and admittedly indigenous, form of multiculturalism. Despite some encouraging signs, Postiglione warns that in terms of educational policy, China appears to be heading in the direction of emphasizing assimilation over any harmonious acceptance of diversity. When compared to Western multiculturalism, Chinese society, with its rich vein on culturalism, exhibits a much more conservative form of multiculturalism than any that currently operates in the West.

Language has long been central, although not irreducible, to identity articulation. And in China, like elsewhere, the language one speaks and studies in helps to determine not only the parameters of one's identity, but also interethnic power relations. In his chapter He Baogang identifies a distinct linguistic trajectory over the *longue durée* of Chinese history: what he terms a type of "Chinese linguistic imperialism," which makes multilingual education an unstable, and possibly untenable, proposition in contemporary China. The spread of Han characters (*Hanzi* 漢字), he argues, has closely followed the expansion of Han culture and political rule—a sort of "soft power" that has resulted in the gradual, yet inextricable decline of alternative, minority languages. He suggests that this history of linguistic imperialism, as signified by the traditional concept of "Great Unity" (*datong*) and the administrative tradition of *gaitu guiliu* (改土歸流, replacing native chieftains with Han administrators), serves as a powerful counterbalance to Fei Xiaotong's *duoyuan yiti* paradigm, and ultimately presents a serious barrier to any bona fide and practical multicultural education in China. While

He Baogang stakes out a normative claim for multilingualism, language is but one element of cultural diversity, and one can point to numerous examples of ethnicity that is not based on language.

Like He Baogang, Naran Bilik stresses the importance of looking at the “big picture” when seeking to uncover the relative position of diversity and unity within Chinese tradition and contemporary society. A bilingual Mongolian scholar with a deep sensitivity to the subtle ways in which power relations are embedded in language usage, Bilik argues that despite the presence of Han linguistic imperialism, there remains a distinct “linguistic-cultural anxiety” in the PRC. On the one hand, there are those that stress the “unity” (*yiti*) side of Fei Xiaotong’s formula and call for more emphasis on national integration, while on the other hand, there are those that emphasize the “diversity” (*duoyuan*) side and advocate increased provisions for ethnic pluralism in China. While market forces have sharpened these contradictions, they are also deeply rooted in the history of the Asian continent. Seeking to uncover the fluid and unstable plurality of past notions of “China,” Bilik highlights the polysemy of Chinese terms like *minzu*, *Zhongguo* (中國), and *Zhonghua* (中華) in the Mongolian language, and suggests that by asking and then validating the different ways “you say China in Mongolian,” one can shatter the myth of “monocultural centrism” and promote interethnic understanding in China.

Part II shifts the focus to the PRC’s massive ethnic frontier. Here minority education is of deep practical concern for policymakers, families, and students. As the socioeconomic gap between the frontier and coastal cities widens, more critical questions are being asked about the ability of the current minority education system to bridge this gap and equip a new generation of minority youth for today’s globalized world. Ma Rong, one of China’s leading sociologists and a former student of Fei Xiaotong, provides a detailed and nuanced overview of bilingual education in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). Charting the historical development of bilingualism in the TAR since 1952, Ma analyzes various models for balancing Putonghua and Tibetan language instruction, highlighting the differences of opinion among state officials and Tibetan families over the relative value of both languages, and the best methods for increasing enrollment, promoting high quality educational outcomes, and improving life chances. He is critical of the current trend that does not require Han students in the TAR

to study the Tibetan language and culture, and stresses the importance of adapting the model of bilingual education to local conditions. In the end, however, he stresses the centrality of Putonghua for Tibet, and contends that “if a minority group does not learn the language of mainstream society—especially those groups that remain relatively less developed in terms of industrialization due to historical reasons—their members will be unable to participate in national education, economy, and social development. In most cases, these groups will be marginalized in all aspects. Trapped at the bottom of the social structure, with almost no access to social mobility to improve their status, ethnic conflicts will become inevitable.”

The remote, sparsely populated, and harsh environment of the Tibetan plateau further complicates educational reform in this frontier region. In their chapter, Gerard Postiglione, Ben Jiao, Li Xiaoliang, and Tsamla survey the challenges associated with popularizing basic education in these nomadic regions. Drawing on fieldwork in Nakchu and Ngari prefectures, they identify a significant gap between the perceptions and desires of state educators and the families of Tibetan nomads. While the state is focused on meeting enrollment targets, most nomadic families continue to question the value of a modern-style education, resulting in high rates of truancy and dropout. What is required, they argue, is a curriculum that is “culturally sensitive, regionally relevant, and responsive to the realities of the nomadic community.” In particular, they identify the lack of sufficient vocational training and locally embedded schools and curriculum as two important hurdles to improving the uptake of basic education among Tibetan nomads.

The next chapter shifts the focus to Xinjiang, China’s other massive, and at times, troubled frontier region, with the young Uyghur scholar Zuliyati Simayi providing a comprehensive and sophisticated survey of bilingualism in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). She highlights some of the important accomplishments over the last couple of decades, but also identifies some of the systemic limitations inherent in the current system. In particular, she highlights the way in which a *minzu*-based education, rather than one that takes the individual as its starting point, can undermine learning and social outcomes, echoing the debate in Western liberalism over the relationship between group and individual rights. She concludes: “... one of the essential objectives

of school education should be not only the cultivation of respect for each ethnic group's history, culture, and guaranteed development, but also the transformation of ethnic minorities into equal citizens of the state. The best way to realize this objective is to promote a mode of multicultural education that targets justice and equality at the individual rather than group level."

Yet, in today's global village, command over two languages is often not enough. This is especially true in China, where English remains an important part of the state curriculum, and compulsory for all primary level students in mainstream schools. In her chapter, Linda Tsung draws on fieldwork in primary schools in southern Xinjiang to ask what happens to educational outcomes when English is introduced into a bilingual curriculum in the XUAR. She concludes that due to poor teaching materials, inadequate teacher training, and limited resources, Uyghur students struggle to keep up with their Han peers in this sort of trilingual environment, and the end result is poor academic achievement, and increased disparity between Uyghur and Han students. This situation is further exacerbated by the gap between urban and rural schools, with urban schools and students better equipped for bilingual and trilingual education, while rural Uyghur students fall further and further behind. Finally, in her opinion, the government-backed merging of schools in Xinjiang has largely failed to address these inequalities, with significant barriers remaining in place (linguistic, cultural, and institutional), which prevent any meaningful interethnic interactions either inside the classroom or on the playgrounds.

Gender issues can further complicate the challenges associated with minority education, with minority women across the globe often placed in a position of inferiority and vulnerability when it comes to accessing quality education. With the support of the Ford Foundation, Professor Teng Xing of Central Minzu University in Beijing has overseen a long-term project aimed at promoting the educational opportunities among the Lahu minority girls of the remote and mountainous Muga Township, which is situated along Yunnan Province's border with Burma. In his chapter for this volume, Teng and his colleagues reflect on the impact of the special classes they helped to create for Lahu girls in 2001, and chronicle the impressive academic achievements of two cohorts of students. Putting forward the "Lahu classes" as a successful example of "multicultural integration education," they argue that the classes provide their lucky participants

with the rudiments of a modern education—fluency in Putonghua, basic academic skills, and a cultural toolkit—which enables them to survive outside their isolated, rural communities. At the same time, they contend that the classes help the girls to take pride in their indigenous culture and language through the use of local curriculum materials and pedagogical strategies, while simultaneously promoting the integration of the Lahu minority into mainstream society and the cultural diversity of the Chinese nation.

China's rapid pace of development has fostered greater interregional mobility, helping to breaking down some of the educational barriers between the frontier and the coastal cities. In Part III, we probe the environment of minority education in China proper and the particular set of challenges facing ethnic minority students living and studying in the heartland of Chinese culturalism. Four case studies are presented which collectively explore some of the pathways and barriers confronted by Uyghur, Mongol, and Korean students.

In his chapter, Chen Yangbin suggests that given their different responses to the growing complexity of the “Xinjiang problem,” Uyghur graduates from specialized dislocated schools are likely to form a group of new educational elite. These Uyghur youth, who attend boarding schools in inland cities (so-called Xinjiang Classes or *Xinjiangban* 新疆班) and undertake the university entrance exam in Putonghua, have gained access to universities across inland China, including some of the nation's most prestigious institutions. Based on an initial survey of these graduates, Chen delineates the uniqueness of their experiences both at university and in their daily lives in eastern China. He demonstrates their feeling of superiority in terms of educational achievement, which they attempt to balance with an equally strong sense of representing Uyghur culture and identity. The chapter also analyzes the implications of this new group of elites when viewed against the background of identity, multiculturalism and ethnic integration in China.

Timothy Grose of Indiana University has been conducting field research among Uyghur students in Beijing since 2006. In his chapter for this volume, he critically interrogates the relationship between social background and religiosity among his informants, seeking a better understanding of the complex attitudes Uyghur students in Beijing have towards Ramadan, the obligatory month long fast observed by Muslims worldwide. He reminds us how fluid and situational

ethnic identity is outside official state discourse, and warns against the dangers of reifying educational categories like *minkaomin* 民考民 (minority students taking exams in minority languages) and *minkaohan* 民考漢 (minority students taking exams in Putonghua), or projecting cultural stereotypes onto them. He demonstrates how the decision to fast during Ramadan is closely correlated with family background and personal choice rather than educational background. It is an important reminder that while state categories might be rigid, quotidian identity (both group and individual) is anything but.

In her chapter, Zhao Zhenzhou returns our focus to language, examining a group of ethnically Mongolian university students who are studying outside their autonomous region following their graduation from an experimental trilingual class in middle school. Echoing He Baogang and other authors in this volume, she demonstrates how neoliberal market reforms in China are slowly squeezing out minority languages, like Mongolian, which are increasingly undervalued within the Chinese marketplace. The emphasis placed on English by the state and its schools intensifies this problem, as minority students are now required to master three languages to achieve success in the state educational system, and often feel like they cannot keep up. Despite some sense of “imagined empowerment,” Zhao argues that the state has distorted the linguistic marketplace in China by attaching greater symbolic importance to English, despite its still limited role in Chinese society. She calls for a “diversification of international language learning in China,” which would allow minority languages to be viewed as an asset in today’s increasingly globalized world, especially in the current environment, where we appear to be moving from a unipolar world dominated by English to a multilingual, multipolar one. In such a context, there should be greater incentive for both minority and Han students to study a second language other than English, which could lead to renewed interest in some minority languages (especially those that are spoken outside of China like Mongolian).

China is home to over one million ethnic Koreans who have long viewed themselves as part of the Chinese nation while making significant contributions to the nation’s development. Due to their high educational outcomes, Koreans are often viewed as a “model minority” in China, a cultural stereotype that can carry a weighty burden according to Hong Kong-based researcher Gao Fang. Arguing that multicultural education requires protective and discursive spaces

for minority languages, Gao Fang demonstrates that for ethnic Korean teachers, at least, the pressure to succeed and live up to the model minority tag has led to a gradual hollowing out of Korean-Chinese identity. In place of the Korean language, which is increasingly devalued, commodified cultural practices like *kimchi* and *karaoke* have come to define the boundaries of Korean identity in China. Gao's chapter also highlights the nested yet fluid hierarchy of *minzu* categories and identities in the PRC, with several of her Korean informants viewing themselves as innately superior to Tibetan and Uyghur students but still inferior to the Han majority.

Finally, in Part IV, we explore some of the ways in which intellectual styles, cognitive stereotypes and online identity articulation can hinder the development of minority education, creating yet more obstacles to increased opportunities and educational outcomes for some minority students. Professor Li-fang Zhang of the University of Hong Kong turns her attention to those "intellectual styles," or pedagogic preferences for learning, that are most conducive for good educational outcomes in a multiethnic environment like China. She convincingly argues that intellectual styles complicate multicultural education and stresses the importance of balancing group preferences for learning with individual cognitive styles. Furthermore, rapidly developing multiethnic societies like China must navigate the desire to cultivate "the adaptive values of Type I styles," which are more propitious to the "creativity-generating" activities of the global economy, with the more traditional style exhibited by some Chinese minorities like Tibetan and Uyghur students. This is made all the more difficult by the PRC's unique ethnic policies, and the inflexibility they can offer at the curriculum level, and, one might add, the institutional scale.

In the PRC, where the majority population exceeds 90 percent, cultural pluralism will remain an uphill struggle without sufficient buy-in from the Han Chinese. In his chapter, James Leibold examines the PRC's extensive regime of affirmative action policies in the state schooling sector. In particular, he explores Han reaction to the policy that provides extra points to minority students, regardless of their socioeconomic and geographic status, on the university entrance exam (*gaokao*). Tracking both online and offline reactions to a 2009 incident where a group of Han students in Chongqing falsified their *minzu* identity to garner extra points, he argues that the reification of *minzu* categories in

China and the creation of a system of benefits based on these identities can foster community resentment and actually hinder the development of genuine cultural pluralism.

In a similar vein to Leibold's chapter, Yu Haibo explores the attitudes of Han university administrators and stresses the importance of listening to and surveying mainstream attitudes on ethnic minorities and minority education. Based on in-depth and wide-ranging interviews with twenty university administrators in 2010 and 2011, Yu demonstrates how a range of opinions coexists among Han educators, including discriminatory perceptions of minorities as slow, violent, or backward. She calls for further education, but also stresses that the minorities themselves have an important role to play in leading by example, allowing their own efforts to shine through with the help of their teachers and other educators. The study of minority education and minority issues more broadly cannot afford to ignore the majority, and this volume seeks to cast a wider lens on the dynamics of ethnicity, culture, and language in the mainstream and minority schooling systems in China.

Notes

Introduction

1. One finds a variety of English glosses for Fei's formulation. In addition to "pluralistic unity," another common translation is "unity in diversity"; yet other authors prefer "diversity in unity." There are obvious differences of emphasis here, with some stressing the unity side of Fei's equation while others the diversity side. Fei Xiaotong remained fairly neutral in the English translation of his Tanner Lecture at the University of Hong Kong, where he first publically introduced the phrase in 1988. Here he rendered the expression *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (中華民族多元一體格局) as "plurality and unity in the configuration of the Chinese people," or "pluralistic yet unified configuration of the Chinese people." Yet, a revised 2003 edition published in Chinese by the Central Minzu University Press added the following English title: "The pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese nation." To avoid foreclosing different interpretations, we have decided against imposing a uniform gloss for the phrase, allowing individual authors to provide their own.

Chapter 2 The Power of Chinese Linguistic Imperialism and Its Challenge to Multicultural Education

1. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Robert Phillipson, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, James Leibold, and Chen Yangbin for their valuable suggestions and criticism, and the participants for their critical comments at the "Multicultural Education and the Challenge to Chinese National Integration" conference, December 2–3, 2010, La Trobe University, and at a School of International and Political Studies seminar, Deakin University, in April 2011. Special thanks go to Kingsley Edney for his research assistance.
2. See the interesting article about how one should refer to this language. Zhang Wenmu advocated "Chinese language" (*Zhongguoyu* 中國語) at <http://www.danwei.org/language/chinas>.

3. See “Tibetan Students in China Protest over Language Policy,” *BBC News*, October 20, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11581189>, accessed on November 5, 2010.
4. See <http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?articletype=flash&id=2007&rmenuid=morennews&tab=1>, accessed on May 30, 2011.
5. See “Uyghur Language Under Attack: The Myth of “Bilingual” Education in the People’s Republic of China,” <http://uhrp.org/docs/UyghurLanguageUnderAttack.pdf>, accessed on 11 November 2012; and “UAA concerned by top Chinese official’s comments on language policy in East Turkestan,” <http://uhrp.org/articles/2232/1/UAA-concerned-by-top-Chinese-officials-comments-on-language-policy-in-East-Turkestan-/index.html>, accessed on November 11, 2012.
6. Ma made such a remark during a workshop at La Trobe University, Australia, December 2–3, 2010.
7. I would like to thank James Leibold for this point. Leibold (2007) has discussed the work of C. Pat Giersch, John Herman, Donald Sutton, William Rowe and others working on the late imperial frontier in the South.
8. See <http://www.xx.gov.cn/goxx/situation.php?id=13>, accessed on November 11, 2012.
9. See <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20050301/index.htm>, accessed on November 11, 2012.
10. Of course, one can argue that the primary reason for adopting simplified Hanzi was the proliferation and universalization of basic education.
11. We need to investigate this further. To what extent did Hanzi become the lingua franca of commerce in premodern China, like what Malay did in Southeast Asia? What role did premodern markets play in spreading the Han script?
12. Ma made such a remark at a workshop at La Trobe University, Australia, December 2–3, 2010.
13. See chapters by Linda Tsung, Zuliayati Simayi, and Zhao Zhenzhou in this volume.

Chapter 3 How Do You Say “China” in Mongolian?

1. I met and argued with them on many occasions since I came back to China from the USA in 2008.
2. This line of argument is well developed by Pan Jiao (2003), Chen Jianyue (2004), Wang Xien (2009), Du Yonghao (2009), and Zhang Haiyang (2011).
3. See V. I. Lenin, “Kriticheskie zametki po national’nomu voprosu,” as cited in Slezkine (1996: 205).
4. Since September 1933, the Red Army was time and again in danger of being wiped out by the Guomindang or Nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-shek and had to launch the so-called Long March in October 1934. As a result, they sought to unite all sectors and gather support in all directions, including that from the minorities, as an urgent priority. Though the discourse of class was dominant, Han cultural pride

and Han centrism never disappeared. As later developments prove, the temporary concession given to minorities only served to assimilate them when the time was ripe, or so many Han elites hoped.

5. Regional autonomy is one important component of the PRC state system, by which the national minorities are supposed to practice their autonomous rights under the unified guidance of the central government. Five Autonomous regions (that are equal to provinces in administrative structure) were established between 1947 and 1965: Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (May 1, 1947); Uyghur Autonomous Region (October 1, 1955); Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (March 5, 1958); Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region (October 25, 1958); and Tibet Autonomous Region (September 1, 1965).
6. Interview with Wu Shuizi, Head of China National Minority Languages and Writings Translation Bureau (November 10, 2009).
7. See <http://www.bjethnic.gov.cn/zcfg/PolicyDetail.asp?id=90&pos=1>, accessed on July 13, 2005.
8. See <http://www.nmg.xinhuanet.com/bnfynmg/bnbs/zpz/z31.htm>, accessed on July 13, 2005.
9. The region was returned to its former size in 1979 after the fall of the Gang of Four, largely due to the personal efforts of Ulanhu, the Mongolian CPC leader, who survived the Cultural Revolution.
10. During a conference in Beijing in June 2010, when a member of the People's Political Consultative Conference proposed that the Han and Uyghurs should learn each other's language, a vice president of a university in Xinjiang immediately protested, arguing that the proposal would ruin the fruits of Sinification and encourage separatism.
11. Many oral dialects are not mutually communicative; the discourse hindrance between Cantonese, Fujianese, and northern dialects are notorious cases to cite. But as discussed by He Baogang (this volume), the Han script has long played an important role in connecting these oral dialects. Even in ancient times many languages, Japanese and Korean included, which were beyond the comprehension of non-speakers have been actively communicating with each other through the Han script.
12. Stevan Harrell analyses three kinds of civilizing projects that took place in China, namely, the Confucian civilizing project, the Christian civilizing project, and the communist civilizing project. Though the center theoretically should treat all cultural groups as equals it had to speak in the idiom of Confucianism that regards Han ways as better and believes that minorities should be civilized up to the levels of the civilizer. See Harrell (1995: 3–36).
13. As part of our CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) Project, "An Investigation of Current Conditions and Development of National Minorities in China" (2000–2001), our fieldwork group went to Ürümqi and Hami in Xinjiang in 2001, during which time the author conducted interviews in Ürümqi on the HSK. The interviews took place on September 19–24, 2001, and included a total of eleven interviewees,

- which included Han, Uyghur, Mongol and Xibo participants, who were leading cadre for the Nationalities Affairs Commission of the People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the HSK office, Xinjiang Normal University, and the Nationality Studies Department of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences.
14. The Russian theorist Bakhtin studies the centrifugal forces in language that “a unitary national language seeks to contain”; *heteroglossia* brings with it stratification, diversity and randomness. *Heteroglossia* also ensures dynamics in the life of language. Cf. Clark and Holquist (1984: 13, Introduction).
 15. Lydia Liu theorizes the “translingual practice” by looking at how “people establish and maintain *hypothetical equivalences* between words and their meanings?” “What does it mean to translate one culture into the language of another on the basis of commonly conceived equivalences?” (1995: xv, Preface). Liu raises “the possibility of rethinking cross-cultural interpretation and forms of linguistic mediation between East and West” (*ibid.*). While the East-West divide is not as absolute as Liu may lead us to believe, the mediation between Han and non-Han languages and cultures can be no less meaningful even though they both belong to the “East.”
 16. Viveiros de Castro describes a type of communicative disjuncture where the interlocutors are not talking about the same thing, and are unaware of this. Cf. Blaser (2009).
 17. I draw on the idea of “Thirdness” developed by the American semiotician Charles Peirce who is known to campaign for semiotic realism: sign or firstness is “the sheer thisness, or existence”; object or secondness is “dyadic, or reactive, relations between things”; interpretant or thirdness is “triadic, or representational, relations among things.” Cf. Hoopes (1991). Different cultural contexts and historical encounters lead to different interactions among firstness, secondness, and thirdness: “abstract” thought is not that far from concrete material process, and thinking is “a brain process” as Peirce argues (*ibid.*).
 18. Here I follow a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to conduct “nomenclatural archaeology,” although there is no denying the power of reality that shapes and limits our incorporated practice. Language influences, and does not determine, thinking. Linguistic relativity drew inspiration from William von Humboldt and Franz Boas and was weakened due to challenges from Chomsky’s linguistics and cognitive anthropology. However, it has enjoyed a recent revival thanks to the efforts of scholars such as Gumperz and Levinson (1996). The life of a word is maintained through social practice while the “social memory” of the word influences human cognition and action in the process of being used. This parallels Giddens’s structuration theory, which holds that human action is performed within the context of a pre-existing social structure, and through human action the social structure is reproduced, modified, and sustained. Cf. Giddens (1984).
 19. Its original meaning might come from “inner side” (*oru), as conjectured by Sergei Starostin et al. for Tungusic (*[x]uri-), Mongolian (*oro-), Turkic (*or-), and Japanese (*ura). Cf. Starostin, Dybo, and Mudrak (2003: 1062). It seems that the original is a locomotive verb that denotes “entering” from outside.

20. According to Christopher Atwood's research, as a translation of the Chinese term *Zhongguo*, the Mongolian term *Dumdadu ulus* "appeared in the history of the Mongolian nobility written in 1735 by the Eight-Banners bannerman Lomi, and in the writings of Injannashi (1837–92) from southeast Inner Mongolia whose *Khökhe Sudur* or Blue Chronicle of 1871 exercised a tremendous influence on those Mongols familiar with Chinese literary culture." However, both Lomi and Injannashi limited *Dumdadu ulus* "to the area south of the Great Wall," and "both continued to speak of Mongolia as a separate *ulus* or realm." Cf. Atwood (2002: 41).
21. The Mongols traditionally lay more emphasis on people, herds, and movement, which is well hinted at by the words *ulus* (people) and *oron* (enter, placing) and their semantic links to both "empire" and "nation-state."
22. The Khitan (Qidan) conquered Northern China and established the Liao dynasty (907–1125). Due to their domination, the "Central State" came to be known as "Cathay" in English and in several other European languages. Cf. Lathan (1958: 10); Jia (1989).
23. Following a linguistic ecology model, I prefer to take a symbiotic approach to such "nomenclatural archaeology." Mühlhäusler makes use of the metaphor of language to explain and describe the complex interlay between languages, speakers and social practice. Cf. Mühlhäusler (1996). The merit of such an approach is that researchers can focus more on the processes of seeking overlapping consensus by peoples of different backgrounds—a process that helped to construct what China is in modern times. Another merit of the approach is that it helps to identify misunderstandings, or rather competing/conflictual understandings of ethnic and national identities.

Chapter 4 Bilingual Education and Language Policy in Tibet

1. Putonghua is the official spoken language for administration and education in today's China. It is based on the Mandarin language of the late Qing dynasty. Today Putonghua is used nation-wide among the Han, Hui, Manchu and many other ethnic groups which consist of over 94 percent of China's total population, while there are many local dialects among Han groups in various regions such as Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, and other provinces besides minority languages (such as Tibetan, Mongolian, Kazak, Uyghur, Korean, Yi, and others).
2. There were only eight monasteries and eight hundred monks in the TAR in 1976. The total number of monks increased to 41,800 in 1994 (Ma 2011b: 159).
3. "Han classes" are defined by the language of instruction and not by the ethnic background of the students. Therefore, there are some Tibetan students in Han classes. These Tibetan students would take their university entrance exams in Putonghua, and thus are classified as *minkaohan*. At the same time, there are also a small number of Han students in "Tibetan classes" with Tibetan as the language of instruction, and they are classified as *hankaomin* (Han students studied in minority languages and

taking their exams in that minority language). The situation and classification is the same in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia.

4. “Teaching sites” refers to classrooms that only offer first through third grade primary school education with one to two teachers. This is the school form in remote grass-land or mountainous areas with a very low population density. After completing grades one through three, these students must attend schools in towns. See Chapter 5 for further information on schooling in Tibetan nomadic areas.
5. The required scores for university admission in Tibet are lower than the national level. For example, the national average for the lowest cut-off score was 420 in 1983 but only 80 in the TAR (cf. Yang 1989: 158). “The score for university admission was 100 for Tibetan candidates and 200 for Han students in 1983, but the score was above 400 in other provinces” (cf. An 1989: 242). In 2002, the admission score was 273 for Tibetans and 340 for Han students in humanities and social science disciplines and 235 for Tibetan and 340 for the Han in science disciplines (cf. Wu 2005: 249).
6. See http://ivysuccess.com/harvard_2009.html/, and http://ivysuccess.com/upenn_2009.html/.

Chapter 5 Popularizing Basic Education in Tibet’s Nomadic Regions

1. Lhasa-Nakchu Senior Secondary School, established in 2004 in Lhasa, is a dislocated school that selectively admits junior secondary graduates from Nakchu and Ngari Prefectures. In comparison to the two nomadic prefectures, Lhasa enjoys both relatively lower altitudes and richer financial, teaching, and human resources. The school, strategically designed to cultivate talents for nomadic regions, has gained strong financial supports from both Nakchu and Lhasa governments.
2. Nyerong people speak a dialect different from the standardized Tibetan language taught and used at school.

Chapter 6 The Practice of Ethnic Policy in Education

1. Hui students make up 4.74 percent of the enrollment; Manchus 0.05 percent, and Daur 0.02 percent, which together represents 4.82 percent of total enrollments. Statistics from the Education Bureau, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, 2009.
2. Minority students enrolled in Han primary and middle schools account for 9.84 percent.
3. Minority students receiving a bilingual education make up 13.66 percent of all the registered students in primary and middle schools.
4. Statistics on enrollment at different schools comes from the Education Bureau, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 2009.

5. Bilingual education, its definition, and its corresponding teaching languages and modes will be discussed in details below.

Chapter 7 Trilingual Education and School Practice in Xinjiang

1. The laws and regulations concerned include the *Guidelines for Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities in PRC* (1952); *Opinions Concerning Improving the Work of Minority Education* (1980); *The Constitution of the PRC* (1982); *The Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* (1984); *The Regulation of Illiteracy Elimination* (1988); *The Higher Education Law* (1999); *The General Language and Script Law* (2000); *The Law of Compulsory Education* (2006); *Outline of China's Middle and long Term Educational Development* (2010).
2. The political structure of the XUAR is the same as in all other provinces and regions. At the top of the structure lies the Xinjiang Regional Politburo Standing Committee under the direct control of the central government. Under it are the Regional Party Congress, the Military Affairs Commission, the Regional People's Congress, and the Regional Government. Within the regional government there are three administrative levels, duplicating the central system in Beijing: regional, districts, and counties/cities. The regional government has direct control over two cities, eight districts, and five autonomous prefectures. There are seventy-nine counties/cities and six autonomous counties below the districts and the prefectures. Among them, thirty-five are border counties.
3. Figures are from the 2008 *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook* (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics 2008: 79).
4. To maintain the anonymity of informants, the actual school names are not given and parents are identified by ethnic group and number.
5. Xinjiang jiaoyu weiyuanhui [Xinjiang Education Commission], *Hanyu 2* [Chinese textbook Volume 2] (Ürümqi: Xinjiang jiaoyu chubanshe [Xinjiang Education Press], 2008): 2.
6. Chairman Mao Zedong said this in 1951 in order to praise and encourage a very brave 8-year-old pupil in Suzhou, Chen Yongkang, who helped to catch a spy. Mao's words have become a nationwide slogan and have been posted in nearly every classroom in China since then.
7. Xinjiang jiaoyu weiyuanhui [Xinjiang Education Commission], *Hanyu 2* [Chinese textbook Volume 2] (Ürümqi: Xinjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008): 18–19.
8. Xinjiang jiaoyu weiyuanhui [Xinjiang Education Commission], *Hanyu 2* [Chinese textbook Volume 2] (Ürümqi: Xinjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008): 12–13.

Chapter 8 Multicultural Education and Ethnic Integration

1. Data from the Sixth National Census of 2010.

2. According to the Sixth National Census of 2010, there are about 206,000 Lahu people in Lancang County accounting for 41.9 percent of its total population.
3. A script created by the government was widely used between 1952 and 1958. Unfortunately, the Great Leap Forward Movement (*dayuejin yundong* 大躍進運動) in 1958–60 initiated a wave of campaigns that attempted to accelerate the process of achieving socialism and eliminate underdeveloped cultures, and which targeted ethnic minority languages and scripts. In 1966, the ten-year Cultural Revolution (*wenhua dageming* 文化大革命) started. Near its end in 1976, ethnic culture revived and eventually thrived in the way that it had after the founding of the nation. However, since the 1980s, the great pace of globalization and marketization has undermined ethnic minority scripts.
4. There were no schools in the Lahu mountainous area before 1947.
5. Universalized four-year primary education was introduced in minority regions, and six-year primary education was introduced during the 1990s. The Chinese government implements compulsory education of different kinds (four-year, six-year, and nine-year) according to the specific situation of different areas.
6. Data from the Bureau of Education, Lancang County.
7. Data from the Muga Township Government.
8. We collected the academic scores of the Lahu Girls' Class over a nine-year period and analyzed them by using SPSS16.0.
9. In 2005, the annual personal income of the Lahu people living in the mountainous areas was about US\$80.

Chapter 9 Towards Another Minority Educational Elite Group in Xinjiang?

1. These programs are referred to by a variety of names in Chinese, such as *Xinjiangban* (新疆班, Xinjiang Classes), *neidiban* (內地班, Inland Classes), or *Xinjiang neigaoban* (新疆內高班, an abbreviation for Inland Xinjiang High School Classes). This chapter uses the term *Xinjiangban* as it is used in official documents available at <http://www.xjban.com/>. Recently, there has appeared another type of *neidiban*: *neichuban* (內初班, an abbreviation for Inland Junior Boarding Classes) which are open to Uyghurs and other minority primary school graduates in Xinjiang. It is said that the *neichuban* prepares graduates for the *Xinjiangban*.
2. It is reported that the majority of the graduates eventually return to Xinjiang where they seek employment in public organizations, the civil service, and the private sectors. Only a very small number remains in inland cities.
3. During the *Xinjiang neigaoban* program from 2003 to 2007, several students returned to Xinjiang due to health problems or studied overseas. The data about the *neigaoban* graduates' university admissions is drawn from the school's website. However, in order to maintain confidentiality, I have not identified the names of the schools.

4. These universities are part of the “National Key Universities and Colleges” project designated by Ministry of Education (also known as “Project 211”) that receives additional central government funding to raise their quality and compete globally.
5. Occasionally, *Xinjiangban* graduates complain that this policy limits their choice of majors at university and is thus unsatisfactory.
6. Baidu is the leading Chinese search engine on the Chinese mainland, with its market share increasing after Google’s exit from the China market in 2010.
7. Since many *minkaomin* students from Xinjiang have also undertaken one or two years of university-level preparatory classes before beginning their formal program in the east, *Xinjiang neigaoban* graduates tend to call them Xinjiang Classes (*Xinjiangban*), causing them to be easily confused with *Xinjiang neigaoban* graduates.

Chapter 10 Uyghur University Students and Ramadan

1. I would like to thank James Leibold and Chen Yangbin for their invaluable comments and suggestions as I wrote and revised this chapter.
2. Prior to 2009, the Minzu University of China (*Zhongyang Minzu Daxue* 中央民族大学) was officially translated into English as the Central University for Nationalities.
3. Although the verb *tutmaq* may be translated most accurately as “holding,” I refer to “observing” the Ramadan fast for sake of convenience. For an interesting discussion on this topic, see Dautcher (2009: 285).
4. In addition to my experiences with Uyghur students in Beijing, I also witnessed several young Han Chinese attending Easter Sunday mass at Wangfujing’s St Joseph’s Cathedral on March 23, 2008. See also Baranovitch (2003).
5. The idea to have students keep dietary journals was inspired by similar journals Maris Boyd Gillette (2000) had Hui residents in Xi’an keep in order to record consumption practices.
6. I intended to duplicate my 2006 study when I returned to China for a six-month research trip, June through December 2010. However, because the dates of Ramadan in 2010 (August 11–September 9) fell during universities’ summer recess (usually July 1–September 1), most Uyghur students were in Xinjiang for the majority of Ramadan.
7. For an overview of this topic see Millward (2007), especially Chapters 1 and 2.
8. For convenience, I treat “ethnonational groups” as a singular entity, but I acknowledge that ethnonational groups rarely, if ever, are unitary actors.
9. Even though novice monks under the age of eighteen can enter Tibetan monasteries, the CPC has implemented a quota system that limits the number of monks and incarnate lamas (*tulkus*) a given monastery may house. See Kolås and Thowsen (2005: 68–92). In addition, Paul Nietupski, who has conducted extensive research on monasticism at Labrang, explained to me through personal communication that

- CPC officials provide input into the “historical, ideological, and political” content of monastic education.
10. Paula Schrode (2008: 42n84) noted similar circumstances during her 2004 field-work in Ürümqi.
 11. From my experience conducting research among Uyghur students who are living in Beijing, very little importance is attached to the *minkaomin* and *minkaohan* labels. As one male Uyghur friend explained, “There is no difference [between *minkaomin* and *minkaohan* Uyghurs]—we are all Uyghur” (*Hechqandaq pärq yoq. Biz hämmimiz Uyghur*).
 12. Uyghur language courses account for 27.2 percent of total classroom time in elementary *minkaomin* schools.
 13. According to the “Regulations on Routine Service,” which outlines the rules for individuals serving in the People’s Liberation Army, servicemen “may not take part in religious or superstitious activities (United States Department of State 2004).
 14. Although some variation exists in the implementation of these rules, information gathered from my research indicates that the vast majority of schools hosting an Inland Xinjiang Class do not allow parents to visit their children.
 15. Students are permitted to observe Islamic dietary norms and are prepared halal meals cooked either by a local Hui or a Uyghur chef.
 16. This information was provided in conversation with Batur’s neighbor, who was also Batur’s classmate at the boarding school. This classmate, who has recently immigrated to a country in the Middle East, spoke candidly about the time he and Batur spent at the boarding school.
 17. Aynur’s status as either a *minkaomin*/*minkaohan* is rather complicated. The Inland Xinjiang Classes are, in every sense of the term, *minkaohan* schools as all instruction is conducted in Putonghua. However, Inland Xinjiang Classes are regarded as a separate mode of schooling. Interestingly, Aynur describes herself as *minkaomin* because before enrolling in the Inland Xinjiang Class program, she attended *minkaomin* schools.
 18. Although by September 2010, I used the Uyghur language during most interactions with Uyghur students, I agreed with this particular individual, who is an English major, that I would speak to her using only Uyghur and she would speak to me only in English.

Chapter 11 The Trilingual Trap

1. Most of these foreigners came from South Korea (around 20 percent) and Japan (11 percent). The other countries include Burma (7 percent), Vietnam (6 percent), France (3 percent), India (3 percent) and Germany (2 percent). This number excludes residents of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The data come from the National Bureau of Statistics of China, www.stats.gov.cn, accessed on September 15, 2011.

2. Data come from the Ministry of Education website, www.moe.edu.cn, accessed on July 30, 2009.

Chapter 12 Identity and Multilingualism

1. Ethnic Koreans are regarded as politically important because of their key role in the liberation of Manchuria, the Chinese Civil War (1946–49) and the Korean War (known as the “Resist-America and Aid-Korea” campaign, 1950–53) and because of their history of peaceful cohabitation with Han people and loyalty to the Communist Party of China (CPC) and socialist regime.
2. By the end of 2010, there were 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms established in 96 countries.

Chapter 13 Intellectual Styles and Their Implications for Multicultural Education in China

1. Within the context of Hofstede’s model, a society refers specifically to a country. However, beyond Hofstede’s model, society can also refer more broadly to other groups based on such dimensions as cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Thus one might speak of the specific cultural dimensions of an ethnic or cultural group.
2. These conceptions of *masculine* and *feminine* can be viewed as stereotypical. I wish to make clear that I refer here to Hofstede’s use of the terms, and not my own.
3. Field-independent people tend to see objects or details as discrete from their backgrounds and they prefer to work in groups; field-dependent people tend to be affected by the prevailing field or context and they prefer to work by themselves.

Chapter 14 Han Chinese Reactions to Preferential Minority Education in the PRC

1. One notable exception is Yi Lin’s examination of Han teachers and school children in Qinghai province. See Yi (2008), especially Chapter 3.
2. Sautman suggests that the growing gap in social and economic status due to an acceleration of economic reform could make preferential admissions “a subject for debate, at least in elite circles,” but did not anticipate the way the Internet revolution would broaden public discourse to include non-elite voices and contestation.
3. An eight-month survey of fifteen different China-based blog service providers (BSPs) in 2008 revealed that the level of censorship varies tremendously across BSPs and, as a result, “a great deal of politically sensitive material survives in the Chinese blogosphere, and chances for survival can likely be improved with knowledge and strategy. Cf. MacKinnon (2009). See also Rabgey (2008) and G. Yang (2009).

4. On the discourse of *suzhi* and its relationship to minority education see Lin (2008: 53–58).
5. In a similar vein, Professor Ma Rong of Peking University has criticized what he sees as the unnecessary “politicization” of ethnic affairs in China, and calls for the replacement of the rigid *minzu* category with a more fluid and malleable concept of ethnicity (*zuqun* 族群). See Ma Rong (2007b, 2012).
6. For a comprehensive analysis of this interethnic, interregional, and gender diversity of education levels based on data from the 1982 and 1990 censuses, see Lamontagne (1999: 133–71).
7. Originally available at <http://www.hanminzu.com/bbs/viewthread.php?tid=90233&extra=&page=1>, but then reposted as “Jiu fangqi qishixing ‘youhui’ pingdeng duidai yanhuang houyi de gongkai xin” [Open letter calling for the abandonment of discriminatory ‘preferential treatment’ and the equal treatment of the descendants of Yan and Huang], Sina blogspot, March 5, 2006, available at http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_48aad69b0100025t.html.
8. The original news article can be found at <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/14562/4714275.html>.

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