

**Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong
Kong: Meeting the Challenges of the Proposed
Racial Discrimination Bill**

A Public Policy Research Project (HKIEd8001-PPR-2)

2nd Interim Report

Chief Investigator

Professor Kerry J. Kennedy, Hong Kong Institute of Education

Co-investigators

Dr. JoAnn Phillion, Purdue University

Dr. Hue Ming Tak, Hong Kong Institute of Education

Submitted to Central Policy Unit, Hong Kong SAR Government

Contents

Introduction:.....	3
International Benchmarks: The Case of Policy Support for Ethnic Minorities in South Korea.....	6
How Does Support Provided by the Hong Kong SAR Government Compare to Provision in Korea	12
Ongoing Issues for the Government’s Attention in Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students.....	18
References.....	20
Appendix: Ethnic Minority Policy of People’s Republic of China: An overview	23

Introduction:

Hong Kong's Ethnic Minority Challenge in International Perspective

Ethnic minorities exist in most countries especially as globalization hastens the flow of people across borders and immigration becomes a common feature of post modern life. This is not to say that ethnic minorities in different locations give rise to the same issues and problems. Contexts can play a very important role in creating circumstances that characterize one location and not another. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that many of the issues that confront Hong Kong's ethnic minorities have already been confronted elsewhere. Much can be learnt from these experiences.

A literature review revealed a range of societies that have dealt with issues relating to minorities of one kind or another: Australia (Department of Immigration 2007), the United States (Gibson and Ogbu, 1991), Canada (Cummins, 1997), France, (Zanten, 1997), Mainland China (Postiglione, 1999), Cambodia (Escott, 2000), Vietnam (van de Walle and Gunewardena, 2001), Korea (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2006), Japan (Okana, 2006) , Taiwan (Wu, 1988) , United Kingdom (Heath and Yu, 2005), Thailand (Burusapatana and Atipas, 1988), Singapore (Clammer,1988), the Philippines (Griffin, 1988), the Netherlands (Driessen, 2000) and Malaysia (Smith, 2003) Over time, each of these societies has grappled with the issue of minorities both in terms of developing appropriate policy as well as seeking to ensure equitable treatment within

their respective communities. Later in this report the experiences of one such country will be examined in depth for the lessons that can be learnt from its experiences.

It is not only individual societies that seek to enhance life-chances of ethnic minorities within their respective jurisdictions. The European Union, for example, adopted a cross national approach to social inclusion (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2004, Lendvai, 2004) in order to focus on the ways in which different groups could live harmoniously together. In 1992, the United Nations adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* (<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r135.htm>). United Nations agencies such as UNSCO and UNDP work actively especially with developing countries to support improvements for minorities. International funding agencies such as The World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are also active in improving the conditions of minorities in different jurisdictions. In the case of the former, however, that role has been contested because WB differentiates between political rights (that it does not see as within its brief) and economic rights (that it does see as falling within its brief) (Clark, 2002).

The use of the term ‘minority’, in the varied contexts described above requires some close examination. It can be applied to the 54 ethnic minority groups in Vietnam, the Roma or gypsies in The Czech Republic, Turkish immigrant worker populations in countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and France or aboriginal people in Taiwan. Henrard (2000, pp 21 ff) has pointed out that the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*

did not provide a specific definition of ‘minority’. Table 1, based on Denrard (2000), illustrates the emphases in different definitions:

Table 1: Definitions of ‘Minority’ from Difference Sources (Based on Denrard, 2000)

Capotorti ¹	Deschênes ²	Fawcett ³	Eide ⁴
Numerically inferior	Numerical minority		
Non dominant	Non dominant	Maybe dominant or non-dominant	Non-dominant
Nationals of the state	Citizens of the state		
Ethnic ,religious or linguistic differences from the rest of the population	Ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics different form the majority		National, ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups that differ from the majority
Sense of solidarity to preserve culture, language, religion, culture	Sense of solidarity and collective will to survive	Common will to preserve certain habits and patterns of life (ethnic, cultural, religious, language)	
	Aim to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law		

There is a great deal of overlap in these definitions but also some notable differences. There is agreement that minority status is determined largely by ‘difference’ from the majority population and these differences may be ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic. One set of differences relates to whether a minority needs to be dominant or non-dominant within a state. Based on the above definitions, non-dominant is more often mentioned. On the issue of whether nationality or citizenship should be a criterion, there

¹ Based on Denrard (2000, p.22)

² Based on Denrard (2000, p.22)

³ Based on Denrard (2000, pp.23-24)

⁴ Based on Denrard (2000, p.24)

is also disagreement. Earlier approaches to the issue of minorities assumed they were groups of citizens within a nation state. Yet as Denrard (2000, p.41) has pointed out, the increase in immigration makes this approach somewhat outdated. An issue not mentioned in any of the above definitions is that of loyalty. Is it a requirement for minorities to be loyal to the country in which they reside? Denrard, (2000, p.47) pointed out that while this issue has often been discussed at the United Nations agreement has not been reached. That the issue has been under discussion is a reminder of the political dimension of the minority issue, a dimension that needs to be kept under consideration.

The international context in which minority issues are debated and discussed is important because it is a reminder that Hong Kong's attitude towards and actions concerning ethnic minorities must be seen in this broader context. As will be shown later in this report, rights' activists continue to look to international agencies to support their case when local authorities appear not to respond. Yet another dimension of the international context is the lessons that can be learnt from international experience. The following section will draw on the experience of Korea to demonstrate how another Asian nation has responded to the needs of its ethnic minorities.

International Benchmarks: The Case of Policy Support for Ethnic Minorities in South Korea⁵

⁵ Based on *Educational Support for Children from Multicultural Backgrounds*, Policy Coordination Division Human Resources Policy Bureau Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development Republic of Korea, May 2006

http://english.mest.go.kr/main.jsp?idx=0301010101&brd_no=51&cp=1&pageSize=10&mode=1

South Korea has been selected as a case study for three reasons:

- Korea's concern with ethnic minority groups is relatively recent;
- It provides an example of the way an Asian country has dealt with the ethnic minorities within their borders; and
- Korea's context in terms of its social values based on a Confucian heritage is similar to that of Hong Kong.

South Korea has developed a comprehensive plan for the education of minority students. In recent years an increase in foreign workers and international marriages has resulted in public schools receiving undocumented children and interracial children, called *Kosians* (children whose fathers are Korean and mothers are from other Asian countries). Foreign workers numbered 6,409 in 1987. In 2005, the number, including illegal foreign workers, was estimated to be 340,000. International marriages numbered 43,121 in 2005, representing 13.6% of all marriages in South Korea, up 10 times from 1990. Foreign children and interracial children have become marginalized in South Korean public education as ethnic minorities with low socioeconomic status. In May 2006, the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development introduced measures to help children of interracial marriages and migrant parents entitled *Educational Support for Children from Multicultural Backgrounds*

Background and Purpose

The support policy was devised upon the identification of three major necessities: 1) the country has an urgent need to promote the human rights of its diverse members and

attain social integration, 2) there should be efficient measures to ensure that children from multicultural backgrounds not be denied education, and 3) the different cultural and linguistic characteristics of multicultural persons should be identified and nurtured so as to develop them into human resources of global competitiveness.

The education ministry's plan targets two school-age groups, children of international marriages and children of migrant workers residing in Korea. Children born from migrant worker parents are guaranteed the same basic educational rights as Korean children, according to the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families(1991). Children of illegal migrant workers also possess the same educational rights as legal migrant worker offspring, as provided in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and the recommendation of the UN International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families (2003).

Government and Private Educational Support

Support for Kosian children

Educational support for Kosian children, coming from government and private sources, are composed of:

- 1) Korean language and social adaptation programmes for married immigrants, and
- 2) Korean language education and school study support for their children.

Support for the children of migrant workers

Educational support for the children of migrant workers, coming both from government and private sources, are composed of 1) helping migrant worker families adapt to Korean

life, 2) securing the basic educational rights of migrant worker's children, and 3) providing education programmes on Korean language, religion, information technology skills and others, mainly through private organizations.

Policy Tasks

A. Building a local cooperation system to support multicultural families:

1) *Forming a cooperative network of local governments through the 'Regional Human Resources Development' project*

The education ministry has plans to provide financial support for regional aid projects, with priority given to collaborative efforts between local governments, education offices, non-government organizations, universities, the media, and businesses.

2) *Develop/disseminate local governments' best practices of aid for multicultural families*

As a means of encouraging participation in such endeavors, the ministry will select local governments that have achieved good results in supporting multicultural families and have their projects widely publicized through the media.

B. Strengthening the role of schools in supporting children of multicultural backgrounds

1) *After-school programmes*

The "after-school" programme provides Korean language courses, schoolwork guidance, cultural experiences, and other adaptation programmes in extra classes after school.

2) *School homepages for educational material provision and communication*

The ministry of education and city/provincial offices of education will offer learning material on the Korean language and culture, as well as instruction guidelines for parents, through their internet homepages.

3) *Interaction with teachers and peer students*

Each school is to designate a separate counseling teacher for caring and instructing children of multicultural backgrounds, while also facilitating one-to-one relationships and interaction with peer students and seniors so as to help children form friendships and improve adaptation.

4) *Schools serving as local community centers for the education and integration of multicultural families*

Schools are to open up their facilities for local governments and private organizations on national holidays, school-holidays and after-school hours for adaptation programmes for multicultural families.

C. Enhancing teacher capacity

1) *Enlarged teacher training on multiculturalism and minority issues*

The ministry plans to provide two hours of education on multiculturalism when teachers receive qualification training and job performance training which includes understanding different cultures, special education for students lagging in academic performance, methods to prevent student isolation.

2) *Korean language and culture training for teachers*

Korean language study centers within universities, the Korean Language Globalization Foundation, and the National Institute for International Education Development will open Korean language and culture courses, which will be included as a part of teacher training.

3) *Incentives for teachers with KSL certificate*

Schools will be encouraged to provide incentives for in-service teachers with KSL certificates who run Korean language classes for children from multicultural families.

C. Improving the textbook and curriculum

1) *Alleviating implications of national and cultural exclusionism in current textbooks*

Reviews have revealed that the current textbooks used in schools contain frequent references to Korea's racial homogeneity. With globalization diversifying the country's demographic composition, the education ministry recognized that it would need to reflect current trends and socially integrative viewpoints in school textbooks.

2) *Reflecting more multicultural/multiracial content when revising national curriculum.*

When revising the national curriculum in the future, the ministry intends to emphasize the value of appreciating different cultures and acquiring non-prejudicial views on foreigners, and will add related contents in basic school subjects including morals, Korean language & literature, and social studies, so as to help Korean students learn and study from a multicultural perspective.

How Does Support Provided by the Hong Kong SAR Government Compare to Provision in Korea

Table 2: Measures taken by the Hong Kong and Korean Governments to cater for ethnic minority students

	Hong Kong	Korea
Social and family support	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction of ‘Regional Human Resources Development’ project to assist multicultural families. ● Develop and disseminate local governments’ best practices of aid for multicultural families. ● Opening up of schools on national and school holidays, and after school hours to serve as local community centers for education and integration of multicultural families. ● Provide parents with courses on Korean language and PC usage (2009). ● Offer counseling programmes and interpretation services to parents.
Curricula and teaching resource development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional assistance to school in development of school-based Chinese language curricula, teaching and learning strategies and other school-based teaching resources. ● Initiation of the “Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students” (Consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alleviation of implications of national and cultural exclusionism in current textbooks. ● Revise of national curriculum and increase in multicultural content in the curriculum.

	Paper).	
Human capital input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiation of training programmes for Chinese language teachers in 15 designated schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist the introduction of courses on ‘multiculturalism’ at universities. ● 2 hours education on multiculturalism for school teachers. ● Including Korean language and culture courses as part of teacher training. ● Designating counseling teacher for caring and instructing children of multicultural background to every school.
Entry into schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ethnic minority children can approach schools by themselves as long as the schools can provide support for them in learning Chinese. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Granting the children of migrant and illegal migrant workers the same educational rights as Korean children. ● Aid to the basic academic development of pre-primary multi-cultural children (2008). ● Aid to the school-aged multi-cultural children on academic acquisition (2009).
Taylor-made programmes for ethnic minority students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 60-hour induction programme for newly arrival Chinese and non-Chinese speaking students. ● 4-week Summer Bridging Programme covering primary to primary 4 students. ● 6-month full-time initiation programme for newly arrived immigrated children before joining mainstream schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After-school programmes to assist ethnic minority students with Korean language learning, school work, and cultural adaption. ● Peer support programme for children with multicultural backgrounds.

Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishment of Chinese Learning Support Centre for non-Chinese speaking students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of school homepage to provide useful information for ethnic minority students and their families. ● Incentives for teacher with KSL certificates to run Korean language classes for children from multicultural families.

Support from the Government

In response to the Bill, EDB has modified a list of measures for ethnic minority students. These measures mainly cover Chinese language learning and teaching, but none on peer interaction, home-school cooperation, and other related issues. Before the new school place allocation policy was finalized in the 2004/05 school year, ethnic minority children were suffering from limited choice of schools. There were only 4 public sector schools with 2 primary and 2 secondary schools providing non-Chinese curriculum (Ku et al., 2005). Under the new school placement policy, these children can approach schools by themselves as long as the schools can provide support for them in learning Chinese. In the 2006/2007 school year, EMB (now EDB) designated 10 primary and 5 secondary schools to receive intensive on-site support in order to enhance the teaching of ethnic minority students. The support includes regular visits by professional officers to schools, providing help to schools in developing school-based Chinese language curricula, teaching and learning strategies and other school-based teaching resources (EMB 2006b and 2007). In addition, a supplementary guide on teaching Chinese to non-Chinese students will be developed. The 4-week Summer Bridging Programme currently covering Primary One students will be extended to Primary Two to Primary Four students. Tertiary institutions will be commissioned to initiate Chinese Learning Support Centre for these students, and training programmes for Chinese language teachers in these 15 designated schools (EMB, 2007).

For the newly arrived immigrated children including both Chinese and non-Chinese-speaking, Education and Manpower Bureau has introduced a 60-hour induction programme for helping them to adapt to the new social and schooling environment since 2005. With the Bureau's subsidy, the programme, mainly to strengthen children's personal development, social adaptation, and basic learning skill, is operated by non-government organizations (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004a).

Moreover, the 6-month full-time initiation programme supported by the Bureau was initiated in 2000. It is to provide an alternative support service for newly arrived immigrated children before they join mainstream schools in Hong Kong. As an integrated programme, it aims to enhance the children's Chinese and English language abilities, to help them in adapting to the new learning and classroom environment in Hong Kong, and to facilitate their personal development and social adaptation. The programme is operated in a school setting, and the school can use the grant to design their own curriculum to meet their students' needs (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004b). Since 2004, five schools have joined the programme; one school is in Hong Kong Island, three in Kowloon and one in New Territories. Three schools provide primary level and two have secondary level for newly arrived children from Mainland, whereas only two offer primary level and one has secondary level for newly arrived non-Chinese speaking children and returnee children (See Table 1) (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004c).

Table 3: Characteristics of Schools Adopting Full-time Initiation Programme

School	School Location	Newly Arrived Children from Mainland China	Newly Arrived Non-Chinese Speaking Children and Returnee Children

		Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
A	Hong Kong	✓	✓		
B	Kowloon	✓		✓	
C	Kowloon			✓	
D	Kowloon		✓		✓
E	New Territories	✓			

Note: “✓” means that the school has adopted the programme.

Source: Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004c.

The support schemes offered by EMB seem to be able to increase learning opportunities for ethnic minority students. However, some advocates argue that these services are unable to help these children to receive mainstream education. They indicate that only around 20 out of 500 South Asian ethnic minority students could pass the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and get places in Form Six.⁶ The adoption of the new senior secondary curriculum will defeat ethnic minority students, as Chinese is one of the four core subjects under the new curriculum. Some principals from schools having traditionally provided French as alternative for non-Chinese-speaking students have raised concern with this issue, but no official reply has yet been given from the government.⁷

Key Recommendations

The following preliminary recommendations are based on three sources: (1) a synthesis across the Asian countries; (2) a review of educational provisions in the United States; and (3) our on-going data collections in the schools and communities.

- Brief policy makers on the gains that have been made and the continuing challenges. It is counterproductive for the government to continue to claim it has meet the needs of ethnic minority students when the most significant issue – a

⁶ South China Morning Post. “Minority interest”, 5 October 2006.

⁷ South China Morning Post. “EMB put on notice to assist switch into Chinese”, 16 December 2006.

Chinese as a second language curriculum – remains a point of contention between EDB and ethnic minority interests.

- Develop “model schools” for others to study (Portuguese School; New Arrival School; Bilingual Schools).
- Develop more school programmes for initial entry to Hong Kong where emphasis is on language and cultural learning (e.g., Newcomer Settlement Programmes, International Heritage Language Programmes).
- Develop multicultural teacher education programmes to train more culturally responsible teachers and to develop culturally responsive teaching strategies.
- Recruit more ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants.
- Develop more after school programmes, other specialized programmes such as math tutorials, extracurricular activities, and career guidance to help ethnic minority students succeed in school and beyond. Homework groups could be established in an after school care programme.
- Provide health services and referrals to meet the physical and emotional needs of ethnic minority students and their families.
- Develop more university and school partnerships and use multiple resources to enrich the curriculum for ethnic minority students.
- Use culturally appropriate diagnostic and assessment techniques as tools for identifying the strengths and needs of ethnic minority students.
- Recognize and use different teaching techniques to enable ethnic minority students to learn through different approaches and learning styles.
- Help all students develop multicultural values, multilingual competence, and multicultural and multilingual sensitivity, take responsibilities as world citizens, participate in community service learning, and contribute to the development of a multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic Hong Kong society.
- Help ethnic minority families get in touch with community resources to meet family needs, such as housing, transportation, English language enhancement programmes, training and employment, legal assistance, health care, family counseling, and social and cultural programmes.
- Involve parents and the communities to participate in the educational process of

ethnic minority students.

- Develop culturally responsive schools, curriculum, teachers, teaching and learning materials, students, and communities to foster the quality of education for ethnic minority students.

Local and International Resources – examples of what is done in Korea

A. University students providing mentoring service

1) Giving priority to multicultural children when providing mentoring service

University students majoring in pre-primary and primary education studies, students of foreign language majors, and foreign students studying in Korean universities, will take part in the ministry's supportive endeavors by teaching multicultural children as a priority under a mentoring programme launched in March 2006.

2) Encouraging volunteer work of mentors

Volunteer mentors in agricultural and fishing villages register with their local education offices, and to provide them with a certain amount of financial compensation.

Ongoing Issues for the Government's Attention in Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students⁸

1) Tailor-made Full-scale Chinese Curriculum for NCS Students needed

The current government education policy fails to look after the special needs of Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students. The absence of Chinese as a Secondary Language

⁸ Refer to the *Joint Submission from Hong Kong Organisations to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the Report by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (16 July 2009)*. Retrieved August 24, 2009 from the World Wide Web: http://hkhrm.org.hk/CERD2009/CERD_NGO_joint_submission_2009.doc

curriculum as well as relevant qualification has forced the NCS students to adapt to the Chinese curriculum of the mainstream schools. As the result, NCS students encounter great difficulties in meeting the common required standards in public examinations. NCS students are hence in a disadvantage position under the current assessment and secondary schools placement system. Considering the above, there are voices urging for the provision of tailor-made full-scale Chinese curriculum for NCS Students, as well as recognized qualification for such curriculum. This issue was recently highlighted in an international report on Hong Kong's treatment of ethnic minorities (see footnote below).

2) Absence of Code of Practice on Education

Currently, the Education Bureau is not bound by the RDO when it implements its primary and secondary school places allocation exercises. In addition, discrimination against migrants from mainland China on the ground of resident status and length of residence amounting to indirect racial discrimination is exempted under the RDO. Many NGOs therefore urge the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) to start working on a Code of Practice on Education under the RDO.

3) Need for multicultural teacher education

Teacher education providers should be alerted to the need to provide preservice students with an introduction to the implications of teaching in multicultural contexts. The numbers may be small but inevitably some teachers will confront classes with ethnic minority students and they need to know how to include these students in their teaching. Some schools have mixtures of Mainland students, ethnic minority students and local Hong Kong students. This mix represents a challenge for teachers used to teaching local Chinese students only.

References

- Atkinson, A. B., Marlier, E. & Nolan, B. (2004). Indicators and targets for social inclusion in the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 42 (1): 47-75.
- Burusapatana, K. & Atipas, P. (1988). Thai government policies on minorities. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 16(2), 47-60.
- Clammer, J. (1988). Minorities and minority policy in Singapore. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 16(2), 96-110.
- Clark, D. (2002). The World Bank and human rights: The need for greater accountability. *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 15.
<http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hrj/iss15/clark.shtml>
- Cummins, J. (1997). Minority status and schooling in Canada. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 28(3), 411-430.
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Canberra, (2007a). Australian Immigration Fact Sheet 6. The Evolution of Australia's Multicultural Policy. Retrieved 1 September 2007, from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/06evolution.htm>
- Driessen, G. (2000). The limits of educational policy and practice? The case of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. *Comparative Education*, 36(1), 55-72.
- Escott, J. (2000). Minority education in Cambodia: The case of the Khmer Loeu. *Intercultural Education*, 11(3), pp. 239-251.
- Gibson, M. and Ogbu, J. (1991). *Minority status and schooling: a comparative study of immigrant and involuntary minorities*. New York: Garland.
- Griffin, P. B. (1988). National policy on minority cultural communities: The Philippine case. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 16(2), 5-16.
- Heath, A. & Yu, S. (2005). Explaining ethnic minority disadvantage. In A. F. Heath, J. Ermisch & D. Gallie (Eds.), *Understanding social change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hernard, K. (2000). *Devising an Adequate System of Minority Protection: Individual Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Right to Self-Determination*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers

Joint Submission from Hong Kong Organisations to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the Report by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (16 July 2009). Retrieved August 24, 2009 from the World Wide Web:

http://hkhrm.org.hk/CERD2009/CERD_NGO_joint_submission_2009.doc

Lendvai, N. (2004). The indigenisation of social inclusion policy in post-communist Europe and its implication for EU social policy after enlargement. Paper presented at the second annual ESPAnet conference, Oxford, 9-11 September.
<http://eucenter.wisc.edu/OMC/Papers/Enlargement/lendvai.pdf>

Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Republic of Korea (2006). *Educational support for children from multicultural backgrounds*. Republic of Korea: Policy Coordination Division, Human Resources Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Department.

Okano, K. (2006). Ethnic minorities in Japanese schools: Globalisation from below. *Language and Education*, 20(4), pp. 338-354.

Policy Planning Division, South Korea (2008, December 17). Government Reveals 54 Key Tasks to Expand Educational Welfare. Press Release. Retrieved October 23, 2009, from
http://english.mest.go.kr/main.jsp?idx=0301010101&brd_no=51&cp=1&pageSize=10&srchSel=&srchVal=&brd_mainno=859&mode=v

Postiglione, G. A. (ed.) (1999). *China's national minority education – culture, schooling, and development*. New York: Falmer Press.

Smith, K. J. (2003). Minority language education in Malaysia: Four ethnic communities' experiences. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 6(1), pp. 52-65.

van de Walle, D. & Gunewardena, D. (2001). Sources of ethnic inequality in Vietnam. *Journal of Development Economics*, 65, pp. 177-207.

Wu, Y. F. (1988). Taiwan's aboriginal administration policy. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 16(2), 61-77.

Zanten, A. V. (1997). Schooling immigrants in France in the 1990s: Success or failure of the republican model of integration? *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 28(3), 351-374.

**Appendix:
Technical Paper**

Ethnic Minority Policy of People's Republic of China

An overview

Yuen Siu Tim

The Hong Kong Institution of Education

The research reported here was supported with a Public Policy Research Grant from Hong Kong's Research Grants Council. The views expressed are those of the author

Introduction

For centuries, China has been a united multi-ethnic state which is formed by the majority Han (over 90%) and other 55 ethnic groups. In order to sustain unity of the state, an effective ethnic minority policy hence has become one of the major agenda in the China's domestic policy. This paper briefly illustrates the ethnic minority policy adopted by the PRC Government and the challenges it faces over the ethnic minorities issues.

1. Background: Ethnic Minorities in China

1.1 Identifying the ethnic groups

Shortly after the establishment of the PRC authority, the PRC Government began its ethnic minority policy with the identification of different ethnic groups within the territory. China criteria of 'ethnic groups' (minzu) was modified from Stalin's approach developed in 1913, under which the criteria have been increased from 4 to 6. Under the Official criteria, an ethnic group refers to a group of people sharing the: common history, common means of production, common Language, common culture, common custom, and common psychological makeup. (Shen & Ou 2007, pp. 41-42). Under the new criteria, 56 ethnic groups have been identified and recognized by the Central Government. (Information Office of the State Council, 2005) According to the fifth national census conducted in 2000, the population of all the 55 ethnic minority groups totaled 104.49 million, accounting for 8.41 percent of the total population of China. (Ibid.)

1.2 Pattern of distribution

According to the government's white paper on ethnic minority policy (1999), ethnic groups in China inhabit in 3 major patterns: 1) living together over vast areas; 2) living in individual concentrated communities in small areas; 3) minorities living in concentrated community within the Han-majority community or the situation the other way round. Such distribution pattern is the result of groups' migrations and interactions during China's historical long development. Currently, ethnic minorities' population are scattered over the territory and could be found in every province, autonomous region and municipality directly under the Central Government. In most county-level units there are at least two ethnic groups inhabited together. Currently, over 50 million – accounting for half of the ethnic minority population, are inhabited in the border regions (Shen & Ou, 2007, p. 19). Province or autonomous region with concentrated ethnic minority population are namely: Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Guangxi, Tibet, Yunnan, Guizhou, Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Liaoning, Jilin, Hunan, Hubei, Hainan and Taiwan.

1.3 The Agenda after the Cultural Revolution

China's ethnic minority policy encountered severe setback during the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1975). During the time, Chair Mao attributed ethnic conflict to class conflict and attacked the ethnic minority policy for its perception of taking minority as backward people (Hansen 1999, p. 17). Ethnic minority policy was replaced by a mass mobilization campaign against class conflict. Expressions of ethnic identity such as religious activities, local festivals and use of local-languages were perceived as 'incorrect' and hence were brutally suppressed. After Mao's death and the fall of Gang of Four in 1976, China's ethnic minority policy was gradually restored. (Xu & Jin, 2008, pp. 78-86), and the following agenda on ethnic minority policy was confirmed:

- The removal of the ideological obstacle against the initiation of ethnic minority policy in the state - The perception that 'Ethnic conflict as the result of class conflict' was denied by the Central Government;
- Speeding up the development of ethnic region would be the main focus of the state's ethnic minority policy;
- System of ethnic autonomous area would be uphold and improved.

2. China's ethnic minority policy: Theory and practice

Characteristics of China's ethnic minority policy:

2.1 Chinese Multiculturalism

China's multiculturalism is characterized by its Confucian dominated values and state's overriding concerns on unity and economic development.

Ren

Since the after the Cultural Revolution, the China Government readopted the principal of Ren - which 'implies a paternalistic government whose duty is to look after the weak and the poor.' (He 2005, p.59). Ethnic minorities are entitled to certain benefits and communitarian support from the government such as: right to self autonomy; higher proportion of representatives in the government; right to bear more children and entitlement to direct economic subsidies from the government. Most of these policies are

top down policies initiated from the Central Government and could be perceived as the majority Han's duty to take care of their weaker ethnic minority brothers.

Ronghe (intermingling)

Upon the cultural differences between the majority Han and the ethnic minority groups, the PRC Government prefers the policy of Ronghe (intermingling) instead of assimilation over its ethnic minority policy. Ronghe (intermingling) differs from the Sinicization approach in the sense that it recognizes the cultural differences between the Han and ethnic minorities, while it does not enforce the compliance of the later to the former (He2005, p76). To a certain extent, the policy is based on the Confucian principals of 'harmony with differences' a, mutual respect and responsibility. These principals are manifested in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which states that:

All ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the ethnic groups and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all China's ethnic groups. Discrimination against and oppression of any ethnic group are prohibited.'
(Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, 1999, ¶15)

Unity

Despite the dominating influence of Marxism to the Chinese communist party. The PRC Government abandoned the principal of national self-determination; neither had it adopted the soviet-style multination federalism. A weaker system of regional autonomy,

which is more favorable to the consideration of national unity, was established instead. Since the beginning of the PRC regime, the state has identified upholding a ‘unified multi-ethnic state’ and achieving ‘unity among ethnic groups’ (Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China, 1999) as the 2 most priority agenda in its ethnic policy. Indeed, unity among ethnic minority groups has critical impact to the national security and territorial integrity of the PRC since most of the ethnic minority groups are distributed in border regions or in remote regions.

Economic determinism

One of the core values under Chinese multiculturalism is economic determinism. Instead of replacing ethnic identity of different ethnic group with ‘class consciousness’, Deng Xiaoping, the former leader of the PRC had successfully unified the ethnic groups together under the shared objective of economic development. As He (2005) has pointed out, ‘Deng’s theory of modernization requires economic development to override any consideration of ethnic identity (p.63). Deng’s economic approach to ethnic minority question was adopted by his successor Jiang Zeming, and then the current president Hu Jintao.

2.2 China’s multiculturalism in practice

Generally speaking, China’s ethnic minority policy could be described as the hybrid product of Confucian paternalism and Marxist economic determinism. In order to implement the *Ronghe* policy, the Central Government initiates various political, economic and social measures to protect the rights of ethnic minority groups and to

preserve and develop the culture of ethnic minorities. These policies are proclaimed to be respecting the ethnic minority and ‘keeping with China’s actual condition and the common interests of all ethnic groups.’ (Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China 2005, ¶65). However, with the absence of democratic participation among the ethnic minorities in the policy initiation process, the policy shows strong paternalistic nature, and could be perceived as the Han’s duty to look after the weaker ethnic minority groups (He, 2005, p.59). At the mean time, the PRC Government has adopted economic development as the overriding consideration in its ethnic minority policy. The following part highlights some important areas in China’s ethnic minority policy.

Regional autonomy for ethnic minorities

PRC’s ethnic minority policy is implemented upon the system of regional autonomy of the ethnic minorities. Such policy could be considered as the realization of China’s Ronghe (intermingling) approach upon the ethnic issue. Under the system of ethnic regional autonomy, local state organs are granted the right to legislation. They also enjoy certain level of autonomy over local finance, power to develop education and ethnic culture, as well as the power to develop and employ the local and written language etc. (Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China, 1999 ¶140). Practice of regional autonomy enhances local government’s overall effectiveness in its policy implementation by enabling local governments to make more flexible use of local resource, and to develop policies which are more appeal to the local condition. By the end of 2003, China had established 155 ethnic autonomous areas. They include: five autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures and 120 autonomous counties (banners). According to the fifth

national census, conducted in 2000, 44 out of the 55 ethnic minority groups have their own ethnic autonomous areas. The population of ethnic minorities practicing regional autonomy accounts for 71 percent of the total population of ethnic minorities, and the area where such regional autonomy is practiced accounts for 64 percent of the entire territory of China. (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2005 ¶11)

The practice of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities in China is characterized by two features: First, the precedence of national unity consideration and central authority over the minority rights. Article 5 of People's Republic of China Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (Law on Regional Autonomy) has defined local government's obligation in upholding national unity, while Article 7 has defined the subordinating position of the local government to the rule of Central Government and the of state interest over the minority rights by stating that:

The organs of self-government of national autonomous areas shall place the interests of the state as a whole above anything else and make positive efforts to fulfill the tasks assigned by state organs at higher levels.

The second characteristic of the regional autonomy practice is that the autonomy is in form of integration of ethnic and regional factors and the combination of political and economic factors (Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, 1999 ¶38) and the objectives of such practice are to benefit national unity, social stability and ultimately state development.

In accordance with the establishment of the ethnic autonomous areas, the Constitution (Article 59) of the PRC also provides ethnic autonomous regions special representation right in the National People's Congress (NPC), under which a quota system which allocates 12 percent of NPC seat to the representatives of the ethnic minorities was developed. Such proportion is higher than the actual proportion of ethnic minority population in the state. However the effectiveness of ethnic minorities' representation in the NPC has been criticized for its weak democratic foundation. As He (2005) pointed out

[T]he fact that 12 percent of seats in the NPC are reserved for minorities does not guarantee the effective representation of national minorities, because in most cases, there are no competitive elections for people's deputies and minority representatives are 'hand-picked' by the Party. (p.67) .

Development in the Ethnic Autonomous Regions

Economic Development

In the white paper concerning Ethnic Minorities Policy in China (1999), the PRC Government has identified 'Promoting the Common Development of All Ethnic Groups' as one of the 5 major objectives in its ethnic minority policy. It is obvious that in the practice of its ethnic minority policy; economic development occupies one of the most important places in the state's agenda; As Yeung (2000) has pointed out,

[A]ssisting ethnic minorities with their economic development, and hence promoting the common prosperity of all ethnic groups is the core idea of Deng Xiaoping's theory on ethnic minority policy (p.79).

The PRC Government's efforts in promoting economic development in the ethnic autonomous regions are in form of state-led industrialization projects, state subsidy to agricultural and animal husbandry activities, preferential financial and trade policies for minority areas etc.

To accelerate the development of China's western regions and ethnic autonomous areas, a grand strategy for the development western China has been launched in 2000. According to the Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2005, ¶38), such strategy covers five autonomous regions, 27 autonomous prefectures and 83 of the 120 autonomous counties (banners), under which there are 60 important projects accounting for a total investment of 850 billion yuan. Most of the investment is spent on the construction of infra-structure like the West-East Natural Gas Transmission Project, West-East Power Transmission Project and Qinghai-Tibet Railway etc.

In addition to the large scale industrialization projects initiated by the Central Government, the state also provide financial subsidies to promote economic development and social progress in ethnic autonomous regions. Funds such as 'Subsidy for Ethnic Minority Areas' and 'Stand-by Fund for Ethnic Minority Areas' were established since 1955 and 1964 respectively. In 1994, the PRC Government further reformed the tax revenue management system to enhance local government's flexibility in allocating its

resources for economic development. The practice of transitional transfer payment since 1995 has further increased local government's capital in developing the economy of the ethnic minority regions.

Education

Under the system of regional autonomy of the ethnic minorities, ethnic autonomous areas are granted the right to develop ethnic education of their own. This includes the right of teaching minority languages and to carry out bilingual teaching in the autonomous area. In addition to the development of diverse of education, another main agenda of the PRC Government on ethnic minority education is to eliminate illiteracy among the young and middle-age population in the ethnic autonomous areas. Assistance has been provided to the ethnic autonomous region to universalize nine-year compulsory education. Between 1995 – 2000, the Central and local government had planned to provide 10 billion yuan (Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, 1999, ¶72) in promoting basic education in the ethnic autonomous area. However, scale of government input in promoting education in ethnic autonomous area is obviously much smaller than that of in economic development.

Apart from direct investment in education, the PRC Government also encourages the establishment of public service project such as the 'Hope Project' to promote basic education in the ethnic autonomous areas.

Other Social Policies

One of the distinctive features of social policy on ethnic minorities is minorities' preference over the birth control policy. Ethnic minorities are exempted from the 'one child' policy that ethnic minority families are allowed to have 2 or 3 children. Some families in the border regions are even allowed to have more than 3 children. In spite of PRC Government's rationale of facilitating economic development in the ethnic autonomous area, ethnic minority's preference over birth control policy has been criticized as the means to win the loyalty of the ethnic minorities. As He (2005,) commented,

The original purpose of exemption was to win the loyalty of minorities in opposing foreign intrusion; nowadays it is to achieve national unity and stability (p. 66)

Uphold of Religious Freedom and Protection and Development of Ethnic Minority Culture

To a certain extent, ethnic identity is linked with the religion and cultural heritage of different ethnic groups. In accordance with the recognition of identity, the PRC Government has taken measures to uphold the religious freedom and to protect the cultural heritage of the ethnic minorities. Article 36 of the PRC Constitution and Article 11 of the Law on Regional Autonomy provide ethnic minorities the freedoms of religious believe to the extent that religious activities would not 'disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state.' (Article 36 of the Constitution). The objective of such measure is probably to facilitate harmony and unity within the state. As Jiang Zeming had emphasized, 'our policy of religious freedom is to

unit together those with religious faith with those without, and also those with different religious faith.’ (Yang 2000, pp.201). PRC’s policy on religious freedom on one hand appeals to many ethnic minorities - such as the Uygur in Xinjiang, who are mostly Muslims, and the Tibetan Buddhists in Tibet, one the other hand, it exercises tight control over religious activities by restricting the venue, time and content of religious activities (Regulations on Religious Affairs) in the hope of avoiding religious conflict and to undermine religious organization’s threat to the Central Government.

To show its respect the ethnic minorities, the PRC Government also introduced various policies to preserve the culture of ethnic minorities such as: upholding ethnic minorities’ right to preserve their folkways and customs; preservation of the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities; promoting ethnic minorities’ cultural and arts undertakings; preserving and developing the traditional medicine of ethnic minorities; developing the traditional sports of ethnic minorities etc. (Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China, 1999).

3. Challenge to Multiculturalism in PRC China

In spite of the PRC Government’s effort in upholding its Ronghe (intermingling) approach in its ethnic minority policy with the hope to achieve national unity and development, China’s ethnic minority policy has been facing challenges from the growing discontent among the ethnic minorities to their situations, separatist movement, and the decline of ethnic minorities’ culture in the state.

Growing discontent among the ethnic minorities

Growing discontent among the ethnic minorities to their social, political and economic situation could be considered as one of greatest threat to China's Ronghe (intermingling) policy since it is likely to stir up anti-Han and anti-Government feeling among the formers. The 5 July Riot of 2009 in Xinjiang and 14 March Riot of 2008 in Tibet could be interpreted as the emotional expression of the accumulated discontent among the ethnic minorities. The discontent among the ethnic minorities could be the result of the followings:

Failure of the PRC Government to uphold the rights of ethnic minorities

Constitutionally, the PRC Government respects the right of ethnic minorities and measures have been taken to uphold the ethnic minorities' right as provided by the constitution. However, the effectiveness of the state's measure to protect the right of ethnic minorities is under much criticism. As He (2005) commented,

[T]he actual practice of minority rights often fails to live up to the promises made in the Constitution and in laws pertaining to ethnic minorities. It seems that rights that are recognized on paper are sometimes ignored in practice. The question of whether legally mandated minority rights have been internalized as a part of Chinese culture and collective psychology remains to be seen (p.67).

Despite central policy of elimination of Han chauvinism (Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, 1999, ¶24), Han chauvinism remains exist in even in the government organs. Speech containing ethnic prejudice content is often delivered in the

official announcements (Sautman, 1999, P. 291), and ethnic minorities are deprived of the right of holding organizations with political agendas at the local grassroots level (He, 2005, p. 68).

Regional gap of development

Under the PRC Government's effort in speeding up the economic and social developments, economic and social developments in the ethnic minority have achieved remarkable progress. However they are still far from catching up with those of the developed areas in the east. In addition, development disparity between the rural and urban areas in the ethnic autonomous area is also increasing. Comparing with the urban region, many rural areas have fallen behind in economic, education and medical services developments, and large proportion of rural areas remains in poverty. (Xu & Jin, 2008, p. 95). The increasing in social and economic equalities in the region is likely to arouse social discontent – especially among the grassroots. Such discontent might turn into hostility against the better off Han's in the regions.

Failure of the preferential policy to the ethnic minorities

In the beginning, the PRC Government intended to appeal to the ethnic minorities by adopting preferential policy to the latter. However, such policy seems to have stirred up tension between the ethnic minorities and the Hans. As Shen (2009) commented, China's ethnic minority policy appeals neither to the ethnic minorities nor to the Hans: The ethnic minorities consider the state's preferential policy as a form of positive discrimination to

the ethnic minorities, while the Hans perceive the ethnic minorities as lack of gratitude to the state. The above thoughts have deepened the hatred between the ethnic minorities and the Hans (p.36).

Separatist movement

In recent years, the growing discontent among the ethnic minorities in ethnic autonomous areas together with the rise of ethnic nationalism among ethnic minorities have provided breeding grounds for the separatist movements (e.g. in Tibet and Xinjiang). For instance, the PRC Government has attributed the 14 March Riot of 2008 in Tibet as the work of the Tibetan separatist, while it blamed the Xinjiang separatists for mobilizing the 5 July Riot of 2009 in Wulumuqi.

Decline of ethnic minority culture

In spite of the state's effort in preserving the ethnic minority culture, economic development (e.g. development of tourism) has resulted in the commercialization of multiculturalism (He, 2005, p.78), resulting in the 'vulgarization and fundamental alteration of minority cultures.' (Ibid., p.78). Xu and Jin (2008), also concerned about the risk of marginalization and assimilation of ethnic minority culture in the rapid process of modernization in China (p. 105)

Conclusion

PRC's ethnic minority policy could be considered as a hybrid product of Confucian paternalism and Marxist economic determinism. The practice of ethnic regional autonomy could be perceived as the means to uphold the Confucian principal of

‘Harmony with Difference’, which is designed to minimize the conflict between the Han and the ethnic minorities – which would hence facilitate national unity. At the same time, the PRC Government attempted to override ethnic group’s identities by uniting all ethnic groups under the common goal of development. However, the lack of democratic practice together with the absence in effective monitoring system has greatly undermined the effectiveness of ethnic regional autonomous practice. Constitutional rights guaranteed to the ethnic minorities are always ignored or violated when coming into practice. In addition, rapid economic development in the ethnic autonomous area has resulted in widespread social and economic inequalities, which provides the breeding ground for social instability, spread of separatism as well as hatred between the ethnic minorities and Hans in the ethnic autonomous areas. There is an urgent need for the PRC Government to reform its multicultural practice as to uphold national unity and harmony within the state.

References:

Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

Hansen, M. H. (1999), *Lessons in being Chinese*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.

He, B. (2005). Minority rights with Chinese characteristics. In Kymlicka, W. *Multiculturalism in Asia*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (2005), Regional autonomy for ethnic minorities in China, retrieved January 14, 2009 from http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/28/content_18127.htm.

People's Republic of China Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (In Chinese 中華人民共和國民族區域自治法) Retrieved August 25, 2009 from <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=9507&PHPSESSID=2d840264a0b4f36c114caeaf36cd1f68>.

Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China (1999). *White Paper 1999: Ethnic Minorities Policy in China*. Retrieved January 14, 2009 from <http://www.china-un.org/eng/gyzg/xizang/t420274.htm>.

Regulations on Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

Sautman, B. (1999). Ethnic Law and minority rights in China: Progress and constraints. *Law & Policy*, 21 (3).

Shen, G., & Ou, G. (2007). *Theory of China's ethnic policy: An introduction*. Beijing Shi : Min zu chu ban she. (In Chinese: 沉桂萍、歐光明 (2007)。《中國民族理論政策概論》。北京市：民族出版社).

Shen, S. (2009). Beijing's ethnic policy failed to appeal to both sides. *Yazhou Zhoukan*, 23 (30) (In Chinese 沉旭輝 (2009)。〈北京民族政策兩面不討好〉。《亞洲週刊》第二十三卷第三十期，頁三十六).

Xu, X., & Jin X. (2008). *Report on the ethnic issues in the China*. Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she. (In Chinese: 徐曉萍、金鑫 (2008) 《中國民族問題報告》。中國社會科學出版。).

Yang, F. (2000). *Deng Xiaoping's ethnic theory and its practice in Xinjiang*. Wulumuqi: Xinjiang ren min chu ban she bian (In Chinese: 楊發仁 (2000) 《鄧小平民族理論及其新疆的實踐》。烏魯木齊：新疆人民出版社。