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## Between Modern Schooling and Cultural Heritage

### Education and Ethnicity in Southwest China

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# Between Modern Schooling and Cultural Heritage

Education and Ethnicity in Southwest China

WEI WANG

DIVISION OF EDUCATION | DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY | LUND UNIVERSITY





# Between Modern Schooling and Cultural Heritage

Education and Ethnicity in Southwest China

Wei Wang



**LUND**  
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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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<b>Title and subtitle</b> Between Modern Schooling and Cultural Heritage: Education and Ethnicity in Southwest China		
<b>Abstract</b> <p>Since the late 1970s, China has experienced remarkable socioeconomic development. The trend towards marketisation and modernisation overturned culturally-rooted lifestyles, and more and more ethnic minorities in China have started to regard their traditional cultures as irrelevant to their livelihoods and future and chosen to move away from them. This poses a threat to the idea of ethnic diversity within the unity of the Chinese nation state. In response, the Chinese government has implemented a series of strategies to integrate ethnic minority culture into modern schooling to maintain cultural heritage.</p> <p>The overall aim of the thesis is to contribute to a critical understanding of how ethnic minority culture is integrated into school practices, inside and outside classrooms; what kinds of challenges in teaching and administration teachers encounter in Chinese ethnic minority regions specifically regarding ethnic Dai and ethnic Tujia; and how pre-service teachers are prepared in present teacher education programmes in ethnic minority areas. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of multicultural education and internal orientalism, this thesis contextualises multicultural education by analysing Chinese academic debates on the subject as well as by investigating how political, social and cultural forces influence education for ethnic minorities in Southwest China.</p> <p>The data for this thesis consists of sampled literature on the topic of "education and ethnicity" in Chinese academia for a literature review, as well as empirical data collected using a qualitative approach, including interviews with school teachers and teacher educators, focus group discussions with school teachers and document analysis of teacher education syllabuses.</p> <p>The overall findings show that the major insights of international scholarship on multicultural education since 1970 has not significantly informed on ethnic minority education research in China; the manifestations of ethnic minority culture within the school context are superficial and largely in the form of static cultural artefacts; teachers' practices of integrating cultural content are performed as add-ons; and cultivation of multicultural competence for work in ethnic minority education amongst pre-service teachers is, to a great extent, missing from teacher education programmes.</p>		
<b>Key words</b> Modern schooling, Cultural heritage, Ethnic minority education, Teacher, Teacher education, Teacher educator, Multicultural education, Internal Orientalism, Xishuangbanna (西双版纳), Qianjiang (黔江), Dai (傣族), Tujia (土家族), China		
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Wei Wang



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*Dedicated to my wife Rui Yang and my son Pengpeng*

谨将此书献给我的夫人杨蕊女士和爱子芃芃小朋友

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Ethnic minority education is one of the most important areas, but also the weakest in education in China. Nine years ago, when I started my master's study at the Centre for Studies of Education and Psychology of Ethnic Minorities in Southwest China, I got to learn about school education in ethnic minority regions; surprisingly, I found no obvious differences in teaching content and modes from the education I (as a non-ethnic minority) received in my childhood. I became more and more convinced that the particularities of ethnic minority culture should be emphasised by educators. This took me on a journey to explore the question, how could education respond to the particularities and diversity of ethnic minority cultures? One might then ask: if you research Chinese ethnic minority education, why would you choose to come to Sweden to pursue your PhD? And if you are coming back a great distance to China for fieldwork, would it not be better if you study in China? In response I would say, ethnic minority education is not only an educational issue or a cultural issue. It is closely connected and interplays with social, economic and political issues. I am appreciative of the fact that I can come into the Western academic context to think about and research ethnic minority education in China; it is like the picture of the earth we see from the moon, that people on earth cannot see with their own eyes. In this long but still continuing journey, I have received much selfless help from many people.

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*Wei Wang at midnight, 3 February 2019, in Vildanden, Lund, Sweden*



## List of articles

### Article 1

Wang, W. (2018). Researching education and ethnicity in China: a critical review of the literature between 1990 and 2014. *Frontier of Education in China*, 13(2): 216-244.

### Article 2

Wang, W. (*resubmitted after major revision*). Ethnic minority culture in Chinese schooling: manifestations, implementation pathways and teachers' practices. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*.

### Article 3

Wang, W. (*submitted*). Fostering teachers' multicultural competence for Chinese ethnic minority education: an analysis of teacher education programmers, syllabuses and teacher educator perceptions.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

CEL	Compulsory Education Law
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CNY	Chinese Yuan
CRT	Culturally responsive teaching
CWDS	China Western Development Strategy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
LTC	Liangxiang Teachers' college (pseudonym)
MOE	Ministry of Education
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCR	New Curriculum Reform
NTES	Nation Teacher Education Standard
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PUEP	Plural Unity Ethnic Pattern
PRC	People's Republic of China
SCTP	Specially Contracted Teachers Programme
SEAC	State Ethnic Affairs Committee
SEC	State Education Commission (Renamed as MOE in 1998)
TRPP	Teacher Replacement Practicum Programme
TTC	Tianxiang Teachers' College (pseudonym)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
XDAP	Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture

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**Map 1: Map of China**

Source: Designed by Maryna Shabeliuk





# 1. Introduction

In 1989, the *Indigenous and Tribal People Convention* (International Labour Organization 169, hereafter ILO 169) was launched in Geneva by the Governing Body of the ILO. The education section of this convention requires member countries to carry out a series of initiatives to ensure that indigenous peoples have the opportunity to receive education equally with majority communities and to ensure their cultural and language rights (ILO 1989). However, the constitution of China does not identify any group or people as indigenous within China and maintains opposition to ILO 169. Instead of “indigenous”, the Chinese authorities prefer to use “ethnic minority” to distinguish between minority and majority groups, especially in the aspect of culture. This is because the Chinese position is that both ethnic minorities and the ethnic Han majority have lived in Chinese territory for a long period of time, which means they are both inherently indigenous to China.

However, refusing to recognise ethnic minorities as indigenous, or the ILO 169 convention, does not mean that the Chinese government does not maintain the rights of ethnic minorities, especially in the educational domain. The Chinese state has increasingly subscribed to global development initiatives that aim at greater educational inclusion and the protection of individual and collective rights, such as Education for All in 1990 and the Millennium Development Goals. In 2000, at the UNESCO World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, a total of 164 countries including China adopted the *Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments* which necessitated strengthening and developing national plans for achieving the goals of Education for All and universal primary education before 2015. In 2005, the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) issued the *Report on Education for All in China* (中国全民教育国家报告) in which it summarised educational development progress in the five years since the Dakar Framework. The data showed that the population coverage of the “two basics”<sup>1</sup> (两基) plan has

---

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the two goals of nine-year compulsory education and eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged people (基本普及九年义务教育, 基本扫除青壮年文盲).

increase from 85% in 2000 to 93.6% in 2004 (MOE 2005). However, only 67.8% of ethnic minority regions achieved two basic plan targets in 2004. Education for ethnic minorities remains a challenging and priority field. According to the most recent National Population Census in 2010 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in 21 of 55 ethnic minorities the enrolment rate in primary school is lower than 90%, compared to 99.7% nationwide (State Council and NBS 2012).

The Reform and Open Policy from the late 1970s and the China Western Development Strategy (CWDS, 西部大开发) from the late 1990s speeded up socioeconomic development and involved most regions of the country in the trend of marketisation and modernisation, including ethnic minority areas (Chow 2004). On one hand, this trend overturned the original culturally-rooted lifestyles in ethnic minority areas so that more and more ethnic minority peoples started to regard their traditional culture as irrelevant to their livelihoods and future life, and have chosen to move away from it. Yi (2008), starting from the concept of cultural capital, considers that acquiring mainstream culture will inevitably lead to the loss of ethnic minority culture. But, on the other hand, the official framework of the Plural Unity Ethnic Pattern (PUEP, 多元一体民族格局) describes China as a unified country with cultural diversity, with 56 ethnic groups (Fei 1989a). The Chinese government's vision under the PUEP is to protect, maintain and transmit ethnic minority culture which is regarded as the common heritage of the Chinese nation (中华民族). This conflict between modernisation and cultural heritage continues to be a reality in present-day China.

## Research aims and research questions

Education is a key part of the conflict between promoting modernisation and maintaining cultural heritage. On one hand, it is believed that education has a central role in transmitting knowledge needed for life in a modern society and the development of the country in different social domains. China has had a strong tradition of emphasising education, which has been encouraged by both past and present generations of China Communist Party (CCP) leaders. As

President Xi Jinping said at a forum at Peking University in 2018, “A nation will prosper only when its educational undertaking thrives.”<sup>2</sup>

On the other side of the conflict, the government implemented a series of initiatives in school education, such as the *Introducing Ethnic Minority Culture into School* (民族文化进校园工程) project to involve ethnic minority culture into school practices. Such initiatives are viewed as important pathways to include cultural heritage (Wu and Zhang 2011).<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the demographic reality of schools and classrooms in Chinese ethnic minority regions is multicultural, often comprising different ethnic minorities (Wang and Gou 2013). This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in Southwest China, the site of the cases discussed in this thesis. This multicultural reality inevitably poses challenges to teachers, raises the need for teachers to possess the ability to deal with students with culturally diverse backgrounds, and for this to be a concern of teacher education programmes.

The initiative to introduce ethnic minority culture in schools aroused my interest in ethnic minority education and corresponding teacher education in China. To this end, the overall aim of this research is to contribute to a critical understanding of how ethnic minority culture is integrated into school practices, inside and outside the classroom; what kinds of challenges in teaching and administration the teachers encounter in Chinese ethnic minority education, specifically regarding the ethnic Dai (傣族) and ethnic Tujia (土家族) communities; and how pre-service teachers are prepared in existing teacher education programmes for working in ethnic minority areas. The specific aims of this research are to clarify the kinds of discussions related to ethnicity and education in Chinese academia, to describe and to analyse the problems and experience of teachers working in ethnic Dai and Tujia areas as well as possible weaknesses in teacher education programmes. To this end, this thesis aims to investigate the following specific research questions:

1. How is “education and ethnicity” framed in Chinese academia? What are the linkages to the international academic debate on multicultural education? (Article 1)

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<sup>2</sup> Xi Jinping: Speech at a forum with teachers and students in Peking University (习近平：在北京大学师生座谈会上的讲话). Retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-05/03/c\\_1122774230.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-05/03/c_1122774230.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Of course, not only do ethnic minorities have their cultural heritage, the majority Han also engages in practices related to its cultural heritage. However, because of the huge number of Han and the dominant position of the Han language in Chinese society, the problem is not as obvious and urgent as for ethnic minorities.

2. How do schools in ethnic minority areas implement minority cultural heritage inside and outside classroom? (Article 2)
3. How do teachers manage their teaching and administration in ethnic minority areas in Southwest China? (Article 2)
4. To what extent do teacher education programmes for pre-service teachers in China incorporate training to build multicultural competence? (Article 3)
5. What are the underlying external forces that influence the extent to which teacher training fosters competence in providing ethnic minority education? (Article 3)

## Thesis structure

This thesis is a compilation of three articles and this introductory part, which in turn is structured into seven chapters. In Chapter 2, the thesis provides an overview of the context of the study, China, its ethnic minorities and their education. In Chapter 3, brief introductions to education governance and the pre-service teacher system in China are provided, where the former can illuminate the latter. Chapter 4 focuses on the conceptual and theoretical background of the study, discussing multicultural education the primary theoretical framework for all three articles, as well as (internal) orientalism which is a particular focus in Article 2.

Chapter 5 begins with an overview of the literature selection process (Article 1), selection of fieldwork sites including local schools (Article 2) and teacher education universities (Article 3). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to methodological concerns and choices throughout the research process, discussing how the data was collected and analysed and how ethical considerations were handled. Chapter 6 summarises the three articles. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a concluding discussion, summarising the arguments of the three articles, returning to the research questions as well as presenting policy implications emerging from the findings of this study.

The first article “Researching education and ethnicity in China: a critical review of the literature between 1990 and 2014” focuses on the research traditions on education and ethnicity in Chinese academia. The aim of this article is to describe and critically analyse how Chinese educational researchers have

researched ethnic minority education between 1990 and 2014. This article is the stepping stone to the following two articles. The literature review shows that multicultural education is the dominant framework for discussing aspects of ethnic minority education in China. However, the literature review indicates that major insights from international scholarship on multicultural education since the 1970s have not significantly informed research on Chinese ethnic minority education research.

The second article “Ethnic minority culture in Chinese schooling: manifestations, implementation pathways and teachers’ practices” turns the focus towards practices in ethnic minority education. In response to the loss of ethnic minority culture amidst modernisation and globalisation, a series of measures were implemented to introduce ethnic minority culture in schools; this is regarded as an important and effective pathway for this purpose. However, qualitative data from Xishuangbanna and Qianjiang suggests that the manifestations of ethnic minority culture within school contexts in both places are superficial. In addition, in teachers’ experience, incorporating ethnic minority culture in teaching is merely an add-on.

Finally, the third article “fostering teachers’ multicultural competence for Chinese ethnic minority education: an analysis of teacher education programmes, syllabuses and teacher educator perceptions” aims to explore how the cultivation of multicultural competence is incorporated into teacher education programmes and the underlying external forces that shape it. The qualitative data shows a lack of explicit consideration in current teacher education programmes on training pre-service teachers to build their multicultural competence in working in ethnic minority education. On the other hand it reveals that what pre-service teacher competence covers, and the external forces that influence how teacher education plays out in practice, are influenced and somewhat determined by the larger social, economic and political context as well as the agenda for educational reform in China.



## 2. Ethnic minorities and ethnic minority education in China

This chapter provides insights into the background and context of the ethnic minorities of Southwest China and the development of ethnic minority education in China. In the first part of the chapter, I introduce how Chinese ethnic minority groups<sup>4</sup> were classified and what criteria were applied to the classification process. In the second part, I present the demographic situation, economic development, and education development of Southwest China, the geographical area of focus in this thesis. In the third part of the chapter, I look into the idea of the “civilising mission” which implies the asymmetrical relations between powerful Western countries and colonised countries in the period of imperialism, as well as between the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). This provides a perspective to understand the inherent power mechanism in implementing ethnic minority education in China. In the last section, I describe some turning points after the late 1970s which influenced ethnic minority education, such as the Compulsory Education Law for normalising and popularising basic education, the preferential policy of higher education entry for lowering the threshold for ethnic minority students, PUEP and the CWDS in motivating concerns on incorporating ethnic minority culture in school.

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<sup>4</sup> For convenience, I use the terms “ethnic minority groups” and “ethnic minorities” interchangeably throughout this thesis.

# Ethnic classification project

## Overview of classification process

The PRC was founded in 1949 by the CCP and was regarded as a multi-ethnic state (Lee 2016). Presently, there are 56 ethnic groups identified and confirmed by the central government, including the majority Han and 55 ethnic minorities, compared to the Republican era when there were only five officially acknowledged ethnic groups (Han, Muslim, Mongol, Tibetan, and Manchu) (Maurer-Fazio and Hasmath 2015).

The 55 ethnic minority groups are products of around 30 years of the official Ethnic Classification Project (民族识别工程) (Mullaney 2011). To give the implementation of ethnic minority policies more focus, starting in the beginning of the 1950s, the government sent out teams of researchers in various fields to carry out large-scale investigations on ethnic minority group classification (Tong 2008). Following the newly-established government's proclamation that it would treat minorities equally, more than 400 ethnic groups applied to be declared minorities at the start of this project (Mackerras 1994). Only 41 ethnic minority groups were identified by government in the 1953 census. During 1954–1964, more ethnic minority groups were recognised and the total increased to 53 ethnic minority groups. Finally, after the ethnic Luoba (珞巴族) in Tibet and ethnic Jinuo (基诺族) in Yunnan were recognised in 1965 and 1979 respectively, 55 ethnic minority groups were officially identified in the 1982 census (Gladney 1998, 14). Table 1 shows the list of ethnic minority groups in China, including their names, populations in 2010 and their main geographical regions.



**Table 1: List of ethnic groups, their populations and main geographical areas**

Source: (State Council and NBS 2012)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Main geographical areas</b>
Han 汉族	1,220,844,520	Spread all over the territory of China
Zhuang 壮族	16,926,381	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
Hui 回族	10,586,087	Ningxia, Gansu
Man 满族	10,387,958	Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Hebei
Uyghur 维吾尔族	10,069,346	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Miao 苗族	9,426,007	Chongqing, Guizhou, Hunan
Yi 彝族	8,714,393	Sichuan
Tujia 土家族	8,353,912	Chongqing, Hunan, Hubei
Tibetan 藏族	6,282,187	Tibet Autonomous Region
Mongol 蒙古族	5,981,840	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Dong 侗族	2,879,974	Guizhou, Hunan
Buyi 布依族	2,870,034	Guizhou, Yunnan
Yao 瑶族	2,796,003	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Yunnan, Hunan
Bai 白族	1,933,510	Yunnan
Korean 朝鲜族	1,830,929	Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang
Hani 哈尼族	1,660,932	Yunnan
Li 黎族	1,463,064	Hainan
Kazak 哈萨克族	1,462,588	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Dai 傣族	1,261,311	Yunnan
She 畲族	708,651	Guangdong
Lisu 傈僳族	702,839	Yunnan, Sichuan
Dongxiang 东乡族	621,500	Gansu
Gelao 仡佬族	550,746	Guizhou
Lahu 拉祜族	485,966	Yunnan
Wa 佤族	429,709	Yunnan
Shui 水族	411,847	Guizhou
Naxi 纳西族	326,295	Yunnan
Qiang 羌族	309,576	Sichuan
Tu 土族	289,565	Qinghai, Gansu
Mulao 仫佬族	216,257	Guangxi
Xibo 锡伯族	190,481	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Kyrgyz 柯尔克孜族	186,708	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Jingpo 景颇族	147,828	Yunnan
Daur 达斡尔族	131,992	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Salar 撒拉族	130,607	Qinghai
Bulang 布朗族	119,639	Yunnan
Maonan 毛南族	101,192	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
Tajik 塔吉克族	51,069	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Pumi 普米族	42,861	Yunnan
Achang 阿昌族	39,555	Yunnan
Nu 怒族	37,523	Yunnan

Ewenke 鄂温克族	30,875	Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Jing 京族	28,199	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
Jinuo 基诺族	23,143	Yunnan
De'ang 德昂族	20,556	Yunnan
Baoan 保安族	20,074	Gansu
Russian 俄罗斯族	15,393	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Yugu 裕固族	14,978	Gansu
Uzbek 乌兹别克族	10,569	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
Menba 门巴族	10,561	Tibet Autonomous Region
Elunchun 鄂伦春族	8,659	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Dulong 独龙族	6,930	Yunnan
Hezhe 赫哲族	5,354	Heilongjiang
Gaoshan 高山族	4,009	Taiwan
Luoba 珞巴族	3,682	Tibet Autonomous Region
Tatar 塔塔尔族	3,556	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

### Classification criteria

Why were these 55 ethnic groups classified as ethnic minorities? What were the criteria applied by government for identifying them? At the outset, the CCP was inspired by Marxist-Leninist theory and the experience of the Soviet Union in dealing with minority affairs including its ethnic classification work (Leibold 2013).

A nationality<sup>5</sup> is a group of people with “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 1953, 307, quoted from Zang 2015, 39)

In the Soviet Union, many ethnic groups were recognised using this fourfold criteria and republics were formed for them. However, the reality of ethnic groups in China is not like the Soviet Union where ethnic groups have strong political complexions and clear boundaries between them (Ma 2012). Common territories and common economic life were thus weaker factors in identifying ethnic minorities, such the Hui and Manchu. By contrast, common language and psychological make-up, which reflect the commonality in cultural domains, were taken as the key factors in ethnic classification (Ma 2012). The CCP also put ethnic minority people’s subjective will at the fore and allowed them to self-register. In general, people’s self-identification and the distinctiveness of culture operated as the main criteria of ethnic classification. Yet there is not always a convergence between self-understanding as an ethnic minority and official acknowledgement.

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<sup>5</sup> In the Chinese context, the terms “nation” and “ethnic group” are used interchangeably. For example, influenced by Stalin’s statement on nation and nationality, government usually adopts “Chinese Nation”(中华民族) to represent a collective culture and cultural entity constituted by both majority and minority groups. By contrast the names of some universities specialising in cultivating ethnic minority talents include the Central University of Nationalities (中央民族大学) and South-Central University of Nationalities (中南民族大学). Here the term “nationality” is used in its plural form and obviously represents ethnic groups in China, as it is impossible to have two “Chinese Nations” (中华民族). Thus, there is, in fact, no obvious dichotomy between “nation” and “ethnic group”, both of which mean a community with a shared culture. In modern English, “nation” and its derivative “nationality” can also represent a country and individual citizenship. To avoid misunderstanding, many Chinese governmental organizations have changed their English translation names; thus the former State Nationalities Affairs Commission (国家民族事务委员会) is now known in English as the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. In this thesis I will employ terms derived from “ethnicity”, such as “ethnic minorities” and “ethnic majority”, to avoid confusion.

# Introduction to Southwest China

## **Populations, multicultural ethnic minorities and geographic factors**

China is divided into seven administrative divisions. These are the Northeast region, North China region, East China region, South China region, Central China region, Southwest region, and Northwest region (see map 1). Southwest China located on the southwestern border contiguous with India, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. It contains five provincial units: the Tibet Autonomous Region, Chongqing Municipality, Sichuan Province, Guizhou Province and Yunnan Province. At the end of 2010, the population in Southwest China was about 192,980,000, comprising 14.08% of the whole population in China. Meanwhile, the ethnic minority population of Southwest China is about 36,260,593 or 31.8% of all ethnic minorities in China (calculated from State Council and NBS 2012). Table 2 shows the population in different provinces in Southwest China and the percentage ethnic minorities occupy in the population.

The diversity and complexity of ethnic minorities in Southwest China is, to a large extent, closely related to its geography. The rugged topography, with mountains, gorges and rivers, has historically hindered connections and integrations between local ethnic minorities. Traditional Chinese proverbs used to describe the complex topography of Southwest China include: “the road to Sichuan is harder than to climb to the sky” (蜀道之难，难于上青天) and “there are never three inches flat road (地无三尺平) in the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau (云贵高原)”. This complex geography divides Southwest China into many isolated geographic units which cause differentiation of ethnic minorities. This relatively separated space has led to each ethnic minority group developing its own language, territory and economic life.

**Table 2: Demographic information of the five provinces in Southwest China**

Source: (State Council and NBS 2012)

Province	Population (2010)	Population of ethnic minorities and percentage	Number of long-established ethnic minorities <sup>6</sup>	Main ethnic minorities
Chongqing	28,846,170	1,398,707 (4.8%)	4	Tujia, Miao, Hui
Guizhou	34,746,468	12,547,983 (36.11%)	17	Miao, Dong, Buyi, Dong
Sichuan	88,152,000	4,220,000 (5%)	14	Yi, Zang, Qiang, Miao
Tibet	3,002,166	2,756,903 (91.83%)	7	Tibet, Menba, Luoba, Naxi
Yunnan	45,960,000	15,337,000 (33.37%)	25	Yi, Dai, Bai, Hani, Miao

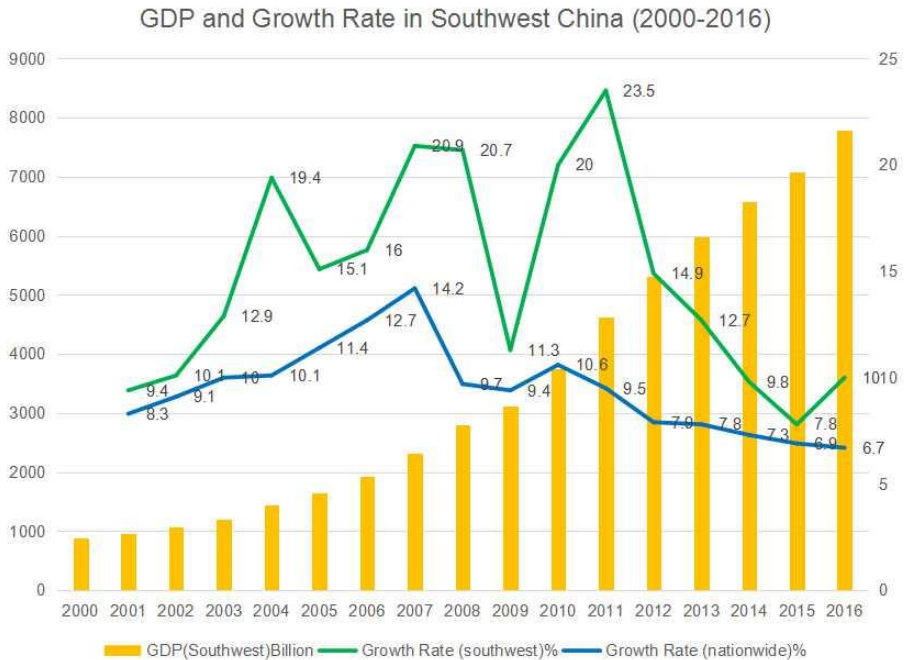
## Economy in Southwest China

From the implementation of the CWDS in the late 1990s, the economic development of Southwest China has made remarkable progress. The Statistical Yearbook shows that the region's gross domestic product (GDP) has increased consistently since 2000, from CNY 886.7 billion in 2000 to CNY 7,799.4 billion in 2016 (see Figure 1). As the figure shows, the growth rate of GDP in Southwest China in these 16 years is higher than the national average.

However, the percentage that the GDP of Southwest China occupies in the national GDP has barely changed. As Figure 2 shows, the GDP of Southwest China was 8.8% of national GDP in 2000, and slightly increased to 10.5% in 2016. In 1978, the per capita disposable income of urban households in Southwest China was CNY 356 per year, 4% more than the national average. Although income in Southwest China increased sharply to CNY 12,906 per year by 2016, it was still only 83.9% of the national average. The eastern and central regions of China dominate the national GDP, and there is a situation of unbalanced development. The high-speed development in Southwest China does not bridge the gap with the eastern and central regions and in fact it is growing.

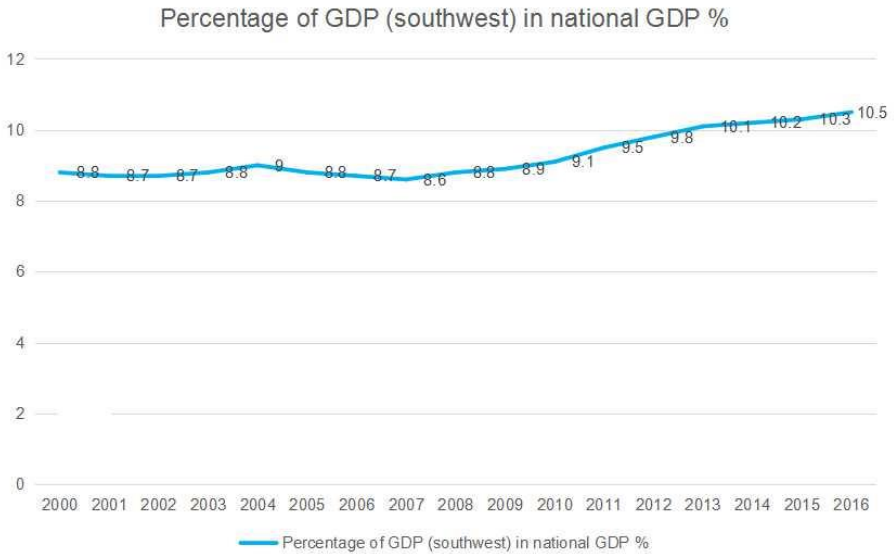
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<sup>6</sup> I use the term "long-established ethnic minorities" to represent those who have lived in each province for generations. Because of internal migration within China, almost 55 ethnic minorities can be found everywhere in China. However, long-established ethnic minorities are the dominant local ethnic minorities.



**Figure 1: GDP and growth rate in Southwest China (2000–2016)**  
 Source: (NBS 2017)

Considering the three-sector model and the respective proportions of each sector of GDP, in 2015 Southwest China had 12.16% in primary industry (agriculture), 42.67% in secondary industry (manufacturing) and 45.18% in tertiary industry (services), comparing to the national averages of 8.42%, 44.38%, and 47.20% respectively (NBS 2017). The higher percentage in primary industry and lower percentage in secondary industry indicates that the Southwest provinces are still in a transitional stage to industrialisation. It should be noticed that the percentage of the tertiary industry differs little from the national average, even in the Tibet Autonomous Region which has 53.80% percent in the tertiary industry. This, to large extent, suggests that tourism is one of the most important sectors in the economic development of Southwest China.



**Figure 2: Percentage of GDP (Southwest) in national GDP (2000–2016)**  
Sources: (NBS 2017)

## Education in Southwest China

In 2017, the Yangtze River Education Research Institution (YRERI 长江教育研究院) officially released the “2017 Chinese Education Index” (中国教育指数 2017). This research report analysed the developmental level of education nationwide and in each province, municipality and autonomous region along the following dimensions: scale, investment, quality, informatisation, equality and contribution. The national index is 5.51. In the five Southwest provinces, only Sichuan even reaches the average, at 5.85. Chongqing, Guizhou, Tibet and Yunnan are 5.08, 4.75, 4.76, and 4.70 respectively (YRERI 2018). By contrast, most central and eastern provinces are much higher than the average index. As with economic development, therefore, education development in China is unbalanced.

Aside from Tibet, where a single ethnic minority dominates the population (this is also the situation in Xinjiang and Mongolia), the remaining three provinces and one municipality in Southwest China have a relatively complex situation with coexisting multi-ethnic minorities, especially in Guizhou and Yunnan. The pattern in which Chinese ethnic minorities exist is that of “an extensive dispersion with localised concentrations” (大杂居, 小聚居), meaning

that ethnic minorities are mixed into the broader population in provinces and cities. Meanwhile, individual ethnic minority groups are concentrated in smaller administration units such as villages.

The complexity of ethnic minority compositions in Southwest China (excluding Tibet), naturally suggests a complex linguistic situation. Bilingual education is a way to help ethnic minority students learn at school more easily. Tibet follows the “mother language first, and Standard Chinese (普通话) supplementary” model in which the ethnic minority language is the main language of instruction from primary to upper secondary school and there is also the choice to sit the Examination for University Entrance (高考) in the Tibetan language. By contrast, the other provinces in Southwest China all follow the model of “mother language as a transition into Han language teaching”, in which the ethnic minority language is used in primary school to help ethnic minority students understand the content easily. When moving to higher grades of primary school and then secondary school, Standard Chinese predominates (Wang 2018). The language barriers between teachers and students and among students in Chongqing, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan (the first two are my chosen fieldwork sites) are not as obvious as in Tibet and Xinjiang when Standard Chinese intervenes.

In the policy aspect, a “merged school” (撤点并校) education policy has been implemented in the region, where small village schools are closed and students are concentrated into centralised schools in urban areas (Cai and Kong 2014). This aims to solve the problem of imbalanced distribution in education resources and promote education equality, but in ethnic minority areas the move from village schools serving single ethnic minority groups to multicultural schools in towns and cities has created a demographic situation for ethnic minorities that is, in essence, heterogeneous. This multicultural reality inevitably challenges teachers working in ethnic minority education and increases the need for teacher competence in dealing with culturally diverse students, especially in the unified curriculum framework. This situation also causes more challenges for education and the need for multicultural education. My fieldwork sites are located amidst such complexity.



# The “civilising mission” in the People’s Republic of China

The concept of the “civilising mission” prevailed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when Western (largely European) imperialism came to impose colonisation on non-Western countries. Under the relations of colonisation Western countries regarded themselves as civilised in various social domains, ideologies and norms, comparing to non-Western countries (which were usually viewed as uncivilised) (Watt 2012). Therefore, the relation between the West and non-West was asymmetrical, in which the “civilised” West, directly or indirectly, undertook the mission to transfer its own civilised elements to the non-West in order to involve them in the social practices embedded in “civilisation” (Watt 2012).

This “civilising mission” reflects the hierarchical nature of relations and provides a reference for understanding similar civilising work undertaken in different countries (Hirono 2008), including China. China, though an “uncivilised” country from the perspective of the civilising mission of Western countries, also had another trajectory of civilisational relations within its own territory: that between the state in the centre and ethnic minorities in the periphery (Harrell 1994).

Though the concept of the “civilising mission” was rarely mentioned in Chinese history, a form existed in feudal China. Two dynasties, the Ming (明朝) and Qing (清朝) founded by Han and Manchu respectively, took the Han-centric Confucian worldview as a basis to divide the world into the civilised and uncivilised (Hirono 2008). Peripheral ethnic minority groups, which did not believe in the Confucian worldview or follow Confucian morality and discipline, were identified as barbarians, uncivilised. In turn, the central regime played a role in transferring Confucianism to ethnic minorities to achieve its own civilising mission.

The foundation of the PRC endowed ethnic minorities with equal status legally. One might imagine that this meant there was no civilising mission in the PRC period, as the relationship was no longer asymmetrical and all ethnic groups, both Han and ethnic minorities, enjoyed equality. However, according to Stalin’s idea of universal historical progress which divides political and economic stages into primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist mode of production, many ethnic minorities were conceived to be at a lower level than Han who were at the level of socialism (Hirono 2008, 64).

Therefore, the civilising mission in the PRC reflected a strong state doctrine that all ethnic groups in China could achieve progress and modernity and move towards socialism and, finally, communism (Jinba 2013, 46). This makes clear that Han culture and modes of production, as well as the principles of socialism, replaced Confucianism at the centre of civilisation and bore the responsibility of helping periphery ethnic minorities to become as civilised as Han (Harrell 1994). According to Harrell (1994), the Chinese civilising project aimed to promote interactions between civilising centres and ethnic minority groups, but such interactions reflect a form of inequality.<sup>7</sup>

State-sponsored ethnic minority education in China is deemed to play a role in promoting the Han-centric civilising project. As Hansen (1999) notes, the highly standardised educational content teaches students that ethnic minorities are more backward than the civilised majority Han, both economically and culturally, and need the help of the CCP and their Han compatriots to advance. In this way, ethnic minority cultures, including their languages, production models, values etc. are normally deemed deficient. Other educational initiatives for ethnic minorities such as preferential policy and bilingual education with the purpose of language transition were also discussed as ways to undertake the civilising mission for helping “backward” ethnic minorities approach the “civilised” Han (Schluessel 2007, Wang and Zhou 2003). This reflects the underlying disproportionality between majority Han and ethnic minorities.

It is clear that the civilising project in the PRC reflects asymmetrical relations between majority Han and ethnic minorities despite the equality proclaimed in official documents of the PRC. However, as a unified and multi-ethnic state, the aim of the government is to help all ethnic groups, both Han and ethnic minorities, achieve common progress and safeguard the unity of the state. This civilising project in China places the majority Han as the civilised group, giving them “positional superiority” over minorities considered less civilised or even uncivilised. These presupposed asymmetrical relations between majority and minorities lead a natural process of internal orientalism. Therefore, a discussion

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<sup>7</sup> This kind of asymmetrical relation between civilising centre and ethnic minority groups resembles relations between colonial powers and indigenous people in many countries, such as Native Americans in the United States, Maori in New Zealand, Aboriginal people in Australia, and many countries in Latin America. Taking self-determination as their right, many indigenous people today struggle to distance or separate themselves from the education system which is controlled by governments constructed by colonial powers, so that they have the flexibility to determine their own education system, develop and implement culturally-inclusive curriculums and establish criteria for education evaluation and assessment etc. (Deyhle et al. 2008)

of the Chinese civilising project can help us to understand the inherent power dynamic in ethnic minority education.

As a Chinese citizen, I have witnessed the high-speed economic development and modernisation of the PRC in the past decades, including in ethnic minority areas. It is probable that the CCP needs to consider strategies for dealing with the loss of ethnic minority culture and identity in the civilising process, such as enhancing the role of ethnic minority culture in local economic development.

## Important turning points in ethnic minority education in the post-Mao period

Ethnic minority groups in China had a population of 113,792,211 in 2010. There are only ten countries in the world with a population larger than the Chinese ethnic minority groups. Ethnic minority groups inhabit areas covering more than 60% of the country's territory, 71.63% of which is located in the west and on the borders (Cherng, Hannum, and Lu 2014). Therefore, promoting educational development for ethnic minorities is by no means an easy task for central government.

From the Reform and Open Policy of the late 1970s to the present, ethnic minority education has experienced considerable changes, both in quantity and quality. The central government has been conscious that ethnic minority cultures are underrepresented in school education and has tried to integrate them into school. In the past 40 years, there have been four important turning points which influenced the development of ethnic minority education and led to changes in educational content. These were the Compulsory Education Law (CEL), preferential policy for higher education enrolment, PUEP and CWDS.

### *Compulsory Education Law*

In 1986, the CEL was enacted in the PRC by the State Education Commission (SEC, reorganised as the MOE in 1998). This law asserts that it is mandatory for all school-aged children, whether Han or ethnic minority, to enter school

and receive a nine-year compulsory education including six years of primary school and three years of junior middle school.<sup>8</sup>

In the decades after CEL came into force, the government made multifaceted efforts and achieved its nationwide aim of providing nine years of compulsory education and eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged people (the “two basics”) in 2000. According to statistical data, at the end of 2002, the population nationwide which had achieved the two basics aim had reached 91%. However, in the western region where most minorities lived the percentage stood at 77% (MOE et al. 2004). This urgent situation led central government to issue the *Crucial Plan for Two Basics in Western Regions (2004–2007)* (国家西部地区“两基”攻坚计划 2004–2007) which proposed that the central financial department would invest CNY 10 billion in launching this plan. Related initiatives included improving school facilities in remote, mountainous and pasturing regions, waiving textbook fees and providing a living allowance for families suffering financially (MOE et al. 2004). School mergers to concentrate high-quality educational resources also contributed to the achievement of this plan. By the end of 2007, the population that achieved the two basics had increased to 98%.

**Table 3: Enrolment rate of primary school and secondary school in seven western provinces (%)**

Source: (SEC 1987, MOE 2015)

Year	Level	Tibet	Guizhou	Ningxia	Qinghai	Yunnan	Xinjiang	Gansu	Nationwide
1986	Primary school	50	86.9	92.5	81.3	93.6	97.2	91.4	96.4
	Secondary school	47.9	53.8	92.3	93.6	57.1	85.2	76.7	69.5
2014	Primary school	99.6	99.1	99.2	99.7	99.5	99.8	99.8	99.8
	Junior secondary school	92.2	100	100	94.3	96.9	98.9	97.6	98

The enrolment rate of school-age children in primary and junior secondary school can be taken as an important indicator of the effect of CEL in ethnic minority areas. Table 3 shows the enrolment rate of school-aged children and in junior secondary school in seven western provinces and autonomous regions, where most ethnic minorities live, in 1986 and 2014. Both indicators showed remarkable increases in these areas during the three decades after CEL.

<sup>8</sup> In the beginning of the implementation of CEL, the length of primary schooling was five years in some rural areas. In addition, many remote, mountainous regions including many ethnic minority areas implemented CEL by stages, introducing first a six-year primary school and then carrying forward to junior middle school.

### *Preferential policies for ethnic minorities in higher education*

Identifying the regional differences in educational development, China has implemented a number of preferential policies to help ethnic minorities achieve educational equity.<sup>9</sup> One of these is preferential higher education entry (Cherng, Hannum, and Lu 2014). In 1980, the central government announced that the ideal proportion of ethnic minorities in higher education would be no less than their proportion in the population as a whole (Ma 2007). In 1987, the Trial Rule of Higher Education Admission (高等教育招生试行条例) issued by SEC regulated that ethnic minority students in the borderlands, mountainous areas, pasturing areas and ethnic minority areas were entitled to enrol in higher education with lower grades in the University Entrance Examination (Teng and Ma 2005). Some universities also began one-year preparatory classes providing basic knowledge, skills and Mandarin lessons to ethnic minority students before their entry into formal university education (Song and Liu 2005, Yan 2003).

This positive discrimination lowered the threshold for ethnic minority students entering higher education. The effects of this affirmative action were significant. The number of ethnic minority students in higher education institutions (HEIs) increased from 226,300 in 1998 to 1,992,383 in 2014, or from 6.2% to 7.8% of students in higher education.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, according to Ma (2007), the proportion of ethnic minority students in HEIs should be no lower than their percentage in the population as a whole, which stood at 8.49% in 2010. Therefore, more effort is required to enhance ethnic minorities' access to higher education.

It can also be acknowledged that while the aim of preferential policies is good for ethnic minorities they risk creating new boundaries; for example, Tibetans in Tibet Autonomous Prefecture and those in western Sichuan benefit from different levels of preferential policies.

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<sup>9</sup> Although the terms “equity” (公平) and “education equity” (教育公平) are not always literally present in policy documents, the Chinese central government has formulated policy related to these notions and taken a series of actions to achieve them. For example, popularising compulsory education and eliminating illiteracy are, in fact, efforts to achieve equity. The various expressions are due to changing socio-political and economic contexts (Zhou, Rinne, and Kallo 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from the Yearbook of Ethnicity in China, 2004 and 2014.

### *Plural Unity Ethnic Pattern and the China Western Development Strategy*

Another two turning points were the implementation of PUEP and CWDS. The reason I put these together is that they jointly led to attention on ethnic minority culture in ethnic minority education.

The PUEP was proposed by the sociologist and anthropologist Fei Xiaotong in 1989 as a paradigm for describing ethnic relations in the post-Mao period. Based on a broad historical perspective, he developed the concept of PUEP, a deeply polysomic expression which literally means “multiple origins, one body”. The “plural unity” pattern raised at the time aimed to cater to social needs for the development of every ethnic group as well as national unity (Fei 1989b, 29-33). More specifically, “plural” means every ethnic group in China has its own origin, history of formation and development; their culture and society are also distinct in character from one another. Meanwhile “unity” points to the fact that all ethnic groups have interrelations of mutual connection, mutual compensation and mutual dependence. They, jointly, constitute the “Chinese nation” in which they have common national interests. Moreover, every ethnic minority as a part has an inseparable relationship with the nation as a whole which reflects a shared hope for national unity, national prosperity and ethnic solidarity. So “plural unity” reflects an inseparable integrity inherent in ethnic plurality rather than assimilation. All in all, the relation between the ethnic plurality and the development of a “Chinese nation” is dialectical unity (Fei 1991, 424). In this pattern, the majority Han exert a centripetal force around which a unified entity is built, and in which the 55 ethnic minority groups participate (Yu 2007). The Han majority functions as a “nucleus of integration”, like a dynamic yet impure “snowball”, drawing together diverse peoples and communities into an eclectic whole (Fei 1989a).

Market-oriented reforms from the late 1970s intensified regional disparities between the eastern regions and broader central and western regions of China. In order to address this challenge, the CWDS was implemented in 2000 by President Jiang Zemin as a cornerstone initiative for fostering the development of China’s inland regions (Lahtinen 2005). However, the CWDS, which promotes the marketisation of ethnic minority areas, has caused conflict between economic development and the protection of ethnic minority culture. As a result, more and more ethnic minority people have started to regard their traditional culture as irrelevant to the future and chosen to move away from it.

Both the normative PUEP and the pragmatic CWDS can be said to underpin Chinese theory- and practice-oriented debates on ethnic minority education. In the theoretical domain, Chinese educational scholars quickly adopted PUEP as a

guiding framework to explore issues of ethnic minority education in China. On one hand, they compared multicultural education in Western countries with ethnic minority education in China and then summarised the similarities and differences. The conclusion they reached was that multicultural education in the Western context cannot be directly transplanted to Chinese ethnic minority education which necessarily needs some changes for adaptation (Huang 2004). For example, a principal responsibility of multicultural education in Western countries is to address issues related to rights and political equality. By contrast, Chinese ethnic minority education is more concerned with economic, social and cultural development (Wan and Bai 2008). On the other hand, in 1997, based on an extensive analysis of foreign multicultural education theory and consideration of ethnic situations, Professor Xing Teng (2012) from the Chinese Central University of Nationalities (中央民族大学) proposed a new theory of “multicultural integrated education” (多元文化整合教育), which is applicable to all students regardless of ethnicity, and is best described as: “the state schooling system has the function not only to transfer the common human cultural achievements, but also to pass on the valued and time-honoured cultural traditions of its dominant ethnic group as well as the ethnic minorities” (p.163). Multicultural integrated education is also viewed as an important pathway to including the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities (Ma 2011).

As to the practical aspect of school education, the projects of “introducing ethnic minority culture into school” and “ethnic solidarity education” are implemented for pursuing plurality and unity. In August 2015, the State Council of China issued the *Decision for Speeding Up Development of Ethnic Minority Education*, pointing out that ethnic minority education should set the selected curriculum for arts and sports which aim to bring ethnic minority culture into school (State Council 2015). Following this decision, provinces where many ethnic minority groups live developed corresponding policies to bring local minority culture into school. These initiatives are viewed as important ways to incorporate cultural heritage. Meanwhile, “ethnic solidarity education”, was first conceived in 1987 by SEC and has played a crucial role in transmitting the concept of ethnic solidarity to students in the decades since (Zhang and Chen 2014). In 2008, the General Office of the MOE and State Ethnic Affairs Committee (SEAC) issued the *Guidance Outline for Ethnic Solidarity Education (Trial)*, a landmark document for making ethnic solidarity education a standard, by pointing out the overall aims, content in different grades of education and implementing measures. Generally speaking, ethnic solidarity education, a policy targeting all students, aims to cultivate heightened

ethnic solidarity, maintain national unity and resist ethnic divisions (MOE and SEAC 2008).



### 3. Teacher education system in China and its support to ethnic minorities

This chapter provides background knowledge on the Chinese teacher education system and two special teacher support programmes for underdeveloped regions in China, including ethnic minority regions. In the first section of this chapter, to give a better and more exact understanding of how teacher education is implemented in China, I provide insights into education governance in both K-12 and higher education (as teacher education serves K-12 education and is itself a part of higher education). I then introduce the network of teacher education universities in China and the curriculum structure of teacher education programmes. The final section introduces two special teacher support programmes, their contributions to teaching teams in ethnic minority regions as well as their underlying limitations.

#### Education governance in China

Education governance refers to the ways educational undertakings are organised, supervised and implemented. It may be of three types: centralised, decentralised and a combination of the two (Yang & Ni, 2018). This classification is based on the question of who has decision-making powers and makes decisions on educational issues. The centralised and decentralised models are two extremes of education governance and it is rare to find a specific context where education is totally controlled and determined by the state on one hand or by local schools and actors on the other. Rather, the combination model of education governance expects to find a rational distribution of power between central and local governments, between government and schools. In this section, I will introduce the model of education governance in China used for K-12 education

and higher education, including teacher education, and discuss how their curriculums are framed.

## **Education governance in K-12 education**

Over the past 40 years, education governance in K-12 education in China has moved from an extreme centralised model to one that is decentralised to a certain degree. The Chinese education system is run by the central government with the support of various agencies. In 1985, the Central Committee of the PRC enacted the *Decision on the Reform of the Education System* (中共中央关于教育体制改革的决定) which clearly affirmed that the power of education governance in K-12 education belongs to the local government. The Central Committee merely formulates fundamental policies and is responsible for macro-planning while local government takes responsibility for establishing and implementing specific policies, regulations and plans as well as managing and inspecting schools (Central Committee of the PRC 1985). In 2006, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (全国人民代表大会常务委员会) revised and passed the CEL which regulated that K-12 education would be led by the State Council, planned and implemented by provincial governments, and governed by county governments. In this way, the local authorities at county level have the main responsibility for administering and delivering K-12 education. This decentralisation also made local authorities take up more of the financial burdens of education, which encouraged them to seek multiple pathways for financing education (Ngok 2007). As the reality of imbalanced regional economic development emerged, local authorities in developed regions (such as Shanghai, Beijing etc.) could achieve more financial support than underdeveloped regions which further intensified education inequality. In addition, holding power to govern or administer educational practices does not inherently mean having decision-making power in all domains of education. The issue of curriculum setting in K-12 education is a good example.

From 1999, following the *Decision to Deepen Educational Reform and Implement Quality-oriented Education* (关于深化教育改革, 全面推进素质教育的决定) promulgated by the State Council (1999), China has utilised a three-level model in K-12 education curriculums which includes curriculums at the national, regional and school level. This model provides a certain degree of flexibility in developing curriculums according to local contexts (Xu 2005, OECD 2016). The national curriculum, which is developed by the MOE, is the core curriculum and provides guidelines for K-12 education. It represents national

aims and has unified and mandatory features for all school students in China. Courses including Chinese, English, mathematics, history, politics, physics, chemistry, music, sports etc., all belong to the national curriculum. It aims to cultivate citizens to attain a common literacy for their future lives. The regional curriculum is developed by local education authorities according to local political, economic, cultural, ethnic characteristics. The school-based curriculum, which is based on the character and reality of individual schools, is developed by schools themselves and is guided and supervised by local education authorities. Therefore, whilst emphasising the importance of national curriculum, regional and school-based curriculums can help to make the school curriculum more individual.

However, the proportions of curriculum decided at national, regional and school levels are extremely imbalanced within the overall curriculum framework. The national curriculum has absolute dominance and occupies more than 80% of the curriculum, while regional and school-based curriculums together control 15–20%. This situation is further intensified because of the examined-oriented culture. As all the subjects in high-stakes examinations are derived from the national curriculum, the regional and school-based curriculums cannot be emphasised by teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders. In the words of one teacher in Xishuangbanna Dai Ethnic Prefecture (XDAP) who participated in this study:

We have regional and school-based curriculums and corresponding textbooks, but it seems this is only a formality. First, there is not strict regulation to require us to implement these curriculums. Next, the most important thing is that principals, teachers, parents and also students care only about the score students get in the high-stakes examinations, such as the high school and university entrance examinations. These will directly influence our school's reputation, teachers' salaries and promotions, as well as students' future.

(Teacher Bai, XDAP, 2017-5-22)

In this case, the teacher expressed his negative attitude towards regional and school-based curriculums, and attached exclusive importance to the national curriculum as this was more relevant to high-stakes examinations which were of great utility to schools, teachers, parents and students.

## Education governance in higher education and teacher education

As with K-12 education, education governance in higher education also moved from a completely centralised model to a certain degree of decentralisation. Before the 1980s, with the background of the planned economy, China developed a higher education system in which the relationship between universities and government was linear and all activities - majors, curriculum setting, teaching plans and textbook selection - were under the direct governance of the central government (Hu, 2003). This state-controlled higher education system began to be reformed in the 1980s when the market economy replaced the planned economy. A 1985 *Decision* clearly stated that the key point of reforming higher education system was to change the state-controlled model and provided autonomy to HEIs under the supervision of the state in order to connect universities with industrial production, research and society. In this process of transformation, the traditional linear relation between central government and universities was replaced by triangular relations between central government, universities and the market, in which universities are not only guided by government, they also adjust to the needs of the market. The autonomy of HEIs was stipulated in the 1998 *Higher Education Law* (中华人民共和国高等教育法). Therefore, universities in China have much more flexibility than K-12 education to run education, including curriculum setting,<sup>11</sup> financial management, etc.

Teacher education, as a part of higher education, also experienced this transition from an era in which all resources and matters related to teacher education programmes were determined by the central government to an era in which teacher education universities began to have a certain degree of autonomy. However, it should be noted that the foremost goal of teacher education programmes in China is to train qualified teachers for K-12 education. The highly unified nature of K-12 education as well as many top-down education reform agendas inevitably causes teacher education programmes to also be unified and to lack actual autonomy. In other words, the situation of K-12 education directly influences the content and missions of teacher education programmes. For example, the top-down curriculum reform in K-12 education from 2001, which strongly emphasised student-centred learning, problem-

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<sup>11</sup> The ideology curriculum series is still in the total control of the central government and includes four courses: Ideology, moral literacy and fundamental law (思想道德与法律修养), Introduction to the basic tenets of Marxism (马克思主义基本原理概论), Essentials of Chinese modern and contemporary history (中国近现代史纲要), and Mao Zedong Thought and an introduction to the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics (毛泽东思想和中国特色社会主义理论体系概论).

solving through inquiry and creativity, posed new expectations for teachers' competence (Zhou, 2014). This competence is further defined in the *Teacher Education Curriculum Standard (Trial)* (教师教育课程标准(试行)) enacted in 2011 as a top-down guideline for teacher education.

## Pre-service teacher education universities in China

In the initial decades after the CCP took power and founded the PRC in 1949, the socialist regime was isolated from most Western powers while the Soviet Union constructed a partnership to provide aid in various fields (Li 2012). As Chairman Mao Zedong formulated it, “the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is our best teacher and we must learn from its successful experience (Mao 1949).” Because of this political alliance, many Soviet experts came to the PRC as counsellors. The pre-service teacher education of Soviet model was adopted by the Chinese regime and a network of pre-service normal universities/colleges<sup>12</sup> (师范大学/学院) was constructed (Pepper 2000). Nowadays, pre-service teacher education is largely provided through normal universities/colleges<sup>13</sup> via three-year college degree programmes (大专) or four-year bachelor programmes. These normal universities/colleges can be divided into three main categories based on the education authority they fall under.

At the national level there are six normal universities administered by MOE, including Beijing Normal University (北京师范大学), East China Normal University (华东师范大学), Central China Normal University (华中师范大学), Northeast University (东北师范大学), Southwest University (西南大学)<sup>14</sup> and Shaanxi Normal University (陕西师范大学). These six are regarded as the best normal universities in China and have trained many of the teachers considered to be of outstanding quality in their districts and nationwide. The second level is the provincial normal university. China has 23 provinces,<sup>15</sup> four

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<sup>12</sup> A normal university (师范大学) is a teacher education university where pre-service teacher are trained.

<sup>13</sup> Though there are also many comprehensive universities that provide teacher education programmes, normal universities/colleges still provide the greater share of teacher education at every level.

<sup>14</sup> Southwest University was renamed in 2005 when Southwest Normal University and Southwest Agricultural University merged. As Southwest Normal University is administered by MOE and is the most important university specialised in teacher training in Southwest China, the successor Southwest University is widely acknowledged as a top-six normal university in China.

<sup>15</sup> Taiwan is considered by the PRC and the CCP as a province of PRC.

municipalities and five ethnic minority autonomous regions.<sup>16</sup> All the provinces have at least one normal university which plays the most important role in cultivating teachers for that province. The third level is the prefectural normal university/college in small and medium-sized cities. According to the 2015 Yearbook of Chinese Education Statistics, in 2014 there were six national normal universities, 37 provincial normal universities and 70 prefectural normal universities/colleges in mainland China.

Students seek to enter normal universities through the highly-competitive National University Entrance Examination, commonly known as *Gaokao* (高考) (Li 2012). The scores students get in the *Gaokao* are the exclusive standard for recruiting them into national, provincial and prefectural normal universities, in order. Naturally, graduates from national and provincial normal universities have better and more chances to work in developed cities than those from prefectural normal universities.

## Curriculum structure of teacher education programmes

Similarly, the curriculum structure of pre-service teacher education was influenced heavily by the Soviet model which placed strong emphasis on subject matter knowledge (Zhou 2014). This subject-centred model of teacher education received much criticism as it was not concerned with training future teachers to develop the ability to teach and understand their students. Today, the college degree and bachelor pre-service teacher education programme is connected with more than ten disciplines set in the education system, from primary to senior high school, while subject knowledge occupies a greater proportion of the pre-service teacher education programme than pedagogical knowledge.

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<sup>16</sup> Province, municipality and ethnic minority autonomous region are all provincial units.

### Three components of the teacher education program

The curriculum structure of pre-service teacher education in the associate and bachelor programmes can be divided into three components: general education, subject knowledge, and pedagogy and teaching practicum, which make up around 15%, 70% and 15% respectively. The general education course includes the ideology curriculum, English etc. Discipline knowledge is a comprehensive curriculum group which assists students to gain knowledge in school subjects such as Chinese language, mathematics, physics, chemistry etc. Finally, the pedagogy and teaching practicum aims to cultivate pre-service teachers' teaching methods and other practical abilities. At present this third part, focusing on professional development, is regarded as the teacher education curriculum. The setting of specific courses in the teacher education curriculum and cultivating aims is suggested in the *Teacher Education Curriculum Standard (Trial)*.

### Teacher Education Curriculum Standard (Trial)

In October 2011, the MOE officially launched the *Teacher Education Curriculum Standard (Trial)*, the first national standard for the teacher education curriculum in Chinese history. The standard reflects the basic requirements for competent teachers, and is an important reference for formulating curriculum schedules, compiling textbooks and implementing teaching practices.

The standard consists of three parts: basic notions, curriculum objects and curriculum setting as well as practical recommendations. Curriculum objects and curriculum setting are among the main focuses of this thesis (see Table 4). For pre-school, primary school and middle school respectively, the standard gives different descriptions for specific curriculum objects, but all belong to three main object fields: educational belief and responsibility, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and educational practice and experience. These three components constitute the core objects of the teacher education curriculum. The standard also presents suggestions for setting specific curriculums according to different school levels (I quote suggestions for junior middle school as an example; see Table 5).

In the suggestions on curriculum setting, the diversity of ethnic minorities is underrepresented. The concern is more with the universality of education and the student, rather than the particularities of a particular group. It is obvious that the standard does not include teacher multicultural competency. Though in its practical recommendations, the standard emphasises “individual differences”,

an important principle in multicultural education, the differences are only related to physical and mental development not cultural background (Wang and Gou, 2013).

**Table 4: Framework of objects of teacher education curriculum**

Source: (MOE 2011)

Object field of curriculum	Specific objects of curriculum
Educational belief and responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have sound viewpoint of students and relevant actions.</li> <li>2. Have sound viewpoint of teachers and relevant actions.</li> <li>3. Have sound viewpoint of education and relevant actions.</li> </ol>
Pedagogical knowledge and skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have knowledge and ability to understand students.</li> <li>2. Have knowledge and ability to teach students.</li> <li>3. Have knowledge and ability for self-development.</li> </ol>
Educational practice and experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have experience in viewing and emulating educational practice.</li> <li>2. Have experience in participating in educational practices.</li> <li>3. Have experience in researching education practices.</li> </ol>

**Table 5: Recommendations on curriculum setting for training junior middle school teachers**

Source: (MOE 2011)

Suggested curriculum areas	Specific contents
1. Children's development and learning	E.g. middle school students' cognition and learning.
2. Educational basis of middle school	E.g. educational philosophy, effective learning, classroom management.
3. Subject teaching and activity guidance	E.g. curriculum and textbook research, teaching design.
4. Education for mental health and morality	E.g. counselling psychology, moral education.
5. Professional ethics and development	E.g. teacher professional development, teacher language, ICT, education research methods.
6. Educational practice	E.g. teaching practice.

## Special teacher support programmes for underdeveloped regions of China

Teachers and teaching quality are regarded as amongst the entrenched problems in underdeveloped areas of central and western China (Lee et al. 2016). In the past two decades, the central government has implemented two special teacher support programmes to provide teaching assistance to these underdeveloped regions and address the lack of qualified teachers. One is the *Specially Contracted Teacher Programme* (SCTP, 特岗教师计划) and the other is the *Teacher Replacement Practicum Programme* (TRPP, 顶岗实习计划).



## Specially Contracted Teachers Programme

Go to rural areas! Go to grassroots areas! Go to the places people need you the most! (Slogan of SCTP)

The SCTP slogan clarifies the places of this programme in practice. Run by central government, SCTP aims to support compulsory education in central and western rural areas. By encouraging university graduates to choose working as teachers in rural schools, this programme aims to gradually solve the problem of lack of teachers, improve the quality of teachers' teams, and promote balanced development of urban and rural regions. The contract duration for serving in this programme is three years, after which teachers can freely choose whether to continue teaching or find a different job.

Since 2006, SCTP has recruited 237,000 special contract teachers or 5.3% of all rural teachers at compulsory level. These teachers are distributed in 22 provinces and autonomous regions, across more than 1,000 county and 30,000 rural schools. There are 54,542 teachers serving in three provinces alone: Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan (Axia 2016).

The aim of SCTP is to improve teacher quality in underdeveloped regions and it has dispatched a large number of degree-holding teachers in the past ten years (Zheng and Yang 2015). However, for ethnic minority education which is also a focus of SCTP, teachers volunteering in SCTP have encountered, to different extents, the problem of cultural acculturation. As the teachers tend to have a different cultural background from their working areas and students, they have little knowledge or understanding of their students' cultural characteristics, which leads to cultural conflict between teachers and students (Axia 2016). An incident described in a conversation with a monk student during my 2011 pilot fieldwork in XDAP illustrates this:

Before class that day, the [SCTP] teacher entered the classroom and found the blackboard had not been cleaned. When he found today there was a student monk on duty, he was angry and rushed to the student and pulled his cassock to clean the blackboard. At this, that student got angry and shouted out “*misu*”<sup>17</sup> and grappled with the teacher. Do you know what does the cassock<sup>18</sup> means to our Dai monk?

(Monk student Ai, XDAP 2011)

This conflict between the teacher and monk student was mainly attributable to the teacher’s action of pulling the monk student’s cassock which was regarded as blaspheming the Buddha. The lack of understanding, respect and consciousness of the ethnic minority culture got this SCTP teacher in trouble and highlighted the problems in the teacher education programme.

## Teacher Replacement Practicum Programme

Problems with the lack of rural teachers and their low-level degrees have limited educational improvement in poor areas in China. To address this, Zhang and Wu (2004) proposed the “teacher replacement practicum” programme, advising normal university students to do their teaching practice in rural schools where elementary education is underdeveloped in order to build cooperation between normal universities and rural schools whilst solving the problem of quality of rural teachers and normal university students’ teaching practice. This programme requires normal university students to enter rural areas for 6–12 months of teaching practice before they graduate.

Today, TRPP has become an important exchange programme for pre-service and in-service teachers. During the pre-service practicum in rural areas, in-service teachers have the opportunity to return to university to receive professional training. This programme provides a good conjunction between theories learnt in university and practices in authentic context for pre-service teachers, and is also a platform for pre-service teachers to receive continuing training.

Similarly with the SCTP, pre-service teachers in TRPP have faced the problem of cultural difference. There are still some problems in teacher education

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<sup>17</sup> *Misu* is equivalent to “damn” or “shit” in the Dai language.

<sup>18</sup> A kind of religious robe wore by Buddhist monks.

programmes such as not cultivating pre-service teachers' cultural knowledge, attitudes and values for their future work in multicultural settings, such as ethnic minority areas. This is also verified in one of the empirical studies in this thesis.

Though SCTP and TRPP have made significant contributions to addressing the problem of teacher shortages in underdeveloped regions of China, both programmes ignore teachers' knowledge and competence to work in multicultural ethnic minority areas. This understanding guided me to move beyond the level of practical initiatives towards teacher education universities to examine concrete issues with how normal universities cultivate pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the possible external factors influencing them.



## 4. Conceptual framework: theorising Chinese ethnic minority education

In this chapter I outline the conceptual framework that underpins this thesis. Before I discuss the two underpinning theoretical approaches of this thesis, multicultural education approaches and internal orientalism, I turn first to a basic understanding of culture and multiculturalism, concepts that inform many of the theories surrounding multicultural education. Subsequently, the approaches of multicultural education are utilised to discuss the findings of all three articles in this thesis. The theory of multicultural education is applied to different aspects in this thesis including multicultural education, approaches to curriculum reform, pedagogical strategies, teacher competence and multicultural teacher education. A second body of theory, orientalism and internal orientalism, are utilised to understand the underlying mechanism for why ethnic minority culture in Chinese school education manifests only superficially and the reasons for the power imbalance between the central authorities (policymakers) and educational practitioners. The underlying epistemological position of this thesis, critical realism, is discussed by connecting the two theoretical underpinnings mentioned above. This chapter ends by linking the conceptual framework with the five research questions posed in Chapter 1.

### Understanding culture

“Culture lies at the heart of multiculturalism” (Hoffman 1996, 549). Concrete policies related to cultural diversity and ethnic relations, such as the different underlying types of multiculturalism, vary in accordance with a government’s ideological understanding of culture. Therefore, it is essential to clarify various conceptual explanations about culture in different social contexts and ideologies.

A frequent approach is that culture is regarded as a *recipe* and is reified to represent people’s identity in a way that is essentialised and stereotyped. In other

words, culture is understood as a determining factor which influences the ways members of a cultural group to think, feel and act (Hoffman 1996). This assumption affirms the clear boundaries between different cultures and views it as an important premise for achieving equality, but denies the reality of ubiquitous interconnections, interactions and interdependencies among different cultural groups, which are usually common in culturally diverse countries (Hoffman 1996). A second approach is that culture is an *essentialised difference* in which cultural differences support the mainstream framework of values and world view that represents the culture of privileged groups (Hoffman 1996). This also leads to the idea that the reality of advocating for cultural differences is to reinforce cultural unity. The final approach is that culture is a *category* in which individual cultures have fixed “components” as labels (Olneck 1990, 162-163). Culture as category is considered ineffective in promoting understanding of self and other, as it ignores people’s subjectivity on culture and further reinforces existing categories, values and world view (Hoffman 1996).

These three arguments, in their different ways, simplify and reify culture in a way that is politically advantageous in reinforcing the dominant ideology and privileged social structure whilst undermining accurate and complete knowledge about culture as life. For example, conservative multiculturalism, which advocates assimilation to eliminate potential threats to national unity and the mainstream ideology, simplifies and reifies ethnic minority cultures into those that contribute to dominant culture. More specifically, these positions of reification and determinism restrict human subjectivity and agency (Hoffman 1999), and ignore an important perspective that helps understand culture reflectively: contextualisation (Hoffman 1996).

Cultural development and transmission should thus take into full consideration the contextualisation of culture and cultural group members’ agency to act in their cultural context. Any politically-oriented actions, such as inserting cultural content into school curriculums, is “at best futile and at worst damaging” for cultural heritage (Hoffman 1996, 555). Therefore, a static understanding of culture and practices of cultural heritage should be avoided and culture and cultural heritage should instead be perceived as dynamic.

# Different types of multiculturalism

## Three variants of Western multiculturalism

Researchers have asserted there are three main theoretical propositions in the study and practice of multicultural education: conservative, liberal and critical multiculturalism. Although these three types all recognise cultural diversity in society, the conservative and the liberal propositions have been found to be “failing to see the power-grounded relationships among identity construction, cultural representations and struggles over resources” (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997, 17). Thus, celebrating cultural diversity is reduced to “cultural enrichment” in which the dominant power of the mainstream group is not challenged or reformed. In contrast, critical multiculturalism goes beyond these conceptions and focuses on issues of power relations and (in) equality of social structures.

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), conservative multiculturalism, strictly speaking, cannot be viewed as a kind of multiculturalism, as the supporters of this perspective view current multicultural actions as threatening traditional Western identity and challenging white male supremacy. Conservative multiculturalists emphasise the role of assimilation in reinforcing the hegemony of whiteness, and the actions of non-white ethnicities or races are judged by white norms (McLaren 1994). Assimilationism is a hegemonic ideology in which marginalised groups lose their own cultural character and identity and are melted into the dominant group so that all ethnic and racial groups, whether white or non-white, have equal opportunity to access all fields in society. In the education domain, conservative multiculturalism recognises cultural and ethnic differences only in terms of their contribution to the dominant culture.

Liberal multiculturalists firmly oppose assimilation as a response to cultural diversity and argue that immigrants and their descendants should not be asked to throw out their own culture. On the contrary, the government should make efforts to help immigrants keep and transmit their languages, customs and other cultural practices (Kymlicka 1995). To promote the development of different cultures and the autonomy of individuals in their cultural choices, religious faith, ethnic belief, the government, including its constitution, laws, policies and institutions, should remain neutral. However, even if liberal multiculturalism recognises inequalities in class, race and gender and takes the perspective of minority groups to struggle for their rights, it is in the context of existing power

structures rather than a transformation of the reality of unequal power relations, resources, and privileges that separate most minority groups from whites (Marable 1995).

Critical multiculturalism, by contrast does not simply emphasise recognising and celebrating difference and reducing prejudice, but also structurally analyses unequal power relations and effectively challenges racism and institutional injustice in action (Berlak and Moyenda 2001, 92, May and Sleeter 2010). The theoretical bases of critical multiculturalism are the critical theory proposed by the Frankfurt School in the 1920s and critical pedagogy (Hopkins-Gillispie 2011). Critical multiculturalism adheres to egalitarianism and advocates eliminating inequality and human suffering (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997, 24). Thus, this approach challenges the cultural hegemony of dominant groups, social classes and genders, and appeals for minority culture to be appropriately represented and expressed equally in a culturally diverse society (Tator, Henry, and Mattis 1998, 260). Any judgement of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups should not be through the lens of the dominant culture but from the perspective of the marginalised group itself (Giroux 1983). Compared to alternative approaches to multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism is concerned with social justice and achieving change, as well as their relevance to education (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997, 27). Critical multicultural education aims to expose social inequalities caused by education curriculums and focuses on power relationships in the historical and social context in which inequalities take place (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997, 24). Thus, traditional multicultural education should be transformed to follow a critical multiculturalism approach in which government or institutions promote democracy via curriculums, pedagogy and social relations in schools (McLaren 2015).

## **Contextualising multiculturalism in China**

Generally speaking, the nature of multiculturalism in both premodern and socialist China is “diversity in unity”. The main difference is whether the political relationship between empire and peripheral groups in the feudal period (and between the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities in the socialist period) is equality. In my discussion of the “civilising project” in China in Chapter 2, I depicted Confucianism as the mainstream ideology in imperial China, in which peripheral cultural groups were defined as barbarians. More specifically, the feudal dynasties used the term *tianxia* (天下), derived from Confucianism, to represent a cosmo-political perspective which means “all under heaven”, uniting different tribes and peoples under the rule of the empire (Rofel 2012). Although



there is an obvious hierarchical asymmetry between empire and border tribes, cultural interactions, such as through commerce, under the umbrella of *tianxia* also enabled imperial China to absorb many cultural elements from peripheral groups, such as food, dress, religions etc. (Rofel 2012). In other words, Chinese culture is not isolated but dynamic and in dialogue with other cultural groups.

When the CCP took power in 1949 and established socialist China, all ethnic minorities attained politically equal rights. However, cultural representation and the production of ethnic minorities reflected a strong political will through top-down policymaking. This showed the underlying asymmetry in discourse in the Chinese political framework. Although many Western researchers extensively examined cultural representations of ethnic minorities in China, such as Schein (1997), Gladney (1994) etc. (see detailed descriptions in the section on internal orientalism later in this chapter), none of these researchers have examined in detail political processes since the 1950s. Fan (2016) work contributed to closing this gap when he analysed the background of Chinese political development and claimed that the particularities of ethnic minorities are largely overlooked and commonalities exclusively emphasised in constructing the “Chinese nation” (中华民族).

Another point to note is Chinese multiculturalism (or the Chinese way of facilitating ethnic affairs) is guided by Chinese Marxism in which the perspective on culture is rather different from Western multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, in many Western critical traditions, advocates cultural relativism which emphasises that cultures cannot be divided into inferior and superior and all cultures have their own rationality within their cultural contexts. This perception provides a theoretical foundation for subordinated cultural groups challenging the domination of mainstream culture and pursuing their cultural rights. By contrast, the Chinese Marxist perspective focuses more on “development” and “evolution”, rather than the self-evident cultural rationality on which multiculturalists insist. In an earlier discussion of the civilising mission in China, I mentioned Stalin’s idea of universal historical progress employed by the CCP, which uses primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist modes of production to represent the different stages of social development. In China, these stages provide important references for policymaking on the development of ethnic minority groups and their culture, and liberating them from underdeveloped social systems. Soon after the foundation of the PRC, there were several ethnic minority groups in Xishuangbanna, such as Jinuo, Bulang and Lahu, who were considered to be slave societies or even “primitive”. Unquestionably, if CCP had chosen cultural relativism as its guiding ideology,

the slave culture and slash-and-burn cultivation methods of these ethnic minorities could be proved rational and would continue to exist until they naturally developed to another stage. Therefore, multiculturalism in China is not only related to culture but to a system with political, economic and cultural elements.

It is difficult to place the official Chinese position within any of the three types of multiculturalism described earlier in this chapter. As Chinese Marxism is the perspective adopted by the CCP, I would rather term it “Chinese Marxist multiculturalism”. Yet, although the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural education were primarily developed in the US context, many of the underlying ideas and concepts can also be fruitfully used for analysing Chinese ethnic minority education. Questions of cultural heritage and practices as well as power dynamics are equally important for both contexts. My research on Chinese multiculturalism and ethnic minority education also takes into account the perspective of politicised Chinese Marxism to expand the development of multicultural theory to some extent.

## Interculturalism, multiculturalism and education

In addition to multiculturalism, there is another policy approach to addressing the cultural diversity of contemporary societies: interculturalism. In this section, I will discuss the similarities and differences between these two policy approaches and consider their application in education.

### **Multiculturalism and interculturalism**

Multiculturalism can represent two categories of societies with cultural diversity: one has immigrants from other cultural settings, and the other has indigenous minority groups. Multiculturalism represents a series of national-level policies to manage a culturally diverse society. For example, ethnic minority cultures should be treated, recognised and respected equally in multicultural societies (Portera 2008) and government should allocate them space for their cultural practices. Related policies, such as affirmative action, are designed and implemented to support all cultural groups to be successful in multicultural societies (Barrett 2013). Overall, multiculturalism has close connections with politics and governance. Nevertheless, amidst changing socio-political contexts, the policy approaches derived from multiculturalism also, to different extents,

show variances, as exemplified by the three types of multiculturalism elaborated at the start of this chapter.

Some scholars claim that the obvious division between multiculturalism and interculturalism lies in those who consider multiculturalism as a descriptive fact of the existence of diverse culture, whereas interculturalism is more practical for fostering interactions and eliminating impediments among people (Lahdenperä 2004, Norberg 2000). This perspective deliberately ignores the practical significance of multiculturalism and moves to highlight perspectives on interculturalism. By contrast, Meer and Modood (2012) affirm that interculturalism is not distinct from multiculturalism, it only has a different emphasis. Building on the foundations of multiculturalism, interculturalism shares many similarities with it, such as valuing cultural diversity, challenging underlying structural inequality and giving particular assistance to subordinated groups for eliminating their disadvantages (Barrett, 2013). However, the central emphasis of interculturalism is “dialogue, interaction and exchange” (Barrett 2013, 26, Norberg 2000). Mutual understanding and respect is constructed in a process of dialogue among individuals from different groups and shared universal values are produced through dialogue and interaction as an important element of social cohesion. In reality, this ideal dialogue requires culturally neutral institutions to guarantee equal interaction. Otherwise, the dialogue is unsustainable (Barrett 2013).

## **Multicultural education and intercultural education**

The practical forms of multiculturalism and interculturalism in education also have different focuses. Generally speaking, these two forms of education originate from different social backgrounds. Multicultural education emerged as a response to the Civil Rights movement in the United States and was launched to disseminate privilege towards ethnic minorities, advocating that education policies and practices should respect, recognise, accept and affirm the differences among students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Sleeter and Grant 2007). The principle aim of multicultural education is to solve social problems such as racial segregation, discrimination, prejudice etc. and pursue equality in rights, political status and social opportunities (Wan and Bai 2008). Consequently, multicultural education concerns cultural diversity in school life and curriculum content, but more importantly, the means to facilitate diverse students’ cultural characteristics and learning needs in order to prompt them to be equally successful in education and further life, such as through critical responsive teaching (Santamaria 2009, Sleeter 2011). By contrast, intercultural education

more commonly appears in some European countries with large inflows of immigrants, such as France, Germany and Sweden. In fact, European countries have also been loyal to multiculturalism and multicultural education from the early 1970s to mid-1980s so as to integrate immigrant children into host countries whilst maintaining the latter's cultural and linguistic traditions and links with their ancestral countries (Portera 2008). In 1990s, cooperation and solidarity were defined by the Council of Europe as highly significant aspects of intercultural education. Intercultural education has been regarded as a response to citizenship education as well as the trend of globalisation which aims to enhance individuals' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society (Bekemans 2013).

From this summary of the different emphases of multicultural and intercultural education, it is clear why present academic discussions on multicultural competence concentrate on *teachers* who should be able to address culturally diverse students' learning needs, but intercultural competence more often concerns *students'* communicative abilities to address conflict and ambiguity in their experiences with one another and the responsibility to establish harmonious relations among them (Hoff 2016, Aman 2014).

As interactions among different ethnic minorities and with the majority Han, as well as ethnic solidarity, are strongly advocated for in the Chinese context, the value of interculturalism and intercultural education in researching issues concerning Chinese ethnic minorities and their education is unquestionable. However, this study focuses more on how school practices incorporate ethnic minority culture, how teachers address culturally diverse students from different ethnic minorities, and how underlying historical, political and social factors influence the practice of ethnic minority education. The nature of the dialogue between different ethnic minorities, such as communication and integration, is not the focus of this study. Therefore, after clarifying the differing emphases between multicultural and intercultural education, I will adopt theoretical approaches from multicultural education to analyse and discuss my empirical data. In turn, my empirical findings from a Chinese context can enrich the breadth of theory developed in a Western context.

## Theoretical approaches to multicultural education

In this section, I will introduce the theoretical approaches used to discuss the findings of this study, including the dimensions of multicultural education,

approaches to multicultural curriculum reform, pedagogical strategy, multicultural competence for teaching culturally diverse students and the external forces influencing multicultural teacher education.

## **Dimensions of multicultural education**

Multicultural education theorists have extensively discussed changes in teaching methods, curriculum, teaching materials, teaching and learning styles, attitudes and school culture for promoting the practices of multicultural education, but there are still many educational practitioners who struggle to understand what multicultural education really is and view it only at the level of curriculum change, such as connecting cultural content from disadvantage groups into an existing curriculum framework. In response to this one-sided perspective, the globally respected researcher James Banks (1993) developed five dimensions which are used to promote a better understanding of multicultural education and help educational practitioners to implement practices that are consistent with the theory. These five dimensions are content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture (see descriptions in Table 6).

In these five dimensions, content integration is characterised by connecting examples, data and cultural content with teaching practices. The knowledge construction process refers to cultivating students' abilities to explore and understand how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference and biases within a discipline influence how knowledge is constructed and presented. These two dimensions, to different extents, focus on how ethnic minority culture is integrated with classroom teaching. However, the content integration dimension is more suitable or relevant to social science, language and arts subjects than scientific subjects. If one only understands multicultural education in this dimension, teachers in scientific subjects, such as physics and mathematics, may deem it relevant to social science, art and language, not to their own disciplines. However, activities related to the other dimensions, like knowledge construction, prejudice reduction and equity pedagogy, can also be undertaken by science teachers. Thus, prejudice reduction and equity pedagogy start from diverse students' cultural characteristics, to enhancing teachers' positive cultural attitudes, to awareness of facilitating students' academic achievement.

**Table 6: Dimensions of multicultural education**

Source: (Banks 1993)

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Content integration</b>	Connecting examples, data and information from variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalisations and theories in subject teaching.
<b>Knowledge construction</b>	Helping students to understand the process of knowledge being created and how it is influenced by racial/ethnic individuals or groups.
<b>Prejudice reduction</b>	Helping students develop more democratic attitudes and values towards intergroup relations.
<b>Equity pedagogy</b>	Using techniques, methods and strategies to facilitate students from diverse cultural background to achieve equally in education.
<b>Empowering school culture</b>	Restructuring the culture and organisation of school to empower students from diverse backgrounds.

The final dimension, of empowering school culture, aims to construct school as a sociocultural system for empowering students from diverse races/ethnicities to find success in education. This dimension broadly refers to the reform of school structures to facilitate education and social equality. To achieve this, school staff can examine underlying inequalities in the cultural and social structure of the school, such as aspects of cross-cultural communication, activity participation, grouping and labelling practices, and diverse students' achievements, to seek rational change and reform for educational equality (Banks 2009).

### **Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform**

Banks' typology discussed above provides a framework for making categories and interpretation in multicultural education practice. For example, engaging in content integration may describe approaches to incorporating ethnic minority culture into the curriculum framework which is fundamental for the knowledge construction dimension and to help students to view knowledge from the perspective of ethnic minorities. These approaches can further help to achieve prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture. For this reason, Banks developed a further typology of multicultural curriculum reform to describe the approaches teachers use in incorporating ethnic minority culture in education practices: the contribution approach, additive approach, transformative approach and social actions approach (see detailed descriptions in Table 7). These two typologies developed by Banks, of the dimensions of multicultural education practice and of multicultural curriculum reform, are here used to discuss how schools and teachers in Chinese ethnic minority education incorporate culture into school activities and classroom teaching.

**Table 7: Approaches for multicultural curriculum transformation**

Source: (Banks 2014, 54)

Approach	Descriptions	Original curriculum structure changed?
Contribution	Focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements.	No
Additive	Content, concept, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing the structure.	No
Transformative	The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.	Yes
Social actions	Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them.	Yes

In the four approaches to multicultural curriculum reform, it can be observed that some potentially reflect underlying power imbalances. Both the contribution and additive approaches, for example, emphasise adding cultural content, such as celebrations of heroes, festivals and events, from ethnic minority groups to the existing curriculum framework rather than challenging it (Banks 2014). The cultural content added to the curriculum usually reflects the norms of mainstream culture rather than subordinated minority communities (Agirdag, Merry, and Van Houtte 2016). This contributes to the power imbalance between mainstream and minority groups. In contrast, two other approaches in Banks' typology, the transformative approach and social action approach, overthrow existing curriculum elements such as canons, paradigms and assumptions, in order to guide students to understand curriculum content from diverse points of view, as well as to make decisions and take action through projects and activities based on the knowledge they are gaining (Banks 2014).

The dimensions of multicultural education and approaches to curriculum reform are inherently related. The four approaches can provide several workable ways to guide content integration and knowledge construction, but the characteristic of changing the original curriculum structure or not directly influences the extent to which prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and empowering school culture can be achieved in multicultural education. For example, teachers engaged in contribution and additive approaches that do not challenge a curriculum structure dominated by the existing mainstream culture will have much weaker outcomes (or even no outcomes) in terms of achieving prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture compared to those engaged in transformative and social actions approaches.

## **Pedagogical strategy in multicultural education**

Besides curriculum reform, the intellectual development of multicultural education theory has moved beyond a concern with integrating cultural content into the curriculum towards developing a pedagogical strategy for accommodating student diversity (Wang 2018) so that teaching practices draw out and reflect the strengths of ethnically diverse students (Gay 2002). More specifically, the cultural knowledge, performance styles and learning styles of diverse students can be important resources for teachers to examine curriculum design and teaching materials and assess teaching interventions that will improve education equality (Gay 2013). This pedagogical strategy is culturally responsive teaching (CRT), also commonly referred to as culturally relevant teaching.

CRT has been extensively discussed by many multicultural theorists (Howard 2003, Ladson-Billings 1995, Pecsek, Macura-Milovanovic, and Vujisic-Zivkovic 2014). A significant aspect of CRT is the rejection of a *cultural deficit* perspective in thinking about culturally diverse students, replacing it with the *cultural difference* perspective (Howard 2003). The cultural deficit perspective attributes ethnic minority students' poor academic achievements to their deficient culture relative to the dominant/mainstream culture and argues that complementary measures should be implemented. The cultural difference paradigm provides an antidote to the problematic aspects of the cultural deficit model. It advocates starting from an awareness of multiple points of difference in order to create classroom interventions and pedagogical strategies for facilitating learning by diverse students (Nasir and Hand 2006). According to this perspective, teachers should be critically mindful of the deficit-based norms of students from diverse backgrounds as well as mainstream-centric teaching practices in traditional school practices, and meanwhile learn about minority students' cultures, recognise that cultural capital can be an impetus for school success, and incorporate their cultures into curriculums and instruction (Howard 2003, Vavrus 2008).

## **Multicultural competence for teaching culturally diverse students**

The significance of CRT naturally provokes another concern among teachers who are the main actors in this strategy, about the kinds of competence they need to handle teaching culturally diverse students.

Awareness of the necessity of teachers' competence in teaching culturally diverse students has grown in the field of multicultural education, as has scholarship on multicultural education and teacher education. Within this field there are



different concepts, such as multicultural competence (Banks 2014), cross-cultural competence (McAllister and Irvine 2000) as well as intercultural competence (Mushi 2004), but all share notions of teachers' competence for effectively teaching culturally diverse students and can largely be used interchangeably. For example, Mushi (2004) argues that teachers engaged in a well-planned multicultural classroom should grasp intercultural competence for effective teaching. In the rest of this thesis I will use the term multicultural competence for these concepts. To answer the first research question in this study and examine the practices of teacher education programmes in China, I examine the related literature on conceptualising teachers' multicultural competence.

Multicultural competence is regarded as the essential quality and ability of teachers to effectively engage with diverse students. Multicultural education researchers, such as Gay and Howard (2000), Mushi (2004), Seeberg and Minick (2012), Villegas and Lucas (2002) etc., discuss teachers' multicultural competence in three dimensions:

1. *Awareness*: The teacher should have the cultural sensitivity to recognise that students' ways of thinking and behaving are profoundly influenced by their cultural backgrounds (Villegas and Lucas 2002). The teacher should respect and eliminate prejudice against different cultures, developing a positive attitude to facilitate students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Mushi 2004).
2. *Knowledge*: The teacher should have factual knowledge of minority cultures and cultural diversity to bring them into educational activities, help reduce prejudice, create cross-cultural awareness and avoid stereotyping culturally diverse students. The teacher should also understand the principles and ideology of multicultural teaching and theories in multicultural education (Banks 2014, Yuan 2018, Melnick and Zeichner 1997).
3. *Skills*: As the opposite of cultural deficit (or cultural deprivation) theory which attributes lower academic performance to students' cultures and recommends compensatory interventions, cultural difference theory recommends that the teacher should have a grasp of culturally relevant (responsive) content and pedagogical strategies to create classroom interventions that facilitate effective learning for diverse students (Gay 2002, Ladson-Billings 1995). CRT requires teachers to respect and care for students' diverse cultural backgrounds and develop effective skills to translate multicultural knowledge into classroom instruction and curriculum design, making education inclusive for culturally diverse students (Gay 2018).

However, these conceptions of teachers' multicultural competence are not changeless, but evolving and expanding (Grant and Agosto 2008). For example, critical multiculturalism, which relates to challenging the power relations with a given society, requires teachers to stand in a broader socio-political context to consider their work in schools (Gorski 2009). Critical multiculturalism shapes an ideology which guides teachers to develop the competence "to confront and engage the world critically and challenge power relations" (Sleeter and McLaren 1995, 7). Teachers should be conscious of how various biases are produced economically, politically and institutionally, and how students' identities are shaped in unequal power relationships, and to act accordingly. Critical consciousness enriches the three dimensions of multicultural consciousness described above rather than being an independent strand, and can help teachers develop critical reflexivity towards underlying inequality in curriculums, school culture and society to promote education equality (May 2009).

### **External forces influencing multicultural teacher education**

The core role in cultivating teachers' multicultural competence belongs to teacher education universities. In this study, I am interested in how these universities achieve this aim and if there are any external forces that influence the process. To this end, I adopt Cochran-Smith's discussion of the external forces which influence practices of training multicultural teachers (Cochran-Smith 2003) and connect them with the conceptual understanding of multicultural competence to create a new framework in which training multicultural competence is influenced by three interconnected external forces (see Figure 1 in Article 3). Although Cochran-Smith's framework originates in an American context, the external forces concerned, which range from the micro practical domain in teacher training to the macro policy level, also exist in other social contexts to different degrees. This framework can provide a tool for examining and analysing empirical research as well as governmental policies related to training teachers for culturally diverse students (Cochran-Smith 2003). It is, therefore, useful for this study to examine the way these external forces manifest in the Chinese context.

These external forces include institutional capacity and mission, relations with local communities and schools, as well as governmental/non-governmental regulations. First, institutional capacity and mission emphasise how institutions can implement various approaches to teacher education in the context of their broader mission. Second, relations with local communities and schools underline the importance of interacting with real multicultural contexts in

teacher preparation programmes. Finally, governmental/non-governmental regulations refer to how teacher education programmes are regulated and influenced by the agencies that have authority over them. Beyond this is the larger context, which points to the educational reform agenda and its implications for how the three external forces are embodied (Cochran-Smith 2003). This framework is significant to this study as a means to examine how teacher education programmes in two universities addressed the characteristics of multicultural ethnic minority education and how efficiency is influenced by external factors and the broader reform agenda in China.

This section has discussed the theoretical approach of multicultural education which can provide a useful theoretical underpinning and framework to categorise and interpret education practices related to diversity (in this study, specifically Chinese ethnic minority education). Thus, the approaches used to include ethnic minority culture in curriculum vary because of changeable or unchangeable curriculum frameworks. Moreover, how teachers' multicultural competence is fostered is constrained by external forces including the broader social, political and economic context. These education practices can be understood from the perspective of internal orientalism which highlights the power asymmetry in one context. For example, it can guide me to go beyond empirical reality to examine power relations in ethnic minority education, such as who or which departments have the power to determine the content and approaches used in multicultural education, and what kind of governance structure influences the implementation of multicultural education in the past and present.

## Orientalism and internal orientalism

This study uses the perspective of internal orientalism to examine the power imbalance between the majority and minorities, education authorities and local schools in China, and to further explain the causal process why the form of ethnic minority culture is superficial in the practices of ethnic minority education.

“Internal orientalism” is a term derived from Edward Said’s ground-breaking text *Orientalism* (Said 1978), which defines “Orientalism as a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological divisions made between the Orient and the Occident (Said 1978, 2-3)”. To analyse the mechanisms of orientalism, Said borrows Foucauldian knowledge/power theory.

## Michel Foucault's theory of power/knowledge and discourse and orientalism

In his archaeological examination of knowledge, Foucault argues that there is an indispensable relation between knowledge and power. It challenges the traditional perspective that knowledge is neutral and reflects objective realities. Because of the existence and influences of power, knowledge is not the real reflection of an objective truth. In other words, knowledge has become non-neutral and is characterised by power. As Foucault states in his book, *The History of Sexuality*, "Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter" (Foucault 1978, 94).

Compared to knowledge, which on its surface reflects objectivity and neutrality, discourse is concerned more with power. Those who have power over others have more discourse to produce and determine the characteristics of knowledge. Therefore, discourse is both a product of power and it can produce power. Based on this, Said introduced the notion of discourse into his discussion of orientalism and termed knowledge of orientalism as a discourse:

I have found it useful here to employ is a Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*, to identify Orientalism. My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period (Said 1978, 3).

In Said's perspective, orientalism is a hegemonic discourse in the use of which the occident (Europeans) has power over the orient. Orientalism is an epistemology with power asymmetry, by which Western scholars portray the orient based on their own cultural norms. In this process, orientalists usually consider people in "large collective terms" and discuss the orient in a holistic way that radically ignores differences within it (Said 1978, 154). This is a typical form of cultural essentialism which ignores differences within individual societies and adopts common characteristics to mark a group (Dirlik 1996). This orientalist epistemology is constructed in the context of the occident's power over the orient. According to Said, "orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" (Said 1978, 3). This is regarded as continuous with colonialism

in academic discourse. Due to the occident's domination of discourse, orientalism is explained as "a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1978, 3). Therefore, the orientalists' depictions of the orient, whether in academic work or art, distort the image of Eastern societies, cultures and peoples. A power asymmetry between two sides is an important characteristic of orientalism.

Two further noticeable characteristics are cultural essentialism and Othering. Amidst power asymmetry the perspective of cultural essentialism puts aside the complexity of individuals and cultures (in these cases, "culture" is reified as a recipe and label). The term Othering is used to define this process whereby cultural elements are imposed to explain others' behaviours and opinions (Dervin 2012). This stereotype and subjective bias is exactly what multicultural education should go against. Thus, when extended to the Chinese context, it resembles the "civilising mission" discussed above in which Han-centric culture is taken as the basis or criterion by which to divide civilised and uncivilised. Or, in other words, Han culture has power over discourse to produce knowledge on ethnic minorities who are regarded as uncivilised. A series of scholars have discussed this mechanism when it takes place within a country and termed it "internal orientalism" (Schein 1997, Kim et al. 2018, Jansson 2005).

Said's concept of orientalism is based on Western countries, such as the United Kingdom, France and the United States, and their writings on Islam in the East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This suggests that orientalism does not cover earlier periods (such as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment) and other Eastern countries like India and China. Because of power shifts in history, orientalism does not describe the time when the West affirmed and praised the East, but relates to the colonial period when Western power was much stronger than in the East. Therefore, orientalism cannot comprehensive represent Western research and attitudes towards the East (Zhou 2003). Moreover, though rooted in a dual structure in which the Occident and the Orient are opposites, Said's orientalism never proposes any constructive suggestions to go beyond this kind of structure. Critics start from "intersubjectivity" and emphasise the interactions between different races and cultures. The "demarcation" of different civilisations (such as Western and Eastern) not only serves to exclude and antagonise, it is a process of interactions for reciprocity (Höfert and Salvatore 2000).

## Internal orientalism

Internal orientalism, which builds on the theoretical foundation of orientalism, refers to the process of marginalising minority cultures within the context of a single state (Kim et al. 2018). Groups that experience disadvantage due to internal orientalism may be involved in national political, cultural and economic institutions, but lack power over discourse within the state (Jansson 2005). These asymmetric power relations between minority groups and those who have power rationalise or naturalise the reality of inequality in a given framework of power relations (Kim et al. 2018).

Internal orientalism is the dominant paradigm for China studies researchers outside China to analyse how marginalised groups are represented in social and cultural practices (Wilcox, 2016). Ethnic minority groups are important focuses. Based on an investigation of ethnic tourism in Guizhou Province, Schein (1997) starts from the dimension of gender and argues that the image of Chinese ethnic minority women as “exotic” was consolidated into a consumer good for the majority to view and desire. Gladney (1994) writes that minority groups in China were regarded as “others” by the majority group, making the former’s cultural features the sole difference between them. Jacka (2005) conducts research on internal migrant women’s experiences and reveals that urban dwellers in China stereotype people from the countryside as backward “others” who are still in the process of modernisation. These research cases, whether they concern ethnic minority groups or migrant women groups, show an obvious power asymmetry between majority and minority, men and women, urban dwellers and migrant women, in which the former groups have more power over discourse to make subjective, reductive interpretations of the latter.

One finding from fieldwork in this research demonstrates that the manifestation of ethnic minority culture in the school context is superficial, concerned with static artefacts, such as clothes, customs, dancing, etc. This led me to ponder over the reasons why ethnic minority culture was simplified into this superficial form. Zhang and Chen (2014) attribute it to “the highly politicised view towards ethnicity and ethnic relations among Chinese top-level policymakers as well as the school-level educators” (p.405). The cultural content selected for school education should serve the political aim of national unity.

Though I partly agree with this perspective, I am more concerned with long-term internal orientalism in China, as was seen in the civilising project, when the “civilised” Han people consolidated “uncivilised” ethnic minority groups based on Han interpretations. The impressions of ethnic minority groups were

intensified when ethnic tourism prevailed. To promote economic development in ethnic minority areas, the central government implemented a series of initiatives to develop ethnic tourism in which attractive and exotic cultural ways were the focus. These seductive but superficial cultural matters were gradually consolidated by external travellers and came to be viewed as the sole signifier of ethnic minority groups. This process resembles orientalism in which orient is depicted as exotic and interesting, but is still backward in the occident's subjective interpretations.

## Multicultural education and internal orientalism in a critical realist perspective

Critical realism is taken as the epistemological position for this research. "Critical realism is seductive" (Brown 2014) and emphasises that social reality as research object is stratified and reality is not only at the level of empirical observation (Sayer 1999, 10). It avoids the shortcomings of positivist theories of causality. According to critical realism, social reality can be categorised at three levels: the empirical (experience, phenomenon), actual (events) and real level (social structure, power, system and tendency). The first two levels belong to superficial reality and can be directly observed by researchers through interviews and observation. By contrast, the real level is a deeper level which usually cannot be observed by empirical investigation (Bhaskar 2008, 56), but has a strong dependence on social practices, human value judgements and ideology as well as space-time. Therefore, critical realism is different from positivism in admitting the existence of underlying structures which also have causal mechanisms to produce events (de Souza 2014). This kind of underlying structure cannot be directly observed at an empirical level. But, to a large extent, such structures influence changes to social reality, so it is necessary to investigate them and explore causal mechanisms between them and social events (Collier 1994, 7). The epistemology of critical realism positions me beyond the empirical and actual levels to explore underlying mechanisms which remain in the real level.

Multicultural education covers not merely teaching practices in the school context, it is a movement towards equality, social justice and democracy. Based on multicultural education theory, this study has adopted qualitative methods to examine situations and phenomena in schools and teacher education programmes. This helps to categorise educational practices into different dimensions, approaches and competencies related to multicultural education.

The findings from interviews, observations and documents stay at the empirical and actual levels in the critical realism framework describing multicultural education in China. Additionally, attention has been paid to education governance and the underlying power structure which influences multicultural education practices in China and shapes them at the empirical and actual levels.

As this study aims to discuss ethnic minorities and their education in China, it is necessary to consider the hidden power asymmetries between them and the majority within the Chinese context, which can be understood from critical realist perspectives. Internal orientalism explains the power asymmetry between majority and minorities in which the majority dominates in discourse over minorities at the real level, which cannot be directly investigated. Similarly, the critical realist perspective can provide a point of view to think beyond empirical facts (ethnic minority culture as a superficial component of education) to consider deep and hidden power structures formed through historical processes.

## Linking theories with research questions

Before moving on to the methodological discussion I conclude this chapter by linking the five research questions presented in the Chapter 1 to the theoretical discussion.

The first question explores linkages between academic discussions on “education and ethnicity” in China and international debates on multicultural education. In the past 25 years, multicultural education has gradually dominated Chinese researchers’ discussions of ethnic minority education. Therefore, examining multicultural education theories and their recent developments can provide a useful theoretical lens to discuss how and to what extent these theories have been informed by the past 25 years of academic research on “ethnicity and education” in China. It can further shed light on outdated aspects of Chinese researchers’ discussions of multicultural education and its application to the Chinese context.

Multicultural education theories also works for the third question related to teachers’ practices in Southwest China with which Banks’ typology on dimensions of multicultural education and approaches to curriculum reform can be used to categorise practices. This can further help understand and explore the underlying reasons why the practices of ethnic minority education in China fall into one category or another. Teachers’ failures in their relations with ethnic minority students highlight the necessity of CRT and the role of teacher



education. Moreover, the fourth and fifth research questions, on teachers and teacher education, are addressed through the perspective of multicultural teacher education including multicultural competence, which can help to examine if and how existing teacher education programmes in China involve multicultural competence training for working with culturally diverse students, and the external forces influencing multicultural teacher education practices. This can guide a scrutiny of broader circumstances such as political, economic and cultural contexts.

Internal orientalism provides an important perspective for this thesis from which to consider problems in ethnic minority education in a critical realist way. Its characteristic concern with power asymmetry in China helps me to trace the historical reasons for the modes in which ethnic minority culture heritage is fostered in schools, which is the focus of the second research question. In addition, the concept of internal orientalism can feed into discussions on power asymmetries between central government and local authorities which influence patterns of ethnic minority education and teacher education.



# 5. Methodological choices and concerns: empirically exploring Chinese ethnic minority education

In this chapter I discuss data collection during different fieldwork periods. The data for this thesis consists of literature on the topic of “education and ethnicity” in Chinese academia, individual interviews and focus group discussions with school teachers in ethnic minority areas, individual interviews with teacher educators in teacher education universities as well as syllabuses of teacher education programmes. The chapter starts by introducing the overall schedule of my fieldwork and follows with a detailed description of my methodology including fieldwork sites, data collection and analysis. I also reflect on ethical considerations in fieldwork as well as my own positionality.

Data collection took place on four occasions: 4–28 May 2017 in XDAP, 30 May–2 June in Tianxiang Teachers’ College (TTC), 4–23 June in Qianjiang, and 24–26 June in Liangxiang Teachers’ College (LTC). This fieldwork of around two months was conducted with the assistance of the Centre of Studies of Education and Psychology of Minorities in Southwest China in Chongqing (<http://epc.swu.edu.cn>), China, one of the key research institutions for social science and humanities under the auspices of the MOE. It has extensive networks of cooperation with local governments and schools in ethnic minority regions in Southwest China, and has established thirteen fieldwork stations in these regions to provide support for researchers in ethnic minority education. Before starting data collection, I requested a letter of introduction (介绍信) from the centre which contained information on my project and requested assistance from local education authorities, schools and individuals. I always showed this official letter to the local educational board and the head teacher in schools which enabled me to easily access schools and conduct my fieldwork.

## Literature selection for critical review

The first article in this thesis concerns research traditions on “education and ethnicity” in Chinese academia between 1990 and 2014 and how international scholarship on multicultural education after the 1970s informed research on Chinese ethnic minority education. Thus the data in this thesis includes the sampled articles.

Articles were selected using a three-step process. First, three search phrases – “ethnic minorities and education,” “multiculturalism and education,” and “ethnic minority culture and education” – were used to find journal articles authored on these topics in the largest Chinese journal database, the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure. Second, the top ten cited articles every year, from 1990 to 2014, were selected. This created a list of 660 journal articles.<sup>19</sup> Third, the abstracts and key sections of the articles were read and 229 articles were excluded. These were excluded for the following reasons. First, the phrase “multiculturalism and education” can refer to articles about culture shock due to globalisation on one hand, and cultural diversity within one country on the other. Since I focus on the latter in this research, a series of articles on morals, music, nursing and sport education, etc., in the context of global multiculturalism were amongst those removed. Second, theoretical discussions of the construction of the discipline of ethnic minority education, and historical discussions on ethnic minorities in feudal society, were also omitted. Finally, translated articles originally authored by scholars outside China were eliminated. A total of 431 articles were selected for final review.

## Selection and description of fieldwork sites

China has 55 ethnic minority groups in which more than 30 reside in Southwest China which includes Chongqing Municipality, Yunnan Province, Guizhou Province, Sichuan Province and Tibet Autonomous Prefecture. It is thus a suitable region for exploring the research questions of this thesis. Fieldwork sites were chosen with the aim of collecting resources on the complexity of ethnic minority areas with different levels of assimilation. Two ethnic minority regions were selected with different levels of cultural preservation and assimilation into

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<sup>19</sup> There are some overlapping articles when using these three search phrases, so the total number of unique journal articles is not 750 but 660.

the mainstream culture. One of these was XDAP where I had already conducted fieldwork in 2011 for my master's thesis which would equip me with practical knowledge and interpersonal contacts when planning and carrying out this study.

## **Fieldwork sites and studied schools in local ethnic minority regions**

### *Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province*

XDAP is an administrative region in Yunnan Province located on the southwestern border of China, contiguous to Laos and Myanmar. XDAP includes one city, Jinghong (景洪市), the capital, and two subordinate counties, Menghai (勐海县) and Mengla (勐腊县). XDAP has a total population of 1,133,515 which includes majority Han and thirteen ethnic minority groups. According to 2010 statistical data, these ethnic minority groups comprise 69.7% of the population. Other than the 30.3% Han population, there are Dai (27.89%), Hani (19.01%), Yi (5.91%), Lahu (5.43%), Bulang (4.19%), Yao (1.96%), Jino (1.95%) and Miao (1.68%) in XDAP (State Council and NBS 2012). In the rural areas of Menghai and Mengla, the percentage of Dai and other ethnic minorities rises significantly. This demographic situation makes XDAP a suitable multicultural site for this study.

Theravada Buddhism (小乘佛教 or 南传佛教) spread through Myanmar to XDAP in 1462 and is a major influence in this area (Komlosy 2004). Over 99% of Dai and Bulang in XDAP follow Theravada Buddhism, holding to their own customs, taboos, and Buddhist temple education (寺庙教育). Ahimsa is one of the religious disciplines of Theravada Buddhism, under which adultery, tricking, stealing and excessive drinking are strictly prohibited. According to religious norms, it is mandatory for boys from Dai and Bulang communities to enter temples to become monks and receive religious education include learning Dai script and history, etc. This custom caused certain conflicts in terms of time allocation when modern education was launched in XDAP. Several researchers have discussed the issues that emerged, such as the coexistence of two separate educational systems (Chen 2012) and how boys' participations in Buddhist temple education influenced academic performance in state education (Yang 2012).



**Map 2: Map of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture**  
 Source: Designed by Shunqian Wang

Recognised as an effective means of economic development, charming, exotic and attractive ethnic minority cultures were developed and marketed for tourism in many parts of China (Yang and Wall 2008). According to the 2016 Statistical Bulletin of Socioeconomic Development of XDAP, the number of tourists to XDAP in 2016 is around 25.19 million and increases by 15-25% every year. Meanwhile, the tourism brought CNY 42 billion to XDAP in 2016 (Yunnan Bureau of Statistics 2017). Besides the beautiful natural landscape, the ethnic minority culture (its architecture, religion, dance, music, clothing etc.) has been very attractive for tourism. This tourism development featuring ethnic minority culture promotes economic development on one hand and, on the other, reinforces cultural heritage. Over the decades, the remote geographical location, inconvenient transportation and profound religious traditions mean that mainstream culture and the modernisation of Chinese society and economy have had limited influence on the region. The ethnic minority culture is thus well-preserved and people have a strong ethnic identity.

The demographic situation in XDAP means that schools are multicultural sites and attended by various ethnic minorities. Thus, to ensure consideration of a more typical multicultural setting, and a “thicker” ethnic minority cultural atmosphere, two rural schools were selected.<sup>20</sup> There were no obvious differences between these two sample schools in terms of students’ ethnic composition, teachers’ ethnic composition etc. The reasons for choosing two included the need to select enough interviewees and to seek more teachers’ experiences. The ethnic composition of students at these two schools was majority Han 7%, Dai 45%, Hani 23%, Bulang 14%, Lahu 5%, Wa 1.7% and other ethnic minorities 4.3%. Majority Han dominated the teaching team in both schools at around 85%, compared to only 4% from the locally dominant Dai.

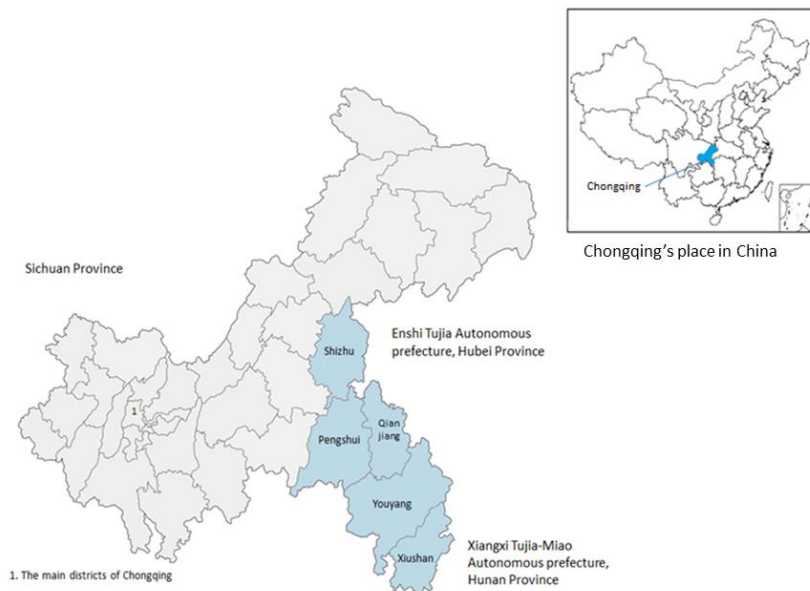
### *Qianjiang District (黔江区), Chongqing Municipality*

In 2000, Qianjiang was upgraded from ethnic Tujia-Miao Autonomous County to an administrative district affiliated with the highly industrialised city of Chongqing. Qianjiang District, Youyang Tujia-Miao Autonomous County (酉阳土家族苗族自治县), Pengshui Miao-Tujia Autonomous County (彭水苗族土家族族自治县), Xiushan Tujia-Miao Autonomous County (秀山土家族苗族自治县) and Shizhu Tujia-Miao Autonomous County (石柱土家族苗族自治县) which are all located to the southwest of Chongqing (渝东南), plus the Enshi Tujia-Miao Autonomous County (恩施土家族苗族自治县) in Hubei Province and Xiangxi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture (湘西土家族苗族自治州) in Hunan Province, which both border Chongqing, form the main areas inhabited by ethnic Tujia.

In Qianjiang, Tujia people comprise 57.58% of the population, with 26.71% majority Han and 15.63% Miao (State Council and NBS 2012). There is no specific religion in Qianjiang or among the ethnic Tujia, who are also fluent speakers of Mandarin. As the area is close to the metropolis and has convenient transport connections, it is profoundly influenced by the market economy. The ethnic minority culture has been, to a large extent, assimilated by the mainstream culture. It is difficult to find people who know their traditional minority culture well. Because of this assimilation, school education is implemented in ways similar to those used in Han areas in central and eastern China. There is no bilingualism and no cultural conflict.

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<sup>20</sup> For ethical considerations, I will not describe in too much detail the location of the study schools, such as the counties they are located in.



**Map 3: Map of Chongqing Municipality**

Source: Designed by Shunqian Wang

I visited two junior secondary schools and one primary school in Qianjiang. Reflecting the reality of cultural assimilation and “thinner” ethnic minority cultural atmosphere in these regions, the schools have limited differences in students’ ethnic composition between urban and rural areas. Therefore, the sampled schools were selected for convenience. The teachers were around 64% Tujia and 29% Han.

### Fieldwork sites in teacher education universities

As one of the study aims is to investigate how existing pre-service teacher education programmes address Chinese ethnic minorities and teacher educators’ perceptions, I visited two teachers’ colleges, TTC in Yunnan Province and LTC<sup>21</sup> in Chongqing Municipality, followed by fieldwork in XDAP and Qianjiang. Both institutions are important teacher education centres for

<sup>21</sup> For ethical reasons, the names of teacher education universities have been changed.



cultivating pre-service teachers and training in-service teachers for their provinces and other regions in China. Both LTC and TTC offer teacher education programmes at bachelor level covering all subjects offered in primary and secondary schools.

## Qualitative data collection

This study exclusively uses qualitative methods. Compared to quantitative research which generates a general picture from research data, qualitative research has unrivalled advantages in constituting an argument about how things work in a particular context (Mason 2002). Adopting different qualitative methods can help to study the meaning of people's lives, explore different perspectives on issues, contribute insights to existing theory etc. This is applicable for my research in exploring school teachers' and teacher educators' perspectives on education as well as taking empirical findings from the Chinese context to expand theories of multicultural education which originated in a Western context (Yin 2015).

The qualitative data in this thesis comprises interviews with local teachers and principals, focus group discussions with local teachers, interviews with teacher educators and syllabuses from teacher education programmes. All in all, 28 interviews and four focus group discussions were conducted and a total of 48 pages of teacher education syllabuses were collected.

### **Interviews and focus group discussions with local teachers**

#### *Interviews with school teachers*

This study has two research questions aiming to examine local school practices in ethnic minority regions. To investigate these questions, it was significant for me to have opportunities to communicate with teachers, the most important practitioners in schools, and learn about their perspectives on classroom teaching, curriculum setting, student management and education policy etc. For this reason, I chose school teachers as my main interviewees. My interview questions were designed to explore their understanding of ethnic minority education, attitudes towards and actions taken in integrating ethnic minority culture into school activities and classroom teaching, as well as their strategies to deal with and facilitate students from culturally diverse backgrounds (see Appendix 2).

My interviews usually started with an opening question about teachers' feelings about their work and life in ethnic minority areas and sharing my experience with them. This opening question was intended to activate the interview atmosphere and help interviewees open up. I then asked for their perspectives on the differences in education between ethnic minority regions and non-ethnic minority regions so that I could get some initial information about their attitudes towards ethnic minority education. In this question, interviewees' answers could take different tracks, such as ethnic minority culture, family education, the examination-oriented culture, culturally diverse classrooms and teaching, student performance etc. For this reason there was no fixed order for the next several questions, as I did not wish to interrupt my interviewees.

### *Sampling of school teachers*

The selection of teachers for the interviews reflected the quantitative relationship between the majority Han and ethnic minorities in the teaching profession in both regions. Accordingly, Han teachers dominated teaching teams in XDAP and the Tujia teachers dominated in Qianjiang. Secondly, as I was interested in examining the teachers' experiences of incorporating cultural content into classroom teaching in different school subjects, both subjects with cultural content (such as language and music) and "non-cultural" subjects (such as mathematics and physics) were represented in the sample.

After ascertaining the nature of the teaching team in each school through interviews with head teachers (always the first interviews at each school), I described my interview plans and asked for permission to interview school teachers. I was led by head teachers to the teachers' offices, which usually had over six teachers. The head teachers introduced me to the teachers and asked them to assist me in the coming weeks. Then the head teachers left. The selection procedures described below were entirely done by myself so that head teachers would not know who had been interviewed and thus avoid causing ethical troubles for interviewees.

### *Focus group discussions*

In total four focus group discussions were held: two in XDAP and two in Qianjiang. The themes for these focus group discussions were perceptions of ethnic minority education and teacher tasks in ethnic minority education. For more details see the discussion guides in Appendix 2.

Focus group discussion is one of principal techniques for qualitative data collection. It usually involves 4–12 persons discussing specific questions raised

by researchers (Marková et al. 2007). Although focus groups cannot replace individual interviews in some kinds of research, they can take a supplemental role to produce richer and broader data through interactions between participants which cannot be obtained from individual interviews (Agar and MacDonald 1995, Greenbaum 2003, Morgan 1996). In addition, there are advantages specific to focus group discussions. The selected group of people discuss given issues or topics in depth, which can provide “a rich and detailed set of data about perceptions, thoughts, feelings and impressions of people in their own words” (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990, 140). On one hand, focus group discussions can directly elicit participants’ perspectives and experiences with similarities and differences on specified topics (Morgan 1996). On the other hand, focus group discussions can consist of multiple persons talking; more significantly they can also be a multi-party dialogue in which participants represent different groups. Thus they can provide a platform for participants to express divergent and conflicting opinions when they explain their own rationales (Marková et al. 2007). A focus group is also “a group comprised of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic” (Anderson and Arsenault 2005, 241); therefore, participants usually share a certain homogeneity of characteristics (Silverman 2013).

During each focus group discussion I acted as a facilitator to distance myself from centre stage and create space for the inter-relational dynamics of the participants (Parker and Tritter 2006). The only times I intervened were when introducing topics and questions and to stimulate discussion if an awkward silence descended.

### *Sampling of focus group participants*

As there was a need for participant homogeneity, the sampling was based on purposive rather than random sampling. Making the focus groups homogenous in certain categories or characteristics can effectively avoid some voices dominating over others. In this study, the groups were divided based on their subject categories: social science subjects on one hand, and natural science subjects on the other.

The focus groups consisted of 4–8 participants each. In XDAP, I was given the schedule for the whole school by the head teacher in each school so I could easily find teachers who were unoccupied. In addition, since focus group discussions all took place as the final step of each school visit, my new friendships with school teachers made sampling easier. However, in one school in Qianjiang, I realised it would be difficult to gather different subject teachers because of their

schedules. Instead, I was invited by the head teacher to join the biweekly meetings of a discipline group (Chinese) in which I could have an hour to conduct focus group discussions.

### **Supplementary classroom observation in local schools**

Initially, I developed a matrix for classroom observations, aiming to note teachers' actions in incorporating ethnic minority culture and the interactions between teachers and students. However, after two or three classroom observations, I found they were crowded with more than 50 students and usually demonstrated a situation in which teachers dominated and interactions between teachers and students were infrequent. Therefore, before each individual interview, I attended that teacher's class to get a preliminary understanding of his/her work and get a sense of certain points such as how ethnic minority culture was integrated and the nature of interactions between the teacher and students (although these were rare, especially in scientific classes). Classroom observation thus provided supportive materials to the individual interviews and focus group discussions that followed.

### **Giving back to studied schools**

In my fieldwork, both in XDAP and Qianjiang, I received so much assistance from local government officials, principals and teachers (especially the latter two) that it led to a sort of partnership between us. When they heard my research would, to some extent, contribute to education policies, as well my solid theoretical foundation in education, they usually asked me to give suggestions for their school's development. As an education researcher, I was keen to give back (Gupta and Kelly 2014).

As I am aware of the centralised governance of basic education and the examination-oriented culture in China, I tried to give workable suggestions. These can be summarised in two points. My first point was that schools should provide a series of training programmes covering local ethnic minority culture, customs, students' cultural characteristics and religions, for newly-recruited teachers. My second suggestion was that school-based curriculums on ethnic minority culture should not be dissociated from the regular curriculum which is included in high-stakes examinations. Schools could organise experienced teachers in different subjects to develop school-based curriculums connected or

contributing to the teaching of regular subjects, including classroom instructions and practical activities.

### **Expert interviews with teacher educators and collection of teacher education syllabuses**

One of the focuses of this thesis is to understand how the multicultural characteristics of ethnic minorities are addressed in existing teacher education programmes in China. Therefore, I considered it important to meet teacher educators and learn about their perceptions of education for ethnic minorities. Interviews with teacher educators at teacher education universities helped to see their standpoints on various aspects of teacher preparation as well as to understand the basic situation of teacher education programmes in each institution. All the four teacher educators interviewed had five or more years' experience working and researching in teacher training and, with more than 6,000 pre-service teachers graduating from each institution annually, may be considered experts in the field. Their perspectives could be surrogates or "crystallisation points" for teacher educators as a group, making data collection more efficient (Bogner, Littig, and Menz 2009, 2). The similarity in interests (i.e. teacher training, ethnic minority education) between teacher educators and my own research was also considered a factor that would increase their motivation to participate in interviews and share their opinions (Bogner, Littig, and Menz 2009). In addition, I collected syllabuses from teacher education programmes to provide a clearer picture about their aims and curriculum setting.

My visits to two teacher education universities, LTC and TTC, followed soon after the school visits in each province/municipality. Data collection in teacher education universities had two parts. First, after obtaining permission from the deans or vice-deans of the Faculty of Education (Teacher Education), I copied the syllabuses of their teacher education programmes, including the overall mission, curriculum framework and descriptions of the parts of the curriculum. Second, I used semi-structured interviews with teacher educators as another data collection tool. As the teacher educators interviewed all had previous academic connections with me, they all voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. Interview questions were designed to examine their perceptions of various aspects of preparation for teaching ethnic minorities.

### *Place of interview and discussions*

All individual interviews with local school teachers in 2017 were held in the schools they worked in, usually outdoors in the school playground and alleyways, but occasionally in their living spaces or restaurants outside the school. All interviews with teacher educators were conducted in their offices or conference rooms. All in all, the individual interviews were held in private spaces. The places for focus group discussions were facilitated by the one of the group members, usually in the chemistry laboratory, available conference rooms or offices.

### *Data documentation*

In total, approximate 30 hours of interview data were collected. All the interviews were conducted in Standard Chinese (普通话) by myself. The recorded interview files were transcribed into text in Chinese for further analysis. To preserve the validity of meaning in the interviews I chose not to translate the entire transcripts into English, text was translated only when quotations was needed (see appendix 4).

## Informed consent, ethical consideration and positionality

Before I began my fieldwork, my project was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Board (*Etikprövningsnämnderna*) in Lund on 20 April 2017 (Case No. 2017/30).

At the start of each individual interview and focus group discussion, participants were informed and their agreement solicited to participate in the study. I introduced my research purpose and guaranteed that I would remove all identifying information, such as their names, from my dissertation, research articles and conference presentations. In addition, it was important to point out to participants in both individual interviews and focus group discussions that their answers and ideas would not be shared with their colleagues, particularly their superiors and the authority board, as Chinese employees, including school teachers, are usually embedded in a complex network of interpersonal hierarchies. The consent also implied that participants had the right to terminate interviews or discussions at any step. I also requested permission to record the interview process.

However, providing written consent to researchers is highly unusual in China and can raise participants' suspicions as to whether formal commitments or obligations are being made through this written consent. Moreover, participants could be afraid of signing agreements that are not directly issued by governmental authorities. Therefore, the request for consent (see Appendix 1) was presented to the participants orally to obtain their agreement which was audio-recorded.

Throughout my fieldwork I used terms like "have a conversation" or "have a chat" instead of "interview" as the latter was easily associated with investigative journalism or more formal interviews with politicians. This implication would have made participants upset and decline to be interviewed. This was proved to be true when I described my research to the head teacher at one school. The head teacher told me to use the terms "conversation and study" which could be more appropriate to use in communication with the teachers.

With respect to my positionality, this research is a kind of journey which carried me from a policy perspective to the practices observed and investigated during fieldwork. I hope the findings as well as the gap between the policy vision and real practices that emerged in this study can provide policymakers with certain references to understand the actual situation in local school practices and teacher education programmes. In the process of fieldwork, my own positionality (as Han) gave me an obvious outsider status in ethnic minority areas which was a limitation. To bridge this ethnic divide during my fieldwork, I often had breakfast, lunch and dinner with school teachers and also participated in exercise in the playgrounds, such as running and kicking footballs, helping me build good friendships with them. This increased interviewees' enthusiasm and led them to join the interviews and actively express their opinions to me instead of keeping a distance.

Most importantly, as a researcher based at Lund University, I may have had more extensive theoretical knowledge about culture and education than local school teachers, but they were definitely closer to the actual practice of ethnic minority education and ethnic minority culture. On one hand, I could share my theoretical knowledge with principals and teachers and give suggestions on school development. On the other hand, conversations with local school teachers sometimes overturned my preconceived notions of ethnic minority culture and education. For example, when we referred to ethnic minority culture in schools, school teachers' lived experience enabled them to see potentially harmful aspects of ethnic minority culture which I had rarely considered, such as

detrimental effects on children's health (early smoking and drinking) or constraints on students' aspirations (removing them from school, early marriage).

## Data analysis

As described above, this study consists of literature, interviews, focus group discussions and documents. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. In the process of transcription, I found there were a few parts of the audio files that were not clear because of the noise from crowded street markets and campus broadcasts. I contacted the related interviewees to double-check these parts of the conversation.

The first part of the data analysis was conducted using the 431 journal articles about "education and ethnicity" in Chinese academia which were selected as samples for literature review. The basic information of these articles was entered in Microsoft Access 2010, software that can be used to categorise and sub-categorise documents. I first read the abstracts and went through these articles quickly, and then labelled them with general categories. Next, I read every article carefully to identify sub-categories in each general category. Finally, as Chinese scholars were heavily influenced by the experience of multicultural education in other countries, the findings were examined in context to understand how international scholarship on multicultural education after the 1970 informed Chinese research on "education and ethnicity".

The second part of the data analysis used the individual interviews and focus group discussions with school teachers in XDAP and Qianjiang. The analysis was influenced by the "thematic network" methodology (Attride-Stirling 2001) and consisted of three steps. The first step was open coding. All the transcriptions were entered into QSR NVIVO 10, a software used to deal with miscellaneous texts. I then read the transcriptions very carefully, line by line, and labelled as many as possible with basic codes. Then the basic code were generated, combined or categorised to produce more abstract organised and global codes (see Appendix 3, coding process).

The third part of the data analysis used the individual interviews with teacher educators and programme syllabuses. Though this set of interview data was not processed using software subsequent steps were the same as for the teacher interviews. In addition, based on the structure of programme syllabuses, the document analysis used "focus coding" with some preset codes, such as



programme missions and curriculum setting, to categorise the data for further analysis (Bryman 2016).



## 6. Summary of articles

Before moving to the final concluding chapter, I will briefly summarise the three articles in the thesis.

**Article 1:** Wang, W. (2018). “Researching education and ethnicity in China: a critical review of the literature between 1990 and 2014.” *Frontier of Education in China*, 13(2): 216-244.

This is a review article examining how Chinese scholars researched education and ethnicity between 1990 and 2014. What are the linkages to international academic debates on multicultural education?

In the past four decades, the People’s Republic of China has made remarkable economic, industrial and educational progress. Since the late 1970s, the Open Reform policy has gradually integrated China into the worldwide trend of globalisation. However, the rapid growth of marketisation and modernisation has led to conflict between economic development and the protection of ethnic minority cultures. Ethnic minorities have increasingly regarded their traditional cultures as irrelevant to their future aspirations and chosen to abandon them. This, to some degree, goes against the claims of the Chinese government regarding cultural diversity. For this reason, a growing number of education scholars in China have focused on education and ethnicity, from educational policies at the macro level to classroom teaching at the micro level. The aim of this article is to describe and critically analyse how Chinese education scholars have researched ethnic minority education between 1990 and 2014.

In the first half of this article, I summarise six research themes from 431 samples. These are: educational policy, multicultural education, minority cultural heritage in school, ideological-political education, multilingual education, and teachers and teacher education. This literature review shows that cultural heritage dominates research on ethnic minorities in education, while research on teachers and teacher education has the smallest share. Multicultural education is the dominant framework for discussing aspects of ethnic minority education in China.

The article ends with a discussion comparing Chinese ethnic minority education research with international scholarship of multicultural education. Although Chinese scholars have introduced much experience of multicultural education in other countries into their own work, research on Chinese ethnic minority education is not well informed and updated on international scholarship on multicultural education since the 1970s. I argue that ethnic minority education research in China should move beyond the curriculum and subject matter towards accommodating student diversity, focusing on structural changes to schools for helping diverse students attain education equality and empowerment, and consider teachers' competence not merely in terms of cultural literacy but multicultural competence, which include awareness, knowledge, skills and critical consciousness of social equality and inclusion.

**Article 2:** Wang, W. (resubmitted after major revision). "Ethnic minority culture in Chinese schooling: manifestations, implementation pathways and teachers' practices". *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*.

This article examines how schools implement cultural heritage inside and outside the classroom, and how teachers manage their teaching and administration based on qualitative data collected in two distinct ethnic minority areas, XDAP and Qianjiang, in Southwest China.

The empirical investigation into teachers' perceptions of differences between school education in ethnic minority areas and Han areas shows entirely different situations. The teachers in XDAP are shown to view ethnic or cultural factors outside the school context as having a negative influence on school practices and student performance. These factors include family education, in which parents depreciate the value of education for their children's future, excessive minority cultural and religious activities in villages which occupy lots of school time, as well as some community practices. Qianjiang, compared to XDAP, had significantly simplified situation. The local ethnic minority cultures have been largely assimilated into Han culture which makes education here no different from that in Han regions.

The findings also show that schools in XDAP and Qianjiang take similar pathways to incorporating ethnic minority culture in school practices. Classroom teaching and various extracurricular activities as well as school exhibitions are regarded as important means of presenting multiple minority cultures. However, static cultural artefacts, such as dances, clothing and sport, are exclusively the focus of these pathways. Teachers' perceptions of, and attitudes to, cultural activities in school show that the existing examination-oriented education, in which the knowledge of ethnic minority culture is not

included, cannot be a concern for stakeholders including teachers, students and parents.

Teachers' practices in implementing ethnic minority cultures indicate their experiences and the difficulties they encounter in classroom teaching and in coping with students from multicultural backgrounds. The teachers in social science subjects have more ways to integrate ethnic minority customs, festivals and architecture in their regular teaching, compared to those in scientific subjects. However, the article shows a problem that many teachers did not understand, or were unfamiliar, with the ethnic minority. In XDAP, the teachers were primarily from Han backgrounds with very limited knowledge of local culture and unable to find points to integrate. And in Qianjiang where the local culture has been assimilated by Han culture, the teachers were distant from local cultural traditions which gave them difficulties in finding points of integration.

The study in XDAP shows the essential need for teachers to have the knowledge and ability to cope with multicultural ethnic minority students in school. It also provides a reference to advance my research into the field of teacher education (Article 3). In the first place, teachers should have the knowledge and consciousness to understand and respect students' cultures, customs and taboos. One significant finding is that teachers should consider their students' cultural characteristics, determined by cultural context, knowledge structures and forms of emotional expression, to adjust their teaching and management strategies. As before, teachers in Qianjiang kept silent on this as their students' culture did not have any particular features that needed to be considered in teaching.

This article ends with a discussion of the role of internal orientalism in shaping ethnic minority culture to be integrated in a superficial form. Teachers' practice of incorporating ethnic minority culture in the curriculum is discussed using the Banks' typology on approaches of multicultural curriculum reform. I argue that centralised model of education governance leads to an unchangeable curriculum structure which keeps teachers' practices in the contribution and additive approaches.

**Article 3:** Wang, W. (submitted). "Fostering teachers' multicultural competence for Chinese ethnic minority education: an analysis of teacher education programmers, syllabuses and teacher educator perceptions".

In this article, I move on to discuss how teacher education programmes for pre-service teachers in China incorporate training to build multicultural competence and the underlying external forces that influence it.

The 55 ethnic minorities in China were identified on account of their distinct cultural differences from the majority Han and one another, particularly in terms of customs, languages, religions etc. Ethnic minorities exist in “an extensive dispersion with localised concentrations”, meaning that their populations are mixed into the broader population in provinces and cities. Meanwhile, individual ethnic minority groups are concentrated in smaller administration units such as villages. However, since 2001 a “merged school” education policy has been implemented, closing small village schools and concentrating student into centralised schools in urban areas. This initiative aims to solve the problem of imbalanced distribution in education resources and to promote education equality, but in ethnic minority areas the move from village schools serving single ethnic minority groups to multicultural schools in towns and cities has created a demographic situation for ethnic minorities that is, in essence, heterogeneous. This multicultural reality inevitably challenges teachers working in ethnic minority education and increases the need for teacher competence in dealing with culturally diverse students. Thus, developing multicultural competence amongst teachers should be a concern of teacher education programmes.

Drawing on international scholarship on teachers’ multicultural competence and Cochran-Smith’s conceptualisation of external forces influencing multicultural teacher education practices, I argue that the cultivation of teachers’ multicultural competence for their future work in ethnic minority education is, to a great extent, missing from teacher education programmes. Furthermore, the capacity of Chinese teacher education universities in fostering pre-service multicultural competence is constrained by several external forces such as education governance and, as reflected in the locations of teaching practicums, relations with community and schools. Furthermore, what pre-service teachers’ competence covers, and the external forces that influence how teacher education plays out in practice, are influenced and somewhat determined by the larger social, economic and political context as well as the agenda for educational reform in China.

## 7. Concluding discussion

In the last four decades, ethnic minority education in China, including K-12 education and higher education, has made remarkable progress. This high-speed development can be attributed to affirmative action at national level, such as a series of preferential policies. However, with the economic development of ethnic minority areas, traditional ethnic minority culture has experienced shocks, and in some cases, been assimilated, by mainstream culture as part of the broader trend of globalisation and modernisation. Meanwhile, the distribution of ethnic minorities in China and the merged school initiative have led to multicultural characteristics in students' backgrounds at ethnic minority schools that cause challenges for teachers and raise the need for teachers to possess the competence to deal with culturally diverse students. Therefore, how schools and teachers implement ethnic minority culture in school practices becomes an important theme. Before I continue, I shall repeat the research aim and questions and list the main findings of this research.

The overall aim of the research is to contribute to a critical understanding of how ethnic minority culture is integrated into school practices, inside and outside the classroom; what kinds of problems in teaching and administration are encountered by teachers in ethnic minority education (specifically for the ethnic Dai and ethnic Tujia); and how pre-service teachers are prepared in present teacher education programmes for working in ethnic minority areas. Based on the literature review as well as empirical studies in ethnic minority areas, the following findings are generated:

1. The international scholarship on multicultural education since the 1970s has not significantly informed ethnic minority education research in China (Article 1).
2. The manifestations of ethnic minority culture within the school context are superficial and largely in the form of static cultural artefacts such as dances, clothing, and sport (Article 2).

3. Teachers' practices of integrating cultural content are constructed on the basis of an unchanged curriculum structure (Article 2).
4. Students' cultural characteristics are perceived to be leading factors for teachers in successful teaching and management (Article 2).
5. Cultivation of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence for future work in ethnic minority education is, to a great extent, missing from teacher education programmes (Article 3).
6. The external forces that influence how teacher education plays out in practice are affected and somewhat determined by the larger social, economic and political context as well as the agenda for education (Article 3).

As a matter of fact, these findings do not exist in isolation but are interrelated. For example, the problems teachers encounter in school practices raise the requirement for teacher education programmes; external influential forces on teacher education can also be used to discuss teacher' practices in school. In the following sections, I will discuss these findings in connection with the conceptual framework. In the final section of this chapter, I present several policy implications.

## Internal orientalism and ethnic minority culture in school

Empirical data from schools in XDAP and Qianjiang (presented in Article 2) suggests the manifestations of ethnic minority culture within the school context in both fieldwork sites show a high degree of similarity despite differing degrees of assimilation in these two regions. Ethnic minority culture in school, whether inside or outside the classroom, largely manifests through superficial modalities: festivals, clothing and dancing etc., while underlying cultural attitudes, values and beliefs are not reflected. As the teachers participating in the research were silent on the possible reasons for this, or ascribed it merely to "assimilation", I trace the transformation of ethnic minority culture historically and attribute it to the long-term process of stereotyping ethnic minority groups and their culture, with a resulting power asymmetry, as the concepts of the civilising mission and "internal orientalism" imply (Schein 1997).



The civilising project positioned Han as superior over other ethnic minorities which were framed as less civilised or even uncivilised. An assumption was that ethnic minorities and their cultures should be civilised if they want to achieve progress and modernity. The hierarchical relations between Han and ethnic minorities caused natural assimilation to occur. In this process, some static aspects of ethnic minority culture, such as dancing, music, clothes etc. which are congruent with the state doctrine of cultural diversity, were preserved and transmitted.

In the post-Mao period, rural culture was regarded as the embodiment of Chinese civilisation and ethnic minority groups came to represent ancient China or, more vividly, “living fossils” (Golik 2014). In order to promote their economic development, some of the more superficial cultural traits of ethnic minorities came to be promoted as charming, quaint and suitable to be “performed” for the public. Thus, these attractive but superficial cultural manifestations became focal points in order to replace the impression of ethnic minorities as “backward” or “underdeveloped”. This impression is consistent with the perspectives of orientalism in which Eastern culture is depicted as exotic; perhaps interesting, but still “backward”. As observed by Schein (1997), the enthusiasm for charming ethnic minorities and the stereotypes surrounding them resemble Western orientalism. For example, for many Chinese people, the Potala Palace (布达拉宫) and the Water Festival (泼水节) are the first things that come to mind if Tibet or the Dai are mentioned.

Obviously, the underlying asymmetrical relations and assimilation phenomenon is contrary to the core purpose of the *Indigenous and Tribal People Convention* (ILO 169) which called for the protection of indigenous groups’ cultural rights (ILO 1989). Under the influence of internal orientalism, much of ethnic minority culture was naturally assimilated by Han culture based on their presupposed civilised or uncivilised situations. Only static cultural “stuff” which could be taken advantage of as a tourism resource was preserved. This long-term internal orientalism in China weakened the cultural capital of most ethnic minority cultures so that more and more ethnic minority people started to regard their traditional cultures as irrelevant to their future aspirations and chose to strip them off voluntarily in order to better enjoy the benefits of modernisation and marketisation.

The power asymmetry embedded in internal orientalism can also be used to examine the relations between central government and local authorities in the framework of centralised education governance in China. The central government has overwhelming power to nail down what content should be

included in curriculums and relevant examination subjects. In such an asymmetrical relationship schools and lower-tier teacher education universities can only accept national education policies or initiatives as a political task and carry them out faithfully (Zhang and Chen 2014).

## Teaching ethnic minority culture in the classroom: towards culturally responsive teaching

The literature review of academic discussions on ethnicity and education (presented in Article 1) from 1990 to 2014 suggests Chinese scholars have been heavily influenced by scholarship on multicultural education and regard it as the dominant framework when they discuss aspects of ethnic minority education in China, such as classroom teaching, curriculum setting and teachers' competence etc. However, an examination of the connections between ethnic minority education research in China and the development of multicultural education scholarship in the past several decades shows that international scholarship on multicultural education since the 1970s, such as use of pedagogical strategies, multicultural education and social justice, roles of school and so on, has not significantly informed Chinese ethnic minority education research.

The most discussed research theme is “cultural heritage in school education” in which Chinese researchers extensively discuss the process and pathways to include content from ethnic minority culture into classroom teaching to improve students' understanding of subject knowledge. This research theme further motivated me to engage in an empirical investigation to examine how schools and teachers in ethnic minority education incorporate ethnic minority culture into actual school practice.

Empirical data from schools in XDAP and Qianjiang (presented in Article 2) suggests that practices of incorporating ethnic minority culture into classroom teaching in both places show a high degree of similarity despite differing degrees of assimilation. The aim of integration is to help students understand the existing curriculum better. Therefore, whatever the academic discussion or real school practices, teachers are positioned within the dimension of content integration and only the contribution and additive approaches in Banks' typology (2014) are taken. This does not necessarily indicate that teachers do not have the competence to step into other dimensions and approaches. In fact, from interviews with teachers, their existing practical ways of incorporating

ethnic minority culture into classroom teaching are largely influenced by external forces, such as the examination-oriented culture which excludes content from ethnic minorities in high-stake examinations, as well as centralised education governance in curriculum setting which provides only limited space for teachers to involve themselves in advanced approaches to curriculum reform like transformative and social actions based on a changeable curriculum structure.

Compare to the Chinese research tradition which focuses on incorporating cultural content into subject teaching, the multicultural education scholarship has gone beyond this to start from students' selves and accommodating student diversity. A pedagogical strategy, CRT, emphasises that classroom teaching should be concerned with and reflect the strengths of culturally diverse students. More specifically, the cultural knowledge and performance styles of diverse students can be used as important resources for teachers to examine curriculum design and teaching materials and to assess teaching interventions that will improve education equality (Gay 2013).

The beneficial preferential policies related to ethnic minority education highlight that education equality should be achieved through external compensatory interventions such as enhancing education investment and dispatching degree-holding teachers to such areas. However, these initiatives, based on positive discrimination, have ignored or given less consideration to students' cultural differences and the need for classroom interventions, which risk exposing students to cultural deficit and further weakening their cultural capital.

Empirical data from XDAP shows teacher perspectives on the necessity of respecting the local culture, customs and taboos as well as concern with students' cultural characteristics, which is the important precondition for implementing CRT. Some teachers perceived this understanding to be the leading factor in successful teaching and management in XDAP. Teacher Liu in XDAP shared an example with me:

Last year, there was a teachers' team from Shanghai coming to our place to help us enhance teaching quality. [...] It was interesting that the average score of the class they teach was lower than those our teachers taught in the semester of the final examinations. I know. [...] Even if they have rich knowledge and advanced teaching skills, in our area they also need to understand students' cultural psychological characteristics and change their teaching and management style to adapt to our ethnic minority students. Otherwise, students will dislike and resist these teachers and cannot concentrate on their studies. (Teacher Liu, XDAP, quoted in Article 3)

In this example, teachers' awareness and knowledge of students' cultural characteristics as well as adapting teaching and management style for culturally diverse students resembles the multicultural competence extensively discussed in multicultural education scholarship. This further motivates me to move beyond local school practices to normal universities to investigate how teacher education programmes in China foster teacher multicultural competence (presented in Article 3).

## Fostering teacher multicultural competence in teacher education programmes and external forces

An important research theme is teacher and teacher education in which Chinese educational researchers have theoretically discussed the importance of multicultural competence for teachers in Chinese ethnic minority areas and appealed to normal universities to address it. Yet, empirical studies examining teacher education in practice remain underrepresented.

The analysis of the syllabuses of two teacher education programmes (presented in Article 3), reveals that teacher education programmes in China lack consideration of the particular needs of teachers providing ethnic minority education. On one hand, New Curriculum Reform (NCR) which determines the mission and core content of teacher education programmes, raised the requirements for teachers in class design and teaching skills to guide explorative learning and develop problem-solving ability. This total loyalty to education reform constrains capacity of teacher education programmes in incorporating multicultural competence. Curriculum setting is centralised, with limited flexibility, and should be in accord with the "pedagogical knowledge and

abilities” section in China’s *Nation Teacher Education Standard* (NTES). This emphasises training teachers on fundamental theories and skills in teaching, understanding students and professional development. This requirement only includes the universal needs of teachers in Chinese education, but omits the particular needs of ethnic minority education.

It can be seen from the analysis of syllabuses that the national education reform and document constrain and influence the capacity of teacher education universities in incorporating training in multicultural competence. Following Cochran-Smith’s (2003) discussion on external forces influencing multicultural teacher education, I discuss several external forces and the broader context in China which influences teacher education practices.

First, it is interesting that all four teacher educators who participated in this study were agreed that fostering pre-service teachers’ multicultural competence for ethnic minority education was important. However, the concrete practices in teacher education contradicted these beliefs. This can be ascribed to the regulation of the NTES which only addresses universal requirements for Chinese teachers. However, the centralised education governance in teacher education refuses flexible changes based on the local context. The institutional capacity of implementing multicultural teacher education is inadequate within the current centralised governance structure for teacher education.

Similarly, China’s broad educational reform agenda greatly influences the mission of teacher education programmes. This mission, as syllabus analysis shows, is loyalty to education reform. The New Curriculum Reform (NCR), which has prevailed since the early 2000s, strongly emphasises student-centred learning rather than teacher-dominated teaching. Pre-service teacher education universities are required to prepare teachers in accordance with the NCR’s requirements for teacher competence. As a broader reform agenda, the NCR influences how teacher education plays out in practice. Therefore, teachers’ multicultural competence, which is excluded from the reform agenda, cannot be emphasised in teacher education programmes, and institutional capacity in this area is restricted. However, it is a little bit ironic that the student-centred learning in fact needs teachers to take consideration of students’ differing characteristics, definitely including cultural differences, to facilitate their learning outcomes. This can be an important point which is ignored by dominant teacher education programmes which are currently silent on cultural differences among ethnic minorities and the requirement for teacher multicultural competence to transform into a more inclusive form.

Secondly, interviews with teacher educators also show that the locations of teaching practicums are, to a large extent, disconnected from multicultural settings. This may be related to the social context in China and the distribution of ethnic minorities within the country. Though China has 55 ethnic minorities, more than 80% live in the western border provinces and autonomous prefectures. The rest are mingled with the majority Han in the eastern and central provinces and have largely been assimilated by the mainstream culture. Provinces where there is a lack of communities and schools with diverse ethnic minorities face challenges in providing authentic multicultural settings for teacher practicums. Moreover, provinces where cultural diversity is lacking do not feel an urgency to foster this transformation. Therefore, if a corresponding reform in teacher education programmes is to be carried out, it must be regional, not nationwide.

Finally, the current ideology of educational equality, which derives from recognition of the uneven socioeconomic development in China, focuses on distributive equality of teacher quality and quantity. Teaching for social justice, which is extensively discussed in multicultural education scholarship, requires teachers to recognise culture as the foundation of learning to facilitate diverse students' academic performance, teach key concepts by using content and examples from different cultural groups, and guide equal inter-ethnic communication between students from different cultural groups for eliminating discrimination (Sleeter 2013). However, it should be noted here that a prerequisite of social justice is distributive equality in resources and rights (Miller 1997). In China, though ethnic minorities have been granted equal civil rights in political domains, their subordinate position in many domains, like economic development and education, has stagnated or worsened in the past four decades. As teacher educators' perceptions have shown, the urgent concern in teacher education for ethnic minorities is to cultivate adequate and qualified teachers.

In conclusion, the capacity of Chinese teacher education universities in fostering pre-service multicultural competence is constrained by several external forces such as education governance and, as reflected in the locations of teaching practicums, relations with community and schools. Furthermore, what pre-service teachers' competence covers, and the external forces that influence how teacher education plays out in practice, are influenced and somewhat determined by the larger social, economic and political context as well as the agenda for educational reform in China.

## Policy implications

A number of policy implications emerge from the literature review and empirical work in this thesis.

Firstly, it reveals an obvious gap between theoretical research and practical issues in Chinese ethnic minority education research. For example, researchers in education had extensively discussed the essentiality and availability of teachers' multicultural competences or similar for coping with diverse students in ethnic minority education in the past two decades, but concrete practices in teacher training have ignored this. This not only informs us that policymakers in education should consider reforming the existing teacher education programme to become more inclusive of ethnic minority education, but also to strengthen the conversion from theoretical discussions to educational experimentation, and finally to generalise to concrete educational policies.

Secondly, as Article 2 shows, the incorporation of ethnic minority culture into schools is advocated by the central government but is disregarded by students, teachers and parents. The main reason is that related content from ethnic minority culture is not included in China's high-stakes examinations. The disconnect between learning and examinations makes stakeholders indifferent to cultural content in the school context. Considering the central position of the examination system in talent selection in China, this suggests that the examination system should take into consideration how to involve ethnic minority culture.

Thirdly, a static understanding of cultural heritage ignores the dynamic development of culture in actual social contexts. To succeed in mainstream Chinese society, ethnic minority students often choose to strip off their traditional culture which is regarded as lacking cultural capital for their future development. This implies that policies on ethnic minority cultural heritage should be concerned with the contribution of ethnic minority culture to life and careers, such as connecting ethnic minority arts with vocational education so that traditional cultures can play an important role in livelihood improvement and poverty alleviation.

Fourthly, longstanding internal orientalism has, to a great extent, caused the mainstream to stereotype ethnic minority peoples and cultures. Therefore, if we want to change the present situation of ethnic minority cultures, which are effectively locked in a cultural museum, public opinion on ethnic minority culture and its value must be transformed. Ethnic solidarity education which

involves both ethnic minorities and the majority can provide a platform to build public understanding. Nevertheless, ethnic solidarity education should be implemented not just using contribution and additive approaches, but in a *transformative* way that guides people to view ethnic minorities and cultures from the perspectives of diverse ethnic minority groups.

Special teacher support programmes, such as SCTP and TRPP, have contributed to the problem of teacher shortages in underdeveloped regions of China. There are also in-service teacher training programmes for local teachers who return to normal universities to receive training. However, teachers who have worked in ethnically diverse schools for several years have more experience in dealing with culturally diverse students, and can be an important resource in enriching teacher education programmes. This implies that in-service teacher training should change its present training mode in which in-service teachers are only in the role of receivers, to a bottom-up way that involves in-service teachers and enables them to contribute to pre-service teacher education programmes.

Finally, Article 3 shows that centralised education governance constrains the institutional capacity of teacher education universities to implement multicultural teacher training for ethnic minorities. Though universities have been endowed with a certain degree of autonomy in carrying out teacher education practices, superficial decentralisation in administration alongside centralisation in curriculum frameworks has, to a large extent, limited the capacity of teacher education universities to facilitate specialised teacher preparation for ethnic minority education. This shows that policies should take into consideration increasing the autonomy for teacher education universities to formulate and implement teacher training which adapts into local conditions.

This research on ethnic minority education in China examines local teachers' perspectives on ethnic minority culture, student-teacher relationships and classroom teaching. Teachers are certainly important actors in ethnic minority education. However, there are also many other actors involved in ethnic minority education, including students, parents, community members, and even religious leaders in some regions, whose standpoints and perceptions may differ from those of teachers. The same situation may also apply to research in teacher education universities where I did not have the opportunity to obtain pre-service teachers' perspectives on teacher education programmes. In addition, due to the centralised governance of education, interviews with the policymakers at the upper end of the policy stream might be constructive. These missing pieces are significant and interesting avenues to explore in the future.



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# Appendix 1: Informed consent

## Introduction and consent (In Chinese and English)

您好，我是瑞典隆德大学的博士研究生王伟，我和我的研究队伍正在进行一项关于中国少数民族教育的研究课题，主要的关注点是民族地区教师队伍。因此，我们想对您进行一次面对面的访谈，时长大约 40 分钟。你的所有的回答，我都将会替你绝对地保密。在我后续的与其它人的访谈中、研究报告以及论文中，都将去掉您所有的私人信息，包括您的姓名和工作的学校名等。另外，为便于我后续的分析，我希望可以将我们的访谈录音，请问您是否同意？在访谈结束后，如果您有任何疑问和请求，您可以随时通过电话，微信，电子邮件等方式与我取得联系。

Hello, I am PhD student Wang Wei from Lund University, Sweden. At present, I and my research team are doing a project on Chinese ethnic minority education, mainly focusing on teachers in ethnic minority areas. I want to have a 40 minute face-to-face interview with you. I guarantee to keep all your answers anonymous. I will remove all information related to your identity such as name and the name of your school, both in following interviews with others as well as in my dissertation and articles. Do you agree to participate in this interview? In addition, for the purpose of the analysis, I hope to audio-record our interview, do you agree? After our interview, you are welcome to contact me via telephone \_\_\_\_\_, WeChat \_\_\_\_\_ or Email ([wei.wang@soc.lu.se](mailto:wei.wang@soc.lu.se)) if you have any questions and requests.



# Appendix 2: Interview guides

## Interview Guide - School Teachers

- As you know, the main topic of my research is teaching in ethnic minority areas. You, as a teacher here, how do you feel about your work as a teacher? Do you encounter any problems in teaching, student management and life here?

你应该知道我的研究主题是少数民族地区的教师。你作为这里的老师，在这里的感觉怎么样？你是否在教学、学生管理和生活中遇到过什么困难？

- From your perspective, what are the differences between teaching in ethnic minority schools and non-ethnic minority schools?

你觉得在少数民族地区学校教书和在非少数民族地区学校里教书有什么区别？

- Before you started working in ethnic minority schools, did you receive any pre-work training about ethnic minority culture?

在你开始在少数民族地区学校里工作之前，你是否接受过任何关于民族文化有关的职前培训？

- If yes, what was the content of the training? Do you think it is useful or has some shortcomings?

如果有，有哪些？这些培训的内容是什么？你认为有用吗？或者有什么不足？

- If no, do you think it is essential for new teachers? What kind of knowledge is most needed for new teachers to work well in ethnic minority schools?

如果没有，你觉得哪些知识是那些新进教师最需要的，如果他们想在少数民族地区的学校工作顺利的话？

- As you may know, more and more researchers and politicians emphasise the role of school education in ethnic minority cultural heritage. How do you understand this?

也许你知道一些，越来越多的研究者和政治家强调学校教育在少数民族文化传承的地位？你是如何理解这个观点的？

- In your teaching subject, have you ever tried to connect your teaching content with the ethnic minority culture? If yes, how did you do so? If no, are there any difficulties to make this connection? Or are there other reasons?

在你任教的学科中，你是否曾经尝试去将民族文化内容融入你的课堂教学？如果有，你是怎么样做的？如果没有，是有什么困难吗？或者有什么其它原因？

- What kinds of cultural problems do you encounter relating to classroom teaching and student management? Do you feel easy to deal with them? How do you deal with them? (Question to Han teacher)

在课堂教学和学生管理中，你遇到过什么文化相关问题？你觉得容易应对吗？你是怎样处理的？（针对汉族教师的问题）

- As an ethnic minority teacher, you have the same cultural background as most of your students. Do you think it is an advantage for you in working here? How does it reflect in your daily work? (Question to ethnic minority teacher)

作为来自少数民族的教师，你和你学校中大多数的学生有着同样的文化背景。你认为这是在你工作中的一个优势吗？这个优势是怎样体现在日常工作中的？（针对少数民族教师的问题）

- In your opinion, what kind of significance does multicultural education have for ethnic minority education?

你觉得多元文化教育对少数民族教育的意义有哪些？

- Do you think the present school education system provides enough space for integrating ethnic minority culture?

你认为当前的学校教育能够为少数民族文化的融入提供多大的空间？



## Interview Guide - Teacher educators

- What kind of similarities and differences do you find in education in ethnic minority regions and non-ethnic minority regions?

你认为少数地区的教育与非少数民族地区的教育异同点有哪些？

- How do you understand the relations between talent cultivation and cultural heritage in ethnic minority education? How could these two aims be combined? What kind of special skills should teachers have for working in the ethnic minority areas?

你是如何理解少数民族教育中人才培养和文化遗产的关系的？这两个目标该如何很好地结合在一起？在少数民族地区工作的教师应具备什么特殊的素养？

- Does your faculty set specific theoretical courses to cultivate future teachers to work in ethnic minority areas? If yes, what are those? What are the main aims of these courses?

你的学部是否提供了相关的理论课程去培养教师未来在少数民族地区工作的需要？如果有，有哪些？这些课程的主要目标是什么？

- What kind of teaching practices does your faculty provide to pre-service teachers? For how long? Where? How do you guide pre-service teachers to apply their theoretical knowledge in teaching practices?

你所在的学部给师范生提供的教育实习是怎么样？持续多长时间？在哪里？在教学实习，你们是如何引导师范生将理论知识应用于教学实践的？

- How do present theoretical and practical courses influence future teachers who will work in ethnic minority regions?

当前所开设的理论和实践的课程是怎样影响未来将在少数民族地区工作的师范生的？

- Does your faculty have the continued training programme for in-service teachers from ethnic minority areas? If yes, what kind of training is it? What is the main aim? What kinds of topics are in the in-service teacher training programme?

你所在的学部有针对少数民族地区在职教师的培训吗？如有，是什么形式的？主要目标是什么？哪些主题是被包含在在职教师培训项目的？

## Interview Guide – Focus Group Discussion with School Teachers

- What is your understanding or definition on ethnic minority education and its mission?  
你们对少数民族教育及其应该承担的使命是如何理解和定义的？
- Did you encounter any problems related to cultural origin working and living here? What were they? How did you deal with them?  
在工作和生活中，你们是否遇到过任何和文化相关的问题？有哪些？你们是如何应对的？
- Do you think ethnic minority culture is significant for the local community and people? Why?  
你们认为少数民族文化对当地村寨和居民重要吗？为什么？
- How do you think about cultural heritage in school education? What is role of teachers in this process? Do you think your subject has advantages or disadvantages in articulating ethnic minority culture? How do you connect knowledge of ethnic minority culture to your subject teaching activities?  
你们如何看待学校里进行民族文化遗产？在这个过程中教师应该起什么角色？你们认为自己所教的学科在传承民族文化上有什么优势或劣势？你们是如何将少数民族文化知识与你们的学科教学结合在一起的。
- What are the most important skills you think a teacher should have when he/she works in ethnic minority regions? Why?  
你们觉得在少数民族工作的教师最重要的素养是什么？为什么？

# Appendix 3: Coding process (analysis of interviews conducted in Xishuangbanna and Qianjiang)

**Coding list (open coding) and how codes are developed into more abstract themes (based on the individual interviews and focus group discussions in XDAP)**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Issues discussed</b>	<b>Basic themes</b>	<b>Organised themes</b>	<b>Global themes</b>
1. indifferent 2. excluding 3. useless 4. pamper 5. slow 6. rich 7. money 8. business 9. selection 10. time 11. management 12. atmosphere	Education is not valued by families Parents do not care about children's study Education is useless Investment on education is long period Dai families are in good financial condition	1. Parents have negative attitude towards education 2. Education are perceived as useless for children's future 3. Education has lower yield rate than business or growing crops 4. Parents prefer ethnic activities, rather than education in school	1. Family education	1. Ethnic factors have negative influences on development of school education
13. drinking 14. marriage 15. bandwagon effect	Ethnic/religious festivals is too many Religious education in temple  Primary students drink wine Age of marriage Attitude of whole community towards education	5. Ethnic/religious festivals and activities occupied students' regular school time 6. Chaotic temple education negatively influences children's development 7. Bad community/social atmosphere influence children's actions 8. Early marriage hinders students from studying at a higher level 9. The people have a basically similar attitude towards receiving education	2. Ethnic/religious activities  Social atmosphere	
16. disturb 17. language	Features of the Dai language disturb students' understanding of Mandarin	10. Ethnic minority language causes difficulties for students' learning in school (where the medium of teaching is Mandarin)	Minority language	
18. connection/immersion 19. festivals 20. customs 21. music	Classroom teaching Interest group of ethnic minority culture Music show and mock football team School-based curriculum and textbook Content of minority culture (include language) is not tested in examinations Teachers' promotion is related to student scores Ethnic minority culture practised in school	11. Some teachers can connect their teaching with knowledge of ethnic minority culture 12. Cultural subjects are preferable to carry cultural elements	Teaching of minority culture in regular subjects	2. School education has possibility to include practice of cultural heritage but is restricted by multiple factors
22. interests	Interest group of ethnic minority culture	12. The most common type of minority	Activities of ethnic minority	

<p>23. group/collective performances/sport games 24. exist in name only</p>	<p>Music show and monk football team School-based curriculum and textbook</p>	<p>culture in school is reflected in collective activities and interest groups (outside regular classroom) 13. School-based curriculum takes limited role in involving ethnic minority culture in school</p>	<p>Culture outside regular teaching</p>	<p><b>3. Teachers' attitudes to students' cultural characters and domains of cultural heritage</b></p>
<p>25. examination/score 26. evaluation 27. inspection</p>	<p>Content of minority culture (including language) are not tested in exams Teachers' promotion is related to student scores Ethnic minority culture practice in school</p>	<p>14. Students' examination score is of the highest importance 15. Teachers concentrate on students' scores 16. Culture practice in school is used to deal with inspections from superior authority (government)</p>	<p>The obstacles to implementing practices of cultural heritage in school</p>	
<p>28. trick on names 29. ethnic psychology 30. custom/religion 31. solidarity</p>	<p>Student-teacher conflicts</p>	<p>17. Understand students' characters related to their ethnicity 18. Promote harmonious ethnic relations 19. Respect cultural customs and taboos 20. Promote harmonious ethnic relations</p>	<p>Individual (students') cultural characters</p>	
<p>32. basic 33. modernisation 34. policy</p>	<p>Lay a solid foundation for study in next step Modernise ethnic minority members No policy support</p>	<p>21. School is an institution to transmit scientific knowledge 22. School plays a function of modernising ethnic minority people (getting rid of bad habit, superstitions) 23. No specific policy to guarantee cultural heritage in school</p>	<p>Function of school education in cultural heritage</p>	
<p>35. villages and communities</p>	<p>Cultural heritage in villages and communities</p>	<p>24. Villages/community have a more complete model to include cultural heritage</p>	<p>Role of community in cultural heritage</p>	
<p>36. ability 37. time 38. space</p>	<p>Dig up cultural resources Not enough time</p>	<p>25. Teachers hardly have the ability to dig up cultural resources 26. Students' academic tasks are ranked at the top</p>	<p>Teachers' difficulties in practices of cultural heritage in school</p>	

**Coding list (open coding) and how codes are developed into more abstract themes (based on the individual interviews and focus group discussions in Qianjiang)**

Codes	Issues discussed	Basic themes	Organised themes	Global themes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. historical</li> <li>2. migrant worker</li> <li>3. writing characters</li> <li>4. religion</li> <li>5. economic/marketisation</li> <li>6. transportation</li> </ol>	<p>governance economic development convenience</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This place is governed by central authority from federal society</li> <li>2. Labour migration to big city widens people's views and outlook</li> <li>3. No writing characters (Tujia) restricts transmission of cultural heritage by texts.</li> <li>4. The lack of religious faith leads people to pursue and receive more better things, rather than traditional culture</li> <li>5. Economic development makes people drop their original lifestyle following traditional culture</li> </ol>	<p>The reasons for assimilation (Sinicisation) are diverse</p>	<p><b>1. Assimilation is caused by complex reasons and has eliminated ethnic features in local communities and in education</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. not obvious</li> <li>8. no different</li> <li>9. label</li> <li>10. lacking of understanding</li> <li>11. same</li> </ol>	<p>ethnic features meaning of culture teachers' understanding comparing with Han</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. There is no ethnic feature as a Tujia person</li> <li>6. Teachers do not need to consider students' ethnic feature in their teaching</li> <li>7. Tujia is nothing than a label</li> </ol>	<p>Influence of assimilation on ethnic minority education in Tujia</p>	<p><b>2. Possibilities of and obstacles to practices of cultural heritage in Tujia schools</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. immersion</li> <li>13. knowledge</li> <li>14. festival</li> <li>15. custom</li> <li>16. regional culture</li> <li>17. practice</li> </ol>	<p>Classroom teaching Modes connection</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Chinese and music teachers (culturalised) can, sometimes, connect knowledge in textbook with minority culture</li> <li>9. Physics and chemistry prefer to connect examples in daily life with their teaching</li> <li>9. Regional culture is more mentioned than minority culture in classroom</li> </ol>	<p>Knowledge teaching of minority culture in regular subjects</p>	<p><b>2. Possibilities of and obstacles to practices of cultural heritage in Tujia schools</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. instrument</li> <li>19. school-based curriculum/textbook</li> <li>20. class-break</li> <li>21. culture from other ethnicities or Chinese nation</li> <li>22. dancing</li> <li>23. slogans and pictures</li> <li>24. tourist attraction</li> </ol>	<p>Types of culture Time Propagandise Practical class</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. The most typical cultural mode in school is shaking-hand dancing during the break</li> <li>11. Some culture from other ethnicities is introduced into school as an activity</li> <li>12. Regional culture is more common than ethnic culture</li> <li>12. Teachers guide students to self-explore types of folk bridges</li> <li>12. Slogans and picture posts are used to introduce information on different ethnicities in China to students</li> <li>13. School-based textbooks contain content on local customs (not related with minority culture)</li> <li>14. Organise students to visit tourist attractions to experience culture</li> </ol>	<p>Practices of cultural heritage outside regular subjects</p>	<p><b>2. Possibilities of and obstacles to practices of cultural heritage in Tujia schools</b></p>

<p>25. reputation 26. examination-oriented 27. teachers' promotion and evaluation 28. not in examination 29. culture in textbook 30. top-down education governance 31. need government lead 32. rights</p>	<p>Stakeholders (school, teachers, students etc.) Conflict Policy and governance Difficulties</p>	<p>15. Students' scores in examination will influence many stakeholders 16. Ethnic minority cultures are not in examinations, reducing their importance 17. There is no explicit policy support and supervision about practices of cultural heritage in school 18. Teachers and principals have few rights to discuss the selection and writing of textbooks</p>	<p>The obstacles hindering implementation of practices of cultural heritage in school</p>	<p><b>3. Teachers' views and suggestions on cultural heritage in school context</b></p>
<p>33. acknowledge 34. beneficial</p>	<p>Suitable Expectation</p>	<p>19. Any traditional culture which is beneficial to children's development can be used in school teaching and activities 20. Selection of culture should be acknowledged and supported by parents/society etc. 21. Teachers (even they are Tujia) do not understand ethnic minority culture and find it impossible to include practices of cultural heritage 22. Heavy teaching tasks leave teachers no time to include practices of cultural heritage</p>	<p>What kind of culture is suitable to be transmitted in school The difficulties teachers have</p>	
<p>35. time 36. ability 37. heavy task</p>	<p>Teachers Not enough time</p>	<p>23. Heritage of minority culture in school requires government guidance 24. Heritage of minority culture in school requires relevant content is included in curriculum and textbooks</p>	<p>Suggested paths to improve the present situation regarding practice of cultural heritage in school</p>	
<p>38. governance 39. curriculum</p>	<p>System of education governance and curriculum in China</p>			





# Appendix 4: List of interviews translated and quoted in the articles

## Article 2 (Arranged in the order they appear)

1. I think one reason for the bad study atmosphere here is parents' indifference to education. [...] One day, a student comes to tell me "Teacher, my parents do not allow me to study in upper secondary school." I know the financial status of her family is not bad, but her parents think if she can leave school and go to tourist attractions for private business, such as selling barbecue or do dance performances, then she can make money immediately.

我觉得造成这样糟糕的学习氛围的原因是父母们对教育的不关心。我记得有一天，一个学生跑来告诉我“老师，我的爸妈不让我去读高中。”我知道他家里的经济条件其实还可以的，但是他的父母却认为如果它不上学了，然后去旅游景点做点小生意，像卖烧烤或者搞点表演，她可以很快地赚到钱。

2. [...] now it is really tough for university graduates to find a good and satisfactory job. Not like in our time, when the job was arranged by the government. The parents think they invest much but gain little. Therefore they forbid their children to study beyond compulsory education.

现在对于大学毕业生来说真的很难找到一份又好又理想的工作，不像我们那个时候，工作是国家分配的。这些学生的父母认为他们投了资，却得不到啥回报。所以啊，他们在孩子结束义务教育的时候就不让他们继续上学了。

3. [...] I feel ethnic minority culture annoys me so much. I agree with their faith on Buddhism, but there are too many festivals when the students need to take several days' leave and go back to the village to join in, such as the open-door/close-door festivals, even a celebration called "gambling day" in a village, that I find hard to understand.

我觉得少数民族文化真的让我伤透了脑筋。我赞成他们信仰佛教，但是怎么会有那么多的节日非得要学生请好多天的假期回村子里参加呢，像开门节/关门节，甚至有个村子还有个什么“赌博节”。我是真的不能理解。

4. In our place, it is too normal for younger people to be married when they are 17 and 18 years old, and even earlier. Many people in my age (around 40 years old) have turned out to be grandparents. So I think it is unrealistic for Dai students to study harder and further when their daily lives are filled with so many attractive things.

在我们这个地方，年轻人十七八岁结婚的太普遍啦，甚至更早。许多人像我这个年纪（40岁）都已经当爷爷奶奶了。所以啊，我认为对于傣族的学生来说让他们努力学习，继续升学真的不太现实，因为他们的日常生活里的诱惑太多了。

5. My impression of ethnic Tujia is from my grandfather; my father and I are Tujia, but we dress and everything at home is same as Han people. Tujia has been assimilated by Han. And in the classroom, if we do not check the students' identification cards, it is very difficult for us to know their ethnicity from actions, appearance etc.

在我对土家族的印象里，就是我的爷爷是土家族，我爸爸和我也是土家族。但是我们穿的还有在家里的所有东西都跟汉族是一样的。土家族已经被汉族同化了。在课堂里，如果你不看看学生的身份证，你是不可能从他们的行为和外貌等方面判断出他们的民族的。

6. Last year I taught the interest group on Dai language and culture in the youth palace once a week, but this semester, [...] the students will face graduation examinations. I really have no time to do this.

去年，我在少年宫开了一个傣族语言和文化的兴趣小组，一周一次课，但是这个学期学生要面临毕业考试。我真的没有时间再去做了。

7. I think we, as music teachers, have not the space to think about teaching ethnic minority culture in our class. Every section of the course and the time is predetermined, and we have to hurry up to finish the content in the textbook for the examination. More importantly, students' scores in the examinations will be taken as the evaluation criterion for our salaries.

我觉得呀像我们这样的音乐老师，真的没有什么空间去想怎么再课堂去教少数民族文化。每部分的课程内容和时间都是定好的，我们只能抓紧时间完成课本中的内容以应付考试。

8. When I taught the text titled “Duck eggs in the Duanwu festival” (duanwu jie de yadan), I asked my students to prepare and introduce their own ethnic minority customs.

在我上端午的鸭蛋那篇课文的时候，我就让我的学生们准备并介绍他们的少数民族习俗。

9. When students learned about the customs of other ethnic minorities in the textbook, such as Dai and Mongolians, I would explain to students our traditional Tujia clothes, customs, even if they are seldom seen in students’ daily life.

当学生们从课本上学到了其他少数民族的习俗的时候，像傣族和蒙古族，我就会向学生们讲解土家族的服饰和习俗，即使学生已经很少能在生活中看到了。

10. In our area, the monk students’ heads cannot be touched. If a teacher does not understand this taboo and does so, the students will be very angry and the conflict will emerge.

在我们这里，和尚生的头是不可以乱摸得。如果一个老师不了解这种禁忌而摸了的话，这些学生可是会非常生气地，甚至发生斗殴。

11. Last year, there was a teachers’ team from Shanghai coming to our place to help us enhance teaching quality. [...] It was interesting that the average score of the class they taught was lower than those our teachers taught in the semester of the final examinations. I know. [...] Even if they have rich knowledge and advanced teaching skills, in our area they also need to understand students’ cultural psychological characteristics and change their teaching and management style to adapt to our ethnic minority students. Otherwise, students will dislike and resist these teachers and cannot concentrate on their studies.

去年，上海有一个名师团队到我们这里进行帮扶。非常有意思的是他们所教的班级的平均分还不如我们自己老师教的班级。我清楚地很，即使他们有丰富的知识和高级的教学技巧，在我们这个地方，他们还需要了解学生的文化心理特征，并改变他们的教学和管理方式来适应少数民族的学生。不然的话，学生们会不喜欢并且抵制这些老师，他们也就不能集中精力学习了。

12. Take ethnic Bulan and ethnic Lahu as examples; we, as teachers, cannot criticise the students from these two ethnic minorities. They have their own temperaments. If you criticise them, they will express resistance. In the past, a teacher criticised a Lahu student, saying: “you are too foolish, why do you not

die?” Then this student took an overdose of medicine to commit suicide. Such criticism from teachers is usual in Han areas, it is really normal.

就拿布朗族和拉祜族作例子吧。我们老师不能批评这两个民族的学生。他们有自己的脾气。如果你批评他们，他们会反抗的。过去有个老师批评了一个拉祜族的学生，就说“你太笨了，你咋不去死呢？”然后这个学生吃了许多安眠药自杀了。这样的批评在汉族地区很平常，真的很平常。

### Article 3 (Arranged in the order they appear)

1. When it comes to emotional expression, the students from the Dai [ethnic group] are gentle and, by contrast, the ones from Bulang and Hani are stubborn. As a teacher, I must use differential treatment in my teaching and management strategies.

情感特征来说，傣族学生比较柔软。相比较而言，布朗族和哈尼族就比较固执。作为老师，我必须要在教学和管理方法上作一些区别。

2. Last year, a teachers' team from Shanghai came to our school to help us enhance teaching quality. [...] It was interesting that the average score of the class taught teach was lower than those our teachers taught in the semester of the final examinations. I know. [...] Even if they have rich knowledge and advanced teaching skills, in our area they also need to understand students' cultural psychological characteristics and change their teaching and management style to adapt to our ethnic minority students. Otherwise, students will dislike and resist these teachers and be unable to concentrate on their studies.

Chinese translation: see previous page, number 11

3. Take Yunnan Province as an example; when recruiting new teachers, the schools in urban areas usually require teachers should at least have a bachelor's degree, but the requirement declines to a College Graduation Diploma (dazhuan) in rural and ethnic minority areas. Indeed, there are many teachers holding only a high school diploma in some remote mountainous areas. I think this is only a way to compromise with present social reality, but as a teacher education institution, we need to develop a balance of teacher quality step by step. Promoting the equality of teachers' basic quality is most important in current situation.

就以我们云南省为例吧，我们在招聘老师的时候，城市里的学校通常都要求至少本科毕业，但是在农村地区和少数民族地区大专就够了。而且在很多偏远山区很多老师只有高中文化。我觉得这是向社会现实妥协的

一个方面啦，但是作为教师教育机构，我们需要一步步地发展教师的质量均衡。当前情况下，促进教师基本素养上的平等才是最重要的。

4. Enhancing the quality of teaching teams in ethnic minority areas, such as their degrees, disciplinary knowledge and teaching skills, are urgent concerns at the present level of socioeconomic development. Indeed, in some ethnic minority areas, the number of teachers cannot be assured either.

在当前这样的社会经济发展条件下，提高少数民族地区教师队伍的素质，像学科知识和教学技巧才能最紧要的。实际上，在很多少数民族地区，教师的数量都没有办法保证。

5. I think the teachers for ethnic minorities and majority Han areas are somewhat different. The cultural characteristics of students in ethnic minority areas require teachers have related abilities and skills. I think it is similar to the multicultural education and related course “teaching for diverse students” that I experienced during my study visit to the United States five years ago. Our ethnic minorities basically have their own ethnic cultural characteristics, so I think our pre-service teachers should be taught a curriculum like “multicultural education” or a similar course at least.

我觉得在少数民族和在汉族地区教书的老师还是有一定的不同的。学生的文化特征就要求教师具备一些能力和技巧。我认为这跟我我五年前在美国访学的时候所了解的多元文化教育还有相关课程如“教多元文化的学生”。我们的少数民族还是有他们自己的民族文化特征的，所以我觉得师范生应该开一门多元文化教育课程，或者至少有类似的课程。

6. I do not think we, as teacher educators, can do too much to transform the ongoing teacher education programme. This power should be in the hand of the central education authorities. Our institution must follow the framework of national education initiatives (board policies and guidelines) to set mandatory and elective curriculums and implement teaching practice, otherwise the authorities will hold our university accountable. Therefore, autonomy is really limited for universities and our teacher educators.

我可不认为我们教师教育者能做什么去改变现有的教师教育，权力都在国家教育部门那里。我们大学只能服从国家教育计划的框架去设置必修和选修课、开展教学实习，否则相关部门会追我们的责的。因此，自主性是真的没有多少，对于大学和我们教师教育人员而言。

7. I think some of the existing courses can provide a platform to teach pre-service teachers multicultural knowledge, competence, and awareness, such as [courses on] general trends in basic education reform, or ethnic minority

education in Yunnan. We can teach them related knowledge and even guide them towards ethnic minority areas for social investigation, but it depends on the experiences, consciousness and ability of teacher educators. But no policy regulates us to do that. If we want to do this in a systematic way, it really requires policy assurances from central government.

我觉得现有的课程里有一些还是可以培养师范生多元文化知识、技能和意识，像基础教育改革或者云南少数民族教育。我们可以教给学生相关的知识甚至引导他们去少数民族地区作一些社会调查，但是这真的太依靠我们教师教育者的经历、意识和能力了。总而言之，没有政策规定我们一定要这样做。如果要系统地做好，就真的需要国家的政策支持了。

8. The teaching practicums of our college are usually carried out in Chongqing Municipality and some will be in nearby districts including the ethnic minority areas in the southeast part of Chongqing. But, as you know, these areas have been assimilated by Han and the students there have few ethnic minority characteristics.

我们学院的教学实习就是在重庆市，还有渝东南的一些少数民族地区。但是如你所知，这些地方已经被汉族同化了，那里的学生也没有什么民族特征了。

9. There is a group of students choosing to do their teaching practicums in schools located in ethnic minority areas. However, [speaking] as a tutor and assessor, classroom management, lesson plan design and teaching design are prioritised [rather than multicultural competence], according to related national documents.

有一些学生会选择在少数民族地区的学校实习。但是相关国家文件规定，我们作为导师和评价者，只能优先考虑课堂管理、教案设计和教学设计等方面。



# Between Modern Schooling and Cultural Heritage

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What does Chinese multicultural education look like from an outside perspective, as seen by a Chinese scholar? This is the topic of this thesis which examines multicultural education from a cultural, political, and economic perspective, in order to provide insight for educational policy in the context of China.



Wei Wang is an education researcher at the Division of Education, Department of Sociology, Lund University. His research interests are multiculturalism and multicultural education, education development and social equality, ethnic minority education in China and teacher education. *Between Modern Schooling and Cultural Heritage* is his doctoral thesis.

