

ACCOMMODATION, ASSIMILATION, AND REGIME LEGITIMACY:  
THE CCP POLICIES TOWARD ITS MINORITIES SINCE 1949

by

JUN TAEK KWON

(Under the Direction of Han S. Park)

ABSTRACT

This study intends to explore a fundamental question about the relationship between the state and minority nationalities by studying the Chinese case: national integration. This study documents the evolution of the minority policies of China since 1949. What it observes is that minority policies in China has alternated between accommodation and assimilation aimed at achieving the goal of national integration. This study proposes regime legitimacy as an independent variable in an effort to provide a convincing explanation to the question of the minority policy alternation.

As the paradigm of political development advanced by Han S. Park proposes, political development of China can be examined by being broken into three stages: regime formation (1949-1957), political integration (1958-1976), and resource expansion (1978 to the present). The basis of regime legitimacy in China subsequently has shifted as the political system undergoes a transition through these three stages: performance basis (1949-1957), ideology basis (1958-1976), and the return of performance basis (1978 to the present).

Based on the above observation, this study concludes that the CCP's minority policies have evolved within the larger context of political development that has taken place in the last six decades. And more specifically, the CCP's minority policies have been directly linked to its

strategies to establish and cultivate regime legitimacy. When performance basis is predominantly pursued to generate regime legitimacy, national differences are accommodated. When an ideology basis is massively utilized to cultivate regime legitimacy, the CCP radically promotes assimilation of minorities into the majority for national convergence.

INDEX WORDS: Ethnic Minority, Accommodation, Assimilation, Integration,  
Performance-based Legitimacy, Ideology-based Legitimacy

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## DEDICATION

To my parents

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>8</sup> Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. <sup>9</sup> “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, *if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.*” <sup>11</sup> So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. <sup>12</sup> *But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread;* so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites <sup>13</sup> and worked them ruthlessly. <sup>14</sup> They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly. <sup>15</sup> The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, <sup>16</sup> “When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” *Exodus 1: 8-16*

Political science is the study of power, political power to be exact. Political power can be defined as “authoritative coercion,” which is usually monopolized by a government. Thus, the boundaries of the discipline of political science should include the question of who has political power and how it can and should be exercised in a given society. In this regard, the role of students of political science is to monitor whether the political power is properly used in areas which need it, and whether it is inappropriately utilized in areas which don’t need it. Political scientists, then, have the mission to advise policy makers on the virtuous principles under which the political power should be exercised for people in a given society.

Ethnic politics is about how the political power of a government is employed toward its minority nationalities.<sup>1</sup> This study explores some fundamental questions about state-minority

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<sup>1</sup> Nationality still remains one of the most controversial subjects in social science. Theory of nationality formation or nationality identity is an enormous topic and well beyond this study. Thus, this study intends

relations by studying the case of the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China). It is written with two different audiences in mind: those who are interested in Chinese studies, and those who are interested in ethnic studies with special care given to practical solutions to the problems of how a state (usually controlled by the majority of the population) and its minorities manage to coexist peacefully.

Ethnic problems involving tensions and conflicts between the majority and minority nationalities within a country are world-wide political issues. Virtually all states are multi-national states and thus have nationality problems. Not only do the problems of ethnic minorities cause social unrest and instability, but also they have the potential to cause bloody conflicts. In recent years, these minority problems are becoming more exacerbated by the rise in many parts of the world of ethno-nationalism which is defined here as “a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.”<sup>2</sup>

## Minorities Question

China is not an exception. There is no doubt that China is a “unified” multi-ethnic country.

Ethnically, China consists of a majority nationality called the Han (汉族) and fifty-five state

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to interchangeably use the following terms: “ethnic groups,” “minorities,” “ethnic minorities,” and “minority nationalities.” Some scholars like Kymlicka distinguish between national minorities and ethnic groups. According to him, “national minorities” are peoples who previously experienced self-governing and territorially were concentrated cultures. Ethnic groups are those individual or familial immigrants wanting to integrate into the larger communities. The subjects of this study are the “national minorities” in China in Kymlicka’s distinction. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford Political Theory (Oxford ; New York: Clarendon Press, 1995). Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation* (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Blackwell Pub, 2006). p. 1. In a similar vein, Michael Hechter also defines nationalism as “collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit.” Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 7.

recognized minority nationalities (少数民族).<sup>3</sup> In this study of ethnic politics in China, the word “minority” is understood in two ways: they are numerically minorities (only 8.49 percent of the total population in China) and they are minorities in the sense of being different in many respects from the Han majority. Recent uprisings across Tibetan regions (in 2008 and 2009) and Inner Mongolia as well as independence movements by Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang (in 2009 and in 2010) have spotlighted the challenges that China confronts in ruling a multi-ethnic state. As of this writing, demonstrations by Mongolians against the Chinese authorities in Inner Mongolia are being intensified (in May, 2011).

According to Enghebatu Togochoog, president of the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, ethnic protests in Inner Mongolia have lengthy roots. Togochoog said that “The root cause of the problem is not money. The problem is the conflict between the Mongolian people’s efforts to maintain their distinct culture and way of life...”<sup>4</sup> Thus, there is no question that how the Chinese authorities deal with “the minorities question” will be a crucial determinant of the China’s destiny going forward in the twenty-first century. In fact, many scholars predicted in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia that China would follow the footsteps of the two countries, pointing out that ethnic issue was one of the leading factors that brought about the disintegration of the two multi-ethnic communist states.

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<sup>3</sup> 56 ethnic groups which have been officially recognized by the central government of China include the Han, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, Uyghur, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Buyei, Korean, Manchu, Dong, Yao, Bai, Tujia, Hani, Kazak, Dai, Li, Lisu, Va, She, Gaoshan, Lahu, Shui, Dongxiang, Naxi, Jingpo, Kirgiz, Tu, Daur, Mulao, Qiang, Blang, Salar, Maonan, Gelao, Xibe, Achang, Pumi, Tajik, Nu, Uzbek, Russian, Ewenki, Deang, Bonan (also Bao'an), Yugur, Jing, Tatar, Derung, Oroqen, Hezhe, Monpa, Lhoba and Jino. “The Han ethnic group has the largest population, while the populations of the other 55 ethnic groups are relatively small, and so the latter are customarily referred to as ethnic minorities.” See Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, September 29, 2009, *White Paper on China’s Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups* (White Paper), Available at [http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node\\_7078073.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7078073.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Jacobs, “Anger Over Protesters’ Death Leads to Intensified Demonstrations by Mongolians,” *New York Times*, May 31, 2011. Available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/world/asia/31mongolia.html?\\_r=1&ref=mongolia](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/world/asia/31mongolia.html?_r=1&ref=mongolia)

In fact, China has been a multi-national country for thousands of years since its inception. Diverse ethnic make-up and the massive territorial size of China have always challenged the Chinese ruling authorities as national integration and ethnic management are unusually difficult. Historically, the Chinese rulers have always been worried about their national security (territorial integrity) and national unity as they have been preoccupied with the underlying mind-set of “internal revolt and foreign invasion” (内憂外患). Internal revolt and foreign invasion are always very closely associated with one another. Internal revolt tends to invite foreign invasion and foreign invasion helps those who are opposed to the rulers to take advantage of it to advance their political objectives.

Qing China collapsed in 1911 (*Xinhai* Revolution: 辛亥革命) due to the foreign invasions and internal rebellions. The non-Han peoples living under the rule of the Qing dynasty used this chaotic situation in China to their advantage to obtain independence or at least greater autonomy. For instance, Outer Mongolia was ruled by the Qing dynasty from 1691 to 1911. The Mongols with support of the Soviet Union succeeded in becoming an independent country by establishing the Mongolian People’s Republic in 1924.

As for Tibet, Qing China expanded its power into Tibet starting in 1700s. During much of 1800s, Tibet came under the rule of the Qing authority (of course, there are some disputes over the trajectories of Tibet’s history between Han Chinese and Tibetans). In the wake of the collapse of the Qing China, Tibet declared independence in 1913. Even though Tibet was not recognized as an independent state by the international community, Tibet with effective control of the Dalai Lama enjoyed its autonomy until the late 1940s.

Qing China also gained control in Xinjiang beginning in the 17th century. Followed by the Opium War and the *Taiping* Rebellions (太平天国), the Qing Empire diminished its ability to

maintain its political influence in Xinjiang. Uyghurs and Chinese Muslims (Hui minority) were motivated to become rebellious and they achieved independence through the creation of an Eastern Turkistan Republic in 1933. In addition, the Southwest region of China where various minorities resided was relatively submissive to Chinese rule between 1911 and 1949, but the region was away from central influence because it was mainly governed by specific regional warlords. All of these minority areas were brought back under Chinese domination when the People's Liberation Army (hereafter referred to as PLA) occupied the areas by force in 1949. For these reasons, when it comes to social unrest and disturbance brought about by ethnic minorities, this internal insurrection is viewed by the Chinese rulers as a matter of national security (territorial integrity) and national unity as opposed to the Western-style multiculturalism which considers ethnic issues as "human rights and social justice."

Through history, the Chinese ruling authorities have expended a great deal of effort to handle the challenges posed by the minority nationalities. These efforts by the Chinese leaders have been centered on aiming to achieve national integration by winning the hearts and minds of the minority nationalities so that the minorities voluntarily shift their loyalty to and accept the political rule of the Chinese central authorities. In this regard, National integration should be considered as one of the most fundamental and persistent goals for the Chinese ruling authorities. The national integration throughout this study is defined as "an integrated conception of the nature of the political community, one to which everyone can feel a positive sense of attachment."<sup>5</sup>

In a similar vein, Dreyer also defines integration as "the process whereby ethnic groups come to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, whose

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<sup>5</sup> Han S. Park, *Human Needs and Political Development : A Dissent to Utopian Solutions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Pub. Co., 1984), 144.

institutions assume jurisdiction over and responsibility for, said groups.”<sup>6</sup> These two definitions suggest that integration is a unity or “belongingness” among nationalities in a given state, and that integration is considered inevitable for any nation-state which desires to make sure of allegiance and compliance of the minority nationalities within its own political and territorial jurisdiction. Therefore, it is said that the ultimate goal of national integration for the Chinese government is to create an “imagined community”<sup>7</sup> in which regardless of their race, nationalities, and skin colors, people feel senses of bonding under the banner of “Greater China” or “the consciousness of Chineseness.” In other words, the Chinese central authorities wish to create a community in which minority nationalities happily recite the Chinese version of “the Pledge of Allegiance”: something similar to the unity and bonding as “Americans” that the United States displayed right after the September 11 attacks in 2001.

States are goal-oriented like human beings. A goal may be attained through diverse strategies and specific tactics. Therefore, in examining any social or political phenomena, analytical separation of goals, strategies, and tactics is essential to a systematic analysis and meaningful comparison. For instance, survival is the number one goal for human beings. In order to guarantee the physical survival, human beings have to eat food. What kinds of food that humans choose to eat involves strategic choices. Some people like to eat bread whereas others prefer to eat rice. Among those who select bread as their diet strategy, some like to eat bread with strawberry jam while others like it with peanut butter. This may be regarded as tactical maneuvers.

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<sup>6</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*, Harvard East Asian Series 87 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed. (London ; New York: Verso, 1991).

The patterns of integration in China consist of strategic and tactical maneuvers aimed at achieving the goal of national integration. Like many other multi-national states, the Chinese government deals with minorities by implementing oppressive strategies and tactics to achieve the goal of integration.<sup>8</sup> The fact that the Chinese central authorities have utilized brutal forms of oppression toward minority nationalities, however, does not mean that more lenient strategic/tactical measures are never adopted in China. Not only does the variation of strategies/tactics for the goal of the national integration exist across nation-states, but also the variation of the strategies/tactics is shown within a nation-state like China over times. The bottom line in the Chinese case for the Chinese authorities, however, is to ensure that territorial integrity and national unity are never undermined in implementing minority policies.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to contribute to our understanding of the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter referred to as the CCP) policies with respect to ethnic minorities by theorizing about ethnic politics and national integration in China. The purpose is to trace and identify the evolution of the CCP policies toward minority nationalities since 1949 when the CCP emerged victorious in Mainland China. In particular, this study intends to analyze Chinese strategies/tactics in the integration of national minorities from 1949 to the present and to examine whether there may be general explanations for the pattern of minority policy changes.

The central questions this study hopes to answer are as follows: What are the underlying (guiding) principles of the Chinese approach to their national minorities? What strategies/tactics for the integration of national minorities have been implemented since 1949? Why and under

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<sup>8</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk : A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993); Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *State Violence and Ethnicity* (Niwot, Colo.: University of Colorado Press, 1990).

what circumstances do the CCP authorities sometimes implement an assimilation strategy (policy) and an accommodation strategy in other times? What factors account for the policy alternation between accommodation and assimilation within the governance of the continuous Communist government in China? In other words, what drives changes (or continuity) in these policies over time in China? After examining the above questions, this study then concludes by assessing the degree of the success with regard to the minority policies in China, and proposes some policy recommendations to the CCP in achieving the goal of true national integration.

In the belief of this writer, in order to analyze any political phenomena (and changes) including the formation of the minority policies in China, one must first know and examine the broader context in which the policies have taken place. The contextual factors include a vast number of more salient factors within and about a country such as geography and natural conditions, geopolitics, culture and political beliefs, social structures, demography, economic conditions, and most importantly the developmental stages in which the system may be situated. When one analyzes governance characteristics and policy goals-strategies-tactics of a regime, the more salient contextual factors (forces) must be considered. This premise is valid for and equally applicable to all forms of regimes whether it is an authoritarian or democratic.

In the particular context of China, several contextual factors should be taken into account: cultural, geopolitical, and historical factors. The legacy of Confucianism and “century of humiliation” struggles<sup>9</sup> continue to exercise a powerful influence on how issues of ethno-cultural diversity are appreciated in China. The development of Marxist ideology also provides a unique perspective on minority issues of China not found in most of multinational countries. In addition,

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<sup>9</sup> The century of humiliation (百年國恥) usually refers to the century of Chinese national humiliation that China had felt subjugated by foreign powers including Japan. It started with the Opium War in 1842 and ended with the CCP victory in Mainland China in 1949. It has made Chinese people be conscious of the essence of political sovereignty and territorial integrity, serving as one of the preoccupied themes in Chinese domestic as well as foreign policies.

the vast size of the land and the repeated pattern of political and territorial division/reunification throughout history laid the foundation of the guiding principles of the Chinese approach to minority questions and still influence the Chinese practice of minority policies.

Considered that the above contextual factors are very specific (not shared with many multinational states) to the Chinese case of the minority policies, it might be unrealistic for this study to develop a generalizable theory across the cases of ethnic policies. The ideal type of any theoretic explanation would be the one elaborated by Theda Skocpol for revolution in her book in which she states that “the only effective antidote is the actual development of explanations of revolutions that illuminate truly general patterns of causes and outcomes, without either ignoring or totally abstracting away from the aspects particular to each revolution and its context.”<sup>10</sup> Skocpol’s suggested way which research should be conducted is a daunting task. But it is worth attempting to do in such a way. This study thus will be conducted with an effort to follow Skocpol’s suggestion. In spite of the particular focus on the Chinese case of minority policies, this study still hopes to be generalized to other cases of ethnic politics beyond the Chinese case.

### Contribution of the Study

This study also intends to advance the research of state-minority relations in China in the following several aspects: First, most studies on the Chinese minorities so far have centered on anthropological and historic descriptions of one or two significant minority groups such as Tibet and Xinjiang. However, since this study attempts to theorize about ethnic politics of the CCP toward its minority, it attempts to consider Chinese minority nationalities as a whole. Therefore,

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<sup>10</sup> T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge Univ Pr, 1979). p. 35.

its findings will certainly add a new theoretical dimension to the current knowledge of ethnic studies in China.

Secondly, this study attempts to tackle one of the most controversial issues in the field of ethnic studies: can the Western model of multiculturalism in liberal democratic thinking be applied to non-western countries like China? I would argue that the thrust of Western-centered multiculturalism has had an influence in China and its minority policies. In this regard, this study would be especially relevant to today's discussion about democratization and its impacts on state-minority relations in China. The findings of this study, however, may provide theoretical and empirical evidence that we need to have a different theoretic lens to understand the minority policies of the CCP.

Last but not least, this study also has policy implications. As mentioned earlier, secessionist movements in Tibet, Xinjiang, and even Inner Mongolia illustrate the serious challenges facing the CCP leadership in achieving the goal of the national integration as a multiethnic but harmonious China. As we have witnessed in the cases of some minorities in China, if the CCP attempts to consolidate China as a unitary and homogenizing society through assimilation policies, the pursuit of national homogenization often leads to resistance among ethnic minorities resulting in bloody conflicts between Han and minorities as well as government crack-downs on minorities in China. This study intends to provide evidence suggesting that no matter how severely the CCP implements assimilation policies, some minorities have never been and will never be assimilated into the Han Chinese society. This study thus proposes to the CCP that it should maintain its current minority policies in an effort to accommodate and respect ethnic and cultural diversity among the minority nationalities.

Despite the above importance of this study in examining the CCP's minority policies, it leaves one important question unanswered. It says almost nothing about the response or behavior of minority nationalities toward the CCP policies. It must be true that ethnic groups are very strategic in their behavior and response toward government policies. In this regard, it would be desirable that this study should ascertain the CCP's minority policies as well as their impact on minority nationalities (as well as responses from the minorities) in order to fully understand the dynamism of the minority policy transformation in China. Nonetheless, this study is circumscribed to examining only the policy changes of the CCP toward its minority due to limitation of time and energy.

#### Organization of the Study

This study will consist of five chapters. Chapter Two will begin with a brief discussion on the question of nationality. This discussion will be focused on the theoretical question of what constitutes nationality. After examining the nationality question, Chapter Two will examine the minority nationalities in China focusing on the process of minority identification in the early years of the CCP rule. The importance of minority nationalities for the Chinese authorities will also be examined in this chapter. Chapter Three discusses the concept of assimilation and accommodation policies in the question of national integration. It then extensively documents the evolution of minority policies of China: accommodation (1949-1957), assimilation (1958-1976), and the return of accommodation (1978 to the present). Chapter Four proposes regime legitimacy as an independent variable in an effort to provide a convincing explanation to the question of the minority policy alternation. This chapter will extensively discuss the basis of regime legitimacy

and the paradigm of political development advanced by Han S. Park. Finally, Chapter Five will provide the prospect on the minority policies of China in the future.

## CHAPTER 2

### MINORITY NATIONALITIES

When the CCP emerged victorious in Mainland China out of the foreign domination and the civil war with the Nationalists Party (KMT), the Chinese Communists established a state named “the People’s Republic of China (PRC)” in 1949. Upon being founded, this CCP-led PRC turned its attention toward consolidating its control over its people as a part of nation and state building for the New China. For a new state born out of the difficult struggles for a century, it was very natural that unifying the fragmented country under a single administrative control became the most important focus of the young CCP regime in China. In particular, incorporating minority nationalities, which had been “historically only loosely integrated”<sup>11</sup> (somewhat isolated), into the newly created political center was one of the top priorities on the new agenda of the CCP.

#### Identification of Minority Nationalities

In an effort to secure its control over minorities within its territory, the new state swiftly implemented the state-wide project of “nationalities (*minzu*, 民族) identification and categorization.” However, classification of minority nationalities was a daunting task. Defining minorities (who were the minority nationalities?) was not an easy job for the CCP. The CCP leaders did not have much knowledge and information about the minorities even though they were aware of the existence of the minorities and made considerable contacts with them during

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<sup>11</sup> Katherine Palmer Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang : Ethnic Politics in China* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000). p. 73.

the Long March between 1934 and 1935. And the process of minority formation in China had its long history with multifarious complexities.

Historically seen, the multi-ethnic state of China had been constructed and reconstructed by the territorial expansion of the Han majority nationality through war and conquests for more than two thousand years. Additional minority territories were constantly incorporated and native peoples in the peripheral areas were absorbed into the dominant Han people. Some of the minorities had been assimilated whereas others had successfully managed to maintain their own cultural characteristics. This historical path of minority evolution made the identification of minorities very complex for the CCP.

Around the early 1950s, no one, including the CCP leadership, knew exactly how many minority nationalities actually existed in China. When the CCP authorities began to grasp the conditions of the minorities in 1953, over 400 applicant groups registered to seek official status of minority nationality (those more than 400 groups of people hoped that they would be treated as equals with the majority Han people and that they would have more regional autonomy once they were granted the official status of minority nationalities by the central government). Facing the over 400 petitions for minority status, the CCP authorities were faced with the identification problems of the minority nationalities. From 1953 the CCP government dispatched “Visit the Nationalities’ teams” to investigate the authenticity of the over-400 registrations being petitioned for the official status of minority nationality. The investigation teams included experts and scholars in all kinds of disciplines ranging from social science to traditional arts.<sup>12</sup>

But the question for the CCP government was how minority groups should be identified and classified. The CCP had troubles in determining what conditions (criteria) constituted a nationality in China. The CCP undertook the ethnic classification on the basis of actual

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<sup>12</sup> X. Fei, "Ethnic Identification in China," *Social Sciences in China* 1, no. 1 (1980).

conditions defined by the combination of objective and subjective approaches on nationality formation. It seemed that the Chinese authorities made an effort to bridge the gaps between the objective and subjective schools of thought in terms of outward characteristics of ethnic groups and the sense of the national self-awareness. The objective approach tends to emphasize the relative importance of externally revealed attributes such as language and cultural aspects in defining ethnic groups whereas the subjective approach places more weight on group consciousness and self-awareness.

Being influenced by the Soviet Union's ethnic policy, the CCP adopted Stalin's criteria for nationality that is a "historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture." Stalin goes on to argue that "none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. Even if one of these characteristics is lacking, then the nation ceases to be a nation."<sup>13</sup> Stalin's view on the formation of nationality epitomizes the "objectivist school" that objective markers such as language, religions, and traditional livelihood should be discerned by the outside observers for any ethnic groups to become a nation.

In other words, this perspective emphasizes the power of cultural difference between ethnic groups; it is considered an "inside-out" explanation on nationality formation that some ethnic groups hold certain cultural characteristics which make them unique and distinct from other ethnic groups. As this school observes, "to be French is to be in possession of a distinct culture to that of the English."<sup>14</sup> Culture does not change easily and the change of it is often beyond individual control. If one is born into a particular group, it is very difficult to change one's ethnicity and nationality.

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<sup>13</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 141; Thomas Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London ; Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2004). p. 2.

However, the application of the objective conditions represented in Stalin's four criteria (common language, common territory, common economic life, and common culture) to the Chinese situation proved somewhat problematic. The Chinese conditions did not easily meet Stalin's definitions. For instance, two of the largest minorities recognized by the central government, the Hui and the Manchus do not have their own languages, speaking Chinese as their own mother tongue. The Hui are not different from the Han majority ethnically and linguistically even though they practice Islam.

And some of China's ethnic minorities are very scattered over many disconnected areas; the Hui are dispersed over the entire area of China as in the case of the Manchus, the Tibetans, and the Mongols. These minorities hardly claim that they have a common territory. On the contrary, several different minorities reside in the same area such that "they have no common territory of only one nationality."<sup>15</sup> In addition, due to the influence of the Han cultural traditions for centuries, many elements of minority cultures become very much similar to those of the Han nationality.

In an effort to offset the weaknesses of the Stalin's objective criteria, the subjective factors were also given consideration to the project of minority classification by the CCP leaders. According to the subjective school, it is not the possession of cultural characteristics that makes ethnic groups distinct but rather it is members' subjective perception and belief that makes ethnic groups differentiate from each other. In other words, the minority groups' self-consciousness should be involved in the process of the ethnic classification: ethnic groups need to view themselves as an independent nationality from other nationalities.

In the case of minorities, in particular, their perception or self-awareness in relation to the Han majority is the most crucial component in the nationality identification. As noted earlier,

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<sup>15</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 31.

minority groups are constructed and reconstructed through their interaction with the Han majority for many centuries. The ethnic differences are created and recreated, developed and maintained through inter-ethnic interactions between minorities and the majority in China. Thus, minority identities should be defined in relation to the majority Han group. The CCP's consideration of this subjective factor was clearly manifested in Lin Yaohua's attestation in 1979 that "for ethnic identification we use Marxist categories. But we do not only proceed from history, economics, habits and customs, language, cast of mind, and historical development, we also of course respect the national will of the nationality concerned. On the other hand, a people cannot be categorized as an independent nationality if the national will is at variance with scientific knowledge."<sup>16</sup>

But consideration of the national will also had the limitations on the minority identification. Some ethnic groups were recognized as national minorities even though they considered themselves to be part of the Han majority. For instance, the Zhuang and the Manchus were highly assimilated with the Han, not recognizing much difference from the Han majority in their self-perception. And the largest Muslim minority Hui people always perceived themselves to be the Chinese even though they practice their own religion, Islam. On the contrary, the Hakkas who live in southern China with a distinct culture and language from the Han Chinese could be a separate nationality. But their claim for the nationality status was rejected by the central authorities.

As alluded earlier, the minority nationalities in China are extremely diverse among themselves as well as their relations vis-à-vis the Chinese state (and the Han majority) in terms of the population, historical development, area of residence, differences in spoken and written

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

languages, religious beliefs, and the way of life.<sup>17</sup> The Zhuang has the largest population of more than 16 million whereas the Lhoba is the smallest nationality with a population of around 3,000. Also, some of the minority nationalities are highly distributed all over China, whereas others are relatively concentrated in certain frontier areas. In addition, 55 minority nationalities speak more than 60 languages, practice many different religions, and preserve a variety of cultures.

For various reasons, however, many ethnic groups who claimed that they were distinct from the Han majority were denied official recognition.<sup>18</sup> Only 55 ethnic groups out of more than 400 groups seeking the minority status were granted official recognition as the minority nationalities. Despite such unusual and arbitrary identification made by the CCP, the large number of minority nationalities officially recognized (and their diversity) and the vast amount of land they occupy forced the CCP government to introduce a policy of regional autonomy.

With the aim of achieving a balance between national integration and satisfaction of the diverse minority nationalities, the CCP had no choice but to institute a unique unitary political system with the principle of “regional autonomy for ethnic minorities” rather than copying the Soviet Union style of a federal union system. It is argued that the establishment of autonomous areas by the CCP with consultation with minorities was an inevitable choice for the New China, which is administratively categorized into five autonomous regions (provincial-level),<sup>19</sup> thirty

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<sup>17</sup> *White Paper on China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups* (White Paper); Xiaotong Fei, *Collected Works of Fei Xiaotong [Fei Xiaotong xuanji]* (Fuzhou: Haixian Wenyi Chubanshe, 1996); S. Robert Ramsey, *The Languages of China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> Guangxue Huang, “Ethnic Identification in China,” *China's Ethnic Groups*, Vol. 02 No. 3 (2004). Available at <http://www.msdcchina.org/page/xl-e.asp?pd=7&pd1=118&id=216>

<sup>19</sup> According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the administrative divisions of China consist of three levels: the province, county, and township. The broadest level is the provincial level. People in China usually tend to identify themselves with their native province. China administers 34 province-level regions: 23 provinces (one claimed province, Taiwan), five autonomous regions, four municipalities (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing), and two special administrative regions (Hong Kong and Macao). The five provincial-level autonomous regions (自治區) are Xinjiang Uyghur, Inner

autonomous prefectures, and 120 autonomous counties.

### Importance of Minority Nationalities

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China,<sup>20</sup> the Law on Regional Autonomy of Minority Nationalities in China,<sup>21</sup> and several White Papers<sup>22</sup> clearly stipulate that China is a “united multi-ethnic country” consisting of a majority nationality called the Han and fifty-five state-recognized minority nationalities. According to the six official population censuses (in 1953, 1964, 1982, 1990, 2000, and 2010) conducted in China, the population of minority nationalities has increased constantly from 35.32 million (6.06 percent of the total population) in 1953 to 113.79 million (8.49 percent of the total population) in 2010.<sup>23</sup>

Although minority nationalities still represent a relatively insignificant portion of the Chinese population, no one can raise an objection to the fact that minority nationalities constitute a matter of great importance for the Chinese ruling authorities. One of the renowned scholars on the Chinese minorities, Dreyer correctly elaborates the five important reasons why the Communist leadership in the PRC pays a great deal of attention to the minority nationalities: strategic importance, potential immigration, natural resources, propaganda, and tourism.<sup>24</sup>

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Mongolia, Ningxia Hui, Tibet, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Regions.

<sup>20</sup> The current version was adopted by in 1982 with further revisions in 1988, 1993, 1999, and 2004. Available at <http://english.people.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>

<sup>21</sup> The Law on Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities in China was enacted in 1984 and amended in 2001. Available at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/ethnic/2009-08/12/content\\_8559272.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/ethnic/2009-08/12/content_8559272.htm)

<sup>22</sup> There are three White Papers published with regard to minority nationalities. See Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper on National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China* (2000); *White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China* (2005); *White Paper on China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups* (2009). Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/4/index.htm>; <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20050301/index.htm>; [http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node\\_7078073.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7078073.htm)

<sup>23</sup> For more information regarding the 2010 China's population census, see [http://www.stats.gov.cn:82/english/newsandcomingevents/t20110428\\_402722244.htm](http://www.stats.gov.cn:82/english/newsandcomingevents/t20110428_402722244.htm)

<sup>24</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*, 7th ed. ([New York]: Longman, 2010). pp. 299-303.

The first is strategic importance of the minorities for China. Most minorities live on the border areas which are very sensitive and vital to the Chinese national security.<sup>25</sup> The strategic importance of the minority-inhabited areas is clearly illustrated by Ulanfu<sup>26</sup> that “Whether the relationship between nationalities is good or bad has always been an important factor affecting the political stability of our country, the tranquility of the frontier areas, and the strength of our national defense. Eighty to ninety percent of China’s vast frontier lands are inhabited by minority people. The Mongolians and other nationalities in Inner Mongolia are defending the national border of the motherland; in Xinjiang the Uyghurs and other nationalities are guarding the western gate; the Tibetans and other nationalities in Tibet are contributing to the defense of the motherland’s Southwestern frontier; and the Zhuangs and other nationalities have been heroic in repulsing Vietnamese aggression.”<sup>27</sup>

The strategic importance is further compounded by the potential separation of the minorities as well as the possible issues of irredentism between China and its neighboring countries. As discussed earlier, minority nationalities over their long history have developed complicated inter-ethnic relations with the Han majority and the Chinese central government. Some minorities differ in many aspects of their culture from the Han Chinese but have perceived themselves to be part of China and have happily accepted the political rule of the Chinese central state; other have claimed that they are different and distinct from the Han, challenging the Chinese rule and seeking independence from the Chinese nation. In particular, minorities in

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<sup>25</sup> Most minorities live over 90 percent of China’s border frontiers.

<sup>26</sup> An ethnic Mongol, Mr. Ulanhu was one of the highest-ranking non-Chinese in the CCP leadership. Mr. Ulanfu was quoted in the New China News Agency as “a long-tested veteran Communist, an outstanding party and state leader and a proletarian revolutionary as well as a noted guide of minority-nationality affairs.” Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/09/obituaries/ulanhu-82-a-mongol-who-rose-to-high-posts-in-beijing-is-dead.html>

<sup>27</sup> Ulanfu, "New Law on Regional Autonomy Needed for the Minority Nationalities: A Summary," *Chinese Law & Government* 14, no. 4 (1981-1982); *ibid.* p. 79-80.

Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang have shown varying degrees of peripheral nationalism<sup>28</sup> and secession movement over the last six decades. In particular, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the ensuing creation of many independent states, these prominent minority nationalities seem to have been more encouraged to pursue the same path toward independence as the East European countries did.

What motivates peripheral-national activism? In other words, what drives members of an ethnic group to become a politicized self-conscious nationality? Social scientists are particularly interested in the conditions under which cultural differences become politicized, active, and mobilized rather than simply discovering various cultural differences between ethnic groups. Even if the theory of nationality formation and mobilization is *not* among the aims of this study, it is worth briefly examining the theoretical discussion on this subject here. There are four primary approaches which have dominated the discourse of the nationality mobilization in the discipline of ethnicity: primordialists, instrumentalists, structuralists, and constructivist.

The primordial perspective pioneered by Geertz argues that nationalist assertion emerges from “the increasing salience of primordial sentiments.”<sup>29</sup> This perspective takes “ethnicity as a fixed characteristic of individuals and communities. Whether rooted in inherited biological traits or centuries of past practice now beyond the ability of individuals or groups to alter, one is invariably and always perceived as a Serb, a Zulu, or a Chechen. In this view, ethnic divisions

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<sup>28</sup> Peripheral nationalism is defined as “a culturally distinctive territory resists incorporation into an expanding state, or attempts to secede and set up its own government.” Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*. p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> University of Chicago. Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations. and Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States; the Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* ([New York]: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (New York,: Basic Books, 1973); David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict : Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang : Ethnic Politics in China*. p. 16.

and tensions are natural... not necessary in need of explanation.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, “certain ‘givens’ of social existence into which one is born determine one’s group loyalties.”<sup>31</sup> Despite the long-standing acceptance of the primordialist approach on the nationality mobilization and ethnic conflict, however, this framework does not go without any criticism.

The biggest weakness of the approach would be that it fails to account for the variations over the degree (strength or weakness) of the primordial sentiments among different ethnic groups as well as different times and places. In particular, it has difficulties explaining why peripheral nationalism has been a problem in some minority nationalities in China whereas peripheral nationalism virtually has not existed in other minorities. In addition, there is also a danger in saying that ethnicity is natural and ineffable. The primordial approach has difficulties elucidating the emergence of new and transformed identities over time and place.

The instrumentalist school agrees with the primordial approach on the importance of primordial attachments in ethnic nationalist movements. However, the instrumentalists view the primordial givens as “artificial constructs that individuals emphasize at various moments in order to promote their specific interests...Ethnicity develops as individual utilize ethnic markers to achieve instrumental goals.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, ethnic differences and primordial sentiments are employed by ethnic elites as an instrumental tool to obtain their material (political as well as economic) gains. When the ethnic elites and politicians attempt to shift the structure of political and economic power in their relations to the central government in a given state, it is more likely that they seek to rally the ethnic masses and make an appeal to the ethnic allegiance (and ethnic cohesion) to their advantages on the assumption that the ethnicity is the best mobilizable and politicizable identity. This perspective provides a convincing account for the question of when

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<sup>30</sup> Lake and Rothchild, *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict : Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang : Ethnic Politics in China*. p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

and why some ethnic groups and not others, “in particular times and places, form themselves into self-conscious communities.”<sup>33</sup>

Ethnic groups and their political mobilization have also been examined and analyzed by the structuralist perspective. This school of thought emphasizes in the relative importance of the environment (structure) in which ethnic actors operate. The structuralists do not differ from the primordialists in that “cultural identity may be stronger and more enduring than most other collective identities (i.e. ideological or class).” But they contend that political mobilization and ethnic conflicts often occur when evident inequalities exist between the majority and minority nationalities in terms of economic distribution, social status, and access to political power. Michael Hechter, for instance, views the nationality mobilization as a result of the pattern of consistent inequality being experienced by minority people living in economically backward regions, or what he calls “internal colonialism.”<sup>34</sup>

Nationalist sentiments are more likely to be stimulated when the economic development which the majority nationalities enjoy is not shared by the minority people. In the similar line of argument with a different focus, Yuan-kang Wang points out that the extent of minority elites’ access to the central political stage is another important nationality mobilization factor. He contends that “if local elites are excluded from high office in the central government, regardless of their similar education and background, we would expect to see nationality movements in the peripheral region.”<sup>35</sup>

The fourth approach to nationality formation and the rise of nationalism is the constructivist approach pioneered by Benedict Anderson in his book, *Imagined Communities*. In

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism : The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

<sup>35</sup> Y.K. Wang, "Toward a Synthesis of the Theories of Peripheral Nationalism: A Comparative Study of China's Xinjiang and Guangdong," *Asian Ethnicity* 2, no. 2 (2001). p. 181.

successfully rejecting the primordialist premises that ethnic and national identities are fixed or given, and that ethnic mobilization and conflict are derived from immutable and unchanging racial and cultural discrepancies, Anderson contends that the national consciousness is constructed and reconstructed through the “political imagining.” According to him, a nation “is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>36</sup>

He goes on to argue that a nation is an imagined community because “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship...Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.” In other words, a nation is a political community imagined by people who perceive and consider themselves to be part of that group. In addition, another variant of the constructivists also argue that individuals can transform their ethnic identities and switch ethnic boundaries. According to Lake and Rothchild, constructivists claim that “ethnicity is not immutable nor completely open” and that “it is constructed from dense webs of social interaction.”<sup>37</sup>

Regardless of which perspective provides the best understanding on nationality formation and ethno-nationalism of minorities, it seems imperative that the Chinese authorities make an effort to prevent any mobilized self-conscious nationality of minorities from emerging if the authorities want to maintain the national security and the national unity.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>36</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Lake and Rothchild, *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict : Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> There are some variations of the Chinese national minorities over the degrees (or extent) of assimilation into the Han majority. Some minorities are much more assimilated than other minorities. One of the

Chinese leadership also needs to go to any length to pacify the potentiality of secessionism of minority nationalities. However, the issue of the potential separation of minorities is further complicated by the likelihood of the irredentism by China's neighboring countries. Minorities are scattered across almost two-thirds of the Chinese proper, mainly residing along the Chinese border frontiers. More than 30 minority nationalities have national counterparts in neighboring countries.

For instance, three newly independent countries emerging out of the dissolution of the Soviet Union —Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan— “share not only borders with China's minority territories but also share the same religions and languages with the corresponding ethnic groups living there, such as Kazaks, Uyghurs, Kirgizs, and Tajiks.”<sup>39</sup> In many other cases, Miao and Shan people live in China as well as in Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Burma; Mongols inhabit in China and the Republic of Mongolia; Koreans (another minority nationality with strong cultural identity) are concentrated in the northeast of China sharing the border with Korea; the Tibetans also have their own exile government led by the Dalai Lama<sup>40</sup> in Northern India.

As Dreyer observes, “foreign powers might want to make use of their own minority nationals to infiltrate the PRC and cause problems.”<sup>41</sup> If China had military confrontations with other countries and these minorities turned their back against China, it would be a nightmare

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intriguing research questions (which is not one of the aims in this study) with regard to the Chinese minorities is that why some ethnic groups are more easily assimilated than others. The variables that one should consider to examine this question might include the demographic size of minorities, religious and cultural differences from the Han, historical development of their relations with the Han, how concentrated the minorities reside in, the locations in which they live, whether the minorities have foreign influence, whether they have organized leadership, and the experience of having independent states on their own. D.J. Solinger, "Minority Nationalities in China's Yunnan Province: Assimilation, Power, and Policy in a Socialist State," *World Politics: A Quarterly Journal of International Relations* (1977).

<sup>39</sup>Yuchao Zhu and Dongyan Blachford, "China's Fate as a Multinational State: A Preliminary Assessment," *Journal of Contemporary China* 15, no. 47 (2006). p. 330.

<sup>40</sup> The Dalai Lama announced in March, 2011 that he would retire and formally relinquish his political leadership role in the Tibetan exile government. But his political influence among the Tibetans would be enormous for the time being. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/11/world/asia/11tibet.html>

<sup>41</sup> Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*. p. 299.

scenario for the Chinese authorities. And there is a concern for irredentism, too. For instance, the Republic of Mongolia might wish to claim “the parts of China inhabited by Mongols.”<sup>42</sup> And the Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang might want to claim to be an independent or to be incorporated into one of the Central Asian countries in which considerable diasporic communities of Uyghurs reside.<sup>43</sup>

The second importance of minority nationalities is that the areas in which minority nationalities inhabit make up about 63.7 percent of the Chinese total lands. The vast size of the minority lands possesses the enormous national resources. The richness of natural resources in minority areas was well articulated in a statement that “these areas possess fabulous wealth in the form of coal, iron, petroleum, and nonferrous and other rare metals. China’s chief livestock-producing areas, representing two-fifths of the total area of the country, are in the national minority areas; the forest reserves in the national minority areas are also exceptionally rich, amounting to one-sixth of the country’s total forested area.”<sup>44</sup> The natural resources of the minority areas are becoming more important for China’s continuing economic development.

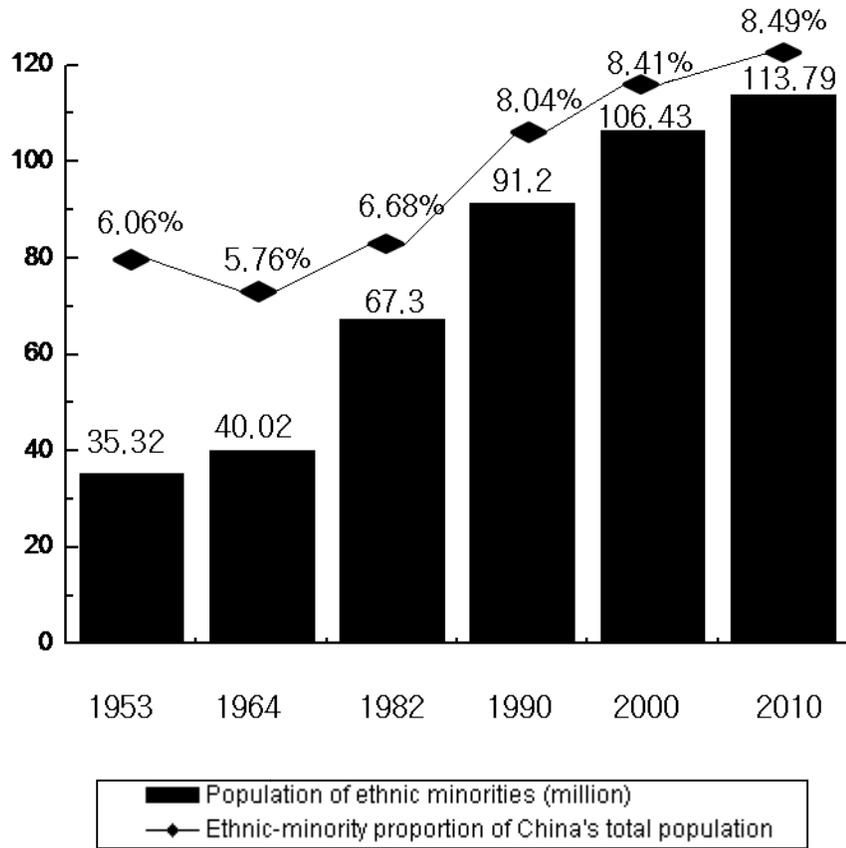
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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 299.

<sup>43</sup> Irredentism is defined here as states intending to extend their borders by incorporating territories of neighboring states inhabited by their co-nationals.

<sup>44</sup> Chih-i Chang and George Moseley, *The Party and the National Question in China* (Cambridge,; M.I.T. Press, 1966). p. 32.

Figure 1 Population of Ethnic Minorities



Source: Census Data of National Bureau of Statistics of China

Table 1  
China's Five Provincial-level Ethnic Autonomous Regions

Name	Set- up date	Capital	Area (1000squarekm)	Population (millions)	Population of Ethnic Minorities (millions)	Percentage of Ethnic Minorities (%)
Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	May 1, 1947	Hohhot	1,183	23.9	5.2	21.6
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region	October 1, 1955	Urumqi	1,650	20.1	12.1	60.4
Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	March 15, 1958	Nanning	236	49.25	19.0	38.54
Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region	October 25, 1958	Yinchuan	66.4	5.96	2.1	35.98
Tibet Autonomous Region	September 1, 1965	Lhasa	1,228	2.76	2.6	93.48

Sources: Wang and Chen, *Minzu qiuyu zizhuzhidu de fazhan*, p. 227; *China Statistical Yearbook 2006*, Beijing: China Statistical Press, 2006, p. 45.

Table 2  
Ethnic Minorities in China: Population and Distribution

Ethnicity	Population	Main Geographic Distribution (Provinces)
Zhuang	16,178,811	Guangxi, Yunnan, Guangdong
Manchu	10,682,262	Liaoning, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Inner, Mongolia, Beijing
Hui	9,816,805	Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Yunnan, Hebei, Shandong, Anhui, Liaoning, Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Tianjin, Heilongjiang, Shaanxi, Guizhou, Jilin, Jiangsu, Sichuan
Miao	8,940,116	Guizhou, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangxi, Chongqing, Hubei, Sichuan
Uygur	8,399,393	Xinjiang
Tujia	8,028,133	Hunan, Hubei, Chongqing, Guizhou
Yi	7,762,272	Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou
Mongolian	5,813,947	Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Jilin, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang
Tibetan	5,416,021	Tibet, Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan
Bouyei	2,971,460	Guizhou
Dong	2,960,293	Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi
Yao	2,637,421	Guangxi, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangdong
Korean	1,923,842	Jilin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning
Bai	1,858,063	Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan
Hani	1,439,673	Yunnan
Kazak	1,250,458	Xinjiang
Li	1,247,814	Hainan
Dai	1,158,989	Yunnan
She	709,592	Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangdong
Lisu	634,912	Yunnan, Sichuan
Gelaov	579,357	Guizhou
Dongxiang	513,805	Gansu, Xinjiang
Lahu	453,705	Yunnan
Shui	406,902	Guizhou, Guangxi
Va	396,610	Yunnan
Naxi	308,839	Yunnan
Qiang	306,072	Sichuan
Tu	241,198	Qinghai, Gansu
Mulam	207,352	Guangxi
Xibe	188,824	Liaoning, Xinjiang
Kirgiz	160,823	Xinjiang
Daur	132,394	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang
Jingpo	132,143	Yunnan
Maonan	107,166	Guangxi
Salar	104,503	Qinghai
Blang	91,882	Yunnan
Tajik	41,028	Xinjiang
Achang	33,936	Yunnan
Pumi	33,600	Yunnan
Ewenki	30,505	Inner Mongolia

Table 2

Ethnic minorities in China: population and provincial distribution

Ethnicity	Population	Main Geographic Distribution (Provinces)
Nu	28,759	Yunnan
Jing	22,517	Guangxi
Jino	20,899	Yunnan
De'ang	17,935	Yunnan
Bonan	16,505	Gansu
Russian	15,609	Xinjiang, Heilongjiang
Yugur	13,719	Gansu
Ozbek	12,370	Xinjiang
Moinba	8,923	Tibet
Oroqen	8,196	Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia
Drung	7,426	Yunnan
Tatar	4,890	Xinjiang
Hezhen	4,640	Heilongjiang
Gaoshan	4,461	Taiwan, Fujian
Lhoba	2,965	Tibet

Source: Dreyer, June Teufel. *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*. 7th ed. [New York]: Longman, 2010. p. 301.

## CHAPTER 3

### MINORITY POLICIES IN CHINA

In spite of being a relatively insignificant portion of the Chinese population, given the sensitive strategic locations and the abundance in natural resources, minority nationalities occupy a very crucial place in policies of the Chinese national security and economic development. Thus, for the Chinese central leaders, how to achieve the goal of national integration by incorporating these minority nationalities into the Chinese political center has assumed supreme significance in the past several decades. As mentioned in Chapter 1, national integration in this study is defined as “an integrated conception of the nature of the political community, one to which everyone can feel a positive sense of attachment.”

The integration efforts which have been made by the Chinese Communists since 1949 have been centered on aiming to win the loyalty and allegiance of the minority nationalities so that the minorities voluntarily accept the political rule of the Chinese central authorities and happily live their lives in the PRC. Strategies (analytical separation of goals, strategies, and tactics) for the achievement of integration can differ widely between countries and can also change over times within a particular country in response to a variety of actors. In theory, there exist two strategies which the governing authorities have utilized for achieving national integration: assimilation and accommodation.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Both Dreyer and Mackerras similarly conceptualized the integration methods “as a continuum ranging from assimilation at one hand to pluralism on the other.” The term that I use, “accommodation” is used as a similar concept as the term “pluralism” elaborated in both Dreyer and Mackerras. Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*; Dreyer,

## Assimilation and Accommodation

The term assimilation is often understood as a policy with regard to immigrants and minority nationalities that are forced to lose their national characteristics and to eventually become similar to the majority in a given society. Assimilation “corresponds to the Chinese term *Tonghua* (同化), which literally means ‘to make the same’ and suggests an exploitative policy compelling the minorities to lose the national features and particularities it previously possessed, and change into a component part within another nationality.”<sup>46</sup> Dreyer also contends that assimilation “implies that members of minority groups have absorbed the characteristics of the dominant group to the exclusion of their own and become indistinguishable from members of the majority. In essence, they have ceased to exist as groups.”<sup>47</sup>

Thus, the assimilation approach can best be summed up as “stop being different and be like us.”<sup>48</sup> Two common perceptions are usually accompanied with this assimilation strategy. One is that it is usually characterized as a gradual change through forced process. The other is that the majority people tend to have some sense of superiority in their own civilization compared to that of the minority nationalities. Complete assimilation takes place when minority

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*China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*; Colin Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century* (Hong Kong ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); C.K.P. Ip, "Minority Policy in Post-Mao China" (University of British Columbia, 1994); Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation*; Wolfram Eberhard, *China's Minorities : Yesterday and Today*, The Wadsworth Civilization in Asia Series (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1982); M. Zhou and H. Sun, *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949*, vol. 4 (Springer Netherlands, 2004); Colin Mackerras, "Aspects of Bai Culture: Change and Continuity in a Yunnan Nationality," *Modern China* 14, no. 1 (1988); Terrence E. Cook, *Separation, Assimilation, or Accommodation : Contrasting Ethnic Minority Policies* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*. p. 7. Zhengyi Shi et al., *Min Zu Ci Dian = Minzu Cidian (Nationality Dictionary)*, Di 1 ban. ed. (Chengdu: Sichuan min zu chu ban she : Sichuan sheng xin hua shu dian fa xing, 1984); *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Cook, *Separation, Assimilation, or Accommodation : Contrasting Ethnic Minority Policies*. p. 62.

nationalities or new immigrants become indistinguishable in almost every cultural aspect from the majority members.

Historically seen, this “ethnocide” type of assimilation strategy was and has been deployed (sometimes very aggressively) by states in many parts of the world. One of the most notorious examples is the heinous Japanese assimilation policies toward Koreans during Japan’s colonial rule of Korea between 1910 and 1945. The Japanese term, “*doka seisaku* (同化政策)” is interpreted as a policy in which “a nation endeavors to make the life-styles and ideologies of the people in its colonies the same as its own.” This policy was more aggressively forced during the last ten years of the colonization period: “it included elimination of Korean language study in the schools, compulsory use of Japanese, shutting down of all civilian Korean language newspapers, forced attendance at Shinto ceremonies, and the notorious 1939 ‘Name Order’ (Imperial Decree 19 on Korean Civil Affairs) requiring that all Koreans change their family and given names to Japanese readings.”<sup>49</sup>

In a rough parallel to the Japanese experience, many Western countries also forcibly pursued the assimilation approach toward their minorities. For instance, the United States overtly implemented assimilation policies that were designed to successfully transform indigenous peoples into the American culture. The assimilation pushes were based on the assumption that native people by being indoctrinated about European-American cultures would be able to become “Americanized” and merged peacefully into the dominant White society.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> M. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Univ of Washington Pr, 2009); S. Rabson, *Assimilation Policy in Okinawa: Promotion, Resistance, and Reconstruction* (1996).

<sup>50</sup> After the end of the Indian Wars, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>, the government prohibited the practice of traditional religious activities. Native children were forced to attend boarding schools in which they were required to speak English, learn standard subjects, attend church, and leave their own traditions behind. Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise : The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*, Bison books ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

The idea of assimilation had also been favored by the Australian government toward the Aboriginal peoples as well as immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century. They were expected to be assimilated into the culture of the majority by relinquishing their own cultural traditions. Another notable case of the forced assimilation can be found in Turkey's official policies toward ethnic minorities up until today: Armenian residents, the Greek Orthodox, the Kurds, and the Circassians.<sup>51</sup>

France has also had a long history of the assimilation approach toward its colonial subjects and immigrants from North Africa in an effort to obliterate any cultural differences of them. France in her colonial policy educated their subjects in Africa to adopt French language and culture so that they could eventually become French. In recent years, the French government revived an assimilation policy that required immigrants "upon their arrival in France to sign an 'integration contract' if they wish to obtain a residence card."<sup>52</sup> In addition, France in April, 2011 formally implemented the ban on wearing full veils of the Muslim women in public places. As indicated in the above examples of assimilation, the study intends to closely excavate specific tactics that the CCP executes to facilitate assimilation strategy. These tactics are also employed

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<sup>51</sup> *Ismet Inonu, prime minister of Turkey in 1925 proudly asserted that "we are frankly nationalists...and nationalism is our only factor of cohesion. In the face of a Turkish majority other elements have no kind of influence. We must Turkify the inhabitants of our land at any price, and we will annihilate those who oppose the Turks."* Cook, Separation, Assimilation, or Accommodation : Contrasting Ethnic Minority Policies. p. 62. *Turkey in 1934 also implemented "the surname act."* This law was designed to force all groups of people, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, to adopt a Turkish-style last name. In addition, a group of Turkey's Circassians took to the streets in March, 2011, demanding an education in their native language. The Circassian Rights Initiative's spokesperson, Kenan Kaplan, said "we got our share of the assimilation policies that have been applied over the years. We forgot our language and culture. Now, we face the danger of not being able to pass these on to future generations." *Emine Dolmaci, "Turkey's Circassians: We also suffered from assimilation policies," Today's Zaman, April 16, 2011. Available at <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-241179-turkeys-circassians-we-also-suffered-from-assimilation-policies.html>*

<sup>52</sup> Sylvia Zappi, "French Government Revives Assimilation Policy," *Migration Information Source*, October, 2003. Available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=165>

as actual indicators to examine the CCP's assimilation attitude: language in education, religion, and population transfer.

States (usually controlled by the majority nationality) are also inclined toward accommodation in dealing with minority people. As opposed to assimilation, integration can be achieved with minority nationalities being still distinct from the majority group and maintaining their own cultural characteristics quite freely in a relationship of reciprocal respect, equality, and peaceful co-existence with the majority group.<sup>53</sup> In the accommodation approach, the minority nationalities are acknowledged and respected by the states as having a right to remain distinct and different, and their differences are sources of their pride rather than the subjects of discrimination or punishment. States work hard to accept and accommodate divergent values of the minority cultures and are willing to value the minorities as "co-nationals." The minority people voluntarily, in turn, receive the political authority of the central government and happily participate in the political process of the center.

Colin Mackerras (Dreyer also implicitly indicates) uses the Chinese term, "*ronghe* (融和)" as an opposite concept to "assimilation." He argues that *ronghe* suggests that "a plurality of nationalities naturally become a newly formed nationality after a process of historic development during which they live together, and over a long period influence and learn from each other. This is historically both necessary and desirable."<sup>54</sup> However, his use of "*ronghe*" as opposed to assimilation may not be accurate. Given the Han pride over their culture (and perception of the high level of Han culture relative to that of minorities) and a staggering disparity between the Han population and the insignificant portion of the minority population, it is almost impossible

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<sup>53</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*; Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*; Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*.

<sup>54</sup> Mackerras, "Aspects of Bai Culture: Change and Continuity in a Yunnan Nationality." p. 52.

to assume and expect that the Han culture and minority cultures would be fused or blended to produce another culture in China. In this regard, the Chinese term “*baorong* (包容)” would be more appropriate to correspond to the English term accommodation in that *baorong* literally means “to embrace and to tolerate” the differences and the standpoints of other people.

Accommodation can often be measured and assessed in relations to the degree or extent which autonomy is granted to minorities and enjoyed by national minorities. One way of ascertaining the degree of autonomy is to examine what rights are given to minorities. In fact, the term “autonomy,” which corresponds to the Chinese term “*zizhi* (自治), has been a fundamental framework for the central government in China to institutionalize the mutual relations with minority nationalities since 1949 as evidenced in the choice of establishment of “autonomous areas” for minority nationalities.

This autonomous principle is clearly stipulated in a 2000 *White paper* that “in China regional autonomy for ethnic minorities is a basic policy adopted by the Chinese government in line with the actual conditions of China, and also an important part of the political system of China. Regional autonomy for ethnic minorities means that under the unified leadership of the state regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established for the exercise of autonomy and for people of ethnic minorities to become masters of their own areas and manage the internal affairs of their own regions.”<sup>55</sup>

In fact, the idea of regional autonomy is nothing new in China. The dominant policy toward minorities in traditional China was accommodation. China during the Ming and Qing dynasties used to govern its subjects (including minorities) through so-called “indirect rule.”

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<sup>55</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, *White Paper on National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China* (2000).

Indirect rule persisted simply because the size of the land was huge and communication between the center and the peripheries was very limited.<sup>56</sup> Indirect rule was usually implemented through indigenous agents who enjoyed significant autonomy and benefited themselves “from the delegated exercise of state power.”<sup>57</sup> Indirect rule created the existence of autonomous governance areas in China just as in feudal Europe, “manors provided justice and other goods to their dependents, owing tribute and various services to the king.”<sup>58</sup>

As inferred from the above passage of a *White Paper*, “autonomy” does not mean that minorities have the rights to secede from the PRC, but refers to a unique system in which minorities have control over their own cultural, economic, legal, and domestic political affairs under self-governance. The activities that self autonomous areas could enjoy administrating may include family life (food, traditional medicine, and marriage), education, religious activities, and the arts/sports on the one hand and finance/economic activities, law, and local elections, and governmental regulations on the other hand. Regional autonomy at least in theory implies that minorities have “internal independence,” with only legal sovereignty belonging to the central government.<sup>59</sup>

The closer the central government’s strategy moves toward assimilation, the lesser the degree of autonomy is likely to be. The nearer the central government’s strategy shifts toward accommodation, the more the degree of autonomy is likely to be enjoyed by the minorities. The

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<sup>56</sup> A recent movie which has become very popular in China proves how loosely the control of the central government was imposed on the peripheries and the power of the local elites in the first half of the twentieth century. The movie titled as “Let the bullets fly (2011)” features the situation set in China during the warring 1920s. In the movie, “notorious bandit chief Zhang descends upon a remote provincial town posing as its new mayor, an identity that he had hijacked from Old Tang, himself a small-time imposter. Hell-bent on making a fast buck, Zhang soon meets his match in the tyrannical local gentry Huang as a deadly battle of wit and brutality ensues.” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1533117/plotsummary>

<sup>57</sup> Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*. p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>59</sup> W.W. Smith, "China's Policy on Tibetan Autonomy," *East-West Center Washington Working Papers* 2(2004). p. 1.

strategies toward minority nationalities in China since 1949 have essentially consisted of the repeated pattern of alternation between assimilation and accommodation although there are some variations over the degree of implementation of the strategies. Thus, the minority policy of the CCP can be best examined by being broken into three stages.

The first stage covered the period between 1949 and 1957 during which accommodation was the rule and the CCP identified and promoted minority identity by establishing various autonomous areas. The second stage was the Chinese forced assimilation stage which spanned the years between 1958 and 1976. This period is characterized by two massive political campaigns (movements) by the CCP. They are Great Leap Forward (hereafter referred to as the GLF) and the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (hereafter referred to as Cultural Revolution) during which the CCP pushed assimilation and promoted the Chinese unicultural vision at the expense of minority identity. The concept that minorities and their territories were distinctive was totally rejected, and all agencies for the minorities (nationality commissions, institutes, schools, etc.) were banned. All special privileges for members of national minorities were eliminated. This was justified by claiming that special treatment would keep the minorities from being assimilated into Chinese society and would prevent them from participating in the revolution on an equal footing. However, the dominance of assimilation policy in this period was briefly interrupted by the failure of the GLF. There was a short relief from assimilation between 1962 and 1964 during which the accommodation policy was restored so that minority nationalities could enjoy their own autonomy. But there was a return to assimilation after this period when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966.

The third stage can be described as the period of “the return of accommodation” between 1976 and to the present. After the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution officially ended with the

arrest of “Gang of Four”<sup>60</sup> in late 1976, accommodation was returned swiftly to the CCP minority policies. The CCP had adopted various measures to improve relationships with the minorities including the autonomy law of 1984 which was “the most far-reaching legislation on the rights of ethnic minorities.”<sup>61</sup> Autonomous areas were given the freedom to enact laws that guaranteed for minorities’ political, economic, and cultural rights. The law upgraded minority status, their autonomy, and their self-administrative bodies. In addition, various policies of affirmative action were introduced to appease minority nationalities including the exemption of one-child policy.

The CCP’s accommodation approach toward minorities experienced a brief setback in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The pro-independence demonstrations and the resultant ethnic unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang apparently challenged overall authority of the CCP over minorities and clearly intended to undermine the spirit of national integration. The CCP instinctively responded by tightening its controls on these troubled regions, resulting in a slight reduction in the extent of their regional autonomy for a tense period between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. However, the minority policies were not reversed to the direction of assimilation. Surprisingly enough, the minority policies remained unchanged and the regional autonomy resumed in most parts of minority areas including Tibet and Xinjiang in the 1990s. The accommodation approach has been maintained and firmly upheld by the successive leaders of the CCP to the present time.

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<sup>60</sup> The Gang of Four was a political faction which was led by Jiang Qing, Mao Zedong’s wife. It controlled the CCP during the Cultural Revolution. All of four were arrested and convicted of a series of treasonous crimes after Mao Zedong died in 1976.

<sup>61</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 43.

## Accommodation between 1949 and 1957

As mentioned repeatedly in this study, the basic principle of minority policies in China is aimed at achieving a balance between integration of minority nationalities with the Han Chinese and the preservation of territorial integrity. The early stage of the PRC's integration efforts on minority nationalities was characterized by an accommodation approach which was clearly demonstrated in three related ways: making laws with regard to the rights of minority nationalities, the CCP leadership's affirmative attitude, and the sincere efforts to implement relevant policies.

In fact, the CCP leaders including Mao Zedong were interested in the existence of national minorities long before their victory in 1949. In the early years of the CCP formation, the CCP leaders appeared to have very positive attitudes toward the minorities and even proclaimed the idea of "the complete separation of minorities from China." The Constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic<sup>62</sup> (also known as the Jiangxi Soviet) promulgated in 1931 clearly stipulated in Article 14 that "The Soviet government of China recognizes the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China, and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans, and others living on the territory of China shall enjoy the full right to self-determination, i.e. they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviets or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer. The Soviet régime of China will do its utmost to assist the national minorities in liberating themselves from the yoke of imperialists, the KMT militarists, *t'u-ssu* [tribal headmen], the princes, lamas, and others, and in achieving complete freedom and autonomy. The

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<sup>62</sup> The Chinese Soviet Republic was a state established in November 1931 by the Communist Party Leaders in Jiangxi province. It was destroyed by the Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek, resulting in the Long March of the Communist Party people.

Soviet régime must encourage the development of the national cultures and of the respective national languages of these peoples.”<sup>63</sup>

Although the explicit right of secession was dropped and replaced with the idea of “establishment of a unified state with the Han majority together” in the Communist Party platforms later in 1938, the CCP still maintained its firm position that many minorities including Mongols, Hui, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Miao, Yi, Zhungs, Buyei, and Koreans were given equal rights with the Han majority, and that their cultural characteristics such as religions, languages, traditional livelihood, and customs should be respected. It was evidently manifested in Mao Zedong’s statement in 1938 that “Their peoples (minorities) not only must not be forced to study the Han language and script, they must be encouraged to develop their own languages, cultures, and education. All would be given the right to administer their own affairs while at the same time establishing a unified state together with the Han.”<sup>64</sup>

What motivated the CCP in its early years to develop the benign attitude toward ethnic minorities? One of the apparent reasons was the fierce competition with the KMT to obtain the support of minority nationalities in the Communist revolution. The CCP leaders were encouraged by the desire to be seen differently from the Nationalist Party (the KMT) as they attempted to appear more democratic and take more care about the minorities than the KMT. The Republic of China governed by the Nationalist Party of Sun Yat-sen only partially acknowledged the existence of ethnic minorities, viewing China as a “Republic of Five Nationalities” mainly consisted of the five major nationalities of Han, Mongols, Manchus, Tibetans, and Muslims. After his death, the successor Chiang Kai-shek completely denied the existence of different ethnic groups. He regarded the non-Han peoples as “branch clans” of the Han and as the subjects

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<sup>63</sup> The Constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic, Available at <http://sites.google.com/site/legalmaterialson Tibet/home/communist-constitution-1931>

<sup>64</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions*, p. 67.

of the forced assimilation into the Han majority.<sup>65</sup> A critique of the minority policies of the KMT was undoubtedly expressed by the CCP leaders as “the KMT, which represents the Chinese landlords among the bourgeoisie, still further increased the oppression, exploitation, and persecution of the national minorities. All the talk about the so-called ‘equality of nations’ and a ‘Five Nations Republic’ is just so much deception on the part of the KMT Government.”<sup>66</sup>

Another reason that the CCP leaders were inspired to have affirmative positions on minority nationalities may also be driven by their pragmatic need to ensure their survival during the Long March (長征) between 1934 and 1935. The Long March refers to a massive military retreat undertaken by the CCP to escape from the KMT attacks. The CCP people embarked on their Long March in 1934 from Jiangxi province in south-east of China to eventually Shaanxi province in the north, reportedly “traversed some 12,500 kilometers (8,000 miles) over 370 days.”<sup>67</sup> The CCP had no choice but to strategically select their routes of the Long March passing through some of the most inhospitable and unfriendly terrain in the west and north often inhabited by various minority nationalities because the CCP needed to avoid the areas which were controlled by the KMT.

Facing the minority peoples in the west and the north who typically had negative sentiments toward the Han Chinese, the CCP needed to convince them that “they were Han of a different sort: not the greedy land thieves of past acquaintance, but the bearers of a new life of freedom and equality for all.”<sup>68</sup> During the Long March, one of the underlying principles in the Red Army (the CCP army) was not to inflict any damage to minority peoples (such as no stealing

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<sup>65</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* pp. 17-18; Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century.* pp. 53-72; Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions*, pp. 15-41; D. Norbu, "China's Policy Towards Its Minority Nationalities the in Nineties," *China Report* 27, no. 3 (1991).

<sup>66</sup> Chang and Moseley, *The Party and the National Question in China.* p. 164.

<sup>67</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long\\_March](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_March)

<sup>68</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions*, p. 68.

of goods from the minority peoples) and respect the customs of minorities. The CCP made an effort to gain goodwill and positive images from minorities by giving them the impression that the CCP and minorities shared a hatred of foreign aggression (in particular, the Japanese) and the CCP was different from the KMT Han Chinese.<sup>69</sup>

As the guardian of the Chinese nation, the CCP was able to begin for the first time to put forward its own minority policies in a more concrete form in 1949 and the subsequent years until 1954. During these years, the official status of the accommodation approach can be broadly summarized in three main party documents: the Common Program (1949), the General Program for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy for Nationalities in PRC (1952), and the Constitution (1954).<sup>70</sup> The Common Program, which served as the provisional constitution until the formal constitution was promulgated in 1954, first specified the broad guidelines of early minority policies in Article 50 through Article 53 of Chapter IV (Policy toward Nationalities) in China.<sup>71</sup>

ARTICLE 50. All nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves, and shall oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and co-operative family composed of all its nationalities. Greater Nationalism and chauvinism shall be opposed. Acts involving discrimination, oppression and splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited.

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<sup>69</sup> The CCP was established in the midst of the chaotic turmoil of China in 1921. The most urgent mission in the early years of the CCP history was epitomized by the Party's struggle for survival. Up until the CCP won its revolution in 1949, the Party had been in constant conflict with the KMT led by Chiang Kai-shek. In particular, during the Long March of 1934-35, as mentioned in the body of this study, the survival depended on the goodwill and support of the minority peoples. Upon realizing the antagonistic response to Chiang's assimilation attitudes toward minorities, the CCP differentiated its minority policies from the KMT and Chiang to take more accommodation approach.

<sup>70</sup> And there was "the Electoral Law" passed in 1953. It required that every minority nationality, regardless their size, send delegates to the National People's Congress (hereafter referred to as NPC). Minorities were guaranteed the rights to have their representation in the NPC. Chinese Constitution stipulates that all powers in the PRC belong to the people. The National People's Congress of the PRC is the highest organ of state power.

<sup>71</sup> The full text of the Common Program now can be accessed at <http://e-chaupak.net/database/chicon/1949/1949e.pdf>

ARTICLE 51. Regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated and various kinds of autonomy organizations of the different nationalities shall be set up according to the size of the respective populations and regions. In places where different nationalities live together and in the autonomous areas of the national minorities, the different nationalities shall each have an appropriate number of representatives in the local organs of political power.

ARTICLE 53. All national minorities shall have freedom to develop their dialects and languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. The People's Government shall assist the masses of the people of all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work.

As articulated in the Articles, the early minority policies of the CCP were summed up in three ways as “equality and unity,” “the practice of autonomous governments,” and “the guarantee to preserve the cultural characteristics.” Although the bare bones of the minority policies were outlined in the Common Program (1949), however, the concrete ways of the implementation of the regional autonomy did not take shape and remained ambiguous until the promulgation of the General Program for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy in 1952.

As to how autonomous areas were to be established, Article 5 and 9 of the General Program stated that autonomous areas should be established “according to economic, political, and other requirements of locality, and with due consideration of historic background” through “consultation between higher levels of government and minority representatives.” Article 12 also articulated that “autonomous governments were to be composed mainly of members of the minority or minorities exercising regional autonomy.” The autonomous governments were also granted the administrative powers to substantively execute “the actual form of cultural autonomy” in their administrative jurisdiction. Article 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21 stipulated that autonomous governments decide “to adopt the most commonly used language as the chief medium of intercourse in the exercise of its authority, to use this and other minority languages in its culture and education, and to develop the culture, education, arts, and health services of the various

nationalities inhabiting the region.” Article 25 further required that local government should “educate the masses to respect each other’s languages, customs, traditions, and religious beliefs.”

The autonomous governments in Article 23 were also officially given the power “to enact special regulations” within the limits of autonomous jurisdiction” as long as these must “comply “with the provisions of the laws and decrees of the central government.” In addition, the General Program includes provisions to self-administer “finance, economy, and organizing military forces” (Article 19, 20, and 22). In order for the regional autonomy to work and function properly, higher level governments were required to respect the autonomy status of regional governments as well as to make sure that their “directives and orders” should be formulated based on both the “general line of the Common Program” and “the special characteristics and actual conditions” of the autonomous regions (Article 30 and 31). However, the General Program also reconfirmed in Article 2 that all autonomous areas are “an integral part of the territory of the PRC and their governments are local governments led by higher levels under the unified leadership of the central government.” In addition, Article 29 required the local autonomous governments at all times “to educate and guide people living in the area toward unity and mutual assistance between all nationalities of the country, and toward love for the PRC in which all nationalities live together in a spirit of fraternity and cooperation like one big family.”<sup>72</sup>

Most of the basic guidelines with regard to the minority nationalities formulated in the two important documents (the Common Program of 1949 and the General Program for the

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<sup>72</sup> Various Articles of the General Program for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy for Nationalities (1952) are quoted from the following research. Y. Ghai, S. Woodman, and K. Loper, "Is There Space for Genuine Autonomy for Tibetan Areas in the Prc's System of Nationalities Regional Autonomy?," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 17, no. 1 (2010). pp. 146-47. Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang : Ethnic Politics in China*. pp. 79-80. Minglang Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*, Contributions to the Sociology of Language (Berlin ; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003). p. 44.

Implementation of Regional Autonomy for Nationalities in PRC of 1952) were formally incorporated with little revision into the China's first constitution adopted in 1954.<sup>73</sup> In order to carry out the basic guidelines for the minority work, several organizations were established till 1954. The minority affairs in China were and are usually managed and conducted by three separate governmental apparatus: the CCP, the State Council (equivalent to the administration), and the NPC (equivalent to the Congress). The United Front Work Department (hereafter referred to as the UFWD) of the CCP's Central Committee is the party organ most closely associated with minority affairs. Originally established in 1944, the UFWD was formally responsible for formulating the broad guidelines of minority work in congruence with the party line.

The guidelines shaped by the UFWD were transmitted to the Nationalities Affairs Commission (NAC) of the State Council which was in charge of implementing them. As Dreyer observes, "despite its subordination to the UFWD, the NAC, meeting every day and functioning as a regular ministry, has considerable power."<sup>74</sup> The NAC also has its regional branches in minority autonomous regions.<sup>75</sup> The 1954 constitution also set up a Nationalities Committee

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<sup>73</sup> The full text of the 1954 Constitution available at <http://e-chaupak.net/database/chicon/1954/1954bilingual.htm#h>

<sup>74</sup> Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*. p. 305.

<sup>75</sup> The responsibilities of the central NAC were presented in details in Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang : Ethnic Politics in China*. p. 81. 1. To supervise the implement of national regional autonomy, to deal with matters concerning ensuring the minority people equality and autonomous rights; 2. To publicize policies concerning minority nationalities and check up on their implementation; 3. To make concerted efforts in conjunction with the relevant departments within the State Council to promote socialist economic and cultural construction in the minority areas; 4. To take charge of work related to minority languages in general, and the translation and publication of works in the minority languages in particular; 5. To take charge of minority nationalities' institutes and work of training minority cadres and scientific and technological personnel; 6. To organize and facilitate minority people's visit to the hinterland and cities of the coastal provinces, and to handle matters related to visits to minority areas and relevant visit abroad; 7. To conduct constant study and investigation of minority nationalities and their areas, and to sum up experience in ethic work; and 8. To carry out tasks assigned by the State Council concerning nationalities affairs, and to give guidance to the nationalities affairs organs of the various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in conducting their administrative work.

directly accountable to the NPC. Even though the National Committee was composed of all ethnic minority delegates to the NPC, its roles were quite limited and it mostly served as a rubber-stamping body for the measures and decisions made elsewhere. It has no meaningful power in ethnic policy making, but ethnic delegates' speeches at the NPC often "give important information about problems in minority areas."<sup>76</sup>

The accommodation strategy of the early years was quite endorsed by the CCP leadership. During the years of doing research on minority areas (including minority classification) and setting up autonomous governments, the CCP leaders showed considerably affirmative attitudes toward minority nationalities with a belief that "good will is most efficiently won by good deeds."<sup>77</sup> All CCP personnel who were dispatched to minority areas were instructed and repeatedly reminded directly from Mao Zedong to "do good things" for minority communities and "make friends" with local minority people. And Mao's message was over and over stressed that any developments in minority communities should be designed and engineered based on the opinions and decisions of the local minority people and based on particular conditions and characteristics of individual minorities.

In 1950, Mao Zedong instructed the CCP leaders that "according to the Common Program, customs and traditions in minority communities can be reformed, but the reform must be initiated and carried out by minorities themselves."<sup>78</sup> In the same year, Zhou Enlai also emphasized the importance of the willingness of the minority people to implement any reform projects and firmly opposed any forced measures. For instance, regarding land reform which was fiercely executed across the entire country in 1950 as a means to consolidate the CCP's power,

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<sup>76</sup> Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*. p. 307.

<sup>77</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 99.

<sup>78</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 45.

Mao Zedong told a Tibetan delegation that “it was up to minorities to decide whether land reform should be carried out in their communities, not through the Han officials.”<sup>79</sup>

Following the messages of the CCP leadership, the dispatchers of the central government to minority areas also made an effort to be modest, humble, and friendly when they made contacts with minority people. As the first task of the CCP delegation teams was to gain goodwill and trust of the minority people, the teams’ slogan was “work together, eat together, and live together with the minorities.”<sup>80</sup> They helped the minority people with their daily livelihood, learning the local languages and cultures. The teams also endeavored to listen to the demands and problems of the minority nationalities, and suggested solutions. For example, if the “drought problem was mentioned, the CCP teams offered to build an irrigation project; if malaria was the issue, drugs were supplied and a plan to kill mosquitoes”<sup>81</sup> was elaborated.

One of the ubiquitous grievances from the minorities was that they felt they were constantly oppressed and unfairly treated by the Han people. The CCP leaders and the delegation teams acknowledged the past wrong doings and candidly apologized for historical injustice inflicted by the Han majority to minority nationalities. Zhou Enlai was one of the outspoken leaders of the CCP on this matter, repeatedly pointing out that “in the relationship between the Han and minorities is was the Han who had done injustice to the minorities and that from now on Han comrades should accept the responsibility and apologize to the minorities...Emphasizing that the CCP should pay minorities the debt of injustice historically owed by Han rulers, Zhou asked CCP officials of Han origin always to consider issues from minorities’ point of view and

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>80</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 106.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

not to let minorities experience injustice again.”<sup>82</sup> This attitude is clearly illustrated in an account of a meeting between Fei Xiaotong<sup>83</sup> and the Miao. The Miao asked, “Who is responsible for this bloody history? Who has oppressed us? Who is our enemy?” Many answered that it was the Han who were oppressor. “But Chairman Mao is a Han. How is it that he helps us rather than oppresses us?” Fei answered that “We Han were also partly responsible. Neither we nor our ancestors felt enough sympathy for our brother nationalities to firmly oppose our own rules when they did these things.”<sup>84</sup>

The CCP authorities also warned against the Han chauvinism and tried to avoid any impression of the Great Han nationalism in minority work. Historically, the Han Chinese had a sense of superiority in their culture to that of the non-Han people. Confucianism which was the governing ideology of all Chinese dynasties, considered the non-Han people as “barbarians” who were treated as culturally inferior. In the mind-set of the Confucian Han culture, it was the duty of the Han Chinese that they needed to educate these barbarians by imposing the Han Chinese cultural values. Any signs of the Great-Han chauvinism in minority work also were closely associated with the potential rise of local ethno-nationalism.

The CCP leadership in the early 1950’s had clearly recognized the potential for Great-Han chauvinism to alienate the minorities and arouse local nationalism. Mao Zedong stressed that any signs of the Great-Han chauvinism must disappear, pointing out that it was “reactionary thinking on the part of feudal class and bourgeoisie concerning national relations.”<sup>85</sup> Zhou Enlai

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<sup>82</sup> X. Liu, China. Guojia minwei. Zhengce yanjiushi, and China. . *Zhongguo Gongchandang Zhuyao Lingdaoren Lun Minzu Wenti* (Minzu chubanshe, 1994). pp. 48 and pp. 149-52. Zhou and Sun, *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949*. pp. 45-47.

<sup>83</sup> Fei Xiaotong was a pioneering Chinese scholar in sociology and anthropology. He was renowned for his studies in the study of China’s minority nationalities.

<sup>84</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 101.

<sup>85</sup> Liu, yanjiushi, and . *Zhongguo Gongchandang Zhuyao Lingdaoren Lun Minzu Wenti*. p. 115. Zhou and

also specifically instructed the CCP officials working in minority areas that in order to fight against Great-Han chauvinism, the Han officials should “respect minorities’ religion, custom, traditions, and languages, and consult with officials of minority origin and win their agreement before implementing changes and new policies.”<sup>86</sup>

The CCP leaders’ understanding and accommodation were also manifested in their attitudes toward minority religions. It seems that the CCP leaders may well be aware of the statement made by Jean Paul Wiest that “If you look at Chinese history, all the rebellions that led to change of dynasty had some religious connotations. The authorities don’t like that.”<sup>87</sup> By and large, religion matters much more to the national minorities than to the Han Chinese. In other words, minorities take religious belief and practices more seriously than the Han people do.<sup>88</sup>

As one scholar describes, “Religious beliefs, minority group feelings, and customs are integrated into an organic whole among these national minorities. Religion sets the norms for their core culture and morality. Religion and the national minorities are still intimately related. We must respect their religious beliefs, or else it will affect the unity [with the nation] of the national minorities.”<sup>89</sup> In the first half of 1950s, the CCP paid attention to implementing the religious policy in line with the promise of the Common Program (1949) and the Constitution (1954). Article 5 of the Common Program stipulated that “The people of the People’s Republic of China shall have freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association,

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Sun, *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949*. p. 46.

<sup>86</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 46.

<sup>87</sup> A. Khan, "China's Religious Policy." p. 1. Available at [http://www.issi.org.pk/publication-files/1302769584\\_725810.pdf](http://www.issi.org.pk/publication-files/1302769584_725810.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> The largest religion among the minority groups is Islam which is the faith of some fifteen million people of mainly the Hui and the Uyghurs. They are concentrated in Ningxia Hui and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regions respectively. The second largest religious group is the Lamaists. Lamaism (also known as the Tibetan Buddhism) is believed mostly among the Tibetans and Mongols.

<sup>89</sup> Zhufeng Luo, *Religion under Socialism in China*, Chinese Studies on China (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1991). p. 11.

correspondence, person, residence, mobility, religious belief and the freedom of holding processions and demonstrations.”

And Article 8 of the Constitution confirmed that “Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief.” The CCP established various governmental bodies such as the Religious Affairs Bureau to implement the religious freedom for minorities and to serve as a connection between government and the various religious organizations. In an effort to make friends from the minority religious circles, the CCP leaders met with the religious leaders in minorities on a regular basis. For instance, Mao Zedong said in 1952 when he met with a Tibetan Goodwill Delegation that “The CCP has adopted the policy of protecting religion. The party respects religious belief. This policy, as presently adopted, will continue in the future.”<sup>90</sup>

Another important aspect of minority culture—language—was not neglected either. Language (both spoken and written form) is a very important means for any nationalities to keep their cultural survival. Language “embodies not only the lifestyle and literature, but the legends and values of a people.”<sup>91</sup> Language also serves as a medium for a people to communicate with each other and allows a people to establish an “imagined community” through sharing the same language just as the rise of “print-capitalism” facilitated the growth of nationalism.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, as the Tower of Babel in the Bible teaches us, language is a crucial element to unite a people.<sup>93</sup> In addition, as Mackerras correctly argues, “although it is perfectly possible for a spoken language to maintain strength in the home indefinitely without being used in the schools, schools can provide a major mechanism for the transmission for written languages from

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p. 143.

<sup>91</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 129.

<sup>92</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

<sup>93</sup> <sup>6</sup> The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” Genesis 11: 6-7.

generation to generation.”<sup>94</sup> According to some anthropological studies, Uyghur students educated in schools where Mandarin is the dominant language of instruction do not accomplish the same degree of proficiency in their native language as Uyghurs educated with their own language in formal school education.<sup>95</sup>

The new measures were taken in three related ways to fulfill the pledges of the CCP to encourage and develop minority languages. In line with the resolution passed by the Ministry of Education in 1951, minority languages must be used as the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools in minority areas. Second, minorities having their own languages but without written languages should be assisted by the CCP officials to create writing systems (in case of minorities having imperfect scripts to reform them for better ones). Li Weihai, the Director of the CCP United Front Work Department recalled that the “Zhuang people were more grateful for the creation of a writing system for their language than the establishment of their autonomous government in Guangxi province.”<sup>96</sup> Third, all the CCP officials working in minority areas were required to learn the local languages.

For instance, the Mongolian bureau of the CCP Central Committee required government officials to study Mongol for “six hours a week and reach primary school graduate level within one year or so.”<sup>97</sup> In the other case of Tibet, all CCP officials including the PLA troops were also instructed from the top of the CCP leadership to learn the Tibetan language in a hope that this could help facilitate better and harmonious relationship between the local Tibetans and the Han officials in Tibet. In addition, the publication of books and magazines and radio broadcasts in

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<sup>94</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 129.

<sup>95</sup> T.A. GROSE, "Educating Xinjiang's Uyghurs: Achieving Success or Creating Unrest," *The Virginia review of Asian studies* (2008). p. 127.

<sup>96</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 47.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49.

minority languages (in particular, in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uyghur languages) flourished around 1952.<sup>98</sup>

During the first several years of 1950s, the CCP rule received a warm welcome in minority areas and the minority people were generally pleased and satisfied with the CCP work in their regions. And the efforts of the CCP to establish autonomous minority communities also made steady progress.<sup>99</sup> The accommodation approach of the CCP made it much easier to smoothly set up the autonomous government in Xinjiang Uyghur region in 1955 without provoking any sense of local nationalism among indigenous Muslim Uyghur population. McMillen also assesses that through “moderate and pragmatic policies,” the CCP was able to consolidate its power in Xinjiang province.<sup>100</sup> And the Tibetan representatives and the PRC signed the Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (better known as the 17-Point Agreement) in Beijing in 1951. Point 1 and 3 declared that Tibet would become a part of China while according to the Common Program, the Tibetan people would have the right of exercising national regional autonomy. Ningxia Hui and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region were established in 1958.

The first decade of the CCP’s integration efforts toward minority nationalities was epitomized by the accommodation strategy as apparently shown in Article 3 of 1954 Constitution.

ARTICLE 3 The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multinational state. All the nationalities are equal. Discrimination against or oppression of any nationality, and acts which undermine the unity of the nationalities, are prohibited. All the nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and to preserve or reform their own customs and ways. Regional autonomy applies in areas where a

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<sup>98</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 120.

<sup>99</sup> The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region was established in 1947 with the support of the ethnic Mongolian Communists even before the CCP won its victory in China.

<sup>100</sup> Donald Hugh McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, A Westview/Dawson Replica Edition (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979). pp. 84-90.

minority nationality lives in a compact community. All the national autonomous areas are inseparable parts of the People's Republic of China.

There are three very clear principles in Article 3. First, the CCP emphasizes the principle of "equality." In the New China, minorities and the Han Chinese should be treated equally with no more the Han chauvinism nor discrimination against minorities. Second, minority nationalities have the right to enjoy regional autonomy. Third, they have the freedom to preserve their own cultural characteristic. The various laws with the leadership's affirmative attitude had centered on promoting a consciousness of being Chinese upon minority people with the accommodation approach in the New China.

#### Assimilation between 1958 and 1976

The choice of accommodation on integration efforts was very successful in the first decade of the CCP governance. Minorities seemed pleased and satisfied with the CCP rule and willing to be a part of the New Chinese nation. Minorities were treated, in fact, considerably better by the CCP than by the previous dynasties including the KMT governance. There were no notable or massive revelations of local national sentiments among major minorities. And the CCP leadership also had a positive self-evaluation on the minority policies. For instance, in 1956, the NAC Chairman Ulanfu (a native of Mongol) made a major speech that there were great achievements obtained by the CCP policies in minority regions during the past years. He added that "these achievements were said to prove the correctness of the party's policies."<sup>101</sup>

However, toward the end of 1950s, there were signs that the CCP was beginning to move away from the basic accommodation approach of the previous decade to the absorption of the

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<sup>101</sup> J. Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly* 35, no. -1 (1968). p. 139.

minorities by an assimilation attitude. The assimilation strategy continued until 1976. During the periods of political campaigns, particularly the GLF and the Cultural Revolution, there were massive suppression of minority nationalities and attempts to forcibly assimilate them into the Han majority. The idea of national differences was completely rejected, and religious persecution as well as cultural destruction of minorities were the dominant themes of the CCP governance. The assimilation approach of the CCP resulted in tension and violence in many minorities, and the relations between the state (and the Han majority) and minority people had sharply deteriorated.

The new regime led by the CCP was very confident in the success which it achieved in terms of generating political stability and the overall economic success of the New China in the first decade of its rule. Once the CCP attained the political stability of the young Communist regime by providing food and security to the members of the society (including minorities), it quickly was moving to further solidify its power and to incorporate the whole nation under its ideological direction. During this period of political fervor, the GLF was one of the major political campaigns pushed ahead by the CCP leadership. It can be seen that the GLF was one of the boldest efforts by the new regime to further consolidate power and to integrate the entire nation.

The slogan “the Great Leap Forward” which appeared for the first time on the People’s Daily on November 13, 1957 was formally adopted by the CCP at the second session of the eighth Party Congress in 1958. After winning enough “conservative” support within the CCP through the “Hundred Flowers Campaign” and the “Anti-Rightist Campaign,” Mao Zedong was able to push and increase the intensity of his political and economic plans concentrating on both accelerating the development of heavy and agricultural industry and mass-mobilizing the

peasants in People's Communes. The Hundred Flowers Campaign was the policy by Mao Zedong of allowing the masses and the intellectuals to express their political views in 1957. Having confidence in the political and economic success following the First Five Year Plan (1952-1957), Mao decided to encourage free expression in the slogan, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools contend." As Han S. Park observes, "the unfettered expression of new ideas and views inevitably led to criticism of the incumbent government."<sup>102</sup>

Mao Zedong's motivation behind this campaign is still controversial. Some scholars view it as "a ruse" intended to ferret out rightists and counter-revolutionaries whereas others argue that Mao was motivated by his sincere desire to elicit the opinions of the non-Party intellectuals. The campaign opened a Pandora's Box of discontent and criticism against the party and Mao Zedong himself. Those who had different thoughts from Mao were suppressed and punished. In a response to the Hundred Flowers movement, Mao launched the Anti-Rightist Campaign. It consisted of a series of campaigns to purge so-called alleged "rightists" who mainly referred to critics and intellectuals favoring capitalism and opposing collectivization. The two political campaigns Hundred Flowers Campaign and Anti-Rightist Campaign eventually forced Mao to launch more radical campaign, the GLF.

Minorities were hardly expected to make any exceptions for this nation-wide radical GLF. The GLF policies formulated for the Han Chinese were applied with no alteration in the minority areas. Minorities, like the Han Chinese, were immediately required to be delighted to participate in the GLF and "to transcend ethnic and territorial limits in their broad support for the GLF and the People's Communes."<sup>103</sup> Since the goals of the GLF and the People's Communes were to increase production, to integrate the whole country by penetrating into the populace, and to

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<sup>102</sup> Park, *Human Needs and Political Development : A Dissent to Utopian Solutions*. p. 143.

<sup>103</sup> B.V. Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces* (Mellen Research University Press, 1993). p. 116.

accomplish the pure form of communism, the previous commitments of minority autonomy and the respect of the cultural differences presented obvious obstacles to success of the GLF. More than anything else, the Commune-style collectivization required standardization and uniformity.

Thus, minority diversities in terms of ethnicity, lifestyle, and languages were to be considered as an obstruction to the achievement of the GLF's goals.<sup>104</sup> Whereas the previous minority policy was formulated around a concept of integration with the accommodation approach allowing cultural cultivation and peculiarities of the minorities, the GLF apparently aimed at achieving integration through the simple form of assimilation requiring the extirpation of nationality differences and uniformity. It is no coincidence that the People's Communes commanded conformity and uniformity on the whole society and forced firm measures in the cultural domain that aimed at changing the traditional ways of the minority life.<sup>105</sup> In fact, the GLF and the People's Communes completely changed the traditional lifestyles with which minority nationalities had been embedded for thousands of years overnight.

The CCP leadership perceived that one of the first obstacles to uniformity and unity was minority languages. The rationale behind the national convergence of languages was the reappearance of the Han chauvinism that the CCP strongly warned against during the accommodation period. It was said to minorities that the Han were the majority nationality in terms of both numbers and superior culture. The minorities, thus, needed to know the Han

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<sup>104</sup> Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution." p. 159.

<sup>105</sup> The People's Commune was implemented in support of the GLF. Communes were divided into production brigades and production teams. The Communes has administrative, political, economic, and educational functions. Each Commune was approximately consisted of 4,000 to 5,000 households, and larger Communes consisted of up to 20,000 households. By the end of October 1958, more than 26,000 Communes housing 120 millions rural households had been established. Timothy Cheek, *A Critical Introduction to Mao* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals* (New York, : Praeger, 1960); Roderick MacFarquhar, *China under Mao : Politics Takes Command ; a Selection of Articles from the China Quarterly* (Cambridge [Mass.]: M.I.T. Press, 1966).

language in order to read and study the Han's advanced culture (of course, translation was also both expensive and time-consuming, which was not efficient).<sup>106</sup> The freedom and equality of minority language were completely ignored. Since the assimilation dominated mind-set of the CCP leadership, relations between languages were considered hierarchical rather than equal: Chinese as the common language at the top and minority languages subordinate to the Chinese. The CCP appeared to believe that language assimilation was considered to be inevitable choice for complete integration.

In a stark departure from his previous affirmative position on the respect of minority language diversities, Zhou Enlai in 1958 strongly expressed his opinion to the Congress that the minorities wished to share the Pinyin (the Roman alphabetic style of Chinese writing system) with the Han people to promote cultural exchanges, and that the development and reform of minority languages' writing systems should use the Roman alphabet.<sup>107</sup> Zhou indicated that the adoption of the same alphabet for writing systems for all nationalities would promote the mutual development and the unification of the motherland. Following Zhou's proposals, the monopolistic efforts by the CCP on minority languages were conducted mainly in two forms: multi-step and single-step. On the one hand, the multi-step policy centered on unifying the writing systems of Chinese and minority languages so that minority writing systems were made compatible to Chinese Pinyin system. The next step was to export Chinese words to minority languages without any changes in hopes of achieving language convergence. On the other hand, the single-step policy mainly focused on increasing the use of Chinese in minority communities

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<sup>106</sup> Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution." p. 161.

<sup>107</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 63.

so that in the long term minority languages could be replaced with Chinese as the common language in social intercourse.<sup>108</sup>

After People's Communes were set up in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in 1958 (the same year as the Communes were established in the Han areas), more and more Korean people were forced to learn the Chinese language and Korean schools were increasingly required to employ Chinese as the language of instruction. Before the GLF, neither Korean teachers nor students were really fluent in Chinese because Chinese was the secondary language in schools in Yanbian Prefecture. According to B. V. Olivier's research on Korean minorities in Northeast China, even though students studied Chinese for five to ten years at school, they had difficulties communicating using Chinese.

Along with radicalization of the GLF, Korean teachers were encouraged to launch a campaign to enhance the overall level of Chinese in their schools. By early 1959, they claimed that "85 percent of the teachers were able to lecture in Chinese and that 90 percent of their students, who had really 'jumped a Great Leap Forward' in their knowledge of the Chinese language, could understand and attend lectures and discussions in Chinese."<sup>109</sup> The new measures also aimed to expand the use of Chinese in Korean minority communities. For example, the CCP officials of Korean origin were required to learn and speak Chinese and Chinese should be used in literacy campaigns in Korean minority communities. And the Korean language *Mudanjiang Daily News* also started to circulate the Chinese edition of the newspaper in 1958.<sup>110</sup>

In another example, the CCP plan to reform the Uyghur and Kazakh scripts based on the Roman alphabet of the Han language started to be publicized and propagated in Xinjiang in 1959. In justifying the promulgation of the new writing system, Saifuddin said that "it was impossible

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. pp. 60-68.

<sup>109</sup> Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. p. 119.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

for the national minorities to rely on their own language to develop their culture, science, and techniques at a rapid pace...He repeatedly spoke of fusion and assimilation and the fact that no nationality could develop independently.”<sup>111</sup> In a similar vein, Jiakeluofu, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Language Reform Committee Chairman added that “Based upon current practical work and objective conditions, we have found that what is most suitable for us is not the Slav alphabet but the Latin alphabet.”<sup>112</sup>

The adoption of the new writing reform for Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Kirghiz was motivated by the CCP’s desire to promote national convergence in China. The CCP also seemed induced to “break the hold of Islam on the local peoples”<sup>113</sup> in Xinjiang region in a hope that the new writing scripts based on the Han Pinyin alphabets would weaken the old Muslim religious teachings written in Arabic which were regarded as an obstacle to national convergence. And another important motivation of the new scripts might be, as one observer put it succinctly, that “the substitution of the Latin for the Cyrillic alphabet, moreover, reflected the Party’s continuing drive to eliminate Soviet influence in the region and cut off the indigenous peoples from their kinsmen on the other side of the Sino-Soviet border.”<sup>114</sup>

The language convergence of the CCP was also accompanied by increasingly radical attacks on minorities’ special characteristics. In August 1958, People’s Daily proclaimed that “war was declared against all backward customs which stood in the way of progress and were an obstacle to the development of production.”<sup>115</sup> The previous accommodation for minority cultures and respect for the minority differences was reversed. The CCP intensively sought to

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<sup>111</sup> Saifuddin Azizi, a native of the Uyghur family, was the chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region from 1955 to 1978. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*. p. 119.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. p. 119.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p. 118.

attain the rapid assimilation of the minority peoples and their culture with the Han people of China. Those who emphasized nationalities' local conditions and characteristics over the common characteristics of the whole were criticized. The political fervor was so high that minority peoples, regardless of their nationality, tried to avoid openly speaking of five taboo terms: "our nationality," "characteristics of minority areas," "errors or shortcomings of Han officials," "minority autonomy," and "our community needs."<sup>116</sup> The predominant social discourse during this period was "the fewer the differences among peoples, the faster development can be."<sup>117</sup>

As the GLF gained momentum, minorities' cultures become the clear subjects of increasingly radical attacks. According to Dreyer's extensive account on this matter, herdsmen were asked to turn their animal-grazing lands into farm fields because the lands would be more productively cultivated if sowed with rice. Other minorities were required to abandon their traditional costumes since they were not very helpful to efficient labor in the field. Tibetan women in Gansu were forced to give up their traditional headgears because they would retard their work in the field. Tibetan Buddhist clergies were also called to participate in productive labor, neglecting their duty in prayer and contemplation.

And Tibetans were also mobilized to denounce their local lamarist temples. The Hui (Muslim Chinese), who were banned from eating pork, were required to join mass halls of the multi-national communes in which they were treated with no variation with anyone else. The tradition that Tai women did not work in the field was denounced. The GLF also advocated more uniformity and convergence in minority arts and entertainment. Numerous traditional festivals

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<sup>116</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. pp. 61-62.

<sup>117</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 161.

and celebrations of various minorities were eliminated in the name of increasing production and promoting the commonalities of nationalities. The CCP demanded minority song and dance troupes to be “red and expert,” singing revolutionary songs in the Han language.<sup>118</sup>

The GLF apparently brought about increased resistance within minority areas, resulting in serious tensions and violence between minorities and the CCP government. Commandism and coercive measures of assimilation did arouse the minority nationality sentiments and fueled old antagonism between minority nationalities and the Han Chinese. Numerous rebellions against the CCP leadership took place in various minority areas. As might be expected, major resistances occurred in Tibet and Xinjiang regions in which ethnic and religious animosities were long extant toward the Han Chinese. In Xinjiang, there were a number of militant revolts to the GLF reforms in between 1958 and 1962, but according to Dreyer, “the resistance was apparently uncoordinated and was put down without great difficulty.”<sup>119</sup> The strongest resistance caused by the GLF came from the Tibetan area in March 1959. It was ignited by a small event when Chinese authorities invited the Dalai Lama to a theatrical performance in their military headquarters. Rumor spread that “the Chinese intended to abduct the Tibetan leader and incarcerate him in Beijing to reduce resistance to the reforms.”<sup>120</sup> The revolt was quickly quelled by the Chinese troops. Sixty thousands Tibetans including the Dalai Lama took refuge and fled across the border and into India where they established a government in-exile. The Tibetans argue that they rose up against the Chinese rule because the CCP attempted to destroy the

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<sup>118</sup> Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution." p. 160-163. Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. pp. 116-122.

<sup>119</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 169. Facing the brutal crack-downs of the Chinese troops, many Uyghurs and Kazakhs felt powerless to resist and fled across the border and into the Soviet Union.

<sup>120</sup> J.T. Dreyer, "Assimilation and Accommodation in China," *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in Asia and the Pacific* (1997). p. 368.

Tibetan identity and culture.<sup>121</sup> There is no doubt that the 1959 uprising produced the opposite result from the Tibetan's wishes. Chinese authorities started to tighten their control over the Tibetan area and intensified the assimilation strategy until Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978.

As Dreyer put it, "if the GLF was a failure in Han Chinese, it was a fiasco in the minority areas."<sup>122</sup> The GLF ended with a disastrous failure and the ultimate failure of the GLF discredited the CCP with minority people. It was expected that the GLF was destined to fail. It is almost universal that whenever regimes implement any ambitious plans conflicting with existing cultural norms and social structures, those plans might have resulted in disastrous outcomes. When the radical programs of the GLF and People's Communes were designed to apparently challenge and overrun an indigenous civilization and culture of the Han people as well as the minorities in China, such an attempt was inevitably bound to fail.

The immediate failure of the GLF campaign prompted the CCP leadership to inaugurate another massive campaign which was viewed as necessary for more effective political integration. The Cultural Revolution, then, may be viewed as an all-out effort by the CCP regime to further solidify the regime's power and achieve the goal of political integration. While the Cultural Revolution was a national campaign, many aspects of the movement targeting the minorities proved to be quite catastrophic. Following the Party Central Committee's August 8, 1966 Decision (also known as "the 16 Points") launching the Cultural Revolution, the Cultural Revolution started to gain momentum throughout China. Point One of the 16 Points decision clearly manifested the objectives of the Cultural Revolution that "Although the bourgeoisie has

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<sup>121</sup> Tibetans in exile claimed that the Chinese government "committed genocide through 'sterilization and assimilation through compulsory intermarriage.' They also charged the Chinese with destructing the temples and scriptures, forcing labor, and seizing the Tibetan resources. According to Dreyer, it is difficult to prove the first two allegations (sterilization and compulsory intermarriage). The latter allegations have been confirmed by successive waves of refugees, investigations by Western human rights organizations, and photographic evidence." Ibid. p. 368.

<sup>122</sup> Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution." p. 99.

been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavor to stage a comeback. The proletariat must do the exact opposite: it must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society. At present, our objective is to struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic ‘authorities’ and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.”<sup>123</sup>

The 1966 Decision became a radical battle to transform the mental outlook and revolutionize the whole of Chinese society, advocating the ideology of the Maoist radicals. In Maoist’s ideology, revolution has two separate stages. The first stage is called “internal revolution” and the second is “external revolution.”<sup>124</sup> The internal revolution is the process in which internal contradictions should be cleaned up in China. The biggest internal contradiction which should be eliminated through the internal revolution was the class contradiction in Mao Zedong’s view. Thus, all internal contradictions during the Cultural Revolution had to be seen in class terms. There was no exception that the nationality question had to be viewed as a class struggle between the revisionist line and the proletarian line. Class struggle that had to take place in the Han Chinese should also be applied to the minority areas. Thus, the dominant theme

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<sup>123</sup> "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," *Beijing Review* 9, no. 33 (1966). pp. 6-11. All 16 points are available at <http://marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-33g.htm>

<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, China also has external contradictions between China and foreign powers. This means that external people are always coming to take over China. This external contradiction can and should be violent and by force. This provides the rationale with China to have military strength in order to counter external strength.

during this period was that the nationality issue in China should be solved by forcing class struggle. The equality and improvement for a minority nationality should be achieved by the proletarian people of that nationality, and the nationality problem should be resolved through the revolutionary struggle of the masses of exploited people.<sup>125</sup>

The influence of Mao's class struggle idea on the CCP minority policy was revealed long before the official advent of the Cultural Revolution. In support of Dr. King's civil rights movements, Mao Zedong pointed out in 1963 that "the struggle between nations is essentially an issue of class struggle. In the United States, it is the reactionary ruling class of the White people that oppresses the black people. The White ruling class does not represent the White masses of workers, farmers, and intellectuals, and other open-minded people."<sup>126</sup> In acting as a spokesperson for the CCP Central Committee, *Red Flag*<sup>127</sup> published in 1964 an article which elaborated on Mao Zedong's ideology regarding the relationship between the concept of nations and class struggle. According to the article, when one nation was oppressed by another nation, it was the bourgeoisie ruling class of one nation who actually oppressed the working class of the other nation. Therefore, oppression of minorities was essentially class oppression; the national question should be resolved through the revolution of the proletariat; the national questions in China should be subordinate to China's whole revolutionary course.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*. p. 152.

<sup>126</sup> *People's Daily*, August 9, 1963, p. 1. Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 72.

<sup>127</sup> *Red Flag* was the journal of the CCP Central Committee. The first issue was published in 1958 and it ceased publication in 1988. It served as a key fount of Maoist ideological inspiration. The journal was replaced by a reform-oriented magazine called *Qiushi* (Seeking Truth). "The name was taken from the slogan, "Seek truth from facts," popularized by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in his drive to supplant ideological orthodoxy with a pragmatic national quest for economic development." *Los Angeles Times*, May 01, 1988.

<sup>128</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. pp. 73-74.

In addition, the existing inequality of political, economic, and cultural conditions in minorities and national animosities between different nationalities can also be solved by the China's socialist revolution and construction. By defining the minority nationality issues as part of China's revolutionary course, the CCP required the minorities not to think about national differences between the Han people and minorities, but to cooperate with the CCP leadership to strike down anti-party, anti-socialists, rightists, and reactionary/revisionist remnants in China. National convergence assumed the top priority of the CCP leadership. This view was also represented in a draft of the CCP constitution in 1968 which stated that "the broad revolutionary masses maintain that the following directive from Chairman Mao should be stressed in the new party constitution of the Ninth Congress: national struggle is, in the final analysis, a question of class struggle. The unity of all nationalities on the basis of the thought of Chairman Mao Zedong and on the socialist road should be stressed."<sup>129</sup> Mao's class struggle theory on minority question was articulated in the party constitutions that were approved at the Ninth (1969), Tenth (1973), and Eleventh (1977) Congresses of the CCP. Mao Zedong's class theory on the question of minorities apparently served as an ideological justification for the policies of national unity and convergence, relegating accommodation policies and forcing assimilation practices toward minority nationalities.

The Cultural Revolution brought about dramatic changes to the political, economic and social nature of the national minorities in China. First of all, the fundamental principle of minority existence that "China was a multinational country" was denied and the predominant thinking was that nationality policy was no longer needed. This atmosphere was clearly illustrated in Jiang Qing's (Mao's wife and leader of the radical faction known as the "gang of four") saying: "Why do we need national minorities anyway? National identity should be done

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<sup>129</sup> Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution." p. 209.

away with! If you follow socialism, why worry about ethnicity?”<sup>130</sup> The minorities were no longer to be labeled “distinctive” or “special” or “different,” and no special policies was to be implemented for minority these regions. The accommodation approach which acknowledged and respected the distinctive characteristics and peculiarities of minority people was completely rejected as a bourgeois reactionary line because it would prevent the minorities from participating in the Chinese revolutionary course with the Han majority.

Regional autonomy, one of the cornerstones of minority policy, was criticized as creating “independent regions” and “dividing the nation,” and the autonomous governments were disbanded in many places. Regional autonomy verbatim ceased to exist.<sup>131</sup> The PLA penetrated into most autonomous regions and took over the reins of local governments. The Regional Revolutionary Committee established by the PLA assumed power and acted as official governing organs in minority areas.<sup>132</sup> In fact, the PLA was one of the two supporting organizations for Mao’s Cultural Revolution along with the Red Guards. The power of the PLA reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution. Mao Zedong wanted the PLA to play a active role in the Cultural Revolution by strongly directing the PLA to become versed in politics and to become a “model of revolutionary movement which was to be emulated by all members of Chinese society”<sup>133</sup> when the nation faced a critical moment.

One of the notorious campaigns in the Cultural Revolution was the all-out attacks on the vestiges of the so-called “four olds: old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas.” Mao called for the “four olds” to be swept away to make it possible for the revolution to completely

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<sup>130</sup> Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese : Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 149 (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1991). p. 138 & p. 203.

<sup>131</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 26.

<sup>132</sup> Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. p. 147.

<sup>133</sup> McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*. p. 138.

succeed. The attacks against the four olds took form of a “renewed” campaign to religious persecution and cultural destruction. The minority nationalities with no doubt constituted a natural target of attack in which there existed the greatest attachment to religion and people strongly maintained their traditional ways. The young revolutionary Red Guards took up this task. The religions which were defined as “feudal superstition” came under massive attack. Outward expressions of religion were completely prohibited as counterrevolutionary and all religious rituals, practices, and observances were forbidden. Many temples, churches, lamaseries and religious buildings were destroyed. Images of Buddha were demolished. In Tibet, the Red Guards “ripped down pictures of the Dalai Lama from the walls of Tibetan homes and replaced them with pictures of Chairman Mao.”<sup>134</sup> Writing and research about Chinese religious history stopped. The situation was as if religion had never existed in China.<sup>135</sup>

An official attempt to abolish languages and scripts of minorities was also made. The single-step policy to increase the use of the Chinese became the government’s dominant practices; the use of minority language in public places became more restricted. Only Chinese should be spoken at public meetings, and in many places it was condemned as a crime to use one’s native language. The publications of newspapers and radio broadcasts in minority languages were terminated. The number of both magazines and newspapers in minority languages decreased from 36 in 1965 to 5 in 1970.<sup>136</sup> Teachers and students in minority areas were required to speak Chinese more and more in schools; After all, Chinese-only in education and government service became a common practice in many minority communities. The number

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<sup>134</sup> Dreyer, "Assimilation and Accommodation in China." p. 370.

<sup>135</sup> CP FitzGerald, "Religion and China's Cultural Revolution," (JSTOR, 1967); Luo, *Religion under Socialism in China*; J. Zuo, "Political Religion: The Case of the Cultural Revolution in China," *Sociology of Religion* 52, no. 1 (1991); C. P. FitzGerald, "Religion and China's Cultural Revolution," *Pacific Affairs* 40, no. 1/2 (1967).

<sup>136</sup> Ip, "Minority Policy in Post-Mao China". p. 26.

of textbooks in minority languages decreased from 787 in 1965 to 75 in 1970.<sup>137</sup> The written scripts of only five minority languages were allowed (Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazak, and Korean), but even their use was severely curtailed. Along with the Han language becoming the only permissible language across the whole China, minority students dropped out of colleges, and almost all schools and colleges for minorities were disbanded. In addition, customs and manners such as songs, dances, arts, traditional holidays, traditional medicines, and literatures of minority nationalities were smashed and prohibited.<sup>138</sup>

Among many factors influencing assimilation policies in minority areas is population transfer or internal immigration within China. During the Cultural Revolution, the relocation of the Han Chinese to settle in minority areas was officially sponsored by the CCP government and was carried out by the Production and Construction Corps (hereafter referred to as PCC).<sup>139</sup> During the period of the GLF and the Cultural Revolution, an estimated 12.25 million Han Chinese migrated into the minority areas.<sup>140</sup> Of the five autonomous regions, the Han population had increased most in Xinjiang. As the figures in Table 3 shows, the proportion of the Han population reached its peak in 1978, accounting for 41.6 percent of a total population of 12.33 million. The proportion of the Uyghurs was decreasing whereas the proportion of the Han population was increasing in the 1960s and 1970s. The Han population slightly decreased in the 1980s, but the Han population has by and large maintained the similar proportion of the population in Xinjiang until now. The ratio of the Han in Inner Mongolia relative to Mongolians

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>138</sup> For a detailed list of revisions in the policies about minorities during the Cultural Revolution, see Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* pp. 25-28.

<sup>139</sup> The PCC was designed to carry out infrastructure construction and improvement projects in China's remote minority territories. The CCP used the PCC as a tool to promote large scale Han migration into minority regions. J.D. Betz, "An Institutional Assessment of Ethnic Conflict in China," (DTIC Document, 2008), p. 29.

<sup>140</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 93.

had continuously increased since the autonomous region was established in 1947. By the time the Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976, the Han populations made up about 95.3 percent of the total population of the Inner Mongolia.<sup>141</sup>

On the contrary to the popular assumption, it is noted that the Tibet was not affected by the Han migrations during the Cultural Revolution. There were far more Tibetans than the Han Chinese in the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1960s and 1970s. The Tibetans had accounted for much higher than 90 percent of the total population in the Tibet Autonomous Region, and this trend has been continued until today. However, when the Dalai Lama addressed the British Parliament in July 1996, he claimed that “the destruction of cultural artifacts and traditions

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<sup>141</sup> J.T. Dreyer, "Go West Young Han: The Hsia Fang Movement to China's Minority Areas," *Pacific Affairs* 48, no. 3 (1975).

Table 3  
 Minority and Han population in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang (1947-1976)

Region	Total Population (in millions)	Minorities		Han	
		Population (in millions)	% of total	Population (in millions)	% of total
Inner Mongolia					
1947	N.A.	N.A.	25.0	N.A.	75.0
1958	8.2	1.2	14.6	7.0	85.4
1959	9.7	1.3	13.4	8.4	86.6
1969	13.0	1.0	7.7	12.0	92.3
1976	8.6	0.4	4.7	8.2	95.3
Xinjiang					
1949	3.7	3.4	91.9	0.3	8.1
1953	4.9	4.6	93.9	0.3	6.1
1957	5.6	4.3	76.8	1.3	23.2
1960	7.0	5.0	71.4	2.0	28.6
1975	10.0	6.2	62.0	3.8	38.0
1978	12.33	5.1	41.6	7.2	58.4

Source: Heberer, Thomas. *China and Its National Minorities*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989. p. 94.

coupled with the mass influx of Chinese into Tibet amounts to cultural genocide.” He added that “the very survival of the Tibetans as a distinct people is under constant threat.”<sup>142</sup>

What did the Dalai Lama mean by “the mass influx of Chinese into Tibet?” It is inferred that the Dalai Lama referred not to the Tibetan Autonomous Region, but to “the Tibetan ethnographic areas that included the whole of Qinghai Province, and parts of Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.”<sup>143</sup> Historically the Tibetans were scattered residing in several provinces of the current China proper. The Chinese government “divided what the Tibetans considered their historical homeland between the Tibet Autonomous Region and the neighboring provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.”<sup>144</sup> Through this political gerrymandering, the CCP intended to govern a large section of the Tibetan population under the control of the normal Chinese provinces, being able to avoid the Dalai Lama’s direct influence on them. During the Cultural Revolution, there were huge migrations of the Han Chinese into these provinces once regarded as the Tibetan ethnographic areas.

The official reason of this internal migration of the Han people into minority areas was to assist the minorities in economic constructions; backward local people were not sufficient to develop by themselves so the more skilled Han Chinese would help them achieve the growth of the local economies. However, the massive influx of the Han people increased the Han influence and control over the minorities, which clearly undermined the regional autonomy of minority areas. In addition, all the benefits of the economic developments in the minority regions were distributed to the Han settlers, not the local people. This unfair distribution undoubtedly caused

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<sup>142</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 138. In a similar sense, Human Rights Watch report of 2001 also argues that the Uyghurs “have struggled for cultural survival in the face of a government-supported influx by Chinese migrants.” *Human Right Watch*, “China: Human Rights Concerns in Xinjiang,” October 18, 2001. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/asia/china-bck1017.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. p. 139.

<sup>144</sup> Betz, "An Institutional Assessment of Ethnic Conflict in China." p. 30.

resistance and resentments among the minorities. Moreover, the imposition of the Han ways of life on minorities was quite a natural consequence of this population transfer. There was no doubt that the CCP intended to facilitate assimilation of the minorities into the mainstream Chinese society by watering down the minority culture through the internal migration during the Cultural Revolution. Nowadays, it is self-criticized by the CCP that a “fascist dictatorship was exercised over the national minorities,” and that “forced assimilation” had been pursued during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>145</sup> If the Cultural Revolution was the “lost decade” for the Han Chinese, it was “the Dark Ages” for the minority nationalities in China.

#### Accommodation between 1978 to the Present

China began the process of overhauling its minority policies that Mao Zedong had installed after the “gang of four” was arrested in 1976 following the death of Mao. The CCP’s integration efforts on minority nationalities centered once again on restoring the accommodation approach which was implemented from 1949 to 1957. The CCP leadership strove to reverse its image by showing a positive and affirmative attitude toward national minorities in various ways. Sincere attempts were made to translate this attitude into administrative and legislation reforms for minorities. In addition, the CCP endeavored to ensure that the reform policies were implemented accordingly in the field of minority regions.

The main turning point that ushered in the “new era” in minority policies was the third plenum of the eleventh Central Committee of the CCP of December of 1978. One of the most crucial changes in this plenum came on the national question and the relationship between the national question and class struggle. The CCP clearly denounced Mao Zedong’s class struggle theory that the minority issues came down fundamentally not to ethnicity but to class. The CCP

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<sup>145</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 28.

determined that class struggle was no longer the main internal contradiction China had to overcome. The fundamental contradiction was the non-ideological economic development rather than politics of the obsessive proletariat revolution.<sup>146</sup>

In the new leadership's view, minority issues in China should be resolved by increasing regional autonomy and by eradicating the political, economic, and cultural inequalities among the nationalities through the socialist modernization.<sup>147</sup> Creating prosperity through socialist modernization amounted to the CCP's top priority. This theoretical departure on ethnic issues from the previous leadership assumed minority people as co-nationals and equal partners in socialist modernization, and the importance of minority contribution (support and participation) in the process of economic modernization was recognized. The spirit of interdependence based on equality among nationalities was emphasized and reiterated by the CCP leadership in the beginning of the new era.

As the CCP leadership's affirmative attitude was disseminated toward minorities at the beginning of the 1980s, there were several signs to reaffirm the spirit of the accommodation approach. First of all, the CCP Central Committee approved several recommendations made by its UFWD (the party organ most closely associated with minority affairs): 1) rehabilitation of the top CCP officials who were in charge of minority affairs and were purged during the Cultural Revolution. This decision clearly signaled the message that the accommodation policies toward minorities would be re-implemented; 2) rehabilitation of prominent intellectuals and officials of minority origin who were labeled and ostracized as "local nationalists" or "local splitists." Their restoration not only helped to please minority people who were alienated from the CCP (and to heal the wounds in the relationship between minorities and the CCP leadership), but also offered

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<sup>146</sup> Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. pp. 175-177.

<sup>147</sup> In particular, the CCP focused on so-called "four modernizations (economy, agriculture, scientific and technological development, and national defense)" advocated by Deng Xiaoping.

the experienced work forces who were very enthusiastic about implementing regional autonomy, and 3) paying more attention to those minority people who resided in outside the jurisdictions of autonomous regions. They were suffering more than any minority communities from the forced assimilation during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>148</sup>

With the approvals of those recommendations, the autonomous governments of minority regions, which were closed, inoperable, and replaced by other administrative bodies such as the Revolutionary Committee during the Mao's Revolution period, were able to reopen and function. A "cut all with the same knife"<sup>149</sup> approach toward minorities, which was the dominant tone of Mao's rule, seemed apparently rejected. When policies were formulated and implemented in minority areas, the political, economic, and cultural characteristics of minorities once again started to be taken into consideration. Contrary to the previous "cookie-cutter" approach, many policies implemented on the Han Chinese were not introduced into minority areas, and the autonomous governments were granted freedom to adopt policies acceptable and suitable to their specific conditions. This view was clearly re-acknowledged in Ulanhu's statement that "There are vast differences in the characteristics of China's various nationalities... They must be allowed to adopt methods and steps suited to their own conditions."<sup>150</sup>

One of the crucial events heralding a sea change in minority policy in the post-Mao era was Hu Yaobang's visit (then the General Secretary of the CCP) to Tibet in May 1980. The Chinese delegation led by Hu reportedly were stunned by what they saw, in particular, in terms of Tibetan culture devastated by radical Maoists, and promised to bring about reforms and changes in Tibet. Their ideas were announced in the so-called "six-point program" designed to

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<sup>148</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 79.

<sup>149</sup> Ip, "Minority Policy in Post-Mao China". p. 34.

<sup>150</sup> *Beijing Review*, July 2, 1981, p. 18

improve conditions in Tibet: 1) Implementing laws to protect the right of regional autonomy and special interests in Tibet; 2) Exempting the Tibetans from taxes over the following three to five years; 3) Adopting special policies promoting Tibet's economic development; 4) Striving to revive and develop Tibetan culture, education, and science; 5) Requiring the Han Chinese officials working in Tibet to learn the Tibetan language; and 6) Increasing the number of the local officials of the Tibetan origin to the extent that more than 2/3rds of all government functionaries would be Tibetans within the next 2-3 years. Along with the pledges of the reforms, the CCP delegation was not reluctant to offer an apology for the past wrongdoings the CCP had inflicted. In a speech delivered during his visit to Lhasa, Hu said that "We feel that our party has let the Tibetan people down. We feel very bad. We have worked nearly thirty years, but the life of the Tibetan people has not been notably improved. Are we not to blame?"<sup>151</sup>

In fact, following Hu's visit, the improvement of the situation was palpable in every corner of the Tibetan society. The economy was developing due to about forty construction projects approved by the central government; religion was quickly revived to an extent that the monasteries were rebuilt and monks returned to the monasteries to resume their normal clerical life; foreign tourists were allowed to visit Tibet though many of them were supporters for Tibetan independence. The situation was much better in Tibet in 1980s compared to the times prior to Hu's visit. As Mackerras observes, "this was still China, but great strides had been made in permitting Tibetan culture and religion to flourish in a region that was still overwhelmingly Tibetan in demographic composition."<sup>152</sup> The completely different posture of the CCP which

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<sup>151</sup> Kenny Lee, *China & Tibet*, April 12, 2008, at <http://www.sohosos.com/weblog/2008/04/china-tibet.html>; Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*; Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*; Yao Wang, "Hu Yaobang's Visit to Tibet, May 22-31, 1980, an Important Development in the Chinese Government's Tibet Policy," *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, London: Hurst (1994).

<sup>152</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon : China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (Berkeley:

was revealed from Hu's visit in Tibet appeared very much sufficient to convince other minorities as well that their lives would be much better in years to come.

The revival of the accommodation tone by the CCP was successfully translated into several legal measures that followed in 1980s. In order to ensure the restoration of accommodation strategy, the new 1982 Constitution restored and expanded the status and rights of minorities that exceeded the previous legal documents. First of all, the Preamble of the 1982 Constitution clearly warned against "Han chauvinism" by stipulating that "in the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism" which was viewed by minorities as the underlying force of assimilation policies. Article 4 was also devoted to reflect and re-emphasize the CCP's accommodation attitude toward minorities.

ARTICLE 4 All nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops the relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any acts that undermine the unity of the nationalities or instigate their secession are prohibited. The state helps the areas inhabited by minority nationalities speed up their economic and cultural development in accordance with the peculiarities and needs of the different minority nationalities. Regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in compact communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established for the exercise of the right of autonomy. All the national autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China. The people of all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and to preserve or reform their own ways and customs.

The general guidelines of minority policy stipulated in Article 4 were further circumstantially delineated in the whole of Section VI (Article 112-122) that focused on the organs of self-government of national autonomous areas. Article 114 declared that the administrative head of an autonomous place (regions, prefectures, and counties) must belong to a

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University of California Press, 1997); Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p.30.

citizen of the nationality exercising regional autonomy.<sup>153</sup> Article 116 empowered congresses of autonomous areas to enact autonomy regulations and specific regulations in the light of the political, economic and cultural characteristics of the nationality in the areas. Article 117 and 118 gave the autonomous areas the power to administer their finances and to arrange their own local economic development. Article 119 granted the autonomous areas the freedom to independently administer, protect, and prosper their own cultures. Article 120 allowed minorities to organize their own public security forces according to their needs. Finally, Article 121 stipulated that minority peoples had the rights to employ the spoken and written language in common use in the locality to perform their functions of self-government of the national autonomous areas.

Following the promulgation of the 1982 Constitution, the Law on Regional Autonomy of Minority Nationalities was passed in 1984 which provided a more detailed guideline for all minority work. The 1984 law served as the most extensive and far-reaching legislation on the rights of minority peoples by elaborating provisions on regional national autonomy stipulated in the 1982 Constitution. This law further expanded the structure of autonomous regimes by specifying more economic and cultural rights to minorities to meet the growing demands from minorities following the CCP's accommodation spirit.

Six Articles were committed to specifically elaborate on the use and development of minority languages in the 1984 law.<sup>154</sup> Article 10 declared that autonomous governments should guarantee the freedom for minority nationalities to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. Article 21 required autonomous governments to use languages and scripts commonly used in the locality for their official business. Article 37 emphasized the importance of the local

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<sup>153</sup> Some scholars raise a question about the genuineness of regional autonomy because there is no provision that the Party Secretary of an autonomous place must belong to a citizen of the nationality exercising regional autonomy. In reality, the administrative head of an autonomous place still remains subordinate to the Party Secretary in that autonomous place who is always a Han Chinese.

<sup>154</sup> The 1984 law consisted of seven Chapters and 74 Articles.

languages in education. Schools (classes and grades) and other institutions of education where most of the students come from minority nationalities should use textbooks in their own languages and use their languages as the media of instruction. And financial support should be provided for the compilation translation and publishing of teaching materials and publications in languages of minority nationalities. Article 47 also required autonomous governments to use the language commonly used in the locality in court proceedings. The courts also should provide translation and interpretation for any party to the court proceedings who is not familiar with the spoken or written languages commonly used in the locality. Both Article 49 and 53 stipulated that autonomous governments should educate the Han officials to learn and to respect the spoken and written languages of the local minority nationalities.

Following the 1984 law, a few minority nationalities started to enact local laws regarding the language use in their autonomous areas. These included those who had the strong perseverance on the use of their own language as the medium of instruction in schools: the Koreans, the Uyghurs, the Tibetans, the Mongolians, the Dai, and the Yi. Beginning in 1980, the Korean language slowly regained its status as the first language of the Korean autonomous areas. Koreans started to proudly speak and use their own language in their daily life: something unthinkable during the Cultural Revolution. They retrieved the credo that safeguarding their identity and culture would be impossible without facilitating the use of the mother tongue by the general population.

Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture resumed its policy that all CCP officials of non-Korean origin should learn Korean because Korean was now the main language in the prefecture. The autonomous government established language classes for these officials so that their Korean level could become good enough to communicate with the local people and to understand the

Korean media. In addition, the Korean leaders in Yanbian strove to increase the use of Korean not only in official records/documents but also in local commercial business. Similar measures to promote the Korean language were followed in other Korean areas. The media made an enormous contribution to the overall effort of the restoration of the Korean language in these Korean communities. The publication of several newspapers in the Korean language was resumed quickly in all three provinces (Jilin, Liaoning, and Heilongjiang) in Northeast of China where Koreans were concentrated. These Korean newspapers were not a mere translation of the Chinese language newspapers. Instead, they printed a completely different edition in order to satisfy the information needs of the Korean people. The circulation of these newspapers rapidly increased among the Koreans in the late 1980s: the Korean language Yanbian daily had a circulation of 30,000 copies; Heilongjiang News reached 40,000 copies; Jilin Daily News published about 7,000 copies. In addition, all of these Korean communities had radio programs in Korean and Yanbian even had television program in Korea.<sup>155</sup>

In 1988, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture passed a “Regulation on the Korean language Work” which was aimed at specifying the use of the Korean language in line with the 1984 regional autonomy law. The linguist Minglang Zhou evaluates this Regulation on the Korean language Work (8 Chapters and 39 Articles) as “the most comprehensive on minority language use in an autonomous prefecture, and setting a model for other autonomous prefecture to follow.”<sup>156</sup> Thus, some clauses of this Regulation are worth being mentioned here. Article 2, 3, and 4 defined the status of the Korean language as the main language of Yanbian. Article 5 stipulated that that all CCP officials of non-Korean origin should learn the Korean language. Article 7 and 9 approved the establishment of the Korean language working committee to carry

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<sup>155</sup> Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. pp. 229-233.

<sup>156</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 87.

out the execution of language policy throughout the prefecture. Article 10, 11, 12, and 16 required all official documents and reports including the court proceedings to be issued in both Korean and Chinese. Articles 18 through 25 required the mandatory use of the Korean language as the medium of instruction in all Korean schools and in the media publications. Article 37 offered official rewards for those who carry out the law successfully, and punishments for those who failed to implement it.<sup>157</sup> As seen in some of the articles above, this Regulation served as the legal guideline to guarantee the use and development of the Korean language in Yanbian. The Korean schools were reopened and efforts were made to expand the use of the Korean language in school education in the Korean communities. The number of Korean schools increased in all of the Korean autonomous areas, and so did the number of the Korean teachers. The teachers again started to teach their Korean students in Korean, not in Chinese. Mackerras observed during his visit in 1990 to Yanbian primary and secondary schools that the use of the Korean language was very widespread (there was hardly any evidence of Chinese) and that there were a range of textbooks written in the Korean language.<sup>158</sup>

The Tibetans' effort to achieve the language equality matched those of the Korean autonomous areas. In 1987, Tibet autonomous government passed the similar language governing law as the Koreans. This law had almost identical contents to the Korean Regulation. For example, it stipulated that the Tibetan language was the first language of Tibet, and that it should be used in official as well as private business in the jurisdiction of the Tibet autonomous areas. The widespread use of the textbooks written in the Tibetan language was very common in Tibet and some textbooks were specially written in the Tibetan language with a focus on the history and culture of Tibet for school children. Xinjiang's language policy was not that different

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<sup>157</sup> Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. pp.235-236.

<sup>158</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 131.

from those of Koreans and Tibet. Xinjiang autonomous government passed similar legislation on the use of minority language and scripts in 1988. Minorities in Xinjiang also made an effort to increase the use of their own language in school education (due to the diverse make-up of ethnic groups in Xinjiang, Uyghur was designated as the regional official language along with Kazak as a second language). Many textbooks were published in the local languages with special attention on the literature, religion, and history of Xinjiang region. Teachers instructed their students with the use of these books. According to one statistic, in 1991, 1,828 new titles of textbook in minority languages were printed compared to 808 in 1980.<sup>159</sup> Many other minorities such as the Dai, the Yi, and the Mongolians followed suit to take advantage of the 1984 law to preserve and continue developing their own language in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>160</sup>

The official religious policy of the CCP has been consistent and has never veered from the position that every citizen has the freedom to believe in religion, and also the freedom not to believe in religion.<sup>161</sup> This principle was radically interrupted by the outright repression on religion during the Cultural Revolution. The radical Maoists tried to eradicate religion and replace it with the Mao's ideology. After the official demise of the Cultural Revolution, the religious freedom was revived and the 1980s were marked as a very liberal period for religion in China. The CCP in 1982 formulated its policy on religion by issuing Document No. 19. *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During our Country's Socialist Period.*

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<sup>159</sup> Ip, "Minority Policy in Post-Mao China". p. 41.

<sup>160</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002.* pp. 85-88. Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation.* pp. 129-133.

<sup>161</sup> The Article 36 of the Constitution declares that Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.

This document served as the ideological foundation for the CCP religious policy as well as provided detailed instructions for its implementation for the religious freedom in the reform era of Deng Xiaoping.<sup>162</sup>

Attention should be paid to the three major elements in the document. First, the CCP clearly broke with the past of the Cultural Revolution. The CCP candidly admitted that there were “many twists and turns” in the Party’s work with regard to the religious question, and that there were some major errors during the Cultural Revolution. The CCP then declared that “the basic policy the Party has adopted toward the religious question is that of respect for and protection of the freedom of religious belief.” The Party added that “We Communists are atheists and must unremittingly propagate atheism. Yet at the same time we must understand that it will be fruitless and extremely harmful to use simple coercion in dealing with religious questions.”

Second, the document discussed the Party’s policies to work together with religious professionals for the implementation of the Party’s religious policy. The CCP required that it must reexamine and redress those injustices perpetrated against persons in religious circles as well as the mass of religious believers. The Party also paid attention to the reinstatement of the religious professionals who were imprisoned or sent to labor reform during the radical persecution period. Third, the CCP ordered that all the Party and the state officials help religious organizations restore places of worship (churches, temples and other religious buildings). The CCP understood that “to make equitable arrangements for places of worship is an important material condition for the normalization of religious activity...especially in ethnic minority areas.” The CCP religious policy also recognized the important relationship between ethnicity

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<sup>162</sup> This internal CCP document consisted of thirty pages was initially circulated inside the CCP among the Central Committee members. It was made public in *Red Flag* in June 1982. Now the full text of the Document No. 19 is available at [http://www.purdue.edu/crcs/itemResources/PRCDoc/pdf/Document\\_no.\\_19\\_1982.pdf](http://www.purdue.edu/crcs/itemResources/PRCDoc/pdf/Document_no._19_1982.pdf)

and religion in minority nationalities. The Document stated that “there are some ethnic minorities in which nearly all the people believe in one particular religion, Islam or Lamaism, for example. Among these peoples, the question of religion and ethnicity is frequently intertwined.”

Since the new era of Deng Xiaoping began, in line with the Party Document no. 19, the CCP made genuine efforts to rehabilitate its relations with the national minorities by allowing a considerable degree of religious tolerance. From 1982 onward, religion and religious activities were once again permitted in minority areas. Places of worship or the holy sites were restored by the state in cooperation with the autonomous governments. Religious leaders and professionals were freed to return to their normal jobs from their work in the fields and communes or from prison. The publication of sacred writings was officially resumed.<sup>163</sup> In Xinjiang alone, approximately 14,000 mosques had been restored and reopened.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang were allowed by the Chinese government to make the Islamic Pilgrimage to Mecca, which was the greatest desire for the Muslims. Uyghur families with pride were able to raise and teach their children with the teachings of the Koran.<sup>165</sup>

Tibet as well enjoyed the revival of religious freedom. Many of the Buddhist temples were restored, and the CCP promised to rebuild two hundred more temples and monasteries by 1988.<sup>166</sup> Mao’s pictures were brought down and replaced with the Dalai Lama’s in the temples. As the CCP officials were instructed not to interfere in the religious affairs of minorities, Tibetan

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<sup>163</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 115.

<sup>164</sup> P. Morrison, "Religious Policy in China and Its Implementation in the Light of Document No. 19," *Religion in Communist Lands* 12(1984). p. 251.

<sup>165</sup> G.E. Fuller and J.N. Lipman, "Islam in Xinjiang," *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (2004); S. Frederick Starr, *Xinjiang : China's Muslim Borderland*, Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2004).

<sup>166</sup> Morrison, "Religious Policy in China and Its Implementation in the Light of Document No. 19." p. 251; Warren W. Smith, *Tibetan Nation : A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).

Buddhism came back and served as a major part of the lives of Tibetans.<sup>167</sup> All these legal measures, the implementation of them, and affirmative attitude taken by the CCP obviously provided minority nationalities with a very favorable legal, political, and social framework enabling them to preserve their identities and to develop their cultures. It is noted that the CCP clearly shifted its emphasis from assimilation of ethnic minorities to accommodation and co-existence in the 1980s.

But the CCP's accommodation approach toward minorities experienced a brief setback in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The pro-independence demonstrations and the resultant ethnic unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang (secession attempts in Inner Mongolia were much smaller) apparently challenged overall authority of the CCP over minorities and clearly intended to undermine the spirit of the national integration. In September 1987, demonstrations took place in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet autonomous region, advocating independence for Tibet. This was mainly orchestrated by monks from Tibet's main monasteries. The protests continued for several more days until they were suppressed by the Chinese troops and police. Similar types of secessionist uprisings sporadically continued in 1988 and they reached a height in March 1989, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1959 rebellion. The aim of these Tibetan demonstrations was to establish a fully independent Tibetan nation-state. Martial law was imposed (it was lifted in 1990) and the demonstrations were put down by the CCP's military forces. In Xinjiang, there were also some Muslim uprisings attempting to break away from China in the early 1990s. The CCP's reaction was very harsh with a military crack-down, clearly indicating that the CCP did not intend to allow any attempts to undermine national unity.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> As a gesture of the open attitude toward Tibet, Deng Xiaoping initiated a dialogue with the Dalai Lama (and his possible return to China from his exile in India) in 1978 and 1984 again. The negotiation attempt between the CCP and the Dalai Lama failed due to many disagreements.

<sup>168</sup> This study does not aim to discuss why the pro-independence demonstrations began in Tibet and

The CCP instinctively responded by tightening its control on these troubled regions, resulting in a slight reduction in the extent of their regional autonomy for a tense period between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. However, on the contrary to the popular expectation (many people actually feared) that the minority policies might be drastically reversed from accommodation to the direction of assimilation, surprisingly enough, the minority policies remained unchanged and the regional autonomy resumed in most parts of minority areas including Tibet and Xinjiang in the 1990s. Furthermore, the CCP has since the 1990s reformulated its minority policies in order to meet the new environment created by independent sentiments of some minorities, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and a market-oriented economy.

In a response to the secession attempts in Tibet and Xinjiang in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the CCP sought to re-emphasize the concept of the “Chinese nation” and the national unity which should be achieved only by mutual interdependence and respect between the Han Chinese and minority nationalities. The perspective of the “Chinese nation” was well illustrated in Fei Xiaotong’s speech in 1989. He claims that the Chinese nation “is not just a collection of the 56 nationalities. It is a national entity that has developed from a common emotion and morale for the fate of its success and failure. This concept entails two levels of national identity awareness: a lower level of ethnic identities for each of the 56 nationalities and a higher level of Chinese national identity for all Chinese citizens. The concept of the diversity in

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Xinjiang in the late 1980s. However, it suggests two possible immediate causes of the secession movements in the regions. First, the Chinese authoritarian regime was rapidly liberalized by the nationwide reform policies (political as well as economic) by Deng Xiaoping’s new era. It was not very surprising to expect that the loosening of the centralized state would encourage some segments of the society to express social contradictions and problems. The democratic uprisings of the Chinese students in 1989 would constitute a great example here. Second, there were some external influences in the late 1980s. There were strong movements of national independence among minorities in the Soviet Union. The ethnic groups under the Soviet Union eventually achieved their independence around 1991.

the unity of the Chinese nation assumes that the two levels of identities do not replace each other nor contradict each other but coexist and co-develop with linguistic and cultural diversity.”<sup>169</sup>

The CCP’s third generation leaders also strove to reiterate the national unity. Jiang Zemin, president of the PRC and general secretary of the CCP, told the local leaders in Xinjiang that “the Chinese nation is made of 56 ethnic groups and in this big family of the motherland the ethnic groups enjoy a new socialist ethnic relationship: the Han cannot do well without the minorities, the minorities cannot do well without the Han, and the minorities cannot do well without each other.”<sup>170</sup> Jiang Zemin in 1992 again emphasized that the CCP was determined to maintain national unity and would never make a concession to the separation demands. But he declared that he would continue the policy of ethnic regional autonomy and assist minorities develop themselves.<sup>171</sup> Premier Li Peng also asserted that symbiotic ethnic relations would depend on the improvement of equal rights for ethnic groups and autonomy for ethnic minority regions.<sup>172</sup>

The reorientation of the CCP’s minority policies was also influenced by the international political situations. The CCP leadership was very much interested in the failure of the ethnic policies in the Soviet Union and the role that ethnic relations played in the process of the dissolution of the Soviet empire. The CCP appeared to have learned at least two lessons: 1) the Soviet leaders did not pay enough attention to the ethnic relations and the ethnic minorities themselves; 2) minority republics in the Soviet federal system were “given too much political power (such as power in diplomacy and military affairs), but too little economic power (such as

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<sup>169</sup> X. Fei, "Zhonghua Minzu Duoyuan Yiti Geju [the Pattern of Diversity in Unity of the Chinese Nation]," *Zhonghua Minzu de Duoyuan Yiti Geju* (1999). p. 13; Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 93.

<sup>170</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 94.

<sup>171</sup> “Party Chief Stresses National Unity,” *Beijing Review* 35, no. 3 (1992). p. 5.

<sup>172</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 38.

the control of local economy, of state enterprises in the republics).”<sup>173</sup> Both Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji in the late 1990s also closely watched the political developments in Kosovo and East Timor. In a speech, both of them stressed better handling of minority issues, mentioning that poor treatment of minority problems (and brutal suppression) could lead to foreign intervention into China as in the cases of Kosovo (NATO) and East Timor (UN forces). They clearly reminded themselves of the century-old wisdom “internal revolt and foreign invasion.”

In 1998, ethnic unrest was on the rise again in Xinjiang.<sup>174</sup> Separatists in Xinjiang may have been influenced by NATO protection for Kosovo. In 1997, the Dalai Lama also stepped up to internalize the Tibet issue by visiting Taiwan and meeting with U.S. President Clinton and Vice President Gore. Drawing on some lessons for these international incidents in relation to ethnic minorities, the CCP endeavored to make minorities more content with their life under the Chinese rule by focusing on improvements of their economic life. One of the major moves was “to speed up economic development” in minority areas (in fact, beginning in the early 1990s, the minority nationalities started to share the China’s economic growth) since the CCP believed that ethnic tensions and social instability in minority communities were caused by economic inequalities and disparities between the developed regions of the east coast where the Han people were concentrated and the economically underdeveloped western or interior regions where various minorities resided in. In 2000, the CCP authorities launched the “Great West Development Strategy” which aimed at overcoming the economically backward minority areas and better integrating them with the national economy (the Great West program was also

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<sup>173</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China : The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*. p. 95.

<sup>174</sup> As a way to contain separatism (and to diminish foreign influence on the Muslim independence movements) in Xinjiang, China paid attention to its neighboring countries. In 1996, China organized the “Shanghai Five” summit on regional security with Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. The Summit was designed to combat separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism.

involved in promoting tourism in minority regions). The Great West covered all the five ethnic autonomous regions as well as autonomous areas in other provinces.<sup>175</sup>

Along with the Great Development, the CCP also revised the 1984 Law of Regional Autonomy in 2001. Even though there are no major differences in terms of its substance, the revised version of the 2001 Law was designed to strengthen local autonomy and to give minorities more economic, social, and political power. The overall tone of accommodation toward minorities has been continuously supported by the fourth generation of the CCP leaders. Upon assuming power in the CCP in 2002, Hu Jintao at the First Session of the 10th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee reiterated that "it is the established policy of the central authorities to work for the all-round prosperity of all ethnic groups across China and particularly support the development in ethnic minority areas." He added that "moreover, it is essential to adhere to and further improve the system of autonomy in ethnic areas, so to guarantee that the Law on Regional Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities would be implemented in a comprehensive way."<sup>176</sup>

His determination to succeed in the accommodation strategy from the previous generation of the CCP leadership has been continuously expressed: regional autonomy for ethnic minorities is a basic political system of China, and the CCP and the central government continue to observe this system. All the ethnic groups are equal and the CCP state makes sure of the rights and interests of all the ethnic minorities. The Chinese government also has published several White Papers in the 2000s to consistently uphold Hu Jintao's view on minority policy. The 2009

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<sup>175</sup> The Great West Development Strategy is composed of two main programs. The central government has drastically increased the Western area's budget share aiming at developing the infrastructure such as transport, hydropower plants, energy, and telecommunications. The central has also strived to entice foreign investment into the region. H. Lai, "Developing Central China: A New Regional Programme," *China: An International Journal* 5, no. 1 (2007); H.H. Lai, "China's Western Development Program," *Modern China* 28, no. 4 (2002).

<sup>176</sup> "Hu Jintao calls for stepping up development in ethnic minority areas," *XINHUANET*, March 24, 2003.

White paper *on China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups* reaffirmed the underlying perspective that the central government would stick to regional ethnic autonomy and would respect and promote the ethnic minority cultures.

## CHAPTER 4

### REGIME LEGITIMACY

Tsze-kung asked about government. The Master said, "The requisites of government are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler." Tsze-kung said, "If it cannot be helped, and one of these must be dispensed with, which of the three should be foregone first?" "The military equipment," said the Master. Tsze-kung again asked, "If it cannot be helped, and one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be foregone?" The Master answered, "Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of a man; but *if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state.*"

-- The Analects of Confucius

Having documented the evolution of minority policies in China in the previous section, it is clearly demonstrated that the strategies employed to achieve the goal of national integration have been varied over time in the last six decades. To be exact, the strategies of the CCP toward the minority nationalities in China since 1949 have essentially consisted of the repeated pattern of alternation between assimilation and accommodation. Why and under what circumstances do the CCP authorities sometimes implement an assimilation strategy and an accommodation strategy in other times? What factors account for the policy alternation between accommodation and assimilation within the governance of the continuous Communist government in China? In other words, what drives changes (or continuity) in these policies over time in China?

#### Lack of Explanation in the Existing Literature

As hinted in the previous sections, the emergence of studies on Chinese ethnic and minority nationalities in American scholarship can be traced back to June Dreyer's writing, *China's Forty*

*Millions*. Since this book was published in 1976, a great deal of research on the study of ethnic politics in China has been conducted.<sup>177</sup> The American literature on Chinese minorities can be categorized into two different groups. On the one hand, some scholars tend to focus on historiography, providing a well-rounded picture of minority policy, religion, ethnology, anthropology and history in China. These scholars mainly center on reliable and accurate descriptions of variations of minority policies over the long course of Chinese history including the period of the PRC.

On the other hand are those who prioritize minority nationalism and minority rights in favor of the standpoints of minority nationalities in China. However, much of the existing literature on the study of ethnic politics in China is based on very descriptive and historical research with anecdotal evidence, and the focus is heavily tilted toward one or two of the country's 55 minorities. In particular, much of this literature is concentrated on the Tibetans in the Tibet Autonomous Region. There is also a growing body of literature about the Uyghurs, one of China's largest ethnic groups concentrated in the far western Xinjiang province.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Mackerras, *China's Minorities : Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*; Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation*; Eberhard, *China's Minorities : Yesterday and Today*; June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*, 6th ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008); Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*.

<sup>178</sup> Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer, *Contemporary Tibet : Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006); Warren W. Smith, *China's Tibet? : Autonomy or Assimilation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008); Starr, *Xinjiang : China's Muslim Borderland*; McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*; Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang : China's Muslim Far Northwest*, Durham East Asia Series (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang : Ethnic Politics in China*; Mackerras, "Aspects of Bai Culture: Change and Continuity in a Yunnan Nationality."; Michael Clarke, "China's Internal Security Dilemma and the "Great Western Development": The Dynamics of Integration, Ethnic Nationalism and Terrorism in Xinjiang," *Asian Studies Review* 31, no. 3 (2007); Zhu and Blachford, "China's Fate as a Multinational State: A Preliminary Assessment."; Yuchao Zhu and Dongyan Blachford, "Ethnic Minority Issues in China's Foreign Policy: Perspectives and Implications," *The Pacific Review* 18, no. 2 (2005); Eric Hyer, "China's Policy Towards Uighur Nationalism," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 26, no. 1 (2006); Barry Sautman, "Preferential Policies for Ethnic Minorities in China: The Case of Xinjiang," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 4, no. 1 (1998); Yuan-kang Wang, "Toward a Synthesis of the Theories of Peripheral Nationalism: A Comparative Study of China S Xinjiang and Guangdong," *Asian ethnicity* 2, no.

Another group of Western scholars also addresses questions of ethnicity and minority nationalities although these scholars do not aim directly to deal with the Chinese minority questions. The particular locus of much of the discussion in this literature has centered on the merits of multiculturalism as public (state) policy in liberal democratic thinking.<sup>179</sup> Will Kymlicka, for example, argues that national minorities should have not only the right of self-governing, but also have the right to refuse to be assimilated into the majority community. His argument is primarily centered on the “justice” of minority rights in combination with traditional human rights principles in a liberal tradition. As he argues, “A comprehensive theory of justice in a multicultural state will include both universal rights, assigned to individuals regardless of group membership, and certain group-differentiated rights or ‘special status’ for minority cultures.”<sup>180</sup> Thomas Heberer also criticizes China’s minority policies in a liberal thinking of justice and human rights, saying that “in the long run such a hard line and its effects may be the ultimate block to the unity of the country.”<sup>181</sup> If it is judged by this Western view of “justice and human rights” on minority questions, the CCP’s handling of the minorities in China is far from being “just.”

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2 (2001); June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution," *China Quarterly* (1968).

<sup>179</sup> Will Kymlicka, *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1995); *ibid*; Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular : Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford, UK New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Will Kymlicka and Bashir Bashir, *The Politics of Reconciliation in Multicultural Societies* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Will Kymlicka and W. J. Norman, *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Will Kymlicka and Magdalena Opalski, *Can Liberal Pluralism Be Exported? : Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); P. J. Kelly, *Multiculturalism Reconsidered : 'Culture and Equality' and Its Critics* (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2002); *ibid*; Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality : An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); R. Viswanathan and M. Dasan, *Rethinking Multiculturalism : Critical Essays on American Literature* (Chennai: Emerald Publishers, 2006); Bhikhu C. Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism : Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>180</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. p. 6.

<sup>181</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p.131.

And indeed the thrust of Western-centered multiculturalism has had an influence in many Asian countries, and particularly the U.S.-dominated liberal model has been employed by the Western academia, governments, and international organizations as a political instrument to put diplomatic pressure on China. However, the Western model is often not well understood in China, and may not go well with the context of China. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, one of the most fundamental differences between China and the Western liberal idea is the response to minority nationalism. The claims of national minorities in the West are assessed primarily in terms of justice requiring some form of self-government for minorities whereas in China they are by and large assessed in terms of security and the fear that self-government for minorities might threaten the existence or territorial integrity of the Chinese state.

Many Asian societies including China have had their own traditions of peaceful coexistence amongst different ethnic groups. Their traditions have their own conceptions of the value of accommodation, and their own wisdoms for sustaining unity in the diversity.<sup>182</sup> As witnessed in the long history of minority policies in China, there were and have been a clear effort to pursue an accommodation approach (which is the identical concept with “justice and human rights” in a liberal tradition in the West) toward minority nationalities by the Han majority and the central government. Therefore, there should be a search for new alternative ways of conceptualizing state-minority relations in China rather than blindly applying the Western model to the Chinese case. In addition, Western scholars have paid little attention to the changes of the CCP policies toward the minority nationalities, clearly failing to ascertain the reasons of the tendency why minority policy has oscillated between accommodation and assimilation under the People’s Republic of China.

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<sup>182</sup> Will Kymlicka and Baogang He, *Multiculturalism in Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1.

There are also some scholars in the West and China who conceptualize and theorize about a long tradition of ethnic relations in China under the name of “minority policy with Chinese characteristics.” According to these scholars, minority policies of China have been based largely on two traditions: the Confucian tradition supplemented with Marxist belief in the twentieth century.<sup>183</sup> They argue that these two very different traditions are the guiding principles of the Chinese approach to the minority question and still influence the Chinese practice of minority policies. Confucianism does not specifically teach how to construct the relationship between a majority and minorities because the culture, not the ethnicity, is the distinguishing criterion between Chinese and non-Chinese.

Although harmony is the most precious value in a Confucian ideal society, distinctions between peoples should be made depending on the degree of the Confucian civilization. Confucianism throughout all Chinese dynasties despised so-called “barbarians” who were alienated from the center of the Confucius teaching. Minority nationalities were treated as those barbarians, and Confucianism called for a “policy of non-violent assimilation through the imposition of Han-Chinese values rather than through a policy of extermination.”<sup>184</sup> In order to alleviate conflicts and maintain social stability (harmony), roles are specifically prescribed for members of the society in Confucianism. People should understand the “correct” conducts

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<sup>183</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*; Dreyer, *China's Political System : Modernization and Tradition*; Kymlicka and He, *Multiculturalism in Asia*; Minglang Zhou, *Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002* (Walter de Gruyter, 2003); Minglang Zhou and Hongkai Sun, *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China : Theory and Practice since 1949*, Language Policy Vol. 4 (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004); Baogang He, "Confucianism Versus Liberalism over Minority Rights: A Critical Response to Will Kymlicka," *Journal of Chinese philosophy* 31, no. 1 (2004); Baogang He, Brian Galligan, and Takashi Inoguchi, *Federalism in Asia* (Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007); Shujie Luo, *Makesi Zhu Yi Min Zu Guan Dao Lun* (Beijing: Min Zu Press, 1997); *ibid*; *ibid*; *ibid*; Luo, *Religion under Socialism in China*; *ibid*; B. He and W. Kymlicka, "Minority Rights with Chinese Characteristics," *Multiculturalism in Asia* (2005).

<sup>184</sup> Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* p. 18.

demanded by their prescribed roles in a society. In other words, the key to a harmonious society lies in understanding mutual obligations that characterize each set of social ties in the Confucian doctrine: the five relations (ruler-subject, parent-child, husband-wife, older-younger, and friend-friend). The lesser party must show loyalty and obedience while the superior party must reciprocate with empathy and assistance.

This Confucian tradition is a very important concept in understanding the minority questions in China. Confucian philosophy should expect minorities to give their loyalty, obey, and conform to the superior Han Chinese values in maintaining harmony and unity. From this tradition, the relationship between the Han center and the minority peripheries was defined as the *Yi-Xia* (夷夏) doctrine. In the Confucian hierarchy, *Xia* (Han Chinese) are the rulers while *Yi* (minorities or barbarians) are the subjects; *Xia* is the center, while *Yi* are the peripheries; and *Xia* is superior while *Yi* is subordinate. The administrative framework within which the *Yi-Xia* doctrine handled minorities was the *Tusi* (土司) system during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties in which “a headman was appointed by, or inherited through the confirmation of, central authority. Headmen enjoyed a number of autonomous powers, such as the right to tax and the right to have their culturally regulated laws.”<sup>185</sup> The *Tusi* system is a type of the “indirect rule” which was mentioned in the previous chapter as an accommodation tactic. As Dreyer argues, the tendency of the *Tusi* system was to “avoid interfering with local affairs unless developments directly threatened imperial control of the area.”<sup>186</sup> This system had been practiced for hundreds

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<sup>185</sup> He and Kymlicka, "Minority Rights with Chinese Characteristics." p. 58.

<sup>186</sup> Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions : Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. p. 10.

of years in China, which served as a very crucial safeguard to minority rights and their cultural characteristics.<sup>187</sup>

The Confucian culture also emphasizes the paternalistic family structure of society in which minorities were seen as younger brothers and the Han Chinese being a big brother. The Han majority has the responsibility and duty to care about minorities and to protect younger minority brothers. In addition, the Han majority also has the duty to educate and civilize these culturally inferior minorities. When minorities followed the teachings of the Confucian Han brothers, there would be peaceful harmony in a society with the belief that in the end all peoples should be integrated into one harmonious entity.<sup>188</sup> Although Confucianism is opposed to assimilation by force, it advocates assimilation through cultural imposition, emphasizing societal harmony and national integration. Confucianism may be a proper lens to examine the minority policies in China before the founding of the PRC in 1949. Given the fact that the PRC made every effort to eliminate the Confucian legacy in every corner of the Chinese society on many occasions since 1949 (in particular, during the Cultural Revolution), however, the Confucian culture may not be an appropriate concept to ascertain the alternation of minority policies in the PRC.<sup>189</sup>

Since 1949, some scholars have moved to focus on the Marxist heritage as the most important factor shaping the CCP policy toward minorities. According to their argument, the

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<sup>187</sup> B. He, "Confucianism Versus Liberalism over Minority Rights: A Critical Response to Will Kymlicka1," *Journal of Chinese philosophy* 31, no. 1 (2004). pp. 111-112.

<sup>188</sup> He and Kymlicka, "Minority Rights with Chinese Characteristics." pp.57-60.

<sup>189</sup> During the Cultural Revolution, it would have been a serious crime in China to say a good word about Confucius in China. Confucius became the anti-revolutionary enemy and all Chinese were indoctrinated to abandon his teachings. Times have changed in the contemporary Chinese society. Since 2007, the CCP officially have sponsored the worship of Confucius in every possible way: establishing Confucius Institute worldwide to disseminate the Chinese language and culture; publications of the Confucius classics; establishing the Confucius Peace Prize; even sponsoring a recent movie "Confucius." What does the official revival of Confucius mean to China's political future and minority policies? This would be a very intriguing question to do research.

CCP's minority policies have been based on the Marxist ideology that ethnic or national antagonism is just a manifestation of the bourgeois-capitalist stage. In other words, ethnic group inequality and exploitation of one nation by another nation should be considered a natural product of capitalism. When one nation was oppressed by another nation, it was the bourgeois ruling class of one nation who actually oppressed the working class of the other nation. Thus, minority oppression was essentially class oppression. The CCP leadership, which was dominated by this Marxist ideology, maintained the view that the nationality issue is by nature an issue of class, and that the national question should be resolved through the revolution of the proletariat. At the end of the successful class conflict, ethnicity and nationality would wither away and would naturally and automatically converge into a homogeneous society. This perspective is clearly shown in one of Mao's statements in 1958 that "Classes will be eliminated first, then states will be abolished, and finally nations will disappear. This will be the case for the whole world."<sup>190</sup> Following this perspective, no coercion would be needed to create this homogeneous culture in the evolution toward socialism and communism.

The Marxist tradition in examining the CCP minority policies may be a useful instrument during Mao's radical Cultural Revolution in that all contradictions were to be seen in class terms including the nationality question in China: class struggle that had to take place in the Han Chinese was also vigorously applied to the minority areas. However, the Marxist and Maoist class struggle theory had no place in Deng Xiaoping's era and the subsequent leaderships (Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao) followed Deng's approach to the minority policies. It seems very clear that Deng wanted to focus on the market and economic development as a solution to the minority question in China. It is true that Marxist ideas as the guiding principle played a role in the CCP's

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<sup>190</sup> Zhou, *Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002*, 41.

minority policy formation during a certain period of time. However, the variations of minority policies over time in the PRC cannot be answered by this Marxist perspective alone. Indeed, the communism-based perspective apparently fails to account for the fact that sometimes national differences are accommodated while accelerated assimilation of minority nationalities is promoted in other times.

### Bases of Regime Legitimacy

As analyzed in the previous section, the examination of the existing literature shows that no theoretical paradigm provides a convincing explanation to the changes of the minority policies in China. What factors account for the policy alternation between accommodation and assimilation within the governance of the continuous Communist government in China? This study argues that the minority policies have been formulated and developed to meet the CCP's needs to generate its legitimacy at the various stages of political development. In other words, the CCP's policies toward its minorities have directly linked to its strategies to establish and cultivate the regime's legitimacy. More specifically, when the CCP pursues its regime legitimacy on the basis of economic performance, it yields accommodation policies toward minority nationalities. On the contrary, when the CCP pursues its regime legitimacy on the basis of ideology, it yields assimilation policies toward minority nationalities.

For outsiders who are attempting to understand the ethnic tensions and violence both in Tibet and Xinjiang provinces in recent years, perhaps the most important thing to grasp is that this is not an argument about history. Nor does it concern the issues of the rights and the wrongs of their claim to independence. It is a contest over political legitimacy for both the CCP in Beijing and for these minority peoples. At the core of ethnic tensions in minority regions in

China is a conflict over political legitimacy, or the “right to rule.” Political legitimacy may be defined as “the belief in the rightfulness of a state, in its authority to issue commands, so that the commands are obeyed not simply out of fear or self-interest, but because they are believed to have moral authority, because subjects believe that they ought to obey.”<sup>191</sup> In this regard, the CCP’s legitimacy depends on the conviction of those minorities that the CCP’s rule is “morally right and they are duty-bound to obey it.”<sup>192</sup> In the absence of such consent, the CCP’s rule will be contested by those minorities. Therefore, if integration is defined as the disparate ethnic groups having their loyalty and allegiances shifted to the political center, political integration can be processed (whether it is an accommodation or assimilation) through the increasing legitimacy of the central government.

If a state fails to maintain legitimacy, then the state will collapse. This is a simple and empirically a very practical concept. When a regime lacks legitimacy, then there is a crisis and the regime collapses. Every political system attempts to generate and maintain the belief of the governed in its legitimacy in order to have orders obeyed willingly rather than the threat of force or out of self-interest. There is only one source of legitimacy. All political systems try to legitimize their exercise of power from only one source; that is support or consent of the people. Even in very authoritarian countries like North Korea, the regime tries to support itself by getting consent from the people. Without people’s consent, leadership will lose its base forever. This commonsensical premise is best manifested in the Analects of Confucius that “if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state.” This view is also reaffirmed in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *the Social Contract* that “the strongest man is never strong enough to

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<sup>191</sup> Rodney Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). p. 11.

<sup>192</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia : The Quest for Moral Authority*, Contemporary Issues in Asia and the Pacific (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995). p. 2.

maintain his mastery at all times unless he transforms his strength into right and obedience into duty.”<sup>193</sup>

Thus political legitimacy is fundamental and indispensable for any regime to govern its people including minorities. Constituting the core of any modern states’ politics, political legitimacy affects all political policies and activities including its national minority policies under its jurisdiction. In other words, how to generate regime legitimacy fundamentally influences the formulation of minority policies in any country: the bases on which legitimacy is claimed will influence the overall landscapes of the policies toward minorities. As Weber argues, “the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, the mode of exercising authority”-- all depend on the kind of legitimacy claimed.<sup>194</sup>

Legitimacy also shapes the political discourse between ethnic minority groups and the state in their endeavor to challenge the political power of the central government. In the case of China, when the CCP is viewed as lacking legitimacy by minorities, they tend to articulate their national sentiments and mobilize their resistance against the incumbent government. Thus regime legitimacy is very crucial to understanding ethnic politics and politics in general in any country. As alluded to earlier, the absence of political legitimacy has profound implications for the way that the CCP behaves toward its ethnic minorities. The lack of legitimacy reduces support from minorities and makes the CCP rule vulnerable to increased local ethno-nationalism

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 3; Stephen P. Turner, *The Cambridge Companion to Weber* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Lynn T. White, *Legitimacy : Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*, Series on Contemporary China Vol. 1 (Singapore ; New Jersey: World Scientific, 2005); John T. Jost and Brenda Major, *The Psychology of Legitimacy : Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); John T. Jost, Aaron C. Kay, and Hulda Thorisdottir, *Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology and System Justification*, Series in Political Psychology (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1964).

and subsequent secession movements. It can be described as “a cry of legitimacy crisis” in the CCP regime. Thus, the Chinese ruling elites make every effort to gain and increase “the consent of the minorities.”

In theory, there are two strategies which the ruling elites utilize for generating political legitimacy: “the performance in meeting basic needs and promoting the prosperity of the people”<sup>195</sup> and “promotion of a belief system through an ideology.” The first strategy with which a regime pursues legitimacy is performance-based, which usually refers to the regime’s capability to achieve economic development. This premise suggests that “the ruling elite can find the justification to possess and exercise power by helping people satisfy their needs and enjoy continuous prosperity in their material and physical life environment.”<sup>196</sup> In other words, the regime constantly needs to strive to satisfy people’s material needs to the greatest possible extent in order to maintain and reinforce its legitimacy. And success or failure in this effort affects the claim and right of the regime to govern its people. Poor performance in economic terms oftentimes invites and encourages people to challenge and contest the incumbent’s right to rule. This view may be closely associated with the CCP’s belief that ethnic tensions and social instability were caused by poor economic performance in minority communities, and that if the CCP delivers economic development and well-being to ethnic minorities, ethnic tensions will diminish and the national integration would be eventually achieved by winning the loyalty of minorities.

Of course, economic performance as a means of legitimacy generation is less critical in well-advanced democratic regimes. For instance, although the Republican Party was defeated in the 2008 presidential election in part because of a bad economic performance, at no time was the

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<sup>195</sup> Han S. Park, *North Korea : The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002). p. 118.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

legitimacy of President Bush's administration challenged or contested. When a government is out of power through elections in well-advanced democracies because economy is in bad shape, it is more an issue of its ineffectiveness, not its legitimacy. In this respect, it may be said that democratic regimes have the capacity to weather poor economic performance without significantly undermining their legitimacy. As witnessed in the case of the United States, if economic ineffectiveness is prolonged and continuous, however, the poor performance may undermine the legitimacy of even developed democratic countries.<sup>197</sup>

And there is no doubt that performance becomes a much more crucial element in generating loyalty and allegiance of people toward the incumbent government in non-democratic regimes in which governments are not elected by popular votes. China constitutes a great example. China is obviously a country without democratic institutional legitimacy, at least not like that of Western democracies. The CCP had to shift its legitimacy basis from ideology to economic performance in the late 1970s due to the death of Mao and the political discontent caused by the Cultural Revolution (the shift of the basis of regime legitimacy will be discussed in the next section). The CCP had to make up for the failure of ideology-based legitimation with high level of economic performance, which led to revolutionary economic reforms and an open-door policy. Most students of Chinese politics recognize the crucial importance of economic performance to the legitimacy of the CCP. That is why, for the CCP, maintaining a high economic growth rate was and is more of a *political* issue than an *economic* one since it concerns the very survival of the regime.

Performance-based legitimacy (by satisfying people's material needs), however, may confront a number of difficulties. First of all, governments should continuously maintain economic growth in order to satisfy rising expectations of people. In reality, no country is able to

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<sup>197</sup> Alagappa, *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia : The Quest for Moral Authority*. p. 23.

maintain high level of economic growth forever. Economy has ups and downs. There would be speed bumps ahead. Economic stagnation or slow-down may make people discontent with the government. People may feel temporal deprivation by comparing their present life with their past life conditions. This may be illustrated in one of the most popular campaign slogans in American presidential elections, “Are we better off than four years ago?” In this situation, people may withdraw their support from their government. Therefore, basing one’s legitimacy on economic performance can also be very contingent or risky. Furthermore, economic performance is not fully within the domestic control of governments due to growing interdependence and internalization of the economy. This is clearly demonstrated in the recent experiences of China. Due to the global economic recession in part caused by the economic downturn in the United States, many export-oriented companies in the once-booming cities in China were shutting down and began to lay off workers. Both central and local officials in China were worried about the plant closures. They were urging factories to avoid large layoffs to prevent social upheaval. While good performance may generate legitimacy, it can also undermine legitimacy.

Second, good economic performance can threaten the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes in the long term. Many Western development scholars like Seymour Martin Lipset have argued that economic growth facilitates democratization by producing effective political competitors, this is, the educated middle class. This middle class starts to demand more political control over government’s decision making. In the long term, the authoritarian governments are forced to implement political liberalization because the increasing political demands of the middle class cannot be accommodated without a sea change in the nature of the authoritarian regimes. This process was clearly demonstrated by the experience of some newly democratized countries in East Asia like Taiwan and South Korea in the 1990s. Moreover, if the benefits of economic

growth are not accompanied by distributive justice, it may also undermine regime legitimacy. As illustrated in the case of Chinese economic growth in recent decades, income inequalities along ethnic (between Han Chinese and minority nationalities), regional (between coastal areas and interior), and residential lines (between urban and rural areas) were one of the potential sources to threaten the CCP's legitimacy. The CCP may need to search for alternative ways to re-legitimize its regime at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As opposed to the performance basis of regime legitimacy, the second strategy with which a regime pursues legitimacy is ideology. As Han S. Park states, "the ideological basis of legitimacy is more of a question of psychology and mass belief system"<sup>198</sup> whereas the performance basis is more of a question of utilitarian and material perception. According to Max Weber, the "basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a *belief*, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige."<sup>199</sup> Based on these two statements, the key component of political legitimacy is the belief by the governed in the rulers' moral right to issue commands and the people's corresponding consent to obey such commands. In other words, when regime legitimacy is created and maximized on the basis of inculcating a belief system, the leadership's longevity is not directly affected by its economic performance to satisfy people's material needs. This view is clearly manifested and demonstrated in Han S. Park's argument that "North Korea is the most striking example of a system that uses values and beliefs as the foundation of power and authority."<sup>200</sup>

Thus, a regime makes an effort to "persuade" the masses and seeks to institutionalize a belief system (a system of values) in the populace upon which people's consent and loyalty toward the regime are built. This belief system, then, is "propagated by means of the various

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<sup>198</sup> Park, *North Korea : The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom*, 118.

<sup>199</sup> Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 382.

<sup>200</sup> Park, *North Korea : The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom*, 163.

agents of [political] socialization (some people call it negatively as indoctrination or brainwashing), especially those over which the regime can exercise some direct control, such as the mass media and the educational system.”<sup>201</sup> It is at this institutionalization stage of belief system that ideology appears to play a very important role in providing and spelling out the nature and contents of a common political belief system. In the ideology instigated by the political leadership, the nature of the current political system and the ultimate goals of the regime are spelled out, which permits justification of current policies and the current regime.

As Han S. Park argues, “an ideology presents the populace with a comprehensive political belief system enumerating the ultimate goals or end-states of the society and the legitimate means by which these goals can be achieved. As such, it provides the individual with a vision of his political society, his place in it, and a set of reasons why this system is worthy of his loyalty.”<sup>202</sup> In other words, the belief system as “a set of values” advanced by the ruling elites becomes internalized and embedded among the members of the society, and a sense of the consent and loyalty to the regime is generated on the basis of this shared belief system.<sup>203</sup> Ideology-based-legitimacy is all about creating the sense of compatibility of the values between the regime and the governed. Of course, these two methods to generate legitimacy cannot be considered “dichotomous.” Both performance and ideology often overlap and are utilized in varying degrees of relative importance to generate legitimacy simultaneously. However, depending on the stages of political development, ideology is weighed more heavily than performance and vice versa.

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<sup>201</sup> Park, *Human Needs and Political Development : A Dissent to Utopian Solutions*, 70.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

## Human Needs and Political Development

What are the conditions leading to the shift of basis of regime legitimacy? The basis of regime legitimacy will alternate as the political system undergoes the process of development. Political development may be defined as a form of change that is universal, goal oriented, and a qualitative transformation of the political system through progressive stages overtime.

Qualitative transformation here refers to the incremental “capacity of the political system to satisfy the changing needs of the members of the society.”<sup>204</sup>

Han S. Park advances a paradigm of political development. Three assumptions underlie the paradigm: First, one consistently endeavors to satisfy one’s needs to the greatest possible extent. Second, the dominant needs of individuals in a given society determine the tasks and the course of political development. Lastly, government and politics are legitimate insofar as they can enhance people’s need-satisfaction.<sup>205</sup> Corresponding to the first assumption, Han S. Park proposes a four-fold hierarchical structure of human needs: one desires the first and foremost to “survive,” next to interact and to share psychological attachments with others (belongingness), then to enjoy a leisurely mode of living (leisure), and finally to attain superior life over others by securing superfluous material goods and social status (control or relative gratification).

Pertaining to Assumptions 2 and 3, Park also proposes that in the process of political development the four stages of political development correspond to four human needs: regime formation, political integration, resource expansion, and conflict management. Each stage of the development includes salient attributes in terms of means of meeting the needs, predominant institutions, and rule characteristics.<sup>206</sup> As the paradigm proposes, the political development of

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid. p. 58.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. p. 59.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. pp. 61-63, 78-85, and 86-87.

China is broken into three stages: regime formation (1949-1957), political integration (1958-1976), and resource expansion (1978 to the present). China has not entered the

Table 4  
Stages of Political Change and Minority Approach in China

	Regime Formation	Political Integration	Resource expansion	Conflict management
Human Needs	Survival	Belonging	Leisure	Control
Period	1949-1957	1958-1976	1978 to the present	Not reached yet
Legitimacy Basis	Performance	Ideology	Performance	Precarious Balance between Performance and Ideology
Legitimacy Means	Food Stability Safety	Indoctrination Socialization Homogeneity	Economic Growth Production of “conspicuous” goods	“Just” distribution (Who gets What, and How?)
Minority Approach	Accommodation	Assimilation	Accommodation	Accommodation Credo with “gaming” between the CCP and the Minority
Minority Policies	Autonomous Areas established	The GLF The Cultural Revolution	Four Modernizations 1984 Law on Regional Autonomy	Affirmative Actions Welfare System Minority Representation
System character	Centrism	Ideological	Bureaucratic	Participatory
Institutions	Agriculture Police Military	Mass Media Education People’s Communes	Industrialization Marketing Urbanization	Mass Media Interest Groups Political Parties

threshold of the stage of conflict management yet. It is not likely that China is entering the threshold of the post-industrial society for the time being. The basis of regime legitimacy in China subsequently has alternated as the political system undergoes a transition through these three stages: performance basis (1949-1957), ideology basis (1958-1976), and the return of performance basis (1978 to the present).

Physical survival in this hierarchy of human needs is the most essential requirement for human beings. It is the true axiom that all human / living beings want to stay alive. In order to ensure the physical survival, people need to obtain the necessities such as food, shelter, and security from physical threat. Given Assumptions 2 and 3 in the paradigm being used in this study, the government (and politics) should formulate and implement policies which can maximize its effort in corresponding to this survival need of the members of the society. This is the only way that the government is able to stay “legitimate.” As mentioned, the government’s response to each of the hierarchical human needs constitutes each of the four stages of the political development. In the regime formation stage corresponding to the survival need, the legitimacy of the government is largely based on its performance to provide its people with food and physical safety.

A new nation in China emerged as a result of internal revolution. The CCP came to power after the long foreign domination of China and by winning the competition for political supremacy with the KMT through the internecine violence of the Chinese civil war. In the process of the birth of the New China, people perceived their physical survival to be endangered. In times in which physical survival is in danger, it is imperative that “people naturally want political stability of any kind, irrespective of the type of government, as long as the emerging

regime can assure their survival.”<sup>207</sup> The question of the CCP’s “legitimacy” in this regime formation stage had everything to do with the government’s performance as the “survival needs” provider.

Once the CCP regime was established, it attempted to meet the public needs at a survival level by implementing policies and building institutions to restore social stability and agricultural production. One of the CCP’s policy performances was land reform or land redistribution. The land reform was designed to fulfill the most basic survival needs in the society by increasing the productivity of agriculture. In pursuit of this developmental task, the CCP was able to generate and maintain its legitimacy by gaining support of the dominant members (poor peasants) in China at that time. In the stage of regime formation from 1949-56, it is argued that the CCP successfully established its legitimacy on the basis of performance: ending the domestic political turmoil and restoring the economy. In this stage, the ideology as the basis of regime legitimacy is “trivial and largely irrelevant.”<sup>208</sup>

Once the need of physical survival is believed to be sufficiently insured, a human being is “expected to seek others with whom to identify.”<sup>209</sup> The dominant need of the members of the society moves up from the survival to the belonging need. The regime responds to satisfy this belonging need of the populace by developing an official political ideology whose goal is to provide a common belief system for the people. In this stage of political integration, the belief system is propagated and institutionalized into the populace through various agents of socialization aimed at “generating a sense of community and a measure of diffuse loyalty to the regime.”<sup>210</sup> In this stage, the regime legitimacy is generated by an ideology basis.

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. p. 138.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. p. 61.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. p. 142.

The role of ideology in political legitimacy during the period of the GLF and the Cultural Revolution was evident. Ideology was utilized to perform a moral function to legitimize the rule of the CCP. Maoist ideology was massively utilized and aimed at generating a common belief system and securing legitimation of the CCP regime. In fact, it is no exaggeration to argue that there is no regime in the world that indoctrinated people with its massive ideological campaigns more than Mao's regime. All agents of socialization were mobilized to brainwash the populace and make people's values and attitudes congruent with the official ideology of Maoism. In an attempt to integrate the political system, Mao's regime apparently relied on the basis of ideology to generate and maintain legitimacy.<sup>211</sup>

When people are assured of the belongingness need and the survival need, they desire to move to the next higher level of human needs to engage in a leisurely mode of living. The lifestyle not only involves more free time but also requires for material abundance. The leisure lifestyle tends to center on more consumptive than productive values in terms of time and material goods. As Han S. Park points out, examples of the human need for leisure include the "desire to have a longer weekend, to ride in an automobile instead of on a bicycle, to have an automatic dishwasher, a backyard swimming pool rather than going to the public pools, and the desire to extend paid vacations."<sup>212</sup> The government, in turn, responds to the leisure appetites of the members of the society by pursuing resource expansion and mass production of consumer

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<sup>211</sup> Feng Chen, "The Dilemma of Eudaemonic Legitimacy in Post-Mao China," *Polity* 29, no. 3 (1997); Feng Chen, *Economic Transition and Political Legitimacy in Post-Mao China: Ideology and Reform* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995); N Sausmikat, "Generations, Legitimacy, and Political Ideas in China: The End of Polarization or the End of Ideology?," *Asian Survey* 43, no. 2 (2003); B Gilley et al., "The Debate on Party Legitimacy in China: A Mixed Quantitative/Qualitative Analysis," *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, no. 59 (2009); L White et al., "Mao and the Cultural Revolution in China: Perspectives on Mao's Last Revolution," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008).

<sup>212</sup> Park, *Human Needs and Political Development: A Dissent to Utopian Solutions*. p. 62.

goods. Political legitimacy in this stage is determined by the degree of a regime's performance in industrialization and economic development.

In response to the leisure need of the society, the CCP launched what I call "Great Leap Outward" aimed at creating a new basis for its legitimacy in the 1980s. The CCP regime strove to satisfy people's material needs to the greatest possible extent by implementing economic reforms and adopting the market-driven model. The economic success is so palpable in every corner of Chinese society that people's leisure life has been remarkably improved in the last three decades. There is no doubt that people's satisfaction of their leisure need is the core basis of the CCP's legitimacy these days.

Considering all of the above, this study contends that the CCP's minority policies have evolved within the larger context of political development that has taken place in the last six decades. And more specifically, the CCP's minority policies have been directly linked to its strategies to establish and cultivate regime legitimacy. When performance basis is predominantly pursued to generate regime legitimacy, national differences are accommodated. When ideology basis is massively utilized to cultivate regime legitimacy, the CCP radically promotes assimilation of minorities into the majority for national convergence.

### Ideology Basis and Assimilation

The new regime in China led by the CCP was very confident in the success which it achieved in terms of meeting the public needs at a survival level in the first decade of its rule by implementing policies and building institutions to end the domestic political turmoil and restore the economy. In pursuit of this developmental task on the basis of performance, the CCP was

able to generate and maintain its legitimacy by gaining support from the dominant members (poor peasants) of Chinese society.

Toward the end of the 1950s, the CCP's attention quickly moved to respond to the popular need for belongingness. The emergence of such a need required the CCP to inculcate a belief system in the populace through a program of socialization so that it could generate a sense of community to bind people together psychologically. The job of integration was not easy in countries like China where ethnic plurality existed. It is assumed that the more homogeneous the society, the easier integration will be. Therefore, since the goal of integration is to attain political homogeneity and unity among people, ethnic plurality was regarded as an obstacle to the achievement of the integration. In this stage of political integration, ideology was radically utilized by the CCP to present the populace with a political belief system spelling out a set of reasons why the CCP regime was worthy of people's loyalty.<sup>213</sup> It is generally agreed that Mao Zedong in his era was successful in achieving political homogeneity and consolidating the ideological basis of legitimacy.

The ideology basis of legitimacy during political integration stage of China naturally promoted assimilation policies toward minorities due to the nature of several rule characteristics. One of the most important characteristics is that ideological indoctrination is accompanied by charismatic leadership. As historically seen, charismatic leaders usually emerged out of national crisis, in particular in countries that have experienced foreign domination or the struggle for national independence. "Most charismatic leaders were the very people who had been known as national heroes to the masses for their leadership in independence or revolutionary movements."<sup>214</sup> The ideology would easily penetrate into the populace if it was propagated by a

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. p. 179.

charismatic leader. The ideology of a charismatic leader would become the ideology of the masses.

In the stage of Mao Zedong's effort to integrate people into a unified China, Mao's personal charisma became the source of absolute legitimacy. Mao's monopoly of legitimacy became the principle basis upon which the CCP claimed to govern people including minorities. Mao himself and his words drew a "sincere attachment and authentic devotion" from the whole nation. As Feng Chen observes, "Mao's charisma was a powerful element in establishing among his followers a belief in the legitimacy of the system."<sup>215</sup> Mao's personal cult was vehemently imposed on minorities as well. Minority people were forced to accept Mao Zedong as their national hero just as shown in the case of Tibet where pictures of Chairman Mao had replaced the pictures of the Dalai Lama on the walls of Tibetan homes.

Mao's socialist ideology was different from Marxism in many respects. Even though Mao had pledged his firm belief and allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, some of his views varied from the orthodox Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The deviation of his views can be explained by the unique nature of the Chinese social and cultural environment, as well as by the particular economic structure (agricultural society) of the twentieth century. Mao was eager to embrace Marxism-Leninism, but he went beyond to adapt it to the Chinese indigenous conditions. It can be argued that Mao's accomplishment was to change Marxism to "Marxism with the Chinese characteristics." One of the most salient elements in "Marxism with the Chinese characteristics" was populism upon which Mao's "mass line" strategy for revolution was based.<sup>216</sup> Mao had maintained his firm conviction that the masses (people) were the true determinant of all social

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<sup>215</sup> Chen, "The Dilemma of Eudaemonic Legitimacy in Post-Mao China," 427.

<sup>216</sup> H.S. Park, *China and North Korea Politics of Integration and Modernization* (Asian Research Service (Hong Kong), 1990). p. 27-29.

changes, and that the masses were “the only bearer of the true socialist consciousness with enormous and inherent revolutionary potentialities.”<sup>217</sup>

A crucial element of Mao’s mass line was his perception of classes. As mentioned previously, the biggest contradiction in Chinese society which should be eliminated through the revolution was the class contradiction in Mao Zedong’s view. The Maoist ideology underlined that all internal contradictions during the GLF and the Cultural Revolution had to be seen in class terms. But deviating from the Marxism-Leninism, Mao insisted that class struggle in China was not a simple capitalist-proletariat polarity nor was the class position determined solely by people’s objective and socio-economic status. Rather, it is the subjective and psychological mind-set of people which determined their proletarian class consciousness.

Thus, Mao’s ideology centered on the importance of political education and inculcation as a means for infusing a class consciousness into the populace. As proletarian class consciousness is viewed as being achieved through indoctrination and educational work, Maoist ideology strove to embrace a diverse array of classes and to remodel them into a revolutionary proletarian class. This concept of class in Mao’s ideology was equally applied to minority nationalities with little exception. Ethnic minorities were regarded as one of the diverse classes that existed in China, and they also had to be educated and transformed into revolutionary working class. During the process of the class consciousness education, the nature and characteristics of the ethnic minorities, and their regional autonomy should be totally ignored. Mao aimed at achieving integration of minorities through the simple form of the extirpation of nationality differences and uniformity in “his strong faith in properly organized and mobilized masses.”<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid. p. 34.

Mao's "mass line" strategy for revolution was embodied by two massive movements in this integration stage: the GLF and the Cultural Revolution. The GLF was one of the boldest efforts adopted by Mao with his strong belief that even the most difficult social and economic goals in China could be accomplished if the masses were organized and mobilized ideologically and politically.<sup>219</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, mass mobilization programs initiated by Mao in the GLF can be characterized by "communization." The CCP established People's Communes in an effort to increase production with a more efficient economic approach and to better integrate the whole country. It can be said that in this integration stage, the desire to identify with other people and belong to a group made people easily susceptible to this radical Commune system.

The People's Communes became the basic mechanism of government performing agricultural, industrial, political, administrative, educational, and militia functions. Communes apparently aimed at expanding and achieving "radical collectivization" in which people were forced to accept collective ownership and collective living. People were to give up their private ownership and transfer to the communes all means of production and properties. And they were forced to live together, eat together, and raise their children together. All traditional ways and customs of their life were considered backward, which stood in the way of progress and were an obstacle to the development of production.

The family, the most basic unit of people's life, was considered obsolescent and completely destroyed. Confucianism, the most salient norm and cultural structure of the Han Chinese, was also believed to obstruct the communal life and economic productivity. Thus, the five relations (ruler-subject, parent-child, husband-wife, older-younger, and friend-friend) in the Confucian doctrine were no longer recognized. The only relationship recognized was

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid. p. 40.

“comradeship,” the one between “fellow workers.”<sup>220</sup> In this manner, the People’s Communes not only commanded economic production through mass mobilization, but also completely changed the traditional cultures with which people had lived for thousands of years. As documented in the previous chapter, diversity and distinctive characteristics of ethnic minorities were also obviously considered obstacles to such a communization of society, and the CCP radically forced uniformity between the nationalities. As Olivier observes, “political fervor of the GLF caused many nationality cadres to neglect their own cultures and vie with one another for a servile conformity to Han ways and manners.”<sup>221</sup>

The failure of the GLF campaign prompted Mao and his protégé to inaugurate another massive campaign which was viewed necessary for more effective political integration. The Cultural Revolution, then, may be viewed as an all-out effort by the Mao’s regime to further solidify the regime’s legitimacy and achieve the goal of political integration. Mao attributed the failure of the GLF to the fact that the intensity and extent of ideological indoctrination and education was not sufficient enough for reconstructing the mentality of the Chinese people. Thus, Mao believed that the whole nation “needed a shock therapy in the form of a violent movement.”<sup>222</sup>

In this integration stage in which ideology is utilized to generate regime legitimacy, politics will tend to become more extreme than the other stages of political development. As seen in the Cultural Revolution, radical and violent means are likely to be used to convey political views of regime leadership. In addition, mass demonstrations are often politically mobilized by the regime. One of the examples was that the mass rally took place in Tiananmen Square on August 18, 1966 where over a million Red Guards gathered to support Chairman Mao. Under

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>221</sup> Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces*. p. 117.

<sup>222</sup> Park, *China and North Korea Politics of Integration and Modernization*. p. 47.

these conditions, the regime is often empowered and necessitated to forcefully crack down on ideas and views politically divergent from the official regime ideology.

The politically divergent ideas and views from Mao's ideology during the Cultural Revolution were clearly identified in the Party Central Committee's August 8, 1966 decision (also known as "the 16 Points"): the "four-olds," the exploiting classes, those within the CCP who were taking the capitalist road, and all anti-party, anti-socialist, rightist elements. Mao's perception on the power of the masses (people) was once again re-emphasized in the 16 Points decision. The tasks of eliminating all of these anti-revolutionary enemies should be left to the hands of the masses. The Party was dismissed as being able to reform itself because it was already infiltrated by the enemies. The masses were instructed not to be afraid of turmoil in their efforts to eliminate the enemies, and were told to learn revolution by making revolution by themselves.<sup>223</sup> Point 4 of the 1966 Decision clearly stipulated "Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement... The masses can clarify the correct views, criticize the wrong views and expose all the ghosts and monsters. In this way the masses will be able to raise their political consciousness in the course of the struggle, enhance their abilities and talents, distinguish right from wrong and draw a clear line between ourselves and the enemy."<sup>224</sup>

The Red Guards, "large numbers of revolutionary young people previously unknown,"<sup>225</sup> became courageous and daring vanguards of the mass movement. The Red Guards were charged with destroying all the enemies for the revolution. They also took up the task of destroying the four-olds in minorities. As mentioned previously, the minority nationalities with no doubt became a natural target of attack by the Red Guards in which there existed the greatest

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<sup>223</sup> McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*. p. 186.

<sup>224</sup> "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

attachment to religion and people strongly maintained their traditional ways. Millions of young revolutionary Maoists were sent to minority areas to share their revolutionary experiences with local ethnic people as local Red Guards were formed as well.

As might be expected, political integration using ideology as a basis is usually carried out by a “coercive central mechanism.” A “coercive central mechanism” is characterized as a method which typically comes along with the process of political socialization or “indoctrination” of the public. Thus, it can be said that the success of political integration using ideology as a basis depends on how effective the regime is in terms of political socialization (indoctrination). As one scholar observes, “much of the emotional adherence to Mao Zedong among the population (particularly the post-revolutionary generation) was simply a result of [successful] political socialization.”<sup>226</sup> For effective political socialization, the regime should require the capacities to promote a belief system by successfully penetrating into the populace with a proper ideology. As Han S. Park states, “the capacities must become institutionalized in the sense that they must exist as regularized and routinized mechanisms”<sup>227</sup> for any regime to accomplish the goal of legitimacy.

In any discussion of institutionalization and institutional change, the most important question that scholars should raise is “what capacities must be institutionalized.” It is not just any capacity that must become institutionalized, but the capacity to be conducive to specific strategies of legitimacy is important. In following Han S. Park’s paradigm, an institution is here viewed as a human invention, particularly initiated and invented by the ruling elites whose intention is to obtain necessary capacities to increase their ruling legitimacy. In the same way, institutions can be expected to change in response to the changing of regime strategies. Thus,

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<sup>226</sup> Chen, "The Dilemma of Eudaemonic Legitimacy in Post-Mao China." p. 427.

<sup>227</sup> Park, *Human Needs and Political Development : A Dissent to Utopian Solutions*, 67.

“the sequence in which specific institutions emerge in a society should parallel the sequence”<sup>228</sup> with which basis of regime legitimacy emerges and is implemented.

In a regime like Mao’s Cultural Revolution in which political socialization was radically carried out, we can expect that governmental institutions such as mass media and the educational system will be empowered and employed as the agents of political indoctrination. These institutions become propaganda machinery to penetrate into the populace and play a role in controlling information and communication among people. The combination of education and media propaganda and censorship makes much of the population believe what the regime argues, and few doubt the moral authority of the system and the ideological principles underpinning it.

As mentioned before, the Cultural Revolution was “the Dark Ages” for the minority nationalities in China. Maoist ideology was indoctrinated into minority areas to the point that it was completely saturated into minority people through ideological education and media propaganda and censorship. Needless to say that minority culture was thoroughly destroyed; Mao’s teachings became the ultimate moral code and the Bible for them. Everybody, regardless of their ethnic origins, was required to recite Mao’s preaching on a daily basis. “Reading of his ‘Little Red Book,’ a collection of revolutionary aphorisms and moral precepts, was ritualized, and group discussion of his latest directives was regularized.”<sup>229</sup> The socialization process continued through formal education, workplaces, community groups, party organizations, and mass media.

All students including minority students were subjected to a political curriculum for the Maoist ideological education (of course, the language of instruction was Mandarin Chinese). In all schools including colleges and universities, their curricula were reorganized in line with

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>229</sup> Park, *China and North Korea Politics of Integration and Modernization*. p. 50.

compulsory courses studying Maoism. As Han S. Park observes, even “the quality of scholarship was evaluated on the basis of the ability to marshal the Maoist arguments.”<sup>230</sup> The publication of all academic works including school textbooks in any discipline was suspended except Mao’s works which were only publication permitted at that time. As mentioned previously, all minority song and dances were orchestrated to convey the personality cult of Mao Zedong and to promote his ideology, singing the revolutionary songs in the Han language. Also, the mass media (papers, radio, and propaganda cinema shows) as a socialization agent played an important role in disseminating the “right” information of the Maoist ideology and permeating it into people’s daily life. At the same time, the Mao’s regime also paid attention to prevent any anti-Maoist views from circulating within society through a tight control over mass media. This is one of the reasons why the publication of newspapers and radio broadcasts in minority languages were terminated.

Mao Zedong endeavored to generate and maintain his legitimacy utilizing the ideology which required the abandonment of the traditional culture and the instillation of the new revolutionary culture. Whether Mao’s regime had generated legitimacy among Chinese people including minority nationalities may be questioned. However, it is assumed that the monopolistic pattern of ideological indoctrination and socialization was able to establish popular social consciousness congruent with the official ideology of Maoism. Even though Mao’s regime had enjoyed legitimacy, however, the ideology basis of legitimacy naturally and definitely brought about assimilation policies toward minorities. The national integration of minorities was achieved, but it was achieved at the expense of minority culture and their regional autonomy.

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

## Performance Basis and Accommodation

As the paradigm being used in this study dictates, the first stage and third stage of political development correspond to each other in terms of the performance basis of legitimacy and minority policies. The regime in both stages constantly needs to strive to satisfy people's material needs to the greatest possible extent in order to create and maintain its legitimacy. And as argued in this study, when the regime pursues its legitimacy on the basis of (economic) performance, it yields accommodation policies toward minority nationalities. Minority policies in the stage of resource expansion are to a large extent quite similar to those of the stage of regime formation. The striking resemblance of these two periods in terms of the accommodation approach can be illustrated as: 1) equality of all nationalities, 2) the practice of autonomous governments, and 3) the guarantee to preserve the cultural characteristics. Due to these similarities between these two stages, the main thrust is directed at an examination of the stage of resource expansion with a brief examination of the first stage.

At the beginning of the regime formation stage (1949-1957) in China, legitimacy was determined by a regime's performance – the extent to which the CCP authority delivered what minorities needed at survival level. This was grounded mainly in the physical and economic sphere. Rather than how the CCP ruled the minorities, what mattered most at this stage was what the CCP could do in providing their needs. It was clear with no doubt that what minority people needed and wanted was a more secure and safe environment with enough food to eat in their areas.

Like the Han Chinese, the life of minority people had also been marked by the crisis of physical survival in turbulent times since the end of the Qing dynasty. Since the minorities' need remained largely at this survival level, the CCP naturally adopted policies that helped restore

social stability and increase agricultural production in an attempt to win the trust of minorities. This performance basis of legitimacy was logically accompanied by accommodation policies toward minority people because better performance typically required “mutual adjustment” and cooperation between the center and the minorities as opposed to the ideology basis being unilaterally imposed on minority people.

One of the first policies to restore social stability in minority areas was to establish the self-governing autonomous governments. This performance was accomplished on the basis of mutual adjustment and reciprocal cooperation between the CCP leadership and minorities, rather than through central coercive mechanism. The CCP realized well that there should be no “cookie-cutter” application of policies that had been workable in Han areas to minority areas; special characteristics and local conditions of each individual minority area should be considered. However, for a more effective practice of the minority autonomy, the CCP sought to solicit opinions of local people and to have consultation with minority representatives to gain understanding of the basic conditions of minority nationalities.

Another important task of the CCP regime in this stage was to increase agricultural production in minority areas. However, unlike areas of the Han Chinese where land redistribution was fiercely executed and complete by 1953, many minority areas including Tibet and Xinjiang were exempted from land reform. Decision to carry out the land reform was completely left to the hands of local minority authorities so that the minority agrarian communities would not be disrupted by forced implementation of land reform. It is clear that in the performance basis of legitimacy, local conditions were accommodated by the CCP leadership, and that the effort to deliver better performance clearly promoted the accommodation approach toward minorities.

In his speech in 1989, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping said that “we owe the stable and united situation in the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities to Chairman Mao...It is the result of the efforts by the Communist Party of China (CPC) in constantly summing up experience and making theoretical innovations.”<sup>231</sup> Deng’s remark seems to prove one important point in Han S. Park’s paradigm: the hierarchical structure of human needs is not a linear process of development. Nor does it assume an uninterrupted forward movement. “The process will be sustained only if lower level needs are well secured and maintained. Failure to do so will result in a reversion to an earlier need.”<sup>232</sup> It is clear that China would not have been able to move up to the resource expansion stage if there had been no successful integration in the previous stage: in particular, in minority areas even though the integration was achieved by forced assimilation.

After successful integration which satisfied people’s belonging need, the CCP regime has been able to take off to the stage of resource expansion whose developmental task is to fulfill the need of a leisurely mode of living for the members of society. The leisure need forces people to desire goods and services in amounts beyond what is needed merely for physical survival, as well as more free time to consume these material goods and services for pleasure. The regime, in turn, should be committed to respond to the leisure appetites of the members of the society by pursuing resource expansion and mass production of consumer goods. Political legitimacy in this stage is determined by the degree of a regime’s performance in industrialization and economic development. As evidenced in the regime formation stage, the (economic) performance basis of legitimacy in this stage once again has revitalized accommodation policies toward minority nationalities.

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<sup>231</sup> <http://www.humanrights.cn/zt/magazine/2004020048594738.htm>

<sup>232</sup> Park, *China and North Korea Politics of Integration and Modernization*. p. 18.

As expected in this stage, the performance basis of legitimacy under Deng Xiaoping's new era centered on production under the Four Modernization program. Deng Xiaoping explicitly declared in 1979 that "the major contradiction in contemporary China lay in the gap between low productivity and people's increased demands for consumer goods."<sup>233</sup> It was a stark departure from the Mao's ideological doctrine that the struggle between the proletarian revolutionary class and anti-revolutionary forces constituted the major internal contradiction in socialist China. Deng Xiaoping endeavored to increase productive forces at the expense of the ideological fervor. As this study argues that minority policies have been formulated in the larger context of the legitimacy generation, the new leadership subsequently declared that minority issues should also be resolved by increasing productive forces in minority areas and by eradicating the economic inequalities among the nationalities through the socialist modernization.

The post-Mao leaders led by Deng in the CCP adopted two drastic reform measures to increase productive forces and promote economic development (industrialization): reform and opening-up. The most dramatic form of the reform was the introduction of elements of the market economy. Deng Xiaoping still wanted to firmly maintain the socialist ideology, but socialism was tactically modified and even optimized to pursue the goal of economic development. Deng's idea can be epitomized by one of his famous remarks: "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice (黑猫白猫 抓住老鼠 就是好猫)."

In this manner, Deng was quite instrumental in introducing a new brand of socialist thinking, having developed the concept of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" which consists of the state possessing ownership of a large fraction of the Chinese economy, while at the same time allowing all entities to participate within a market economy. Deng's economic

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<sup>233</sup> Chen, "The Dilemma of Eudaemonic Legitimacy in Post-Mao China." p. 429.

doctrine has been firmly upheld by his successors and stipulated in various Chinese laws including the constitution. In 1979, Premier Zhao Ziyang summarized the directions of the economic reform declaring that “we should vigorously expand the decision-making power of enterprises..., restructure the economic system step by step, combine regulations through planning with regulations by the market...”<sup>234</sup> The NPC in March 1993 eventually changed the Constitution to declare that “the state has put into practice a socialist market economy.”<sup>235</sup>

After about 30 years of practice of these reforms, Deng’s doctrine is still upheld and admired. Premier Wen Jiabao in his interview with the CNN in 2008 said that he attributed the Chinese economic success to the reforms and opening-up policy introduced in 1978. He added that “we have one important thought: that socialism can also practice market economy... The complete formulation of our economic policy is to give full play to the basic role of market forces in allocating resources under the macroeconomic guidance and regulation of the government... We have one important piece of experience of the past 30 years: that is to ensure that both the visible hand and the invisible hand are given full play in regulating the market forces.”<sup>236</sup>

Deng Xiaoping’s reform and opening-up drive impacted on almost every aspect of the economy, society, and politics. The state-owned enterprises and the central planning, which were the two bedrocks of the Chinese economy under Mao’s economy, have been diminished in the

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<sup>234</sup> Park, *China and North Korea Politics of Integration and Modernization*. p. 99.

<sup>235</sup> Article 15 (Approved on March 29, 1993, by the 8th NPC at its 1st Session), Available at <http://chineseculture.about.com/library/china/basic/blconstitution198313.htm>

<sup>236</sup> Premier Wen’s interview with Zakaria on CNN, September 29, 2008. Full transcript of the interview is available at [http://articles.cnn.com/2008-09-29/world/chinese.premier.transcript\\_1\\_financial-crisis-interview-vice-premier?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2008-09-29/world/chinese.premier.transcript_1_financial-crisis-interview-vice-premier?_s=PM:WORLD) The Chinese model of economic success has two distinctive features: 1) a theoretically incompatible marriage between socialism (as an economic term) and the market economy and 2) this unprecedented experiment is being operated under political communism (as a political term). No one will deny that the Chinese Communist Party holds a monopoly on power, but neither can anyone deny that most economic decisions are made by the market, not the “central planning.” These two features are worth being scholarly examined.

last thirty years. The state-owned enterprises have been gradually corporatized and privatized, and they have been granted a greater decision-making power and autonomy with respect to “making production plans, selling products, and handling financial matters.”<sup>237</sup> The state-owned share of gross industrial output value has radically decreased since 1978. This important change certainly reflects the growing power of the market at the expense of the state central planning in the Chinese economy.

As clearly defined in Premier Wen’s interview above, both the visible hand (the role of a state) and the invisible hand (the role of market) are given full play in the Chinese economy. Along with the market drive, in 2001 private business people and entrepreneurs were allowed to become members of the CCP. And the Constitution was amended to “protect the lawful rights and interests of the non-public sectors of the economy such as the individual and private sectors of the economy. (Article 11, 2004 Amendment)” In addition, private property is constitutionally guaranteed (Article 13, 2004 Amendment).

Another core of Deng’s economic drive was opening-up policy which took off the bamboo curtain of China. Special attention was paid to foreign trade which was considered one of the most important tools for economic success and the acquisition of foreign capital and technology. For the purpose of attracting foreign investment, the four “special economic zones” were established in 1980 where foreign investors were given preferential treatments such as exemption of income tax. Four years later in 1984 China further opened 14 coastal cities to foreign investment. In addition, the power to regulate foreign trade before 1979 was monopolized by the state. However, this power has been decentralized and devolved to local levels.

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<sup>237</sup> Park, *China and North Korea Politics of Integration and Modernization*. p. 99.

As examined earlier, the reform policies of Deng Xiaoping have been engineered by a radical liberalization of the Chinese economy through market economy, power decentralization (economic and politics), and private property empowerment. There is no question that the economic reform has achieved remarkable success with an average 9½ percent growth rate every year for the last 30 years and has significantly enhanced satisfaction of people's needs of resource expansion. The economic liberalization also has resulted in reducing the state's involvement in society and the peripheries and in increasing the autonomy of the societal actors. The performance basis of legitimacy has been characterized as "less government coercion and involvement" in society throughout the reform era.

Minorities have been able to participate in and share this economic development. The standard of living of most minorities has risen substantially. They have been encouraged to join and cooperate with the CCP for better economic outcomes. Given the enormous national resources that minority areas possess, the importance of minority contribution (support and participation) in the process of economic modernization has been recognized. The spirit of interdependence and mutual benefits between the Han Chinese and minorities has been emphasized and promoted by the CCP leadership in Deng's new era. Regional autonomy was returned to minority areas and ethnic autonomous areas even have been able to independently conduct imports and exports with foreign countries and businessmen. Since the 1990s, trade volumes (both exports and imports) have risen substantially in minority areas including Xinjiang and Tibet.

Another aspect of the economic liberalization and the opening-up policy is the growth of the tourism industry in China. Unlike Mao Zedong's isolationist era when tourism was regarded as unproductive and useless to economic growth, tourism has been officially promoted in Deng's

reform era as an important source of government revenues. What is more important about tourism expansion is that minority areas have opened up to tourism. It was expected that minorities have many things to offer tourists: many minorities live in areas of beautiful scenery; they have rich artistic traditions. In fact, “many ethnic villages have made themselves into ‘theme parks,’ hoping to attract tourists and make money.”<sup>238</sup> The expansion of tourism has played a crucial role for minorities in maintaining and developing their own traditions and culture. The economic basis of legitimacy in the stage of resource expansion undoubtedly has brought about the accommodation policies toward minorities.

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<sup>238</sup> Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation*. p. 71.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROSPECT

In the previous chapters, I have documented the evolution of the minority policies of China since 1949. What I have observed is that minority policies in China have alternated between accommodation and assimilation aimed at achieving the goal of national integration. This study has proposed regime legitimacy as an independent variable in an effort to provide a convincing explanation to the question of the minority policy shift. As the paradigm used in this study proposes, the political development of China can be examined by being broken into three stages: regime formation (1949-1957), political integration (1958-1976), and resource expansion (1978 to the present). The basis of regime legitimacy in China subsequently has shifted as the political system undergoes a transition through these three stages: performance basis (1949-1957), ideology basis (1958-1976), and the return of performance basis (1978 to the present).

Based on the above observation, this study concludes that the CCP's minority policies have evolved within the larger context of political development that has taken place in the last six decades. And more specifically, the CCP's minority policies have been directly linked to its strategies to establish and cultivate regime legitimacy. When a performance basis is predominantly pursued to generate regime legitimacy, national differences are accommodated. When an ideology basis is massively utilized to cultivate regime legitimacy, the CCP radically promotes assimilation of minorities into the majority for national convergence.

This study predicts that the current accommodation approach toward minority nationalities will be continuous and remaining unchanged because the CCP is expected to maintain its focus on (economic) performance as its basis of legitimacy in this stage of resource expansion. Of course, the CCP undoubtedly still has minority problems as of 2011. Obviously the accommodation policy has by no means been free of problems. As shown in Tibet and Xinjiang in 2008 and 2009, there were the resurgence of the independence-minded uprisings and ensuing ethnic unrest. And there is no doubt that there are some discrepancies between the theory of the regional autonomy and the actual practices of it. The CCP also tended to tighten the security by police forces over the troubled minority areas when the gravity of the situation was intensified. In the wake of September 11, China may have taken advantage of the U.S. war on terror to crack down on Uyghur separatists, claiming them as Islamic terrorists. The Western media often times show the desirability of highlighting or exaggerating these disparities under the name of human rights.

The improved infrastructures and impressive economic growth in minority areas often times are very negatively portrayed. For instance, when the Qinghai-Tibet railway was completed in 2006, the Chinese officials proudly announced that this railroad would serve as the crucial link to connect the “restive and long-isolated people of Tibet” to the modern world and would bring economic opportunity to Tibet. As opposed to the view of the Han officials, some Tibetans were very skeptical of the benefits that they would enjoy from the railroad construction. And many local people in Tibet worried about the possible influx of the Han people into Tibet, which would pose a threat to their culture. One Tibetan said that “they are robbing our land of precious minerals and will use the train to take them away faster. They say they’ve brought us electricity, hospitals, roads, etc., but they are not for us; they are for the hundreds of thousands of

Chinese who live here now.”<sup>239</sup> It is also true that some minorities eagerly want to learn Mandarin Chinese in a hope of catching an opportunity in the booming economy.

It should be noted, however, that the CCP has never been derailed from the accommodation approach toward ethnic minorities in the last thirty years. Since 1978, the CCP has constantly endeavored to strengthen the basic system of the regional autonomy and to promote the development of ethnic minorities and their cultures with the adoption of various measures at the same time rectifying some problems arising from practice. This has been accompanied with economic growth in the minority regions and with the upgrading of living standard of minority people.

It can be said that the accommodation of the CCP has been quite successful in achieving national integration (Tibet and Xinjiang remain difficult for the Chinese authorities, though). In general, it seems that minorities are considerably content with their life under the rule of Communist China, and that minorities are happy to become integrated into China and to coexist with the Han Chinese as long as their autonomy is accommodated, tolerated, and respected (political, economic, and cultural) by the central government.

As the paradigm predicts, when people are satisfied with a more comfortable life with more leisure time and material resources, they are likely to seek relative gratification in relation to other people. In the hierarchical structure of human needs in the paradigm used in this study, the level of human needs is required to shift to that of social control. Social control refers to the desire to attain superior life over others by securing superfluous material goods and social status.

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<sup>239</sup> “Deemed a road to ruin, Tibetans say Beijing rail-way poses latest threat to minority culture,” Boston Globe, August 26, 2002. Available at <http://www.tibetanliberation.org/railroad802.html>

Thus, “social competition arises in the form of competition for the control over ‘values’ including social as well as material resources.”<sup>240</sup>

The expected developmental task of the regime in response to the control needs of the people is to resolve this social conflict through the redistribution of such “values.” Thus, government policies naturally center on the question of “who gets what, when, how and why.” However, resolving such social conflict and satisfying everybody in this stage of conflict management is a daunting task for any regime because satisfaction of one person (or one group) automatically necessitates a relative deprivation of another person (or another group) seeking the same need. In the zero-sum nature of the developmental stage, social conflict may not be resolved: it can be only managed.

China has not entered the threshold of the stage of conflict management yet. It is not likely that China is entering the threshold of the post-industrial society for the time being. However, as long as human needs are universal, and the dominant needs of the members of the society determine behavior patterns of people and engineer the course of political development, it is obvious that China would follow the path that the paradigm commands. China moves to the stage of conflict management eventually.

What is the basis of legitimacy in the stage of conflict management? What would be the dominant minority policies in China when it entered the stage of conflict management? As Han S. Park argues, political stability in this stage depends on the regime’s skill “in the theoretically impossible job of maintaining the support of the winner without losing the support of the loser.”<sup>241</sup> In this difficult job, this study predicts that the legitimacy of the Chinese regime will center on the precarious balance between performance and ideology. When the economic

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<sup>240</sup> Park, *Human Needs and Political Development : A Dissent to Utopian Solutions*. p. 83.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. p. 83.

performance is stagnant or goes into recession, there would be fewer material resources available to be redistributed in a society. Moreover, certain segments of the society are much more seriously affected by the economic downturn than other segments. A sense of relative deprivation felt by the certain portion of the society would surely undermine the regime's legitimacy. In this manner, maintenance and growth of the economy will be given more importance to regime legitimacy in this conflict management stage than the three previous stages of political development.

Ideology is very crucial as a basis of regime legitimacy in the conflict management stage. Since the developmental task focuses on redistribution, the regime needs to rationalize distributive justice by devising a formula for the allocation of material as well as social values. Ideology becomes a very important guiding principle to determine which redistribution formula would be suitable to meet the dominant needs of the members of the society. Any regime in this stage should maintain a precarious balance between ideology and performance to stay "legitimate." As predicted in this study, in the stage of conflict management China is also likely to utilize this balance to maintain its legitimacy.

Minority policies are also likely to be formulated in the context of the legitimacy basis of this precarious balance between ideology and performance. This study predicts that an accommodation credo will be maintained, but there will be constant "gaming" between the CCP and minority nationalities. As the nature of the conflict management stage commands, minority nationalities (one of the most deprived groups based on the current standard in China) are more likely to develop intensive opinions and attitudes looking for more (maximal) concessions from the central government. The concessions that they will be demanding may include more autonomy power, more economic benefits, and more equal opportunity in terms of their

representation in the political center. On the other hand, the central government will be expected to make an effort to make minimal concessions because the Chinese authorities fear loss of control over minorities and they worry about the possibility that excessive concessions would encourage minorities to arouse the sense of national determination and secessionist ambitions. However, it should be noted that all of this gaming and negotiations between the central government and minorities would be taking place in the context of the accommodation principle.

On the prediction that the stage of conflict management will be accompanied by political liberalization, several institutions such as free media, interest groups, and even political parties will be anticipated to emerge to represent the interest of minority nationalities in China. Minorities will be expected to take advantage of these institutions to have their claims and demands accommodated by the central government. The absence of these institutions may make minorities resort to such means as violent protests or political terrorism. It is not certain when China is ready to take off to the stage of conflict management. But it is observed that some phenomena of the gaming between the CCP and minority nationalities are taking place as of 2011. This study hopes that the CCP would not abandon this fundamental principle: who would not agree that accommodation is the only approach to achieve true national integration in any multi-ethnic country whether it is democratic or totalitarian?

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