



# American Indians and Alaska Natives and Chinese Ethnic Minorities: Demographics and Higher Education

## 2.1 A DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW OF AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES, AND CHINESE ETHNIC MINORITIES

Even though the overall populations of AIANs in the United States and EMs in China have increased in past decades, they are still much smaller than the majority groups—Whites in many places in the United States and the Han People in the vast majority of China. However, they are significant components of the two populations, while being essential for the cultural diversity in each country. AIANs and CEMs present similar but different demographic characters in the respective countries. This chapter presents the current demographic status of both groups.

### 2.1.1 *American Indians and Alaska Natives*

In the United States, the terminology of the indigenous peoples has been an ongoing discussion. While “American Indian” or “Indian” has been used for an extended period, “Native American” was proposed by the federal government as a term of political correctness to respond to the American Indian Movement since the 1960s. Even though these three terms are often used interchangeably, “Native American” is often criticized by its connotation of excluding indigenous groups outside the continental United States, such as the indigenous peoples from Alaska, Hawaii, and other Pacific Islands. Because of the vast diversity among

indigenous peoples and communities, it is not easy to reach a consensus on which name to use, and most prefer to be referred by their specific nations or tribes. This study will adopt the term “American Indian and Alaska Native” because Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) mainly cover these two overall groups of indigenous peoples. However, “Native American” and “American Indian” will also be used in some instances.

AIANs include peoples who originate from North America and maintain tribal affiliation and attachment (US Census Bureau 2002). AIANs are composed of various tribes, bands, and ethnic groups, and many of these groups exist as sovereign nations. As of January 2018, there are 573 federally recognized AIAN tribes (Bureau of Indian Affairs 2018). They have the right to receive funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the US Department of the Interior (DOI), which is the primary bureau administrating programs for federally recognized tribes, and promoting American Indian self-determination (National Conference of State Legislatures 2016). Also, there are 79 AIAN tribes recognized by 17 states which have established agency programs and a formal process for evaluation and recognition, as well as have organizations to provide Indian tribes with aid or assistance. Among the state-recognized tribes, six are also federally recognized.<sup>1</sup>

According to the latest US Census in 2010, there were 5.2 million AIANs, either alone or in combination with one or more other races, comprising approximately 1.7 percent of the total US population. The overall AIAN population increased by 26.7 percent since 2000 (US Census Bureau 2012). According to the 2016 estimate (US Census Bureau 2016a), the AIAN population would grow to 5.3 million, while the percentage of the total national population remained constant at 1.7 percent (see Table 2.1).

In 2010, there were five American Indian tribes with a population of more than 100,000—Cherokee, Chippewa, Choctaw, Navajo, and Sioux. Among them, the Cherokee was the largest tribal group with a population of 330,463. These five tribes comprised around one-third of the total AIAN population.

Most federally recognized AIAN tribes have reservations, which were established by the federal government. Currently, approximately 326 federal reserved land areas are held in trust by the federal government for AIAN tribes and individuals as reservations, pueblos, rancherias, missions, villages, or communities. The Navajo Nation is comprised of the largest

**Table 2.1** The US total and AIAN populations, and selected tribal groupings, 2000–2016<sup>a</sup>

<i>AIANs</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2016</i> <i>Estimated</i>
Total US population	281,421,906	285,691,501	308,745,538	318,558,162
AIAN along or in combination	4,119,301	4,006,160	5,220,579	5,399,769
• AIAN along	2,475,956	2,151,322	2,932,248	2,597,817
• AIAN in combination with one or more other races	1,643,345	1,854,838	2,288,331	2,801,952
Percentage of total	1.50%	1.40%	1.70%	1.70%
<i>American Indian tribes (along)<sup>b</sup></i>				
Apache	64,977	66,048	69,694	314,169
Cherokee	299,862	331,491	300,463	115,320
Chippewa	108,637	92,041	115,402	57,000
Choctaw	96,901	55,107	110,308	124,980
Iroquois	47,530	50,982	42,461	70,314
Lumbee	52,555	59,433	62,957	69,805
Navajo	275,991	230,401	295,016	94,691
Pueblo	63,060	69,203	52,026	44,025
Sioux	113,066	67,666	116,477	22,034
<i>Alaska Native tribes (along)<sup>b</sup></i>				
Eskimo <sup>c</sup>	47,337	35,951	NA	NA
Iñupiat <sup>c</sup>	NA	NA	25,736	29,227
Yup'ik <sup>c</sup>	NA	NA	29,618	36,137

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (2002, 2007, 2012, 2016a, b).

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Because of the significant changes in data collection methods of AIAN demographic information since the Census 2000, which made the data were not directly comparable with data from previous censuses (U.S. Census Bureau 2002), this study looks at the population data since 2000. <sup>b</sup> The populations for selected tribal groupings include people who reported one specified AIAN tribe and who reported two or more specified AIAN tribes. <sup>c</sup> In Census 2000, “Yup'ik” was included within the Eskimo groupings, and became an individual one in Census 2010. The Eskimo tribal groups without the Yup'ik tribe have been classified under the tribal grouping of Iñupiat since 2010.

geographic reservation located in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah (BIA 2018).

AIANs bear a dual citizenship status in US society. On the one hand, AIANs were exempt from federal taxation and most laws through the *Civilization Act of 1802* and *1819*. Also, the treaties signed between some

AIAN tribes and the US government provided them with some benefits. In the following century and even after the treaty era ended in 1871, the unique position of AIANs in US society has largely been maintained. This particular status was later affirmed in federal court in 1884. On the other hand, AIANs also enjoy the benefits of US citizenship. In 1919, all AIANs serving in the military during World War I had been granted US citizenship by Congress. Later the *Indian Citizenship Act of 1924* conferred the title upon all AIANs.

### 2.1.2 *Chinese Ethnic Minorities*

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a “unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities”<sup>2</sup> (National People's Congress of China 2004, Preamble). With the consideration of national social and economic development, national unity, and political stability, promoting the prosperity and development of EM groups has been a sustainable agenda and domestic policy of the central government of China. Regarding the preservation of EM cultures and languages, the Chinese central government has made and implemented a series of top-down laws and policies to legitimize the freedom for every EM group to use, develop, and promote their languages, culture, and customs (Jacob 2015).

Since 1949 when the PRC was founded, there has been a total of 56 ethnic groups recognized by the central government, among which 55 are EM groups, and Han is the majority group.<sup>3</sup> With the considerable increase of the total Chinese population, the EM population has also grown dramatically. According to China's six censuses from 1953 to 2010, the EM percentage of the total population rose from 6.1 to 8.4 percent, with the total EM population reaching 112 million in 2010. The EM groups with a population of more than one million include the Mongol, Hui, Zang, Uyгур, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Bouyei, Korean, and Manchu (see Table 2.2).

A majority of the EM population resides in the less-developed western areas of the country. In the form of concentrated communities, five EM groups have established provincial-level autonomous regions—Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uyгур Autonomous Region, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Tibet Autonomous Region. Below the provincial-level administrative regions, there are 30 autonomous prefectures, and 120 autonomous counties, which are located outside of the 5 Autonomous

**Table 2.2** China's EM group population, 1953–2010

	1953	1964	1982	1990	2000	2010
Total population <sup>a</sup>	578,874,444	691,259,931	1,004,718,569	1,131,266,483	1,242,612,226	1,332,810,869
EM population	35,032,085	39,923,736	67,238,983	91,323,090	105,226,114	111,966,349
Percentage of total	6.1%	5.8%	6.7%	8.1%	8.5%	8.4%
Mongol	1,451,035	1,965,766	3,411,367	4,802,407	5,813,947	5,981,840
Hui	3,530,498	4,473,147	7,228,398	8,612,001	9,816,805	10,586,087
Zang	2,753,081	2,501,174	3,847,875	4,593,072	5,416,021	6,282,187
Uyгур	3,610,462	3,996,311	5,963,491	7,207,024	8,399,393	10,069,346
Miao	2,490,874	2,782,088	5,021,175	7,383,622	8,940,116	9,426,007
Yi	3,227,750	3,380,960	5,453,564	6,578,524	7,762,272	8,714,393
Zhuang	6,864,585	8,386,140	13,383,086	15,555,820	16,178,811	16,926,381
Bouyei	1,237,714	1,348,055	2,119,345	2,548,294	2,971,460	2,870,034
Korean	1,111,275	1,339,569	1,765,204	1,923,361	1,923,842	1,830,929
Manchu	2,399,228	2,695,675	4,304,981	9,846,776	10,682,262	10,387,958

*Sources:* Calculated from the data of National Bureau of Statistics of China and State Ethnic Affairs Commission of China (NBSC and SEACC 1990), and NBSC (2000; 2010).

*Note:* <sup>a</sup>The total population of each census does not include the population of military personnel in active service.

Regions. In 2015, 41 percent of the population in all EM autonomous areas were of EM decent. EM group members also reside dispersedly throughout China's many provinces and cities. Among the 34 provincial-level administrative regions, there are only 10 without any level of EM autonomous administrative areas (Guo et al. 2015, p. xviii). This demographic pattern is summarized as "big dispersion and small concentration," which historically encouraged the integration of EM groups with Han people and other EM groups (Wang 2015). Fifty-three of the 55 EM groups have their own native languages, of which 21 groups have written languages (Myers Jr. et al. 2013).

## 2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES, AND CHINESE ETHNIC MINORITIES

Promoting education for AIANs and CEMs has been promised for many years by the United States and Chinese governments. However, both groups are underrepresented in their educational systems, especially at the postsecondary level. Higher education (HE) has been an essential venue for AIANs and CEMs to build their tribal nations and groups, as well as in preserving their respective cultures and languages. This section examines HE access and attainment of AIANs and CEMs.

### *2.2.1 American Indian and Alaska Native Higher Education*

HE for American Indians used to be a central purpose of the early higher education institutions (HEIs), including Harvard College, William and Mary College, and Dartmouth College. However, the early colonial HEIs did not fully realize their institutional purpose toward American Indians (Carney 1999). Even though the enrollment of AIANs almost doubled from 1976 to 2016 (see Table 2.3), they were still one of the most underrepresented groups regarding HE access. Other than a surge in the 1990s and early 2000s, AIANs have comprised on average well below 1 percent of all US HE students. In 2016, 18.6 percent of 18- to 24-year-old AIANs were enrolled at HEIs, which was lower than all other race/ethnic groups in the United States: African American (36.2 percent), Hispanic (39.2 percent), Asian (57.6 percent), and Pacific Islander (20.7 percent) (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] 2017, Table 302.60).

**Table 2.3** Total fall enrollment of AIANs in degree-granting HEIs, 1976–2016 (in thousands)

	1976	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	76.1	83.9	102.8	151.2	176.3	196.2	186.2	173.0	162.2	152.9	146.2	142.3
Percentage of the US total	0.71%	0.71%	0.77%	1.02%	1.04%	0.97%	0.92%	0.87%	0.83%	0.79%	0.77%	0.76%
4-Year HEIs	35.0	36.9	47.9	76.5	95.6	109.0	105.1	98.1	91.4	87.0	83.3	83.6
2-Year HEIs	41.2	47.0	54.9	74.7	80.7	87.2	81.1	74.9	70.8	65.9	62.9	5.7
Undergraduate	69.7	77.9	95.5	138.5	160.4	179.1	170.2	157.6	147.4	138.6	132.3	128.6
Graduate	6.4	6.0	7.3	12.6	15.9	17.1	16.1	15.4	14.8	14.3	13.9	13.7

*Sources:* NCES (2017, Tables 306.10 and 306.20)

**Table 2.4** Graduation rates for AIAN and total students, 1996–2010

<i>Starting Cohort</i>	<i>Graduating within four years (%)</i>		<i>Graduating within five years (%)</i>		<i>Graduating within six years (%)</i>	
	<i>AIAN</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>AIAN</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>AIAN</i>	<i>National</i>
1996	18.8	33.7	33.3	50.2	38.0	55.4
2000	21.0	36.1	35.1	52.6	40.2	57.5
2002	20.5	36.4	33.8	52.3	38.3	57.2
2003	20.6	37.0	33.7	53.2	38.7	57.8
2004	21.8	38.0	34.7	54.1	39.4	58.4
2005	21.8	38.3	34.7	54.2	39.3	58.6
2006	21.9	39.1	35.6	54.9	40.2	59.2
2007	23.0	39.4	36.3	55.1	40.6	59.4
2008	23.0	39.8	36.3	55.3	41.0	59.6
2009	24.0	39.8	36.9	55.3	41.2	59.4
2010	22.8	40.6	34.8	55.8	n/a	n/a

Source: NCES (2017, Table 326.10).

Regarding educational attainment, shown in Table 2.4, from 1996 to 2010, around one-fifth of AIAN students graduated within four years from their first-time attending four-year HEIs for a bachelor's degree, which was much lower than the national average (and just higher than their African American counterparts). Also, the graduation rates within five and six years were lower than the national average level.

Figure 2.1 presents that from 1976–77 to 2015–16, among every 100 students who received their associate's degree, only 1 was AIAN. This number decreased to less than 1 AIAN per 100 HE students nationwide for students graduating with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

The United States has a highly decentralized education system, in which state governments take the primary responsibility for education. However, the federal government has an indirect but important impact on HE through its federal grant and student loan programs (e.g., the Federal Pell Grant Program). In addition, the federal government plays a significant role in AIAN HE because of the government-to-government relationship between tribal nations and the federal government. At the federal government level, there are various policies in the form of federal laws and presidential executive orders to facilitate the development of AIAN HE. Table 2.5 presents the current federal policies in effect regarding AIAN HE.



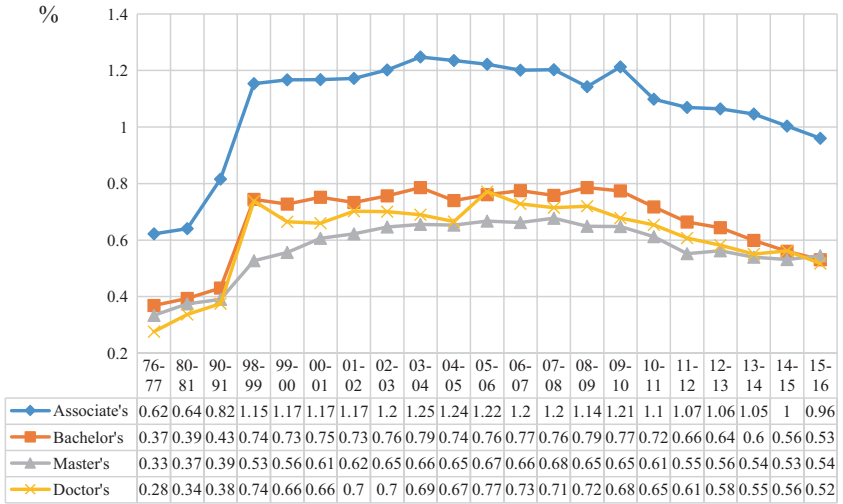


Fig. 2.1 Percent of degrees conferred to AIANs, compared to the US total, 1976–2016. *Source:* NCES (2017, Table 321.20, Table 322.20, Table 323.20, and Table 324.20)

Besides federal-level policies, there are also offices in the federal government overseeing AIAN HE affairs, as well as national organizations operating for improving AIAN HE through establishing HE networks, influencing governmental policies, and offering scholarships to AIAN students. The following list presents the major organizations relevant to AIAN HE.

- **American Indian College Fund (AICF)**, established in 1989, provides scholarships to Native American students, and funds and creates awareness about the community-based TCUs that offer students access to knowledge and skills about Native American culture, language, and values (AICF 2017).
- **American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)**, established in 1973, serves as a support network to influence federal policies on AIAN HE (AIHEC 2017a).
- **Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA)**, established in 1922, is a national Native American organization. Regarding HE, AAIA provides scholarships to Native American college and graduate

**Table 2.5** Current federal-level policies of AIAN HE

<i>Policy</i>		<i>Contents</i>
20 United States Code (USC), Chapter 28—HE Resources and Student Assistance	American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities	Department of the Interior (DOI) provides eligible TCUs with one-year grants of not less than \$1,000,000 and related assistance plan, and develops, undertakes, and carries out activities to improve and expand their capacity to serve AIAN students.
	Native American-Serving, Non-Tribal Institutions (NASIs)	DOI provides a grant of at least \$200,000 to NASIs, which are non-TCUs with an enrollment of AIAN students taking up at least ten percent of undergraduate students. Grants awarded shall be used to improve and expand NASIs' capacity to serve AIAN and low-income students.
25 USC, Chapter 20—Tribally Controlled College and Universities Assistance	Tribally Controlled Colleges or Universities Grant Program	DOI provides grants of \$8000 per AIAN student at TCUs to ensure continued and expanded educational opportunities for AIAN students, and to allow for the improvement and expansion of the physical resources of such institutions.
	Tribally Controlled Colleges or Universities Endowment Program	DOI provides grants for the encouragement of endowment funds for the operation and improvement of TCUs.
	Tribal Economic Development	DOI provides grants to TCUs for the establishment and support of tribal economic development and education institutes.
	Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions	DOI selects two tribally controlled postsecondary career and technical institutions to provide funding to pay the costs (including institutional support costs) of operating postsecondary career and technical education programs for AIAN students.

*(continued)*

**Table 2.5** (continued)

<i>Policy</i>		<i>Contents</i>
25 USC, Chapter 35—Indian HE Programs	HE Tribal Grant Authorization	DOI provides grants to AIAN tribes to provide financial assistance to individual AIAN students for the cost of attendance at HEIs.
	Critical Needs for Tribal Development	An eligible Indian tribe or tribal organization may require any federally funded HE assistance in designated vocational areas as critical for the economic or human development needs of the tribe or its members.
Executive Order 13592	Improving AIAN Educational Opportunities and Strengthening TCUs	<i>White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education</i> is proposed under this Order.

*Sources:* 20 USC §§ 1059c, 1059f; 25 USC §§ 1801–1864, 3301–3325; The White House Office of the Press Secretary (2011).

students from both federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes (AAIA 2017).

- **Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)**, established in 2006, is in the US Department of the Interior. In HE, BIE serves Native American students through scholarships and support funding for TCUs. BIE directly oversees two federally chartered TCUs—Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (BIE 2017).
- **College Horizons**, established in 1998, is a non-profit organization that supports Native American HE by providing college and graduate admissions workshops to Native American students from across the nation (College Horizons 2017).
- **National Indian Education Association (NIEA)**, established in 1970, aims to convene educators to explore ways of improving schools and the educational systems serving Native children, to promote the maintenance and continued development of language and cultural programs, and to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and decision-makers (NIEA 2017).

- **Office of Indian Education (OIE)**, established in 1980, is in the US Department of Education. One of OIE missions is to support the efforts of postsecondary institutions to meet the unique cultural, language, and educational needs of Native American students (OIE 2017).

In conclusion, AIAN has been one of the most underrepresented groups in US HE in relation to both access and attainment. Also, based on trends data in recent years, even though the situation is gradually improving, the development pace of AIAN HE remains slow.

### 2.2.2 *Chinese Ethnic Minority Higher Education*

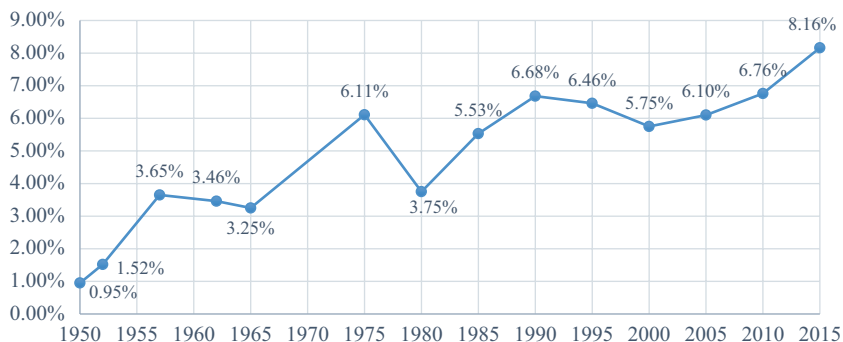
It has been a significant focus of Chinese affirmative action policies to facilitate the educational development of EMs. Education is closely related to the EM groups' social and economic development, as well as their language and culture preservation. With the preferential policies to increase EM students' access to HE, the number and percentage of EM students enrolled at HEIs have grown since 1949, especially after entering the twenty-first century. As Table 2.6 shows, from 2004 to 2016, the total enrollment of EM students at all levels in HEIs has almost doubled. Moreover, the percentage of EM students of total HE enrollments during this time period increased from 5.69 percent to 7.69 percent but decreased in 2016. In 1950, there was less than one EM student among 100 undergraduate students at Chinese HEIs. In 2015, the number increased to 8.16 (see Fig. 2.2). However, comparing the percentage of EMs to China's total population, EM students are underrepresented in HE. Also, the

**Table 2.6** CEM students enrolled in HEIs, 2004–2016 (in thousands)

	2004	2008	2012	2016
Total	1189.6	1758.9	2656.1	2824.7
Percentage of total	5.69%	5.69%	7.05%	6.76%
Graduate	33.0	58.9	99.4	115.3
Undergrad.	774.3	1279.9	1779.6	2318.2
Adult HEIs	292.6	278.7	454.4	506.5
Online HE Programs	89.7	141.4	322.7	455.8

Source: China's Ministry of Education (CMOE 2017a).

Note: Before 2004, the HE enrollment data of CEM students was only in undergraduate programs.



**Fig. 2.2** The percent of EM undergraduate students at 2- and 4-year HEIs, 1950–2015. *Source:* Author’s calculation based on data from CMOE (2017a)

**Table 2.7** HE population of China, Han people, and selected EM groups, 1990–2010

	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
National	15,757,443	1.39	44,020,145	3.54	118,374,897	8.88
Han	14,917,741	1.43	41,421,568	3.64	111,132,052	9.10
Mongol	88,770	1.85	278,229	4.79	782,492	13.08
Hui	131,350	1.53	364,259	3.71	906,437	8.56
Zang	20,392	0.44	64,850	1.20	309,313	4.92
Uygur	64,503	0.90	206,048	2.45	565,630	5.62
Miao	29,339	0.40	114,476	1.28	374,844	3.98
Yi	17,152	0.26	73,085	0.94	294,852	3.38
Zhuang	88,287	0.57	307,299	1.90	872,818	5.16
Bouyei	9844	0.39	35,559	1.20	118,122	4.12
Korean	83,015	4.32	158,937	8.26	281,656	15.38
Manchu	162,280	1.65	477,119	4.47	1,096,559	10.56

*Sources:* NBSC and SEACC (1990) and NBSC (2000; 2010).

Note: The 1990 data does not include people with graduate degrees.

growth rate of EM students at HEIs is lower than that of the national EM population growth rate (Tan and Xie 2009; Wang 2016).

With the increased HE enrollment, the EM HE population also raised drastically. Table 2.7 presents the status of the HE population of China, the Han people, and selected EM groups from 1990 to 2010.<sup>4</sup> Among the

ten selected EM groups, in 2010, the HE population percentages of the Mongol, Korean, and Manchu groups surpassed 10 percent and were higher than the Han people and the national average. The increase in EM student enrollments in HEIs, as well as the growth of the HE population of each group, benefited from the policies aimed at facilitating the development of EM HE.

In China, the national constitution and a series of regulations formulated by the central and local governments help guarantee the rights of EM groups and their cultures and languages, which have created a favorable policy environment for the development of EM HE. CEM HE policies can be divided into four groups corresponding with four HE stages that EM students will go through. Orderly, EM students prepare for HE (Pre-HE Stage), take the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (NHEEE Stage), are admitted into programs at HEIs (HEI Stage), and seek for a job following graduation (Employment Stage).

*Policies at the Pre-HE Stage.* At the Pre-HE Stage, bilingual education is implemented for EM students to master both their native languages and Mandarin. Bilingual education has been the primary channel to promote EM education, as well as preserve EM culture and languages. When planning and developing bilingual education policies, policymakers mainly consider the local language environment, social and economic development needs, pedagogical benefits, and preferences of residents (Hannum and Wang 2012).

After graduating from high school, EM students can attend the pre-college program to prepare for HE, which is in the form of inland classes and boarding schools. It has played a significant role in preparing EM students to attend regular HEIs and reducing the gap between EM and Han students regarding language proficiency of Mandarin, educational attainment, and employment after graduation.

*NHEEE Stage Policies.* In order to provide EM students with equal access to high-quality HE, the Chinese central government has implemented several preferential policies for EM students to compete with the majority of Han students in the NHEEE. Based on their ethnic identity, EM students can receive different bonus scores in the NHEEE. Also, the HEI admission threshold score for EM students is lower than that for Han students. With these policies, CEM HE has a dramatic development regarding the enrollments of EM students (Lei 2010; Wang 2016). In addition to the point allowance and priority admission policies, students from a given EM can choose to use either Mandarin or their mother

tongue as the text language (if applicable). However, point allowances are different for these students when using non-Mandarin languages.

***Policies at the HEI Stage.*** If they obtain a certain score threshold in the NHEEE, EM students are then free to choose to attend either a regular or ethnic HEI. As an integrated part of the Chinese HE system, EM-serving HEIs play a significant role in facilitating the development of EM HE. There are three principal types of EM-serving HEIs, namely Ethnic Minority Colleges and Universities (EMCUs), Institutions in Ethnic Autonomous Areas (IEAAs), and other Ethnic Minority-Serving Institutions (EMSI).

After entering an HEI, EM students can enjoy the waiver of tuition and fees if they choose EM majors and programs like EM languages. Also, a select of EM students can choose programs in which the medium of instruction is EM languages.<sup>5</sup> If EM students decide to pursue a postgraduate degree following their graduation, they can also enjoy the preferential policies in the postgraduate entrance examination.

The support and aid from the economically developed areas are treated as an essential means of facilitating the development of EM HE. Currently, there are three forms of partnership assistance categorized by source. The first is the assistance from the CMOE. The second is the assistance from the coastal provinces and cities to the western provinces and cities. The last is the assistance from the major cities in the western provinces to the remote areas (Sun and Wang 2015). HEIs in the eastern and coastal regions will establish a partnership with EM HEIs in the western provinces to provide financial and staff support.

***Employment Stage Policies.*** EM graduates—especially those from programs with EM languages as the medium of instruction—face great employment challenges (Ha 2016; Jacob and Park 2011). However, at the national level, there does not exist a policy or regulation regarding the employment of EM HE graduates. This issue has attracted much attention because it is significant to facilitate the development of EM HE, as well as the central governmental goal of social stability (Ha 2016; Xiong et al. 2016; Xu 2013).

At the local level, especially in the EM regions, the local governments have put forward a series of policies regarding the employment of EM HE graduates. Also, particular attention is given to those graduates from the program with ethnic languages as the medium of instruction. For example, the government of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region has implemented a regulation in December 2015 with a series of specific and

operable items to help Mongol Chinese students find employment who graduate from HE programs with Mongol as the medium of instruction (Ha 2016).

While the preferential policies toward EM students in HE admission are continually strengthened, several new trends are emerging during the development of CEM HE. First, the methods of EM talent training become varied, and the vocational, normal, and adult HE within EM regions are rapidly developing (Sun and Wang 2015). Second, with the introduction of English into the secondary curriculum since the 1980s, as well as becoming a compulsory testing subject in the NHEEE later on, some EM groups students are facing a trilingual situation instead of simply a bilingual one (Adamson and Feng 2015; Park and Jacob 2011). Finally, the research on the ethnic culture in EM HE is strengthening (Gan and Peng 2012).

There are also challenges in the new development of CEM HE. The first and the most significant one is the educational gap between EM and Han students, as well as among EM groups located in the eastern, coastal region and those in the less-developed western region. This gap is widening, especially after the late 1990s when the free higher education and government-guaranteed employment of university undergraduates ceased (Wang 2015). In addition, the absence of a specific law regarding EM HE only exacerbates this situation (Sun and Wang 2015). The second challenge is how to better integrate ethnic languages and culture into the HE curriculum (Gan and Peng 2012). Currently, bilingual education is provided at the primary level, and after entering secondary and tertiary schools, most formal learning about EM languages ceases, which has frustrated EM students in their native language learning (Hu 2007). Third, a policy supporting the employment of EM students after graduation is also necessary (Xiong et al. 2016). Finally, financial support for EM regions needs to be fully implemented, particularly at the local levels (Sun and Wang 2015).

### 2.2.3 *Ethnic Minority-Serving Higher Education Institutions*

The ethnic minority-serving HEIs in the United States and China have been treated as vital venues to increase HE opportunities for AIANs and CEMs, facilitate local economic development, and assist nation and group building (for the United States, see Brayboy et al. 2012; Crazybull 2009; Stull et al. 2015; Stein 2009; for China, see Clothey 2005; Qiu 2012;



Yang and Wu 2009). Ethnic minority-serving HEIs in the United States and China have dual primary purposes. One is to educate students, and the other is to address tribal and ethnic priorities.

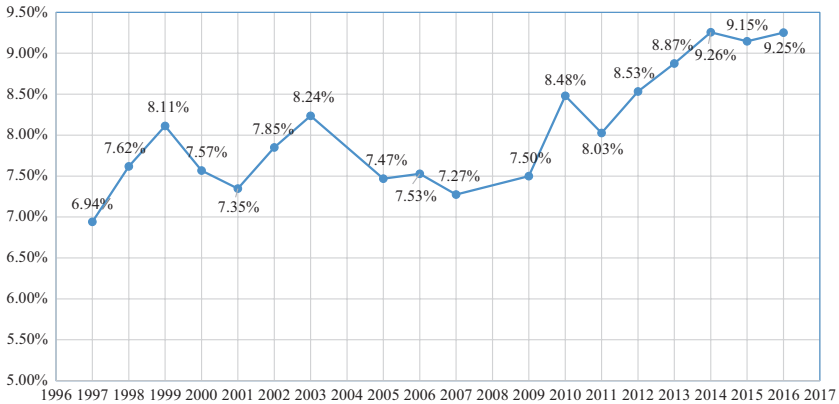
### 2.2.3.1 *Tribal Colleges and Universities in the United States*

In the United States, minority-serving institutions refer to seven types of HEIs federally designated to serve minority groups, which are eligible for federal assistance and funding based on different criteria (Nguyen et al. 2015). The seven types of minority-serving HEIs include Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASIs),<sup>6</sup> Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNHSIs). Among these minority-serving institutions, TCUs, NASIs, and AANAPISIs serve AIANs and are relevant to this study. This study is further narrowed to primarily focus on TCUs and their institutional efforts of serving AIAN students and communities.

The establishment of TCUs was an essential component of the Native American Self-Determination Movement in the 1960s, and in 1986, the first TCU—Navajo Community College (currently the Diné College)—was established. TCUs were defined as “institutions that are chartered by their respective Indian tribes through the sovereign authority of the tribes or by the Federal Government” (The White House Office of the Press Secretary 2011).

In 1973, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) was founded to serve as a national organization to facilitate the development of TCUs (Stein 2009). In 1994, through the efforts of AIHEC, 34 TCUs were awarded land-grant institution status, which guarantees them with federal funding for institutional capacity building and research. Currently, there are 38 TCUs, of which 35 were chartered by AIAN tribes and 3 by the federal government. Twenty-six TCUs award associate’s degrees and 12 offer bachelor’s programs, among which 5 also provide master’s programs (AIHEC 2017b).

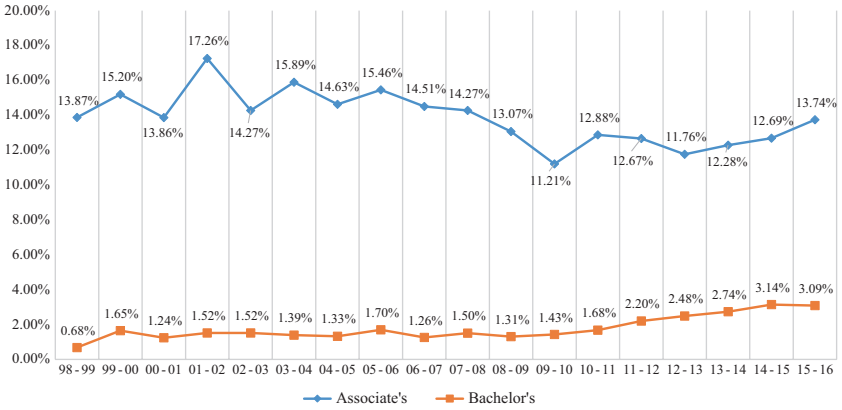
TCUs play a significant role in providing AIANs with HE opportunities. In the past two decades, the AIAN enrollment at TCUs has grown dramatically. In the fall of 2016, TCUs enrolled 9.25 percent of AIAN HE students (see Fig. 2.3).



**Fig. 2.3** Percent of AIANs enrolled in TCUs of the total degree-granting HEIs enrollment, 1997–2016. *Sources:* Author’s calculation based on the data from NCES (2000, Tables 211 and 222; 2001, Table 221; 2002, Table 220; 2003, Tables 207 and 219; 2004, Table 222; 2005, Table 219; 2006, Tables 205 and 218; 2008, Table 229; 2009, Table 239; 2010, Table 239; 2011, Tables 236 and 249; 2012, Table 253; 2013, Table 280; 2014, Table 312.50; 2015, Table 312.50; 2016, Table 312.50; 2017, Tables 306.10 and 312.50). *Note:* Data for 2004 and 2008 is not available on the NCES website

Around 13 percent of all associate’s degrees received by AIANs were awarded by TCUs from 1998 to 2016, but the trend is decreasing in recent years. However, bachelor’s degrees conferred to AIAN graduates through TCUs increased considerably during this same time period even though the number of degrees awarded is small. In 2016, more than 3 of 100 AIAN graduates with a bachelor’s degree were from TCUs, while the number in 1999 was less than 1 person (see Fig. 2.4).

In addition to providing postsecondary education for AIANs, TCUs also provide educational services for their local communities (such as library and consultation services). Also, the majority of TCUs are vocational institutions, and their students are considered non-traditional by most HE standards. For example, the average-age TCU student is older than most traditional age-eligible students. Also, because they are located on tribal reservations, TCUs are essential for the local economic development, and culture and language preservation. For these purposes, many TCUs hire elders to teach native cultures and languages at TCUs.



**Fig. 2.4** Percent of associate’s and bachelor’s degrees awarded to AIANs by TCUs, 1999–2016. *Sources:* Author’s calculations based on data from NCES (2003, Table 219; 2004, Table 222; 2005, Table 219; 2006, Table 218; 2007, Table 223; 2008, Table 229; 2009, Table 239; 2010, Table 239; 2011, Table 249; 2012, Table 253; 2013, Table 280; 2014, Table 312.50; 2015, Table 312.50; 2016, Table 312.50; 2017, Table 312.50)

*2.2.3.2 Ethnic Minority-Serving Institutions in China*

EMSIs in China aim to serve EM students and areas. Referring to the Chinese official reports on EM HE (e.g., CMOE 2015), EMSIs have two main categories: Ethnic Minority Colleges and Universities (EMCUs) and Institutions in Ethnic Autonomous Areas (IEAAs). Also, outside of autonomous ethnic areas, there is a relatively small number of HEIs with an institutional mission to serve EM students. In June 2017, there are 255 EMSIs in China (CMOE 2017b).

EMCUs are categorized as “ethnic institutions” or “institutions for nationalities,” which is one official classification of Chinese colleges and universities.<sup>7</sup> EMCUs were established shortly following the establishment of the PRC. Their initial missions were to primarily cultivate EM political leaders to administrate ethnic areas and ultimately to help achieve national unity and political stability (Zhang and Qu 2009). Currently, there are 17 EMCUs, all of which offer undergraduate and graduate programs. Six EMCUs are directly administrated by the ministry-level State Ethnic Affairs Commission of China (SEACC). Nine EMCUs are co-administrated by SEACC and local governments, and the remaining two

are administrated by local governments. Among the 17 EMCUs, 8 are located within EM autonomous areas.

IEAAs have a natural relationship with EM groups because of their geographic locations. They usually have an institutional mission of facilitating local economic and social development, and local EM students are their target students. Currently, there are 233 IEAAs, among which 195 are located in the 5 EM autonomous regions; the remaining 38 are located in EM Autonomous Prefectures in non-ethnic provinces (CMOE 2017b). IEAAs cover almost all HEIs types, which provide local EM students with broad HE choices. Of the 233 IEAAs, 66 offer ethnic-related programs<sup>8</sup> and/or have ethnic research centers, among which 43 HEIs offer undergraduate and graduate programs, and the remaining 23 are vocational institutions (CMOE 2017b). IEAAs play a significant role in providing HE opportunities and preserving ethnic languages and cultures for EM areas in non-ethnic provinces, such as Yanbian University for the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, and Jishou University for the Xiangxi Tu and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hunan Province.

Besides EMCUs and IEAAs, there are also colleges and universities located outside autonomous ethnic areas with an institutional mission of serving EM students. These institutions often include the word “ethnic” in their names. Currently, five HEIs belong to this category (CMOE 2017b). For a broader definition, they are also treated as EMSIs (e.g., Meng 2016).

Due to the lack of an operational definition of “ethnic institutions,” it is controversial in the calculation of the number of EMSIs. The number of EMCUs is different in various governmental reports and in the academic literature. Due to this limitation, enrollment and completion data of EM students in EMSIs are not readily available. Therefore, more work is urgently needed to standardize the definition and classification of Chinese EMSIs.

## NOTES

1. Data on state-recognized Native American tribes were retrieved from the state government websites. Six tribes recognized by both federal and state governments are Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Alabama; Mashantucket Pequot, and Mohegan in Connecticut; Tonawanda Band of Seneca, and Tuscarora Nation in New York; and Pamunkey in Virginia.

2. In China, “nationality” and “ethnicity” are both used when referring to ethnic minority groups. “Ethnic” is usually used in the phrases, such as “ethnic minority” and “ethnic affairs,” while the “nationality” is used in official documents and names of ethnic institutions. However, there is a trend of using the Pinyin of “ethnicity/nationality”—Minzu in the names of ethnic institutions, such as the Minzu University of China.
3. In the 1953 Census, there were 41 recognized Ethnic Minority groups, among which the Nùng and the Sha were later integrated into Zhuang, and the Yakuts were integrated into the Evenks. In the 1964 Census, there were 53 recognized ethnic groups.
4. This table mainly focuses on the Ethnic Minority groups with large population because some small Ethnic Minority groups with very high percentage of HE population lack representation. For example, the Russ people’s population was 15,393 in 2010, and their HE population reached 4257, taking up 27.66 percent of the total Russ population (NBSC 2010).
5. These programs are not for all EM languages; currently there are programs in the following EM languages: Kazak, Korean, Mongol, Uygur, and Zang.
6. The acronym of Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions as “NASNTIs” is viewed as offensive to many Native Americans and the institutions themselves. This study refers to Roachat’s (2015) policy brief and uses “NASIs” as the acronym.
7. Institution type based on discipline is used as one criterion to classify Chinese HEIs, which includes comprehensive university; institution of science and engineering; agricultural institution; forestry institution; institution of medicine and pharmacy; normal institution; institution of languages and literatures; institution of finance and economics; institution of political science and law; institution for sports, physical education, and health sciences; art institution; and ethnic institution.
8. Ethnic-related programs include degree programs of ethnic languages and studies, HE preparatory programs for ethnic students, and programs instructed by ethnic languages. Data are retrieved from IEAAs’ official websites.

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 25 USC §§ 1801-1864, 3301-3325, 5301-5423.  
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