DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF AN AGGREGATE MINORITY: AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES AMONG CHINA'S FIFTY-SIX ETHNIC GROUPS

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A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies Croft Institute for International Studies Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi
May 2012

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my thesis mentor, Dr. Gang Guo, for his tremendous enthusiasm and support throughout this whole process as well as his patience throughout the last year and a half of teaching me statistics.

I would also like to thank my second and third readers, Dr. Kees Gispen and Dr. Peter Frost, for refusing to accept anything less than my best work. I'd like to extend many thanks to Dr. Kate Centellas and Dr. Jeffrey T. Jackson for their invaluable input and source recommendations.

Thank you, Xiong Xin and Ye Meng, for running with me to catch buses and trains all over Yunnan, for staying in moldy hostels, and sitting patiently as I, in very broken Chinese, constantly scrambled to ask you about political and social abstractions.

Lastly, I want to thank my peers Amy Richards, Evan Akin, Sarah-Fey Rumbarger, and Kaitlyn Stovall for their consistent and unparalleled support throughout the entire year. It seems that all of those all-nighters and hours upon hours of peer editing have paid off!

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DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF AN AGGREGATE MINORITY: AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES AMONG CHINA'S FIFTY-SIX ETHNIC GROUPS

MEGAN LORIA

INTRODUCTION

Of all the factors contributing to stratification in societies, inequality in education is arguably the most profound. The importance of educational equality cannot be overstated, particularly in the case of societies fraught with socioeconomic disparities. Educational attainment is widely accepted as an important determinant of "individual income and, more generally, of well-being."[1] In his 2007 article in *Asian Survey*, Dr. Guo states, "education is often regarded as the ultimate equalizer, creating opportunities for better employment and income."[2] Guo continues to emphasize the value of high quality education systems through discussing education's role in counteracting growing disparities in society; he states these education systems "are especially beneficial for poverty alleviation because they mostly educate local people and thus accumulate human capital for years to come."[3] Maintaining equality in the education system is the most basic and necessary step in alleviating and preventing socioeconomic cleavages permeating all aspects of society.

The disparities in educational attainment among the people of China are worthy of extensive research and analysis. The irrefutable fragmentation in Chinese society inspires scholars to compile books such as Whyte's *One Country, Two Societies*, which through extensive examination of the disparities in facets of Chinese politics, economics, and society in general, suggest that China is not

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[1] Connelly, R. "Determinants of School Enrollment and Completion of 10 to 18 Year Olds in China." Economics of Education Review 22.4 (2003): 379-88. Print.

[2] Guo, Gang. "Persistent Inequalities in Funding for Rural Schooling in Contemporary China." Asian Survey 47.2 (2007): 213-30. Print.

[3] Guo, p. 218

one cohesive nation but rather many individual societies.[4] The benefits of establishing effective educational systems allow communities to foster economic and social progress; meanwhile communities with weak educational infrastructure continue to fall behind in all of these aspects. Lawrence Summers adds to the importance of investing in the education of women in developing countries; "when girls are not educated, their labor has little economic value outside the home. They are forced to marry young and unable to stand up to their husbands...and are unable to invest heavily in each child. Poverty is perpetuated."[5]

Despite China's implementation of a nation-wide compulsory education policy, the evident disparities in educational attainment among various groups suggest that, in essence, this "great equalizer" of education fails to attain the egalitarian ideals it claims to espouse. In this thesis, I will primarily investigate and seek to explain deviation in educational attainment levels among China's various ethnic groups as well as corresponding varied ethnic gender gaps found in China's education system.

The danger of this increasing gap—between the educated and illiterate, between the wealthy and the impoverished, between men and women—highlights the importance of investigating the factors influencing disparities in educational attainment. The implementation of education reform without a thorough understanding of these problems is not likely to make a significant difference. Ultimately, the investigation of educational disparities and potential explanatory factors could lay the foundations for profound, lasting reforms. China cannot alleviate its ingrained societal fragmentation without addressing the parallel inequalities, among ethnic minorities and between men and women, entrenched in the education system.

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[4] Whyte, Martin King. *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Inequality in Contemporary China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010. Print.

[5] Summers, Lawrence H. Investing in all the people: Educating women in developing countries. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1994.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

While education in the Maoist era is often characterized by the systematic devastation of the higher education system formerly in place, the centralization efforts of the Cultural Revolution had a positive, profound impact on the popularization of primary education throughout all of China."[6] It seems that very shortly after primary education developed a stable comprehensive foundation, "progressive" efforts to deviate from much of Maoist policy resulted in educational fragmentation.

Shortly after Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping restored the national college entrance exam and embarked on the path of modernization and decentralization, placing a higher value on quality efficiency rather than equality.[7] It was during the mid 1980s that the government decided to restructure the compulsory education system in its entirety. This restructuring included the successful initiative to raise compulsory education to nine years by adding one extra year to primary school as well as efforts to further invest in vocational schools and educational leadership.[8] Yet perhaps the initiative with the most consequences was the foundation of the reform, the initiative to "shift financial responsibilities from the central government to local levels."[9] The subsequent fiscal decentralization of educational funding throughout the 1980s and 1990s increasingly widened the rural-urban educational divide.

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[6] Guo p. 215

[7] Guo p. 216

[8] Hannum, Emily, Meiyan Wang, and Jennifer Adams. "Rural-Urban Disparities in Access to Primary and Secondary Education under Market Reforms." *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Inequality in Contemporary China*. Ed. Martin King Whyte. Vol. 16. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010. 125-46. Print. Harvard Contemporary China Ser.

[9] Hannum et. al, p. 127

This is often viewed as a general Han-minority division because of general descriptive statistics based on the divide between the Han and China's minorities. Yet considering each individual ethnic group while simultaneously controlling for location and a number of other variables should show that merely labeling this as a divide between the majority and aggregate minority grossly oversimplifies the analysis of educational stratification and eliminates variation worthy of research. Minorities make up for roughly eight percent of China's population of over 1.3 billion. The individual populations of several ethnic groups in China exceed the population of numerous countries around the world. The Manchu population, for example, exceeds ten million people. In fact, sixteen of China's fifty-five recognized minority nationalities boast populations exceeding one million. Furthermore, the people of China speak various languages from at least seven major language families: the Sino-Tibetan, Hmong-Mien, Altaic, Austro-Asiatic, Tai-Kadai, Indo-European, and Austronesian. The cultural and linguistic diversity found among China's minority populations is often as profound as the variations between separate countries.

CLASSIFYING ETHNIC MINORITIES IN CHINA

> "By simultaneously surfacing and canonizing the officially recognized [ethnic groups] and sublimating and subordinating the rest, the Chinese state has been remarkably successful in turning the fifty-six [ethnic groups] model into common sense."[10] –Thomas S. Mullaney

In 1954 the Chinese government decided to eliminate open ethnic self-categorization on the national census and established what is known as the "fifty-six *minzu* model."[11] *Minzu* is the Mandarin word for ethnicity or nationality; the model includes Han as well as fifty-five recognized

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[10] Mullaney, Thomas S. *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California, 2011. Print.

[11] Mullaney, Thomas Shawn. Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China. Berkeley, CA: University of California P, 2011.

minority groups. The implementation of the fifty-six *minzu* model meant that people would have to "select their ethnonational identity from among a menu of preset options, options that would obey ...[an] earlier policy proposal: one name, one spelling, one pronunciation, not to be changed at will."[12] The previous census data showed that, according to the census's respondents, the number of ethnic minority groups exceeded fifty-five. These widely varied ethnic self-categorization results obfuscated the discourse on classification and "ethnotaxonomic blueprints for China's unified multinationalism."[13] As the aforementioned policy proposal suggests, the fifty-six nationalities model simplified the process of dealing with ethnic minority groups and made it possible for the Chinese government to categorize groups and "standardize the definition of *minzu* on a mass level."[14] Of course, consolidating all of China's non-Han population into fifty-five distinct categories required the marginalization of some groups as well as the disproportionally great recognition and veneration of others.

The case of the Zhuang, the largest minority group in China, is particularly helpful in understanding the politics and problems that both fostered and came from the implementation of the fifty-six *minzu* model. The Zhuang are made up of several different small groups scattered throughout Guangxi and Yunnan who felt no connection to the ethnic groups residing near them.[15] In *Creating the Zhuang*, Kaup explains, "…the various groups that the party lumped together as the Zhuang did not feel any greater Zhuang identity with other Zhuang groups living outside their immediate area."[16] Ultimately, the Zhuang do not constitute a single cohesive group, but rather are comprised of a myriad of separate peoples united only through official government records and

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[12] Mullaney, p. 121

[13] Mullaney p. 121

[14] Mullaney p. 40

[15] Katherine, Kaup P. Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 2000. Print.

[16] Kaup p. 53

policies as opposed to a common sense of national identity. The marginalization of these groups coupled with the official recognition of other groups such as the Naxi people, whose entire population does not exceed 300,000 people, constructed a hierarchy comprised of each of China's ethnic groups rather than a simple dichotomy between the Han and the aggregate minority. This fundamental stratification among China's minority groups is a recurrent theme of profound importance throughout this entire analysis of ethnic and gender disparities in China's education system.

A new concept of education emerged from these structured legal foundations of minority classification. In fact, public schooling in China falls into two broad categories. The first type is normal education; the second type is *minzu* (nationality/minority) education. Minority education "is normally conceived of in two ways in China: either as all forms of education directed toward and practiced among the officially recognized minority *minzu*, or, more specifically, as the special education measures adopted among some of the minority *minzu* (such as bilingual education and special curriculum)."[17] As education in general is dichotomized based on Han versus not Han, the qualifications for "literacy," or really "illiteracy," likewise vary according to certain factors.

THE MEANING OF ILLITERACY IN CHINA

The way "literacy" is determined in China is quite complicated; each province implements its own system of measuring literacy rates. Yet, we tackle this complicated process, we must analyze the actual meaning of the word "literacy," or more importantly, "illiterate" in standard Mandarin Chinese. This requires some explanation of the concept of civility and sophistication in Chinese as well. The word for "civilized" in Chinese is *wenming*. The *wen* character is found in the words

[17] Hansen, Mette Halskov. *Lessons in Being Chinese: Minority Education and Ethnic Identity in Southwest China*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1999. Print.

literature, written language, and culture. *Ming* means bright and is found in Mandarin words such as "smart" and "clear."

This suggests that the nation's standard of civility and intelligence lies deep within Han Chinese culture. To be bright in Han culture is to be civilized. This is also evident in China's historical approach to foreign relations, to China's approach in dealing with any type of "other." In an article in *The Journal of Contemporary China,* Chen Zhimin argues that before the twentieth century, Chinese foreign relations were dominated by culturalism, a system in which a group of people identifies as a cohesive group through cultural aspects such as rites and rituals, religion, language etc… as opposed to physical, biological, or national differences.[18]

According to the Chinese, the difference between them and the uncivilized "others," or even barbarians, was determined by cultural rather than racial criteria.[19] That is, China focused much more on Han culture than on racial or ethnic differences. A "civilization" must be a Chinese (Han Chinese) civilization in order to be civilized. In order to be civilized, one must adapt to this Han culture. It was through adopting Han culture that the Manchus were able to establish the Qing dynasty and rule over the entire Chinese empire. While they were of a different ethnicity or nationality, the Manchus were able to assimilate into Chinese culture and ultimately hold immense political power. The Manchus were *wenming* or "civilized" due to their assimilation.

The word for "illiterate" in Mandarin is a noun comprised of the same *wen* character immediately followed by the Chinese word for "blind." An illiterate person in China is called a *wenmang*; he/she is blind to *wen*, blind to Han culture. While in China, I came across scores of posters and signs up in classrooms and around cities that said "*Shuo Putonghua, xie guifanzi. Yong*

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[18] Chen, Zhimin. Nationalism, Internationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy. The Journal of Contemporary China 14.42 01 Feb 2005: 35-53. Taylor & Francis. 19 Feb 2012.

[19] Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo Zhexue Jianshi* [*A Concise History of Chinese Philosophy*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1985). p. 211-222.

wenmingyu, zuo wenmingren," "Speak standard Mandarin Chinese, write standard characters. Use civilized language, be a civilized person."

Culturalism is clearly still prevalent in modern Chinese society. The Chinese have designated Mandarin as the official language of the state, as a language to unify this large, linguistically diverse nation. Speaking Mandarin and writing Chinese characters, this is how one proves him/herself to be a civilized member of society, at least within the eyes of the government. While China's official language fundamentally links illiteracy to being uncivilized or "blind to" (Han) civilization, the concept of literacy is not necessarily confined within the context of Mandarin Chinese.

DETERMINING LITERACY IN CHINA

While China's official language is Mandarin Chinese, determining "literacy" and "literacy rates" in China is a relatively complicated process. The criteria for literacy vary from province to province, and as a result, the People's Republic of China lacks a single nationally recognized standard or definition of literacy. In fact, although the Chinese language has a word that means "illiterate," it lacks a word for "literate." As a result, the provincial statistics bureaus calculate illiteracy rates as opposed to literacy rates. Because it is the most ethnically diverse province, I have chosen to investigate Yunnan province's official criteria for determining literacy.

It is no great surprise that this province that boasts the presence of at least twenty-six different minority groups and capitalizes on grandiose celebrations of ethnic diversity uses a variegated model when determining the literacy (or illiteracy) of its people. In order to be considered literate in Yunnan, a Han Chinese farmer is required to know how to read and write

1,500 Chinese characters; this number rises to 2000 for Han urban workers.[20] For ethnic minorities who are not native Chinese speakers, Yunnan has developed two separate sets of regulations. If the person's native language is character-based, he/she will have to know 1000 characters. Those who speak alphabet-based languages, however, are only expected to know 500 words.[21] This convoluted system reflects even more institutionalized differences between ethnic groups.

VARIATION AMONG ETHNIC MINORITIES

A family's concept of and attitude toward education and its value is "deeply embedded in a given sociocultural background and for this reason [is] also shaped by the cultural background."[22] As a result, "different educational investment behaviors will be generated among different ethnic peoples" due to cultural discrepancies concerning the value or role of education in the family or society.[23] It is only natural to assume that different cultures will develop distinctly different value systems, and these differences may theoretically influence educational attainment levels, potentially resulting in up to fifty-six distinct "education cultures." Most of the available literature on the subject of ethnic disparities in the Chinese education system, however, only divides people into two groups: Han and minority. Through analyzing the variation in educational attainment between these two groups, most sources agree on an overall "disadvantaged position" of minorities in relation to the Han majority (Hannum, Wang, Adams p. 135).[24]

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[20] "Yunnan sheng saochu wenmang gongzuo shishi banfa." Yunnan sheng renmin zhengfu menhu wangzhan. 14 Nov. 1996. Yunnan sheng renmin zhengfu: <http://116.52.249.39/yunnan,china/72908671872401408/20060427/1066068.html>.

[21] "Yunnan sheng saochu wenmang gongzuo shishi banfa." Yunnan sheng renmin zhengfu menhu wangzhan. 14 Nov. 1996. Yunnan sheng renmin zhengfu: <http://116.52.249.39/yunnan, china/72908671872401408/20060427/1066068.html>.

[22] Sun, Baicai, and Jingjian Xu. "Why Ethnic Minority Children Are More Likely to Drop Out of School: A Cultural Capital Perspective." *Chinese Education and Society&* 43.5 (2011): 31-46. Print.

[23] Sun, p. 33

[24] Hannum et. al.

The correlation table below, for example, suggests a statistically significant, strong, negative relationship between increasing percentages of minorities in a county and the average educational attainment level per capita. The magnitude of correlation between minority population percentage of China's 3,246 counties and educational attainment is alarmingly high and statistically significant at negative .553 with a p value lower than 0.01. Using this correlation when predicting a person's educational attainment would result in predicting that all minorities are significantly disadvantaged in the Chinese education system when compared to Han.

Table 1:1

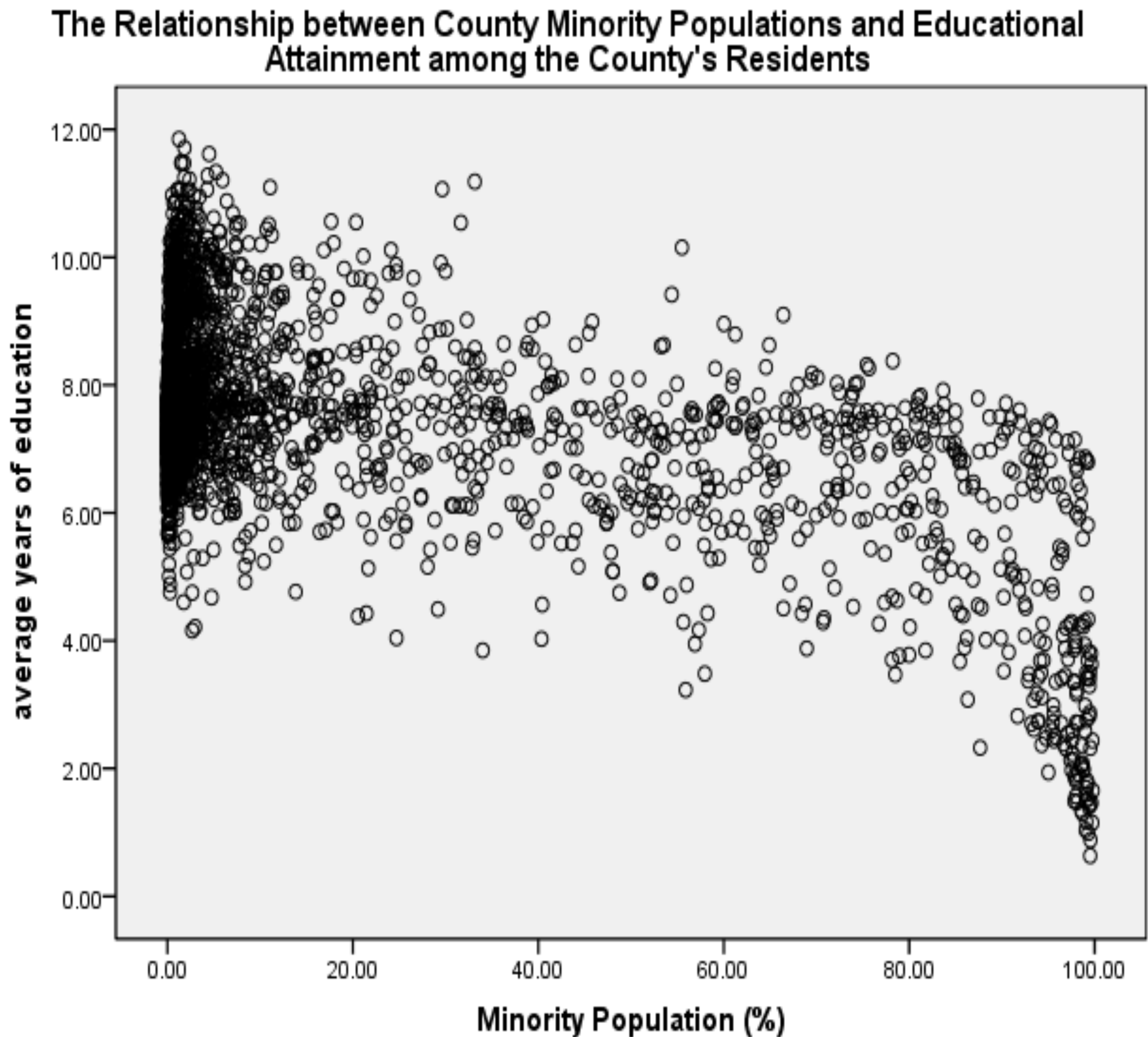
Correlations

		Minority Population (%)	Average years of education
Minority Population (%)	**Pearson Correlation**	1	-.553**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	3246	3246
Average years of education	**Pearson Correlation**	-.553**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	3246	3246

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

While the correlation table above offers a very interesting stastical perspective on the correlation between minority population in a county and the average educational attainment among the county's residents, I have included the graph below in order to provide a more visual representation of this relationship. The Y axis represents average years of education; it ranges from

zero to twelve. The X axis represents aggregate minority percentage of a county's population. Each circle on the graph represents a Chinese county; there are over 3,000 counties reprented on this graph. The shape of the scatterplot shows the higher a county's minority population, the lower the educational attainment. In fact, the average educational attainment in counties whose populations are nearly 100% minority ranges from under one year to about eight years. Conversely, the educational attainment in counties who have zero percent minorities ranges from about five to twelve years.



While this graph above (figure 1:1) appears to be very powerful in representing the disadvantages of minority counties, it does not account for specific minorities. The data from the 2000 census groups all minority groups together to represent non-Han. Many counties may have several different ethnic minorities as well as Han living in them.

I have included a table of China's ethnic groups below in an attempt to begin to touch on the tremendous variation within the aggregate "minority" population of China and to thereby reiterate the importance of looking at each ethnicity when researching educational disparities in China. This information comes from China's 1990 census. The last four columns in this table illustrate the significant educational disparities among different minority groups. This table should, therefore, start to explain why correlations such as the one above do not sufficiently describe the variation among the dependent variable, educational attainment. There are, after all, several minority groups whose average educational attainment levels exceed that of the Han. In fact, the average Naxi attends nearly twice as much schooling as the average Han. Yet even if all minorities were to attend fewer years of schooling than the Han, they would still deviate from the Han in varying degrees. Furthermore, by looking at the female over male education ratio, we can see that even gender gaps vary between different minority groups.

Table 1:2	Population	Region	Religion	Language Group	Average Educational Attainment (years)	Average Ed. Males	F/M Ed
Han	1.042 billion			Sino-Tibetan	5.6	6.3	77%
Mongol	4.8 million	Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Gansu, Hebei, Henan, Qinghai	Buddhism/ Taoism		6.1	6.4	86%
Hui	8.61 million	Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Hebei, Qinghai, Shandong, Yunnan, Xinjiang, Anhui, Liaoning,	Islam		4.8	5.4	77%

		Heilongjiang, Jilin, Shaanxi, Beijing, Tianjin					
Tibetan	4.6 million	Tibet, Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan	Buddhism		**1.4**	**2.2**	**35%**
Uygur	7.21 million	Xinjiang	Islam		**4.7**	**4.9**	**93%**
Miao	7.38 million	Guizhou, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Hainan, Hubei			**3.9**	**4.9**	**59%**
Yi	6.58 million	Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi			**1.9**	**2.7**	**41%**
Zhuang	15.56 million	Guangxi, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guizhou	Shamanism		**5.1**	**5.9**	**73%**
Bouyei	2.55 million	Guizhou			**3.5**	**4.7**	**47%**
Korean	1.92 million	Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang			**7.3**	**7.9**	**87%**
Manchu	9.85 million	Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Hebei, Beijing, Inner Mongolia	Buddhism/ Taoism		**6.3**	**6.6**	**89%**
Dong	2.51 million	Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi			**4.7**	**5.5**	**68%**
Yao	2.14 million	Guangxi, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guizhou			**4.4**	**5.2**	**69%**
Bai	1.60 million	Yunnan, Guizhou	Buddhism/ Taoism		**6.2**	**7.2**	**73%**
Tujia	5.73 million	Hunan, Hubei			**5.0**	**5.8**	**71%**
Hani	1.25 million	Yunnan			**5.3**	**11.4**	**38%**
Kazak	1.11 million	Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai	Islam		**5.5**	**5.8**	**88%**
Dai	1.03 million	Yunnan	Buddhism		**5.4**	**6.0**	**85%**
Li	1.11 million	Hainan			**4.7**	**5.5**	**73%**
Lisu	5.75,000	Yunnan, Sichuan	Christian		**2.1**	**2.6**	**58%**
Va	352,000	Yunnan			**4.3**	**6.5**	**55%**
She	634,700	Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangdong			**3.9**	**4.8**	**61%**
Gaoshan	2,900	Taiwan, Fujian			**7.4**	**-**	**-**
Lahu	411,500	Yunnan			**4.1**	**6.7**	**58%**
Shui	347,100	Guizhou, Guangxi			**3.0**	**4.3**	**35%**
Dongxian	373,700	Gansu, Xinjiang	Islam		**1.8**	**2.3**	**58%**

g							
Naxi	277,800	Yunnan, Sichuan			**10.0**	**10.9**	**81%**
Jingpo	119,300	Yunnan			**8.0**	-	-
Kirgiz	143,500	Xinjiang, Heilongjiang	Islam		**6.8**	**7.3**	**89%**
Tu	192,600	Qinghai, Gansu			**3.9**	**4.8**	**57%**
Daur	121,500	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang			**6.5**	**6.6**	**98%**
Mulam	160,600	Guangxi			**6.8**	**7.3**	**85%**
Qiang	198,300	Sichuan			**4.1**	**5.0**	**62%**
Blang	82,400	Yunnan			**5.9**	-	-
Salar	87,500	Qinghai, Gansu	Islam		**2.3**	**3.5**	**30%**
Maonan	72,400	Guangxi			**6.0**	**6.5**	**87%**
Gelo	438,200	Guizhou, Guangxi		Tai-Kadai	**4.5**	**5.3**	**67%**
Xibe	172,900	Xinjiang, Liaoning, Jilin			**7.1**	**7.4**	**91%**
Achang	27,700	Yunnan			-	-	-
Pumi	29,700	Yunnan			**7.5**	-	-
Tajik	33,200	Xinjiang	Islam		**6.0**	-	-
Nu	27,200	Yunnan			**15.0**	-	-
Ozbek	14,800	Xinjiang	Islam		**6.6**	**6.8**	**95%**
Russian	13,500	Xinjiang			**7.4**	**7.9**	**89%**
Ewenki	26,400	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang			**6.1**	**6.3**	**94%**
Deang	15,500	Yunnan			-	-	-
Bonan	11,700	Gansu	Islam		**2.4**	**4.9**	**13%**
Yugur	12,300	Gansu			**5.2**	**5.8**	**77%**
Jing	18,700	Guangxi			**4.6**	**9.7**	**27%**
Tatar	5,100	Xinjiang	Islam		**6.8**	-	-
Drung	5,800	Yunnan			**4.3**	-	-
Oroqen	7,000	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang			**6.5**	**6.5**	**99.5%**
Hezhen	4,300	Heilongjiang			**8.3**	**8.2**	**103%**
Moinba	7,500	Tibet			**9.0**	-	-
Lhoba	2,300	Tibet			**0.0**	-	-
Jino	18,000	Yunnan			-		

In addition, according to many sources, rural residence has a greater negative effect on educational attainment of minorities than Han. Analyses in "Rural-Urban Disparities in Access to Primary and Secondary Education under Market Reforms," "show that there is a significant interaction with rural residence, such that the difference in educational opportunities associated with urban versus rural origins is substantially greater for minorities than for the majority Han."[25]

Yet by placing all fifty-five of China's minority groups into a single non-Han category, we eliminate any variation that might be found among these individual minority groups. While this type of measurement may be important in terms of Han versus non-Han, it does not really measure the significance of ethnicity itself, but rather the significance of not being of Han ethnicity. According to data from China's 1990 1% Census, several minority groups reach higher levels of educational attainment than the Han. The average educational attainment levels among many ethnic groups is comparable to that of the Han's, while the majority of ethnic minority groups, on average, attend fewer years of schooling.

According to the table, the average Han attends just over 5.6 years of formal schooling. This figure is slightly above the national average of 5.5 years. Ethnic groups such as the Tibetans and the Yi appear to be significantly disadvantaged in education, as their average educational attainment levels measure just under 1.5 and 1.9 years respectively. The most outstanding, in terms of educational attainment, are the Naxi who, on average, attend school nearly twice as long as the average Han. This thesis primarily seeks to explain this wide variation in educational attainment levels through analyzing the impact of being of a specific ethnicity and/or gender while holding a number of other factors constant.

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[25] Hannum, Emily, Meiyan Wang, and Jennifer Adams. "Rural-Urban Disparities in Access to Primary and Secondary Education under Market Reforms." *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Inequality in Contemporary China*. Ed. Martin King Whyte. Vol. 16. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010. 125-46. Print. Harvard Contemporary China Ser.

CHAPTER 2

My theoretical framework has emerged as a result of combining my research using both primary and secondary sources in print, the information gained from conducting interviews with ethnic minority students in Kunming in December of 2011, and things or trends I have personally observed throughout my aggregate year living and studying in China. In December of 2011, I conducted interviews with people in cities and villages ranging from Shanghai to Jianshui, Yunnan on topics ranging from their personal experiences in the Chinese education system, their attitudes toward the system, attitudes toward compulsory education among members of their communities, the importance of maintaining constructed gender roles in their cultures and societies, their attitudes toward other ethnic groups, among others. I have included a table at the end of this chapter that gives a brief, structured description of each of my interviewees; I have assigned a number to each respondent in order to protect his/her privacy.

My qualitative research through interviews and various other sources has constructed a solid foundation for my understanding of hierarchical disparities among ethnic groups in China. Instead of structuring my theoretical framework around the introduction and descriptions of specific ethnic groups, I will use the introduction and explanation of other factors or variables that affect the dependant variable, average years of education received. Upon establishing the theoretical significance of these different factors, I will discuss these variables within the context of several specific ethnic groups in order to more clearly demonstrate the significant variation among different ethnic minority groups.

RELATIONSHIP WITH HAN

The relationship between ethnic groups and the dominant Han should impact educational attainment levels among different minority groups. Those who maintain a stable relationship with the Chinese government and embrace Mandarin Chinese should achieve higher levels of educational

attainment than those whose relationships with the Han are fraught with conflict. Such conflict would deter members of a minority group from respecting and fully participating in state-sanctioned compulsory education. To a certain extent, we can view and analyze such relationships between minority groups and the dominant group through the degree or dimension of assimilation of the minority into Han society. Stable relations between an ethnic group and the Chinese government reflect higher levels of assimilation on the minority's part. I will be using Gordon's seven dimensions of assimilation to frame the relationships between certain ethnic groups and the Chinese government.[26]

Table 2:1

1. *Cultural assimilation: the change of one's group's important cultural patterns to those of the core society.*
2. *Structural assimilation: penetration of cliques and associations of the core society at the primary-group level.*
3. *Marital assimilation: significant intermarriage*
4. *Identification assimilation: development of a sense of identity linked to the core society*
5. *Attitude-receptional assimilation: absence of prejudice and stereotyping*
6. *Behavior-receptional assimilation: absence of intentional discrimination*
7. *Civic assimilation: absence of value and power conflict.*

Certain groups may have already reached all seven of these dimensions of assimilation, while others may only exhibit one or two dimensions. For an ethnic minority group, a higher degree of

[26] Feagin, Joe R., and Clarece B. Feagin. Racial and Ethnic Relations. 9th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011. Print.

assimilation into the dominant society should lead to higher levels of educational attainment.

RELIGION

Any ethnic group that identifies strongly with a religious belief should lack any significant degree of behavioral-receptional assimilation. The People's Republic of China is officially atheist. This label shines through to the education system in which religion is often denounced by teachers or textbooks. State schools are therefore intentionally discriminating against religious ethnic groups.

Furthermore, religious dietary restrictions often lead to Han people developing stereotypes and exhibiting prejudice. The words for "meat" and "pork" in Mandarin are interchangeable, and unless otherwise specified, the meat found in a Chinese dish is pork. This creates a huge barrier between the Muslim groups in China and the Han, as Muslims exclude pork from their diets. This specific example leads to a barrier to attitude-receptional assimilation.

During my time in China, I frequently heard my Han classmates discussing their attitudes toward their fellow Hui classmates. I asked interviewee 2011-24 to elaborate on the relationship between the Han and Muslims in society, and she explained she felt awkward around Muslims. "Why don't they eat meat," she asked me. When I mentioned that it was pork that Muslims are not supposed to eat and that other meat was often fine, she shrugged her shoulders. "It's the same thing," she insisted. She felt as though it has always been pointless to try to socialize with them, as social activities in China tend to revolve around meals. They (Muslims) eat at different types of restaurants, in different cafeterias at school. In addition to this barrier to attitude-receptional assimilation, religious affiliation may also result in more structured discrimination within the core institutions of Chinese society.

Any real power in Chinese society lies within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). To become a party member in the officially atheist People's Republic of China (PRC), a person cannot

be openly affiliated with a religious organization. This prevents religious nationalities from permeating the political arena while still maintaining a sense of ethnic identity.

LANGUAGE

Language is one of the most prominent dividing factors of the constructed hierarchy of ethnicities in China. While conducting ethnographic research in Xishuangbanna, a primarily Dai area in southern Yunnan, Mette H. Hansen audited a class in which the teacher discussed the characteristics of "primitive societ[ies]."[27] The defining characteristic of a primitive society, the defining characteristic of backwardness, according to this public school teacher, is the absence of a writing system.[28] "Within the educational system," Hansen explains, "there is a clear conflict between the government's wish to [recognize the importance of the *minzu*]…and the presentations of the alleged scientifically proven backwardness of minorities."[29] State-sanctioned prejudices against the use of indigenous languages are not the only barrier between those who speak ethnic minority languages and the education system.

China's linguistic diversity is so vast that it would be virtually impossible for public schools to cater to each specific language group. Take the Tibetans for example. China's 4.6 million Tibetans speak three separate, major dialects.[30] These dialects, however, are mutually unintelligible and break down into smaller regional dialects as well.[31] The Nu people, whose population is less than 30,000 people, speak multiple languages. With over 100 million minorities speaking scores of

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[27] Hansen, p. 259

[28] Hansen, p. 259

[29] Hansen, p. 266

[30] Stites, Regie. "Writing Cultural Boundaries: National Minority Language Policy, Literacy Planning, and Bilingual Education." *China's National Minority Education*. Ed. Gerard Postiglione. Vol. 42. New York: Falmer, 1999. 95-130. Print. Reference Books in International Education.

[31] Stites, p. 114

languages and hundreds of dialects, the PRC enforces the use of standard Mandarin for all things official, including school, with a few exceptions within specific autonomous counties and prefectures.

Ultimately, proficiency in Mandarin is a major asset for any student. High school and college entrance exams, again with a few exceptions, are written in Chinese and contain Chinese language sections. School is generally taught in Mandarin. It is not surprising that those who do not speak the official state language at home might experience more difficulties in state-run schools, which may lead to higher dropout rates at younger ages. As long as China implements a nation-wide curriculum, certain areas will always lack resources, such as professionally trained teachers, needed for proper Mandarin education.

Specific Ethnic Groups and Assimilation

Naxi:

"Generally, the state-controlled education in Lijiang is perceived by the Naxi as 'their own,' not as a foreign institution imposed to civilize or change them."

-Mette Halskov Hansen[32]

Throughout researching various ethnic groups in China, I realized that some ethnicities are absent in much of the available literature on the subject of education in China, or some footnote may give a cursory explanation for the dearth of information on the given ethnic group. The Naxi, however, appear in almost every single piece of information concerning minorities in China. Many sociologists and anthropologists have studied the Naxi people and published a plethora of articles and books on their culture and history.

[32] Hansen, p. xvii

What is so significant about the Naxi people? The average Naxi goes to school for ten years. That is higher than any other ethnic group in China. Interviewee 2011-30 is working on her PhD at Yunnan University in Kunming. She assured me that she never faced any problems in school due to her ethnicity. "Historically, our relationship with the Han has been very stable," she assured me, "there is no conflict between the Chinese educations system and my ethnic culture." She continued to discuss the history of Naxi-Han relations. The Naxi people began studying Han culture during the Ming dynasty, and this practice was limited to the elite, constructing a sociological connection between being successful and fortunate and having the privilege to learn about the Han.[33] "Even our music fused together," interviewee 2011-30 explained, "the Naxi have preserved an solid ethnic identity while simultaneously *hanhua* (converting to "Chinese" or Han culture)." This unique historical relationship between the Han and Naxi has greatly influenced the way the Naxi view education in the PRC today.

> "Education has led the Naxi to identify with the central government. Education is regarded as a way to resolve ethnic conflicts. Teaching universal knowledge and skills to students from different ethnic groups in a school setting is said to stabilize the country."[34]

Today the Naxi people are well known for ethno-tourism and a strong sense of ethnic pride in addition to their accomplishments in the education system. "Naxi identity, however strongly expressed, does not oppose the Chinese supraidentity of the *Zhonghua minzu* so vigorously promoted by the government," Hansen states.[35] A strong, Han-trained elite as well as a booming ethno-

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[33] Yu, Haibo. "Cultural Integration and Education of the Naxi." Chinese Education & Society 43.1 (2010): 36-45. Print.

[34] Yu, p. 43

[35] Hansen, p. 165

tourism economy has provided the Naxi with the funds and confidence to successfully tackle the Chinese education system.

DAI:

"[These] students seem more influenced by the construction of themselves as members of a backward group than by the superficial statements about their history and society [in school]."[36]

Interviewee 2011-27 marks that she is Dai on all official documents. One of her parents is Dai and the other Han. Her father stressed the significance of preserving Dai culture, particularly through practicing Buddhism, throughout her childhood. In middle and high school, she explained to me, "I began to realize that my schooling contradicted the foundations of my Dai heritage." Despite the fact that she herself identifies more with mainstream Han culture, interviewee 2011-27 felt defensive in this educational environment. Eventually she gave in and embraced the state-run education system; she even went to university. As a young adult living in Kunming, Yunnan now, she considers herself to be Han.

Situations similar to that of interviewee 2011-27 are fairly common among Dai youth. While the older generations in Dai communities continue to speak Dai and focus on Buddhism, the youth often find themselves torn between two cultures. Hansen writes, "In school, all these aspects of life in the [D]ai villages are repudiated as being worthless or even an impediment to modernization and the students' own careers, and therefore, in practice, most students seem to have no choice but to disassociate themselves from it."[37] It almost seems paradoxical that the successful ethno-tourism in Dai communities, tourism that exploits traditional Dai culture, leads to wealth within these areas that, in turn, raises the quality of education.

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[36] Hansen, p. 266

[37] Hansen, p. 268

Ultimately, the Dai face an interesting dilemma when it comes to the PRC's education system. Firstly, many Dai are behind in school from the very beginning due to insufficient knowledge of Mandarin Chinese. In addition, public schooling in China clashes with religious devotion. Yet on the other hand, the Dai have a unique opportunity in that they have access to more resources than many other ethnic minorities, groups lacking the economic prosperity enjoyed by the Dai people. The Dai are able to succeed in the Chinese education system; the hitch is that success might only be possible through weakening one's sense of Dai identity.

HUI:

"I do not wear my hijab anymore. One of my professors said he would no longer let me attend his class unless I removed it right then and there."

Interviewee 2011-35 discussed her experience as a Muslim in the Chinese education system in Yunnan, a tinge of resentment echoing through her speech. Her ethnicity did not result in the actual schoolwork being more difficult for her. Her native language, after all, is Mandarin. As her identity within the Islamic faith strengthened, however, she faced an increasing number of obstacles in school. "I do not wear my hijab anymore," she told me; "one of my professors said he would no longer let me attend his class unless I removed it right then and there."

The Hui clearly face some obstacles to full assimilation into Han society, but they might have a better chance in school than other ethnicities of the Islamic faith. The Uyghurs as well as several other Islamic ethnonationalities are at a disadvantage in public schooling because these groups primarily speak different languages, while the Hui mostly grow up speaking Mandarin.

MANCHU:

"The only place you might find my Manchu name written out is on my tombstone. The Manchu language is dying out, and we are all basically Han."

Throughout my discussion with interviewee 2011-37, I could sense that he was not proud of the fact that the Manchu people appear to achieve slightly higher levels of schooling than the average Han. When asked questions about Manchu culture, he could only spout off a few facts he had read in a book. "The only place you might find my Manchu name written out is on my tombstone," he sighed, "The Manchu language is dying out, and we are all basically Han."

As mentioned in chapter 1, the Manchus are well known for their rapid assimilation into Han culture leading to their rule over the Qing dynasty. As a result, the Manchu people have a very weak sense ethnic identity, if they even identify as Manchu at all, interviewee 2011-37 explained to me. So while "Manchu" is still available to be checked off on China's censuses and other official forms, in reality the Manchu people probably do not deviate much from the Han on a number of things, including educational attainment.

TIBETANS:

"My Mandarin is worse than yours, and it was time to get married soon. There is absolutely no way I would have gone to middle or high school."

I talked to interviewee 2011-50 at her home in the mountains in Sichuan province. She is originally from Lhasa, Tibet but moved to Sichuan with her daughter and son-in-law ten years ago. This woman had attended five years of primary school. The educational opportunities in Lhasa, she explained, are not all that bad. "They even have bilingual educational opportunities!" She, however, did not enjoy these privileges she claimed are available in Tibet's capital. "My Mandarin is worse

than *yours*," she argued, "and it was time to get married soon. There is absolutely no way I would have gone to middle or high school."

Tibet is China's least populous province; its population is about 2.6 million.[38] Furthermore, the Tibetan Plateau's high altitude, which averages nearly 15,000 feet, as well as various other geographical and topographical factors, makes rural education in Tibetan areas "probably the most difficult and…costly."[39] The topography of the sparsely populated Tibetan Plateau alone creates major barriers to education for students. Moreover, Tibetan culture revolves around devotion to Tibetan Buddhism. This is a major conflict for many Tibetans who feel the PRC and CCP completely disregard their religious freedoms. Ultimately, going to monastery is more important than going to a school that is so hard to get to, a school that, once you are there, teaches you that your culture is backwards and your religion invalid.

UYGHURS:

"They carry needles infected with HIV and stab people…"

When I expressed my interest in ethnic minorities to interviewee 2011-5, a government worker in Beijing, he quickly warned me to "stay away from the Uyghurs."

"They carry needles infected with HIV and stab people with them," he explained. His basis for this stereotype no doubt stems from two events: one in July of 2009, the other in September 2009. The latter occurred in Urumqi, Xinjiang where over 500 people were attacked with needles.[40] Despite the fact that none of the injured people showed signs of HIV, China's generalization of the growing AIDS epidemic in Xinjiang resulted in public belief that the Uyghurs in Urumqi had, in fact,

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[38] Guo, p. 57

[39] Guo, p. 57

[40] "5 Killed in Needle-attack Protests in China." *Http://www.msnbc.msn.com*. Msnbc, 4 Sept. 2009. Web. 23 Mar. 2012. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/32689688/ns/world_news- asia_pacific/t/killed-needle-attack-protests-china/#.T25S8MwyfJ4>.

used HIV infected needles.[41] This type of rumor-based prejudice against the Uyghurs, a group of over seven million people, must certainly construct barriers between them and mainstream Han culture.

Furthermore, the Uyghurs are characterized by Islamic faith, meaning that the previously mentioned obstacles faced by the Hui also apply to them. To make things even more difficult to the Uyghurs, their native language is not Mandarin but rather one that belongs to the Turkic language family.

<u>NU:</u>

"My mother speaks three languages… she is illiterate (a wenmang)."

Interviewee 2011-36 is the only person from his village who has attended graduate school. "We live in an underdeveloped ethnic minority region," he reasoned with me, "my home is so disconnected from the rest of China." Indeed, interviewee 2011-36's Mandarin was so influenced by his native Nu dialect that I had to ask interviewee 2011-37 to sit in on the interview and translate what the Nu graduate student said into standard Mandarin. When I asked him to describe his parents' educational experience, he explained, "my mother speaks three languages, but none of those are Mandarin, she is illiterate." The languages spoken by the mother of interviewee 2011-36 belong to the Tibeto-Burman cluster of languages in the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family.[42] The interviewee's insistence on his mother's illiteracy reflects the ideas discussed in chapter one pertaining to the inherent connection between Han literature and general literacy in China.

"For most people," interviewee 2011-36 sighed, "education is of no value." Getting married, learning technical skills, learning to farm, these are the kinds of things the Nu people value. Chinese public schools, as it turns out, are not able to alter the curriculum enough to help the Nu

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[41] "5 Killed in Needle-attack Protests in China."

[42] Olson, James Stuart. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998. Print.

people or to keep them interested. "It's not like there's somebody there to enforce compulsory education policies. Like I said, we're disconnected," my interviewee exclaimed. The fact that there was only one Nu respondent in the entire 1990 census confirms this idea of the Nu being disconnected from everyone else and especially from the dominant culture. As a result, the Nu will not be included in any of the regressions in Chapter 4.

Table 2:2

Interviewee Number	Gender	Ethnicity	Education Level	Location	Religion	Native Language	Self-Identification	Occupation
2011-05	Male	Han	Master's Degree	Beijing	None	Mandarin	Han	Gov't Official
2011-24	Female	Han	Master's Degree	Beijing	None	Mandarin	Han	Teacher
2011-27	Female	Dai	Bachelor's Degree	Yunnan	Buddhism	Mandarin	Han	Student
2011-29	Female	Hani	Bachelor's Degree	Yunnan	None	Mandarin	Hani	Student
2011-30	Female	Naxi	Working on Phd	Lijiang, Yunnan	Traditional Naxi Religion	Naxiyu	Naxi	Student
2011-35	Female	Hui	Bachelor's Degree	Yunnan	Islam	Mandarin	Hui	Student
2011-36	Male	Nu	Working on MA	Yunnan	Traditional Nu Religion	Nu	Nu/Han	Student
2011-37	Male	Manchu/Han	Working on Phd	Yunnan	None	Mandarin	Manchu/Han	Student
2011-47	Female	Han	MA	Hunan	None	Mandarin	Han	Unemployed/ CCP member
2011-50	Female	Tibetan	Primary School	Jiuzhaigou Sichuan	Buddhism	Tibetan	Tibetan	Housework

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

China's 1990 fourth national population census consists of millions of respondents, one percent of China's population at the time, to be precise. The table in chapter one contains information from China's 1990 census as well. The data for Zhejiang province is missing, so my statistical analysis is based on a pool of just over 11 million respondents. I have created a variable for males and females who are Han as well as each of the fifty-five minority groups in China. For the sake of statistical accuracy, I have eliminated those ethnic groups who are represented in the census data by fewer than thirty respondents. I have used regression analyses to determine the significance of the impact ethnicity and gender has on a person's educational attainment. Each regression model takes a few more factors into account in order to determine if variation among ethnic groups is just that, rather than a representation of people in specific regions or of specific household registration statuses.

I also run regression analyses on data from China's 2000 fifth national population census, in which the unit of analysis is a county rather than an individual person. In this section of my analysis, I look into the relationship between the minority population percentage of a county and the county's illiteracy rate as well as the average educational attainment, in years, among the county's residents.

CHAPTER 4

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The following table is based on statistics from China's 1990 1% Census.

Table 4:1	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	6.300*** (.002)	6.091*** (.026)	6.035*** (.026)
Han Female	-1.429*** (.002)	-1.285*** (.002)	-1.287*** (.002)
Mongol Male	.111*** (.023)	-.144*** (.021)	-.113*** (.021)
Mongol Female	-.621*** (.023)	-.813*** (.022)	-.780*** (.022)
Hui Male	-.861*** (.018)	-1.174*** (.016)	-1.208*** (.016)
Hui Female	-2.128*** (.018)	-2.396*** (.017)	-2.434*** (.017)
Tibetan Male	-4.079*** (.023)	-3.627*** (.022)	-3.588*** (.022)
Tibetan Female	-5.514*** (.023)	-4.926*** (.021)	-4.888*** (.021)
Uygur Male	-1.403*** (.019)	-1.389*** (.018)	-1.345*** (.018)
Uygur Female	-1.770*** (.019)	-1.730*** (.018)	-1.686*** (.018)
Miao Male (Hmong)	-1.435*** (.020)	-.992*** (.018)	-.953*** (.018)
Miao Female (Hmong)	-3.448*** (.021)	-2.908*** (.019)	-2.870*** (.019)
Yi Male	-3.648*** (.038)	-2.999*** (.035)	-2.962*** (.035)
Yi Female	-5.210*** (.038)	-4.518*** (.035)	-4.481*** (.035)
Zhuang Male	-.443*** (.009)	-.043*** (.009)	-.004 (.009)
Zhuang Female	-2.051*** (.009)	-1.518*** (.009)	-1.480*** (.009)
Bouyei Male	-1.610*** (.033)	-1.062*** (.030)	-1.024*** (.030)
Bouyei Female	-4.094*** (.033)	-3.472*** (.031)	-3.435*** (.031)
Korean Male	1.567*** (.039)	1.286*** (.036)	1.324*** (.036)
Korean Female	.534*** (.039)	.292*** (.036)	.329*** (.036)
Manchu Male	.334*** (.016)	.322*** (.015)	.306*** (.015)

Manchu Female	-.420*** (.017)	-.380*** (.015)	-.391*** (.015)
Dong Male	-.762*** (.031)	-.284*** (.029)	-.245*** (.029)
Dong Female	-2.530*** (.033)	-1.969*** (.031)	-1.932*** (.031)
Yao Male	-1.098*** (.024)	-.582*** (.023)	-.543*** (.023)
Yao Female	-2.706*** (.025)	-2.099*** (.024)	-2.062*** (.023)
Bai Male	.905*** (.202)	.469* (.188)	.492** (.187)
Bai Female	-1.049*** (.193)	-1.068*** (.179)	-1.043*** (.179)
Tujia Male	-.521*** (.020)	-.046* (.019)	-.007 (.019)
Tujia Female	-2.219*** (.021)	-1.655*** (.020)	-1.617*** (.020)
Hani Male	5.144*** (1.133)	2.408* (.1051)	2.294* (1.050)
Hani Female	-1.921*** (.446)	-1.758*** (.414)	-1.735*** (.413)
Kazak Male	-.477*** (.064)	-.322*** (.059)	-.280*** (.059)
Kazak Female	-1.174*** (.066)	-.974*** (.061)	-.932*** (.061)
Dai Male	-.334 (.439)	-.146 (.407)	-.184 (.406)
Dai Female	-1.225*** (.330)	-1.255*** (.306)	-1.235*** (.306)
Li Male	-.816*** (.049)	-.347*** (.046)	-.308*** (.046)
Li Female	-2.317*** (.050)	-1.775*** (.046)	-1.737*** (.046)
Lisu Male	-3.651*** (.165)	-2.979*** (.153)	-2.944*** (.153)
Lisu Female	-4.763*** (.169)	-4.077*** (.157)	-4.044*** (.157)
Va Male	.245 (1.025)	.477 (.950)	.504 (.949)
Va Female	-2.694*** (.592)	-2.112*** (.549)	-2.107*** (.548)
She Male	-1.511*** (.070)	-.990*** (.065)	-.952*** (.065)
She Female	-3.403*** (.075)	-2.778*** (.069)	-2.740*** (.069)
Lahu Male	.366 (1.962)	-2.107 (1.820)	-2.042 (1.818)
Lahu Female	-2.425*** (.061)	-1.862** (.557)	-1.914** (.557)

Shui Male	**-2.006*** (.069)**	**-1.555*** (.064)**	**-1.516*** (.063)**
Shui Female	**-4.816*** (.072)**	**-4.194*** (.067)**	**-4.156*** (.067)**
Dongxiang Male	**-4.037*** (.102)**	**-3.641*** (.094)**	**-3.603*** (.094)**
Dongxiang Female	**-4.994*** (.115)**	**-4.428*** (.106)**	**-4.390*** (.106)**
Naxi Male	**4.644*** (.801)**	**1.748* (.743)**	**1.623* (.742)**
Naxi Female	**2.566** (.877)**	**1.021 (.814)**	**.975 (.813)**
Kirgiz Male	**.991*** (.147)**	**-.085 (.136)**	**-.029 (.136)**
Kirgiz Female	**-.051 (.148)**	**-1.063*** (.138)**	**-1.008*** (.137)**
Tu Male	**-1.471*** (.104)**	**-1.094*** (.096)**	**-1.053*** (.096)**
Tu Female	**-3.541*** (.120)**	**-3.078*** (.112)**	**-3.040*** (.112)**
Daur Male	**.274 (.147)**	**-.602*** (.112)**	**-.557*** (.136)**
Daur Female	**.138 (.148)**	**-.662*** (.138)**	**-.619*** (.137)**
Mulam Male	**.985*** (.151)**	**.123 (.140)**	**.176 (.140)**
Mulam Female	**-.126 (.164)**	**-.719*** (.152)**	**-.668*** (.152)**
Qiang Male	**-1.290*** (.130)**	**-.696*** (.120)**	**-.658*** (.120)**
Qiang Female	**-3.175*** (.129)**	**-2.486*** (.120)**	**-2.449*** (.120)**
Salar Male	**-2.828*** (.182)**	**-2.270*** (.169)**	**-2.232*** (.169)**
Salar Female	**-5.256*** (.191)**	**-4.624*** (.178)**	**-4.589*** (.177)**
Maonan Male	**.200 (.371)**	**.209 (.344)**	**.253 (.344)**
Maonan Female	**-.645* (.308)**	**-.226 (.285)**	**-.190 (.285)**
Gelo Male	**-1.011*** (.068)**	**-.414*** (.063)**	**-.376*** (.063)**
Gelo Female	**-2.770*** (.073)**	**-2.118*** (.067)**	**-2.080*** (.067)**
Xibe Male	**1.087*** (.135)**	**.869*** (.125)**	**.908*** (.125)**
Xibe Female	**.426** (.141)**	**.267* (.130)**	**.303* (.130)**
Ozbek Male	**.450 (.491)**	**-.836 (.455)**	**-.777 (.454)**

Ozbek Female	.128 (.574)	-1.138* (.533)	-1.079* (.532)
Russian Male	1.565** (.471)	1.087* (.437)	1.125* (.437)
Russian Female	.700 (.432)	-.270 (.400)	-.224 (.400)
Ewenki Male	-.018 (.282)	-.741** (.262)	-.689** (.261)
Ewenki Female	-.380 (.320)	-1.036*** (.297)	-.985** (.296)
Bonan Male	-1.394* (.601)	-1.217* (.557)	-1.178* (.557)
Bonan Female	-5.664*** (.512)	-5.034*** (.475)	-4.996*** (.475)
Yugur Male	-.499 (.256)	.025 (.238)	.064 (.237)
Yugur Female	-1.845*** (.280)	-1.371*** (.260)	-1.332*** (.260)
Jing Male	3.395*** (.709)	2.611*** (.657)	2.664*** (.657)
Jing Female	-3.667*** (.439)	-4.236*** (.407)	-4.184*** (.406)
Tatar Male	.166 (.620)	.095 (.575)	.139 (.575)
Tatar Female	.881 (.725)	.415 (.672)	.465 (.671)
Oroqen Male	.247 (.467)	-1.813*** (.433)	-1.746*** (.432)
Oroqen Female	.219 (.471)	-1.938*** (.437)	-1.870*** (.437)
Hezhen Male	1.890* (.742)	-.067 (.688)	-.002 (.687)
Hezhen Female	2.158** (.694)	.506 (.643)	.569 (.643)
Non-agriculture	-	2.908*** (.002)	2.877*** (.003)
People/household	-	.024*** (.000)	.024*** (.000)
Residing>1year Not registered here	-	-.081** (.027)	-.082** (.027)
Residing and Registered here	-	-.666*** (.026)	-.647*** (.026)
Living here & not settled registration	-	-.530*** (.035)	-.516*** (.035)
Used to live here & now abroad with no registration here	-	5.910*** (.070)	5.590*** (.070)
Tianjin	-		.604*** (.010)

Hebei	-		.164*** (.005)
Henan	-		.203*** (.004)
Beijing	-		1.210*** (.010)
Adjusted R Squared	.055	.187	.189

Dependent variable: Average years of education received. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the table above includes variables indicating ethnicity and gender. This model seeks to explain the impact of being of a certain gender and certain ethnicity has on a person's educational attainment. The base of this model is the male Han who on average, according to this regression, attends just over six years of schooling. Model 2 includes all of the ethnicity and gender groups in the previous model with an additional six factors: five related to China's household registration system, one indicating the number of people living in one household. Model 3 includes all of model 2 as well as four different regions generally characterized by Han homogeneity.

Model 1 suggests that 5.5% of the educational attainment variation among this dataset's eleven million people can be explained just by two factors: ethnicity and gender. Most of the categories listed in model 1 have a statistically significant impact on educational attainment. Furthermore, the degree to which each of these groups of people deviates from the Han male varies greatly between each group and ranges from Hani males who average over eleven years of education to Bonan females who average less than a year of education. The Bonan are another Islamic minority, and they live in Gansu province in north central China. The native Bonan language belongs to the Altaic language family. Many sources suggest that the Bonan have yet to catch up from the damage done to their communities and culture during the Cultural Revolution.[43] The

[43] Olson, p. 32

harsh conditions of Gansu province and the residual effects from the Maoist era along with the small population of the Bonan people may provide some explanation for this group's relative lack of success in education. Moreover, the ethnicity's wide gender disparity might, in part, be a product of their Islamic culture and scarce resources.

The table also varied male/female divisions within specific ethnic groups. These gender gaps vary widely between ethnicities. According to Model 1 as well as the descriptive table in chapter 1, the ethnicity with the lowest female/male educational attainment ratio is the Jing minority. The average Jing male attends school for over 9.5 years, while the average Jing female attends just over 2.5 years of school. Jing males attend school three years longer than Han males, and Jing females attend four years fewer.

Females of the Hezhen nationality, however, actually receive more education than their male counterparts. Both exceed Han males in educational attainment, but Hezhen females attend school for about 8.5 years, roughly six months longer than Hezhen males. The Hezhen population in China is about 4,300, and they almost all live in Heilongjiang, a Northeastern province bordering Russia. The history of the Hezhen people is "intimately linked with that of the Manchus," and their language is of the Manchu-Tungus branch of the Altaic linguistic family.[44] This intimate link between the Manchus and the Hezhen may offer some explanation as to why the Hezhen go to school for so long and maybe even why females have an advantage over males, but this topic is worthy of future research.

The average Tibetan female attends public school for about a year and a half, and the average Tibetan male receives over two and a half years of education. These numbers are significantly lower than the average Han, and the Tibetans attend school for less time than most other ethnic groups in China. The low educational attainment average among Tibetans could be due

[44] Olson, p. 140

in part to the fact that "as a group, China's Tibetan population is among the least assimilated of the national minorities."[45]

Model 2 considers an additional six factors, resulting in an increase in the explanatory power, suggesting that Model 2 explains 18.7% of the variation in educational attainment among these eleven million respondents. According to Model 2, holding all else constant, a person with a non-agricultural registration status will attend nearly three more years of school than those with an agricultural status. Those residing in an area for over a year without local registration, residing and being registered in an area, and residing here with no registration at all will attend less schooling than those with different registrations. Yet those who used to live in a specific area and now live abroad with no local registration attend school nearly six years longer than those with different registration situations. In addition, the more people there are per household, the higher the educational attainment will be.

Ultimately, each one of the new factors used in model 2 has a significant effect on a person's educational attainment. By adding just six more categories to model 1, over 18% of the variation in educational attainment among eleven million people can be explained by model 2. While these new factors raise the explanatory power of the regression model from 5.5% to 18.7% of the variation in education, they do not detract from the significance of gender and ethnicity. In fact, nearly every ethno/gender group significantly influences a person's educational attainment, and the degree of this influence varies greatly among all of the ethnicity/gender categories.

Lastly, model 3 adds two cities and two provinces, both of which are predominantly homogenously Han: Tianjin, Beijing, Henan, Hebei. The addition of these Han regions increases the explanatory power of the regression from 18.7% to 18.9%; living in any of these four areas increases a person's level of educational attainment. Those who live in Beijing, for example, attend

[45] Stites, p. 114

an average of 7.5 years of school, over a year longer than the average Han male. Even after including these cities and provinces, a person who has a non-agricultural *hukou* status still attends nearly three more years of schooling than those who do not.

Ultimately, even though taking various Han provinces, cities, as well as different types of household registration statuses raises the explanatory power of this regression analysis, ethnicity and gender are irrefutably significant in investigating educational disparities among all of China's ethnic groups.

NAXI: Model 1 suggests that the average Naxi male receives eleven years of formal education and that his female counterpart goes to school for nearly nine years. After taking *hukou* status and the four ethnically homogenous regions, however, we find that the average Naxi male goes to school for eight years, still two years longer than the average male Han. The Naxi-female combination, however, loses its statistical significance once locations and *hukou* status are considered, thereby losing any explanatory power among the variation in the respondents' educational attainment. This may be due, in part, to a low number of female Naxi respondents in the census data. Ultimately, we can reject the null hypothesis for the Naxi males and state that Naxi males, holding a variety of factors constant, on average attend two more years of schooling than the average male Han.

DAI: According to all three regression models, being Dai and male does not impact the duration of a person's time in formal schooling. Dai women, however, appear to attend school a little over a year less than the base average male Han. This number is comparable to the difference between Han females' and males' school attendance.

In addition to the regressions based on data from China's 1990 census, I have included some information about the relationship between education and minority population within a county in the regression table below.

Table 4:2	Model 1 Illiteracy Rate	Model 2 Average Years of Education Attained
Constant	-.597** (.230)	9.031*** (.183)
Minority Population (%)	.009*** (.001)	-.009*** (.000)
People/Family	.466*** (.039)	-.379*** (.031)
Floor/Person	-.017*** (.003)	.016*** (.002)
Birthrate	.074*** (.005)	-.083*** (.004)
Agriculture (%)	-.039 (.164)	-1.010*** (.131)
Non-agriculture Registered %	-.002 (.001)	.014*** (.001)
Housework (%)	2.421 (4.800)	-63.559*** (3.815)
Tertiary Sector	.000 (.002)	.018*** (.002)
Beijing	-.130 (.154)	.761*** (.123)
Tianjin	-.257 (.154)	.691*** (.122)
Hebei	-.632*** (.085)	1.058*** (.068)
Shanxi	-1.082*** (.092)	1.443*** (.073)
InnerMongolia	-.255* (.100)	.713*** (.079)
Liaoning	-.585*** (.097)	.706*** (.077)
Jilin	-.625*** (.111)	.868*** (.077)
Heilongjiang	-.341** (.102)	.646*** (.081)
Shanghai	.159 (.148)	.031 (.118)
Jiangsu	-.088 (.089)	.227** (.071)
Anhui	-.042 (.092)	.255** (.074)
Fujian	-.258** (.092)	.417*** (.073)
Jiangxi	-1.004*** (.094)	1.106*** (.075)
Shandong	-.166 (.087)	.657*** (.070)

Henan	**-.845*** (.089)**	**1.257*** (.071)**
Hubei	**-.035 (.094)**	**.417*** (.075)**
Hunan	**-.732*** (.088)**	**1.045*** (.070)**
Guangdong	**-.901*** (.088)**	**.865*** (.070)**
Guangxi	**-1.426*** (.095)**	**1.356*** (.075)**
Hainan	**-1.224*** (.148)**	**1.259*** (.118)**
Chongqing	**-.117 (.118)**	**.165 (.093)**
Sichuan	**.106 (.086)**	**-.017 (.068)**
Guizhou	**-.577*** (.104)**	**.740*** (.083)**
Yunnan	**-.723*** (.096)**	**.628*** (.076)**
Tibet	**1.491*** (.120)**	**-1.060*** (.096)**
Shaanxi	**-.182 (.095)**	**.556*** (.075)**
Gansu	**.111 (.102)**	**.312*** (.081)**
Qinghai	**.913*** (.122)**	**-3.26** (.097)**
Ningxia	**-.647*** (.137)**	**.870*** (.078)**
Xinjiang	**-1.752*** (.099)**	**1.762*** (.078)**
Adjusted R Squared	**.725**	**.892**

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Model 1 Dependent Variable: Illiteracy Rate in a County
Model 2 Dependent Variable: Average Educational Attainment among People>15 in a County

Model 1 explores how much of the variation in illiteracy rates among China's thousands of counties can be explained by the Han non-Han population ratio. Model 2, however, looks at variation in the average educational attainment among a county's residents and how much can be explained by minority population within the county. The results of both models are fairly consistent. The higher the minority population ratio in a county, the higher the illiteracy rate is.

Likewise, a higher minority percentage in a county leads to a lower average educational attainment per person. Controlling for provinces may help us investigate which ethnic groups have what kind of effect on the illiteracy rate and the county's average educational attainment per capita due to general distribution of ethnic groups, but ultimately, this subject requires further research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In short, this thesis seeks to debunk the myth of an aggregate non-Han, to show that the variation among China's fifty-five ethnic minority groups is too great to disregard and to suggest this alternative model of analysis to those conducting research in the future. In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the ethnic stratification in the Chinese education system, we must consider each and every ethnic group as a separate entity; otherwise the analysis will only determine the impact being Han as opposed to not being Han has on a person's educational attainment. Dividing China into a dichotomous majority/minority nation blatantly disregards the sociocultural distinctions between fifty-five different cultures. The tables in chapter 4 show that factors such as location, *hukou* status, and rural/urban significantly impact a person's educational attainment level. Those who analyze general educational disparities in China and lack the time or resources to measure the disparities among every ethnic group should definitely take these various factors into account. A Han male in a wealthy city should attend more schooling than a Han male in rural China. This model should suffice for a broader measure of inequalities in education. However, if the ultimate goal is to specifically investigate ethnic disparities, it is imperative to consider each and every group as a unique factor. Ultimately, measuring ethnic stratification in China's compulsory education system will help one investigate ethnic stratification in the nation as a whole, not confined to the classroom. Better understanding these inequalities makes it easier to develop policies to alleviate China's ethnic inequalities.

Chapter 1 provides some brief background information on China's ethnic groups and the education system in addition to introducing the ultimate goal of analyzing disparities between all fifty-five minority groups plus the majority Han in order to substantiate my claim that there is no cohesive, aggregate minority in China. Much of my theoretical framework is a compilation of

interviews with various people in China and a way to measure the degree to which a group as assimilated into the majority culture by framing it through Gordon's seven stages of assimilation. Religion and language are two incredibly important factors when it comes to assimilation, particularly into Han culture. My theoretical framework suggested that the Naxi would attend significantly more schooling than the average Han male. The Manchus, however, due to their rapid assimilation into Chinese culture and loss of a cohesive sense of ethnic identity, should not deviate much from the Han when it comes to education. All of these things are backed up in chapter 4 through various regression analyses.

Ultimately, my interviews, my qualitative research, and the results of my quantitative analysis consistent results: the variation of educational attainment levels among China's fifty-five ethnic minority groups is too significant to ignore. The Bonan and Naxi peoples, who average 2.4 and 10 years of schooling respectively, do not belong in the same category. So long as the educational disparities in China are viewed as a gap between Han and "minority," so long will stratification persist among the fifty-five minority groups.

In an ideal situation, researchers will tackle this topic and conduct more in depth qualitative analyses of each ethnic group, and people will apply similar regression models to more recent data, such as the 2010 census. This type of thorough qualitative and quantitative investigation is a necessary step in developing strategies to alleviate all sorts of socioeconomic disparities. Egalitarian education is of course, the "ultimate equalizer."[46] Fostering stability in modern China hinges on some type of educational reform. Effective education reform requires a thorough analysis of disparities along as many lines as possible; researchers should consider location, *hukou* status, among other factors when studying inequalities in education. Ultimately, in order to develop these effective education reform policies, measuring disparities among all of China's ethnic groups is imperative. To

[46] Guo, p. 213

apply the Han/minority model as shown in figure 1:1 is to place over 113 million people into a cohesive group. Furthermore, the amount of variation between each unique ethnic minority group is so vast: Bonan females attend less than a year of school while the average Naxi male attends about eleven years of school. In order to effectively examine the equalizing qualities of the public education system, we must refrain from designating this group of 113 million people as a homogenous, marginalized entity.

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