

Multilingual Education

Jan GUBE

Fang GAO *Editors*

Education, Ethnicity and Equity in the Multilingual Asian Context

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Multilingual Education

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Jan GUBE • Fang GAO
Editors

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Foreword

This foreword offers the “back story” of how the volume that follows came to be.

Being an academic in education and a “gweilo” (local Hong Kong Cantonese term meaning “white foreigner”), I was not warned of the many hurdles to researching in the field of ethnic minority education. They manifested as covert negative resistance on the part of colleagues who deliberated in committees to accept or reject research grant applications or manifested as polite, yet resistant Education Bureau responses from education administrators who couldn’t (or wouldn’t) provide details of the policy for establishing and funding designated schools for ethnic minority (EM) students.

With persistence and resilience, each hurdle was met and overcome. The research team, consisting of myself, Jan Gube, and Chura Thapa, were able to proceed with the gathering of data across a number of “designated” schools – courtesy of either a school’s visionary principal or a school’s individual teachers of EM students. In the main, these principals and teachers were committed to fostering more equitable practices through their roles, even though they openly admitted that they struggled in their efforts to accomplish this. The schools primarily served EM students. The official label for EM students is non-Chinese-speaking students (NCS). Such a label renders invisible the linguistic and cultural diversity of ethnic minority students, whereas “ethnic minority” accurately captures the notion of the ethnicity diversity of the population.

A wealth of findings emerged (more than we could disseminate); this was due in large part to the qualitative data gathered in the language choice of respondents facilitated by the multi-language skills of researcher Jan Gube, whose heritage is Filipino, although “born and bred” and educated in Hong Kong and whose language proficiency includes Tagalog, Cantonese, and Putonghua. Additionally, researcher Chura Thapa, who is Nepalese, therefore used both the Nepalese language and languages spoken by Indian EM students in research interviews.

As our research project concluded and we began publishing the findings (see Connelly, Gube & Thapa, 2013), we grew more cognizant of “other players” in EM education debates, some of who warrant a mention here:

Ms. Fermi Wong Wai-fun, a social worker who has for 16 years set up and run Hong Kong's foremost non-governmental organization (NGO) called *Unison* that advocated for the rights of ethnic minorities particularly in schools. Ms Wong stood down from her role in Unison in 2013.

Dr. Chan Kui Pui has worked for 13 years for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. He transformed a secondary school into the first "designated" schools admitting more than 800 students of South Asian ethnicities. Dr. Chan's "Great Leap Forward" (2005) in *The Hong Kong Standard* of the 19th October, was a watershed moment.

Professor Kerry Kennedy along with his colleague, Professor Ming Tak Hue (2012) have carried out numerous research projects and written articles, focused on various aspects of educational provision for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong.

From the academic field of Law, Associate Professor Kelley Loper, Director of the Centre for Comparative and Public Law, raised the plight of inequity in relation to ethnic minorities in Hong Kong's education system and provided the report: *Race and equality: A study of ethnic minority in Hong Kong's education system* (Loper, 2004).

We contacted these and other researchers and drew together the first cluster of like-minded academics and doctoral students across Hong Kong, at an *EM in Education* Forum (Hong Kong Baptist University, HKBU). The interest in EM education captured the attention of HKBU's Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences – Professor Adrian Bailey – with the support of a faculty initiative, the *Global Social Science Conferences*. A grant was successfully applied for, and the not-for-profit 2-day symposium – *Education, Ethnicity and Inequality: Issues and Insights* – was held at HKBU in the summer recess of 2013.

Symposium conveners – Dr. Fang Gao, Mr. Jan Gube, and I – asked presenters to provide narratives from their contexts and also give some consideration to educational solutions to the issue of social justice, the elimination of prejudice and discrimination, and the integration of ethnic minority groups into the social fabric of society.

The symposium produced powerful commentaries from a diverse group of educational academics, teachers, doctoral students, postgraduate students, and a group of EM secondary students – the latter co-presenting with their teacher. Following this and with the encouragement of Hong Kong Baptist University's Strategic Development Fund and its *Global Social Science Conferences Project*, a plan was launched to compile presenters' papers into a volume.

Between the symposium and the realization of the said volume, 4 years have passed. During this interval, Jan Gube gained his doctorate and has subsequently taken up an academic appointment at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). Dr. Fang Gao has moved from HKBU to EdUHK. And I have returned to Australia and continued working in educational equity with a focus on teacher education on the small Pacific Island of Nauru.

In these intervening years, the body of scholarship, having a bearing on ethnic minority education, has greatly expanded. New voices now add to those of the symposium presenters' accounts. Dr. Gube and Dr. Gao have diligently pursued the

authors of such work. Through their dedication, a richer volume (inclusive of current discourses in the field) than was first envisaged has been brought to fruition.

I commend to you this volume of important and timely work that aims to shed light on the educational experiences of different ethnic minority groups in Asian multilingual contexts.

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Preface

Our aim in editing this book arose from the need to sustain and extend critical debates concerning the education of ethnic minority students in the Asia-Pacific region. Research has been increasingly evident not just about the cultural differences and inequities confronting Asian minorities in their host education systems but also about how these differences/inequities are sustained and complicated at and through different sociocultural contexts. A belief driving this book is that cultural differences and diversity can be addressed more productively by paying attention to how educational experiences of those underserved minority students are tied to the issues of power and equity in and across different school communities and societies.

To this end, this book is intended to clarify the processes associated with cultural differences and inequities in education. It explores the topics of language, ethnicity, and equity in Asia's culturally diverse education contexts to reveal deep-seated issues regarding how power is constructed, legitimized, and reproduced through educational policy and language practices. Western, Asian, and ethnic minority scholars in this volume bring together studies on ethnic minorities informed by different theoretical and methodological traditions to capture the progressive steps and impediments toward equity and diversity in an array of cultural and language scenarios. They attend to ethnic minorities and immigrants within Asia and Asian countries that move forward scholarship in the field that has traditionally focused on minority population in Western and immigrant countries. Despite its focus upon educational landscapes in Asia, the implications arising from the studies featured in this volume will be able to add to discussions pertaining to policy-making and planning efforts of policy-makers, educators, researchers, and all others devoted to improving the educational experience of ethnic minorities. The structure of the volume and its rationale are offered in the introductory chapter.

This book is a collective effort that has come to fruition with the input and support of various individuals and institutions. First, we express our heartfelt thanks to each author for committing to the project, thus making this book a reality while broadening our horizons as editors. We thank Hong Kong Community College, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, for allowing the first editor to undertake this

book project. We also thank Prof. Mark Mason, Head of the Department of International Education and Lifelong Learning, The Education University of Hong Kong, for his encouragement and generous financial support through the Departmental Research Funding, which made possible the eventual compilation of this book.

In addition, we express our gratitude to Dr. Jennifer Connelly for writing the foreword for this book and for many insightful conversations about our experiences working with ethnic minorities, Prof. Christine Halse for synthesizing the contributions in this book, providing recommendations for future research and policy planning, and offering financial support through the Intercultural Studies Area of Strength. Our gratitude also goes to Prof. Andy Kirkpatrick and Prof. Bob Adamson for including this volume in the Springer series “Multilingual Education.”

We immensely value the expertise of numerous anonymous peer reviewers who voluntarily provided thorough, thoughtful, and critical comments to the authors that gave the scholarship pursued in this book a much-needed vigor. Our sincere thanks go to Dr. Amy Jia for capably managing the submissions and peer review process of the chapters, Miss Angela Yim for her administrative support, and Miss Melissa Au for contributing to the finalization of the book.

Hong Kong SAR, China

Jan GUBE
Fang GAO

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Irina Balitskaya is a professor of Sakhalin State University, Russian Federation. Her research interests are in multicultural and comparative education. Among her works are the books *Multicultural Education in Multiethnic Societies* and *Academic Mobility in Russian Universities* and book chapters "The Development of Citizenship Education Curriculum in Russia: National Identity and Global Citizenship," "Cultural Diversity and the Problem of Inequality in Russian Society," and "Facing the Challenges of Ethno-cultural Diversity in Russian Schools." Her works focus on the problems of intercultural aspects of education. She is a member of the Comparative Education Council (Russian Academy of Education, Moscow). She serves as the deputy director of the Department of Philology, History, and Eastern Studies.

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Helen Boulton is an associate professor at Nottingham Trent University; course leader for the Doctorate in Education, a course which is taught in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom; and a national teaching fellow (UK). Dr. Boulton is a well-published and highly respected author, having coauthored several books and many journal articles which are published internationally. She is chair of the Association for Information Technology and Teacher Education, regional coordinator for Computing at School, and a member of several national committees. Dr. Boulton has been involved in the use of digital technologies in education with UK government agencies, including the Department for Education, Training and Development Agency, HEA, and JISC. Dr. Boulton is currently a co-investigator for two European Horizon 2020 projects: No One Left Behind and Managing Affective-learning Through Intelligent Atoms and Smart Interactions. Helen is also a co-investigator for an Erasmus + research project: Mobile Pedagogical Assistant to develop meaningful pathways to personalised learning.

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Casey Burkholder is an assistant professor at the University of New Brunswick whose research explores the intersections of gender, identity, DIY media-making, civic engagement, youth, and Social Studies education. She first became invested in the relationships between space, belonging, and civic engagement from a young age, growing up in Canada's North. During her 2 years as a classroom teacher in Hong Kong, Casey saw her ethnic minority students systematically excluded from school activities and language instruction and watched as many students were pushed out of the school. She wondered about the difference between the Hong Kong government's policy to include ethnic minority youth in schools and their lived experiences. This question served as the foundation for Casey's Master of Arts work, which she undertook in Educational Studies at Concordia University. In her doctoral work at McGill University's Department of Integrated Studies in Education, Casey has embarked in an action-oriented project of creating youth-led media-making about issues of identity, belonging, and civic engagement with cellphone videos (cellphilms).

Tina Byrom is an established academic, with over 25 years' experience in education, including secondary schools, post-compulsory education, and higher education. Her current role is professional development officer (teaching and learning) at the University of Nottingham. Prior to this, she worked as a research consultant after leaving a senior leadership role in the School of Education at Nottingham Trent University. While at NTU, Dr. Byrom was also the center lead for the EdD provision based in Hong Kong. Dr. Byrom's research interests include social justice, widening participation, and the experiences of nontraditional students. She completed her Ph.D. thesis "*The Dream of Social Flying*": *Social Class, Higher Education Choice and the Paradox of Widening Participation* at the University of Nottingham in 2008. Dr. Byrom has continued to research marginalized groups and has presented findings of her research at national and international conferences, including work on teenage pregnancy in Nottingham, higher education experiences of first-generation students, higher education participation rates of young people living in Nottingham North, and education experiences of black, minority ethnic groups. She has recently published a coauthored book titled *Young and Homeless: Exploring the Education, Life Experiences and Aspirations of Homeless Youth*.

Jon K. Chang is an American who received his Ph.D. in History specializing in Russian/Soviet and Asian studies from the University of Manchester. He has taught at the American University of Central Asia and the University of California, Los

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Kara Fleming is an assistant professor in the Language Center of KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Her research focuses on how language ideologies interact with ethnic and national identities, particularly as mediated through the education system. She received her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Hong Kong and previously worked at the University of Hong Kong and the University of Leeds.

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From Living in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity to Equitable Outcomes in Education: An Introduction



Jan GUBE and Fang GAO

Abstract This chapter provides an overview of the contributions in this book, which brings together a group of scholars interested to shed light on the educational experiences of different ethnic minority groups in multilingual contexts in Asia. It draws together studies and perspectives that link ethnolinguistic practices, racialized experiences, and institutional policies and processes on how ethnic minorities in the region are situated in their historical and contemporary moments. Through the insights arising from these contributions, it is argued that debates on how equitable outcomes in education might be achieved can be moved forward by paying attention to and making the case for recognizing and valuing cultural and linguistic diversity in Asian societies.

1 Introduction

Global mandates advocating for minority human rights have pointed to the importance of education for equity, diversity, and social cohesion in multilingual and multicultural contexts (UNESCO Bangkok 2005). In such contexts, included are, but not limited to, underserved, underrepresented, and at-risk minority students in Asia (Gao 2017). Their educational experiences are often the material effects of racialized ideologies and discourses of their receiving context, accompanied by dilemmas in enacting multilingual and multicultural policies (Gao 2011). These scenarios represent important concerns to advance teacher training quality in response to cultural and linguistic diversity (United Nations 2013). Moreover, increased dislocation, segregationism, and global flows of refugees and migrants on a hitherto unprecedented scale have triggered a resurgence of nationalistic nativism around the globe, thus creating new social, economic, political, and intercultural conditions and challenges for education (Gao and Lai 2017). Images of such

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cultural disjuncture mark the timeliness and importance of locating new cultural diversity narratives in Asian societies. As has been said, “If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity” (John F. Kennedy). Akin to this attestation is the urge to balance the support for equity and diversity and to maintain a cohesive and integrated society reflected in contemporary language and education practices.

This book explores the topics of language, ethnicity, and equity in Asia’s culturally diverse education contexts, including their links with one another. It taps into deep-seated issues regarding how power is constructed, legitimized, and reproduced through educational policy and language practices embedded within its social and political arenas concerning ethnic minorities in the region. Focusing on education for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and other Asian societies, this book captures the progressive steps and impediments toward equity and diversity through an array of cultural and language scenarios. Hong Kong, an international financial hub in East Asia and a former British colony, has attracted an increasing scholarly interest in its provision of educational opportunities for ethnic minorities. Beneath the city’s “multicultural” stature lies issues of racism, societal and educational inequalities, and cross-generational poverty. How the postcolonial city tackles these issues and how its strategies and approaches differ from those taking place in other Asian jurisdictions are questions for academic dialogues that this book seeks to engage with. That is, how could and should we learn to live with “difference” that is constantly being redefined (Cantle 2016)?

In this book, ethnic minorities are defined as people who are different from the majority in ethnocultural background. The usage and connotation of the umbrella term “ethnic minorities” vary from context to context. For example, in Hong Kong, ethnic minority is a term widely used to refer to all non-Chinese people and particularly to those more visible South and Southeast Asian population. In Mainland China, ethnic minorities include non-Han people from the 55 officially recognized ethnic groups. In Cambodia, the term is specifically related to indigenous peoples as well as those ethnic groups: Khmer, Khmer Loeu, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tai, and Cham. Such variations, as elaborated in each chapter of this book, remind us that any simple representation or categorization will face its restrictions (as suggested by Fleming, see chapter “Who is “Diverse”?: (In)Tolerance, Education, and Race in Hong Kong”). While these categorizations are politically laden with deep cultural roots, a larger task that does more justice to the quest of a new diversity narrative is to rethink the role of education for ethnic minorities’ rights in Asia.

Central to the recognition of minority rights are considerations of power relations and demographic changes in societies. New integrationist and harmony-driven approaches to questions of ethnicity characterize power relations at and structural conditions of institutions in Asian jurisdictions (Postiglione 2017). Power manifests itself in terms of relations, a duel between the acts of imposition (of something over another person) and resistance (toward the imposer), which imply how one is positioned within a community, institution, or society and how this position is negotiated and contested (Foucault 1982). The sociopolitical underpinnings of institutions, mandates, and public discourses define what counts as culturally appropriate or not

(Gube 2015), which create intended and unintended effects on school education for ethnic minorities. The dialectics of such sociopolitical contexts and material effects contribute to the practices of inclusion, exclusion, subjugation of certain minority groups in various aspects of social life, and education. This book recognizes the different dynamics of power relations (Gube 2017), where educators seek to empower ethnic minorities who take advantage of certain linguistic, cultural, and social capitals to reconstruct ethnicity and identity in ways that allow them to navigate the education system and career paths. Also residing at the intellectual pursuit of this book is the drive to moving forward scholarship in ethnicity and education, which has traditionally focused on Western, Anglophone, and immigrant-receiving countries. In featuring research in ethnolinguistic practices, cultural identities, and educational provisions in selected culturally and linguistically diverse Asian societies, we pose three fundamental questions:

1. What linguistic practices do Asian ethnic minorities engage in and develop? How are their linguistic practices positioned within the language landscape of the Asian societies?
2. What identity dynamics do ethnic minorities develop, negotiate, and construct? How are these dynamics relevant to the ethnic and racial fabric of the Asian societies?
3. How do the educational policies and practices toward ethnic minorities reflect power and political frameworks in the Asian societies?

2 Book Overview

The edited book consists of 15 chapters. The intent of this book is not to examine the modus operandi of cultural diversity models, although this is often a point of departure in the scholarship of ethnicity and education. Rather, we argue that the dynamics among education, ethnicity, and equity take form in day-to-day cultural and linguistic practices of ethnic minorities, interactions with people who support them (or might have fallen short of so), institutional setup of school communities, and sociohistorical contexts of Asian education systems. In other words, cultural difference is constructed through the languages one chooses and uses, how one makes sense of himself or herself and others as ethnic person, how one embodies such linguistic and cultural practices, and how all these are enabled in diverse institutional contexts. A starting point of this argument is our observation as scholars based in Hong Kong that different forms of inequities, which have constantly gone under the guise of the city's international image in education, have only attracted academic and educational attention recently despite the history of settlement of minority population. Even though the chapter authors have different geographical, theoretical, empirical, and population foci, they all identify how education systems have played a part in reshaping how students, teachers, schools, and policymakers conceive and enact ethnicity and equity. The authors come from a variety of

scholarly backgrounds who present nuanced accounts of issues in minority education, altogether representing a combination of Western, Asian, and ethnic minority perspectives. Their chapters are presented in accordance with the questions above: Part I, Language Policies and Practices; Part II, Racialized Discourses, Diversities, and Identities; and Part III, Educational Equity and Equality: Provisions and Interventions.

2.1 Part I: Language Policies and Practices

Contributions that highlight ethnolinguistic practices of minorities begin in chapter “[Ethnicity and Equity: The Development of Linguistic Capital for a Subgroup of South Asian Individuals in Hong Kong](#)”, where Byrom, Wong, and Boulton focus on the experiences of a group of South Asian individuals and explore how their language learning was interlaced with structural inequities in Hong Kong. This study reports how South Asian students are emplaced to learn the Chinese language (Cantonese) in isolation from local Chinese students, a situation that prevents them from acquiring desirable communication opportunities and later a proficient level of the language. The authors argue that a lack of immersion in the wider Chinese-speaking context implies a class-based difference in school choice and admission.

In an effort to describe the distinct cultural experience of a South Asian group, Thapa describes in chapter “[Identity and Investment in Learning English and Chinese: An Ethnographic Inquiry of Two Nepali Students in Hong Kong](#)” the trajectories of language learning among two Nepalese students in Hong Kong in relation to their identity construction. This chapter offers a nuanced description of how these two minority students were caught in a dilemma between family’s and school’s expectations. The findings indicate that the students negotiated the conflicting language practices arising from the instructional preference in English and Chinese learning and familial demands to acquire the heritage language—Nepali. Such dilemma has certain implications for individuals’ language practices and identity formation. These two chapters complement each other in important ways as they both provide a glimpse into South Asian as a panethnic minority group and Nepalese as specific minority group, which encourage researchers to treat intragroup dynamics carefully and ethnic categorization within subgroups (Okamoto and Mora 2014), such as when panethnic terms “South Asian” and “ethnic minorities” are applied.

In chapter “[Linguistic Landscape and Social Equality in an Ethnic Tourism Village in Guizhou, China](#)”, Shan, Adamson, and Liu pay attention to an ethnic minority village in Guizhou, China, where tourism is promoted and developed in relation to language status and practice. The authors examine how Mandarin, English, and Miao languages are manifested in public discourses, as displayed in billboards, signage, and government sites, which form the linguistic landscape of the region, characterized by unequal statuses and visibility among the three languages. The authors shed light on the importance of introducing a multilingual education model to allow minority people to capitalize on their ethnic language and

culture. Given the reality that ethnolinguistic practices are an important component of ethnic minorities' schooling experiences and how an equitable practice of such languages might be taught, the chapters speak to the unequal language status and ensuing policy and practice that give shape to imbalances in power relations.

However, similar questions could be pointed to enacting systemic changes on making language policies work for minority population. Concerted effort among stakeholders at different levels, which is crucial for sustaining equitable access to multilingual education, is shown in chapter "[Language as Gatekeeper for Equitable Education: Multilingual Education in Cambodia](#)". Here, Wong and Benson provide an optimistic look at the status of various languages in Cambodia and its implications for multilingual education practices, specifically in indigenous communities: Kreung and Khmer. The authors argue that incorporating multilingual aspects into language-in-education policy provides an important means to overcome inequity among indigenous people and contributes to an increased access to high-quality education. They highlight that a vital element of such a success rests on the strong collaboration among multiple stakeholders, who work together to ensure that effective policies and support fall into place for a sustainable policy development.

2.2 Part II: Racialized Discourses, Diversities, and Identities

Sociolinguists have little disagreement on how language impacts upon identity and cultural experiences (or vice versa) and importantly their implications for the formation of cultural diversity narratives in education. On this view, Fleming discusses in chapter "[Who is "Diverse"?: \(In\)Tolerance, Education, and Race in Hong Kong](#)" the notion of diversity by drawing on data from an ethnographic study with South Asian secondary students in Hong Kong. Her study focuses on daily interactions in particular on school's multicultural day as well as in Social Studies course in which issues of diversity are raised and discussed. This study shows how these activities, while aimed to promote cross-ethnic communication among students from different ethnic backgrounds, cause unintended and even counterproductive results. These unintended results seem to portray South Asian students as being unable to adjust (assimilate in reality) into the majority Hong Kong culture. The author, therefore, calls for a deeper scrutiny of the multilingual and multicultural measures in a view to achieving a genuine representation for ethnic minorities through culturally inclusive practices.

In chapter "[Unresolved Tensions in Hong Kong's Racialized Discourse: Rethinking Differences in Educating about Ethnic Minorities](#)", Gube and Burkholder explicate how ethnic minorities are racialized in Hong Kong. They draw attention to public and educational discourses that construct social meanings of race and examine how forms of racialization are manifested by different levels of invisibility and racial normativity. They maintain that discourses on cultural and linguistic diversity and ethnic minorities are not yet deeply entrenched; expectations on them to conform to local and Hong Kong-centric linguistic and cultural

practices still prevail. These expectations, according to the authors, are different from those for more privileged communities, such as expatriates and Caucasian non-Chinese residents, and thus signify a distinctive set of cultural divisions and societal hierarchy in the city.

In chapter “[Citizenship Status and Identities of Ethnic Minorities: Cases of Hong Kong Filipino Youth](#)”, Ng and Kennedy explore the citizenship identity of a group of Filipino youth in Hong Kong. Attention is drawn to the intricacy of citizenship status among ethnic minorities and exposes how Filipino young people negotiate identities in relation to Hong Kong, Mainland China, and the Philippines. The study points to the distinction between legal citizenship (e.g., being naturalized as a Chinese citizen) and citizenship identity (i.e., how individuals construct social meanings in relation to the structures and contexts they live in). This study finds that Filipino youth in Hong Kong construct their citizenship identity in a way that reflects a desire for possessing permanent residency in Hong Kong and facing varying degrees of racial discrimination in the city.

The complexity of minority identity formation cannot be reduced to present day-to-day schooling experience, especially when minority population settlement is brought to light. In chapter “[A Forgotten Diaspora: Russian-Koreans Negotiating Life, Education, and Social Mobility](#)”, Chang offers a historical account of Russian-Koreans, particularly in terms of their mobility and settlement within the Soviet Union and Central Asia. His study highlights how Koreans in that region employ their transnational background for their integration, orientated to a desired occupational status through agriculture and communicative practices. This chapter also discusses the demographic changes of the Korean population and the development of Korean education institutions in the region and illustrates how occupational success in agriculture and the maintenance of cultural traditions contribute to the formation of diasporic identity among Koreans in Russia.

The authors in this part have thus far shown how diversity, identity, and citizenship are defined in the societal contexts and are interpreted, challenged, and reconstructed by ethnic minorities in their daily educational and lived experiences. These identity tensions are often an outcome of discrimination. In chapter “[The Analysis on Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants in Korea and Its Implications for Multicultural Human Rights Education Policies](#)”, Seong analyzes the discrimination experiences of immigrants in South Korea. Seong observes the influx of immigrants mainly from China, Vietnam, and the Philippines due to work and marriage and problematizes the inadequacy of multicultural education programs in South Korea. The survey findings show that most of the immigrants view the Korean society as discriminating due to cultural and socioeconomic factors. Discrimination takes place in work settings, such as immigrants being coerced to work overtime and perform additional tasks. Seong argues that multicultural programs should focus not only on facilitating these immigrants’ integration into the Korean society but also on protecting migrants’ human rights and promoting social recognition and inclusion.

2.3 Part III: Educational Equity and Equality—Provisions and Interventions

Identity experiences, exclusionary and discriminatory measures, and practices inherent in education systems often invite a pressing question that confronts many educators and commentators: “what can be or has been done” to cater for cultural diversity in schools. Clarifying and acknowledging the sources of inequity are often the first step. In chapter “[Ethnic Minority Young People’s Education in Hong Kong: Factors Influencing School Failure](#)”, Bhowmik scrutinizes the factors that contribute to ethnic minorities’ dropping out of school in Hong Kong. The case study provides detailed accounts about how minority students, school teachers, and other stakeholders talk about unsatisfactory academic outcomes, being overage, Chinese language issues, low socioeconomic background, and racism, among others. Bhowmik argues for the importance of abandoning the deficit views of ethnic minorities being “left behind” in the education system and rather concentrating on institutional interventions and remedies.

The attention to policy and institutional contexts of education for ethnic minorities is important for developing a nuanced understanding of how minorities are pushed out in the schooling system. Even though institutional change is not often immediate, interventions in pedagogy can be done in ways that counter the reproduction of social, racial, and class hierarchy. In chapter “[Critical Pedagogy and Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Possibilities for Empowerment](#)”, Soto reflects on his use of critical pedagogy in two ethnically diverse secondary schools in Hong Kong. By employing critical ethnography, Soto’s teaching journey aims to reenvision the teacher-student relationship in a manner that promotes the student awareness of social justice in teaching and learning processes. Soto engaged students with culturally relevant movies and poems, and positioned them to express themselves in nonthreatening ways. This action research concludes with a call for a stronger commitment to minority students’ communities and cultures through empowering pedagogies and class practices.

Policy intervention, beyond pedagogies, for positive minority parents’ involvement in education is important. In chapter “[Parental Involvement and University Aspirations of Ethnic Korean Students in China](#)”, Gao and Tsang examine social capital-embedded parental involvement and ethnic Korean students’ aspirations for university education in China. Statistical data analysis reveals that social capital is positively associated with students’ educational aspirations and also confirms the value of economic and cultural capital in affecting the operation of social capital-embedded parental involvement, as manifested by the hypothesized intersecting relationship between social capital and other types of capital. The preliminary analyses provide significant contribution to the prevalence of the interacting patterns among different types of capital. Not only does this finding warrant future work but also bears implications for university outreach programs toward ethnic minorities.

Turning to the role of curriculum, Muhammad and Brett in chapter “[Addressing Social Justice and Cultural Identity in Pakistani Education: A Qualitative Content](#)

Analysis of Curriculum Policy” look at how social justice and cultural diversity are addressed in Pakistan’s education policies. Their analysis draws on curricular policy documents for an understanding of how policy objectives and recommendations are related to national identity, cultural, and global perspectives. The content analysis shows that cultural diversity has been acknowledged such as in terms of portraying Pakistan as multiethnic and multireligious and making Islamic perspectives apparent in the cultivation of national identity.

Beyond curriculum, the complex relationship between policy and educational system has implications for ethnic minorities. In chapter “*Power Relations and Education of the Korean Minority in the Japanese Karafuto and Soviet/Russian Sakhalin*”, Park and Balitskaya document the education experiences of diasporic Koreans in the Russian Island of Sakhalin. Under the political condition, reported in this chapter, the Sakhalin Koreans were not positioned to retain their ethnic language and culture. This is tied to an assimilatory policy practice in education. Their discussion shows the different institutional efforts in the region that contribute to the deprival and revival of the Korean language in its education system. This chapter especially contributes to the discussion on how undocumented minorities are complexly juxtaposed in the power of institutional forces.

In the concluding chapter “*Challenges for Interethnic Relations, Language and Educational Equity in Asia*”, Halse synthesizes the contribution of all chapters by highlighting the overarching themes of and links among ethnic minorities, language, and educational equity. With reference to international scenarios of ethnic divisions and racial sentiments, Halse’s discussion makes visible the dilemmas concerning the boundaries and categorization that exist around the social world of different cultural groups. In closing, the chapter provides directions for scholarship and practice on how rootedness and belonging can be framed more productively in Asian societies.

2.4 Confronting Social and Educational Inequality and Promoting Multiculturalism/Multilingualism

While this book draws upon empirical accounts with different theoretical lenses, the thread that links such perspectives is how the intersection of power, equity, and diversity is tacitly realized and manifested in education in light of historical remnants and recent demographic changes in Asia. Home to Asia are a sizeable number of Confucian societies that respond differently to equity and diversity when compared to their Western counterparts. Underlying this response is the Confucian conception of social justice that shapes the condition of education resources made available to ethnic minorities (Kennedy 2011). Such conception and attention reinforce and invite new challenges on striking a balance among supporting the ethnic identities, languages, and cultures of minority groups and maintaining the integrated and harmonious nature of society (Feng and Adamson 2017; Romaine 2011). In

other words, the rights of minorities should ideally be safeguarded in ways that avoid social separation and ethnic conflicts. Rather than subscribing to Western multicultural models uncritically or deliberately bypassing issues of ethnicity, diversity, and equity, the chapters together clarify how certain Asian sociopolitical and cultural conditions underlie the existence of past and current policies and linguistic practices in education for ethnic minorities. Indeed, the contexts described in the chapters display an array of conflicting educational expectations, practices, and cultural and ethnolinguistic identities, especially when multiculturalism suffers from its own shortcoming and backlash against it (He and Kymlicka 2005; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010) and when inequities in education are not always laid bare. All the chapters in this book help us rethink multicultural and multilingual education theories and practices, particularly in understanding how power operates differently in the Asian context (Kymlicka 2015; Phillion et al. 2011). These perspectives together provide us directions to move away from “centrism” in education systems (Gundara 2017, p. 70).

Centrism in educational intervention reflects the proclivity toward integrationist approaches to cultural diversity. The outcome can be producing sameness—for ethnic minorities to become like their majority counterpart, especially in monocultural societies. As Nasir et al. (2006, p. 499) explained, however, “Equity is not about offering or producing sameness, but about enabling youth to appropriate the repertoires they need in order to live the richest life possible and reach their full academic potential.” This view echoes the appeal to global justice that opposes the effects of assimilation, which implies that different ethnocultural groups can coexist (He 2003). Putting this perspective into practice, an imperative for stakeholders would be to confront one’s own traditional ideologies and reconstruct political discourses and educational mandates that embrace harmony, equity, and diversity. Meanwhile, Asian societies enjoy an advantage: culturally inclusive and linguistically diverse environments are traditionally tolerated and recognized at different levels across polities (He 2003; Lee 2004). This tolerance and recognition form the basis to reenvision multiculturalism and multilingualism in ways that attend to social equity. Within such relatively inclusive learning and societal environments, therefore, policies should be designed to reflect greater efforts on “providing *enabling environment* to facilitate access to other cultures” (UNESCO 2009, p. 237), which value language and cultural rights of minorities to achieve equity for all. Yet, a crucible consideration for educators and policymakers is whether tolerance and recognition alone are desirable responses to the shifting sociocultural demographics of Asian societies. Here, the word “desirable” (instead of “sufficient” or “effective”) emphasizes the political nature of conflicting and competing discourses on what different cultural groups, stakeholders, and governments might perceive as an equitable response to diversity—what looks like equitable to one may appear to be unfair to others. This is often the case when societies have their own conceptions of tolerance and justice that dictate how cultural diversity is conceived (He 2003; He and Kymlicka 2005).

To cultivate an “enabling” multicultural and multilingual learning environment, beyond delving into the cultural and sociopolitical makeup of Asian societies in

relation to different levels of educational interventions, one needs a disposition that permits a proactive engagement with various forms of racism, discrimination, and prejudices that exist in interethnic relations and interactions (Gao 2012). The need to adopt this disposition speaks to the reality that each jurisdiction has its own historical and cultural specificities by which generalization cannot be made for the entire region how cultural and linguistic diversity is treated. Nevertheless, the disposition suggested here is not about devising curriculum and community interventions per se, but more about having a critical eye toward how disparity emerges in and through power within the social fabric and mundane practices in everyday life of different cultural groups (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997). Educational solutions to this end rest not only on effective support measures (Connelly et al. 2013), but also on how researchers and practitioners position themselves in their respective contexts to promote equity and diversity in culturally and linguistically diverse landscapes.

An overarching theme of this book is the intricacy of how ethno-linguistic, identity, and institutional processes intercross with one another in the treatment toward cultural and linguistic diversity embedded within power and equity rhetoric. The book responds to the sociopolitical changes in Asia (Miller 2011) and attends to the manifestations of power within the Asian diversity narratives (or lack thereof) and voices of ethnic minorities. Implicit within such responses and attention is a challenge: the way we imagine and build a sense of rootedness in cultural and linguistic terms goes beyond lobbying for systemic efforts for young people where their educational rights are protected and cultural backgrounds and linguistic heritages are respected (Gao 2016). The task to address inequities in education takes on significance, not only because of the developing and conflicting discourses on ethnicity and equity in Asian contexts, where ethnic conflicts and silences on engagement with cultural and linguistic diversity persist, but also because how these issues can be subjected to interpretation via the oft-debated paradigms—or fashioned under the guise—of multiculturalism or interculturalism (see Antonsich 2016; Halse, chapter “Challenges for Interethnic Relations, Language and Educational Equity in Asia”; Modood 2017). Fully unpacking the distinction of these two paradigms and examining their applicability in Asian education contexts are beyond the scope of this book. Though, this intellectual task must be continued if we scrutinize further the power that plays into the relations of different cultural groups, rather than resorting to such paradigms uncritically when devising strategies at the levels of policy and pedagogy.

Beyond the ethnic conflicts and violence in other jurisdictions that receive much media and academic attention, many questions remain unanswered. What would influence one’s orientation toward diversity in societies that privilege harmonious relations? How do we translate all kinds of diversity rhetoric meaningfully into educational initiatives that balance the principles of social justice and cultural cohesiveness, in addition to the neoliberal priorities that privilege computable academic outcomes? The words “from” and “to” in this chapter’s title denote the quest and journey of what one might conceive as equitable outcomes in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts of Asia and, more broadly, within highly globalized world

we live in (Connelly and Gube 2013). In so doing, we are better positioned at moving toward a civic reality characterized by a stronger commitment to maintaining a cohesive society, where everyone has a firm ground to stand on when engaging with diversity, thus feeling connected to the societies that one lives in and to the educational landscapes that are culturally and linguistically evolving.

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Part I
Language Practices and Policy

Ethnicity and Equity: The Development of Linguistic Capital for a Subgroup of South Asian Individuals in Hong Kong



Tina Byrom, Kam Yin Peggy Wong, and Helen Boulton

Abstract The importance of Chinese language learning has received much policy attention in Hong Kong, with the transition into particular forms of employment requiring specific levels of Chinese language acquisition and competence. Acquisition of linguistic capital therefore becomes an essential component in processes of social mobility where those who do not have access to the appropriate resources (economic, cultural and social) become disadvantaged. This chapter explores the experiences of Chinese language learning for six individuals who describe themselves as part of a South Asian ethnic minority group. Through semi-structured interviews, participants recounted the limited access to Chinese they had in the family home and the ways in which this contributed to their experiences of structural inequalities.

1 Language Learning in Hong Kong

Historically, English has been privileged as the language for progression into professional occupations. Indeed, before 1997 during the British colonial era in Hong Kong, the superposed bilingualism or diglossic language policy treated English as the higher status language, while Chinese was deemed a low-status subordinate language (Poon 2004; Gao 2011). Structural constraints were placed on particular groups through the insistence that mastery of English was a prerequisite for access to the civil service, higher education and British-based professional qualifications such as accountancy, medicine and engineering (Hu 2007). English mastery became a major criterion for the selection of local Chinese as well as other ethnic minorities

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into the elite group in colonial Hong Kong. As a result, English was used in high-status work situations and hence is considered the language of power and educational and socioeconomic advancement in the area (De Mejía 2002) in a context that concurrently negated the development of linguistic competence in Cantonese. However, since the handover from English rule to China in 1997, the language policy in Hong Kong has shifted to trilingualism (speaking fluent Cantonese, Putonghua and English), and biliteracy (mastery of written Chinese and English) (Evans 2013) is considered important. The specific focus of this research was to, therefore, explore the experiences of a small group of South Asians to examine the ways in which their limited access to Chinese in their respective family homes contributed to their experiences of structural inequalities within education.

2 Reunification and Stratification

Bourdieu (1991) argues that language systems provide a mechanism through which possible consensus on the sense of the social world can be achieved, thus making a fundamental contribution towards reproducing the social order. In other words, language proficiency is both emancipatory and limiting depending on the levels of linguistic skill possessed. Language proficiency therefore functions as an instrument of domination in which the dominant culture sustains its privileged position through mastery in communication: a command of the dominant language accepted and utilized by members of the dominant group. Through such practices, those who possess the linguistic capital associated with the dominant group enable them to distinguish themselves from others in the social order. Individuals who cannot master or refuse to utilize the language of the dominant class may experience isolation and even segregation. As a result, an official language is used to differentiate social groups but also to demobilize the dominated classes through legitimation of the designated languages. Bourdieu thus addresses the relation of an official language to the imposition of political unity to explain the existence of subtle discrimination against language minorities whose linguistic backgrounds are different from those of the dominant (Bourdieu 1991).

Over 96.4% (7.08 million) of the local population in Hong Kong was Chinese in 2016 (Census and Statistics Department 2017). It is perhaps not surprising that the Chinese language is to become the dominant language during the new Chinese regime. Under the symbolic system, language is power, and language education is both the medium and the message (Gao 2011). Through a Bourdieuan lens, educational systems play a decisive role in the process, leading to the construction, legitimation and imposition of an official language (Bourdieu 1991). Education policymakers devalue the previous dominant language through the imposition of a new medium of instruction in schools. Through this, the Chinese language is established as the new legitimate language and thus becomes a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) as it negates the previous dominant language and those who possess the communication skills in that language.

Local policymakers identify that Hong Kong is an international city. To increase the locals' competitiveness in the international arena and to enhance their role in fostering exchange and stronger ties with Mainland China, Hong Kong students are expected to be nurtured as individuals who are proficient in both Chinese and English. The postcolonial move towards 'biliteracy' and 'trilingualism' therefore recognizes and represents the economic power of China as pragmatic and legitimate. Individuals who possess trilingual skills are naturally in advantageous positions in which these changing language policies create changes in symbols of power (Gao 2011). The local South Asian language minorities, who have inadequate Chinese language skills across generations, are hence prone to suffer from the biliteracy and trilingualism policy.

The reported limited Chinese language proficiency of South Asian groups living in Hong Kong (Ku et al. 2005) is an important consideration. Notably, these ethnic groups' underachievement of Chinese language skills is often held to be the main cause of their low socioeconomic status in the sociopolitical context of Hong Kong (Ke and Tucker 2016) irrespective of the structural constraints that contributed to their underachievement. Improving South Asian students' Chinese proficiency is therefore important (*ibid*) to secure their improved life chances.

3 The Research Setting and Approach

'Designated schools' were originally established by the then Education Department and now Education Bureau with additional resources and focused support to enhance the learning and teaching of students located in language minority groups (Education Bureau 2014). However, those schools have been accused of exercising segregation between the language minorities and local Chinese students so that the former are deprived of opportunities to learn Chinese language in a natural environment (Loper 2004; Carmichael 2009; Centre for Civil Society and Governance at the University of Hong Kong and Policy 21 Limited 2012; Cunanan 2011).

To increase understanding of the phenomenon and impact of designated schools on South Asians in learning Chinese language, research was undertaken in one designated school that was participating in the 'Supporting Secondary Schools in the Teaching and Learning of Chinese for Non-native Learners' programme. In 2014–2015, there were five classes of Secondary Five (S5) in the selected secondary school. As informed, 53% of the student population was of Indian, Pakistani or Nepalese nationalities, while the rest was of Filipino, Chinese and other nationalities. Students were invited to take part in the research. As it was deemed important to provide further understanding of the impact of language acquisition after compulsory schooling, prior students of the school were also invited to take part in the research. The research took place over a period of 6 months.

Ethical processes were in line with the British Educational Research Association Guidelines (2011), and all participants were fully informed about the nature of the research and their rights to withdraw at any stage should they wish to do so. The

study was framed within qualitative research and as such, a range of methods (including interviews, email communications and WhatsApp conversations) were deployed to illicit the stories of six individuals in the study, in their own words. Stories were subsequently coded thematically.

4 The Sample

The individuals involved with this study comprised six individuals who identified themselves as a South Asian minority. Details of the individuals can be found in Table 1 below (all names are pseudonyms):

Sampling in qualitative research poses numerous issues (Berk 1983). Generalisability was not a consideration of the research; instead the focus was placed on deeper situated understanding and experiences. Recognizing the importance of constructing a sample based on the aims of the research (Coyne 1997), three schools that comprised ethnic minority students were approached. The sample that was finally established was essentially a sample of convenience, being established through a contact with the specific setting that took part. Participants self-selected into the study and inclusion criteria determined that they should be of South Asian background. This decision was pragmatic based on initial recruitment difficulties.

5 Further Information on the Participants

5.1 Mar

Mar is the elder daughter of her four-person nuclear family and a Muslim. She knew very little about her paternal and maternal grandparents since they had passed away before she was born. She assured me that her father was born in Hong Kong while

Table 1 The background information of six participants

Pseudonyms	Gender/age	Ethnicity/religion	Family composition	Generation in Hong Kong
Mar	Female/18	Pakistani/Muslim	Father, mother and one younger sister	Third
Jas	Female/17	Indian/Sikh	Stepfather, mother, one elder brother, one younger sister and one newly born brother	Third
Edi	Male/16	Indian/Hindu	Edi is the son of Mr. T. He is living with Mr. T, his mother and one younger brother	Second
Mr. T	Male/46	Hindu		First
Joe	Male/20	Indian/Catholic	Living with parents and being brothers to each other	First
Ni	Male/18	Catholic		Second

her mother was born in Pakistan. Her father had married her mother in Pakistan about 20 years before, and she was born about a year later. She learnt to speak Hindko and Punjabi when she was living in Pakistan with her mother.

5.2 *Jas*

Jas and her three siblings were all born in Hong Kong. She is a Sikh. Jas's late father passed away when she was about 5 years old. Since her mother was unable to take care of three children alone, she and her younger sister were brought to India to be looked after by relatives for a year. It was at that time that Jas learnt the Punjabi. As her mother spoke Cantonese as well as English at home, she considered Cantonese and Punjabi as her mother tongues.

5.3 *Edi*

Edi is the elder son of his four-person family and a Hindu. He came to Hong Kong with his parents when he was about 11 years old. Since his parents spoke mainly Tamil to him at home, he considered the language of Tamil as his mother tongue and himself as second generation in Hong Kong.

5.4 *Mr. T*

Mr. T is the father of Edi. He was born in Chennai, the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He and his two younger brothers arrived in Hong Kong to join their parents in 1981. He joined Form Two in the first and only designated school for South Asian language minorities where he first learnt Hindi. Mr. T has two sons who were studying in two different designated schools. Tamil was the major language spoken within Mr. T's household.

5.5 *Joe*

Joe was born in the South India and a Catholic. A multinational company relocated from India to Hong Kong 20 years before hired his father. His parents brought him to Hong Kong when he was about 10-month old. At the age of three, he started attending the English section of a local Anglo-Chinese kindergarten and then the designated 'Indian school' for primary schooling. Being identified as an Indian, he attended Hindi class in primary school, a language he had never used. The designated

primary school was also the institution where he started learning Chinese. He completed his secondary education in a self-financed Catholic secondary school in which English was adopted as the MOI. He was encouraged to learn the language of Konkani with his maternal grandmother as well as parents in family gathering.

5.6 *Ni*

Ni is the younger brother of Joe. He was born and baptized as a Catholic in Hong Kong. Similar to Joe's educational trajectory, he attended the English section of a local Anglo-Chinese kindergarten, the designated 'Indian school' and the self-financed Catholic secondary school for his primary and secondary education, respectively. The designated primary school was the place that Ni first came into contact with and learnt Hindi and Chinese. Similar to his elder brother Joe, he learnt some Konkani but was unable to use it to converse.

6 Characteristics of the Participants' Familial Habitus

Individuals from the Indian subcontinent are generally understood as being Indian or South Asian. Along with the names comes a range of stereotypical views: males are superior and dominant while females are inferior, poverty and large families living in crowded homes. Such stereotypes lead to the oppression of South Asians (Das and Singh 2014; Qureshi et al. 2014). The backgrounds of the six participants (ethnicities, religion, languages, aspirations, and personal experiences) are diverse though there are similarities. What is common across all participants is the adaptation and transformation of their primary habitus into a secondary habitus (Reed-Danahay 2005) that facilitates their living in Hong Kong and their capacity to engage with language learning and acquisition.

7 Characteristics of the Linguistic Habitus

Habitus is an internalized, embodied disposition towards the world. It comes into being through inculcation in early childhood with immersion in a particular socio-cultural milieu, that is, the family and household as well as institutions (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.46–47). Linguistic habitus, a set of dispositions that are acquired to speak within particular contexts through inculcation into any social milieu (Bourdieu 1991, p.17), emerged to be a set of complications for the language minority participants. It was strongly shaped by their growing up experiences and trajectories. The six participants' linguistic habitus through language acquisition is listed in Table 2.

Table 2 The six participants' linguistic habitus and language acquisition

Participants	Languages inculcated through family	A dual mechanism	
		Languages inculcated through institutes (formal)	Languages inculcated through peers (informal)
Mar	Hindko and Punjabi from her mother	Chinese, English and Urdu from the primary school in HK	Urdu and Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK
	Chinese from her father	Chinese and English from the secondary school	
Jas	Chinese from her mother	Chinese, English and Hindi from the primary school in HK	Urdu and Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK
	Punjabi from relatives in India	Chinese and English from the secondary school in HK	
Edi	Tamil from both parents	English from the primary school in HK	Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK
		Chinese and English and from the secondary school in HK	
Mr. T	Tamil from both parents	Tamil and English from the primary school in India	Cantonese and Hindi from schoolmates in the secondary school in HK
		English and Hindi from the secondary school in HK	Turkish from the locals in Turkey
		Turkish from a private institute in Turkey	Tamil from his clans and Cantonese from acquaintances in HK
Joe	English and Konkani from parents and maternal grandmother	Chinese, English and Hindi from the primary school	Hindi and English from schoolmates in primary school in HK
		Chinese and English and French from the secondary school in HK	English and Cantonese from schoolmates in secondary school in HK
		English in the university in HK	Cantonese from peers in the university in HK
Ni	English and Konkani from both parents and maternal grandmother	Chinese, English and Hindi from the primary school	English from schoolmates in primary school in HK
		Chinese, English and French from the secondary school in HK	English and Cantonese from schoolmates in secondary school in HK
		English in the tertiary institute in HK	Cantonese from peers in the tertiary institute in HK

8 Multilingualism and Language as a Common Denominator

Mar, born in Pakistan, spent 3 years with her mother in their homeland until they moved to Hong Kong. In those 3 years living with her mother, she learnt to converse in a local dialect called Hindko which is similar and close to Punjabi. At primary school, Mar had the opportunity to learn the language of Urdu from a qualified teacher who originated from Pakistan. Moving to the designated secondary school, she attended all classes in English except the subjects of Chinese language and the Urdu language. When asked what language was used in her family, she thought for a second before responding that no single language was employed; instead multiple languages were used:

[My mum speaks] ‘Hindko’, it’s like Punjabi. Urdu, we use Urdu, basically Urdu, Punjabi. And my dad use Chinese, mainly Chinese, English. (Mar: interview)

A similar phenomenon happened to Jas’s family. Jas was born in Hong Kong. She attended a local kindergarten, a designated primary school and then the present designated secondary school. She emphasized that her stepfather and mother could speak fluent Cantonese because they were second-generation Indians born and brought up in Hong Kong. She learnt to speak Punjabi due to a rupture caused by her natural father’s death; this impacted her social trajectory. Shortly after her father’s death, Jas and her younger sister were brought to India to be looked after by relatives in the region of Punjab for a year when she was about 5 years old. It was the period of time and arena that meant she had to learn to converse in Punjabi. Since her parents, elder brother and younger brother knew very little about Punjabi, the languages of Chinese, English, Hindi and Urdu, which they learnt in the schools in Hong Kong, criss-crossed in her household. She did find this natural but did express annoyance whenever people made comments on the languages used in her family:

My parents, they know English, Chinese, our languages and we speak Punjabi at home... We talk in Hindi and Urdu with our brothers and sisters because that’s the languages we use with our friends...And someone talks in English and all mixed up. I mean, we do not feel really special about it. It’s really normal for us. But when people hear us, like, doing that, they feel really awkward. (Jas: interview)

On the other hand, Mr. T was born and raised in Tamil Nadu where Tamil is the first language of the majority people residing there. Due to the anti-Hindi sentiments in Tamil Nadu during the post-Independence period, many Tamils had preferred English in education (Pandian 1996). Although Mr. T had lived in India for 12 years, the designated school in Hong Kong was the arena where he came into contact with and learnt the language of Hindi for the first time. He chose this language as one of his subjects because the selection was based on his identification of the language as an Indian one. Also, he could speak other foreign languages such as Turkish:

We were given a choice to learn either Chinese, Urdu, Hindi or French. I chose Hindi because it is an Indian language...

I have lived in so many countries and I know foreign languages... I lived in Turkey. OK. There was no English in use at all. So we were forced to learn Turkish. My wife and I forced to learn every day. Now I can speak like a local person... (Mr. T: interview)

Edi, the son of Mr. T, came to Hong Kong in his early teens. Chinese and Hindi were completely new to him. He was studying in a primary school in Chennai where English was adopted as the MOI. Meanwhile, Tamil was used at home in India and in Hong Kong. After he came to Hong Kong at the age of 11, he was admitted into a designated primary school and then the present designated secondary school for education. His father was the chairperson of the Tamil Association in Hong Kong and organized Tamil classes for children originating from the region of Tamil Nadu. Tamil was the major language being spoken by Edi and his family:

In Hong Kong, we in school, I speak Hindi, English. I only use these two languages. But at home in my daily life, I only use Tamil and English. (Edi: interview)

An interesting observation was that none of these South Asian participants was a native Hindi or Urdu speaker. Hong Kong somehow became the place where they were encouraged or made to learn the Hindi or Urdu language though these two languages were hardly used in their daily living. Joe and Ni, who had left the designated school, were now studying in two tertiary institutes where the majority was Chinese and noted that:

Joe: At home I use both English and Konkani which is my mother tongue. I've learned Hindi in my primary school for 5 years. But I think it is not very good and barely communicable. (Joe: interview)

Ni: I've learned a bit of Hindi in primary school and I can fairly understand it to a point that I can follow a normal conversation but I have trouble speaking the language as I wasn't brought up in a Hindi language speaking environment. (Ni: interview)

Born in India but studying in two designated schools and living in Hong Kong, Joe has acquired five languages in Hong Kong that were developed to various degrees of proficiency. After the interview, he sent the information of his language proficiency in LinkedIn as shown in Photo 1 that was sent through the instant messenger.

The national-language status for Hindi as well as Urdu has been a long-debated theme (Pandian 1996). The former was envisioned to be the sole language for governmental and bureaucratic matters in India. However, English is still used very widely due to resistance from many individual areas of India that wanted to keep their traditional languages (*ibid*). Since these two languages have been misunderstood and misrecognized as the native languages of all Indians and Pakistani in Hong Kong, the teaching of these two languages as subjects could be a means of reinforcing the effect of misrecognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.145). Now the Chinese Language has become an essential subject in all designated schools under the Chinese rule. Compared to their local Chinese counterparts just focusing on Chinese and English in schools, the South Asian students very often had to learn at least three languages in designated schools, namely Chinese, English and Hindi/Urdu. English was seldom their mother tongue, while it was the MOI in the designated school; the acquisition of multiple languages at the same time could become a burden to the students.

Languages

English

Native or bilingual proficiency

French

Full professional proficiency

Konkani

Native or bilingual proficiency

Cantonese

Limited working proficiency

Hindi

Limited working proficiency

Photo 1 Joe's language proficiencies presented on his LinkedIn webpage 2014

9 Linguistic Imperialism and Utilitarianism

Linguistic habitus is the social ability to adequately utilize this competence in a given situation and a linguistic market (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). A noteworthy finding is that the language of English, being the official language of England as well as of the former colonies of Hong Kong and India, is still playing a dominant role in the lives of the six participants to a certain extent. English was adopted as the official and major MOI in the Hong Kong designated schools. On the other hand, the English language had made continuous impact on the six participants alongside the complex historical process.

Mr. T reminisced that Chinese students always wanted to learn English from Indian students in designated schools. Emphasizing the value of English, he considered it as his second, but not a foreign language, through the inculcation of the school:

[English was] taught as the second language. All learnt English, even today...While, the Chinese students picking up their English from us. (Mr. T: interview)

For Mar and Jas, English was linked to a possibility to emigrate to Britain where history had led some of their extended families settling there. Habitus, as a generative spontaneity which asserts itself in the improvised confrontation with endlessly renewed situations, follows a practical logic (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 22). Mar thus started working hard to improve the language of English since her father told her about the possibility of immigration:

Because I have lot of my relatives and all living in UK... So I think, I mean if I concentrate to learn Chinese more, it will not help me in UK or something. So I basically change to improve my English and all. (Mar: interview)

Meanwhile, Jas also mentioned that her stepfather had an idea to emigrate to the United Kingdom and thus encouraged her to work hard on this language:

My parents said that they want to move to the UK. Because they said Hong Kong is like China now...Because my father's sister they are in UK. They are calling us so applying for the visas is easy. Because they have British passports. (Jas: interview)

Edi was inculcated with the English linguistic habitus during his primary education in India. Edi's betterment in the language of English thus facilitated his transition from India to Hong Kong, as English continues to be the official language in both places. Also, he could name a number of postcolonial countries where English was used as the sole or one of the official languages and he believed that it was important for him to continue learning English:

If you go to other countries, if you go to foreign country like Canada, Australia, you need to know English. That's most important that you have to know English. (Edi: interview)

Having a lived experience that English was pragmatic and widely accepted across the world, Edi strongly believed that it was sufficient for him to concentrate on English and not Chinese. His continuity in Chinese language was thus limited as a school subject in order to meet his parents' expectation regarding his academic performance.

On the other hand, having been raised and having lived in Hong Kong for almost two decades, the two brothers, Joe and Ni, were able to communicate in fluent English and basic Cantonese. Through the inculcation in the family and schools, the English that they used in the home environment and with friends of other language minorities such as Catholic Filipinos was their lingua franca. These two brothers perceived English as their first language and a cultural capital that it was not only able to be converted into academic attainment but also helped them to be popular among the Chinese peers because it is employed as the MOI in the tertiary institutions they were studying:

Joe: At class, I would use English with English-speaking classmates and Cantonese with local classmates... My English language ability does help me communicate with my peers and classmates in university...I do have the upper hand when it comes to working with people who don't speak at a native level. (Joe: interview)

Ni: English helps me in my degree studies and has made me more popular in my programme...During group work I often edit the work of the group by correcting their English sometimes even redoing a lot. (Ni: interview)

'Linguicism' or linguistic discrimination is culturally and socially determined due to a preference for the use of one language over another (Skutnabb-Kangas 2008). Structural and cultural inequality ensures the continued allocation of more material resources to English than the other languages. English has emerged as the dominant and legitimate language in Hong Kong, while it has been chosen as the designated medium of instruction in designated schools to suit the needs of the language minority students mostly from former British colonies. Seen through a Bourdieuan lens, it benefits those students who are proficient in English or those with the English linguistic habitus so that they can reproduce cultural capital such as academic achievement more easily than those without it. Joe and Ni, who used English to communicate in their family, were superior to their Chinese counterparts who had other linguistic habitus and proficiency. Considering English was a language inculcated through familial and institutional habitus, Joe and Ni who mastered English well were advantaged in academic performance (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Educational research has shown that students learn better through their mother tongue (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1989; Baker and Sienkewicz 2000; Cummins 2000, 2001; Baker 2014). While the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development and has positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development (Cummins 2001; Bühmann and Trudell 2008), it is unlikely that students such as Mar and Jas could benefit from the mother-tongue education due to their unique linguistic habitus produced and reproduced within their households. The current findings might shed light on the phenomenon about the academic underachievement of most South Asians studying in designated schools (Gao 2011; Kennedy 2012; Tsung and Gao 2012) as English was not their mother tongue.

10 Class-Fraction-Based Language Practice

The findings indicated that there were associations between the participants' socio-economic status and their practice to acquire the Chinese language. In the absence of the information about participants' household income provided by the participants, Mosaic Hong Kong was adopted as the major component for socioeconomic classifications in the research. Mosaic Hong Kong is a geodemographic segmentation system that classifies all Hong Kong households and neighbourhoods into 38 unique Mosaic types and 12 groupings that share similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics (Hong Kong Post Circular Service 2012; Experian 2015).

Upon cluster analysis of Mosaic Hong Kong, Mar's domicile was classified as Type G22–G23 the 'Grass Roots Living Average Families in Affordable Public Blocks'. Mar and her family were living in a public housing flat where households were predominantly Chinese, and thus the facilities and service provisions were in the language of Chinese. When Mar's father was at work while her mother was unable to converse in Chinese language, Mar, being the elder daughter, became the person helping her mother in household chores. Chinese language became a pragmatic tool for her to accomplish the daily activities:

Actually, I really notice something. When I go to the Chinese shop, when they see me speaking Chinese, 平d啦, 學生嚟, 無咁多錢, 唔該你... (translation in English: cheaper please, I'm a student, have no money, please...). 你又識中文, 幾好呀! ok, 好啦, 平d比你 (translation in English: It's good you know Chinese. Ok, cheaper for you). (Mar: interview)

On the other hand, Jas and her family were living in a public housing flat. Both of her parents were semi-professional employees, while her elder brother was working as a full-time pub manager. With a bigger household size and being able to pay more rent, her domiciliary of Mosaic Hong Kong was classified as Type F18–F21 'Mid-to-low Income Families Living in Urban and Suburban Subsidized Homes'. Jas and her family did their shopping in a local supermarket where goods labels were displayed in both English and Chinese. However, the experience told her that

competence in the Chinese language was essential as it was the language in which to converse with the supermarket workers hired to serve mainly local Chinese:

Because living in Hong Kong and we know Chinese, you feel a bit like... you do not feel helpless. Because when we look at other people, like other people from our country, and they do not know Chinese. Like even if you saw them anywhere in the place, like some ParknShop, some shops, they cannot communicate, it's really difficult for them to find stuff they need. (Jas: interview)

In the case of Jas, she had already been inculcated with the partial valued linguistic habitus from her parents and extended family to survive in the community. Since she was satisfied with her linguistic capital, she was not motivated to make further effort in any language acquisition:

[Hindi] is not my subject. I choose geography, THS tourism for my elective...I am ok with other languages...(Jas: interview)

Edi, who was living in the private middle-class expatriate housing area, provided a different story. Edi, dressed in an ironed uniform and shiny leather shoes, lived in the Western District of Hong Kong Island classified by Mosaic segmentation tool of neighbourhood types as 'Type B05 Well-off Families'. Edi had a unique view on Chinese language acquisition. He viewed himself as different from his South Asian schoolmates in socioeconomic terms. He was free to play basketball that required no language and was able to have tea with friends after school. Chinese was purely a school subject to him, while it was an instrument for those schoolmates who had to acquire it to earn their living:

So basketball for me, this sport does not need communication. You don't need language. You just ask, you just throw...if I am with my school friends or friends which I know, I go out with them have lunch or dinner...Pakistani and Indian can speak fluent Chinese because they work outside part-time job, so it's important for them to learn Chinese. So they have learnt. So they know fluent Chinese. (Edi: interview)

Having sufficient financial resources, Edi did not have to speak the local providers' language for what he wanted. Instead, he was free to choose and purchase services from providers who could speak his languages, which were Tamil or English. He learnt yoga and badminton from a Tamil-speaking instructor, and he learnt painting and drawing from a Chinese teacher who could explain the skills to him in English:

[B]ecause of my dad. Because in Hong Kong, we have an association, call Tamil Cultural Association, we all Tamil people in Hong Kong gather together. So even the coach where he is, all Tamil people gather together ...

He just need to guide me how to draw, he just need to show me how to draw so that I can learn. But he knows how to speak English, I can learn many things from him....(Edi: interview)

Despite research studies identifying inequalities encountered by the South Asian language minority students in education as a result of having inadequate Chinese language skills (vide Loper 2004; Ku et al. 2005; Carmichael 2009; Gao 2011; Cunanan 2011), having insufficient Chinese language skill did not create any barrier for Edi at all. His economic and cultural capital allowed him to escape from the

competition field in Hong Kong and to be free in making choices of his study plan in places where the language of English was used:

So that I have planned business and account in Australia or Canada...and it depends on the language. In Australia and Canada, mainly talk in English. So it's really easy to put up and communicate with others in English if you have a doubt. (Edi: interview)

The research findings show that class-fraction-based habitus is a factor as well as a driving force on the participants' Chinese language acquisition. The findings suggest that class fractions, determined by a combination of the varying degrees of social, economic and cultural capital, could reflect trends in the participants' consumption correlating with their fit in society. Although Cantonese is the unmarked language for spoken communication, English is used in commercial and residential areas wherever expatriates and the educated middle class are present (Evans and Green 2001). A higher socioeconomic status can result in South Asians having choices and/or privileges in extensive dining, social and recreational facilities and schoolings where English and languages other than Chinese are used to serve expatriates and the prosperous group. Moreover, residing in the areas where store or restaurant staff could hold conversations in English, Edi who was inculcated with the 'high-class' language eventually felt it was pointless to produce Chinese language as his cultural capital. Given that English as an international language for business and a historically preferred language for elites and professionals, participants who fall into these categories even knowing little Chinese tended to be of lesser importance for their daily living.

11 Inverse Immersion

The findings also indicated that the longer the generation of the participants such as Mar and Jas lived in Hong Kong, the more the languages they acquired were used in their daily living. In addition to their mother tongue of Punjabi, the languages of English, Chinese, Hindi and/or Urdu were learnt and taught in the designated school. Being overwhelmed by the heavy school workload, Mar and Jas quitted the elective subjects of Hindi and Urdu in their Secondary 5 study. While they were expected then to be better off in the Chinese language under the provision of the systematic Chinese lessons, an unusual phenomenon, 'inverse immersion', took place to cater for their social needs in the school. Mar acquired Urdu and became fluent in this language through daily conversation with her peers:

The national language of India and Pakistan 'Standard Urdu' is mutually intelligible with 'Standard Hindi' because both languages share the same Indic base and are all but indistinguishable in phonology and grammar (Lust et al. 2000). Upon analysis, languages were in fact acquired through a dual mechanism within the designated school. The first mechanism was provided through the official curricula. The majority of the language minority students were grouped into the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Chinese language class so that they

were isolated from the Chinese native speakers of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) Chinese language class. In this regard, there were very few or even no Chinese counterparts studying with the language minority students in the same class. The second mechanism, unofficial but powerful, was established through peer entities enabling the participants to become actively immersed in an informal language learning environment. Consequently, an interruption took place, and the language minority students were inversely immersed in a language environment full of Hindi and Urdu speakers. Gradually, the student participants developed their various degrees of proficiency in Urdu and/or Hindi from daily interaction with the other South Asian peers in the class.

Habitus is about cumulative exposure to certain social conditions, and it instils in individuals an ensemble of ‘durable and transposable dispositions’ that internalized the necessities of the extant social environment (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.13). Language acquisition thus requires not just knowledge of rules but a feel of the language or a practical sense for learning through time and experience, in which the social agent is never perfect at and that takes prolonged immersion to develop it. The Chinese language is a comparatively new language that was introduced into the education system of the designated school after 1997. However, the arrangement to separate the language minority students and the Chinese students into different classes is entirely unfavorable to Chinese language immersion. The research was not intended to scrutinize the historically structured segregation arrangement of the designated school. Instead, the findings focus on uncovering the factors in relation to the South Asian students being unable to inculcate with the linguistic habitus of Chinese effectively. Through a Bourdieuan lens, immersion through interactions in a selected language speaking environment is a key factor and pedagogy for successful language acquisition, at least at conversation level.

12 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the impact of language and language learning in Hong Kong through a Bourdieuan lens. To speak of habitus is to assert that the individual, and even the personal, the subjective, is a social collective (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). In societies with education, the primary habitus inculcated through the family then comes into contact with a system – the school (Reed-Danahay 2005).

The chapter has given voice to six representatives from Hong Kong society who went to a designated school and had different experiences in language learning. Based on the habitus immersion under certain language, contexts/fields shaped the participants’ linguistic habitus in order to gain valued linguistic capital. For example, when it was assumed that Mar was fluent in Urdu simply because she was a Pakistani while the rest should be fluent in Hindi because of their Indian ethnicity, the findings, from the perspectives of the participants, indicated a lack of awareness from the education policymakers of the South Asia histories and its language complexities. Jas, who had been given the chance to learn Cantonese from her mother

since birth and continued to use this language to converse with her mother and stepfather at home, was the only one of the six participants that could speak fluent Cantonese in terms of being able to use a variety of vocabulary to communicate while engaged with the researcher. Then Mar, who learnt basic Chinese from her father while Punjabi continued to be the dominant language used at home, was able to speak basic Chinese in her daily life. Meanwhile, Edi and his father, Mr. T, who had learnt to speak, read and write the language of Tamil and continued to use this language at home in Hong Kong, were confident in using this language as well as identifying themselves as Indian Tamil. Meanwhile, Joe and Ni, who had been taught Konkani at home, were confident with their English.

On the other hand, the transformations of the participants' habitus suggest that their submission resided in the unconscious fit between their habitus and the fields they operated within (Reed-Danahay 2005). With this understanding in mind, the field is the locus of relations of force and of struggles which aim to transform it (Reed-Danahay 2005). Simply speaking, habitus is a hopeful concept because it is a product of history but also an open system of dispositions that is constantly subject to experiences and therefore to change. Within this complex field of relations and experiences, South Asian minority groups are required to put aside their primary linguistic habitus in order to learn a language that is not only historically and culturally remote from them but where the learning of this language is constructed within a structure that produces them as 'other' to live in Hong Kong.

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Identity and Investment in Learning English and Chinese: An Ethnographic Inquiry of Two Nepali Students in Hong Kong



Chura Bahadur Thapa

Abstract This chapter reports on an ethnographic study of two Nepali students' identity and investment in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) in Hong Kong. This ethnographic inquiry lasted for more than 2 years during which I had interactions with the participating students and observed their language practices and social interactions at various locations (i.e., at school, home, friendship networks, and social media). Analysis of the data reveals that self-other identification processes play important roles in learners' investments in learning a particular dominant or non-dominant language. In light of these findings, this chapter concludes with a call to researchers to undertake further research on the social identification processes and investment in learning languages. This chapter also calls on educators to understand the identities of the linguistic minority students in order to respond to their needs so that they could invest meaningfully in learning institutionally legitimized languages.

1 Introduction

This chapter reports on an ethnographic study of two Nepali minority students' identity and investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) in Hong Kong. Much of the research on identity and investment in language learning have either been undertaken in English-speaking contexts (Norton 2000; McKay and Wong 1996; Darwin and Norton 2015; De Costa 2010), in tertiary institutions (Kim 2003; Gao et al. 2008), or with learners whose first language is often the language of classroom instruction (Rajadurai 2010; Kim 2003). These studies have shown how learners' sense of identity (Norton 2000) is linked to their investments in learning a second or a foreign language, which is English in many cases.

In Asian contexts, studies on the identity and investment of linguistic minority students are rare. Linguistic minority students are often subjected to studying multiple dominant languages among which they have to choose one of the institu-

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tionally legitimized languages as a medium of instruction. My aim in this chapter is to explore (1) how the identification process is linked to the linguistic minority students' investments in learning multiple dominant languages and (2) what opportunities and constraints the ethnic minority students have when making investments in learning those languages. I undertook this study in a context where students have to study two legitimized languages – Chinese (Cantonese) and English – which are not widely practiced by the students at home and among their friendship circles (Census and Statistics Department [CSD] 2011). Students also have no choice but to receive their education in one of those dominant languages as part of the medium of instruction (MOI) policy, given that most teachers can speak only these two languages.

In the following section, I review literatures on identity and investment in language learning in different contexts (Norton 2000; McKay and Wong 1996; De Costa 2010; Rajadurai 2010; Kim 2003). After that I describe the language education policy of the government of Hong Kong for ethnic minority students in order to show what languages are institutionally legitimized or delegitimized that have material consequences for certain group of students (see García and Lin 2017) followed by the methodological approach adopted in this study. In the findings section, I present two focus group participants' identities and investments in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese) in Hong Kong. I argue that institutional and individual self-identification processes play important roles in the way ethnic and linguistic minority students invest in learning particular languages.

2 Identity and Investment in Language Learning Research

The notions of identity and investment in language learning research have received extensive attention from researchers in recent years from diverse theoretical and methodological orientations (Norton 2000; Gao et al. 2008; Rajadurai 2010; Kim 2003; De Costa 2010). The notion of identity and investment was introduced as an alternative to the notion of language learning motivation (LLM) in which individuals' language learning attitudes have been categorized as integrative or instrumental (Gardner and Tremblay 1994).

As sociocultural theorists contend, motivation for learning a second or a foreign language is “a multi-faceted, dynamic and complex phenomenon” in which issues of ethnicity, social categorizations, and unequal power relationships are embedded (Gao et al. 2008, p.12). In order to address the unequal power dynamics between learners and target language community, Norton (2000, p.6) developed the construct of investment and notion of imagined identity in language learning research. Norton (2000) defines learners' identity as the “desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety” based on Anderson's notion of imagined community, which may or may not be real (Norton 2000, p.8; Anderson 2006).

Based on learners' such sense of future identity, they are expected to “engage in social interaction and community practices,” which Norton (2013) considers the “learners' commitment to learning” or investment in learning the target language

(p.6). Research on identity and investment in language learning have taken place in English-speaking ESL contexts where notions of social integration are played out to appropriate the identities of the immigrant students (De Costa 2010; Menard-Warwick 2005; McKay and Wong 1996) or in university contexts (Kim 2003; Gao et al. 2008).

Research has identified the value of immigrant students' cultural capital referring to the acquired sense of gender or ethnic identity in the process of investing in a dominant language such as English for economic benefits (De Costa 2010; Menard-Warwick 2005). For example, De Costa (2010) shows how Vue Lang, an adult immigrant from Laos to the USA, managed to learn English by invigorating his memories of being a Hmong refugee, his own ethnic practices, and his experiences of being subjected to the acculturation processes while on the way to the USA. De Costa's (2010) and Menard-Warwick's (2005) studies of the students in ESL programs show a complex interplay between the learners' trajectories, institutional and curricular arrangements, and learners' investment in learning the target language.

Few studies undertaken in non-English-speaking contexts, such as in Malaysia, show that learners' static ethnic identity often plays a mediating role in their investment in learning English, an internationally dominant language (Rajadurai 2010; Kim 2003). The participants in Rajadurai's (2010) study – Farah and Amy, for example – found it hard to meaningfully invest in learning English because their Malay counterparts often expected them to speak in Malay instead of in English. Farah and Amy's motivations to invest in English were complicated by, among others, the perceived stigmatizations from their own community members showing the tensions in the identification process and investment in learning English. Rajadurai's (2010) study is particularly noteworthy to understand how the learners' static ethnic identity can become one of the "obstacles" in their investments in learning English (p.102).

Researchers have shown that identity is not a thing but a process in which self-other construction takes place in day-to-day or moment-to-moment interactions between and among people (Wortham 2006; Bucholtz and Hall 2005). In addition, as McKay and Wong (1996; also see Lee 2008) show, there are also institutional identification processes in multiethnic and multicultural settings in which people from certain ethnic or linguistic groups are stereotyped and discriminated by members of other groups. Such identification process has implications in the students' academic learning (Wortham 2006). Drawing on classroom discourses over a long span of time, Wortham (2006) presented a telling example of how social identification processes in the classroom over a period of time categorized certain group of students as promising and uncompromising or "outcasts" and how such processes had implications in their academic learning (p.148). Those identified as promising students in the ongoing curricular themes during the classroom discourses are shown engaging in classroom discussions productively and advancing their academic learning, while those identified as "outcasts" became increasingly dissenting and unpromising. I follow Wortham (2006) to explore the identities and investments of Nepali minority students in learning multiple dominant languages – English and Chinese (Cantonese) – in Hong Kong.

I undertook an ethnographic study of two secondary school Nepali students, who were subjected to learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) as part of the government-imposed curricular requirement in Hong Kong. Instead of focusing on one particular type of interactional event in a fixed classroom space, I focused on participants' identity trajectory reflected in their own narratives, classroom interactions, and social media activity to explore how their identities constructed in different spaces and times overlapped with their investments in learning languages in the context of Hong Kong. Before moving on to the methodology section, I describe the background of Nepali students and language policy of the government of Hong Kong with a purpose of understanding the macro-level identification processes of these students.

3 Nepali Students and Language Education Policy in Hong Kong

Historically connected to the colonial British Gurkha military in Hong Kong, Nepali students comprise a small proportion (roughly 3091) of Hong Kong's student population (CSD 2011; Equal Opportunities Commission [EOC] 2011). Hong Kong's mainstream discourses often tend to problematize these students' identities and social integration due to their lower competency and skills in Chinese (Cantonese) language (Gao 2011; HK Govt. 2014; EOC 2011). As Nepali students are categorized as ethnic minorities or non-Chinese-speaking students (NCS) along with other groups such as Indians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, and Indonesians, I believe that the opportunities and constraints that Nepali students face in Hong Kong education system, particularly in relation to language learning and medium of learning in schools, should be similar to that of other ethnic minority students as well.

The postcolonial Hong Kong government has institutionalized a "trilingual" and "biliteracy" language policy in which skills in written Chinese and English and spoken English, Mandarin, and Cantonese are promoted (Education Commission 2005; Kan and Adamson 2010). English and Chinese being the core subjects under Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary School Examination (HKDSE), ethnic minority students are also required to pass Chinese language international examinations such as GCSE or GCE in order to be eligible for tertiary education (Education Bureau 2014).

As they practice their own heritage languages at home (CSD 2011), Nepali and other ethnic minority students also face the complexities associated with the medium of instruction (MOI) in schools. During the colonial times, almost all government secondary schools had to use English as the medium of instruction (EMI) (Kan and Adamson 2010). While there is an ongoing debate whether Cantonese is a dialect of Chinese or an independent language system (see Gao 2012), the postcolonial government of Hong Kong adopted mother tongue (Cantonese) teaching policy for all but 114 secondary schools after Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997.

Although a large number of secondary schools still maintain CMI education, Hong Kong's demographic change compelled some of those CMI schools to convert themselves into English-medium schools or create some English-medium classes in which ethnic minority students, like the Nepalis, were recruited. These schools received government supports for Chinese language education programs, which were considered inadequate to meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of the students (Connelly et al. 2013). However, the government of Hong Kong introduced Chinese as a Second Language Framework (CSL) in which ethnic minority students' "migration" to CMI classes or schools is prioritized (Hong Kong Government [HK Govt.] 2014).

Most South Asian ethnic minority residents call Hong Kong home. [...] to improve the Chinese foundation of ethnic minority students at junior primary levels to *facilitate their migration to the mainstream Chinese language classes*. (HK Govt. 2014, pp. 22–23, emphasis my own)

Considering the ability of South Asian ethnic minority students "to listen and to speak, read, and write Chinese," a fundamental one for their "social integration," the government of Hong Kong allocated a large sum of money for schools to "migrate" the ethnic minority students to "mainstream Chinese language classes" referring to the CMI classes. There have been studies, among others, on ethnic or cultural differences (Kennedy and Hue 2011), support measures (Connelly et al. 2013), or language policy analysis (Gao 2011) in relation to the education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. This study particularly intends to look into (1) how the identification processes of ethnic minority students overlap with their investments in learning the two institutionally legitimized languages – English and Chinese (Cantonese) – and (2) what opportunities and constraints these students have when making investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese). In the following section, I describe the methodological approach of this study.

4 The Study

This chapter is part of my 4-year PhD project at The University of Hong Kong in which I conducted an ethnographic inquiry of secondary school Nepali students' identities and investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) in Hong Kong. In this chapter, I report two focus group participants' identities and investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese). The participants come from a secondary school (Ming Hing School hereafter), which represented a group of other schools described in Sect. 3 having English-medium instruction (EMI) for ethnic minority students and Cantonese medium instruction (CMI) for Chinese students.

While Ming Hing School hosted a large number of ethnic Chinese students in CMI stream, ethnic minority students, the largest proportion of which is accounted for by Nepalis, accounted for roughly 40% of the student population. The school used Chinese or spoken Cantonese for much of the multimodal spaces and everyday

school rituals, thereby identifying the Nepali and other ethnic minority students as outsiders. Practice of English by the school management, and teachers as well, was found limited to classroom teaching and delivery of disciplinary instructions to the ethnic minority students. Ming Hing School had arranged extensive Chinese language lessons for the Nepali and other ethnic minority students dividing them into three different ability groups such as “high level,” “middle level,” and “low level” based on their Cantonese skills as judged by the teachers and the school.

Since this study intended to explore the identities and investments of Nepali students, selection of the two ethnic Nepali students – Kina and Jankee – was made purposefully. Kina received her kindergarten and primary education in CMI stream, while Jankee received her kindergarten and primary education in EMI. Both students were born in Hong Kong and were sent to Nepal at different times for different periods. Kina was sent to Nepal when she was 6 months old and brought back to Hong Kong to be enrolled in a CMI kindergarten. Although Jankee went to a Chinese-dominated kindergarten, she was sent to Nepal when she was 6 years old. After she returned to Hong Kong, she received her education mostly in EMI thereafter. As such, Kina had been put in the “high-level” group, while Jankee was put in the “low-level” group for Chinese (Cantonese) language education in Ming Hing School showing how the two participants were identified institutionally. Kina and Jankee’s different linguistic trajectories fit into the broader policy goals as articulated in the Chinese as a Second Language Framework of the government as described earlier (also see HK Govt. 2014).

Data were collected through interviews and casual interactions with the participants several times, chats with the participants in social media, and observation of the school as well as students’ language practices (O’Reilly 2012). For ethical considerations, participants’ identities and names including the social media names of the participants were anonymized, prior consent was received, and off-line contacts were constantly maintained to understand if participants had any concerns about their participation in the research (see Tao et al. 2016). I also interviewed parents and teachers of the participants in order to triangulate the data on the participants’ investment in English or Chinese. While one of the participants (Kina) could speak fluent Cantonese, due to my own limited competency in Cantonese, interviews and other forms of interactions took place mostly in English or in mixed codes (English and Nepali).

Having come from the same community that is Nepali community, I was also able to establish extensive contacts and engage in mundane interactions with the participants becoming a “researcher as a befriender” (in De Costa 2010, p. 525) and also positioning myself as a student. As a result, I was able to understand the participants’ identification processes and their investment in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) through the face-to-face interactions and use of social media platforms such as Facebook and other communication Apps. The participants were also aware of my limited competency in Cantonese, and probably might have taken me as a role model, which might have influenced the way they produced their narratives during the interview processes. I transcribed and translated the interviews and interactions into English for analysis and interpretation based on discourse analysis approach

(Worham 2006; Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Analysis and interpretation of the data were guided by the research questions in which processes of identification and participants' investment involving the participants' written and oral practices in English or Chinese became central.

During the process of analysis, I identified categories that reflected the processes of identifications (institutionally and individually) and investments based on participants' narratives (Worham 2006; Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Field notes about their language practices (oral and written) in various occasions were also categorized as the participants' investments in learning particular languages. The opportunities and constraints for investments were identified based on the institutional arrangements (such as language use in multimodal spaces and school rituals) and teachers' legitimation of particular languages at particular times including their own language practices. While reporting the findings, I mainly depend on the identity categories constructed about the participants and by the participants institutionally and individually.

4.1 *Kina*

Identified as a Chinese Kid

Kina was admitted to a local kindergarten (Highland Kindergarten hereafter) that hosted majority of the kids from the local Chinese families, who predominantly used Cantonese for communication among themselves and with the teachers. As such the teachers and other Chinese kids probably identified Kina as a Chinese kid, which probably mediated in her investments in learning Cantonese since her early years. After Kina completed her kindergarten education, Highland Kindergarten recommended her to a nearby CMI school (Dialect School), an example of her being identified as a Chinese kid again.

During our interactions, Kina recounted her Chinese and English language learning experiences in Dialect School, where she invested heavily in learning Chinese (Cantonese) while investing less in English.

Kina- I still remember all I pass is Eng in Dialect School though the English level isn't any high nor my English level were [...] because we did not study English that much in Dialect School. (Retrieved from Facebook messaging on January 20, 2016)

Kina- I didn't really enjoy learning Chinese in Dialect School, I was just learning what my parents wanted me to learn. I don't really remember at the time when I was still studying in Dialect School. In San Leung, I was also not sure why I was learning Chinese but I kept on learning it anyways. My Chinese skills was much better when I was studying in Dialect School comparing to San Leung, probably because [...] I could only communicate with Chinese classmates. (Retrieved from Facebook messaging on April 14, 2016)

Recounting her experiences of learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) in Dialect School “like a dream” (based on interaction with Kina on April 17, 2017), Kina mentioned that she did not “study English that much” in Dialect School probably because it was a CMI institution, which structured its curricular activities as per its identity. At the same time, students enrolled in this institution were all, except few, Cantonese speakers, who identified everyone including Kina as a Cantonese speaker.

While Kina mentioned that she did not “enjoy studying Chinese (Cantonese)” in Dialect School, she learned it “anyway” because all her friends were Chinese (Cantonese) speakers. In addition, she was also provided with “tuition classes” (based on interaction with Kina on 17 April 2016) for Chinese (Cantonese) language, because her parents also wanted her to “study” Chinese (Cantonese), which maximized her investments in learning Chinese (Cantonese).

In my own observation, Dialect School was a typical monolingual institution in which Chinese (Cantonese) language occupied most of the domains and activities such as teaching, learning, textbooks (except English), all forms of multimodal spaces, extracurricular activities, and school rituals. Such practices implicitly identified Kina as similar to the Chinese kids thereby constraining her investment in learning English because English language was only used within English language classrooms. As such, Kina’s parents (Gita) transferred her to a multilingual school in another part of the same city.

R: Kina was in Chinese medium in primary/ right?

Gita: yes/she was in Chinese medium since she quite young/ since she was in Kindergarten

R: oh/ I see

Gita: yes/ since her childhood/ and when you went to Dialect School/ there was also Chinese medium/ they used to teach English too/ but they used to teach Chinese the most/ that’s why/ like when we were sent forms/ letters/ they were all in Chinese/ and we also needed English/ we need English and Chinese together/ that’s why I thought/ it is not going to help/ so I transferred her to San Leung) (*Interaction with Kina’s mother 15/12/2015*)

Kina’s mother recounted her observation of the English and Chinese (Cantonese) learning opportunities for Kina in Dialect School saying that “they used to teach English too, but they used to teach Chinese the most” pointing to the lack of adequate opportunities for learning English. This excerpt also shows a clash of identity expectations and linguistic ideologies between the institutions and families that played mediating roles in Kina’s investments in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese). For example, Gita constructed her family’s identity as “we” and mentioned that “we also need English, along with Chinese” thereby pointing to a need of an appropriate institutional environment for Kina to balance her learning of English and Chinese. Kina’s family’s such identity construction led them to “transfer” Kina to a multilingual school (San Leung hereafter), where Kina built her multilingual identity.

Being a Multilingual

Kina's new school, San Leung School, identified the ethnic minority kids based on their language skills and facilitated their investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese).

Gita: /they used to teach them local Chinese curriculum in San Leung/ and they used to teach the simple Chinese with simple words to the other children/ those who have come from Nepal and who have come from Samata Kindergarten/ they taught Chinese language to my daughter and my son with the local Chinese/ it was like that) (Interaction with Kina's mother 15/12/2015)

Kina's mother says that San Leung School put Kina with the Chinese kids for the Chinese subject and taught her "local Chinese," referring to the higher-level or native-level Chinese being taught to Kina. The students coming from "Samata" (an English-medium kindergarten) and newly arrived children in Hong Kong were taught the course with "simple Chinese words" referring to the basic foundation level Chinese language course.

Kina also believed that her investment in learning Chinese (Cantonese) in San Leung School was more enjoyable and meaningful than in Dialect School.

R- where did you enjoy learning Chinese/ in Dialect or in San Leung?)

Kina- in San Leung/

R- why?

Kina- /{laughs}/ in Dialect School/ I was the only Nepali in the class/ and there was no meaning of speaking Chinese or not speaking/ and they taught all the subjects except English/ in Chinese/ so not fun/ but in San Leung/ they taught Chinese only in Chinese medium/ and other lessons used to be in English/[...] and it was fun learning with friends/ it was not that difficult/ it was fun/

R- why was it fun?

Kina- {laughs}/{laughs}/may be because I know three languages/ I could communicate with Chinese friends in Chinese/ and in Nepali with Nepali friends/ or in English/ and I felt it was useful/ like/ to translate for friends/ felt it good to help them/ and then/ I also felt good when the teachers complemented me/ (*Interaction with Kina in Yuen Long on 17/04/2016*)

The reason why Kina had to be transferred to a multilingual school (San Leung) might be because the monolingual school suppressed the parents' and students' identities (Norton 2013). For example, when Kina was in Dialect School, she was the only Nepali kid identified by the school as a Chinese kid being taught all the subjects in "Chinese except English" language. After moving to San Leung School, Kina started enjoying the investments in Chinese language lessons because she was identified by her teachers and peers as a competent student having an ability of "translating" for her non-Chinese friends.

Being a Made in China Girl

Kina's extensive investment in Cantonese and becoming a competent student in Chinese (Cantonese) led her to be ethnified as a made in China girl by other ethnic minority peers and teachers.

Kina: [...] classmates and teachers were making fun of the fact that I know Chinese. People started to make jokes for example “made in china”/“dream in Chinese”. (*Retrieved from the Facebook inbox messaging with Kina*)

She also mentioned once about her habit of thinking in Chinese (Cantonese) before speaking in English or Nepali. When I was observing the interactions between Kina and her close friends during lunch break or after-school activities, they regularly threw jokes around, for example, asking “where is made-in China?” or “made-in China does not eat that food.” In the later days, Kina seemed less interested in learning Chinese (Cantonese) and invested heavily in learning English.

R: /uh/ why do you want to use English/I think you should feel comfortable to speak in Chinese/

Kina: /no/I am not comfortable with Chinese/

R: /but you are a fluent Cantonese speaker/aren't you?/

Kina: /yes/

R: /so?/

Kina: //uh//because/I have like/most of my friends//speak Nepalese//even/ even/ they might understand some Chinese/but/I don't see any point/like/why should I speak Chinese/with them?/

R: /because//because/

Kina: /uh/I don't want to improve my Chinese/I want to improve my English and Nepali/ (*Taken from an interaction among the students during a lunch break on 2/7/2014*)

This excerpt shows how the social identification processes had implications in Kina's investments in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese). According to Kina, although most of her “Nepali friends understood some Chinese,” she did not see “any point speaking Chinese” with them or investing in Chinese (Cantonese). Kina was comparatively more fluent in Cantonese than any of her Nepali or Pakistani friends, which probably prompted her to socially identify herself as a better student in Cantonese. While Kina said that she did not care much about such identification, she might also be trying to avoid the stigmatization of “made-in China girl” by her own community members. However, her investments in learning Chinese (Cantonese) were also mediated by the way she was identified institutionally in Ming Hing School.

Kina- [...] in Ming Hing, I started not to enjoy learning Chinese because the Chinese was really easy for me. I didn't need to study for any Chinese tests or exams and got nearly 100 marks. I talked to the teacher about the situation but there wasn't any change, so I just stop improving my Chinese. In fact, it got somehow worse than before. Now, I don't even want to learn Chinese [...] (*Retrieved from Facebook message*)

Although Kina's Chinese language ability was somehow near to that of a native Cantonese speaker, the teachers in Ming Hing School put Kina with other non-Chinese students in tailor-made Chinese language lessons, which was "really easy" for her, and she could "get 100 marks" without even studying. As such, Kina started "not to enjoy learning Chinese" indicating her de-motivation for investment in Chinese (Cantonese). She tried to communicate the mismatch between her Chinese language ability and the level of lessons with her teacher, but there was no "change," probably because she was socially identified by the teachers as a non-Chinese-speaking student, who fitted into the tailor-made Chinese language lessons. As a result, Kina did not "even want to learn Chinese" anymore indicating her decreased investment in learning it.

I argue that the whole institutional and social context including curriculum, pedagogy, and community of practice identified Kina as a "non-Chinese" with a need of simplified Chinese language curriculum, which mediated her investments in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese) in her secondary school. In addition, Kina also did not want to invest in "learning Chinese anymore," probably because she was identified by her non-Chinese classmates, who were not that competent enough in Cantonese, as a competent Cantonese speaker.

4.2 *Jankee*

Caught in Between

While Kina's investments in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese) were mediated by the way she was identified institutionally throughout her primary and secondary schooling, Jankee's investment in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese) was mediated by her transnational identity and the multiculturalist teachers. Jankee was sent to Nepal to be taken care of by her grandparents when she was 6 years old, which resulted in her losing fluency in Cantonese.

Jankee: actually when I was young I used speak Cantonese fluently/and could write and read/ but I don't know/ after I went to Nepal/everything disappeared/ it may be because I did not study Chinese in Nepal/(*based on interaction on 5/12/2014*)

As Jankee went to an EMI kindergarten dominantly occupied by Cantonese-speaking kids, she invested in Cantonese that enabled her to speak "fluently/ [...] read and write" Chinese during her pre-primary school years. However, after she was sent to Nepal, her knowledge of Cantonese "disappeared" probably because she "did not study Chinese in Nepal" indicating the role of transnationalism and the way her family constructed her identity in her investments in learning Chinese.

Jankee: uh/ [...] because I have to speak with my grandfather and grandmother/ if I only use Chinese or English/ my grandparents would not understand/ that's why I was taken to Nepal/ like with an intention that I learn my own language/ uh/ the parents these days they take their children back to

Nepal if their children do not know how to speak Nepali/ like/ thinking that they learn their language/ and like they communicate and meet their grandparents and relatives/(based on interaction on 14/12/2015)

According to Jankee, her parents sent her to Nepal with a view that she would “learn Nepali language” and be able to communicate with her “grandparents as well as relatives” thereby identifying her as an ethnic Nepali, who should have knowledge of her heritage language and culture. As a result, she was “forced into” the zero-investment opportunity for learning Cantonese in Nepal thereby losing her Cantonese fluency. Yet, Jankee was highly motivated to invest in learning Chinese (Cantonese) due to the way her teacher identified her needs and supported her in Hong Kong.

Motivated in Investing in Chinese (Cantonese)

Despite Jankee having had a bumpy ride in her Chinese language learning and investment, she is considered a motivated Chinese learner. During my observations, Jankee seemed to be having more positive attitudes than Kina in communicating with the Chinese community members in Cantonese. Whenever we met for coffee or meals together, she always tried to communicate in Cantonese with the staff in coffee shops and restaurants. She was also seen trying her best to interact with the Cantonese-speaking students in her school. According to Jankee, the main source of her motivation was her Chinese language teacher, who seemed to be having positive understandings about the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity of not only Jankee but also the entire class comprising of students from Nepali and Pakistani backgrounds and providing them with “right advice.”

Jankee: /Actually I am supposed to be in middle level/ but I want to be in low level because of Miss San/ because I want to be in her class/that’s why/ {laughs}

R: /last time you said that Miss San understands you/ what does it mean?

Jankee: / she knows the way how to like/ [...] she knows how to give us the right advice/and she knows/ she understands what I am facing/ because I share a lot of my problems with her/ and she knows the right advice to give me/ but it’s not only me/ like/ [...] it’s not only me/ also Bina and other students like Pasan/ she gives us advice to our whole class/ like she gives us advice/ and motivates us/ in short cut/ I can say she motivated us/(based on interaction on 8 December 2015)

Ming Hing School had grouped the NCS students into “high-level,” “middle-level,” and “low-level” lessons for teaching Chinese (Cantonese). Jankee was supposed to be in the “middle-level” group, but she chose to stay with the “low-level” group because of her favorite teacher – Miss San. According to Jankee, Miss San, an ethnic Chinese teacher, understood them (the NCS students) and knew how to give them the “right advice.” For Jankee, a likely at-risk student having come from

a broken family, Miss San seemed to be someone who did not only teach but also guided and provided the needed “advice” to these students. For example, Jankee said that she shared her “problems with Miss San” and Miss San gave her and her class the “right advice,” which became a motivating source for her to invest more in learning Chinese (Cantonese) in Miss San’s class.

During my observation of the lessons and interaction with Miss San (the Chinese language teacher), Jankee was seen and reported to be having invested more in learning Chinese (Cantonese) than most other students.

Miss San: Jankee is a very kind girl/ very very kind girl/ and/ uh/ her family background is very complicated/ because sometimes she is very depressed/ [...]

Miss San: and she will be very depressed/ crying sometimes/ but this/ after April/ after March like this/ this kind of /she become better/ and then/ she is good at Chinese as well/ she wants to learn/ she got good motivation to learn as I well/ [...]comparatively/ Jankee wants to learn/ Jankee said/ Chinese is very important for me/ and then even go out for part-time job/ uhh/he will send/ she will send some message to me/ Miss/ how to translate these two words?/ pronounce this two words/ [...] this is very truth/ (*Interaction with Ms San about Jankee on 3/5/2016*)

As reported by Miss San, Jankee was “good at Chinese/ and wants to learn” indicating Jankee’s motivation to invest more in Chinese (Cantonese). Jankee was at a “part-time job” when this data was collected and was reported to be sending “some messages” to the teacher and seeking her help for the meaning or pronunciation of the Chinese words, a clear example of her investment in learning Chinese (Cantonese).

Identification, Ownership, and Investment in English

As I presented in the previous sections, Kina and Jankee seemed to be having differing motivations in learning Chinese (Cantonese). However, they both seemed to be having similar motivation for the investment in English probably due to the everyday contextual reality. Investment in English has become more intensive due to its overarching role in communication, education, and its status as an international language with which Jankee and her fellow Nepali students tended to identify themselves with.

Jankee: English is everywhere/ I don’t know/ but I think English is everywhere/ although/ I cannot say that everyone knows English/ but/ we communicate through English/ that’s why/ [...] and/our teacher teaches in English/ (*Interview on 16 April 2014*)

These students were taught in EMI and identified as English-speaking students in their school. As was briefly described in the methodology section, ethnic Chinese students form majority of the school population, thereby making English the only

resource and medium for these students to communicate with their teachers and other school staffs. This shows that English has been the most important cultural capital for the ethnic minority students in contexts like Hong Kong, which are dominated by Cantonese ethnolinguistic group. They did so to balance and negotiate the identity between the policy discourses of Chinese (Cantonese) language learning (HK Govt. 2014; EOC 2011) and their imagined global identity connected to English language-speaking community (Darvin and Norton 2015).

Although Jankee and most other Nepali youngsters in Hong Kong were observed to be interacting in mixed codes (between Nepali and English), most of them did not possess the literacy skills in Nepali language. Except a few like Kina, many of these youngsters were also not competent enough to write in Chinese or read the Chinese texts circulating in the social media that effectively seemed to be mediating in their investment in English when it came to their social media activities. When I monitored the friends' lists of Jankee, and also Kina, it was observed that the majority of their friends were from Nepali, Indian, and Pakistani communities in Hong Kong. Their statuses and comments written in English in the social media should be, therefore, viewed in relation to the community and the context of social media in which they were engaged in. As such, their investment in English was more autonomous and natural based on their social context in which they constructed their identities. One such example was Jankee post celebrating her winning of the 67th Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival in 2015.

Jankee

December 15, 2015

Winning the 67th Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival out of 51 students was a very extraordinary experience. As Kaneeta said, yes we recited it ourselves, no guidance from any teachers but got great advices from peers and classmates. I thank you all from my heart. Especially, Shanha, Umi and Kan, Sita (pseudonyms). [...]

Comment react-text: 18 Share /react-text 73

You, [...] and 70 others

This is just one example of hundreds of such posts in Jankee's Facebook activity in which she was seen only investing in English. In this post, she writes that she invested by practicing the reciting of English with the "advices" from her classmates, but without the "guidance" from "any teachers," and was declared the winner out of 51 contestants participating in the Hong Kong wide Speech Festival in 2015. By the time I extracted this post, there were 71 likes (including me) and over 40 congratulatory comments. Among all the participants in the likes and comments on this post, five were her Pakistani classmates, two were her Chinese friends, and one was her former American teacher. The rest of the likes and comments came from Nepali friends of different ages for whom investment and achievement in English seemed to be a means through which "they could gain their desired social status and identities" (Gao et al. 2008, p. 24).

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Studies in the past have shown that learners' investments in learning a target language depend on their imagined identity (Norton 2000; Darvin and Norton 2015), acquired sense of gender or ethnic identity (De Costa 2010), or one's static ethnic identity (Rajadurai 2010; Kim 2003). This study shows that there is an intricate interplay between the ways identities are constructed at macro- and microlevels and the ways learners from ethnic and linguistic minority backgrounds invest in particular language in a particular sociocultural context. The macro-level social identification process involved the ethnic and social categorizations of Nepali students by the institutions, teachers, and parents, while microlevel social identification involved the self-other categorizations in particular social space. For example, Kina's investment in English and Chinese (Cantonese) was mediated by the way she was identified by Dialect School as a Chinese kid thereby failing to understand her and her family's ethnic and linguistic identity. Kina's family, on the other hand, construed such identification process as a threat to her daughter's investment in English. As such, she was transferred to a multilingual school. Similarly, Jankee's parents' expectations about Jankee to know Nepali language and culture affected her Cantonese fluency that she developed during her kindergarten years.

The microlevel interactions between Jankee and her teacher and also perceived negligence of Kina's teacher about her linguistic background mediated in her motivation in learning Chinese or English in later years. Unlike in Rajadurai's (2010) study, participants' ethnic background, as Nepali students, and categorized as ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, seemingly facilitates in balancing their investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) in this study. Hong Kong government's language policy context and the ethnolinguistic context of Hong Kong society play contributing roles for the Nepali students to balance their learning of English or Chinese (Cantonese).

A marked difference is seen between the linguistic trajectory of the two participants and the way they tended to invest in learning English or Chinese (Cantonese). Kina, for example, intends to invest less in learning Chinese, while Jankee tends to invest more in learning Chinese (Cantonese). It is possible that their interactions and relationships with their teachers played key roles in their increased or decreased motivations for learning Chinese or English. However, the participants must have taken into consideration the sociolinguistic context of Hong Kong, the language in education policy, their ethnic and social networks, and their own competency in English or Chinese (Cantonese). For example, Kina is already a fluent Cantonese speaker and might be identifying herself as a more competent Cantonese user among her social networks mostly involving the non-Chinese-speaking people. Since she was receiving her education in EMI, Kina was keen on investing more in English in order to advance her studies and communicate with her social networks. Jankee, on the other hand, was still struggling to develop a fair level of Chinese competency (writing, reading, listening, and speaking) but had realized the importance of it in the local context due to her teachers' mediational role. As such, she

intended to invest more in learning Chinese. However, both the participants were observed investing in English heavily in the social media and in mixed codes during interactions with me.

This study also shows that such identification processes have implications for the way learners get opportunities or are constrained in investing in a particular language. In the case of young ethnic minority students, such opportunities and constraints are created by the tensions between the learners' own sense of their identities and the identification by the institutions and families. For example, there was a tension between the way Kina was positioned by her school and her family, thereby creating opportunities and constraining her investments in English or Chinese at the same time. In microlevel interactions, learners were always socially positioned in particular ways that contributed to their investments in learning English or Chinese. For example, Kina was positioned as a multilingual student in San Leung School, where she enjoyed having invested in Chinese the most because she could feel the sense of who she was by being able to "translate for her friends" and by being "complemented" by her teachers (Norton 2000, 2013). Kina was also ethnified as a "made-in China" girl by her friends and teachers that seemingly reverted her motivation in investing more in English or Nepali language instead of Chinese (Cantonese).

There has been a considerable input on pedagogical issues in ESL classrooms (Norton 2000, 2013; Lee 2008) often essentializing the pedagogical practices of the teachers. The analysis of the data in this study shows that notwithstanding the pedagogical approaches of the teachers, institutional recognition, and teachers' appropriate understanding of the ethnic and linguistic minority students' identities creates a conducive environment for the learners to invest meaningfully, as in the case of Jankee and Kina, in learning the target languages. This study is an ethnographic inquiry of two secondary school Nepali students' identities and investments in learning English and Chinese (Cantonese) in Hong Kong. Sociolinguistic ethnographies on minority students' identities and language learning would further contribute to understanding the ways learners manage their investments in learning a particular target language in particular types of sociolinguistic contexts.

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Linguistic Landscape and Social Equality in an Ethnic Tourism Village in Guizhou, China



Feifei Shan, Bob Adamson, and Chengyu Liu

Abstract This chapter investigates the linguistic landscape in a typical ethnic tourism village in Guizhou Province, China, by focusing on the language choice and arrangement of the linguistic landscape and the attitudes of different groups toward the languages involved. The results are interpreted using the notion of cultural capital to show the relationship among various languages and their social status. The linguistic landscape provides a window for examining the social status and power relations among languages in this multilingual society. The study shows that the power and social status of these languages are different, which indicates that the cultural capital of these language communities is distributed unevenly. The ecology of languages in this multilingual society is also unbalanced. Most notably, the living space of the vernacular Miao ethnic language is squeezed, which considerably hinders not only its maintenance but also the sustainable development of the ethnic tourism village. The research demonstrates that the relationship among linguistic landscape, cultural capital, and ecology of languages is multidirectional. It concludes that, by promoting multilingual education, the cultural capital of the ethnic language can be enhanced and the ecological balance of languages can be redressed, thus improving the social status and vitality of the ethnic language.

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1 Introduction

Xijiang Thousand Households Miao Village is a typical ethnic tourism village in Guizhou Province in China. It is located in Leishan County in the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Ethnic Minority Autonomous Prefecture. Before Xijiang became a popular tourist destination, the Miao language was the predominant channel for communication. The expansion of the tourist industry radically altered the language context, with the vernacular Miao, the majority (national) language, Chinese, and—to a lesser extent—English and other international languages forming a complex ecology of languages. In this respect, the village represents an interesting site for investigating the linguistic dimensions of economic development and cultural globalization, which has brought about increased interactions between minority and majority groups within China and among local, national, and international languages. Given the issues of identity and power that are connected with official and community language use (Tollefson and Tsui 2003), the new circumstances in the village create potential tensions, as well as opportunities for establishing harmonious multilingualism.

In China, minority languages (some of which only have a spoken form and no written script) serve mainly for intra-ethnic communication. The rights of ethnic minority groups to use and protect their own languages are guaranteed by laws and legislature, such as the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1982), the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy (1984), and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language (2000). A number of supportive measures have been put in place since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Bilingual or trilingual education have been advocated at different times, although through diverse rather than unified policy streams (Adamson and Feng 2009, 2014). Written scripts were developed for a number of ethnic languages: in the case of Miao, for instance, the national government authorized the creation of a Romanized written form in the 1950s. However, minority languages and vernaculars often struggle for survival in the face of powerful national and international languages. Mandarin Chinese, in the standardized form known as Putonghua, is the most important language in China, being used for administration, broadcasting, and education and as a lingua franca for people from different language communities. English, as an international language, plays an increasingly significant role in Chinese society. Feng and Adamson (2015, p. 6) note that “Increasing tourism in many minority regions, joint ventures, international economic activities, have all helped fuel enthusiasm for gaining English language competence not only in metropolitan areas, but also in remote minority communities.”

Nowadays, trilingual or multilingual education in China, involving ethnic minority languages (L1), Chinese (L2), and English (L3), is increasingly emphasized in the minority areas to promote social equality and development, as well as national unity. For minority students, the three languages are equally important tools of communication and carriers of culture, while their educational functions are different as

they have their respective roles in the social and economic development of the country. Briefly, the crucial role of L1 is to maintain and transmit minority students' linguistic and cultural heritage, and thereby their identity, and to facilitate children's cognitive development (Baker 2011); L2 plays an important role in their social mobility and economic development; and L3 is also helpful for engaging in international affairs. Attention is thus paid to all three languages, but the status and roles of these languages in education have subtle differences. Chinese, as the language of national unity and linguistic capital, possesses the highest status and a strong sense of cultural identity. English occupies an increasingly important position in minority education owing to increasing global interaction in minority areas. Minority languages, for lack of associated economic and political capital, tend to be paid comparatively less attention or, in some cases, overlooked. Thus, the respective roles of three languages in schools are controversial issues, being connected with questions of identity, social equity, and economic and social power in multilingual contexts (Johnson et al. 2016).

The study of a linguistic landscape (LL) is a relatively new approach to multilingualism (Gorter 2006). Landry and Bourhis (1997) defined the notion of LL as "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs" (p. 23), including road signs, names of places, sites and institutions, advertising billboards, and signs on shops and government buildings in a given territory, and argued that the LL serves as both an informational marker of the geographical territory and a symbolic reflection of the power and social identity of linguistic communities. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) suggest that there is a bidirectional relationship between LL and the sociolinguistic context as LL can also influence language use and people's perception of the status of the different languages. The distinction between official and private signs is also an interesting characteristic of the LL, with the former including signs used by public authorities (e.g., road signs, place names, and signs on government buildings) and the latter referring to signs installed by individuals, business institutions, and associations (e.g., commercial signs, advertising billboards, and signs on vehicles). Official signs mainly reflect government language policy, while private signs present actual linguistic practices and people's preferences in language use. Official and private signs thus make different contributions to the LL of a given territory and interact in the social context to form a distinctive linguistic ecology.

While there is a consistent agreement that LL can reflect social realities and ecologies of language, there is little research into the social factors that mold LL. This chapter focuses on the language choices and arrangements of the LL and the attitudes of different groups toward the languages involved and analyzes the underlying social forces and drivers. It then considers the implications of these choices for the minority language and how multilingual education and other strategies might strengthen its status and presence. The analysis is based on the cultural capital theory of social action. Bourdieu (1983, 1991, 1993) argues that social reality is composed of a series of interconnected fields of social facts structured by unequal power relations among various participants. All social practices of participants in the field or among fields are involved in the exchange of capital to maximize

Table 1 Three forms of cultural capital

Form of cultural capital	Definition	Representatives
Embodied capital	Internalized language, ability, behavior, and knowledge system	Manifested by human beings, e.g., Miao people represents capital of Miao ethnic culture
Objectified capital	Transmissible, the form of material objects	Book, other mediums, e.g., Miao artworks
Institutional capital	The academic certification or reward	Certificates affirmed by authority or institutions

access to power and resources. The “nonmaterial” form of the exchange is related to cultural capital, which is the resource of social power and control. Cultural capital is the sum of cultural resources, including cultural ability, cultural habitus, cultural products, cultural institutions, and so on. Bourdieu further divides cultural capital into three forms (Table 1): embodied capital, objectified capital, and institutional capital (Carrington and Luke 1997).

Cultural capital is developed by habitus, nurtured gradually by consistent involvement in social life and activities. The distributions of cultural capital are uneven owing to the presence of different strata and milieus in a society, resulting in the distinctions of high or low, more or less, and dominant or marginal cultural capital between different communities. However, as a semiautonomous and structured social space, each field with its own power dynamics can both affect and be affected by the other fields, which on the one hand makes the cultural capital in a group relatively stable and on the other hand provides an opportunity for a group to change the cultural capital and, by extension, the power relations. When cultural capital becomes symbolic capital (i.e., legitimate) that is seen as accumulated prestige or honor, cultural capital and other forms of capital (i.e., economic capital and social capital) can transform into each other. As the core of culture, language does not merely function as a means of communication: more importantly, it becomes a medium of power (Phillipson 1992).

Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory provides a useful analytical tool for understanding the language use and practices within LL and the power relations of various sociolinguistic domains. In this study, the relationship among LL, ecology of languages, and cultural capital is viewed as multidirectional. Firstly, LL can both reflect and construct the ecology of languages and cultural capital. Secondly, cultural capital determines LL and the power relations of various sociolinguistic domains and therefore can promote the value and status of the linguistic communities and alter the ecology of languages. Hence, on the one hand, LL is affected by the cultural capital of different sociolinguistic domains; on the other hand, it embodies and has impacts on cultural capital and the ecology of languages. Once the cultural capital of a minority language is promoted and the ecology of languages correspondingly changed, the social value and status of the minority language will be improved, and the language and culture will be developed (see Fig. 1).

The first step in our analysis of the LL is to investigate the language choices and arrangements among the minority language (Miao), majority language (Chinese),

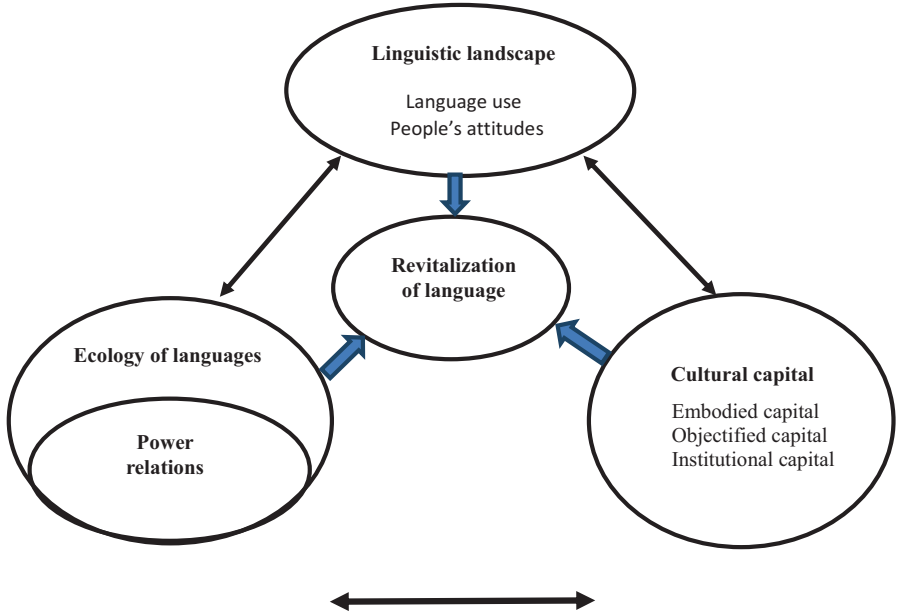


Fig. 1 The interrelationship of linguistic landscape, ecology of languages, and cultural capital

and international languages (predominantly but not exclusively English) and the attitudes toward the LL of people from various social domains, including government officials, shopkeepers, tourists, and inhabitants. Data in the form of photo records, interviews, and observations were collected during field visits in 2015. The distribution of languages used on signs was quantified, while other qualitative data were coded according to themes. The power relations of different sociolinguistic communities revealed by the data were analyzed in order to discern the underlying social factors shaping the LL according to the framework shown in Fig. 1. In the concluding section of this chapter, effective approaches are proposed to utilize and promote ethnic cultural capital aimed to ultimately improving the status and value of ethnic language and culture. By resetting the positions of various categories of participants in a field to reconstruct social reality, a better ecological balance of languages may be achieved and issues of social equality could be addressed.

2 The Ecology of Languages in Xijiang

Xijiang is the largest village inhabited by Miao ethnic minority people in the world. Comprising four smaller villages (Pingzhai, Dongyin, Yangpai, and Nangu), Xijiang has a total population of about 9000, of which some 99.5% are Miao, giving rise to the informal name, “Thousand Households Miao Village.” Migrant

permanent residents number around 600. There are 523 households running individual business, and 280 commercial networks, 70% of which are from outside Xijiang, within an administrative area of 38.59 square kilometers. Miao folk customs in farming methods, festivals, silver jewelry, clothes, food, song, and dance have been passed on from generation to generation. Xijiang represents the long history and development of Chinese-Miao and is seen by Chinese and foreign folklorists and scholars as a place where the “original ecological” culture of the Miao is preserved relatively intact and has earned the village the reputation of being “China’s Miao capital.”

The village is located in a mountainous region and a small river transverses it; special outseam wooden buildings (*diaojaolou* in Chinese) have been constructed in picturesque disorder near the mountains and by the river, forming an idyllic scene. Cultural attractions for tourists include song and dance performances, the Xijiang Miao minority museum, “wine before opening the door” (*lanmenjiu*, a ceremony to welcome guests), wax printing houses, distilleries, a repository (*guzangtang*) where holy articles are stored, silver production houses, and an ethnic painting and arts exhibition. The total number of tourists visiting Xijiang has grown rapidly in recent years. The volume was 3.6755 million in 2012, of which foreign visitors, mainly from the USA, England, France, Japan, and Korea, accounted for 0.4%.

The formal language of administration, commerce, and communication among the various groups in the village is Chinese. The language for family communication of local residents is Miao. However, with the continuous and growing presence of tourists, the villagers tend to speak Mandarin Chinese most of the time, and children in the village reportedly show less interest in their ethnic language. The formal language in school, including the medium of instruction, is Chinese. English is a core subject usually taught from grade 3 in primary school. The Miao language is also taught in schools, which are classed as offering a bilingual (Chinese and Miao) education. Xijiang Primary School (which includes a Kindergarten section) was officially recognized as a “Provincial Pre-school Bilingual Education Experimental School” in 2011 and “Provincial Exemplary Base for Fostering a Harmonious Bilingual Environment” in 2012.

2.1 Code Choice on Signs

The samples of signs for this study were selected from places according to their representativeness of commercial, residential, and scenic spots. Official signs were coded according to whether they belonged to a local state or travel office. Private signs were coded according to the nature of the business (e.g., food, clothing, and cultural products). With the criterion of one sign per site as a unit of analysis, altogether 267 units of analysis were collected, comprising 92 official signs—notice at scenic spots, street names, maps, public notifications, warning signs, and signs on public sites—and 175 private signs produced by individual, associative, or corporate agents, including 85 shop signs relating to ethno-cultural products (such as wax

printing, embroidery, tricot, silver, ethnic costumes, ethnic musical instruments, and other local specialties), 43 food shops, 30 hotels, and 17 other businesses (banks, delivery companies, and so on).

Xijiang Miao village is a multilingual setting as evidenced by monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual displays on the signs. Table 2 offers an overall comparison of the number of languages in Xijiang Miao village. As can be seen, monolingualism prevails within the multilingual setting, with Chinese-only signs dominant. In terms of the code choice, some differences are found between official signs and private signs. Monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs are equal in number for official signs, and on multilingual signs, the use of Chinese, English, Japanese, and Korean is the preferred combination. Monolingual Chinese predominates on private signs (85.1%); otherwise, the pairing of Chinese and English is the preferred combination. Miao is rarely present—just one Chinese-Miao bilingual private sign (see Fig. 2) was detected, and this sign has the Chinese information literally and (according to a Miao language expert) poorly translated into Miao. A few official signs (typically the names of places or bridges—see Fig. 3) are monolingual with Miao transcribed into Chinese characters so domestic tourists could access the Miao name.

Language choices are also presented in Table 3. As can be seen, five languages are present on the signs, Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, and Miao (including Miao Romanized script and phonetic transcriptions into Chinese characters), while the usage of these languages on signs varies. Chinese has the strongest presence, appearing on almost all signs (98.5%). English has a stronger distribution (25.1%) than Japanese and Korean, which have the same presence (13.1%). Miao only appears on its own in 1.9% of all the cases. This phenomenon illustrates that, although multilingualism does exist in Xijiang, the overwhelmingly dominant language is Chinese, while the Miao language occupies the lowest place of the written languages. (The use of foreign languages is likely to reflect the most common languages of overseas tourists.)

In our analysis, we assume that the names written in larger fonts are the primary names for the shops. On bilingual and multilingual signs, a notable tendency is for Chinese to be presented as the primary shop name. This usage probably reflects the fact that it is the predominant language of the majority of tourists visiting the village (see Fig. 4). English is rarely found on the shop signs, which might reflect the reality that foreign tourists are less numerous and creating English signs is a linguistic challenge for many shop owners.

Table 2 Number of languages on the sign (percentages)

Number and languages		Official signs	Private signs
1	Chinese	50	85.1
	Miao	4.3	0
2	Chinese-English	5.4	13.7
	Chinese-Miao	0	0.6
4	Chinese-English-Japanese-Korean	40.3	0.6

Fig. 2 Sign of cultural products shop (private sign)



Fig. 3 Bridge name
(official sign)



Table 3 Presence of
languages in the LL

Languages	Number	Percentage (%)
Chinese	263	98.5
English	67	25.1
Japanese	35	13.1
Korean	35	13.1
Miao	5	1.9

Fig. 4 Ethnic hairdressing
(private sign)



We also assume that the preferred language is usually placed above the secondary or peripheral language when they are vertically aligned and to the left when they are horizontally aligned (Scollon and Scollon 2003). In Xijiang, an upper-lower alignment of two or more languages is preferred, with Chinese placed in the top position (see Fig. 5). No left-right alignment was found on the bilingual and multilingual signs.

The visibility of languages in the LL was recorded according to the nature of the business or location of signs. As the language choice and the placement of official signs issued by the local government follow standard regulations, signs on government buildings and residential areas are usually monolingual (in Chinese). Chinese-English bilingual and Chinese-English-Japanese-Korean multilingual signs are often found at scenic spots and business centers to serve international visitors. Monolingual Chinese names are more common for shop signs, especially food and beverage stores, while other major types of shops (such as bars or shops selling cultural products) tend to have bilingual signs, mainly Chinese-English (see Table 4):



Fig. 5 Guideboard (official sign with Chinese, English, Japanese, and Korean)

Table 4 Presence and position of languages in signage according to type of carries

Business	Chinese	Chinese-English	Chinese-Miao	Chinese-English-Japanese-Korean	Total
Ethnic cultural products	74	10	1	0	85
Food and beverages	40				40
Bars		3			3
Hotels	22	7		1	30
Groceries	6	1			7
Banks		2			2
Others	8				8
Total	150	24		1	175

3 Attitudes Toward the Linguistic Landscape

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data on various groups’ attitudes. Thirty participants were selected, including Xijiang government officials, shop owners or their employees in commercial areas and the farmyard guesthouse area, tourists from home and abroad, and local residents. The participants were randomly selected, except for the government officials, who were chosen on the basis of their work being related to signage and management of scenic spots. (Official signage in Xijiang is under the control of local language planning bodies,

while private signs are not usually under government supervision). All interviews were conducted by the first author (Shan) in July, 2015, with each lasting 5–10 minutes. The interviews with officials were carried out in government offices, and the other interviews were conducted in streets and shops. Four sets of interview questions were designed for the different groups of respondents. One questionnaire in English was designed for foreign tourists, and the rest were in Chinese. All the sets of questions were divided into two parts: the first part collected information about the respondents, and the other part comprised three to seven open questions about their attitudes toward language use in the LL. Most of the interviews were recorded by note-taking, and Chinese extracts in this chapter were translated into English by Shan.

3.1 Government Officials

Government officials showed the most positive attitude toward the use of Chinese on signs, an attitude that aligned with the regulations promoting the national language as the standard medium of public communication. The officials also approved the use of English and other foreign languages in meeting the needs of international visitors. However, they were less inclined to use Miao on the signs, on the grounds that few people were competent in the language. As one official commented:

It goes without saying that Chinese should be put in the first place, as it is the official language and all people can understand it. Foreign languages help foreign tourists. The unique ethnic customs and culture here attract more and more tourists, especially those from abroad. If you want to make an international tourist attraction, foreign languages on the signs are essential. We conducted a survey and found that Japanese and Korean account for the largest proportion of foreign tourists, so we made the unified Chinese–English–Japanese–Korean multilingual signs. (Official 1: our translation)

It's not necessary to use the Miao language on signs—even the majority of Miao people don't know the Miao script. I belong to the Miao minority but I don't know the Miao script. We just speak Miao but don't write it in most cases. Of course, other people don't know the Miao language, so it is pointless to put it on signs. (Official 2: our translation)

From the above we can observe that the number and countries of origin of foreign visitors are increasing, adding to the complexity of the ecology of languages in Xijiang.

3.2 Shopkeepers

Shopkeepers were also positive about the use of Chinese; they believed that Chinese can inform the majority of tourists about the nature of the business. Their impression toward English was ambivalent. Some shopkeepers said that English can convey information for foreign tourists and attract them to the shop. There was also a view that Chinese-English bilingual signs look more attractive.

Foreign tourists are also interested in Miao products like silver, clothes and hairstyles, so I chose to use English, as it can attract more foreign customers. But I don't know English, so the English on the sign was translated by others. And bilingual signs are beautiful; other shopkeepers said my sign was beautiful and they used the same style. (Shopkeeper 1: our translation)

For some shopkeepers, using English was too much of a challenge:

I just know Chinese, I don't know English. It is inconvenient to ask other people to translate Chinese into English as I don't know people who speak English, so I just put Chinese on my sign. (Shopkeeper 2: our translation)

However, most shopkeepers rejected the idea of using Miao on their signs, on the assumption that their target customers would not understand the language. Even in the only shop that had a sign in Miao, the shopkeeper displayed puzzlement at the choice of language:

I don't know the language on the sign or why they put it there. It was designed by the company. (Shopkeeper 3: our translation)

On the other hand, a few reasoned that the Miao language may add an air of authenticity to the cultural products on display:

I never thought of putting Miao language on my sign, I just reckon nobody would be able to understand it. Maybe it's a good idea, to make my cultural products look more authentic. (Shopkeeper 4: our translation)

3.3 *Tourists*

Tourists were the only group that overwhelmingly expressed positive opinions toward the use of multilingual signs. In particular, they supported the combined use of Chinese, English, and Miao. They had been attracted to the primitive Miao ethnic village, and the purpose of their visit was to explore the folklore and customs within a natural cultural environment. They recognized the pragmatic value of Chinese and English (or other foreign languages) in helping visitors, but they wanted to see and hear the Miao language in order to feel closer to the ethnic flavor of the village and thus have a richer cultural experience.

We can get information in Chinese and English; using Miao on signs is just a symbol. Even if we don't know Miao, we can appreciate it. And I guess learning some Miao words would be interesting. (Tourist 1: our translation)

The point of travelling to a Miao ethnic village is to experience real Miao culture. I want everything to be real here—not artificial culture. The Miao language is real. (Tourist 2: our translation)

The use of Miao language on the sign shows the unique cultural features and can preserve the ethnic culture. (Tourist 3: our translation)

I think the Miao language is interesting. It's better to put it on signs. It makes me feel that the Miao village is unique and real. I find the Miao written script is beautiful, like a work of art. (Tourist 4: our translation)

I can sense the holistic cultural atmosphere of the Miao minority in the village, but I find many artificial things—cultural products are half-real and half-fake. They're all too commercialized. Maybe the Miao language can make a difference. (Tourist 5: our translation)

3.4 *Local Residents*

Local residents tended to be positively disposed toward the use of Chinese and foreign languages, but they were negative about the use of Miao language on signs even though they identified strongly with the language. They said that they would only use spoken Miao with local Miao people and mainly use Chinese for oral and written communication with others. They noted that the younger generation was also keen to learn foreign languages.

We originally didn't have a Miao script, so few residents know it. We don't use the Miao script in daily life. I learned a little Miao script in primary school but now I've forgotten it—it is too difficult. Chinese is a very important subject at school; we use Chinese to write, study and take exams. (Local resident 1: our translation)

We speak Miao at home and with villagers, but we speak Mandarin or Chinese dialects with non-locals and tourists. Children like to learn the languages of the foreign tourists. It seems very interesting to them to say 'Hello' to foreigners and speak English. (Local resident 2: our translation)

The failure of the written versions of Miao to gain popular traction was cited as another reason why the use of the language on signs was redundant:

It is too complicated because there are new and old Miao written scripts, and the newly created Romanized version. I don't completely accept the written form of Miao as my own language. What's more, we don't need a Miao script to read and write in our daily life. (Local resident 3: our translation)

Many residents admitted that they were illiterate in Miao and did not see the value of having signs in the language as tourists and locals alike would not be able to understand them.

Most local Miao people cannot even read or write Miao written scripts, not to mention the other people, so there is no point in putting it on signs. (Local resident 4: our translation)

However, some residents valued cultural transmission as an important means of preserving their ethnic identity:

The Miao language is our own ethnic language. We must speak it and teach our children to speak it. (Local resident 5: our translation)

4 Redressing the Linguistic Balance

The data suggest that, while monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs coexist in Xijiang, the predominant signs are monolingual Chinese. Chinese-English-Japanese-Korean multilingual signs (mainly official signs) take second place owing to the tourist management policies of the local government. Bilingual signs on which the languages are mainly Chinese and English account for only a small part of the LL. This state of affairs reflects and contributes to official views of the various languages.

Chinese is the most prevalent and salient language of the LL, which reflects the fact that it is the lingua franca for communication among the different language communities in Xijiang and its prominence also demonstrates its power as the common national language of China. Out of the foreign languages displayed on the signage, English has the largest presence, which accords with its status as an international language in general and of tourism in particular. The use of English symbolizes the impact of globalization on the village. Through its powerful status, it is associated with notions of modernity, prestige, and attractiveness, as is indicated by the desire of some village children to learn English. All the groups interviewed for this study display positive attitudes toward Chinese and English but, with the exception of tourists, negative attitudes toward the Miao language. The low status of the Miao language indicates that locals lack identification with it, especially the written forms—none of which seems to be strongly embraced by the Miao people. For them, their language is only for internal communication, and there is little value in a formalized written script. Another reason is that it appears that the local government attaches less importance to the Miao language and concentrates on the promotion of Chinese. Only tourists support the use of Miao in the LL, as it represents to them a sense of accessing the ethnic culture that is the focus of their visit. The public's attitudes are, to a large extent, aligned with the visibility and prominence of the languages in the LL. The dominance of Chinese and English on signs in Xijiang exemplify how the language choices in the LL are affected by the social status and economic benefits that they are perceived to bring and reveal the uneven distribution and different values of cultural capital among the language communities.

The local Miao language embodies considerable invisible cultural value as demonstrated by the popularity of the village for ethnic tourism. However, although it is the first language and main carrier of cultural heritage that forms the basis for the current economic prosperity of the village, Miao actually has low social status, and its associated linguistic and cultural capital are not developed. Ironically, it is the same opportunity for economic prosperity through tourism that induces the local residents to cater to the language needs of other groups, thereby failing to take advantage of their ethnic linguistic capital. As a result, only part of the cultural capital is developed, and the symbolic value of ethnic language and culture is rarely exploited, and hence ethnic objectified capital is not achieved completely. The unbalanced ecosystem of languages hinders the sustainable and harmonious development of the Xijiang Miao village. Without the institutional capital that the Miao language might accrue from official recognition and use in public arenas (traffic

signs, mass media, courts, and so on), the foundations for the sustainability and growth of the language and culture are weak.

What steps could be taken to strengthen the visibility and status of the Miao language? The first area for development could be to build on its value as an important cultural resource that can be utilized for the purposes of tourism, which would bring both cultural and economic capital. The emphasis on Chinese and foreign languages is detrimental in this regard, affecting—at least in the eyes of visitors—the authenticity of the village as an embodiment of ethnic minority culture, and so the production of signs written in the Miao script is essential to facilitate the realization and transformation of cultural capital and to create a more “genuine” ethnic cultural environment. Of the choices of script available, the older version that is admired as artwork by visitors would seem the most appropriate to achieve this purpose. The greater prominence afforded to the Miao language by such a policy could give rise to the development of other cultural initiatives, such as the manufacture of handicrafts and silver carvings in the same script, recordings of ethnic songs and dances with multilingual captions, and designating sites for tourists to study the minority language, folklore, arts, and crafts, all of which would contribute to the distinctive features and authenticity of the village. In this way, through the process of occupying the objects of cultural capital, customers come to accept, whether actively or passively, the symbolic meaning of cultural capital. Hence, the material and nonmaterial resources can be transformed into cultural capital.

Members of minority communities, as the carriers of ethnic culture, are also themselves significant ethnic cultural capital. However, they acquire lower or less dominant cultural capital due to the relatively backward provision of education and closed social environment, which hinder their ability to know and leverage the value of their ethnic language and culture. Additional educational investment could help ethnic members to acquire mainstream cultural capital. Specifically, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills or qualifications would facilitate the generation of institutional cultural capital. One benefit of this cultural capital would be to contribute to ethnic members’ cognition and ability to better use their ethnic language and culture for the sustainability of the village. A specific form of education intervention would be the development of a strong multilingual model in schools.

The promotion of multilingual education can be an important step to gain the institutional capital and other cultural capital for Miao language. Recent research (e.g., Feng and Adamson 2015) into multilingual education in ethnic minority regions of China has identified four distinct models. Two of them (the accretive and the balanced) promote additive multilingualism, while the other two (the transitional and depreciative) are deleterious to the minority language (Adamson and Feng 2015). The accretive model appears to be appropriate for the context of Xijiang. This model is based on the students learning through the minority language (Miao in this case) initially, and using their linguistic knowledge to learn Chinese, before they draw on both the minority language and Chinese to learn a foreign language (usually English) (see Zhang et al. 2015). If this model were implemented, we would suggest that written Miao could be learned initially through the Romanized script, as this would facilitate the students’ development of multilingualism by

providing them with a basis for also accessing the *pinyin* form of Chinese as well as the English alphabetic system. The more traditional script that tourists appreciate could be learned at a later stage, along with other aspects of Miao cultural heritage, such as music, arts, and handicrafts. This model of multilingualism has the potential to equip the students with the linguistic capital to reinforce the cultural capital of their village (and thereby enhance the economic capital), as well as to benefit from life chances afforded by competence in Chinese and a foreign language. In addition, the development of an accretive model of multilingualism represents institutionalization of support for the Miao language, a process of strengthening symbolic capital that has the benefit of raising public and private consciousness of the value of protecting the local language and culture. In short, a strong model of multilingual education can provide the means by which the rich ethnic cultural resources of the village can be transformed into cultural capital, bringing social and economic rewards. Hence, the social value and status of the Miao language can be improved, the social structure in the field would be reconstructed, and the ecosystem of languages can be adjusted to achieve a more balanced state.

This research points to the possibilities of treating the LL as a means of investigating the cultural capital and ecology of languages from a Bourdieusian perspective. We have focused on the use of the principal languages, the minority language (Miao), the majority language (Chinese), and international languages (mainly English), in the multilingual context of Xijiang village and on the attitudes of different groups—government officials, shopkeepers, tourists, and local inhabitants. Our findings demonstrate that the Miao-Chinese-English power relations in Xijiang can be defined as “asymmetric,” with the living space of Miao language threatened by the dominance of Chinese in particular. We have suggested that foregrounding the minority language as the foundation of the ecology of languages in Xijiang and instituting a multilingual model of education offer potential gains in the coherent development of all the relevant languages. We argue that the study of the LL may effectively bring to light aspects of the dynamics of these relationships. In addition, the notion of cultural capital provides the basis for an effective education strategy to utilize and develop the value of the ethnic culture and to raise the social status of the minority language in order to rebalance the ecosystem of languages and address issues of social equality.

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Language as Gatekeeper for Equitable Education: Multilingual Education in Cambodia



Kevin M. Wong and Carol Benson

Abstract Multilingual education (MLE) is paramount in providing educational access and social equity to ethnolinguistic minority populations. This has been long recognized since UNESCO’s classic statement that it is “axiomatic” for children to learn in their own languages. Undertaking research in the Ratanak Kiri province of Cambodia, this book chapter aims to illuminate how MLE policy and practice have affected the Kreung-speaking Indigenous communities. The discussion in this chapter will be based on main findings from a study conducted in June/July 2015 that evaluated the state of MLE implementation in Cambodia. Data collection methods included report reading/analysis, informational meetings, individual interviews, group discussions, classroom observations, and some photographic recordings at the national, provincial, and local levels. Based on our analysis, we support current strategies and recommend further steps to strengthen the quality, improve the sustainability, and further expand the approach to MLE at the preschool and primary levels.

1 Introduction

Languages and cultures play a critical role in providing non-dominant ethnolinguistic groups with access to quality basic and continuing education—and if they are not considered, they close and lock the gate to an equitable education (UNESCO 2012a). To date, millions of children in Southeast Asia have been forced to shuffle through their formal education, unable to understand the language of instruction because schools use socially dominant languages rather than languages spoken at

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home (Kosonen 2010, 2013). While proficiency in a dominant language is an important product of education, using that language as a medium of instruction does not guarantee that it will be learned, especially in contexts where students are not offered appropriate resources or opportunities to learn this new language. Because power is ascribed to languages spoken in- and out-of-school contexts (Bourdieu 1991), this chapter uses the terminology *dominant* and *non-dominant language* to highlight the oppressed status of languages that are less privileged in society, which are useful when discussing education policy and the use of learners' home languages (Kosonen and Benson 2013).

To address the overuse of dominant languages as mediums of instruction and the need to support speakers of non-dominant languages in literacy and learning, both policymakers and practitioners are beginning to see L1-based multilingual education (MLE) as a potential solution. MLE refers to the use of a learner's strongest language (a mother tongue or L1) to systematically develop an initial literacy base and support the learning of two or more languages and other academic content. This is particularly important in the case of non-dominant languages, the languages of people who have been oppressed (Kosonen 2010), because not only do they serve as essential resources for learning, but their valorization also has the potential to transform and liberate their speaker communities. MLE works effectively in the following ways. First, it equips learners with literacy and thinking skills in their respective L1s. Next, it allows them to learn curricular content like mathematics, sciences, and social studies through that familiar language, which aids in their understanding as well as their development of critical thinking skills. Meanwhile, learners are explicitly taught one or more additional languages, including the dominant language of their region or country. Finally, MLE helps learners transfer their skills and knowledge between languages so that they are effectively multilingual and multiliterate. With such an approach, MLE has the capacity to make education more inclusive and equitable because everyone will be able to understand instruction and acquire proficiency in multiple languages.

Using non-dominant languages to educate ethnolinguistic minority populations is an issue of equity. Children from non-dominant language communities would require more or at least different resources (e.g., through bi- or multilingual education programs) than those from dominant language communities. This is due to factors such as prior discrimination, lack of infrastructure, need for capacity building for MLE teachers, and other challenges related to schooling in remote areas, such as inputs into teacher certification, placement, and retention.

In recent years, many low-income countries that have struggled to provide universal access to education have begun to consider how MLE can help them reach ethnolinguistic minority students with high quality, effective programs (Tollefson and Tsui 2014; Walter and Benson 2012). Cambodia is one of these countries. Wright and Boun (2015) document the growth and development of MLE programs in Cambodia by describing the first bilingual nonformal education programs founded in the northeast provinces of the country, where there are concentrations of an estimated 24 Indigenous groups in Cambodia, as well as speakers of other non-dominant languages like Lao and Vietnamese (Simons and Fennig 2017). In the

early 2000s, CARE International worked with the support of provincial education authorities and the national education ministry to expand into formal education using a community schools model of MLE to introduce literacy in Tampuan and Kreung, and later three additional Indigenous languages, while teaching Khmer, the dominant national language. The process by which the Cambodian government has gradually taken responsibility for adopting and implementing the MLE model across the northeastern provinces of Cambodia is the focus of this chapter.

As observers of this highly informative process of MLE institutionalization, we the authors of this chapter position language as a crucial component of equitable education for non-dominant groups, contributing to the global literature on medium of instruction policies (Tollefson and Tsui 2014). Specifically, we examine how the Cambodian government has successfully disrupted the gate-closing function of Khmer by providing Indigenous learners with access to literacy and learning through their own languages. Our research questions are the following: How does MLE play a gate-opening role in promoting educational equity? How are the Cambodian government and its development partners implementing MLE in policy and practice? Finally, what are the results, and do they demonstrate that the gate is opening?

To address these questions, we first describe the potential role of MLE in promoting educational equity in low-income contexts. We document the affordances and challenges of language-in-education policy as it impacts marginalized communities. Next, we describe the case of Cambodia to illuminate how MLE policy and practice have affected the Kreung- and Tampuan-speaking Indigenous communities in the northeastern regions of the country. Data for this case study are drawn from fieldwork and a series of commissioned evaluations undertaken by the authors and our colleagues between 2010 and 2016 that report on the state of MLE at the national, provincial, and local levels. The gatekeeping function of the medium of instruction is explored through this analysis of MLE policies and practices in Cambodia. Finally, the chapter concludes with implications and future directions for MLE as ways to promote equitable educational development.

2 The Role of Language in Educational Equity

Language of instruction plays a vital role in determining whether or not children can learn. In fact, in linguistically diverse countries around the world, research has continuously demonstrated that using a student's home language (L1) in all content areas provides a solid foundation for basic education, which can then be transferred as skills and knowledge to new, non-dominant languages (Cummins 2009). These findings are substantiated by large-scale longitudinal studies in North America (Thomas and Collier 1997, 2002), as well as in low-income contexts like Ethiopia and Eritrea, countries whose policies allow for home languages to be used as languages of instruction all the way up to eighth grade (Walter and Davis 2005; Heugh et al. 2012). Having said that, with an estimated 7000 languages spoken in the world today (Simons and Fennig 2017), only a few hundred are formally used as

languages of instruction in school settings, most of which are dominant languages (see table in Walter and Benson 2012, p. 283).

Using dominant languages in education systems becomes an issue of (in)equity when we reflect on how most countries in the world are in fact multilingual societies. Educational systems have tended to operate monolingually due in large part to the postcolonial myth that nation-building is cultivated through the use of one language (Spolsky 2004). Dominant languages polarize education systems and schools in linguistically diverse societies, causing communities to become categorized as either speakers or non-speakers of the specific privileged language. Schools that ignore non-dominant languages force students to learn (and teachers to teach) in a language in which they are not proficient, making language a pedagogical issue as well as an issue of equity.

L1-based multilingual education (also MLE), formerly known as bilingual education, is a systematic approach to learning two or more languages and academic content, using a learner's strongest language to learn. In educational development, and the Southeast Asian context, in particular, there is a growing recognition of the advantages that MLE can provide to education access, quality, and equity for linguistically and socially marginalized groups (Kosonen 2013; UNESCO 2013). Beyond these educational outcomes, MLE reaps other benefits as it is associated with an increase in parental involvement (Ball 2010) and greater participation of girls and female teachers in education (Benson 2005; Lewis and Lockheed 2012). In addition, large-scale assessments such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment, despite the critiques that note its failure to account for linguistic variation (Graham and van Ginkel 2014; Schroeder 2013), have begun to raise awareness for government officials that initial reading and writing should use learners' own languages (Benson and Wong 2015).

The critical role of language in educational equity needs to be made explicit, especially when non-dominant language speakers are viewed through a deficit lens. Learners are often viewed as deficit for their lack of proficiency in the language of instruction even before they set foot in school. Reinforcing this "language as problem" orientation (Ruiz 1984), societies that focus on "language barriers" experienced by non-dominant speakers invariably relegate these speakers to the bottom strata of society, without much hope for upward social mobility. This phenomenon has been referred to as a *monolingual habitus*, whereby, according to Gogolin (2002, referencing Bourdieu 1991), societies function under a set of unquestioned assumptions that unconsciously privilege a single dominant language. This is apparent in many education systems in Southeast Asia and the broader international context, rendering the possibility of a bi- or multilingual habitus as invisible or undesirable (Benson 2014a, b). If the reader doubts this unconscious tendency, we have only to reverse the logic, asking: Why doesn't the school speak the language of the ethnolinguistic learner?

In the Southeast Asian context, the use of non-dominant languages in education has been viewed as taking "two steps forward and one step back" (Kosonen 2013, p. 53). In his chapter showcasing MLE in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, Kosonen points out that although the educational use of non-dominant languages is not a

new concept, it has remained relatively theoretical in national constitutions and other policy documents since the mid-1940s. Meanwhile, however, due to the increasing awareness of disparities in school achievement according to gender, ethnicity, disability, and language, educational language policies in favor of MLE have begun to gain traction. In addition, international and nongovernmental organizations, academics, and activists have propelled this agenda forward by reporting disaggregated statistics that associate language of instruction with educational quality (Benson 2004; Kosonen and Young 2009; UNESCO 2012a, 2012b, all cited in Kosonen 2013). In his 2013 analysis, Kosonen analyzes a series of policy documents to trace the direction of multilingual education in each of the case study countries. The respective Ministries of Education appear to be promoting a regional trend toward adopting non-dominant languages in school settings, even though their political systems differ and the decision-making processes for language-in-education issues vary in levels of autonomy (Kosonen 2013). Still, taking “one step back,” policies in these regions do not explicitly support all languages in education, which in some cases include very large groups of non-dominant language speakers. For MLE programs spearheaded by international NGOs, the lack of policy support often brings up sustainability issues. In the special case of Cambodia, Kosonen (2013) finds that the government and its development partners are working hand-in-hand on policy and practice, implementing and institutionalizing MLE for Indigenous communities.

3 Background

Cambodia is not the most diverse country in the region, but there are over 20 Indigenous languages spoken, as well as other non-dominant languages like Lao and Vietnamese, whose speakers currently lack access to instruction in a language they understand. Khmer, the constitutionally mandated official language of Cambodia, is both the medium of instruction and the mother tongue of approximately 96% of the population (Kosonen 2013; Simons and Fennig 2017; UNICEF 2015). The remaining 4% are concentrated in five highland provinces in the north-east of Cambodia—Kratie, Mondul Kiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanak Kiri, and Stung Treng. The Indigenous language speakers in these provinces experience wide disparities in educational opportunity due in large part to the discrepancy between home and school languages (CARE 2010).

The use of non-dominant languages in education began in 1997 with a nonformal education pilot program for farmers, supported by linguists and literacy instructors from International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) and UNESCO. Wright and Boun (2015) document the development of nonformal education and show how it led to community involvement in addressing the needs of Indigenous ethnic minority populations in the northeastern provinces.

In 2002, L1-based MLE was brought in by CARE International working in Ratanak Kiri province as part of a larger program aiming to improve educational

opportunities for Indigenous people with a focus on girls and women (Nowaczyk 2015; Wright and Boun 2015). International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC)¹ was an important partner in the development of school materials in the languages that had been used for adult literacy. At that time, CARE saw MLE as a useful strategy to meet the educational needs of girls as well as all children from marginalized groups in the region. The community schools model developed by CARE brought MLE programs into remote areas through community school management committees, who not only built and maintained their own schools but also selected community members to be trained by CARE to be MLE teachers (Nowaczyk 2015). Over time, collaboration between the partners—CARE, ICC, and later UNICEF—and the provincial and national offices of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), has led to the passing of a number of decrees and other legal documents to protect and expand MLE (Benson and Wong 2017). As we write this chapter, expansion is underway in terms of training and qualifying more MLE teachers, designating more schools to provide L1-based MLE, and increasing the number of languages approved for school use. As of July 2018, six non-dominant languages—Brao, Bunong, Kavet, Kreung, Tampuan, and most recently Jarai—have been approved for literacy and instruction in schools, while another, Kuy, is still undergoing the approval process in preparation for MLE.

It is the institutionalizing of MLE through the synergistic relationship built between CARE, the communities, the schools, the provincial education offices (POEs), and MoEYS that makes the case of Cambodia so special (Benson and Wong 2017; Nowaczyk 2015; Wright and Boun 2015), as well as UNICEF's important role in facilitating policy development. Our purpose is to share our research and analysis on the processes which have taken place, highlighting this generally positive case to examine steps taken, both forward and backward, in the implementation of MLE for educational equity.

3.1 Research Methodology

Data for this description and analysis of MLE implementation in Cambodia consist of analyses of policy documents and field-based ethnographic descriptions, classroom observations, and interviews undertaken by one or both of the authors in 2011, 2015, and 2016, along with ongoing communication with stakeholders since that time. We have taken a holistic approach to the descriptive data characterized by O'Reilly (2009) as iterative-inductive, meaning that we have observed relevant situations and interacted with stakeholders to interpret the relationships between policy and practice and between implementers at different levels. The 2011 fieldwork consisted of visits to remote schools and POEs in all five provinces (Benson 2011), while the more recent visits (Wong and Benson 2015; Benson et al. 2016) focused on

¹According to its website (<http://www.icc.org.kh>), ICC is a faith-based NGO committed to “serving the least served” in Cambodia, including Indigenous people and girls and women.

two provinces: Ratanak Kiri, where MLE is most widely practiced with speakers of Kreung and Tampuan, and Mondul Kiri, where MLE is now being rapidly expanded for Bunong speakers. Using skilled translators, meetings and formal interviews have been conducted with POE officers and NGO staff, and visits have been made to multiple schools serving Indigenous communities, allowing for classroom observations and meetings with students, school staff, parents, School Management Committees (SMCs), and community representatives including elders, commune and village chiefs, and women’s committees. Data collection methods have included report and policy reading/analysis, informational meetings, individual interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and some photographic and video recording. Finally, meetings have been held with national representatives of the MoEYS both in Phnom Penh and at international conferences.

As outsiders, we are aware that we may not fully capture all of the nuances of the personal and professional interactions that have facilitated the synergistic relationships that appear to be key to institutionalizing MLE in Cambodia. However, as MLE researchers who have worked in other contexts, we are relatively well positioned to analyze what makes the Cambodia situation special. Major themes have emerged from our iterative process, and our observations, as well as drafts of our analyses, have been reviewed by POE and CARE staff.

4 The Special Case of Cambodia

For this analysis, we use our data to address the questions of how the Cambodian government and its partners are implementing MLE in policy and practice and whether the results indicate that non-dominant languages and cultures are opening the gates to educational opportunity for Indigenous learners. As mentioned above, collaboration between stakeholders has been an essential aspect of the process from the beginning. As CARE and other partners worked strategically with provincial and national education officials to raise capacity and awareness of MLE, the results are significant in terms of a series of policy documents that build structural supports for MLE provision. Below, we describe and analyze the unprecedented set of policy documents that have been developed and officially approved in the past ten years. We then use interviews and classroom observations to analyze the structural supports that are in place at the various levels. We conclude with some lessons learned for MLE implementation that may have implications for other countries in the region.

4.1 MLE in Cambodian Education Policy

Cambodian Education Law stipulates that Khmer is the official language as well as a subject of general education. However, there is built-in flexibility for ethnic minorities, since the language of learning and teaching of ethnolinguistic minority

groups should be decided by a Prakas of the education ministry (MoEYS 2013). A Prakas is a ministerial or interministerial proclamation or decision, signed by the relevant Minister(s), which must conform to the Constitution and law or sub-decree to which it refers. On 26 August 2010, the *Guidelines on Implementation of Education for Indigenous Children in Highland Provinces* (MoEYS 2010) were signed by the Minister of Education, giving policy support to the implementation of MLE in Cambodia in five targeted highland provinces according to the community-based school pilot model developed by CARE International in collaboration with the government. The Guidelines promote a 3-year (early-exit) transitional model, which prescribed that the L1 should be used for teaching 80% of the time in grade 1, 60% in grade 2, 30% in grade 3, and that Khmer should be the sole medium of instruction starting from grade 4. Since then, three important policy documents have been created to address the specific linguistic needs of ethnolinguistic communities through MLE: the 2014–2018 Education Strategic Plan, the 2013 Prakas, and the 2015–2018 Multilingual Education National Action Plan. These three documents play a pivotal role in opening the “gate” of language policies to reflect the languages spoken by communities, and grant non-dominant speakers access to quality basic education.

In order to fulfill its national vision and reach the goals of the National Strategic Plan 2014–2018, the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2014–2018 aims at consolidating the accomplishments made by the previous ESPs, assisting the “most disadvantaged,” and providing education that is of high quality and compatible with national development (MoEYS 2014, p.12). The goal is for “all children to have access to all types of early childhood education services, primary schools, secondary schools and opportunities to continue learning,” with special attention to educational equity for the “most disadvantaged” areas and groups of children (MoEYS 2014, p. 13). The ESP puts its emphasis on seven key sub-sectors: early childhood education, primary education, secondary and technical education, higher education, nonformal education, youth development, and physical education and sports. It also includes strategies for improving early childhood education through teacher training, infrastructure development, and curriculum development. More importantly, MLE for ethnolinguistic minorities is explicitly mentioned, detailing a need to “strengthen and expand bilingual community pre-schools for ethnic minorities” (MoEYS 2014, p. 18). MLE is similarly used as a strategy in the primary education sector but fails to be mentioned in the secondary and technical education sector, as well as in the nonformal education sector, all areas where the L1 should arguably be used as a medium of instruction.

According to Article 1 of the 2013 Prakas on Identification of Languages for Khmer National Learners who are Indigenous People (MoEYS 2013), the purpose of the Prakas is to identify languages for “Khmer national learners who are Indigenous people.” Therefore, the entire Prakas targets Indigenous people in Cambodia, which unfortunately does not explicitly include groups like Vietnamese speakers. (Interestingly, Jarai, a border-crossing Indigenous language spoken in Vietnam and Cambodia, has just been approved by MoEYS as a language of instruction

for MLE.) Article 2 of the Prakas delves into MLE implementation, stipulating that the location, curriculum, textbooks, and pedagogies of MLE should be under the guidance of MoEYS. It also prescribes an early-exit transitional bilingual model for primary education in Article 7.

The Multilingual Education National Action Plan (MENAP) aims to improve the quality of education and expand MLE in a variety of aspects. The vision promoted by MENAP is that all ethnolinguistic minority children have the right to receive high-quality basic education, “including the use of their mother tongue (L1) in the initial stages of education” (MoEYS 2015, p. 6). The specific objectives of the MENAP are to ensure that ethnic minority boys and girls have inclusive access to quality and relevant education; to build the capacity of national and sub-national education officials to manage and monitor MLE implementation; to scale up MLE provision in relevant provinces; and to promote demand for quality MLE among community-based schools, parents, and local authorities (MoEYS 2015, p.6). After introducing the cultural and educational contexts in the five highland provinces, the MENAP explains why MLE is necessary and how to make MLE programs sustainable. To tackle challenges such as the long distances from home to school, communities living in poverty, and a lack of qualified teachers, representatives from the five provinces have agreed on building capacity for teachers and teacher training. This includes developing multilingual materials for teaching and learning, coordinating data and information for monitoring and evaluation purposes, expanding MLE to new schools and languages, developing sufficient school infrastructure and other resources, and converting all community schools into government-run state schools.

The combination of the three abovementioned policy documents that promote MLE in the education sector in Cambodia, namely, the ESP, Prakas, and MENAP, demonstrates an intentional effort on behalf of the MoEYS to institutionalize MLE for the promotion of educational equity among ethnolinguistic community members. By allowing children to use and learn in their home languages, the gate-keeping function of language-in-education policies that would otherwise prevent children from understanding school material is disrupted. Moreover, the policy documents align with international research promoting MLE, further convincing key stakeholders that MLE is necessary for ethnolinguistic minority learners. Where they might merit criticism is in their failure to adopt a more theoretically sound model of MLE, as technical assistants like us have recommended through the partners for many years. A 6-year model has been proposed to pilot the use of the L1 throughout the primary cycle, maximizing its potential to build a strong literacy and learning foundation (Benson and Wong 2017). However, due to a lack of consensus at the time, any mention of the pilot was avoided in the MENAP policy so that negotiations could proceed among the stakeholders. Limiting the opportunity for children to develop a solid literacy foundation in their first language during the primary school years, the transitional MLE model leaves the “gate” half opened, where the threat of transitioning into sink-or-swim immersion policies looms in the distance.

4.2 *National Support for MLE*

Administration of MLE officially falls under the responsibility of the Special Education Department within the Primary Education Department (PED), apparently under an “inclusiveness” umbrella. The work of the PED with regard to MLE is guided by two overlapping aims—the ESP and MENAP, as discussed above.

According to interviews in 2015 and 2016 with members of the PED, a consistent priority of MoEYS has been to integrate community schools into the state (government) school system. With the conversion of community schools to state schools, these schools will become eligible for government funding for teachers, materials, and other essential resources. According to interviews with CARE staff, MoEYS has with their help developed a set of criteria for integrating community schools into the state system based on school environment, classroom environment, and teacher qualifications, and these are spelled out in the MENAP document. Moreover, UNICEF staff indicates that a few community schools have already become government schools under UNICEF’s Child-Friendly Schools framework, which will continue to unfold in upcoming years.

While the ministry officials that we interviewed revealed that expanding MLE in the school system is a priority of MoEYS, building the capacity of community teachers to pass qualifications and become state teachers is also a MoEYS priority that CARE is supporting. There are currently a number of community teachers who have devoted 8–10 years of their lives teaching in their communities and who have earned the equivalent of lower secondary education through the CARE trainings. Through MENAP, MoEYS recognizes these community teachers as a resource for the education of ethnolinguistic minority children in remote villages; as the only teachers who share the linguistic and cultural background of their students, they serve as important gatekeepers—or perhaps better stated, *gate openers*—for Indigenous children. In fact, the approximately 127 working community teachers have reached over 5000 students in remote parts of the northeastern provinces.

In order to build community teachers’ capacity to become state teachers, recognized by the government and placed on the government pay scale, they currently follow the teacher training curriculum developed by CARE in partnership with the government. This involves travel to Ban Lung, the capital of Ratanak Kiri province, for five days of training three times a year. The training consists of teaching methodology (2 days), academic home language development (half a day), and Khmer literacy and mathematics (1.5 days), and the last day is split between testing and a roundtable meeting. Academic upgrading is a top priority as community teachers who test at the grade 9 level are able to enter Provincial Teacher Training Colleges for 2-year programs to become qualified as government teachers, who are paid on the government teacher salary scale. Thanks to the support of CARE and the collaborative efforts of multiple actors, MENAP serves as a roadmap for MoEYS, which is now committed to expanding MLE in Cambodia.

4.3 *Provincial Support for MLE*

I wanted to be a teacher in this village because I always dreamed of helping to develop this village and increase literacy. I also wanted to teach young students in this village to read and write in their own language.—MLE teacher and former student in Ratanak Kiri

The Provincial Offices of Education (POE) have proven to be the key to successful implementation of MLE in Cambodia, opening “gates” that follow the strategies outlined in MENAP to implement bilingual programs in new communities in collaboration with NGOs and other partners. Moreover, because the gatekeeping function of Khmer, the dominant language, has been challenged in Cambodia with MLE programs, POEs have more opportunity to develop MLE programs to provide their respective community members with an equitable education.

As the original innovators in MLE in 2002, Ratanak Kiri POE officers are often considered leaders of MLE implementation by the MoEYS. According to various POE officers we have interviewed, as the program expanded, CARE and the other development partners have worked with the government to build strong capacity at the Ratanak Kiri POE to pioneer developments in teacher training, resource development, technical assistance, and overall direction for sustainability. POE staff monitored progress, discussed challenges, and collaboratively relayed findings to the national MoEYS headquarters while hosting many study visits to community MLE schools. Meanwhile, neighboring Mondul Kiri POE became actively involved, and other POEs followed suit. The Mondul Kiri POE now has a high capacity for the dissemination of effective MLE practices, partially because they have established strong structures to manage student and teacher absenteeism in village schools. POE staff from Ratanak Kiri and Mondul Kiri have played a critical role in analyzing issues and challenges with MLE, offering solutions to other POEs during annual meetings (Benson et al. 2016). A current challenge noted by interviews with POE officials is integrating MLE into existing state schools. In these schools, community teachers have been promoted to contract teacher status, which enables the government to pay for most of their salaries and alleviates development partners having to provide external funding (Benson and Wong 2017). Alongside this effort is the expansion of MLE programs into state schools by training existing teachers who speak Indigenous languages to teach bilingually in grades 1 to 3. Supported by CARE, the Ratanak Kiri POE aims to build a knowledge base on MLE for its staff in order to raise capacity for teacher training and other requirements of MLE expansion. As of July 2018, there is a plan to use a regional teacher training college to train MLE teachers.

4.4 *Nongovernmental Support of MLE*

Three primary external actors, CARE International, UNICEF, and International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC), have played a pivotal role in the development of MLE over the years. Their current roles are discussed in this section.

As described above, CARE began working with MoEYS and the Ratanak Kiri POE to promote MLE in 2002 as part of its efforts to improve education for Indigenous girls, and by extension, whole communities. In recent years, CARE has continued to provide leadership and support to MLE in four areas: capacity building of government education staff, handing over components of the program to MoEYS, converting community teachers to state school teachers, and providing a foundation of evidence-based research. Based on our interviews with stakeholders, CARE has worked closely with MoEYS and POE staff as well as with UNICEF to continue generating a high level of government ownership, which CARE deems essential for the success and sustainability of MLE in Cambodia (Nowaczyk 2015).

CARE's approach to community and structural development at the POE and MoEYS has been well thought out, particularly in strategizing how to approach and advise different stakeholders and how to maximize organizational strengths. UNICEF has focused on its strengths in facilitating the development of sustainable governmental policy and communicating results, while CARE has served as the main source of technical assistance in teacher training and support, until recently, as MoEYS takes over the trainings. Adding to the equation, ICC has made important contributions to the linguistic development of the Indigenous languages needed for school use, having worked for many years in nonformal adult literacy programs. The elaboration of L1 literacy and other materials for the school curriculum has been based on ICC's ongoing work with Indigenous communities in developing harmonized writing systems. ICC has worked to develop each language linguistically so that the documentation can be submitted to MoEYS for approval to be used in MLE programs. Guiding this collaboration, with a strong commitment to respecting government structures, CARE has helped to keep the "gate" open by ensuring both the quality and longevity of MLE in the five highland provinces.

Since the inception of MLE in 2002, CARE has slowly shifted its role from implementing community-based MLE schools to supporting the MoEYS in implementing MLE schools. Over the past ten years, CARE has worked intensively to build MoEYS capacity in MLE. Now, instead of implementing most of the programming, CARE provides technical support to the ministry, assisting with trainings of trainers and monitoring of schools, and even facilitates MoEYS representation at regional MLE conferences to discuss results (e.g., the fifth International Conference on Language and Education, 19–21 October 2016 in Bangkok).² CARE still organizes and conducts the tailored MLE trainings for community teachers and for state teachers, but POE and MoEYS educators are integral parts of these trainings in another move toward handover to government structures and personnel.

Lastly, although CARE has always used evidence-based research to inform practice, in the last five years, the organization has invested more resources in scholarly research on MLE as a strategy to facilitate policy change. One example is a large-scale longitudinal study spanning six years that attempted to quantify the effectiveness of MLE (e.g., Lee et al. 2014). This comprehensive study sought to measure

²<http://www.lc.mahidol.ac.th/mleconf/2016/background.htm>

student performance in mathematics, Khmer literacy, and oral Khmer after six years of MLE, comparing achievement to ethnolinguistic minority students in non-MLE schools. Findings from the study demonstrated that students in bilingual schools performed the same as or better than their counterparts in state schools, especially in mathematics (Lee et al. 2014). Results of the study are consistent with international findings (e.g., Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh 2012; Walter and Benson 2012) that highlight the benefits of MLE. Implications of these findings are especially important as they draw interest from regional and international scholars alike to MLE policy and practice in Cambodia. According to CARE, research has been a strategy for policy change, which has helped MoEYS to become more aware of the advantages of MLE for ethnolinguistic minority learners. This, in turn, has strengthened the trajectory of MLE for educational equity in Cambodia.

5 Implications

With the goal of reaching ethnolinguistic minority learners with educational access and quality through MLE, this case study has important implications for Cambodia, the Southeast Asian context, and beyond. In the context of educational development, these implications relate to empowering stakeholders, working in partnership with government and other agencies, and promoting ownership and autonomy so that change is sustainable (CARE 2008). In addition, areas of concern and challenges in MLE implementation are highlighted.

5.1 *Consistent Partnership with Government to Promote Policy Development*

As the Cambodia case study demonstrates, language-in-education policies play an important role in disrupting the gate-closing function of exclusive teaching in Khmer by providing Indigenous learners with access to schooling in their own languages. MLE was first introduced by CARE International through the piloting of community-based schools. With vested interest from stakeholders at all levels, including non-dominant linguistic communities, provincial and national education offices, and international partners, MLE has evolved in policy and practice. Now relatively mature in its development, MLE policy in Cambodia is garnering international attention as key MoEYS and Ratanak Kiri POE staff share best practices at international conferences. Most recently, the Deputy Director of the Ratanak Kiri POE presented best practices on training ethnic minority teachers for MLE at the fifth International Conference on Language and Education held in Bangkok, Thailand.³ This positive reinforcement of strengths in MLE development further

³<http://www.lc.mahidol.ac.th/mleconf/2016/background.htm>

enhances the sustainability of language-in-education policy development in the country.

5.2 Consistent Partnership with Non-dominant Communities to Ensure Support

Since 2002, when Cambodia began piloting community-based MLE schools, community members have been strongly invested in the overall process. The pilot MLE model included the formation of Community School Management Committees (now known as School Support Committees to be consistent with the term in state schools) composed of village elders and leaders, women and men, who were responsible for identifying potential community teachers to be trained, and for building and autonomously managing MLE schools. Engaging local members in the development and implementation of the MLE policy has been an important part of the success of MLE schools, facilitating public engagement, contextualizing MLE policy in ways that are seen as valuable to stakeholders, and breaking down the gatekeeping function of language use in the classroom.

5.3 Development of Structural Supports for MLE Practice

Two important implications of the Cambodia context for implementing MLE include cultivating teacher supply and training and developing non-dominant languages for use in education. First, the selection of potential teachers by their communities, and the design of trainings tailored to meet their needs was a particularly effective way to address the temporary lack of trained teachers who were literate in the languages of their students. To date, 12 graduates of MLE primary schools have gone on to complete degrees at teacher training institutions with more on the way, demonstrating that a single generation of MLE learners at the primary level can serve as a catalyst that multiplies the number of MLE teachers who can become qualified according to government requirements (Benson and Wong 2017). Second, when developing and institutionalizing non-dominant languages, processes need to be put in place to facilitate their approval. Currently, in Cambodia, a committee of educators at MoEYS has been tasked with receiving documentation of new languages for approval to be used in MLE. While five have been approved for some years, two have been awaiting approval, one of which (Jarai) has only recently been given the green light and the other of which languishes in a time-consuming process fraught with inconsistencies. While it could be argued that this system has given MoEYS ownership of a critical aspect of MLE policy and practice, it could also be suggested that some authority should be given to people with technical expertise, such as university linguists.

5.4 The Importance of Collaboration Between Development Partners

The case of Cambodia demonstrates the importance of partnerships between development partners to open the gate for MLE policy. Good communication and collaboration have characterized the relationship built in Cambodia between CARE and UNICEF, and a high level of trust has been built between these organizations, MoEYS, and the POEs. These relationships are pivotal in the success and sustainability of MLE in Cambodia. In recent years, and particularly with the agreement on MENAP, CARE and UNICEF have adopted very clearly defined and specific roles that strategically support MoEYS in moving the MLE agenda forward. While UNICEF draws from its strengths in state policy and MLE institutionalization, CARE International has spearheaded technical assistance and capacity building that ensures successful MLE implementation on the ground. ICC, a third NGO partner, has played an important role in developing appropriate languages for MLE use and has been a great resource for teaching and learning materials for formal MLE as well as nonformal L1 literacy needs. The synergistic collaboration between NGOs and the government that has developed in Cambodia appears to ensure both the quality and longevity of MLE in Cambodia—and potentially in the region, depending on how these organizations and governments influence each other.

5.5 The Importance of Evidence-Based Decision-Making

As noted above, significant attention has been placed in recent years on assessing the effectiveness of MLE in Cambodia. Both CARE and UNICEF have sought technical assistance from individual scholars and research-based institutions internationally, not only for the provision of on-the-ground assistance but also to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the program. Learning metrics that include both quantitative and qualitative evidence are critical for moving policy development forward. The longitudinal study previously cited (Lee et al. 2014), which examined learner achievement in MLE and non-MLE control schools, represents an effort to document and disseminate MLE both within and beyond Cambodia, particularly in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region. Our recent study (Benson and Wong 2017), along with this chapter, also attempts to document MLE successes and challenges in a way that will inform other countries and contexts. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, we document implementational processes, stakeholders' views, and learner achievement for a holistic view of how MLE is developing in Cambodia. These and studies of policy development like Kosonen's (2013) are important for triangulating the experiences, affordances, and challenges of MLE in development contexts.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has described Cambodia's groundbreaking steps toward integrating multilingual education into policy and practice in an effort to provide improved access and quality education to Indigenous learners. The use of learners' own languages by new teachers from their own communities has been the key to providing equitable education in a place where the language of instruction once stood in the way, metaphorically acting as a gatekeeper. In northeastern Cambodia, when we ask if the school speaks the language of the learner, the answer is increasingly "yes."

The Cambodian government and its development partners should be recognized for their groundbreaking efforts, which other educational systems would be well advised to study. Meanwhile, the project of investing in the strengths of linguistically diverse learners is not complete, as evident in the 3-year (early-exit) transitional model of bilingual education delineated in the MENAP. Using an early-exit model risks achieving less-than-optimal results, as research in high-income contexts has indicated that a 6- to 8-year investment in MLE is needed to demonstrate significant differences between MLE and non-MLE treatments (Thomas and Collier 1997, 2002; Heugh 2011). If the goal is to develop stronger skills in Khmer, use of the L1 should be extended through to the end of the primary cycle, which is likely to improve student achievement, making the impact of MLE much more convincing to policymakers and the public. Judging by the excellent progress made by Cambodia since 2002, we believe that this next step can and should be taken, moving Cambodia—and by its lessons, neighboring countries—into an era of truly equitable Education for All.

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Part II
Racialized Discourses, Identity and
Diversity

Who Is “Diverse”?: (In)Tolerance, Education, and Race in Hong Kong



Kara Fleming

Abstract This chapter will take a critical perspective on discourses of “diversity” in Hong Kong as expressed in the education system and the media, in order to argue that despite their apparently positive intentions, many efforts at raising awareness of “diversity” contribute to homogenizing racial groups, reinforcing racial and linguistic boundaries and rationalizing social stratification. Through ethnographic research with South Asian students at a multiethnic Hong Kong secondary school as well as analysis of Hong Kong media and policy, this chapter will demonstrate that such discourses of diversity depend on an understanding of society as composed of distinct and homogeneous blocks and thus help cast South Asians as a unified and exoticized group who are permanently “diverse.” This chapter joins with other work which takes a critical perspective on what it means to talk about diversity, in order to consider how awareness of Hong Kong’s linguistic and racial diversity could be supported in ways that might truly contribute to minority equality and empowerment.

1 Introduction

South Asians in Hong Kong, like many other minority groups in contexts around the world, are often portrayed in media and policy discourse as problematic residents who have not successfully “integrated” into mainstream society (Erni and Leung 2014). Language is frequently cited as the central, sometimes even the sole, factor in achieving this integration – successfully learning Cantonese is presented as the key to accessing quality education and jobs, which will accompany an overall move toward cultural assimilation into the ethnic Chinese mainstream (Chow 2013; Ngo 2013).

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Circulating at the same time as these assimilationist discourses is an apparently more positive portrayal of South Asians as a source of enriching multiculturalism and diversity in an internationalized Hong Kong. Yet are these two discourses really so contradictory as they might initially appear? In this chapter, I will critically analyze discourses around “diversity” in relation to Hong Kong South Asians. Focusing on educational contexts, this chapter will ask – what does it actually mean to talk about diversity? What forms of diversity are acceptable or valued? And in what ways does it benefit – or not benefit – individuals to be seen as “diverse”?

This chapter will demonstrate that despite apparent good intentions, many efforts at raising awareness of “diversity” contribute to the homogenization of racial groups, reinforcement of racial and linguistic boundaries, and the rationalization of social stratification. “Diversity” and “integration” are therefore mutually reinforcing. Through ethnographic research with South Asian students at a multiethnic Hong Kong secondary school as well as analysis of Hong Kong media and policy, this chapter will demonstrate that such discourses of diversity depend on an understanding of society as composed of distinct and homogeneous blocks and target only superficial forms of diversity, like food and clothing, for celebration. Thus they help cast South Asians as a unified and exoticized group who are permanently “diverse.” Schools are a key site within which these processes are reinforced, and accordingly this analysis will draw on ethnographic data from a Hong Kong secondary school, as well as considering how such ideologies are reflected in policy and the media.

2 Hong Kong as a Diverse City

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China with a population of approximately 7.34 million in 2016 (Census and Statistics Department 2016). Its national branding has explicitly emphasized Hong Kong’s international cosmopolitanism, positioning itself as “Asia’s World City.” However, the treatment and portrayal of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong operate on racially and socioeconomically stratified lines. Particularly, South Asian minorities face discrimination in employment, housing, banking, healthcare, and other domains and are underrepresented in higher education (Erni and Leung 2014).

According to the 2016 by-census, 92% percent of Hong Kong’s population is ethnically Chinese. The largest South Asian groups include people of Indian (36,462 or 0.5% of the overall population in 2016), Nepali (25,472 – 0.3%), and Pakistani origins (18,094 – 0.2%) (Census and Statistics Department 2016). South Asians have a long history in Hong Kong – they have been present since its colonial beginnings in the 1840s. During the earlier days of rule by the British, South Asians came to Hong Kong primarily as merchants, soldiers, and ship workers (White 1994, p. 15). Many remained in Hong Kong and established the longstanding participation of South Asians in the police force and civil service, although Cantonese language requirements implemented since the handover in 1997 have largely eroded this

presence. Hong Kong’s Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) was implemented in 2010, significantly later than other types of anti-discrimination ordinances – the Sex Discrimination Ordinance and Disability Discrimination Ordinance were passed/implemented in 1995–1996 and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance in 1996–1997 – and the RDO has been criticized as being weaker than these other ordinances (Erni and Leung 2014). Despite this, there is a widespread sense that racism is not a problem in Hong Kong, particularly because there has been little racially motivated violence (O’Connor 2010).

Hong Kong’s overall education policy is complex and changing. The government promotes a language policy of “biliteracy and trilingualism” meant to encourage fluency in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English and literacy in English and Standard Written Chinese, although what exactly this standard is meant to look like on a societal level and who is meant to attain it is often left unspecified (for further discussion, see Fleming 2017). Debates over the medium of instruction have resulted in a generally stratified school system, especially at secondary level, in which the best schools teach in English and attending a Chinese-medium school means effectively being streamed into the “non-university track” (Lin and Man 2009; Tsang 2009). Newer “fine-tuning” policies implemented since 2013 have attempted to address this imbalance (Chan 2014), but English-language education is still a mark of prestige and seen as better preparation for Hong Kong’s universities, which are all English-medium.

The majority of working-class South Asians attend Chinese-medium (CMI) schools (where “Chinese” generally means spoken Cantonese and Standard Written Chinese in traditional characters), which often have little in the way of Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) provision. Despite Hong Kong’s Chief Executive vowing in 2014 to improve CSL provision, relatively little has been accomplished in terms of actual curriculum development, and so teachers at Hong Kong schools serving CSL learners are largely left to fend for themselves. As a result CSL provision is very inconsistent across schools in Hong Kong and is largely up to the will, time, and expertise of individual teachers and schools. Unless parents can afford very expensive school fees at Hong Kong’s international schools, the most common alternative for minority students to CMI education are the formerly so-called “designated” schools, which target working-class ethnic minorities specifically. These schools teach in English but do not share in the prestige of mainstream English-medium schools and generally have lower university admission rates. Designated schools have also faced criticism for being segregationist; in 2013–2014 the Education Bureau removed the designated school label and introduced funding measures designed to get more South Asian students into mainstream schools, but the former designated schools still exist in largely unchanged form. In 2009, about one fourth of Hong Kong South Asian students were attending designated schools, and the majority of the rest were at CMI schools (Tsung et al. 2010, p. 18).

Terminology around different ethnic groups in Hong Kong is somewhat contested; the term “ethnic minorities” in Hong Kong is typically understood to be referring specifically to working-class nonwhite minorities, particularly South and Southeast Asian groups. Middle and upper class minorities, especially white

minorities, are usually termed “expatriates.” I have generally used “South Asian” to refer to the people I am discussing, but this is also not a perfect term, as individuals with non-South Asian backgrounds are sometimes treated as part of the same category or may share similar experiences. Of course, the “groupness” of any of these terms’ referents should not be taken for granted. The extent to which there are easily definable and identifiable ethnic groups at all is highly questionable – these categories are much more diffuse and overlapping than the use of these terms suggests. Individuals also may have very different orientations to these labels. The fact that ethnic category terms are often taken for granted is one of the problems of the discourses I outline below.

This study draws on ethnographic fieldwork which took place at a secondary school I call MSC Secondary. I conducted 5 months of fieldwork here between February and June 2013, including participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires; this chapter primarily draws on data from interviews and ethnographic observation in the school. At the time of fieldwork, MSC had recently undergone some significant changes, moving from a school which primarily served recently immigrated students from mainland China to one which in 2011 had begun recruiting South Asian students in order to combat the threat of falling enrollment. This meant that while upper forms were still entirely ethnically Chinese, lower forms were split into three streams – a Cantonese-medium stream for ethnic Chinese students, an English-medium stream for South Asian students, and a bilingual stream for the best students from each ethnic grouping. Most of my time at MSC was spent with students in the English-medium and bilingual classes in Form 1, who were generally around 11–13 years old. The analysis that follows draws on my experiences with these students, as well as discussions with teachers, and media and policy analysis.

Due to the importance that has been placed on learning Cantonese and how central language is to structuring social stratification in Hong Kong, language ideologies offer a particularly useful lens through which to examine the issues below. Beliefs about language “often index the political and economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic or other interest groups, and nation states” (Kroskrity 2010, p. 192) and thus provide a way to examine how beliefs about broader social structures are encoded (Irvine and Gal 2000; Kroskrity 2010; Silverstein 1979; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Semiotic relations of indexicality link linguistic or social-semiotic features to particular speakers and meanings (Silverstein, 1979). “Diversity” itself is a term which obviously has a complex web of ideological associations and competing interpretations (Urciuoli 2010). Although other forms of social organization such as gender certainly play a significant role in the categorization and experiences of South Asians, the discussion below will primarily focus on ethnic/racial/national diversity, and the way that these categories are linked to language use.

3 The Problem of Integration

A common explanation for the problems facing working-class minorities in Hong Kong is that they have not successfully “integrated” into Hong Kong life. Language, specifically a perceived lack of Cantonese abilities among minority groups, is frequently cited both as a key factor preventing integration and the most important feature needed in order for successful integration to occur. Pinning this problem to language is a prominent feature of much discussion in the media and by NGOs working with ethnic minorities (Carvalho 2017; Ngo 2013; Novianti 2007; SCMP editors 2015). Thus while the government is also blamed for failing to provide adequate Chinese as a Second Language support, Hong Kong South Asians are under significant pressure to learn Cantonese.

Some of these ideologies can be identified in the text of the 2014 policy address given by Hong Kong’s Chief Executive:

There are more than 60,000 South Asian ethnic minority people living in Hong Kong, an increase of 50% over the past decade. **They have much difficulty integrating fully into the community due to differences in culture, language and ethnic background.** The Government will strengthen education support and employment services for them. Most South Asian ethnic minority residents call Hong Kong home. **To integrate into the community and develop their careers, they must improve their ability to listen to, speak, read and write Chinese.** We will strengthen the Chinese learning support for ethnic minorities from early childhood education through to primary and secondary levels. (Hong Kong Information Services Department 2014, emphasis mine)

Here diversity is cast as a problem that must be solved, and a vision of integration as assimilation, especially through the means of Cantonese language learning, is set up as the necessary solution.

It is notable that the discourse of integration is targeted specifically at South Asian ethnic minority groups. Although upper and middle class “expatriates” are similarly not considered to be assimilated into Hong Kong’s mainstream, the suggestion that they too need to integrate is virtually never raised. Instead they are positioned as desirable tokens of transnationalism, as Lo (2007, p. 438) writes: “Also considered as the alien others, white minorities are far more respected by the local Chinese than dark-skinned people from South and Southeast Asia. The Caucasian element is always seen as the most significant facade to make Hong Kong look global; it is also the most important constitutive factor that helps define the cosmopolitan nature of Hong Kong identity.” Similar uneven valuations of diversity based on class and racial factors have been described in contexts such as South Korea and the United States (Hill 2008; Lippi-Green 2012; Lo and Kim 2011, 2012). Elite “non-locals” are welcomed as desirable links to the world, while non-elite non-locals are disorderly, threatening, and problematic – and thus in need of integration.

Yet because the actual meaning of “integration” is left underspecified, it becomes difficult to determine when a minority group or individual has actually succeeded in integrating. Benchmarks can perpetually be shifted so that even if South Asians are acknowledged as having learnt to speak Cantonese, the problem can then be pinned to a perceived lack of Chinese literacy, and so on. South Asian students in Hong Kong are officially classified as “non-Chinese speaking” regardless of linguistic skill, raising the question of when students could ever escape this category, no matter how well they master Cantonese (further discussion of “integration” issues in Fleming 2015).

Discourses which position minority group members as both in need of integration and unassimilable have been described in other contexts, including Belgium, Canada, and Spain (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Jaspers 2005; Li 2003; Martín Rojo 2010), though these issues of boundary-making and hierarchization take on their own unique resonances in Hong Kong’s postcolonial context. Educating citizens about diversity seems to be a possible counterpoint to these assimilationist ideologies. In recent years a number of initiatives – by media outlets, NGOs, government bodies, and other organizations as well as individual schools and teachers – have sought to educate Hong Kongers about ethnic diversity in their city. However, the next section will demonstrate some of the ways in which, instead of disrupting stereotypes, discourses around diversity can instead homogenize ethnic categories and reinforce intergroup boundaries. When “diversity” is understood in this way, it becomes clear that such discourses are coherent with and contribute to the maintenance of the integration “problem.”

4 Diversity as Homogenization

Rather than uncritically celebrating all activities which claim to advance the goal of diversity education/promotion, it is important to examine what exactly such activities achieve and what kind of understanding of “diversity” underpins them, as scholars of critical multiculturalism and pedagogy have pointed out (May 1999; Kubota 2001, 2004). I will argue that in many cases, “diversity” is understood in a limited and homogenizing way and accordingly that such discussions of diversity, even when well-intentioned, serve not to break down intergroup barriers but rather reinforce and legitimize them.

At MSC Secondary, one of the ways in which the school was responding to its changing structure was through the introduction of a number of activities designed to encourage students from different ethnic groups to interact with each other and to educate students about diversity, multiculturalism, and other nations. However, these activities and lessons often relied on an image of a “diverse” society as composed of a number of distinct, mutually exclusive and internally homogenous population blocks. This underpinning made such activities potentially counterproductive, as it covertly emphasized a portrayal of South Asians as exotic and unassimilable.

During such activities at MSC, South Asian students were often called upon to share their perspectives; yet in many cases it seems students were expected not to share based on their own personal experiences but rather to act as idealized representatives of “their” countries. Some students enjoyed and played up to their attributed role as national experts, but for others this positioning was more troubling, as seen in Excerpt 1. This excerpt comes from an activity called the “Immersion Scheme.” This was a specially dedicated class period during which all the students in all three streams (Chinese, English, and bilingual) of Form 1 joined together to work on semester-long projects, in order to give students an opportunity for cross-ethnic cooperation and to practice speaking both English and Cantonese. During the semester of my fieldwork, students were working in groups to prepare for a “Multicultural Day.” Each group had been assigned a country from which MSC students’ families originated (either Nepal, India, Pakistan, China, or the Philippines) and were tasked with designing a booth introducing a festival from this country. During the planning periods, groups that found themselves without a member from the country they had been assigned would sometimes call over a student with the relevant background to ask questions. In the following excerpt, the group in question has been assigned Nepal and is considering designing their booth around Holi and calls over Keshav,¹ a Nepali-background student, to consult.

Excerpt 1. Immersion Scheme (from field notes)

1. Teacher: Keshav! Are you Nepalean?
2. [Keshav does not respond]
3. Teacher: Are you Nepalean?
4. Keshav: Am I Napoleon? I’m not Napoleon. I’m Nepali.
5. Teacher: Keshav, you’re Nepalean. Do you celebrate Holi?
6. Keshav: No.
7. Teacher: [gesturing to computer] Ah! It’s a lie!
8. [A girl in the group asks Keshav if Holi is celebrated in Nepal; he says that it is.
9. The teacher chides him, he responds that it is celebrated in Nepal but he has never gone.]
10. Boy: We don’t care about you, we just want to know about your people.

In this excerpt, Keshav’s account of his own experience – that he has never personally celebrated Holi – is rejected as inappropriate. What is needed is for him to act as a representative of an idealized, depersonalized version of Nepali identity. Here Keshav seems to express discomfort with this role, and in a later interview, Keshav commented on the Multicultural Day as follows:

Excerpt 2.

1. Keshav: We had a multicultural day but then it’s just weird because I never
2. experienced anything, so those cultures seem weird - maybe a bit stupid
3. sometimes, like - my country celebrating a festival for cows² I have no idea
4. why

¹All student names are pseudonyms.

²Keshav is referring here to the Nepali Hindu festival Gaijatra, which was the subject of another group’s booth.

Keshav describes the Multicultural Day as detached from his own experiences – here he seems to position himself no closer to “those cultures” than any other non-Nepali classmate might be. Indeed, many students had complex, sometimes ambivalent attitudes toward their ethnic backgrounds and the way these were discussed by the school and in public. Like the British South Asian students described by Harris (2006), many students at MSC expressed pride in their backgrounds but at times also distanced themselves from their families’ nations of origin. To varying extents many students also expressed a positive sense of identification with Hong Kong, and yet they often seemed to display an awareness that such ties might not be taken seriously by other interlocutors. In Excerpt 3, Tariq, a Pakistani background boy, expresses affective ties and a sense of identity attached to three nations but says that if asked he would simply explain himself as Pakistani to make his identity easier for others to understand:

Excerpt 3.

1. Kara: Where would you say you’re from if someone asked you?
2. Tariq: I would rather say I’m from Pakistan. Because, I but- because I am born in
3. Hong Kong, and I’m British. hhh And I’m three of them! So I would just say that
4. I’m a Pakistani. It will not be confused. As easy

Tariq was born and had lived his whole life in Hong Kong and also expresses his transnational affiliations with both Pakistan and the UK (he said that his grandfather was from the UK and that his sister currently lived there). Yet his ultimate choice of Pakistani as an identifier is not based on his own feelings of personal identification but an awareness that this is the explanation most likely to be accepted by others.

Similarly, Priti, a Nepali background girl, said that she enjoyed her participation in Multicultural Day precisely because it gave her an opportunity to engage with elements of being “Nepali” that she did not usually encounter:

Excerpt 4.

- 1 Kara: What do you think about the, the festival that went on, with like -
- 2 Priti: Yeah it was fun
- 3 Kara: the billboards and stuff?
- 4 Priti: I got to taste the – you know, one of the mm, some of them got to choose
- 5 Nepal, right? And they – and I got after a long time, I got to eat a traditional food of
- 6 Nepal. Cause in our home, we usually eat light food, like Hong – like a bowl dim
- 7 sums or like that right? After a long time I got to eat an Indian food also, so it was
- 8 nice.

Priti here represents her daily life as much more “local” than her positioning as a representative of an idealized “Nepal” would predict, but there is little opportunity for her to get these practices officially ratified as evidence for any “local” status she might wish to claim.

In other cases, discussions of diversity did focus on ethnic diversity within Hong Kong itself rather than linking South Asians to their “homelands.” However, such discussions at MSC and on wider scales of circulation were frequently centered on the difficulties faced by ethnic minority people. While it is good to acknowledge the real effects of racial discrimination and inequality, this focus risks a dominant image of South Asians as having and complaining about problems, and indeed Erni and

Leung note that South Asians are frequently positioned in the media as problem-prone, victims, and potential burdens to the taxpayer (2014, pp. 55–56).

At MSC, students discussed issues facing ethnic minorities during a unit on racial diversity in a class called Life and Society. During one of these lessons, students were asked to form groups and list problems that ethnic minorities might experience in Hong Kong. The teacher’s expectation in this case seemed to be that the students would offer examples from their own experiences; yet while presenting their lists, students often seemed to describe the problems they cited as something experienced by a group of people they themselves did not belong to.

Excerpt 5. Life and Society class (from field notes)

1. Suraj: Food problems – can’t get their own country food.
2. Ms Mak: You cannot buy suitable food for you to eat?
3. Suraj: Yes.

As some other students did in their presentations, Suraj uses third-person pronouns to suggest that the nonavailability of particular foods could be a problem for some people, but not necessarily for him. Ms. Mak, the Life and Society teacher, reframes this by replacing the third person pronouns with second person pronouns, attributing the complaint to Suraj himself. In contrast, during another group’s discussion of the problem of “social inclusion,” Faryal used first person pronouns to comment, “They don’t think of us as equals.” Language was very frequently brought up as a potential source of difficulty, but here again some students seemed to resist the implication that they themselves were insufficient Cantonese speakers, as seen in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6. Life and Society class (from field notes)

1. Rebecca: Some of the ethnic minorities don’t know Chinese.
2. Hasan (from audience): I know Chinese!

Here, Hasan challenges the portrayal of all minorities as unsuccessful Cantonese learners by offering his own Cantonese skills as a counterexample, which indeed builds on Rebecca’s initial framing of not knowing Cantonese as a problem faced by only *some* ethnic minority people – in contrast to dominant narratives that attribute a lack of Cantonese to *all* Hong Kong South Asians. Yet his response was not taken up by the teacher or other students. This discursive erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000) takes place simultaneously on broader institutional levels – as noted above, all South Asian students are classed as “non-Chinese speaking” by the Education Bureau. “Non-Chinese speaking” is clearly an ethnic label rather than a linguistic one, as it applied regardless of Cantonese language ability. Given this underpinning, it is not clear how South Asian students could ever get themselves recategorized as “Chinese-speaking.” Repeatedly in the course of discussions around diversity, students seemed to be asked to inhabit experiences and categories that did not match their own understanding of their daily realities. The constant emphasis on an attributed lack of success in Hong Kong and on the way their homogenized national origins are different helps present South Asian students as maximally and problematically foreign.

During the same series of lessons, students at MSC took issue with their course textbook's presentation of the topic of Hong Kong's diversity. One page included the caption "Can you recognize a Hindu temple in Hong Kong?" underneath a photo of a Hong Kong religious building. The photograph actually depicted the Sikh temple in Wan Chai, as several students pointed out with indignation.

Photos of two other Hong Kong textbooks on the topic of diversity education went viral on Hong Kong social media in 2014 after being posted on the blog HongWrong and were picked up by the international press (Grundy 2014a, b; Strauss 2014; Al Jazeera 2014). Both textbooks were criticized for reinforcing racist stereotypes. The first came from a primary three textbook which, under the heading "Racial Harmony," asked students to match ethnicities to pictures of people accompanied by statements such as "I am a Filipino. I am a domestic helper in Hong Kong," "I am British. I am an English teacher," and "I am Indian. I study in an international school."

The second was from a primary four textbook. This textbook asks students to match photographs of people to their "race" (the choices are white, black, brown, and yellow). It then provides some "common characteristics" of these races, from which students should select the correct answers. The list is reproduced here; the parentheses contain the options which students were supposed to choose between.

- White: Light skin, tall, (flat/narrow) nose, (thin/thick) lips
- Black: Very dark skin, tall, flat and wide nose, (thin/thick) lips, curly hair
- Brown: Dark skin, (big/small) nose, (thin/thick) lips
- Yellow: Yellow skin, (blue/dark brown) eyes, high cheek bones

The drawings next to each box represent the "white" person with a T-shirt and baseball cap, the "black" person with a T-shirt, the "yellow" person in a kimono, and the "brown" person shirtless and with tribal-looking tattoos.

It is clear from these examples that diversity education cannot be uncritically accepted as positive. Diversity education can rely on simplistic stereotypes about the groups in question, homogenizing, delegitimizing, and misrepresenting the experiences of individuals. Repeated references to diversity emphasize indexical links with foreignness – in a sense it does not matter for these ideologies if the building in the photo is a Hindu or Sikh temple; they have been lumped together in the realm of "non-Chinese." "Diversity" becomes a quality which only applies to individuals outside the unmarked norm; only "they" are "diverse" (Urciuoli 2010).

Where discourses of diversity in Hong Kong are celebratory, they tend only to involve superficial forms of diversity such as food, dress, and festivals – other more "serious" aspects are still presented as in need of integration. Thus one can dress up and eat "diverse" foods at Multicultural Day while still maintaining that South Asians' lack of assimilation is problematic. As Blommaert and Verscheuren (1998, p. 99) write in their analysis of similar discourses in Europe:

Although the presence of these foreign elements in Belgian society is officially declared to be a form of 'cultural enrichment' ..., a detailed analysis... reveals that Belgian society wants to be 'enriched' only in domains such as exotic cuisine, exotic music, and dance – in sum, folklore. Socially, culturally, and linguistically, if not religiously, immigrants should

‘integrate’ or de-ethnicize themselves, to the point where, as one government party’s policy document on immigrants states, ‘Migrants should become Flemish.’

The burden of this assimilation is placed with minority group members themselves, who are expected to shed any marked cultural or linguistic practices, even while racialized definitions of the “local” simultaneously ensure they are not recognized for any “local” practices they do adopt. Note, for instance, the examples of Priti and Tariq above, as well as the difficulty for students of moving out of the “non-Chinese speaking” category. The perceived failure to assimilate and exoticized cultural qualities are then used as further explanations for any problems South Asians might face in Hong Kong, as in the following quote from an editorial in the *South China Morning Post*.

Perhaps we also need to examine ethnic minorities, tolerance of Hongkongers. Do they attempt to integrate themselves into society? So far, this has been a one-sided argument. It should be remembered that Hong Kong is more diverse and democratic than any other city. (Young, 2013)

Here, as in many discussions of diversity and integration, in Hong Kong, there is a token acknowledgement that the Hong Kong “mainstream” could perhaps do more to accommodate minorities, yet the underlying assumption is that the opportunities for engagement and socioeconomic mobility are already there if the South Asians would merely take them. Though students at MSC were often critical of how they were treated and perceived by the Chinese majority, some of them also seemed to have internalized a sense of this personal responsibility, as Naeem, a Pakistani background boy who spoke very good Cantonese, put it when asked why he had chosen to attend MSC:

Excerpt 7.

1. Naeem: In this school we can learn many different subjects and we can also
2. communicate with those Chinese student – which maybe we can tell them about our
3. culture so that maybe they won’t discriminate us.

Discrimination here is framed as a function of a lack of knowledge about minority groups and their cultural practices (instead of a general awareness of the problems of discrimination), and it is up to South Asians to redress this deficit. Similarly, critiques of corporate “diversity management” and discourses of success, failure, and “appropriateness” in second language/heritage language education have argued that “diversity” is often defined through the gaze of those in power, who espouse the value of multiculturalism while still retaining the ability to evaluate whether or not minority group members are appropriately “diverse” (Park 2013; Rosa and Flores 2017).

Thus the true collusion of diversity education and assimilationist ideologies becomes clear – a few superficial and nonthreatening forms of diversity are targeted for celebration while emphasizing minorities’ indexical links with “foreign,” exoticized practices. This helps to homogenize the differences among South Asian students, including any of their claims to being “local” – South Asians that speak Cantonese or have assimilated culturally are semiotically erased (Irvine and Gal

2000). Instead South Asians become “forever foreigners” (Lo and Reyes 2009) who are portrayed simplistically. Their individual histories, affiliations, and linguistic abilities are not recognized, and yet they are also held personally responsible as individuals for assimilating themselves into “local” practices. Hong Kong can give itself credit for open-mindedness and tolerance while maintaining the ideological boundaries that keep South Asians outside the cultural mainstream.

5 Conclusion

This analysis has outlined some ways in which discussion of “diversity” and multiculturalism can subtly and ironically help maintain an image of minority groups as permanent others who can never really integrate into the mainstream or shed the marked quality of being “diverse.” Materials and efforts toward diversity education are often overly simplified or simply mistaken and cast South Asians as exotic tokens of homogenized cultures. From this it is clear that recognizing some form of linguistic or cultural diversity does not mean embracing heterogeneity – it can in fact constrain heterogeneity (Piller 2016; Stroud 2004). In other words, a “naive, static and undifferentiated conception of cultural identity... end[s] up being not that dissimilar from the new racisms of the Right” (May 1999, p. 13).

Although this chapter has focused on how “diversity” discourses construct homogenized images of South Asians, they are not the only essentialized, racialized group in Hong Kong – the category of “Chinese,” for instance, is similarly taken for granted. The “Chinese” are, like the “South Asians,” a much more complex and heterogeneous group than diversity discourses make them out to be, with a wide variety of migration histories, cultural practices, linguistic resources (including Sinitic varieties such as Mandarin, Hakka, Fukien, Chiu Chau, etc.), and socioeconomic situations. Indeed, imagining a unified “South Asian” block helps to construct an essentialized “Chineseness” by way of contrast.

With such discourses of diversity keeping South Asians indexed as perpetually foreign, it seems to be impossible at present for South Asians to actually be recognized as having integrated or for them to get credit for any “local” linguistic and cultural practices they have adopted. However, given the assimilationist underpinnings of local understandings of integration, it is also important to ask whether integration should be seen as a worthwhile or desirable goal. In other words, even if South Asians *could* culturally and linguistically assimilate and be acknowledged as having done so, would they want to? The contrast in portrayals of and expectations concerning “expatriates” and South Asians is again notable here. Although both expatriates and working-class South Asians are seen as ethnic outsiders, the pressure to integrate is applied unevenly and overwhelmingly to the South Asians. Expatriates are constructed by dominant discourses of diversity as enriching transnational links, enhancing Hong Kong’s status as a global cosmopolitan city; thus there is no need for them to integrate. Working-class South Asians, on the other hand, do not get the same kind of social credit for their transnational links. In any

case, it is clear that minorities’ learning of Cantonese on its own would not be sufficient to resolve underlying racial- and class-based barriers.

This is all not to say that there is no role for education to play or that all efforts in Hong Kong have been counterproductive. There is a widespread lack of awareness among ethnic Chinese that many South Asian families have been in Hong Kong for generations and a sense that Hong Kong is a fundamentally Chinese society in which a certain amount of racism is unproblematic, which education might usefully address – a commenter on a recent article on the situation of Hong Kong’s ethnic minorities wrote, “If minorities feel neglected in HK, they have the choice by not coming to HK, or go to an inclusive country like America. HK does not force minorities to stay in HK where they find social inequality” (comment on Blundy and Leung, 2016). At MSC itself, activities like the Immersion Scheme were still being negotiated, and many teachers and administrators were deeply concerned with and thinking hard about minority education issues. On a follow-up visit in 2015, I attended a set of presentations during the Immersion Scheme by form 1 students about diversity and different cultures, but this time the presentations focused on the history of minority communities in Hong Kong and their contributions to Hong Kong society. Posters on the school walls asked critical questions about why wealthy white businessmen like Allan Zeman had successfully applied for naturalization as Chinese citizens, while other naturalization applications by successful South Asians, such as Chinese University of Hong Kong professor Shekhar Kumta, had been rejected (Leung 2008; Cheung 2012; see Fleming 2015 for further discussion of these cases).

That is to say that there are educators who are working hard to get students and the public thinking carefully about issues of race and equality, but clearly we cannot assume that anything which places itself under the heading of diversity education is necessarily a positive. Instead this chapter demonstrates some ways in which a great deal of what falls under this label in Hong Kong reinforces the marginalization of South Asians. If this is how “diversity” is portrayed, is the oft-cited goal of increased “awareness” really beneficial? A critical examination of diversity discourse is necessary in order to establish paths toward a more inclusive social reality.

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Unresolved Tensions in Hong Kong's Racialized Discourse: Rethinking Differences in Educating about Ethnic Minorities



Jan GUBE and Casey Burkholder

When people rely on surface appearances and false racial stereotypes, rather than in-depth knowledge of others at the level of the heart, mind and spirit, their ability to assess and understand people accurately is compromised.

- James A. Forbes

Abstract The lack of Chinese language proficiency of Hong Kong ethnic minorities has frequently been cited as an inherent factor preventing their social integration. Beneath this assumption are racialized discourses that intensify the social boundaries between ethnic minorities and Hong Kong Chinese people. This chapter elaborates on some deep-seated issues relating to how ethnic minorities are racialized in Hong Kong. We argue that ethnic minorities are fraught with different levels of invisibility and racial normativity, creating a set of dilemmas on how cultural diversity is conceived in Hong Kong's wider social fabric. Using the notion of race as a starting point, the discussion highlights the dilemmas resulting from the invisibilities of ethnic minorities of color in the public discourse and the educational discourse and at a community level among non-Chinese residents. We argue that these racialized discourses operate differently toward white ethnic minorities who are provided unearned social and economic advantages within this city, solidifying further divisions. Clarifying the racialized discourses provides a means to delve into the normative inclinations of Hong Kong—how ethnic minorities of color are systematically and persistently rendered as outsiders at multiple levels.

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1 Introduction

Although legislation is in place to address racism in Hong Kong—e.g., 2008s Racial Discrimination Ordinance—the lack of systematic initiatives relating to multiculturalism (Jackson 2013; Kennedy 2011; Lee and Law 2016) makes it tempting to question Hong Kong’s readiness to embrace cultural diversity. A likely outcome of such a monocultural tendency is that conversations about race are not yet deeply entrenched in Hong Kong’s public and educational discourses. Such conversations tend to be confined within ethnically and linguistically diverse, non-Chinese communities, NGOs, advocates, and researchers who take interest in the experiences of ethnic minorities. What seems particularly problematic about this situation is the paucity of intellectual room for conceptualizing the racial experiences of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Given that Hong Kong constructs cultural diversity in different terms (Kennedy 2011; Lee and Law 2016) and the heterogeneity of its non-Chinese population, it must be pointed out that the extant literature on race still leaves a gap to grasp racialized discourses associated with ethnic minorities.

In this chapter, we contribute to the discussion of racial formation of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. We do so by laying bare some key issues regarding how race is conceived in the city’s dominant Chinese context. The central question addressed in this chapter is: how are ethnic minorities racialized in Hong Kong? In addressing this question, we discuss the usefulness of race as a conceptual tool in exploring the dominant racialized discourses pertaining to ethnic minorities of color in Hong Kong. The intention here is not to exhaustively describe what racism or its discourse entails. Rather, in unsettling the essentializing tendencies of the academic and public discourses, we will examine a body of literature on race and racialized discourses that account for ethnic minorities’ invisibility and racial normativity on Chinese-ness. Last, we will conclude by proposing research directions on how scholarship on race might be conceptualized and pursued, considering the specific cultural conditions of Hong Kong. This conceptual direction, we argue, will contribute to the understanding of deep-seated, but not always visible, racial tensions in Hong Kong.

For the rest of this chapter, we will refer to ethnic minorities of color as “ethnic minorities” as this is the discourse most often used by policy, the media, and Hong Kong’s educational system. However, we want to make clear that these discourses operate differently on Hong Kong’s white ethnic minorities, who are often referred to as expatriates and who reap unearned social and economic privilege in the city (Groves 2014, October).

2 Race and Social Meanings

Race has been a dominant concept in understanding the racial identities and inequalities of ethnic minorities in various culturally diverse and immigrant contexts. In this chapter, race is understood as a social construct rather than an individual’s specific genetics. The focus here is on how physical markers of individuals based on

lineage are socially constructed. In this sense, race is mutable, a sociohistorical concept (Omi and Winant 1994), in which individuals are classified, if not demarcated, based on skin color and appearance with links to their ancestry and morphology. This constructionist view of race has been favored among social scientists because of its usefulness in understanding how social meanings are ascribed to the physical characteristics of people: “Determining which characteristics constitute the race—the selection of markers and therefore the construction of the racial category itself—is a *choice* human beings make. Neither markers nor categories are predetermined by any biological factors” (Cornell and Hartman 1998, p. 24, emphasis added). In placing the choices surrounding the construction of racial categories, race needs to be understood in terms of how it has become subsumed in the broader narratives of a specific culture through the way people and institutions determine minorities as racial beings or perpetuate such understandings (i.e., who counts as ethnic/racial minorities? Who and what makes them count as ethnic/racial minorities? And, in the case of Hong Kong, what does it mean when the category of “ethnic minorities” discursively excludes its white residents?). Although drawing on data from before the 2016 census, in May 2017, Rachel Blundy of the South China Morning Post made this point explicitly,

Only 6 per cent of Hong Kong’s population is classed as non-ethnic Chinese, equating to about 450,000 people, according to the 2011 census. More than half of this group (about 270,000) are Filipinos and Indonesians employed as foreign domestic workers. The rest, *other than about 55,000 Caucasians mainly from Europe, the United States, and Canada*, are a diverse mix of races, including Indians, Nepalis, Pakistanis, Malaysians, Thais, Vietnamese and Japanese. The number of non-ethnic Chinese people in Hong Kong has grown since 2001, when it stood at 343,950, equivalent to 5.1 per cent of the population. (Blundy 2017, May 6, emphasis added)

To appreciate the idea that “[a]ny physical traits used to construct racial categories are culturally determined” (Lee and Law 2016, p. 84), it is crucial to overcome overly instrumental ideologies that tend to cast ethnic minorities as racialized individuals who fail to adhere to the values of ethnic majority. Spencer (2014) warned us of treating human behavior as “mere biology” or “mere pragmatism,” which underplays the symbolic forms of cultural representations, such as the intricacies of how people make sense their racial characteristics through their everyday life practices and how these characteristics are portrayed in the wider public: “Individuals are neither ‘cultural dopes’, reproducing dominant cultural forms, nor merely at the mercy of ‘hard-wired’ biological systems” (p. 101). In moving away from the view that racial characteristics are immutable biological differences, Spencer’s consideration is helpful in raising questions not about how different ethnic minorities are from ethnic majorities, but how ethnic minorities are *made* different. We suggest that these makings operate differently on ethnic minorities depending on the dominant society and who counts as the majority. As Meer (2014) reminds, “while race is a social construct it has real social and economic consequences. If we therefore choose to ignore race in public policy, we also ignore how racial categories are embedded in the routine practices of societies” (p. 117). To grasp the social meanings of race in Hong Kong, it is vital to examine the cultural factors that give rise to

the formation of racialized discourses in the city, enabling us to complicate how ethnic minorities are racialized in Hong Kong. In what follows, we provide a brief contextualization of how race issues in Hong Kong came to the fore as a backdrop to how race is culturally defined in the city's multicultural context.

3 Problematizing Race in Hong Kong

One of the pioneering studies on race issues in Hong Kong is Loper's (2004) documentation of ethnic minority students' encounters of racial inequalities. While Loper's study opened an avenue to critically examine what racial discrimination might mean, a more important implication of her study is how race has been a basis of discrimination toward ethnic minorities. Racism has been present in Hong Kong society long before Loper's study. Lee and Law (2016) cited a report on the death of Harinder Veriah, an Indian-Malaysian woman who allegedly received scant medical attention, as an example of racism, in which racial hierarchy was constructed based on color and appearance. As Lee and Law argued, building from colonialism, white people symbolize superiority, and individuals of color were inferior, providing a picture of the varied, yet prevailing, attitudes toward different races in Hong Kong.

Paralleling Lee and Law's argument was the findings of the racial acceptance survey conducted by Hong Kong Unison (2012). The survey findings revealed a wide discrepancy in the degree of acceptance of Hong Kong ethnic Chinese toward different ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. For instance, Pakistanis, Nepalese, and black Africans were reported as the least accepted ethnic minority groups in the neighborhood, education, and workplace, while Japanese and white Americans were more accepted by Hong Kong Chinese. The survey findings indicate that the substance of racism and racist attitudes in the city still leaves open a room for debate. Yet, a clearer implication was the varied degree of acceptance toward different ethnic groups, constituting a racial hierarchy among Hong Kong residents.

Despite the presence of racial hierarchy among ethnic groups in Hong Kong, critical attention on racism is recent. One reason for such is the less than overt presence of racial discrimination in the city. Unlike in the United States, for instance, where racially motivated violent altercations are common, racism in Hong Kong seldom translate into large scale and sustained violence and hatred. In a study of Equal Opportunities Commission (EoC) (The University of Hong Kong and Policy 21 Limited 2012), South Asians perceived racial discrimination as a less than severe issue. This perception is perhaps reflected in the reports of EoC. In comparing the various discrimination cases it received, the EoC (2016) handled 52 complaints related to the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) out of 612 overall complaints (8.5%) in years 2014–2015 and 2015–2016. This is a relatively small figure. What seems to be pointed out more frequently is the unequal treatment toward South Asians in workplaces (Equal Opportunities Commission 2011), which could be seen as a subtler form of racial discrimination when compared to the violent ones in the US context.

On the other hand, systemic forms of racism receive more public attention, such as the limited access to Chinese-medium schools, segregating effects of schooling arrangements for ethnic minorities (Shum et al. 2016) and their difficulty in finding residential accommodation (Oxfam Hong Kong 2016). For systemic and individual issues as such, it is unclear how many of those have been brought up to the EoC. The implications of these studies and reports, however, seem to project a rather mixed picture of how racism is conceived in Hong Kong. That is, while racism is a feature of Hong Kong society (Kennedy 2011), its discourses remains invisible at many levels, as Lo (2015, June 8) quipped in his column: “Is Hong Kong a racist society? For the longest time, as a member of a local Chinese middle-class family, I didn’t think we were.” It is in this view that the city grapples with the idea of racism.

4 Potentials and Limits of RDO in Promoting Multicultural Initiatives

At a systemic level, racism is addressed in Hong Kong through the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO), playing into the shaping of racial discourses of the city. In the RDO, race “in relation to a person means the race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin of the person” (Legislative Council 2008, p. 1). This definition, accordingly, makes it applicable to the discussion of racial characteristics and differences of nonethnic Chinese people in Hong Kong and vice versa. The RDO has clearly stated aims in combating racism, such as:

- To render discrimination, harassment, and vilification, on the ground of race, unlawful
- To prohibit serious vilification of persons on that ground
- To extend the jurisdiction of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EoC) to include such unlawful acts
- To confer on the Commission the function of eliminating such discrimination, harassment, and vilification and promoting equality and harmony between people of different races

These aims have become the cornerstone of EoC in processing complaints with respect to racial discrimination. The RDO is a much-welcomed initiative that aims to promote racial harmony, which is an effort that taps into the arena of cultural diversity in Hong Kong (Kennedy 2011). If systemic efforts are in place to promote racial harmony and, to some extent, cultural diversity, then why do dissenting voices—views that represent dissatisfaction toward the multicultural initiatives in Hong Kong—remain? Despite the successes in processing RDO-related complaints, EoC noted that their data are “far from satisfactory” in claiming Hong Kong as a city with low racism-related incidents (Equal Opportunities Commission 2014, p. 46). A possible explanation for this is the difficulty in advancing complaints to legal actions under the RDO (Kapai 2015). Kapai noted, for instance, some gaps in the RDO related to protecting ethnic minorities against the conduct of public bod-

ies. The legal details are worthy of attention, but they are beyond the scope of this chapter. An important implication of these gaps is that RDO is neither a panacea to stop racism nor a catalyst for promoting comprehensive multicultural initiatives. The fabric of racism in Hong Kong society must be examined if we are to understand how ethnic minorities are imagined within the public and education discourses.

5 Invisibility in Discourses of Public, Education, and Demographic Representation

Despite the growing body of literature accounting for racism, a deep-seated issue is that race remains a difficult concept to grasp in a city without a developed discourse on cultural diversity. While race and racism are by no means synonymous, it could be said that racism is in an outcome of how race has been culturally defined, particularly in the case of Hong Kong. Recognizing invisibility is an essential move to understand how race is defined in Hong Kong. In the context of ethnic minorities, invisibility is considered as a denial of “the existence of racially disparate treatment by consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or non-deliberately overacting, ignoring, or oversimplifying the problem” (Sun and Starosta 2006, p. 121). Without a broader multicultural agenda that explicitly recognizes and addresses racial displays and treatments in social structures, there exists a risk in narrowly defining race as mere physical markers. This definition of race is not divorced from discourses fraught with different levels of invisibility and racial normativity in Hong Kong that amount to exclusionary practices. These discourses and practices are important to iterate to arrive at a deeper understanding on the tensions in Hong Kong racialized discourses.

5.1 Invisibility in Public Discourse

Racial discourses associated with ethnic minorities has not been a prominent feature of Hong Kong historical texts. This is not to ignore the studies that have documented, for example, the presence of South Asian communities in Hong Kong under the British rule (Baig 2012; Erni and Leung 2014). However, the depictions of ethnic minorities in the broader societal discourse are far from ideal. A frequently pointed out irony in Hong Kong is its international image, as “Asia’s World City,” which is anchored merely on tourism discourse (Law and Lee 2012). This is because discourses on cultural diversity within Hong Kong barely surface in the “Asia’s World City” propaganda. This seemingly global outlook is rooted in a tourism discourse that reflects the international standing of Hong Kong as a financial hub in Asia and tourist destination. The cultural diversity *within* the city is barely promoted

as its broader social feature, except the confluence of Eastern and Western influences resulting from Hong Kong's colonial past. This colonial feature of Hong Kong implies that an uneven picture of the international community exists, which in many ways obscures the presence of ethnic minorities. What this opaque picture of ethnic minorities in public discourse amounts to is the scant recognition of their contribution to the city. As Erni (2012) noted:

Hong Kong is a "raceless" global city because of the historical amnesia it suffers: a forgetting of the fact that although the unprivileged ethnic minorities constitute only around 5% of the total population, they build distinctive communities, practice unique and diverse customs, and make a considerable contribution to the economic development of Hong Kong society. The persistent consignment of these minorities to menial occupations, in welfare discourse, and increasingly in episodes of crime, has contributed to a callous erasure of their presence, except in moments of social panic and moral wrath. (p. 83)

Erni's rationale behind his claim above rests on the "constant lack of social discourse about race and racism, whether in schools, at home, or in the media" (p. 83). Stated differently, the lifeworld and practices of ethnic minorities are not always within the purview of the Chinese community. Their media presence is limited to those who have played roles in local television series (Leung 2016) and those who have been reportedly unlawful in Hong Kong. More recently, Jackson and Nesterova's (2017) analysis of newspapers published by Apple Daily (a local news source) revealed how ethnic minorities had been stereotypically represented, despite the pro-multicultural stance of the news outlet. It was furthermore observed that the views of ethnic minorities were not adequately presented and those who were presented tended to be more successful and privileged. These portrayals together hint that ethnic minorities remain as "strangers" (Erni 2012) who "tend to be cast as transient populations uncommitted to Hong Kong civil society" (Bridges et al. 2016, p. 7). The perceived foreign status of ethnic minorities is not surprising, given that cultural diversity in Hong Kong is viewed merely as the coexistence of different ethnic groups (Lee and Law 2016) rather than real contact or integration. Such a coexistence neither implies a high degree of tolerance nor acceptance toward ethnic minorities. Interaction between Chinese and ethnic minorities is rarely explicitly promoted, except in only a handful of schools and organizations that conscientiously do otherwise. The limited presence of ethnic minorities in public discourse means that misunderstandings on their cultural diversity and characteristics abound. If there is a factor to be recognized in such an invisibility in the public discourse, it is difficult to ignore Hong Kong's treatment of cultural diversity in the educational landscape.

5.2 Invisibility in Educational Discourse

The educational support mechanism for ethnic minorities at a policy level is not conceived as a multicultural project, leaving open rooms for disagreements between the EDB and NGOs (Kennedy 2011). Such disagreements are also reflected in the consistencies between the goals of the EDB in facilitating ethnic minorities' smooth

integration (Connelly et al. 2013). As pointed out earlier, the RDO seems to protect, rather than promote, the rights of ethnic minorities, and its legal effects barely reach the education landscape. Although it would be unrealistic to account for the educational inequities within the scope of the existing legal framework, much is left unsaid about safeguarding and promoting the cultural rights of ethnic minorities in the current schooling arrangements in the local education system. Burkholder (2013) found that the experiences of ethnic minorities were barely consistent with the integrationist goals of the EDB. The schooling arrangements for ethnic minorities in most part failed to help them integrate in the wider Chinese community (Connelly et al. 2013). The education provision of the EDB, as Burkholder stated further, meant that learning Chinese was the key to become full participants in Hong Kong society. It is then of little surprise that Chinese language learning has been the central focus of the EDB in serving ethnic minorities, which is based on a need to remediate their Chinese language abilities. This is a pragmatic move on the government's part. An underside of this move, however, is the growing question on the government's "commitment to celebrating cultural diversity or to adapting the curriculum to meet the special needs of ethnic minority students" (Kennedy 2011, p. 169). Erni (2012) echoed Kennedy's point more forcefully:

Hong Kong as a raceless, global city has also emerged out of a near total abandonment of the teaching of the subjects of race and racism in either public or family educational domains. Never has serious attention been devoted to the study of these subjects in Hong Kong's education system. In other words, generations of Hong Kong people have been educationally blind to the existence of racial inequalities. (pp. 83-84)

Erni's comment speaks to the racial inequality in the education system. One of which is the racial segregating effects of the schooling arrangement for ethnic minorities (Cunanan 2011; Shum et al. 2016) brought by the focused support provided to schools with a "critical mass" of ethnic minority students. These schools were previously labeled as "designated schools." The segregating effect of such a schooling arrangement means that many ethnic minorities had been excluded from mainstream Chinese medium schools, which deprived them of opportunities to socialize with Chinese students and vice versa. The limited presence of ethnic minorities in local Chinese medium schools rendered them invisible to the social world of Chinese students. Although at the time of writing the EDB has stopped using the label "designated schools" and a number of new measures have been introduced (Education Bureau 2016), it is not difficult to observe the absence of clear multicultural policies besides "enhanced funding" to support schools' creating of "inclusive environment." Without clearly defining what is meant by an "inclusive environment," these discourses are unlikely to be taken up proactively to support ethnic minority students in Hong Kong's public schools. This lack of long-term and systematic multicultural initiatives conjures up another educational blindness that Erni described.

In the broader education landscape, such a blindness means that educational provisions for ethnic minorities are motivated not by cultural considerations but by pragmatic concerns to remediate their Chinese language issues. Except for the systematic efforts in upscaling Chinese language support measures, the government is rarely seen to be "taking affirmative action for ethnic minorities" (Kennedy and Hue 2011,

p. 351) to redress inequities in the education system. The instrumental motif of the government in the educational provision suggests that ethnic minorities' needs are yet to be met, which points to how their visibility is "masked by long held cultural values" (p. 352) complicit in Hong Kong's education system. These cultural values leave little room for developing culturally inclusive school environment for ethnic minorities, which, among several issues, are frequently associated with underdeveloped in-class diversity management and teacher training (Kapai 2015; Tsung et al. 2010). In aggregate, what still holds true in terms of the climate at the education policy level is that the initiatives designed for ethnic minorities are, as Erni and Leung (2014) aptly put it, meant to leave "the dominant society more or less untouched" (p. 128).

5.3 Invisibility in Demographic Representation

One of the key sources in understanding Hong Kong's racial diversity is the census data. Although the official statistics (Census and Statistics Department 2017) has listed the different nationalities of the 8% non-Chinese population in Hong Kong, the available data are not comprehensive enough to represent the racial diversity among different ethnic minority groups. This issue can be attributed to the previous data keeping and labeling practices on ethnic minorities. Ethnic-specific demographic information is not always kept by government departments (Kapai 2015). Understandably, the racial diversity of non-Chinese individuals in Hong Kong, despite their relatively small number, has presented challenges in making their demographic representation comprehensive. An example of this case is how Caucasian, representing racial groups from different Anglo Saxon contexts, is listed as "Whites" with no further breakdown of the figure. "Whites" represent a wide range of individuals from Anglophonic and European heritages with no specific reference to their ethnic or national origins. Other minority groups are listed as "Filipino," "Indonesian," "Thai," etc., representing their ethnic and national origins. The inconsistency in such labeling practice can dilute the representation of Hong Kong's racial demographics. It underrepresents certain minority groups, such as Germans, Americans, British, and so forth.

The presence of foreign domestic helpers (FDH) contributes to the invisibility of certain groups within ethnic minority communities. The official statistics (Census and Statistics Department, 2011, February 21) shows that Indonesians and Filipino are the largest ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. The large influx of FDH contributes to this figure. Their presence, along with their occupational status, has given shape to how they are represented in the media and stereotyped in textbooks (Jackson 2016). As FDH do not enjoy a right of abode—meaning they do not have the right to settle in the territory and their presence is tied to work conditions, including residing in their employers' homes and working 6 days a week—rarely would they raise family in Hong Kong; they would typically return to their home country after their employment contracts expire and when they do not secure a new one. These circumstances mean that FDH communities are more transient who may

not necessarily consider Hong Kong as a permanent destination for residence. Care is, therefore, needed when interpreting demographic data relating to ethnic groups with significant FDH population.

Despite FDH's visibility in Hong Kong due to their occupational status and presence, a lesser visible and represented community are, for example, Filipinos who are residing in Hong Kong permanently or longer term. This community comprises a smaller group of Filipinos who work as professionals, such as musicians, engineers, and architects, and their children who were born and raised in Hong Kong (Gube 2015). Having interacted with different Filipino groups in Hong Kong, we have come to understand that Filipino residents are not always comfortable with stereotypes that conflate their occupational status with FDH. Experiences like this were observed among Filipino youths who were raised in Hong Kong (Gube 2015). A Filipino youth participant in Gube's study, for instance, preferred to be identified as "Filipinos living in Hong Kong" who were thought to be "more of like the residents," rather than "Hong Kong Filipinos" (which she perceived as a label representing Filipinos, including FDH, as a homogenous racial group) (p. 133). Another participant held a similar view, but highlighting the negative stereotypes associated with FDH (whom she mentioned as "maids") when asked to describe her ethnic identity:

If they ask me, I'll just say I'm Filipino. I do think twice. I don't wanna say it 'cause people have this stereotypical—if they're talking about Filipinos, they'll think we're poor, most of our people are working as maids and all that. (p. 134)

The struggles with the above stereotypes suggest that individuals within a single ethnic group construct their racial experiences differently. We highlight these experiences not to criticize the shortcomings of the census data, but to show how different racial experiences can be easily obscured when portrayals and perceptions on ethnic minorities are founded solely on such data—the majority population in ethnic groups (i.e., Filipinos and Indonesians are FDH). This perceived homogeneity can result in misconstrued portrayal of the identities of ethnic minorities. To complicate matters further, it has been reported that few Hong Kong (local Chinese) people show awareness on the disharmony among different ethnic groups in Hong Kong (Law and Lee 2013). The racial dynamics within ethnic minority communities could be underrepresented, thus contributing to the invisibility of and essentialist understandings on them.

The discussion on the different layers of invisibility indicates that representing the cultural and racial dynamics of ethnic minorities is not straightforward. These layers of invisibility can at many times intersect with one another and cannot be understood in isolation. The invisibility of ethnic minorities in public discourse can be promoted by their lack of visibility in educational discourse and demography (i.e., how ethnic minorities are portrayed in media could be caused by the lack of extensive education on their life in Hong Kong). It underscores the fact that what one understands about ethnic minorities stem from not a single discourse, but multiple, conflicting, or perhaps untenable discourses that obscure how ethnic minorities' lifeworld is (re-)presented. To further clarify the racialization of ethnic

minorities, it is important to recognize how racial normativity in Hong Kong undergirds, at least in part, the different facets of invisibility of ethnic minorities, which will be discussed in the following section.

5.4 *Racial Normativity*

To move beyond the narratives surrounding the monocultural tendencies of Hong Kong (e.g., Kennedy 2011), highlighting the racial ideologies in a Chinese context is necessary. In bringing racial normativity to the picture, one could be reminded of how discourses related to ethnic majority complicate how minorities are perceived as social beings. Karsjens and Johnson (2003) spoke of human races as social constructs, which are “products of the human mind’s indelible wont to classify phenomena into some meaningful semblance of order and thereby reflect the dominant culture and dominant ideology” (p. 22). This emphasis on social constructs points to how racial markers are interlaced with the broader societal narratives and dominant cultural ideologies of Hong Kong. What cannot be ignored accordingly is how the racial discourse of Chinese-ness intermesh with that of ethnic minorities. Meaning to say, how ethnic minorities are racialized is not just about who they are as racial beings, but also about how they become racial beings within the racial discourse of Chinese people.

What does race mean in a Chinese context? The fundamental idea of race can be understood in terms of racial consciousness in the historical context of China, often summed up in an old Chinese saying: *fei wo zu lei qi xin bi yi* (非我族類, 其心必異), translated as “Someone of not my race¹ must have a different mentality” (Webb 2015, p. 131). Arguably, this Chinese saying implies a sense of defensiveness against hostility, in which people who do not belong to the same race, nation, or culture are not considered loyal to the country. Although this sense of defensiveness does not necessarily apply to modern day Hong Kong in a literal sense, what can be borne out from such an outlook is a form of othering that underwrites how ethnic minorities are racialized:

Hong Kong’s cultural identity is formed through the otherization of non-Hong Kong people, including mainland Chinese, Southeast Asians and South Asians. The making process invokes the *racialization of cultural differences*, and the forming of representation of cultural differences between Hongkonger and non-Hongkonger was constructed in historically specific moments. (Ku 2006, p. 291, emphasis added)

The notion of Hong Kong Chinese-ness is made salient through the presence of non-Hong Kong Chinese people who do not conform to the cultural norms and values of the city. These cultural norms and values are represented by “language, vocabulary, clothing, behavior, attitudes, cultural tastes, habits, etc.” (p. 291), which are not biological but an interpellation of social meanings that define the racial

¹Goldin (2011, p. 236), however, somewhat differed from Webb’s translation by claiming that *zu lei* means “kind” and not race.

norms in Hong Kong. As such, the consciousness on racial difference is not difficult to discern within the purview of racial nepotism, where people belonging to the same race and sharing the same historical background (or those who exhibit cultural markers of local Chinese-ness) are favored than those who do not. To borrow Barth's (1998, p. 15) analogy, an individual acquires a social membership who play "the same game"; those who do not "play the game" are social others. Qualifying as a local Hong Kong person means that (s)he must exhibit cultural markers consistent with that of Hong Kong Chinese people, such as the ability to speak the Hong Kong variety of Cantonese and write traditional Chinese texts. Possessing Chinese language skills, however, is only one of the various cultural markers that an ethnic person can exhibit. This means that other cultural markers—values and lifestyle—must be exhibited to increase the likelihood in being recognized a Hong Kong person, such as dressing modernly that conveys "urban imaginary," behaving like educated individuals, not being backward, etc. (Ku 2006, p. 292).

Likewise, the literature is increasingly clear that the lack of Chinese language skills is not the only factor that prevents ethnic minorities to integrate in Hong Kong (Bhowmik and Kennedy 2016). Another layer within the discourse of racial normativity that needs to be considered is its effect in terms of privilege. This normativity is fueled by "a formation of local culture vis-à-vis the colonial cultural domination" (Fung 2001, p. 595), which conjures up what Lee and Law (2016) called "orientalist discourse." They pointed out that Hong Kong Chinese people construct a distinctive identity reinforced by a sense of superiority arising from the colonial discourse:

Hong Kong is a modern, cosmopolitan, and urban society exposed to Western acculturation; thus, it is much better than the home countries of Hong Kong's ethnic minorities. If Filipinos, Indonesians, Indians, Nepalese, Thais, and Pakistanis cannot make their countries as wealthy as Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Chinese may ask how they could contribute to Hong Kong's prosperity. (p. 105)

A feature of this racial discourse appears to be speaking to the status of non-Caucasian ethnic minorities from developing nations. The perceived inability of ethnic minorities to improve the economic situation of their home countries and the economic prowess of Hong Kong society constituted a status hierarchy, rendering ethnic minorities as second-class citizens. This perception is tenable when one turns to Hong Kong's labor demographics, in which ethnic minorities occupy a sizeable portion of the low-paying jobs, such as FDH and South Asian construction workers. Although the view that ethnic minorities tend to be socioeconomically less privileged cannot be generalized because of the presence of foreign, more financially able, expatriates in the labor market, what tends to surface is the speculation on ethnic minorities' inability to contribute to Hong Kong's prosperity, which turns out to be an aspect deviating from Hong Kong's racial norms. The low socioeconomic status of certain families within ethnic minority groups who rely on social welfare attract negative stereotypes and may be seen as lazy by some local Chinese people (Chan 2013). Put differently, such a racial norm arises from a cultural expectation to contribute to Hong Kong's economic development and not hoarding the resources of the residents. This cultural expectation makes plausible an assumption on why

ethnic minorities from well-to-do backgrounds, such as Caucasians, Japanese, and Koreans, tend to be less racially denigrated compared to South or Southeast Asian residents.

The normativity described above reflects attitudes that homogenize ethnic minorities not just in terms of racial characteristics but also socioeconomic status. These attitudes run counter to the fact that each ethnic minority group within Hong Kong is heterogenous in terms of class, partly hinging on how they are treated differently. Such treatment points to the importance of empirically examining how racial discourses intersect with issues of class, gender, and religion within the city. This intersection of discourses is an area worthy of investigation beyond this chapter.

6 From Unresolved Tensions to Racial Formation: What Can Be Done?

By witnessing how Hong Kong grapples with what “multicultural” means in a context without broader mechanisms promoting such, it seems unsurprising that the treatment on ethnic minorities policy-wise has often resorted to addressing their immediate welfare, schooling, and language needs. This treatment, in parallel, often amounts to apathy in recognizing how racial differences are implicitly drawn at systemic levels, which ties in with the lack of long-term vision for the education of ethnic minorities. In this context, we extend the literature by conceptually interrogating Hong Kong's racialized discourse to offer clearer clues on the shaping of racial boundaries stemming from the presence of ethnic minorities. We began this chapter by asking: How are ethnic minorities racialized in Hong Kong? Our response is that the racialization of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong cannot be reduced to how they are made invisible at different levels, but also how they are alienated through the racial normativity in the dominant Chinese context of Hong Kong. These discourses together, whether tangible or not, act as powerful social forces that continue to accentuate differences between Chinese and ethnic minority people. Recognizing this premise is an important step in overcoming myopic conceptions of race as a “physical reality” based on appearance like skin color (Silva 2015, p. 84). Thus, to appreciate race as a social concept in Hong Kong, the analytical treatment of such must not be confined to primordial arguments that view racial identities as fixed and immutable (Cornell and Hartman 1998). Equally important here is how social meanings of race are dynamically defined, underpinning the portrayals on ethnic minorities at different discourse levels. The interrelation of how racialization plays out *across* these discourse levels must also be investigated rather than examining each in isolation to understand their impact on the social life of ethnic minorities more fully. Doing so would pave way for conceptualizing Hong Kong's racial formation, consistent with a pluralistic outlook that values social resilience as a strength and fabric of an international city (Kennedy 2012). This conceptualization would be an ambitious intellectual undertaking, if not a radical shift in epistemology, but nevertheless must be pursued to allow for proactive responses to the effects of

invisibility and racial normativity that render the experiences of ethnic minorities unheeded or misunderstood.

We argue that paying attention to the construction of racial differences at different levels paves way for reorienting inquiries and perceptions on race and its connection with how Hong Kong incarnates its notion of cultural diversity. The attention to the social dimension of race in understanding the diverse population of Hong Kong can drive our efforts in promoting cultural inclusivity in the education sector and beyond. To answer the “what can be done” question, we cannot help but critically reflect on the *doing* part, that is, our research practice. We recognize that our writings on ethnic minorities can be less than far-reaching in terms of readership as they generally can only be accessed via academic institutions, social networks, or channels. This is more so to the discontent of practitioners who work closely and regularly with ethnic minorities and who may regard academics as interested primarily in “theory-building” (Wong 2013, July), which can be thought to carry little implication for practice that directly improves the situation of ethnic minorities. As educators and advocates, however, we feel that these sentiments need not cripple our research efforts; rather, we are compelled to vouch for empirical methods that go beyond traditional surveys and interviews. This methodological orientation involves, for example, using participatory art-based and visual methods such as cellphlms (cellphone + video production; see MacEntee et al. 2016; Burkholder 2017) that can systematically and rigorously capture the richness, interstices, and idiosyncrasies of the social world of ethnic minorities. Taking advantage of such methods means that data or media produced from which can be easily used for participant engagement and public dissemination and, where relevant, to inform curriculum development. Participatory methods, thus, take on significance when the genuine goal to uncover the lifeworld of ethnic minorities is embedded in long-term research agendas. These methods also encourage thoughtful actions among those who are involved in producing data, where visibility takes place. Research, after all, is an educational activity that goes hand in hand with expanding our knowledge base to improve practice. We as authors are not free from the tensions of Hong Kong’s racialized discourses. But in trying to extricate ourselves from these tensions by writing this chapter, the more we come to grips with such tensioned discourses as a necessary and productive stimulation in promoting education about the city’s evolving forms of racialization.

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Citizenship Status and Identities of Ethnic Minorities: Cases of Hong Kong Filipino Youth



Hoi-Yu Ng and Kerry J. Kennedy

Abstract Citizenship status is the legal membership of a political community such as nation-state, while citizenship identity is the subjective meaning a person gives to that community. The citizenship status of ethnic minorities in postcolonial Hong Kong is particularly problematic due to the complex legal institutions laid down by Britain and China. Although many ethnic minorities are Hong Kong permanent residents, their national citizenship is less clear. Many remain citizens of their countries of origin, while some have successfully acquired Chinese or British citizenship. This chapter explores how ethnic minority youth construct their citizenship identities under the Hong Kong context. It also explores the factors that might have influenced their citizenship identities. Based on in-depth interviews with four young Hong Kong Filipinos, we found that their citizenship identity is diverse, with a participant holding dual identities with Hong Kong and the Philippines and two not identifying strongly with any polities. For some participants, citizenship status is not closely linked to their citizenship identities, which are also shaped by factors like discrimination, cultural compatibility, inter-ethnic networks, and instrumental considerations. Lastly, like many local Chinese youth, most participants hold varying degrees of anti-China sentiment. Theoretical implications of these findings are discussed.

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1 Citizenship and Identity for Hong Kong's Ethnic Minorities

Hong Kong is a predominantly ethnic Chinese society. But from the beginning of the British colonial period (1842–1997), Indians were brought in to further the aims of the colonial administration (Law and Lee 2013). Later, more South and Southeast Asians such as Nepalese and Filipino migrated to Hong Kong for various reasons. These ethnic minorities accounted for around 5.4% of the population in 2011 (Census and Statistics Department 2012). Their citizenship status in this global city has long been a complicated issue. When China and Britain negotiated Hong Kong political future in the 1980s, there were two dynamics relating to the citizenship of Hong Kongers. On the Chinese side, there was no question that those of Chinese ethnicity would simply assume Chinese citizenship after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997 as a special administrative region under the “one country, two systems” principle¹ (White 1987). Yet little consideration was given to ethnic minorities by China. On the British side, there was a reluctance to assume any responsibility for their non-Chinese subjects, especially in terms of granting the right of abode in Britain. The citizenship issue finally was glossed over, and the category of Hong Kong permanent resident (HKPR) was created as part of the Basic Law, the city's mini-constitution after 1997. HKPR status allowed ethnic minorities to continue their lives in Hong Kong, but they were left to negotiate their national citizenship with their respective countries of origin even though many of them were locally born. This status problematized the issue of citizenship and national identity of Hong Kong ethnic minorities. The transfer of sovereignty in 1997 also forced the ethnic minorities to negotiate their relationship with China, the new master of Hong Kong.

The key issue of this chapter is how a sample of young Hong Kong Filipinos constructs their citizenship identities with Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Mainland China under the complicated institutional context of citizenship. It also explores the factors such as citizenship laws which may influence their citizenship identities. Given the growing number of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, it is important to understand more deeply how they feel as minority residents in a Chinese-dominant society. While there have been some studies related to identities of ethnic minorities (Gu and Patkin 2013; Gu 2015; O'Connor 2010; Plüss 2006), these have not previously been linked directly to citizenship or national identity. Therefore, this chapter will provide insights into how Hong Kong minorities view the political communities with which they have connections.

¹It allows Hong Kong to retain its capitalist economic system and way of life for at least 50 years since 1997.

2 Citizenship Status of Hong Kong Ethnic Minorities

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research indicating the influence of institutional contexts on the social and political attitudes of ethnic minorities (Busetti et al. 2013; Giugni and Passy 2004; Hero and Tolbert 2004; Roland 2004; Tolbert and Hero 2001; Weldon 2006). These institutional contexts include government policies, social norms, and the rules and laws governing the acquisition of citizenship (Weldon 2006). Despite its significance, this institutional perspective has received little attention in the research on Hong Kong ethnic minorities.

Citizenship is a membership of a political community (i.e., nation-state, autonomous region) which carries a set of rights and duties and is usually an ascribed status acquired at birth (Pierson 2011). The legal institutions governing the citizenship status of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong are complex. Ethnic minorities residing in Hong Kong prior to 1981 were regarded as British subjects, as were Chinese residents. Under the British Nationality Act in 1981, British subjects residing in overseas territories reverted either to national citizenship status or British Dependent Territory Citizens (BDTC) without the right of abode in Britain (Dummett 2006; Juss 1993). At the time of Hong Kong's return to China, most of Hong Kong's ethnic minorities were classified as BDTC, and neither Britain nor China wished to grant them full citizenship. White (1987), for example, referred to the effective "racial barrier" (p.502) posed by the Chinese Nationality Law, and Nicol (1993) referred to the racial turn in British immigration policy in the 1970s. The outcome of this impasse was a series of temporary solutions on the part of the British (e.g., the invention of a new nationality status referred to as British Nationals (Overseas) (BN(O)) and on the part of the Chinese, the incorporation of Hong Kong Permanent Resident Status in the Basic Law (Chan 2008). Neither BN(O) nor HKPR status represents a national citizenship status. Rather, each represents a deliberate rejection of such a status on the part of both the British and Chinese governments. It is because BN(O) is only a passport license which does not grant right of abode and citizenship rights of Britain to the holders. While the HKPR grants right of abode for foreign nationals in Hong Kong, it does not provide access to Chinese citizenship.

After Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997, the citizenship status of Hong Kong ethnic minorities remains complicated. Many of them retain the national citizenship of their countries of origin. Some may have qualified for British citizenship under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (Dummett 2006) or the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill 2009, both of which attempted to address the potential statelessness of many Hong Kong ethnic minorities (Avebury 2009). Some have successfully naturalized as Chinese citizens. However, the Chinese Nationality Law follows the right of blood (*jus sanguine*) tradition which makes ethnic minorities, whose parents or grandparents are usually not Chinese citizens, very difficult to naturalize except they possess "other legitimate reasons" determined by the Immigration Department with no objective criteria (Tsoi 2012). As one Hong Kong born Pakistani businessperson found out, neither his birth in Hong Kong nor

his HKPR status entitled him “to gain Chinese nationality or a local passport even though his family came to the city nearly a century ago” (Cheung 2012). As shown in this case, the most critical consequence of failing to gain Chinese citizenship is losing the right to apply for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport, which can only be issued to HKPRs with Chinese citizenship. Some ethnic minorities argue that this made them feel excluded and has weakened their sense of belonging to Hong Kong (Cheung 2012, 2016; Tsoi 2012). Although the national citizenship of Hong Kong ethnic minorities is diverse, most of them remain as HKPRs, which allows them to enjoy almost the same social and political rights with ethnic Chinese residents such as welfare, education, and voting rights. The only exceptions are assuming key public offices such as Chief Executive and Principal Officials.²

3 Citizenship Identities of Hong Kong Ethnic Minorities

Citizenship status is after all a legal status which does not necessarily link to the identity of a person with his or her political community(s), although it may bear some influence (Karlsen and Nazroo 2013). Identity is a set of meanings that define who we are in society. People usually have multiple identities as they belong to different social groups (Burke and Stets 2009; Tajfel 1981). Different from a legal citizenship status which is exogenous to a person and in many cases acquired involuntarily at birth (Pierson 2011), identity is often referred to as endogenous (Green 2011). It is an individual response to institutional and social contexts (i.e., laws, social norms) and may either ameliorate or exacerbate the effects of such contexts (Weldon 2006). In traditional debates within sociology, identity is also conceived as the “agency” of people while social contexts represent the “structures” they cannot evade (Karlsen and Nazroo 2002). How ethnic minorities negotiate and express their citizenship identities within such structures is the issue which this chapter seeks to address.

Studies on citizenship or national identity in Hong Kong focus on the contestation of Hong Kong local and Chinese national identity of the ethnic Chinese residents and rarely touch on ethnic minorities (Brewer 1999; C. K. Chan 2014; Ma and Fung 2007; So 2016; Yew and Kwong 2014). They found that most Hong Kong ethnic Chinese hold dual identities of Hong Kong and China (Brewer 1999; Chan 2014). But the strength of Chinese identity has weakened substantially in recent years, particularly among the youth (Yew and Kwong 2014). Scholars attributed this to growing social inequalities, influx of Mainland tourists and immigrants (So 2016),

²The Basic Law of the HKSAR stipulates that only Chinese citizens are eligible to become Chief Executive (Article 44), Members of the Executive Council (Article 55), and principal officials of the HKSAR government (Article 61). Only 20 per cent seats of the Legislative Council can be taken by non-Chinese citizens (Article 67). Only Chinese citizens can become the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal and the Chief Judge of the High Court (Article 101).

and enhanced Beijing's intervention in Hong Kong affairs (Yew and Kwong 2014). The anti-China sentiment was intensified further by Beijing's decision to rule out democratic reform in 2014, triggering the Umbrella Movement³ in the same year (Ortmann 2015).

Research on Hong Kong ethnic minorities also seldom addresses citizenship identity directly. Some, however, do explore their sense of belonging to the community. A focus group study conducted by the Equal Opportunities Commission (2012) found that most South Asian participants saw Hong Kong as home. Similarly, a survey of South Asians conducted by the Government of the HKSAR (2015) found that over half of the respondents had a strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong, particularly the teenagers.

The literature also highlighted a range of factors influencing the ethnic and community identity of minorities. Through interviewing some South Asian students, Gu and Patkin (2013) found that the lack of Chinese proficiency and racial discrimination may have distanced them from the mainstream culture and enhanced their heritage identity. Gu's (2015) study of Pakistani schoolgirls found that racial prejudice helped enhance their Muslim identity which differentiated them from the local Chinese. Based on interviews with Muslim youth, however, O'Connor (2010) argued that the negative influence of racism was partly mitigated by the "freedom, safety and religious tolerance" (p. 535) of Hong Kong. Plüss (2006) found, somewhat ironically, that when Muslims adopted elements of local culture, they had their religious identity enhanced and their distance with the mainstream society widened because it helped create a pan-ethnic Islamic community. Although these studies have provided valuable insights into the study of citizenship identity of ethnic minorities, they lean more toward ethnic and cultural identities instead of identities with political communities. Thus, this chapter will examine how four young Filipinos construct their identities with three political communities they have relationship with – Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Mainland China.

4 Research Method

The study reported in this chapter used in-depth interviews as the research method. Qualitative interview is suitable because it emphasizes the participants' perspectives and focuses on how people interpret the social world (Berg 2009; Merriam 2002). This allows us to probe deeply how the participants negotiated their citizenship identity. The data of this chapter was drawn from a larger study on Hong Kong ethnic minority youth. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. The criteria for selecting the samples were that all participants must be ethnic minority Hong Kong residents between the ages of 16 and 24. Through personal networks, snowballing, and organizations serving ethnic minority, 21 participants from 5 minority groups were interviewed in 2015 and 2016.

³This was a large scale pro-democracy protest in 2014 which occupied the city center for 79 days.

Table 1 Profiles of the participants

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Place of birth	Citizenship	Family migration generation	Occupation
Kathy	Female	21	Hong Kong	Filipino	2	University student
Charlotte	Female	23	Hong Kong	Filipino	3	Public relations consultant
Aaron	Male	19	Hong Kong	Filipino	2	University student
Elaine	Female	17	Hong Kong	Filipino	2	Secondary student

This chapter reports the stories of four young Filipinos from the sample. All are HKPR and Filipino citizens. Their backgrounds are shown in Table 1. Although most Filipinos in Hong Kong are domestic helpers without right of abode (Gube 2015), there are around 15,000 Filipino permanent residents in Hong Kong, and many of them are working in the entertainment industry as musicians. Some also work in the service industry as executives and architects (Gube 2015). It is also reported that there are around 2500 Filipino students studying in local primary and secondary schools (Gube 2015). The reason for focusing on a single ethnic group was that it helps us to observe the distinctive characteristics of a specific ethnic group, as there has been a tendency for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong to be grouped together and regarded as a single ethnic category.

Most interviews were conducted in cafés, university campuses, or the participants' schools. To enhance the consistency of the questions asked, an interview guide was designed to facilitate the interview. The first section of the guide addressed the personal background of the participants such as place of birth and citizenship status. The second section addressed their citizenship identities. The last section touched on the factors which may have shaped their identity. All interviews lasted for around 50 minutes and were tape-recorded.

Regarding data analysis, there is no one standard way to analyze qualitative biographical interviews (Cole and Knowles 2001; Merrill and West 2009). However, a typical procedure involves steps such as transcribing, reading, summarizing, coding, and comparing the interviews (Plummer 2001; Merrill and West 2009). We started data analysis with transcribing the interviews verbatim. The transcripts were then read and reread by the authors, who then made notes of the main ideas of each interview. After that, the authors produced for each interview a summary consisting of a detailed list of main points. Based on the framework set in the interview guide, the main points were then grouped into different categories and themes such as Hong Kong identity, home country identity, and perception of China. Lastly, original texts of the transcripts corresponding to the categories were extracted and sorted so that relevant quotes can be selected to support the presentation of the results.

5 Results

This section portrays the way four Filipino youth responded to issues concerning their citizenship identities. It examines how they constructed their identities with Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Mainland China and what they felt have shaped their identity construction.

5.1 Aaron

Aaron is a 19-year-old Filipino. He is a locally born HKPR but retains his Filipino citizenship. He is a first-year student at a local university majoring in Business. His parents moved from the Philippines to Hong Kong for work. His father works for a travel agency, and his mother works in a nongovernmental organization (NGO). He has an older sister who is also working in Hong Kong. His family is Catholic and lives in private housing. Aaron has spent his whole life in Hong Kong except spending 2 years in the Philippines when he was a little boy.

Perception of Hong Kong Identity Aaron identifies more with Hong Kong than with the Philippines because he was born and raised in Hong Kong. He said:

I think I grew up here and this is where I spent all of my life to be honest, and all the values, all the Hong Kong culture are still in me so I guess Hong Kong...and the Philippines I wouldn't say I live there, I [am] not very familiar with the history of the Philippines.

He also does not see big difference between him and the local Chinese except language and skin color. Instead, he thinks he shares many similarities with local Chinese in terms of values and behaviors. For example, he has already adapted to the hardworking and career-oriented culture of Hong Kong. He also learnt the Hong Kong etiquettes such as giving seats to the elderly, lining up, and being quiet in public areas. He and his family also like going to local Chinese restaurants.

Moreover, he said Hong Kong is a very good place to live and is one of the greatest cities in the world that makes him proud of. He said:

We don't have the best government as it is argued. But if you compare to anywhere else in the world, and even with the transportation, the cleanliness, and even the culture of people, that's what makes me proud to be a Hong Konger.

Aaron's Hong Kong identity is also demonstrated in his passion to learn the Chinese language and to follow local current issues. He saw the latter as his responsibility as a Hong Konger.

Aaron's strong Hong Kong identity is situated in a context where he faces relatively little racial discrimination. "It's not very severe I would say. Sometimes you get the dirty looks but...to me it's very rare." Since the school he attended was mainly for non-Chinese students, his school life was very multicultural, and he did not experience any discrimination.

Despite his strong Hong Kong identity, he may not stay in Hong Kong in the long term though he wants to develop his career here. What concerns him most is the political environment such as the lack of democracy and growing interference from Mainland China.

Perception of Filipino Identity Although Aaron has a strong Hong Kong identity, he still identifies moderately with the Philippines. For example, he prefers people calling him Hong Kong Filipino instead of purely Hong Konger. Together with his parents, he also visits relatives in the Philippines every Christmas. In recent years, he even started visiting friends in the Philippines on his own because he has made new Filipino friends through an exchange program of a church youth group and AIESEC, a NGO providing leadership training to young people. To him the Philippines is a good place to visit because people are nice and easy to connect with. He may consider moving to the Philippines after graduation because there might be more business opportunities in the future.

Nevertheless, he thinks that the living conditions of the Philippines are not very good, and living there would be difficult. “Traffic situation, especially in Manila, the capital city, is very severe. I think sometime there is also an issue with safety, the crime rate is quite different from here (Hong Kong). Public transportation isn’t as developed as it is here.” He also pays little attention to the current affairs of the Philippines, despite the strong interest of his parents.

Perception of Mainland China Although Aaron did not identify himself as Chinese, he viewed Mainland China positively. He visited the Mainland several times for family trips and school study tours. For instance, he spent 3 weeks in Zhuhai, a city in Guangdong Province, to learn Mandarin during secondary school and found that most people he met were friendly. He thinks that the uncivil behaviors of some Mainland tourists in Hong Kong are only isolated cases.

5.2 *Eileen*

Like Aaron, Eileen was locally born and therefore is a HKPR. But she retains her Filipino citizenship. Eileen is 17 years old and a secondary 6 student at a local secondary school with mainly ethnic Chinese students. Her parents migrated from the Philippines to Hong Kong for career development. Eileen’s father is a musician, and her mother is a housewife and part-time singer. She has two younger sisters, and the whole family is living a public housing estate.

Perception of Hong Kong Identity Eileen possesses a strong Hong Kong identity. She sees Hong Kong as home as she was born here and everything is here. She wants to continue her study in Hong Kong and work here after graduation. She illustrated:

I had a talk with my Dad last year, he was asking if I want to study in the Philippines and work there. I said everything is fine with me but for me I just really like to stay in Hong Kong because I really love Hong Kong, this is my home I can say. Since this is my home, I really like to work here.... Just really nice I think. Hong Kong is just really nice, I can't say anything else about it just really really great.

Moreover, Eileen can speak fluent Cantonese (the mainstream local language) and does not see much cultural difference between herself and the local Chinese. For example, she and her parents like local foods such as dim sum and hot pot. Eileen also appreciates the safety of Hong Kong.

Like Aaron, Eileen's strong Hong Kong identity was nurtured in an environment with minimal discrimination. Eileen seldom encountered discrimination in daily life. She said, "I really like Hong Kong people as well because, compared to me as a Filipino in Hong Kong, they are also friendly and understanding." As a student, she does not feel she has been discriminated against at school. She did experience some prejudices in primary school because she did not speak Cantonese well. But since then she has tried her best to learn how to communicate and socialize with local students, and now she has lots of Chinese friends, even more than Filipino friends. Her teachers are also very helpful and supportive. Some even spend extra time on helping non-Chinese-speaking students to learn the Chinese language.

Perception of Filipino Identity Eileen's Filipino identity is relatively weak. She cannot speak Tagalog (national language of the Philippines) well because English is the major language of her family. She seldom watches the news of the Philippines although her parents like doing so. She only visits relatives in the Philippines every 2 years, less frequently than Aaron. On general impression, Eileen thinks that Hong Kong is a much better place than the Philippines. She said:

If I can compare Philippines and Hong Kong, obviously Hong Kong is much much better than Philippines because of the law and everything.... For example, here in Hong Kong is less crowded, I mean traffic, but in Philippines though, because there is only one road, it's like only one way, so usually it causes a lot of traffic and all that.

Yet for her, the Philippines also has its merits because the people are very friendly. Regarding citizenship, she does not mind giving up her Filipino citizenship in exchange for a HKSAR passport because she really loves Hong Kong. She explains, "I think because it (a HKSAR passport) makes me feel more like...my identity as a Hong Konger here. And I think having a Hong Kong passport would be really good."

Perception of Mainland China Eileen does not have a strong feeling toward China and that feeling is mixed. She has never been to the Mainland, so all her knowledge about China is from the media. She was upset and angered by the media reports of the uncivil attitude and behaviors of the Mainlanders in Hong Kong. But she also thinks that not all Mainlanders are behaving like this. When asked if there is any national (patriotic) education in her school, she said students are asked to sing the national anthem from time to time, and she thinks it is enjoyable. But there is no

strong patriotic feeling attached to it. She said, “It is just enjoyable. I mean it’s nothing I will think of, it is just that I see this and I feel it.”

5.3 *Kathy*

Like the previous two participants, Kathy was born and raised in Hong Kong and is a Filipino citizen. She is currently a third-year student at a local university majoring in English. Her parents migrated to Hong Kong for work more than 20 years ago. Her father is working in the construction industry, and her mother is a housewife. She has a younger brother, and her whole family is now living in a private rental apartment.

Perception of Hong Kong Identity Different from Aaron and Eileen, Kathy does not have a strong Hong Kong identity although she has recently begun to regard Hong Kong as her home. In fact, her citizenship identity is a bit ambivalent and fluid, and she does not identify strongly with any nation or culture. She described:

I don’t really find culturally what my identity is.... They asked me do you really feel you have a sense of your own country, I’m like...I don’t know...because I don’t really identify strong with either Hong Kong or the Philippines in that point.... Even though I am purely Filipino but I am not really a Filipino in that ways.

Regarding Hong Kong, she feels that she cannot fully connect with Hong Kong culturally mainly because she finds it difficult to speak Cantonese well. English is the language she speaks with her family, and the schools she attended are either for non-Chinese or without much interaction between Chinese and non-Chinese students. She also found she was being judged negatively by local Chinese when she speaks nonstandard Cantonese. She said:

If I tried to speak with Chinese people from school, they are like “you sound like a kid.” When you learn Chinese, that’s not very encouraging at all. That’s the reason why it’s hard for us to speak in Chinese because the local Chinese people are judging us.

The language barrier leads her to have very few Chinese friends and makes it difficult for her to participate in civic activities such as elections because most campaign advertisements are in Chinese. Nevertheless, apart from the language issue, she has experienced very little discrimination in daily life. She thinks it is because she looks Chinese. However, she thinks that racial discrimination is still a problem in Hong Kong based on her observation.

Although she cannot fully integrate into Hong Kong, she still sees Hong Kong as her home mainly because she was born and grew up here. She also feels proud of Hong Kongers when they fought for their rights during the Umbrella Movement. “I’m proud of it especially how the locals recently standing up for what they believe in....and shows that how loyal they are to Hong Kong...just amazing.” Despite that, she might consider moving to a Western country if Hong Kong becomes more like Mainland China and loses its freedom. She said:

I heard about the political situation in China, I mean I don't really want to live under that kind of ruling. If I remember correctly what it's like.... Hong Kong is going back to China one day (in 2047).⁴ That means all the laws here will be changed. So, I don't think I can live like that. Because right now Hong Kong is, compared to other places in China, I think it is free.

Perception of Filipino Identity Kathy only identifies weakly with the Philippines. She said, "my friends ask me how about Philippines but I wouldn't imagine myself thinking about Philippines as a place permanently I want to live." Kathy only maintains a weak connection with the Philippines. For example, her parents have never taught her Tagalog or any Filipino customs and values except religion (Catholicism). She also never shows interest in learning them. Moreover, she only went to the Philippines once to visit her relatives, and she found it difficult to communicate with them because of her poor Tagalog. In addition, she found that the Philippines is a dangerous place. "Even Hong Kong you can walk around at night until mid-night. But in the Philippines, it says all the shops close at 7, there is no street lights, so it's very, very dark and very dangerous." She also shows little interest in what happens in the Philippines. "When I hear all these major issues like when my friends talking Philippines political stuff. I don't know what's going on."

Perception of Mainland China Kathy has never been to Mainland China and only has little knowledge about China. But she holds a negative impression of China because of what she heard from her friends. She said, "I keep on hearing stories from my other friends about their visiting China....particularly some bad stuff about China so that's why I am like so skeptical." Her bad impression is also influenced by the media. She described:

I hear all these big issues like last year Occupy Central (Umbrella Movement), now Lee Bo⁵ about his abduction or something.... You know what China is like and you start to think ... you start to question what is actually really happening. You hear country like Communist Party (Communist China) and they abduct people for no reasons.... It's confusing for me.

5.4 Charlotte

Charlotte is currently 23 and working for a public relations company. She was also born and raised in Hong Kong and is a Filipino citizen. Her father migrated to Hong Kong as a musician, and her mother is a daughter of a Filipino foreign domestic

⁴The Basic Law (Article 5) states that the capitalist system and way of life of Hong Kong shall remain unchanged for 50 years.

⁵Lee Bo is one of the five booksellers of the Causeway Bay Bookstore who were allegedly abducted and then taken into custody by the Mainland authorities in late 2015. His abduction was probably linked to his selling of politically sensitive books about Chinese political leaders and the Chinese Communist Party. This incident caused widespread concern among the Hong Kong people over their freedom of expression and the autonomy of Hong Kong.

helper and currently a restaurant manager. She has four siblings and her whole family is living in a private rental apartment. Unlike the other participants, she studied in the Philippines from primary 5 to secondary 3 because her parents wanted her to keep her Filipino identity and learn the Filipino language.

Perception of Hong Kong Identity Like Kathy, Charlotte's citizenship identity is ambivalent and mixed. She thinks that her identity is in between the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Western culture. She described:

At heart, I am a Filipino, but I feel like a Westernized Filipino. Growing up in Hong Kong makes for a very convoluted identity. So, I am no specific country. Have you heard of the term "third culture kid"?... I am a third culture kid.... A third culture kid is someone who was born in a different country and raised in a different culture from the home country or even the parents' culture.

Regarding Hong Kong, she holds a kind of love-hate attitude. On the one hand, she holds a negative impression of Hong Kong because of the racial discrimination and culture difference she faced. She said, "when I was growing up it was quite hard, because I dealt with a lot of indirect racism, like wouldn't sit next to me on the bus.... assumed I am the [domestic] helper but I am not the helper." The situation only improved gradually when her Cantonese has improved. But she still feels that she would be judged by her skin color in daily life. On cultural difference, her Western working style is very different from local Chinese. She thinks that the local workers are not encouraged to think independently, and she disagrees with the mentality that you cannot leave the office earlier than your boss.

On the other hand, she sees Hong Kong as home and a good living place and is willing to contribute to the society. For example, she participated in the Umbrella Movement because she sees Hong Kong as home. She said:

I joined the Occupy Central because this is my home too. I care about it just as much as you guys, I feel like they shouldn't look at us as an outsider just because we are different color. This is my home as well.

She also volunteers at the Boys and Girls Club and teaches English for an NGO because she wants to contribute to the society. Moreover, she thinks Hong Kong is a good place to live because it is very efficient and the public services are good. Despite this, she is considering moving to a Western country like Australia or the United States at least temporarily because she is worried about the local political situation and wants to advance her career in an ethnically diverse country where she would not be seen as an outsider.

Perception of Filipino Identity Charlotte does not identify strongly with the Philippines. Although she spent 5 years there and speaks fluent Tagalog, she thinks she is culturally different from the ordinary Filipinos. She said, "I find it hard to make friends with traditional Filipinos raised in Hong Kong. I feel like we are quite different. I feel like my mindset is more.... I would say Western and their mindset is more Filipino." In fact, most of her friends are Westerners or Westernized Chinese. When compared with her former classmates in the Philippines, she said she is

slightly less family and religiously oriented. Nevertheless, she still maintains certain ties with the Philippines by visiting relatives there once or twice a year. She has not, however, considered moving to the Philippines because all her professional connections are in Hong Kong and the Philippines is not a very safe country.

Perception of Mainland China Charlotte holds a very negative attitude toward Mainland China. She said:

I am very anti-China. The whole booksellers' disappearance (see Endnote No.5 for details) is making me super, super nervous. Because if it turns out that it was an order from China then "one country, two systems" is dead. I hate China, very strongly.

When asked about the relationship between the Philippines and China, Charlotte condemned China's growing influence in the South China Sea and said China must stop trying to take territory that, she argues, is not theirs. Apart from government behaviors, she also thinks that the Mainlanders are very different from Hong Kongers in terms of culture and manners. Nevertheless, she still wants to be a Chinese citizen and get a HKSAR passport because it is much more convenient. She sees it as a necessary evil.

6 Discussion

This chapter explored the citizenship identity of Hong Kong ethnic minorities through an in-depth study of four Hong Kong Filipino youths. Although the findings are not generalizable due to the small sample size, they do raise some theoretical insights for the study of citizenship and national identity of minorities in Hong Kong and elsewhere.

First, the findings show that ethnic minority youth in Hong Kong can share different citizenship identities even though they belong to the same ethnic group. For example, one participant holds a strong Hong Kong identity, a moderate Filipino identity, and a good impression of Mainland China. Another holds a strong Hong Kong identity, a weak Filipino identity, and an ambivalent attitude toward China. The remaining two do not identify strongly with any of the three political communities. These findings bear some similarities to Lock and Detaramani (2006) who found that Indians in Hong Kong can conceive ethnic identities very differently. We extend this argument to citizenship identities.

Second, the findings suggest that ethnic minorities can hold dual citizenship identities with both Hong Kong and their country of origin. For example, a participant simultaneously holds a strong Hong Kong identity and a moderate Filipino identity. The coexistence of two citizenship identities not only lends support to some European studies (Fleischmann and Phalet 2016; Hopkins 2011; Maxwell 2006; Nandi and Platt 2015) which find that national and ethnic identities can coexist for minority citizens but also challenges some local studies (Gu 2015; Gu and

Patkin 2013; Plüss 2006) which tend to portray a zero-sum relationship between Hong Kong and heritage identities.

Third, the findings demonstrated that the legal citizenship of ethnic minorities may not necessarily link to their citizenship identity. For example, although all four participants are Filipino citizens, none of them show a very strong Filipino identity. In contrast, not having a Chinese citizenship and a HKSAR passport does not prevent two participants from developing a strong Hong Kong identity, although one of them claims that having a HKSAR passport can further strengthen her Hong Kong identity. A participant even claims that earning Chinese citizenship will not change her anti-China attitude as she treats it only as a means to get a HKSAR passport. This contradicts some media reports saying that failing to get a HKSAR passport has led some ethnic minorities to feel excluded (Cheung 2012, 2016; Tsoi 2012). One possible explanation is the small sample size which prevented us from covering those seeing citizenship as important. Another explanation might be the HKPR status, which many minority residents hold. This status allows them to enjoy almost the same rights with the local Chinese residents, which to some extent mitigates their sense of exclusion.

This study also highlighted several factors that may influence the citizenship identity of minorities. The first is racial discrimination. The two participants who show a strong Hong Kong identity claimed they experienced little discrimination, while the two showing weaker Hong Kong identity seem to have experienced more discrimination. This result is consistent with many local (Gu 2015; Gu and Patkin 2013) and European studies (Fleischmann and Phalet 2016; Maxwell 2006; Karlsen and Nazroo 2013) which found that discrimination significantly influences minorities' identification with the host society. The cases also highlighted the special situation facing Hong Kong Filipinos in terms of racism. For example, a participant claimed she was discriminated against because some people misidentified her as a foreign domestic helper, an occupation widely taken up by Filipinos. But another participant attributed her immunity from racism partly to her Chinese-like appearance. That is different from South Asians who usually look less like ethnic Chinese.

Second, the results suggested the importance of cultural compatibility, as highlighted by the literature (Gu 2015; Gu and Patkin 2013; Plüss 2006). The two participants identifying more strongly with Hong Kong tended to acculturate or assimilate more into the mainstream culture. Cultural difference is also cited by two participants as a reason for not identifying strongly with Mainland China and the Philippines.

Third, the findings confirm the importance of inter-ethnic networks (Siroky and Mahmudlu 2016). The two participants who have more friendship with local Chinese tend to have a stronger Hong Kong identity, and the one who is studying in a mainstream school with mainly Chinese students has the strongest Hong Kong identity. A factor related to inter-ethnic networks is language barrier. There are participants claiming that the lack of Cantonese proficiency hinders their interaction with local Chinese and participation in political activities, which hampers the development of Hong Kong identity.

Fifth, the findings highlighted the importance of instrumental considerations in identity construction. The relatively good living environment of Hong Kong such as safety and convenient public transport helped foster a Hong Kong identity, while the relatively poor public order and infrastructure of the Philippines left the participants with a negative impression. This seems to confirm O'Connor (2010)'s study where Hong Kong ethnic minorities appear to tolerate "minor" racism when they can enjoy benefits such as safety and freedom. Another implication is that the Hong Kong identity of ethnic minorities might be weakened if the instrumental benefits diminish.

Regarding China, none of the participants identified themselves as Chinese. Three participants even held varying degrees of antipathy toward the Chinese government or the Mainlanders. Two participants cited the alleged abduction of booksellers by Mainland authorities in 2015 (see Endnote No.5 for details) to highlight the Chinese government's growing intervention in Hong Kong affairs and its disrespect of human rights. Another participant highlighted the reportedly uncivil behaviors of Mainlanders in Hong Kong. Interestingly, these concerns are also widely shared among local Chinese residents (Chan 2014; Yew and Kwong 2014). This may hint that the recent rise of anti-China sentiments in Hong Kong is potentially a phenomenon which cuts across ethnic groups, though further research is needed to verify that. Lastly, lack of connections with China and cultural differences were also cited as reasons behind their antipathy toward China. This is unsurprising as most ethnic minorities lack close ties with Mainland China.

7 Conclusion

The Filipino youth in this chapter showed that the citizenship status and identity of Hong Kong ethnic minorities can be highly complex. Many are simultaneously Hong Kong permanent residents and citizens of their countries of origin. The story is further complicated by the fact that their legal citizenship is not necessarily linked to their citizenship identity. This means the institutions governing citizenship status are only one of the many factors that influence the citizenship identity of the minorities and may not necessarily play a significant role for everyone. As a semiautonomous region of China, the case of Hong Kong may also inform future studies of minorities' identities in other autonomous regions where ethnic minorities not only have to negotiate their identities with their host and home countries but also with the subnational unit in which they are living. Lastly, as the participants described in this chapter were still young, their identities may ebb and flow in the future. Future research can investigate how minority youth develop and change their identities over time.

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A Forgotten Diaspora: Russian-Koreans Negotiating Life, Education, and Social Mobility



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Abstract This study primarily deals with the Russian-Koreans (also known as “Soviet Koreans”) and their attempts to negotiate life, education, and social mobility during Tsarism and the Soviet era (to 1991). As “Russian-Koreans” (their ethnonym in Russian), they were seen as foreigners in Russia even while official Soviet policy preached a “class line” and the brotherhood of all of the proletariat peoples. This primordialist view of the Koreans from the USSR, in part, led to their deportation in Central Asia in 1937. Most Koreans were deported to Central Asian collective farms where their “nationality” (a people) typically formed the majority of the population. The Koreans organized, mobilized their resources, and persevered. Soon, the Korean “kolkhozes (collective farms)” in Central Asia became known as the most productive state farms throughout the entire Soviet Union. Approximately 12 elderly Koreans were interviewed in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. These informants remembered how even the non-Koreans (such as Russians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs) on the Korean collective farms assimilated to their language, culture, and ethos to help build their communities into rich farms with many of the amenities of urban life: finely paved roads, well-built schools, and state-of-the-art hospitals. Some also told of how they utilized the Soviet sports and special educational programs in order to become chess champions and modern dance instructors. The Koreans gained respect from the other peoples of the former Soviet Union because they treated their deportation as merely a “bump in the road” rather than as their denouement.

1 Literature Review

Two of the first academic articles in English about the Russian-Koreans appeared within 5 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Huttenbach (1993) and Gelb (1995) agreed that the Koreans had done quite well after their deportation in

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1937. Both groups had worked primarily in agriculture after being exiled to Central Asia; they had done well educationally and professionally and were firmly seen as a community whose members were firmly in the middle class of the Soviet Union and (after 1991) the Central Asian states. Both authors noted that Koreans had been heavily Russified through education and the lack of institutions serving specifically Koreans. (Prior to their deportation in 1937, Soviet Koreans had “cultural autonomy” and their own institutions in the Russian Far East). Natsuko Oka (2001) pointed out that the “Russification” among the Koreans of Kazakhstan was much further advanced than the official figures. Officially in 1999, 25.8 percent of the Koreans in Kazakhstan could still speak Korean. She stated that based on her years of working and living there, she seriously doubted this figure to be accurate. Buttino (2009) conducted fieldwork on Koreans in Samarkand and how they maintained family ties and national (Korean) traditions and negotiated daily life while using primarily the Russian language. Buttino’s study most closely resembles this one due to its use of interviews, its focus on a “micro-view” of the Koreans, and in situ fieldwork. This study will demonstrate how the Russian-Koreans came to Central Asia and created “small microcosms” of Soviet Korean life, culture, and language and even assimilated several non-Koreans who grew up on predominantly Korean collective farms. I will examine how education impacted the lives of these subjects allowing them opportunities to travel during the Soviet period and or teach others. In general, higher or specialized technical education gave the recipient-holder greater social mobility and a wider range of life experiences. It had a plus-value during the Soviet period at the individual and the societal levels. In the cases of Gerasim Pak and Larisa Kim, the education that they received in chess and dance (respectively) was passed on later when they taught these subjects informally in Soviet institutions for the youth.

2 Introduction

The Koreans who arrived in Russia in the early 1860s were the first Korean diaspora in a European society. The descendants of the original migrants to Tsarist Russia have lived in the former Soviet Union for some seven generations (Chang 2016). Today, the Russian-Koreans and some of their cultural legacies such as cuisine, rice farming and others are ubiquitous in Central Asia. They are primarily Russian speaking with a smaller percentage, mostly elderly and over 60 years of age, who are bilingual in Korean and Russian. Many Russian-Koreans still strongly identify with the Soviet Union.

The terms “Soviet-Koreans,” “Russian-Koreans,” and simply “Koreans” will be used throughout this study to refer to Koreans in Russia, the former USSR and now the post-Soviet states in Central Asia. Second, this study’s primary focus is on the Soviet period (1917–1991) and post-Soviet periods until around 1995. Russian-Korean (a term used in the Russian language) denotes that no matter how many generations one has spent in the Soviet and post-Soviet lands, one is at core a Korean with Korean customs and culture more deeply understood than a Russian ethos and

cultural mores. All the national minorities of Russia and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) are termed in this manner. Thus, Greeks, Poles, and Germans are, respectively, Russian-Greeks, Russian-Poles, and Russian-Germans (rather than as Greek-Russians, Polish-Russians, German-Russians). There is some sense of “primordialism” in this social and sociological praxis. The view of the Koreans from Russia or the former Soviet Union as “Russian-Koreans” sees them as “foreigners” rather than as “natives.” This is seemingly only a small semantic difference (rather than as “Korean-Russians”), yet during times of flux, upheavals, and war, “nativist” sentiments and even state policy can easily be mobilized against “foreign” peoples as “internal enemies” or as fifth columnists. Valery Tishkov, a noted Soviet ethnographer, explained the notion of primordialism: “The Russian social science tradition, especially with respect to interpreting ethnicity is heavily dominated by the primordial approach. Its adherents see ethnicity as an objective “given,” a sort of primordial characteristic of humanity” (Tishkov 1997). Therefore, a primordialist view of race was not officially acknowledged, and yet, these views of race or “nationality” did carry over from the Tsarist period into Soviet socialism (Mogilner 2008). The Soviet and even post-Soviet term “nationality” refers to a “nation,” although the Soviets claimed that these “peoples” were judged by only sociohistorical traits and not racial ones. Nevertheless, “nationality” was listed on line five on all Soviet passports through 1991 and on post-Soviet Central Asian passports in the titular languages but not in Latin (e.g., in Uzbek or in Russian). Note that in 1993, Uzbekistan switched from Cyrillic to the Latin script (Allworth et al. 1998). Joseph Stalin defined nationality as a “historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” (Stalin 2003, 1935). However, this is quite problematic because the mass passportization of Soviet citizens after 1933 defined one’s nationality with one or two words which referred only to the individual’s ethnicity. It is and remains impossible to interpret and decipher how much of a role the “socio-historical” factors of Soviet nationality (Hirsch 2002) on one’s passport played in the Soviet era. An individual’s “social class” was the only sociohistorical factor listed on some (and possibly even a majority) of the Soviet passports in Russia and the USSR’s major urban areas until sometime in the 1950s. Class was not however on all Soviet passports from the 1930s to the 1950s (Rayfield 2018). For all practical purposes, at least on the passport, “nationality” equals “ethnicity” or “race.” There are clearly some differences between official ideas and on-the-ground interpretation by everyday people of the Soviet and post-Soviet term “nationality.” It oscillates between being defined as “race” and “ethnicity” and a socialist definition of “people” based more on cultural factors than race (Chang 2016; Weitz 2003).

This chapter examines how the Koreans have employed education along with their own transnational identity and practices as a means to integrate, obtain marketable skills, and pursue occupational and social mobility throughout their history. The term “transnational” in this study is primarily an internal quality that is based on an individual’s (and sometimes, collective) decision making, determination, initiative, abilities, and communication skills rather than defined by markets, capital, and modern technologies. The reason for this should be obvious, and “transnational” as an internal ability affords the individual and or their communities (if the

event was a collective one) a much greater sense of “agency” and initiative than a “transnationalism” based on markets, technological progress, and fluid capital. This chapter will also elaborate on other Soviet nationalities such as Russians, Uzbeks, and Uyghurs who learned Korean culture and language while growing up on the Korean *kolkhozes* or Soviet collective farms in Central Asia.

The Soviet Koreans were a deported people who were seen by the state as good workers, but as dubious Soviet citizens with unknown political loyalties. Therefore, the “view from below,” that is, their social history and the daily, lived “interpretation” of state policies and Soviet communism, can best be understood through oral history interviews conducted in situ and fieldwork (Chang 2016; Ritchie 2003). It is those interviews which will be referenced in this chapter. It is hoped that the original oral histories shed light beyond what has been previously written and theorized (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Korean men in their finest (Russian) clothes, 1920 Vladivostok. Note ship’s captain costume in back row, one of the most popular of the day. (Photo courtesy of Serafima Kim)

3 Methodology

This qualitative study employs the Annales School's *longue durée* method for a historiography of the Russian-Korean ethnic minority from the 1917 (the beginning of the Soviet Union) until the early 1990s (Howell and Prevenier 2001). The data was obtained directly from the informants' oral histories. Furthermore, this author, J. Chang, conducted fieldwork and interviews in Central Asia from 2005 to 2010 and 2014 in Russian and sometimes (with the help of a translator) in Korean. Oral interviews were preferred over archives in order to capture the "agency," initiative, and creativity of the Soviet minority peoples such as the Koreans. This author conducted several structured interviews in Central Asia with 12 subjects regarding questions which moved the interviews through diachronic time and space. Interviews conducted in situ afford this study a greater range of opinions, self-doubt, and contradictions, which, in turn, can provide greater depth and complexity. The Soviet Koreans and or Russian-Koreans are a diaspora people situated in Russia, and the former USSR and the interviews were conducted primarily in Russian. Thus, many of various words, names, and loan words used by the Russian-Koreans were not transliterated using any of the popular Romanization systems for the Korean language. Instead, this study follows the Library of Congress' system of Russian transliteration (Romanization).

4 Soviet Koreans Under Soviet Indigenization: *Korenizatsiia*

In October 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution overthrew Russia's Provisional Government which had replaced the Tsar in February 1917. The Bolsheviks represented a socialist platform of territorial and "cultural autonomy" for all of the Russian empire's peoples. Cultural autonomy meant that the national minorities or nationalities were to be provided schools, books, and teachers in their own national languages. Unfortunately, a civil war broke out in Russia in 1918 which lasted until the end of the Intervention around October 1922 in the RFE. Only in 1923, the Bolsheviks began their cultural autonomy program in education and social policy programs, which they called *korenizatsiia*, that is, indigenization.

Indigenization marked a distinct break from Tsarism because of its attempt to implement socialist social policies to remedy past inequities and the creation of ideologically mobilized communities, identities, and loyalties. The former missionary schools and schools in Korean language were seized by the state and converted to both public and private schools. Generally, religious study was banned, but privately, it seemed to have continued well into the late 1920s (Kenez 1999). Nevertheless, some of the Korean villages continued to remain Christians and hold secret worship and prayer even in the 1930s. Gum Soi Kim (2009a) in her interview stated that she became a Christian sometime around 1933–1934 and that several people in her village remained Christians. She lived in the Korean village of Si Cha

in the Suchanski *raion* (district) in the RFE. There were also covert cases of Tsarist era professors teaching religious courses and coursework in the universities in Moscow through 1928. These professors and intellectuals were purged steadily during the 1920s, but especially from 1928 to 1932 (Fitzpatrick 1979).

Moscow envisioned that it would construct each nationality during *korenizatsiia* through granting each group territorial autonomy, education in one's native language, guaranteed educational and institutional representation for national minorities, and the expression of arts, literature, and media (film, theatre, and print) in one's native language and written by and about one's community. *Korenizatsiia's* ultimate goal was, however, to turn Soviet national minorities into loyal Soviet cadres and fill many Soviet institutions with the young Communist Party cadres. This, in turn, would produce Soviet nationalities such as the Greeks, Germans, Koreans, Chinese, and others who were national in form (in appearance), socialist in content (ideologically). The USSR boasted that it was a "state of [many] nations." It claimed that only socialism united all of the various peoples within its borders who were "national [ethnic] in form," but "socialist in content [ideology]."

In 1923, the Soviet Union was in the process of establishing one of the most progressive [educational, institutional, and occupational] platforms for national minorities and indigenes in the entire world (Chang 2016). The appeal of *korenizatsiia* was also through representation of the Soviet *natsmen* (Russian for "national minority"). For example, one could see Koreans of every stripe, whether rice farmer or bureaucrat, on the local radio and in the newspapers because each ethnic group had their own newspaper, radio station, and other forms of cultural institutions and media. Neighbors and friends were also state officials, bureaucrats, and political police such as the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD, which was the Soviet political police). This program summed up the allure of Bolshevism because the representation of one's nationality among the Soviet leadership meant that there was a high degree of social mobility and the feeling of access to Soviet leadership, media, arts, and institutions. This decentralization of representational power ameliorated the less glamorous stints of queuing up for commodities, corruption, terror, repression, and general disillusionment with news, data, and officials.

The decentralization of representational power was the positive side of *korenizatsiia*. One major weakness was its inability to differentiate between Koreans from China, Japan, USSR, and peninsular Korea. To some Soviet cadres and leaders, all Koreans were equally "Korean," which was not Marxist, but rather a view based on "essentialized race," in other words, primordialism. This idea also ascribed to all Russian Koreans some degree of political loyalty to peninsular Korea, which was a Japanese colony during *korenizatsiia*.

During *korenizatsiia* as a process of forced or mandatory public education, Korean language became the medium of instruction for the majority of Koreans except in the urban areas where one could choose whether their child was enrolled in a Russian or a Korean language institution. However, the ideas and lessons promulgated in Soviet Korean schools and institutes were strictly socialist. This meant that lessons regarding Marxist and Russian literature were standardized to teach Pushkin, Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, but in the Korean language. These lessons would

focus on class distinctions with a historical materialist foundation. Schools, universities, and workers' night schools (*rabfaks*) were the key to building the new generation of young, vigilant, and well-trained revolutionary socialists, often called *vydvizhentsy* (Chang 2016).

In the 1923–1924 school year, 716 Korean students went on to higher education in institutes, technicums (technical institutes), and universities all across the Soviet Union. This figure was to increase tremendously from 1923 to 1937, the period of Korean *korenizatsiia*. In 1924–1925, Koreans had a higher proportion of school children than the Russian population. In the Vladivostok district, Korean students outnumbered Russians 156 to 152 per thousand population. This led a local newspaper *Sovetskii Primore* to remark “Now isn’t that strange?” (Pak 1995). By the late 1920s, Koreans had a plethora of magazines, newspapers, and other media in Russian and Korean to choose from. By 1935, there were nine newspapers and six journals in Korean language. The nine Korean language newspapers were named as follows: *Avangard*, *Workers*, *Peasants Gazette*, *Red Star*, *The Path of Lenin*, *The Path of Stalin*, *New World*, *Culture*, and *Stalin’s Tribunal* (Kuzin 1993, p. 98).

Cultural change in the Russian-Korean communities came with population growth and a large increase in the demand for general, technical, and higher education. By 1936, there was an estimated 204,000 Koreans of a total population of 2,273,000 in the Russian Far East (Bugai and Pak 2001; Stephan 1994). The Korean population had increased from 106,000 in 1926 to 170,000 in 1929 (Bugai and Pak 2001). 25,043 Koreans were enrolled in primary and secondary schools in the RFE. They made up 12.5 percent of the total primary and secondary school population (Bugai and Pak 2001, p. 234). By 1935, there was a Korean section in the Far Eastern University, two Korean pedagogical institutes, one Korean Pedagogical Institute for workers of Vladivostok which was a 4-year university (established in 1931 with 780 students), a Korean section in the Khabarovsk Agricultural Institute, a Korean section of the Soviet Party School which was established in 1927, and, finally, the Korean Pedagogical Institute of Nikolsk-Ussuriysk which was a 4-year institute with approximately 420 students (Bugai and Pak 2001; Kuzin 1993).

The Korean Pedagogical Institute of Nikolsk-Ussuriysk was regarded as the crown jewel in the Korean community and seen as representative of how quickly they had risen as a Soviet people. All students there were Koreans and all courses were in Korean language according to Serafima Kim (2009c). Koreans were doing so well educationally that a Korean Soviet Party School also opened in Nikolsk-Ussuriysk in 1930, which had 372 Korean students by 1933. There was also an explosion of books being printed in the Korean alphabet. Over 200 Korean villages now had their own libraries in 1932. By 1934, there were 36 Korean authors who were regularly being published, 22 of whom had their works published in both Russian and Korean. Of the 20 most popular books by Korean authors, the print run ranged from 5 to 176 thousand. The Korean section of the state RFE publishing house employed ten people in production and still could not keep up with the demand (Pak 1994; Kuzin 1993).

Gerhard Simon (1991) noted that, typically, Soviet nationalities with several institutes of higher education were granted the status of an autonomous Soviet

socialist republic or a union republic. The Koreans did not receive either due to their being a diaspora nationality continually linked to a supposed Japanese-led juggernaut that was using the Chinese and Korean peasants of the RFE as espionage agents.

5 State Policies Toward the Soviet Koreans and Their Education After Deportation

The *korenizatsiia* period in the RFE was the absolute apogee for the Koreans and their “cultural autonomy” and sociopolitical representation, but it ended abruptly on 21 August 1937 with the Resolution 1428–3266ss approved and signed by General Secretary Stalin and Chairman of the Ministry of People’s Commissars, Vyacheslav Molotov. The resolution was entitled “On the exile of the Korean population from the border regions of the Russian Far Eastern region” and called for the deportation of all Koreans from the RFE to Central Asia and the Crimea. The same resolution stated that Koreans were being deported because of the need to “suppress the penetration of Japanese espionage,” though Soviet authorities had not caught any Soviet Koreans who could be verified as agents of Japanese intelligence. By November 1937, the Korean deportation was essentially finished; a total of 172,597 Koreans (36,681 families) were deported from the RFE. Only some 600–700 remained in the RFE who were to be deported ad hoc through the beginning of 1938; around 2000 remained on North Sakhalin (Chang 2016). The Koreans were sent off to Central Asia with a memo signed by People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs NKVD agents Meer and Dalkrai. The NKVD head, Liushkov, reported the fulfillment of his duties stating, “On October 30, from the city of Vladivostok’s station was sent the last assembled echelon 501 ordinal 125/62 with the suspicious Koreans” (Kim 1999).

The Korean’s fidelity and willingness to defend their Soviet homeland should never have been questioned. However, this “problem” was not due to anything that the Soviet Koreans might have said or done. The origin of this problem lay in the fact that the Stalinist regime and its political elites continually regarded its “national minorities” and non-Eastern Slavic natives as potential fifth columnists despite the avowals to follow a Marxist or socialist “class line.” As an example, during the First World War, the problem of “political loyalty” required that the state removed and expropriated the properties of 1.5 million Jews, Poles, Russian-Germans, and (to a much lesser extent) Chinese and deported them from the western borders of the Russian empire to Siberia and Central Asia, then known as Turkestan. The Chinese were primarily guest-laborers in Russia, and only 15 thousand were deported outside of the Russian empire as possible German spies (Chang 2016). These unfortunate deportees were labeled as “enemy aliens” and as “internal enemies” during the First World War. Mostly importantly, these labels and categories by the Tsarist state were reinvigorated and recycled by the Soviet regime during the 1930s with very few changes. In regard to the Jews, Poles, and Germans, a minority of each of these

communities had long ago assimilated as “Russians” and yet were still deported as “enemy aliens” or “internal aliens” (Lohr 2003)! This is a strong sense of primordialism that extends even to Russian syntax since these people are known as Russian-Poles, Russian-Germans, and or Russian-Chinese in Russian. In less primordialist societies such as in North America (in English), these same peoples would have been known as Polish-Russians or Chinese-Russians signifying Polish or Chinese on the exterior but “Russian” by culture and language internally (Chang 2016). Lenin and Stalin repeatedly proclaimed cultural and linguistic autonomy for every ethnic group (known as a “nationality”) during the first years after the Bolshevik Revolution (Smith 1999). However, by the early 1930s, the Soviet Union believed that it was surrounded on all borders by inimical, anti-communist states such as Finland, Germany, and Poland on its western borders and the Japanese empire (in Korea and Manchukuo) to the east. By 1936–1937, Stalin was actually promoting the idea of the fifth columnists in the USSR and the fact that they needed to be purged. His regime labeled the Koreans repeatedly as “those suspicious people,” an “enemy nation,” and “undoubtedly cadres of Japanese espionage” (Chang 2016). Additionally, the category of “enemy nations” referring primarily to the diaspora peoples within the USSR was bandied about by Stalin and the Politburo to encourage the idea that some kind of punitive actions had to be taken toward the Soviet diaspora peoples (Khlevniuk 2015). This led to the Korean deportation in 1937 and the deportation of many others.

The loyalty of the Soviet Koreans had been established since the First World War when 4 thousand fought in the Russian Army. They actively fought the Japanese during the Intervention (1918–1922) with 4–5 thousand fighting as Red Partisans and another 2 thousand who fought without an affiliation. John Stephan lists 48 Korean Red Partisans units, some of them as large as 700 men (Stephan 1971). Koreans fought again in the Red Army during the short Sino-Japanese War of 1929. A renowned Red Army unit among the Korean community, the 76th Riflemen’s regiment which was composed mostly of Russian-Koreans stayed in Manchuria for the postwar “mop up” operations against Chang Hsueh-Liang’s Manchurian army from September to November 1929 (Pak 2006). Then, almost adding insult to injury, it was Soviet Korean NKVD units made up of Korean officers who worked alongside regular NKVD units to evacuate and deport the entire Korean population from the RFE (Khisamutdinov 1993).

The deportation of the Koreans to Central Asia signaled the end of two processes: indigenization through education and the end of their rapid recruitment or promotion as “national cadres” in Soviet institutions. The “flagship” of Soviet Korean higher education, the Korean Pedagogical Institute of Nikolsk-Ussuriysk, was transferred to Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan. However, after one academic year, it became the Kyzylorda Pedagogical Institute, and the medium of instruction was changed from Korean to Russian. Also Kazakh language instruction became an option, and the institute was now open for all nationalities.

After their deportation, the Koreans continued to use the Korean language as the medium of instruction for 1 or 2 years depending on the location. Several of our interviewees gave their accounts regarding the changes to their language of instruc-

tion. Pyotr Pak (2009b) stated that Korean language education continued for 2 years after the deportation. Nikolai Shek (2008) stated that it lasted for only 1 year. Then all schooling was transferred to Russian language as the medium of instruction and either 1 or 2 h per week of Korean lessons as a foreign language.

6 Three Soviet Koreans and How Education Improved Their Lives

This study will now examine three Koreans who attended specialized Soviet schools or study programs dedicated to sports or dance. Gleb Semyonovich Li (2009) and Gerasim Sergeevich Pak (Pak 2009a) were approximately 2 and 4 years of age when deported to Central Asia in 1937. They remember spending much of their adolescence playing chess in clubs which were sponsored by different Soviet sports societies. Some of these clubs were sponsored by different worker's societies, military, and university and some by particular neighborhoods. Li and Pak would attend chess training sessions and receive instruction after school through all of the aforementioned societies, institutes, and clubs. Chess in the Soviet Union of the late 1940s and early 1950s was ubiquitous (Karpov 1991). The Soviet Union was very strong in chess and treated chess as a sport, which would help the nation be "ready to labor and to defend [against capitalist-imperialists]" (Pearson 1990). It possessed a number of publishing houses which allowed Soviet children to learn chess and buy books, which taught them chess strategies from basic to advanced. There were also books which reconstructed the matches between famous world and Soviet grandmasters of chess. The books could be bought cheaply as well as the chess sets. The cities of Urgench and Nukus were far away from the center of Soviet Uzbek life in Tashkent, but most of the amenities of Soviet life were brought to Nukus and the Khorezm area.

Gleb Li and Gerasim Pak began in local clubs and then moved up to chess clubs which were sponsored by labor organizations, factories, universities, and the like. After 1953, both were able to travel to regional and all-union chess tournaments. They played matches constantly in order to keep moving up on the local and regional rankings in Uzbekistan, Central Asia, and Russia. These tournaments, the travel, and the small stipends were paid by the state. Eventually, both Li and Pak became Master of Sport and Candidate Master of Sport, respectively, in chess. Pak stated:

I had some natural abilities in math and physics so this is the department in which I enrolled at the Nukus Pedagogical Institute [Uzbekistan]. This allowed me to continue playing competitive chess matches throughout my years at the university.

Pak also became a chess instructor at the *Dom Pionerov* [*dom* means house; the *Pionerov* or *Pionery* means Pioneers which were a youth communist organization from 10 to 15 years of age] in Urgench, Uzbekistan (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Gerasim Pak, 1990, chess instructor at the *Dom Pioneerov* in Urgench, Uzbekistan. Dom means house; the Pioneers were a youth socialist group from ages 10 to 15. (Photo courtesy of Gerasim Pak)

Larisa Valentinovna Kim (2010) was involved with a Korean dance troupe of young women from her collective farm, *Pravda*. The group named *Miya Ri* (“mountain flower” in the Hamgyong dialect of Korean) performed in front of many other Korean *kolkhozes* in and around Tashkent. At age 14 in 1969, Larisa left the farm to go to the city of Tashkent and study dance at the Choreographic School of Tashkent. She was fortunate in ways that Pak and Li, who grew up in the 1950s, were not because by the 1960s, Soviet Central Asia was relatively developed and could offer many of the same amenities as one could find in the western side of the USSR. Additionally, specialized education, sports, and dance schools had opened throughout the USSR beginning in the late 1950s (Il He 2010). In 1962, Tashkent opened an *internat* which was a boarding facility or dormitory for gifted and sports-related students. Larisa stated that in the 1960s, life was quite good for students at the specialized schools. She received a student stipend for room and board at the *internat* along with some 200 or so other students. The stipend also covered her travel expenses to return home on the weekends by bus. The *internat* was full of students from all over Uzbekistan who were receiving specialized sports, dance, or gifted education.

By the 1960s, the Soviet Union employed recruiters to search every city and region for the best young prospects in sports, gifted students in math, physics, and dance. The recruiters would attend the competitions and offer the most outstanding competitors (usually those who placed in the top three) scholarships to study at the sports

schools in Tashkent. Larisa managed to win entrance which guaranteed her a stipend to the Tashkent Choreographic School. At this time, the school offered only two divisions, ballet or national dances. She chose the latter specialization. There, she studied the general subjects such as math, literature, science, and history (Savelyeva 2014).

In addition, Larisa Kim studied courses on interpretative dance, the kinesthetic of dance, Spanish dance, Turkic dance (various), Russian dance (various modern and classical), dances of Northern people (Nanai dance), Mongol dance, and Uzbek dance. She stated that every performance had at least one rendition of Uzbek dance since they lived in the Uzbek SSR. In 1973, at age 17, she finished the choreographic school and did not continue onwards in the Tashkent Choreographic Institute which offered a diploma. Her first employment after her graduation was with *Kyr Kyss* (meaning “40 beauties” in Uzbek) a dance troupe from Nukus, Uzbekistan, which had other Koreans in it, but performed mostly Uzbek and Turkic dances. In 1976, Larisa Kim began performing in a Korean *kolkhoz* dance and vocalist ensemble called *Chen Chun*. Kim stated that this was perhaps the most exciting period of her life:

We traveled all over Central Asia, visiting and performing in Korean *kolkhozes* in Kazakhstan, Kirgizia and Uzbekistan. Everyone was happy to see us. It was like receiving a standing ovation every night [at every performance].

Kim also traveled to Mongolia and several times to North Korea as part of *Chen Chun* troupe. She stated that her average salary was 200 rubles per month which was an excellent salary at the time. In comparison, the average collective farmer earned 120 rubles per month (Larisa Kim 2010) (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Larisa V. Kim (third from the left) 1970 at the collective farm *Pravda* as part of *Pravda*'s youth dance troupe called “*Miya Ri*” (Little Mountain Flower). She later helped found *Chen Chun*. Note that some of the dresses are slightly different. *Pravda* received the materials. Then, their mothers shared a general design and began sewing according to their own interpretation and the availability of materials, lace, cloth, etc. The dresses took long hours to complete. (Photo courtesy of Larisa Kim)

7 Non-Koreans' Korean Culture and Language

This section describes the informal education and integration of non-Koreans to Korean language and culture after the 1937 deportation. The deported Koreans were placed in collective farms (*kolkhozes*) surrounding the capital of Uzbekistan, Tashkent. Soviet Koreans were typically the overwhelming majority in the Korean *kolkhozes*.

Perhaps one of the most interesting phenomena in Korean *kolkhozes* was that the non-Koreans' integration or even, perhaps, assimilation to Korean culture (Berry 2003). This author visited the former Korean *kolkhozes* called *Sverdlov, Uzbekistan, Pravda, Staryi Leninskii Put* (the Old Lenin's Way), *Leninskii Put, Politotdel, Iik Ota*, and others which surrounded Tashkent. In most of the collectives, the population was majority Korean through the late 1970s to early 1980s. These collective farms remained from 50% to 70% Korean through 1991. The non-Koreans children and young adults on these collectives had assimilated to varying degrees with Korean life and lifestyle (*byt*) and learned the Korean language. The following interviews were conducted in Korean with several of the non-Koreans (Fig. 4).

Atabek Zamov (2009) was a Uyghur man who had come with his family as refugees from China to the USSR and Uzbekistan in the early 1960s to the collective Kim Pen Khva, formerly called the North Star collective farm. Atabek's family arrived in Uzbekistan when he was 10 years old and he soon learned Korean. During school, all classes were taught in Russian and all the Korean students spoke in Russian. When at home, afterschool and during sports activities (but not during Pioneer or Komsomol group meetings), the children spoke in Korean. In this manner, Atabek and the others who were interviewed learned Korean. Atabek spoke Korean fairly fluently with little or no accent. He married a Korean woman and his daughter married a South Korean. He did not feel that it was a problem to have



Fig. 4 Anna Ivanovna Tsoi, left. Sabirzhon Zuparov, right. (Photos by author)

assimilated to the Korean culture rather than maintaining a stronger Uyghur identity. The fact that Uyghurs are a diaspora nationality within Central Asia and had few cultural and educational programs for them probably played a large role in his primarily voluntary assimilation.

Another research participant, Sabirzhon Zuparov (2010), was perhaps the best Korean speaker of all the non-Koreans who were interviewed. He spoke Korean rather fluently. Sabirzhon is an Uzbek born in 1958 on the collective *Severnyi Maiak* (Northern Lighthouse). His parents had joined this collective farm when they were young adults and could understand Korean but spoke it poorly. When Sabirzhon was young, he was left in the care of an elderly Korean couple while his parents worked in the fields. Thus, he spoke Korean all day. Sabirzhon stated that he spoke Korean more than any other language until he was about 12 or 14 years old. He would even speak with his parents in Korean while they responded to him in Uzbek.

Sabirzhon stated that while in the Soviet army, he continued to speak Korean with other Korean recruits and officers. I asked him, “Do you also feel Korean since you speak Korean and have lived with Koreans all your life?” To which Sabirzhon replied:

Yes I do, I feel both Uzbek and Korean. I grew up speaking Korean most of my life. I was good friends with all of the Koreans here. We were good friends and our friendships were deep.

Asked about the issue of intermarriage with Koreans, he answered:

Even if I had wanted to, I could not. First, my parents would not have allowed it. Second, I am an Uzbek, we have our ways and traditions [but], as a matter of fact, we were all good friends here. Those were good times here. Maybe there was a certain Korean girlfriend, but I just would not have been able to.

Although Sabirzhon had more inclusive feelings about identifying as a Korean when younger, when he reached adulthood, his considerations became much more focused around his core identities (as a Muslim and an Uzbek) and intermarriage was no longer possible for him.

Anna Ivanovna Tsoi (2009) is a Russian who came to *Severnyi Maiak* (Uzbekistan) from Russia in 1944 when she was 5 years old. She stated, “I have been speaking Korean since I was five.” Anna married a Korean man surnamed Tsoi who has since passed away. Both of her sons were raised in *Severnyi Maiak* and can understand Korean but speak it poorly. She added:

My children understand and speak it, but with an accent [Russian]. Our Koreans today speak it poorly as well. I maintain the Korean customs. For the most part, I continue to eat Korean food every day, rice with kimchi and seaweed kimchi [*megi cha* in Hamgyong Province dialect or hae ch’o].

Anna also said that there were other Russians and Ukrainians on the collective farms in general who also grew up speaking Korean, but they began leaving by the mid-1980s and many more left Uzbekistan after the independence in 1991. They returned to Russia and the Ukraine. One of Anna’s sons has gone to Russia and is currently living and working in the Primore (the RFE) while the other son is in Tashkent (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5 Sabirzhon Zuparov's 4th class photo, 1969 at *Severnyi Maiaak*. Sabirzhon was absent this day. Note only 2–3 non-Koreans in the photo. Nearly all students are wearing the Pioneer's neckerchief. (Photo courtesy of Sabirzhon Zuparov)

On the Korean *kolkhozes*, everyone partook of celebrating the Korean festivities of *Tano* and *Chusok*. Koreans brought out symbols of their traditional ways such as the hand-mill for grinding rice to make sticky rice cakes. Sabirzhon stated that he too participated in this turning of the hand-mill and all of the other Korean traditional games as a child and teenager. The hand-mill not only represented Koreans, but was also symbolic of one group of people becoming a “collective.” It was noticeable that Sabirzhon maintained his national and cultural identity much more strongly than Atabek. Sabirzhon had family and relatives outside of the Korean *kolkhozes* which reinforced this identity and the need to maintain honor and tradition.

The Uzbek identity was further reinforced by the state structure and Soviet education in Uzbekistan, which taught about the brotherhood of the Soviet peoples, but also that “this land which was shared by all was Uzbek land.” This was further reinforced by the Soviet Union's political system. The USSR demonstrated a startling bias against the diaspora nationalities (such as Poles, Greeks, Germans, Iranians, Chinese, Finns, and Koreans) who lost all of their autonomous territories within the USSR and most of their gains during *korenizatsiia* after the Second World War (Naimark 2010). Furthermore, Sabirzhon's national identity as an Uzbek seemed to be strengthened by his religious one as a Muslim (Bennigsen and Wimbush 1986). This in fact is the course that most of the Central Asian states have chosen after the end of the Soviet Union, that is, that national culture would be shaped and reinforced by, albeit their own Islamic religion and traditions which include some pre-Islamic shamanistic, Zoroastrian, and other practices. In post-Soviet Central Asia, Islam has played a much larger role in the formation of national

culture and identity. For example, Islam Karimov, the former President of Uzbekistan, took his oath as President (year not stated) with his hand on both the Koran and the Uzbek constitution (Sengupta 2003). Regarding Islam influencing the formation of national identity and culture, Dagikhudo Dagiev (2014) wrote, “As in post-Ottoman Turkey, Islam plays an important role in the newly independent states of Central Asia. In these countries Islam remains not only a major factor in the formation of national culture, as it does in modern Turkey....”

8 Conclusion

Russian-Korean identity appears to have been formed through a complex mixture of primordialist (“I am Korean by blood”) and transnationalist views of race and nationality. This admixture has produced a people that curiously see their ethnogenesis as having taken place outside of Korea, thus, a Korean diaspora people having been formed in *Vondo* (the Russian Far East). Maia Kim (2009b) who was born in 1937 stated, “For my parents, their homeland was the Primore. They put down roots there, they were raised there.” Chan Nim Kim (2009) who was born 1929 stated, “I would have liked to have taken a look around there [peninsular Korea], but I was a Soviet citizen and proud to have been from the USSR and now an Uzbek Korean.”

However, when questioned further, the Korean interviewees sometimes explained that the Primore area and the particular time period (the 1920s to 1930s) were like living in Russia, but surrounded by Koreans, a sort of “second Korea.” These elderly Koreans (80–94 years old when interviewed in the years 2006–2010) as far back as even their grandparents stated that they were a people derived from Korea but, certainly, defined themselves as of a “mixed culture and life (*smeshnaia kultura i smeshnyi byt*).”

A salient characteristic of Russian-Korean life and ethos was the plus-value assigned to higher education. They above all wanted the social mobility that higher education granted. In 1926, one of the Soviet Korean leaders, Kim Mangyom, told the local Communist Party leadership (of the Primore) that “the mood [desire] of the Koreans is in favor of Russian language education or at least Russian as one of the separate subjects in school.” This went against the state’s policy of *korenizatsiia*. A second Korean leader, N.F. Ni, went even further stating, “The Koreans want to master Russian customs, life and language. Their parents want the language of instruction in school for their children to be Russian (Pak 1995).”

Why was this so? It was Russian that was spoken in all the Soviet courts and used by Soviet police officers. Russian was the language of instruction in the best Soviet universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg and the instructional medium which would afford their children the best chance at working as a Soviet cadre. At any rate, Korean language instruction was terminated in 1938–1939 and replaced by Russian. The end goal for the Koreans from the very beginning of the Soviet Union was social mobility and a greater degree of life and career choices especially in comparison with the previous generations. This was best achieved through general and

higher education in Russian which the Soviet Korean leaders and parents recognized as early as 1926 (Gelb 1995; Chang 2016; Krieger 2006). Thus, my primary findings from the interviews and fieldwork are that the Soviet Koreans are a diaspora people who were formed from their interactions with non-Korean peoples, languages, practices, values, and milieus. Figuratively, they understood that they were actors in a Russian play (society) wearing Korean masks. Some people saw them as out of place. After their deportation to Central Asia, they understood that language (whether Russian or Korean) was simply a tool by which their community could transmit their values which were already established as “Korean with other major influences.”

In Central Asia (after 1937), the Koreans were deported and reconstituted in Soviet economic units called *kolkhozes* made up of primarily Koreans. As they were very productive agriculturally, they were able to sustain their cultural traditions and ways of life which were various gradations of a unique hybrid culture, while some practices remained purely Korean and Russian. The collective farms were their centralized sites of institutional, economic, and cultural power and representation (Chang and Park 2013). In turn, during the Soviet period, the Koreans informally transferred and taught (to varying degrees) their lifestyle, traditions, farming, and language to non-Koreans within their cultural space(s)—the aforementioned farms. That which was deemed foreign merged with local elements bringing both into greater proximity, increasing their interactions, multiplying their social capital, and creating new local entities with mixed characteristics.

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The Analysis on Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants in Korea and Its Implications for Multicultural Human Rights Education Policies



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Abstract Many multicultural education programs have been initiated in South Korea under the supervision of public organizations and civil societies. However, the number of multicultural programs for Korean adults in general is not enough. Also, the target population and topics for many of these programs are limited to immigrants only, providing education programs for these immigrants to fit into the Korean society. In order to shift the current trend and bring in a new paradigm of coexistence and cooperation in the multicultural society that Korea is becoming, on top of the protection of migrants' other rights and interests, the general public's acknowledgement of human rights issues and cultivation of welcoming attitudes toward immigrants would be necessary. As one way of approaching the issue, the current study aims to raise awareness of the importance and necessity of human rights education programs by analyzing the discrimination types and patterns experienced by the immigrants in Korea. By doing so, the results are expected to provide helpful reference for developing more effective multicultural human rights education programs in Korea.

1 Introduction

1.1 *The Purpose of the Study*

Being a newcomer to any existing society can be a stressful experience. According to Abraham Maslow, people have a basic “need to belong (Maslow 1943),” and they often rely on communities and familial ties in order to satisfy this need. This is especially important in collectivistic cultures such as the Korean society where personal connections and *jeong* (Korean expression for the feeling of love, sentiment, sympathy, heart...attachment, bond, affection, and bondage) among the in-group

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members are important in one's social status and everyday life (McGoldrick et al. 2005; Chung and Cho 2012). However, when a person immigrates to another country, in other words, when an individual is uprooted from his/her community and is relocated to a new environment, those bondages are removed, and one faces new tasks to form new relationships to find belongingness.

In this era of globalization, most of the people in the world are subject to experiencing either being a newcomer to a community or the host of these newcomers. Although the newcomers would want to be welcomed by the host cultures, many times it may not always be an easy task for the host cultures to accept sudden changes caused by these newcomers. The current study seeks to examine the experience of immigrants in Korea in order to provide helpful information to develop more effective tools for multicultural education and to enhance human rights-based approach to education for the general public. Given this context the present author conducted a survey-based field research in order to ascertain the various discrimination cases and the needs of the marriage-based immigrants and labor migrants as part of the efforts for suggesting a new human rights-based direction to the multicultural policy makers in Korea. In this endeavor the perspectives of the immigrants will be reflected on the research.

In the era of globalization, South Korea is continuously becoming a multicultural society. Given the fact that South Korean education has long emphasized the homogeneous identity of the Korean society, the discussion of multiculturalism associated with transborder migration is drawing constant attention these days. Traditionally, the state-led top-down policies set the educational contents and boundaries of the school systems in Korea. However, the new educational environments which are closely tied with the changing global political economy and the increasing migrants from other countries encourage the Korean society to go through a testing ground for seriously considering the various challenges for multiculturalism. This change of perspective can be interpreted as an important effort to build a more democratic civil society in Korea. When it comes to educational challenges, it is important to note that "multicultural education has a global component that seeks to help students develop cosmopolitan attitudes and become effective world citizens" (Banks 2009, p.14). In this respect it is also essential to nurture the competence of understanding the state of affairs from migrants' perspectives.

From 2009 to 2016, the total number of foreigners residing in the country has increased from approximately 1.2 million to 2 million (Statistics Korea 2016). This rapid increase of the population with migrant backgrounds is mainly a result of the growing number of marriage immigrants and labor migrants. Consequently, the coexistence of people of various languages, cultures, skin colors, and religions is emerging as an important social issue. Now that the families with interracial marriages and labor migrants are on the rise, Korean society enters the stage in which it must acknowledge and embrace various conflicts and cultural differences. The influx of mostly female marriage immigrants from East and Southeast Asian countries into Korea in the past 10 years is attributable to its unique demographic structure and the unbalanced social structure between urban and rural areas of the country. In Korea, the continued influx of migrant workers and marriage immigrants

is increasing the number of multicultural or multiethnic families and giving rise to related problems, which have implications for future policy development. There is no question that Korea's rapid transition into and its future as a multicultural society pose great challenges for the Korean people and require both material and time investment for the society to adapt itself to multiculturalism. To adapt to the future society that is approaching at a rapid pace, Korea needs to make proactive nationwide efforts to establish the infrastructure required to support a multicultural society. The infrastructure should cover a wide range of social services, including education, medical services, welfare, and legal support. In addition to that, Korea needs to build an organic cooperation network that connects the central government to educational and training institutions, local bodies related to multiculturalism, and multicultural family support centers. Korea, a country that has a long history of homogeneity, can find it particularly difficult to adapt to a multicultural society of the future. A recent nationwide survey by the Korea Ministry of Family and Gender Equality (2016) shows that Korea's multicultural receptiveness of the general public is still lower than that of major advanced countries.

In response to this phenomenon, many multicultural education programs have been initiated in South Korea under the supervision of public organizations and civil societies. However, there is still a dearth of multicultural education programs designed for the general Korean public. The target population and topics addressed in most of the existing programs are limited to immigrants only and provide unidirectional education programs for them to fit into the Korean society (e.g., to learn the Korean language and sociocultural adjustment) or merely introduce ethnic cultural practices to the general public (Lee et al. 2012; Lee 2012; Kim and Kim 2012). Yet, the reports of adjustment issues experienced by ethnic minorities in South Korea have not diminished, because at the core of their adjustment problems is the experience of discrimination and prejudice expressed by the general public (Kim 2015). In order to shift the current trend and introduce a new paradigm of coexistence and cooperation in the multicultural society that South Korea is becoming, migrants' experience of discrimination should be acknowledged and publicized from a human rights perspective in order to develop multicultural education programs that address the core of the current issue. Accordingly, the current study aims to analyze the ethnic/racial discrimination experienced by the immigrants in South Korea. The results are expected to provide information on the reality of discrimination experience in the country and contribute to improving the effectiveness of the current multicultural education policies.

2 Discrimination as Violation of Human Rights

According to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations 2015), "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." They continue by defining human rights as follows:

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

The violation of human rights occurs “when any state or non-state actor breaches any part of the UDHR treaty or other international human rights or humanitarian law.” As of 2010, approximately 3% of the world’s population, which is about 214 million, is living abroad (United Nations 2013). In the International Migration Report (United Nations 2013), this number has continuously been increasing, and the phenomenon can be attributed to voluntary and involuntary reasons. Generally, educational and economic issues account for voluntary reasons, whereas political issues, torture, and persecution are considered involuntary reasons. Due to the heightened local conflicts within countries, widely shared information about migration, and decreased expenses for migration with the development of transportation and communication, the migration-related issues are becoming more prominent.

Despite the fact that the number of migrants is increasing worldwide, their basic human rights are often ignored due to their status as social minorities. Amnesty International (2006) has listed rights that should be secured for migrants, which includes the following: right to live, right to forbid torturing, right to make independent decisions, right to ban racial discrimination, and right to have beliefs and religions. The efforts to protect these minority population’s human rights first occurred during the World War II. The UN World Human Rights Declaration (United Nations 1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations 1966) are the results of these efforts. Moreover, the international society has signed various international contracts and initiated the foundation of related organizations.

South Korea has recently been showing interests in immigrants’ human rights issues as multiculturalization continues to be a critical social issue (cf. National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea 2010). With the steady growth of foreign population and the associated struggle for labor and human rights, the traditional discourse of social, political, and cultural exclusivity is being shifted to a discourse of inclusivity (cf. Lim 2010:53). Watson (2010) also persuasively argues that multiculturalism in Korea is a state-led response to the political and economic changes of the global environment. It is also argued that the top-down multicultural policies in Korea have been driven by “a coalition of vested neo-liberal and conservative interests to create and sustain capitalistic competition” in the South Korean labor market (cf. Watson 2010). This in turn signifies that the multicultural perspectives backed by the grassroots movements of the civil societies are not well represented in the policy making process in South Korea.

Given this situational background, the institutional framework for the multicultural society has not been securely established in the country, yet. As for Japan, who values one-race and one-culture, which is similarly valued in the Korean culture, they have continuously been practicing specific policies for the current Japanese public. As the number of labor immigrants increased rapidly, they have started to implement the “multicultural coexistence policies (Nagy 2015).” In Japan, however,

this new plan is criticized in the framework of a liberal democratic society. It is sometimes argued that it will be difficult to implement equal opportunity and outcome stylized multicultural coexistence initiatives (Nagy 2015, p. 14).

As for Germany, they have been practicing their migrant policies after having carefully considered their current situation and the country's benefits (Bauder 2008). In 2005 they have announced the New Immigration Law (Ger. *Zuwanderungsgesetz*) and prepared an institutional framework for securing immigrants' human rights by pulling in professional human resources, simplifying the immigration application process, and implementing an immigrant integration policy. Multiculturalism in Korea and in Germany seems to share some similarities. It began as a countermeasure to discriminatory, nationalistic discourse and physical attacks on migrants. In the case of Germany, a multicultural education was not implemented from the start. It has traditionally maintained a nationality law based on single ethnicity. However, many migrant or guest workers who have been employed on temporary contracts increasingly prolonged their stays and even invited their families from the home countries. As they eventually did not return to their native countries, Germany naturally made transition to a multicultural society and reformed its policy accordingly. For example, German government has been changing immigration laws and policies since the late 1990s during the reign of the former *Bundeskanzler Gerhardt Schröder*.

Language education, in particular, was a crucial part in the policy of protecting migrants' human rights in Germany. According to de Cillia and Busch (2006), the interest in migrant languages began in the domain of language in education when it became obvious that "migration could not be considered a temporary phenomenon." Early research within the multicultural paradigm was argued to be mainly concerned with language acquisition and bi- or multilingual education. For the most part, migration and mobility are no longer interpreted as temporary phenomena but as a consequence of the process of globalization (de Cillia and Busch 2006). The characteristic of language education for children of migrant families until the 1990s was that it was integrated into the school system that uses only German but, at the same time, aimed at maintaining the children's "ability to adapt" when they return to their native lands and protecting their "cultural identity" (Gogolin et al. 2003). The tools for carrying out this "dual strategy" were "German as a second language courses (preparation courses/special courses)" and "supplementary native language classes." However, the German government's policy has been changing, and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research later encouraged "multicultural education at schools." With the passage of time, the possibility of these children going back to their own countries was no longer taken into consideration. Instead, each of these multicultural children was viewed as a national human resource with bilingual or even multilingual skills, and "native language classes" were opened to support them. In other words, a new perspective that the language skills of migrant children should be utilized for all children has taken root (e.g., the concept of a "language class for all" in the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia). This move in the language education policy can be argued to broaden the perspective of the linguistic human rights. In this case, the "Development of a European

language Portfolio (Ger. *Europäisches Portfolio für Sprachen*)” can be seen as an example. Yet, in implementing policies supporting multilingual skills, the abilities of teachers and the qualities of teaching materials are rising as major issues. Especially when it comes to practical elementary school subjects like history and social studies, developing multicultural curricula and revising syllabuses also play an important role (cf. Gogolin et al. 2003).

The multilingual education practice employed in Germany has a direct implication for Korean situations in the educational framework of human rights protection. In Korea, there is a new population of students who arrive after the age of adolescence (Seong 2011). They tend to display much slower rate of adjustment and acquisition of Korean, and therefore, a closer attention and a broader perspective is required for these so-called accompanied/midway-arrival immigrant children different from the existing ones who were born in Korea. For example, for the *accompanied/midway-arrival immigrant children* who have already acquired the culture and language in their country of origin, their education should receive special attention that is distinguished from the one received by other multiracial children born in Korea. For those who are at the age of adolescence, there should be a greater educational emphasis on developing self-identity and the ability to form social relationships than those who are below the age of adolescence. Moreover, the current school programs for the multiracial family students should be examined further. Nowadays, schools in Korea tend to focus on English for the bilingual education requirement. However, this may merely be an alternative exit for solving problems such as lack of human resources for systematic bilingual education. For these reasons, professional teacher development for [heritage] language education is immediately called for in order to carry out effective bilingual education for the *accompanied/midway-arrival immigrant children*. Thus, bilingual education for the migrant children constitutes an important part of linguistic human rights, when it comes to school education.

Among many countries, Canada could be considered most successful in securing immigrants’ human rights (Madsen 2015). They have carried out immigrant integration policies by presenting the position of “multiculturalism” and structurally managing foreigners’ departure and arrival according to the “Immigration and Refugee Protection Law.” Moreover, their immigration policies are managed according to the frame of Convention of International Human Rights and the Canadian Bill of Human Rights. By considering the cases of aforementioned countries, it is now time for South Korea to examine its current status and find directions and means to secure immigrants’ human rights in its unique cultural context. In the following, the present author demonstrates the method and the outcome of a survey-based field research in order to ascertain the various discrimination cases and the needs of the migrants in Korea.

3 Method

3.1 *Research Design, Participants, and Data Collection*

In order to examine a general trend of discrimination experienced by immigrants, a survey was conducted among the immigrants. The target population of the study was the immigrants who have moved to South Korea. This population included labor immigrants, international marriage immigrants, and children and youths of multicultural families. In an effort to raise sample's validity and its response rate, the survey was distributed by schools' vice-commissioners who were in charge of multicultural education at their respective office of education in 16 different cities and provinces throughout the nation. In addition, the teachers of schools that run multicultural education policy research and the teachers who received educators' multicultural education programs at the Multicultural Education Center helped distribute the survey. The survey was conducted in September 2014, and for each of the division that responded, 100 copies were distributed. The final number of all the collected responses was 78.

3.2 *The Process of Developing Research Tool*

The main research tool for the current study was survey, which was written in Korean. The participants who were not fluent in Korean completed the survey with a help of their teachers, counselors, researchers, or co-workers. It was difficult to find existing tools designed specifically for the same purpose of the current study in South Korea. As a result, a rough draft was created based on human rights perception research, immigrant human rights reports, and research on multicultural teacher education effectiveness. Then the draft was revised after the researcher has discussed them with experts (i.e., focus group interview) by considering its compatibility with the Korean culture and the purpose of the current study.

Specifically, the questions in the survey were considered to provide the standards for assessing the immigrants' human rights issues. They were created based on previous research such as "The Basic Plans for the National Human Rights Policies (The Korean Government 2007)" and "The Multicultural Society and Constitution (National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea 2010)." Moreover, the questions were developed through specifying everyday incidents of discrimination experienced by immigrants that were widely reported across various studies on minority human rights issues (National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea 2008, 2009; National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea Gwangju Local Office 2007, 2010).

3.3 Method for Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by a statistical program SPSS WIN. For the descriptive analysis, frequency and percentage were obtained. The average and standard deviation were calculated and analyzed for the responses on perception and opinions.

Results

A total of 78 immigrants have responded to the survey. Among the 78 immigrants (including naturalized citizens after immigration), 17.9%($n = 14$) self-identified as Chinese, 16.7%($n = 13$) as Koreans, 10.2%($n = 8$) as Vietnamese, and 6.4%($n = 5$) as Filipinos.

As for the questions regarding the attitude of the Korean society toward the immigrants, 55%($n = 43$) responded “Somewhat discriminating” and 10%($n = 8$) responded “Very discriminating (Chart 1).” As for the mechanisms of discrimination, skin color (35.8%, $n = 28$) and class (28.2%, $n = 22$) scored the highest (Chart 2). By using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “completely disagree”; 5 = “completely agree”) for the statement, “there is a great amount of conflict between the immigrants and the general Koreans in South Korea,” it was slightly higher than neutral (average = 3.4).

When more detailed human rights violation cases were asked, bullying, ridiculing, humiliating, limiting one’s educational rights, limiting one’s cultural activities, and limiting participation in various activities were reported relatively frequently (for both children and adults) (Chart 3). As for the questions that only applied to adults, unfair payment, forced labor, and violation of property rights were most frequently observed (Chart 3).

When they were asked how they responded to human rights violation cases, asking for help to family members, others who came from the same country, and religious leaders could be categorized as “help request through one’s personal means.” On the other hand, help requests to police officers, human rights organizations, immigrant support centers, counselors, social workers, and teachers for students were categorized as “help request through official means.” Complaining to their family members in their countries of origin or staying silent and hiding the human rights violence cases were all categorized as “passive coping.” As a result, most of them responded to violation of human rights with personal or passive means rather than through the official means (Chart 4).

Chart 1 Perception of the Korean society’s attitude toward the immigrants

Scale	Frequency (%)
Very equal	1(13%)
Somewhat equal	6(7.7%)
Neutral	20(25%)
Somewhat discriminating	43(55%)
Very discriminating	8(10%)
Total	78(100%)

Chart 2 Mechanisms of discrimination perceived by immigrants

Mechanisms	Frequency (%)
Skin color	28(35.8%)
Country of origin	16(20.5%)
Class (economic status)	22(28.2%)
Attractiveness of physical appearance	2(2.6%)
Equally discriminating toward all foreigners	8(10.3%)
Not so discriminating	2(2.6%)
Total	78(100%)

Chart 3 The experience of human rights violation case experiences

Cases of discrimination	People who have experienced the case (%) n = 78
1 I have been isolated/bullied at work or school	55(70.5%)
2 I have been inspected or arrested without any reason	2(2.5%)
3 I have been banned or obstructed from participating in religious activities	1(1.3%)
4 I have been ridiculed because of my language and/or food I eat	30(38.5%)
5 I have heard people making humiliating comments about my skin color and/or clothes I wear	25(32.1%)
6 I have been rejected by store clerks who did not want to sell products to me	3(3.8%)
7 Even if I wanted to learn the Korean culture and language, I did not have the opportunity	31(39.7%)
8 When I wanted to participate in the local immigrant society, other people did not let me do so	5(6.4%)
9 I have been rejected by the larger Korean society when I wanted to organize an immigrant society	0(0%)
10 I was not able to receive appropriate care when I became ill or got hurt	10(12.8%)
11 I have been homeless because I had no place to stay	2(2.6%)
12 I have heard humiliating comments about my (or my parents') country of origin and the people	45(57.7%)
13 I have starved because I had no money to buy food	7(9.0%)
14 I have been rejected with no reason when I wanted to organize and participate in festivals and activities for my country of origin	1(1.3%)
15 I have been intruded by people other than my family members about my family affairs	10(12.8%)
16 People have taken away my right to speak at work, church, and the community because I was an immigrant	23(29.5%)
17 I have been rejected when I wanted to go to school or when I wanted to send my children to school because I was an immigrant	2(2.6%)
18 Someone has thrown stuff at me	7(9.0%)

(continued)

Chart 3 (continued)

Cases of discrimination		People who have experienced the case (%) n = 78
19	I have been admitted to the hospital and received a long-term treatment because I was physically abused	1(1.3%)
20	I have been sexually humiliated or harassed	4(5.1%)
21	People have twisted my wrist, pulled my hair, or kicked me	7(9.0%)
The following are for adults only		n = 32
22	I have been paid later than the mainstream Koreans	4(12.5)
23	I have been paid less than the mainstream Koreans even when I have worked the same amount of hours	7(21.9%)
24	I have been forced to work overtime, run extra errands, or work on weekends	8(25.0%)
25	I have been rejected from joining the labor union because I was an immigrant	0(0%)
26	I have been rejected by community organizations because I was an immigrant	0(0%)
27	Other people have taken care of my money and property even when I did not want them to	13(40.6%)
28	I have been banned or interrupted from meeting with my children or spouse with no special reasons	1(3.1%)

Chart 4 Responses to human rights violation (multiple responses were allowed)

Responses	Frequency (%)
Directly protested	20(7.8%)
Requested for help via personal means	126((49.2%)
Requested for help via official means	28(10.9%)
Passive coping	82(32.0%)
No experience of discrimination	0(%)
Total	256(100%)

Among those who talk to their family members in their countries of origin, or those who stay silent without telling anyone, 30 of them responded that they did so because “they did not think it was a big deal,” which was 40.8%. Twenty of them responded “because there were nowhere for me to ask for help,” which was 20.4% (Chart 5).

4 Discussion

The South Korean society is undoubtedly being diversified with a growing number of foreigners migrating to the country for various reasons. Most of these foreigners enter the country for the purpose of long-term residence (Statistics Korea 2016) either as labor migrants or marriage migrants as a spouse of a Korean. These families of a foreigner and a Korean spouse are officially referred to as “multicultural

Chart 5 Reasons for selecting personal means or passive coping strategies

Reasons	Frequency (%)
There were nowhere to ask for help (I did not know where to go for help)	20(20.4%)
It was no use for me to ask for help	13(13.3%)
I was afraid of retaliation	12(12.2%)
I did not want to make a big deal out of it	13(13.3%)
I did not think it was a big deal	30(40.8%)
Other opinions	0(%)
Total	98(100%)

Multiple responses were allowed

families,” and they are becoming a vital part of the South Korean society. In the midst of this societal change, what is concerning is that most of the labor and marriage migrants come from developing countries that are often deemed inferior economically and culturally in the eyes of most Koreans. This kind of stereotype can be manifested in various behaviors, often in the form of discrimination, which is clearly a violation of human rights (cf. Starkey and Osler 2009, p. 350). However, most of the current multicultural education programs are focused on educating the migrants to assimilate and have overlooked the seriousness of discrimination they could have experienced. Since discrimination is both consciously and unconsciously exercised by the general public, the general public would need to become aware of the types of discrimination experienced by migrants. As the first step, how discrimination is specifically experienced by the migrants and their children would need to be understood. Accordingly, the current study examined the discrimination cases experienced by marriage and labor migrants and their children in an effort to raise the awareness of the importance and necessity of human rights education programs that address the issue of discrimination on migrants in Korea.

As a result, more than the majority, 65% of the participants, reported that they viewed the attitude of the South Korean society as being somewhat or very discriminating (Chart 1). They thought the discrimination was exercised largely due to different skin color, low economic status, and their country of origin. This result suggests that the general Korean public has a tendency to discriminate foreigners based on socioeconomic and ethnic factors that are often difficult to change, which are also critical parts of migrants’ identity (i.e., who they are and where they come from). The fact that their skin color and clothes (32.1%), country of origin and the people (57.7%), food, and language (38.5%) were ridiculed and criticized strongly attest to the fact that multicultural education that generates respect for diverse cultures and cultural practices is urgently needed. If the migrants who participated in this survey feel that they are discriminated, they are likely to have a low sense of belongingness in the host country. However, the education programs should not solely be centered on outwardly shown cultural practices, but should address the issues of human rights. In other words, merely familiarizing and being exposed to different cultural practices may not be adequate. From a human rights perspective, the education should involve the idea that however different cultures may be, no one

culture is inferior or superior to other cultures. Moreover, the idea that some lives and cultures are worth less than others should be tackled. For the contexts in which the migrants were discriminated for both adults and children, most of the participants experienced discrimination in the form of being isolated or bullied at work or school (70.5%). This implies that they may often be left alone, feeling disconnected from their social environment and that they could suffer from loneliness and lack of social capital. Future multicultural education policies could consider these findings by creating opportunities for the immigrants to connect among themselves, their original family members, as well as the native Korean neighbors.

Next, for adults' discrimination experienced at workplaces, they reported that other people have taken care of their money and property even though they did not want them to (40.6%). They also reported being forced to work overtime, run extra errands, and work on weekends (25%). Some of them even reported that they were paid less than the mainstream Koreans even when they have worked for the same amount of hours (21.9%). In order to address the discrimination happening in this part of the society, the multicultural education programs and policies designed from a human rights perspective should be provided for the employers and co-workers in a wide array of workplaces. Especially, people taking care of their money and property even though they did not want them to do so seem to show how much these "other people" distrust the immigrants' ability to manage resources as well as their unwillingness to grant them the responsibility and power to do so. For this particular point, if immigrants do lack the ability to learn new skills and manage resources, they should be educated. Then, the awareness and willingness to trust and share equal opportunities by the employers and co-workers working with multicultural population would need to be addressed.

Finally, once the migrants have experienced cases of discrimination, they most frequently turned for help from personal connections (49.2%) or remained passive about the situation (29%) instead of asking for official help. They did so mainly because they did not think it was a big deal (40.8%) and they did not know where to ask for help (20.4%). Other opinions were that because they did not want to make a big deal out of it, asking for help was no use, and they were afraid of retaliation. While discrimination is clearly a violation of human rights, without being educated, when it becomes one's everyday life, its seriousness may not be apparent even to the victim. The awareness of every one's equal human rights should be educated to both the potential oppressors and the oppressed. Also, the fact that they did not know where to ask for help is another critical point that needs to be addressed. Even if they have experienced discrimination, they do not know who to speak to or where to turn for official help. It is true that at the societal level, the issue of discrimination and human rights violation has not been discussed or promoted as widely as other social issues such as theft and bribery. The concept of discrimination as human rights violation and where to ask for help should be educated and discussed openly and frequently both to the immigrants and the general Korean public.

The current study has a few limitations that should be addressed in the future studies. First, the size of the sample was limited and thus is difficult to be generalized even though the sample was relatively randomly selected. A greater number of

sample sizes would enable the consideration of the unique characteristics and detailed analysis of different ethnic and age group. However, overall the current study was able to show how discrimination is being experienced by some of the immigrants in South Korea and their responses to such experience through relatively detailed questions regarding discrimination with simple analyses. This kind of study has been rare in the Korean multicultural education policy research. The results are expected to contribute to the development of multicultural education programs and policies regarding discrimination from a human rights perspective. In order to shift the current multicultural education program and bring in a new paradigm of coexistence and cooperation in the multicultural society that Korea is becoming on top of protecting migrants' other rights and interests, the general public's acknowledgment of human rights issues and cultivation of welcoming attitudes toward immigrants would be critical. Specifically, the following aspects found in the current study are suggested for further consideration: (1) migrants' relationship with other migrants, family of origin and native Korean neighbors to prevent and eliminate discrimination resulting in isolation, (2) promoting migrants' ability to manage resources, (3) fostering trust among native Koreans and migrants, (4) raising the awareness of discrimination as human rights violation, and (5) guiding the migrants to finding official help.

As Starkey and Osler (2009) put it, citizenship education was introduced as a response to racial discrimination in Europe. The issue of racism was clearly expressed in Europe as a threat to democracy and to peace in the region and the world (Starkey and Osler 2009, p. 350). Thus, it is important to teach the matter of racial discrimination as human rights violation to the general public in the school subject of citizenship education from early on.

5 Conclusion and Some Further Issues

The discrimination data from the survey-based field research implies that the character and contents of immigrants' daily human rights violation cases in Korea vary widely. There are areas that are more vulnerable to human rights violation than others depending on general understanding of social and educational meanings, immigrants' reasons for immigration, economic status, level of family's social and emotional support, and their readiness for residence in Korea. Besides the discriminations attested in the surveys, most of the marriage immigrants who participated in this survey have been also experiencing problems in communication in Korea. The results indicate that there are needs for expansion of Korean language education support programs. The immigrants were also highly interested in their children's education, especially in receiving learning support through afterschool programs or programs at public institutions such as multicultural family support centers. In order to resolve the issues of discrimination at school, marriage immigrants felt that there should be stronger multicultural education programs at both the societal and school level while increasing the interests of teachers. Moreover, they thought that the

interests and attitude of these teachers could influence children's school life. This would be taken to mean that multicultural or intercultural awareness program for the general public is an integral part of enhancing multicultural human rights awareness throughout the country.

From the cultural perception perspective, marriage immigrants also indicated that "they [the Korean public] do not approve me of being one of the members of the Korean society," "they force unilateral acceptance of Korean culture even in close relationships," "Koreans are not interested in my country of origin and the culture," and "there are not many chances to learn about the Korean culture." Among all of these responses, "being forced to accept Korean culture unilaterally" was viewed as especially difficult. This perception indicates that the acculturation of the Korean culture is rather being forced upon the immigrants instead of Koreans and the Korean society putting effort to understand the immigrants and their culture. This suggests that Koreans are still very conservative about their native culture and that they are still keeping a unilateral perspective toward it. Continued effort for improving migrants' human rights perceptions should be placed on these issues that are being experienced by immigrants early on in order to alleviate the difficulties and create a more integrative society.

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Part III
Education Equity and Equality: Provisions
and Interventions

Ethnic Minority Young People's Education in Hong Kong: Factors Influencing School Failure



Miron Kumar Bhowmik

Abstract This chapter explores different factors that contribute to the school failure of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. It draws on a case study approach based on 15 in-depth interviews with 11 “out of school” ethnic minority young people, of whom 6 were dropouts, 4 were at risk of dropping out, and 1 never attended a school. It was also augmented with an additional 22 in-depth interviews with 20 other stakeholders related to ethnic minority education including 3 principals, 6 teachers and support staff, 3 school social workers and NGO professionals, 2 government officials, 3 ethnic minority community leaders, and 3 parents. Several themes were created using schema analysis that help explain different factors making them “out of school.” It has been common to attribute school failure for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong to problems with Chinese language education, yet this study shows that a number of other interrelated factors contributed to their lack of successful schooling. The key influences are multilevel – with individuals themselves, within families, within schools, and within the community. Implications are drawn at the levels of policy, practice, and theory to better support ethnic minority young people’s schooling success in Hong Kong.

1 Introduction

The official recognition of ethnic minorities as a subgroup of Hong Kong’s population was only announced in 2001, even though such groups were already present since the beginning of the British colonial period (Bhowmik and Kennedy 2013). “Ethnic minorities” refers to the “people from non-Chinese ethnicities” by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) (Census and Statistics Department 2007, 2012, p. 2; Census and Statistics Department 2017,

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p. 3). According to the latest 2016 by-census (Census and Statistics Department 2017, p. 7), 584,383 people living in Hong Kong (about 8.0% of the total population) were ethnic minorities. They belong to the ethnic groups of Indonesians, Filipinos, Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, White, Japanese, Thais, Koreans, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, etc.

Ethnic minorities are a small but growing population in Hong Kong. This is evidenced by the fact that the 2006 by-census (2007, p. 15) reported about 5% (exact figure is 342,198) of the total population of HKSAR were ethnic minorities which means an increase of the total number of ethnic minority population by 70.8% in 10 years between 2006 and 2016 (Census and Statistics Department 2017, p. 7). In 2016, South Asians collectively represented 14.5% of the total ethnic minority population which increased by 71.4% compared to the 2006 by-census (Census and Statistics Department 2017, p. 21).

The schools predominantly catering for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong are called designated¹ schools. “Biliterate and trilingual” is the language policy context in post-handover Hong Kong under which ethnic minority students’ education is provided. This means that all Hong Kong students should be able to master two written languages (Chinese, English) and three spoken languages (Cantonese, Putonghua, English).

A growing body of literature has reported that ethnic minority students are facing many issues and challenges within Hong Kong school in the areas such as admissions, Chinese language learning, assessment, curriculum, teaching, resource support, supervision and monitoring, and overall policy toward multicultural education (e.g., Connelly et al. 2013; Heung 2006; Hue 2011; Kennedy 2011a, b; Kennedy and Hue 2011; Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004). It has been collectively suggested that all these issues and challenges are seriously hindering ethnic minority students’ access to higher education, the job market, and their future prospects. However, there is one area that has been little explored, that is, the reasons why ethnic minority students are “out of school” or have dropped out of school. To address the issue, this chapter explores different factors that contribute to making ethnic minority young people fail in Hong Kong schools. It draws on a larger research (Bhowmik and Kennedy 2016) that sought to understand the extent of “out of school” ethnic

¹ While the number of designated school was 15 in 2006/07, it has reached 31 in 2012/13 (Education Bureau [EDB], 2012). Education Bureau (EDB) in Hong Kong has clearly mentioned the rationale of inviting schools to be designated schools mainly to develop expertise among a pool of schools in dealing with ethnic minority students and sharing their experience with other schools. Perhaps, this system was easier for the EDB to provide support and resources. However, this designated school concept has been highly criticized as a discriminatory approach itself mainly because it reinforces segregation rather than integration (EOC, 2011, p. 7). The EDB is not any more using the word ‘designated school’ on their website, and recently changed the term to ‘schools provided with recurrent funding and school-based professional support for non-Chinese speaking students’ (EDB, 2012). Yet, the very essence of segregating ethnic minority students in these schools, in whatever name it takes, is still in practice. I will keep using the word ‘designated school’ for easy reference and maintaining consistency with the previous literature.

minority young people in Hong Kong, the reasons for being “out of school,” and what their “out of school” life looks like.

2 Literature Review

Hong Kong's Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) first recognized the disproportionately low participation rates of ethnic minority students in upper secondary and post-secondary education compared to the majority ethnic Chinese students (Equal Opportunities Commission [EOC] 2011). Earlier in 2009, a Hong Kong Legislative Council (LegCo) discussion paper raised concerns about the academic performance of ethnic minority students by indicating that less than 50% met the minimum requirements to be admitted into Form Six in 2008/2009 with only 24 students sitting examinations in the final year of senior secondary. LegCo provided recommendation for the government to carry out research on ethnic minority students' academic performance (Hong Kong Legislative Council 2009).

Bhowmik (2013, 2014) analyzed the 2006 by-census data and the 2011 census data, respectively, to understand the extent of “out of school” ethnic minority children in Hong Kong. In both cases he suggested that although there is a lack of available data to estimate the right number of “out of school” ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, a good number of ethnic minority children were “out of school” including the pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and post-secondary age-group young people. “Out of school” issue could be as high as about 25%, and more than 85% of ethnic minority young people were out of full-time education by the time they reached to upper secondary and post-secondary education, respectively. Kennedy (2012) also reported similar phenomena. Moreover, Bhowmik and Kennedy (2013) provided explanations concerning how the “out of school” phenomenon for ethnic minority young people raises new issues about access and equity in Hong Kong's education system and how it has failed to meet the requirements of the “no-loser principle” that is meant to characterize Hong Kong's most recent education reform (Education Commission [EC] 2000). Altogether the above works substantiate EOC's valid concern for ethnic minority students in upper secondary and post-secondary levels and also extend the same concern for ethnic minority students in pre-primary and lower secondary levels. This “out of school” issue warrants the examination of the factors associated with the school failure of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Because of the little knowledge and understanding about “out of school” ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, the potential personal, social, and economic impact of this school failure issue (Rumberger 2011), and the need to ensure equity in Hong Kong's education system and uphold the social justice as a whole, this chapter seeks to specifically answer one research question:

What are the factors influencing ethnic minority young people's school failure in Hong Kong?

3 Theoretical Framework

Conceptualizations of the school failure or “out of school” issue largely stem from experiences in developing countries where the universalization of primary and secondary education remains a key policy objective. Commonly used frameworks such as “Five Dimensions of Exclusion” (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010, p. 3) and “Seven Zones of Exclusion” (Lewin 2007, pp. 21–23) consider “out of school” construct for the students up to the end of lower secondary level in the contexts of developing countries. Yet dropout discourse in the context of the United States considers students until the achievement of a high school diploma (Rumberger 2011). While it is seen from the literature that there are two different upper limits, we shall extend those limits to discuss “out of school” issue for ethnic minority young people from pre-primary to post-secondary level of education in Hong Kong. It can be summarized in three broad categories, firstly, the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and post-secondary age-group young people who have never been to any schools; secondly, the dropout students of primary, secondary, and post-secondary level; and thirdly, the primary, secondary, and post-secondary level students who are in primary, secondary, and post-secondary school but at risk of dropping out (Bhowmik and Kennedy 2016, p. 54).

School failure literature worldwide has identified that school failure in both developed and developing contexts is more than simply a consequence of academic failure; rather there are many other interrelated factors contributing to this (Hunt 2008; Rumberger 2011).

Hunt (2008) provided a comprehensive review of academic and development agencies’ literature on dropping out especially in the development context with a focus on South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and also included research from places such as China and South American countries. The review identified a number of interrelated factors in relation to household, community, and schools that influence dropout. Hunt’s (2008, p. 53) review also identified four “at-risk” indicators. The four indicators are students repeating grades, students with lower achievement, students at overage enrolment, and students who remain regularly absent from the school or had temporary withdrawal previously.

Rumberger’s (2011, p. 155) work provided a conceptual framework that constitutes both individual and institutional factors as predictors of dropping out drawing on his over 30 years work on dropping out in the US schools. The framework assumes dropping out is an aspect of student performance in school and identifies two types of factors that influence the performance. While “individual factors” are associated with students themselves, the “institutional factors” focus the contexts found in students’ families, schools, and communities. Rumberger additionally offers conceptualizations of “socioeconomic” factors, that is, differences in resources in the social contexts of family, school, and community, and “sociocultural” factors, that is, cultural differences in values, attitudes, and behaviors in explaining racial and ethnic differences in dropping out.

For the purpose of this chapter, the discussion will mainly be limited to a selected number of factors from both Hunt's and Rumberger's frameworks which are found to be affecting school failure of Hong Kong's ethnic minority students. These theoretical frameworks provide a basis to analyze selected ethnic minority young people's cases in this chapter and help identify the processes and factors involved for them becoming school failure in Hong Kong. It is important to note that these frameworks have been drawn from Western literature as well as literature relating to developing countries. Neither of these sources exactly reflects the Hong Kong context that is developed but deeply embedded in a Chinese value system. School failure issue in this distinctive context needs further investigation and this chapter has only begun to explore this complex social issue.

4 Methodology and Methods

This study sought to understand what school contexts shaped and influenced a group of young people becoming "out of school" students in Hong Kong. The qualitative study employed the case study method (Stake 2000) based on 15 in-depth interviews with 11 "out of school" ethnic minority young people. In addition, there were another 22 in-depth interviews carried out with 20 other stakeholders related to the education of ethnic minority young people. The reason for choosing case study is to gain a better or more complex understanding about school failure issue in ethnic minority young people's life (Stake 1994) and subsequently for theorizing about them (Stake 2000). All in-depth interviews were unstructured in nature that provided a greater breadth to understand their school failure issue critically (Fontana and Frey 1994).

4.1 Participants

A total of 31 people including 11 "out of school" ethnic minority young people, 3 principals, 6 teachers and support staff, 3 school social workers and NGO professionals, 2 government officials, 3 ethnic minority community leaders, and 3 parents participated in the research. All the participants were selected purposively as they were willing to be involved in the project. Selection was also informed by theoretical sampling, that is, sampling was guided by the "theoretical sensitivity" which is necessary in qualitative work in general (Glaser 1978; Strauss and Corbin 1998). For example, the selection of "out of school" ethnic minority young people for interview followed the summarized and extended adaption of "out of school" framework (Bhowmik and Kennedy 2016, p.54) that largely included three categories, i.e., students who never attended school, dropout students, and students at risk of dropping out. Please see Bhowmik and Kennedy (2016, pp. 62–68) for details about

participants' category, gender, ethnicity, and how many in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews were conducted over an 8-month period, between October 2012 and May 2013. Each interview with "out of school" ethnic minority participants lasted for about 2 h and with other participants on average between an hour and 2 h. The family interview with a young girl and her parents lasted for 3 h. I conducted all interviews. The language of the interview was in English and is a second language for most of the participants and myself. However, some of the ethnic minority participants opted to use their South Asian languages such as Urdu, Hindi, and Bangla. Being a native Bangla speaker, I am also conversant in Urdu and Hindi. The time and place of the interviews were negotiated and determined according to the participants' preferences.

Data analysis was continuous and started simultaneously while collecting data. It was in the form of writing stories based on the field notes and audio record. After stories' validation against transcription and notes, they were read several times from beginning to end for coding and writing a list of ideas and finally to identify themes. In this process several readings were also done again between transcription and field notes. Schema analysis (Ryan and Bernard 2000) of participants' accounts was done to identify the themes that help explain the reasons of school failure for ethnic minority young people. The relationship in this schema analysis between different coding categories is what Foss and Waters (2007, p. 201) call the "cause and effect." This means school failure is the "effect" of the different factors identified at the coding categories of the schema, or in other words, different factors identified at the coding categories of the schema are the "cause" of the school failure. Finally, salient themes were created from the data to answer the research question (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

5 Factors Contributing to Ethnic Minority Students' School Failure

The case studies with 11 "out of school" ethnic minority young people and interviews with 20 other stakeholders revealed an array of factors that contributed to ethnic minority young people for being "out of school." These are low academic achievement, overage and retention or repetition, low education aspiration, attendance issue, Chinese language, behavioral problems, employment, involvement with gangs, health issues, school changes or student mobility, peer factors, family poverty, parental education, dropout history in the family, parental practices,

inadequate schooling provisions for ethnic minority students, segregation effect in designated school, issues in teaching, school policy and practices, teachers' low expectation, community factors, differences of culture in education, immigration and citizenship, racism, special education needs, and stereotypes. Due to space limitation, only a selected number of factors are presented in detail in the following sections. Pseudonyms are used to refer to participants and their comments.

5.1 Low Academic Achievement

The most common factor found across most of the participants was low academic achievement. While the failing subjects list included almost all school subjects such as Mathematics, Liberal Studies, Chinese, Science, Biology, Chemistry, English, Business, and Accounting and Financial Studies, the first three subjects in the list emerged to be the main subject areas where many ethnic minority participants had not done well academically. For example, Morshed, a dropout student after Form one, commented:

In primary school I was always passing in Chinese and English but failed in the rest of the subjects. In secondary school my academic result was very poor, I only scored 31.14% at the final examination where the school's requirement for progressing to the next Form is more than or equal to 50%. I only passed in Chinese and English language subjects, the rest of the subjects I failed.

Academic achievement has been identified as one of the powerful predictors of dropping out in the developed context such as the United States (Rumberger 2011). A majority of the studies that examined the effects of test scores and grades on school failure found that academic achievement had a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of dropping out, more powerful in the middle and high school, although the majority of the studies did not find a direct relationship between achievement in elementary grades and dropping out (Rumberger 2011, p. 166). Similarly, lower achievement has been identified as an "at-risk" indicator of dropping out in the developing context (Hunt 2008, p 48). Research suggested that students with lower achievement were more at risk of dropping out than those with higher achievement.

5.2 Overage and Retention or Repetition

It was common that many of the "out of school" ethnic minority participants actually came to Hong Kong at the end of primary school age or early secondary school age after having spent the first years of schooling in their home country. At the entry point to Hong Kong schools, they were not allocated to the respective grade level relevant to their ages. Some of them also had to repeat in the same class because

they had not achieved the required marks academically for promotion. Therefore, many of the participants ended up being in the classroom where they were significantly overage compared to their peers. In the cases of Morshed and Azad, the issue of overage was very prominent. Azad, a dropout student, commented:

I was significantly over aged compared to my classmates. I started primary school when I was 9 years old. And again I lost one more year when I was 'kicked out' of my first secondary school after Form One and repeated the same Form in another secondary school. Altogether I was at least 5 years over-age compared to my peers in the secondary school.

Overage has been identified as an indicator for at risk of dropping out students in the developing context (Hunt 2008) and a predictor of dropping out in the developed context such as the United States (Rumberger 2011). Hunt's review found a number of studies that suggested students who started schooling over age were more at risk of dropping out than those who began at the official age and were less likely to complete full education cycle (2008, p. 45). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review identified that 31 studies out of 52 that examined the relationship between overage and dropout showed older students were more likely to drop out than younger students at the high school level (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 164).

Similarly grade retention has been found as a consistent predictor of dropping out in the United States (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review in this regard showed that 37 of the 50 studies found retention in primary or junior secondary level increased the likelihood of dropping out of high school (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 163). Retention in the name of repetition has also been identified as at-risk indicator for dropping out in the developing context (Hunt 2008). Hunt's review found that repeating students were more at risk of dropping out than non-repeaters.

5.3 *Chinese Language*

Case studies of students such as Taufiq, Nadia, Aruna, and Sahid, who were at risk of dropping out, revealed that many of them were seriously struggling in Chinese language especially in Chinese medium of instruction schools. For example, when asked whether Taufiq was facing any problem being taught in Chinese in the secondary school, he commented:

Here every subject is in Chinese. It is very difficult to understand many things. Then I ask help from teachers or some students in my class. With their help sometime I understand, sometime I do not understand anything. The situation was very bad in Form One, but now it is slowly getting better...

It was also found from the case study with dropout participant Veem that his struggle in Chinese was one of the main reasons for his dropping out. In addition, Aruna's high academic expectation in Hong Kong was hindered by her poor Chinese skills. Moreover, Maneesha felt that she would never do well in work and career in the future due to her lack in Chinese skill. Chinese emerged as one of the main three subjects in the list that many participants failed academically in school.

Dropout research in the context of the United States identified immigration status has a bearing on dropping out (Rumberger 2011). In most cases, this was related to their poor English language skills. Most of the studies found that immigrant students with less English language ability had higher dropout rates (p. 184). Dropout research in the context of developing countries referred to the role language might play in dropping out (Hunt 2008). Exclusion may occur when students are taught in languages other than their native languages. The research in Burundi found that repetition rates increased for children by up from 28% to 40% in the first 2 years of using French as the language of instruction (Jackson 2000, cited in Hunt 2008). Research from Paraguay suggested that language influenced school performance and was highly associated with poverty, leading to dropout and low earnings (Patrinos and Psacharopoulos 1995, cited in Hunt 2008, p. 40).

5.4 *Family Poverty*

Family poverty seemed to be a very strong factor for the “out of school” participants such as Shormin and Abdal. In Shormin’s case, the whole family was living in Hong Kong with an amount of only 10,000 HKD for a month for a family of four members which was far below than the poverty line considered in Hong Kong. As a result, the family could not afford to send Shormin to a kindergarten even at the age of 5. Mr. Abbas, Shormin’s father commented:

We were told by the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) of Hong Kong government for pre-primary education voucher scheme that we are not eligible to receive assistance for Shormin because I am on a student visa. Then we visited at least five to six kindergartens and phoned several others both English and Chinese medium. There is not any bar for Shormin to get a place in a kindergarten but the minimum monthly fee would be HKD 3000. Considering other costs such as transportation, dresses, buying books, notebooks etc. altogether we would need at least HKD 4000 per month for Shormin. We cannot afford this cost since we only have HKD 10,000 a month to lead our life in Hong Kong.

In general the census data show that the median monthly incomes for the South Asians are among the lowest of all major ethnic minorities in Hong Kong excluding foreign domestic helpers (Census and Statistics Department 2007, p. 75; Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 86; Census and Statistics Department 2017, p. 100).

In the context of the developing countries, Hunt’s (2008) review identified research that indicated direct and indirect schooling costs were important factors in whether children enroll in, attend, and continue school since schooling incurred a range of costs. While direct costs referred to school fees, the more hidden costs included uniforms, travel, equipment, and the opportunity costs of sending children to school. Therefore, family poverty appeared to be an important factor in determining success in school. Hunt argued: “both statistical data and empirical research suggest that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop out once they have enrolled” (2008, p. 7).

In the United States' context, family poverty as a part of composite indicator of socioeconomic status (SES) has been widely examined in the dropout literature (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review of research revealed that students from high SES were less likely to drop out than their counterpart students from low SES (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 191). The review also found that family income predicted school failure; therefore, childhood poverty is a powerful predictor of adolescent and adult outcomes. Rumberger also highlighted one US national study that found students from the lowest quartile of SES were five times more likely to drop out than the students of highest quartile of SES (Dalton et al. 2009 cited in Rumberger 2011).

5.5 Issues in Teaching

Issues in teaching skills in Chinese and other subjects, as revealed from the interviews with dropout ethnic minority participants such as Maneesha and Veem, affected their school failure. For example, Maneesha indicated her teacher's lack of skills in teaching Chinese was the reason for not learning Chinese well in school. The teacher only focused on writing skill whereas other important skill such as speaking was not addressed at all:

I didn't learn anything from my Chinese class. The reasons were mainly our teacher who always wrote something on board and asked us to write down. We never had a chance of practicing speaking in our class. Even our Chinese classmates were always communicating with us in English.

Lack of teachers' skills in teaching Chinese as a foreign language has also been identified as a barrier for ethnic minority students to learn Chinese in EOC report (2011). A wider literature also reported Chinese language issue including teaching for the Hong Kong ethnic minority students (e.g., Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004, Ullah 2012).

In the developed context such as the United States, it was found that teacher quality as a part of school resources has a bearing on dropout or graduation rates (Rumberger 2011). Similarly, in the developing context, teaching quality has been identified as a factor affecting dropout, as Hunt (2008, p. 39) argued, the quality of the teaching in schools is linked to the learning outcomes of student, and it can also influence students' experiences of schooling, their motivations, and the move toward dropping out.

5.6 Teachers' Low Expectation

Teachers' low expectation seemed to affect Taufiq, an at risk of dropping out student. Mr. Jordan, Taufiq's teacher, had low expectation about Taufiq's school success as when asked why he thought that Taufiq was at risk of dropping out, Mr. Jordan commented:

Taufiq's Chinese is bad. Although he speaks Chinese quite well, but his reading and writing are not good. Moreover, his academic result is very low throughout the last three Forms. He also has some bad peer influences like most of his friends in the school do not like study. He does not have yet any attendance problem though. Although he wants to finish his HKDSE, but I fear that he would not get promoted to Form Four and will have to repeat Form Three mainly because of his academic result. Therefore, his target may change when he will have to repeat his Form. All in all, Taufiq has a strong possibility for dropping out...

Some other stakeholders also felt that teachers' low expectation about ethnic minority students' educational success influenced ethnic minority students in the Hong Kong schools.

While Rumberger's (2011) framework for dropping out failed to explain this factor, Hunt's (2008) work in developing countries identified literature showing a relationship between teachers' low expectation and dropping out. He highlighted a research from Peru that suggested teachers had very low expectations of girls, because they believed girls would drop out (Ames 2004, cited in Hunt 2008). Drawing on social, educational, and developmental psychology literature in developed countries, Schofield et al. (2006) suggested that teachers' expectation regarding students' academic ability and achievement can impact students' academic outcomes. And it is often the case that teachers often have lower expectations for the academic performance of students from low socioeconomic status and/or immigrant and minority backgrounds.

5.7 *Stereotypes*

Stereotypes as a school factor can affect ethnic minority students' school failure. Interviews with principal Mr. Yuen and teacher Mr. Knowles revealed that stereotypes of ethnic minority students such as "lazy," "less motivated," and "not hard-working" were very pervasive among the teachers in Hong Kong schools. Interestingly, during the interview with EDB official Mr. Cheng, he mentioned a handful of reasons for ethnic minority students for dropping out which were actually stereotypes. He indicated these under the guise of religious and cultural factors. His comment:

There is some religious, gender and cultural reasons that many ethnic minority girls do not continue after primary education. They either stay back at home or go back to their home country. After certain time they get married. Ethnic minority students who join schools in Hong Kong late cannot do well in education. Students have their sub-cultural groups like Pakistani group, Nepalese group, they always fight against each other. Ethnic minority students do not have any interest at all to learn Chinese. They have gross behavioral problems.

Literature also suggests that teachers were holding stereotypes of ethnic minority students such as 'useless', 'misbehaving' and 'impolite' was prevalent (Ku et al. 2005). In addition teachers also hold the views about parents of ethnic minority students such as 'not supportive to education', 'don't cooperate with the school' were common among Hong Kong school (EOC 2011; Ku et al. 2005).

Rumberger's (2011) framework located stereotypes within sociocultural factors instead of school factors to explain racial and ethnic differences in dropout rates in the United States. He highlighted research that demonstrated social stigma or stereotypes related to intellectual inferiority among some cultural minority groups contributed to their lower academic achievement (Claude 1997 cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 204). In addition, social, educational, and developmental psychology literature in developed countries suggested that, for immigrant and minority students, negative stereotypes related to inferior intellectual skills to group membership can considerably obstacle both short- and long-term performance in a variety of academic domains (Schofield et al. 2006). Eventually it can lead to reduced interest in academic accomplishment and to behaviors that undermine achievement in the long term. However, dropout literature in developing countries has not yet explored relationship between stereotypes and educational achievements.

5.8 Peer and Community Factors

Four out of six dropout ethnic minority research participants in this study had friends from their own community who also dropped out of school previously. For example, Azad, a dropout student, commented:

I remember about three of my classmates from my schools. They were all of Pakistani origin. Two of them dropped out of my first secondary school after Form Two. One of them had started working in a restaurant right away. Another was sent back to Pakistan by his parents as he was having drug addiction problem. The third one dropped out of my second secondary school after Form Four. He had been working in a mobile shop in Tsim Sha Tsui since then.

It was also found that some of the participants' ethnic minority classmates were working part-time and at some point they stopped coming to school and started full-time work. For example, Abdal's friend who was a candidate for interview in this study did not appear in school at all during my fieldwork period in the school. He had been identified as at risk of dropping out student by a teacher at the beginning of my fieldwork, and he actually dropped out by the time I finished my fieldwork. Abdal mentioned that his friend was working part-time in places like Sham Shui Po, Mong Kok, for distributing leaflets when he was still in school. Overall, it seemed that the practices in the community mentioned above affected some participants' school failure. It can also be mediated through peer factors in the ethnic minority community.

Undoubtedly, peers have a strong influence on adolescents. In the US dropout literature, it was consistently found that having dropout friends increased the likelihood of dropping out, with such association appearing as early as seventh grade (Rumberger 2011, p. 176). Community factors have also been identified as predictors of dropping out in the developed context such as the United States (Rumberger 2011). One study highlighted that community factors could affect adolescents in three different ways such as access to institutional resources, parental relationships,

and social relationships (Leventhal and Brooks-Gun 2000, cited in Rumberger 2011). Although Rumberger and Lim (2008) found no strong correlation between dropout and community factors (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 201), in his later work, Rumberger (2011) argued that affluent neighborhoods or communities provide students more access to community resources and positive role models from affluent neighbors. In the developing context, however, the relationship between peer or community factors and dropout has not yet been explored.

5.9 Racism

The case studies indicated that almost all “out of school” ethnic minority participants experienced racism in their life in Hong Kong. For example, Tanvir, a dropout student, shared his experience:

... On the streets and in the MTR I found many Chinese people avoided me many times... Many ethnic minority people I knew working in Airport said to me that they were less paid compared to Chinese people... One of my recent experiences was with a Chinese lady who fainted in the middle of the road. I helped her by calling an ambulance and accompanying her to the hospital instead of going to work. But when the lady had her sense back, she scolded me. ... On another occasion recently I tried to help one of my old aged colleagues with his weight loads but in return the old colleague punched me... In a recent district council election I saw one candidate circulating his election promises in Chinese full of racial hatred and that he would not be going to support providing resources for ethnic minority people's well-being if he was elected.

Many of them also encountered racism in the schools. For example, Maneesha, a dropout student, mentioned some different behaviors of her teachers in school compared to their behaviors toward Chinese students:

... In detention rooms teachers were stricter on the international students. When Chinese students were arguing with the teachers in detention room they normally overlooked it or pretended they didn't hear it. But in case of other students like me arguing with teachers in detention room caused extended detention. And they were rude towards us...

Even one community leader, Mr. Baral, had also faced racism in his life in Hong Kong as he revealed in his interview. He also mentioned that some ethnic minority students in his school experienced such while he was teaching in a Hong Kong school. Therefore, it appeared that racism which privileges Chinese and oppresses ethnic minorities was a common feature in the life of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong including in their schools. Such experiences are not confined to this study but have also been in the literature. Using ethnographic approach Ku et al. (2010) conducted a year-long field study to understand the lives of the South Asian community in Hong Kong. Their study depicted South Asians' experiences of racial discrimination in areas such as “employment (hiring, firing, and advancement), admission to facilities, purchasing of goods and services, access to government services, and acquiring a home” (p. 4–5). Ku et al. (2005) found a quarter of the ethnic minority students who participated in the research agreed that their teachers did not

treat students of different ethnicities equally. They also reported that teachers gave more attention to the Chinese students than ethnic minority students and teachers gave more severe punishment to the ethnic minority students than Chinese students.

Dropout literature in both developed (Rumberger 2011) and developing (Hunt 2008) contexts did not identify racism as a separate factor for school failure. Critical race theorist López (2003) was right when he identified that the presence and effects of racism remain largely absent from the discussions in the areas such as educational administration, politics of education, policy studies, and political science. Drawing on Rumberger's (2011) dropout framework, however, through factors such as social composition of school that segregates ethnic minority students, school policies and practices that treat ethnic minority students differentially and ultimately create negative school climate for them and stereotypes that characterize inferior academic ability of ethnic minority students can explain how racism affects ethnic minority students' lower academic achievement and finally school failure. Similarly, drawing on Hunt's work (2008), factor such as teachers' low expectation toward ethnic minority students can also explain how racism affects school failure. Because of racist teachers have lower expectations that contribute to lower academic achievement of students and ultimately affect school failure. Moreover, the work of Schofield et al. (2006) can be drawn on to explain how racism interacts with ethnic minorities' or immigrants' lower academic achievement through the effect of negative stereotypes, teachers' lower expectation, and segregation at school.

6 Conclusion

In Hong Kong literature, it has been common to attribute school failure for ethnic minority students to problems with Chinese language as the language of instruction in most secondary schools and to lower achievement in the Chinese language school subject (Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004; Ullah 2012). Yet we learned differently from some "out of school" participants' stories in this study. It is clear that a number of interrelated factors such as low academic achievement, overage and retention or repetition, family poverty, issues in teaching, teachers' low expectation, stereotypes, peer and community factors, and racism are affecting ethnic minority students' school failure in Hong Kong. In all cases several factors interacted together to create the condition for their school failure. This list of factors and their interaction are mostly in line with school failure literature worldwide (e.g., Hunt 2008; Rumberger 2011).

Despite the long list of different factors identified in this study affecting ethnic minority students' school failure, policy makers in Hong Kong have assumed that the only issue that needs to be addressed is the Chinese language skills of ethnic minority students. In light of the result of this study, this is a very limited response on the part of government. Without addressing other issues, it would be impossible to gain any success against school failure of ethnic minority young people. It is, therefore, important to understand the interaction of different school failure factors

at students' individual, family, and school levels so that the support measures can be targeted at all levels. Without intervention at all levels, it would be difficult to fight against school failure. Structural issue such as family poverty needs special attention as it has been identified as one of the most powerful predictors of dropout irrespective of developed or developing context.

At the practice level, schools should take more responsibility to address all the school factors that have a bearing on ethnic minority students' school failure. At the same time, schools also need to be aware of which school factors exert more powerful influence than others on school failure and, therefore, should be targeting to address those in the first instance. In addition, schools also might need to take prompt and active initiatives to work closely with students' family for a well-integrated intervention meaning that schools and families need to work together to prevent school failure.

At the level of theory, the school failure issue for ethnic minority young people should not be understood from the point of view of their so-called deficits. Rather, it should be conceptualized at the intersection of multiple inequalities and disadvantages, such as their limited income and support from the school, which make ethnic minorities vulnerable to school failure. Moreover, racism in Hong Kong, which represents Chinese privilege and oppression in relation to ethnic minorities, should be properly acknowledged and considered at the center of these critical understandings.

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Critical Pedagogy and Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Possibilities for Empowerment



Carlos Soto

Abstract This chapter reports on the author's use of critical ethnography over the course of 4 years to develop a critical pedagogy praxis, based on humanizing educational practices, meant to empower ethnic minority students at two low-prestige government subsidized secondary schools in Hong Kong. Within a Hong Kong educational system orienting individuals and institutions toward local and global market competition, ethnic minority students from families of low socioeconomic status face persistent inequities. The chapter highlights critical pedagogy as an intervention, via Bollywood and Nepalese films as vehicles for engaging students, building critical consciousness, and moving students toward transformative forms of resistance. It concludes with a call for critical hope and suggestions for building a greater movement for critical pedagogy in Hong Kong by increasing theoretical critical deconstruction of society and education and generating critical construction of practices grounded in the local context.

1 Introduction

Stories of critical pedagogy can reaffirm education as empowering, liberating, and capable of driving social transformation. But no single story of critical pedagogy is enough. Since critical pedagogy is not a single set of theories or practices, its story needs to be told and retold and written and rewritten to account for new sets of circumstances.

I first encountered critical pedagogy via the narratives of Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Ira Shor, Jeff Duncan-Andrade, and Ernest Morrell, as an educator in the United States, and I brought their stories of critical pedagogy to Hong Kong, where I met hopeful, but sometimes hurt, and bright but often confused young people. Engagement with their lives now frames my own narratives, in which I strive to

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resonate with the hope, compassion, love, and renewal that energized me when I first committed myself to the traditions of the authors that influenced me.

I work with ethnic minority students in Hong Kong as a practitioner of a critical pedagogy. To me, this means taking an approach to teaching and learning in which teachers and students use dialogue to identify and understand oppression in their lives so they can go about transforming the world, for themselves, their families, and their communities. As a teacher, I use resources such as movies, literature, music, and philosophical texts that allow us to explore conflicts in their lives, identify oppression they face, and build academic skills.

What might my critical pedagogy mean to my students? Tara¹, a former student of Nepali heritage who gained admission to a prestigious senior secondary (see Pérez-Milans and Soto 2016), was interviewed by a local newspaper and described her experiences in our junior secondary class:

The way he talked to us, it was like human-to-human, not like teacher-to-student. It was never 'take out your textbook and turn to this'. There was humanity in our class: sharing our feelings, sharing our struggles.

Tara's comments return me to the heart of critical pedagogy: students and teachers seeing each other, as much as possible, as fellow human beings, and exploring together what it means to know, to care, to be, and to act, what it means *to be more fully human* (Freire 2005). In other words, because oppression exists in the world, we need to talk about it and how it impacts our thoughts, actions, and relationships with others, so that we may move toward identities brought about through more of our own choosing. Humanization, as the "ownership of consciousness, and thus identity," can lead to greater freedom and liberation (Shudak and Avoseh 2015, p. 465).

This chapter draws on my doctoral research² (Soto 2016) to describe my approach to critical pedagogy, one in which humanizing practices were used to empower students. My doctoral study documents the ups and downs of 4 years of fieldwork in two Hong Kong schools serving ethnic minority students: 1 year conducting participant observation and co-teaching in one school and 3 years working as a part-time teacher and creating curriculum at a second school. The dissertation elaborates on the collaborative nature of the critical pedagogy developed (which relied on important allies in and out of the schools), the institutional constraints and ethical dilemmas that arose, and the personal and interpersonal conflicts I faced. Here, I provide an overview of the study, highlighting how humanization, as described by Tara, emerged as I got to know students and their experiences in and out of school and committed myself to developing practices that would respond to their feelings and struggles.

In the following section, I detail ethnic minority students in Hong Kong demographically, what some of their experiences have been in Hong Kong's education system, and why I thought critical pedagogy was a necessary approach to address their needs. Section 3 explains how I used critical ethnography and critical pedagogy theory and practice to develop a praxis in Hong Kong while researching and teaching at two schools. Following this methodological and theoretical orientation,

Sect. 4 describes some of the alienating conditions I found at schools, and Sect. 5 presents in part the pedagogy I crafted in response. Finally, Sect. 6 shares some of my proposals for moving critical pedagogy as a field forward in Hong Kong and the greater Asian region.

The chapter relies on the concept of empowerment, so before moving on, I articulate it as follows: “the generating of power amongst actors through a process of interactions that enables students and educators to feel valued, to have voice for expression, and to engage academically” as well as “individual and collective acts by students that move themselves and those around them toward transformational forms resistance” (Soto 2016, p. 44), and “student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice” (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal 2001, p. 320).

2 Hong Kong’s Ethnic Minority Students

Hong Kong’s ethnic minority residents compose a diverse and quickly growing group that makes up about 8% of the general population (*Census and Statistics Department* 2017), their numbers having increased about 70% from 2006 to 2016 (Bhowmik 2017). While these figures include foreign domestic workers of Indonesian and Filipino origin, and individuals of other national origins, special attention is often paid to what the Hong Kong government has referred to as “disadvantaged group” of about 80,000 ethnic minorities as of 2016. This group is made up largely of residents of Pakistani and Nepalese descent, one that the government claims has “much difficulty integrating fully into the community due to differences in culture, language and ethnic background” (*Chief Executive* 2014, para. 74). Students in this category often trace their presence in Hong Kong to soldiers and policemen brought by the former Hong Kong colonial government from Pakistan and Nepalese soldiers who were members of the colonial Gurkha Brigade of security forces. Today, the parents of these students are often employed in working-class construction and service-industry jobs as security guards, drivers, and restaurant workers (Law and Lee 2013).

Ethnic minority students have encountered difficulties in attaining academic success in Hong Kong. While failure has often been attributed to problems with Chinese language education, research is increasingly showing the presence of other interrelated factors (Bhowmik, Chap. 11, this volume), beginning with a school system known for exam-driven teaching and learning practices. In the post-1997 period, reforms to the Hong Kong education system were introduced to alleviate monotonous and alienating conditions, refashion Hong Kong’s workforce toward a knowledge-based economy, nurture Hong Kong’s sense of belonging to China, address wealth disparity, and assure all students had opportunities to develop their potentials, thus ensuring there would be “no loser” (*Education Commission, HKSAR* 2000). But these reforms, which emphasized the need for the territory and students to be oriented toward economic competitiveness, contributed to privatization of the

system, managerialism and performativity within schools, standardization and surveillance in curriculum, and fierce competition among schools and individuals that marginalized values of “community, solidarity, and social justice” (Choi 2005, p. 239).

When I began my study in 2009, the population of ethnic minority students in government-subsidized schools stood at about 20,900 (Bhowmik and Kennedy 2013, p. 35). Their numbers in schools began to grow following the 1997 return of Hong Kong to China, but in those years, many of these children of new migrants and previously settled families were left with few options for schooling, as the dominant medium of instruction in schools changed from English to Cantonese at the time of the handover. Due to limited income, their families were priced out of the expanding English-medium-based private international school market (Ku et al. 2005).

In the early 2000s, declining school enrolments, stemming from a low fertility rate in Hong Kong, put schools under pressure from the Education Bureau to increase enrolments or suffer consequences such as the cutting of classes and teaching positions. This was especially true for schools that were considered poor quality or had previously served as prevocational, nonacademic track institutions (Carmichael 2009; Pérez-Milans and Soto 2014). In this period, most ethnic minority students were relegated to a handful of schools that formerly taught in a Chinese medium of instruction (Erni and Leung 2014). Schools took on marketing activities to attract students, some seeing an opportunity in recruiting ethnic minorities, who became “an important source of student intake for the less competitive schools in order to avoid being closed down due to inadequate student intake” (Shum et al. 2016). They competed for ethnic minority students by offering an English medium of instruction, Chinese second-language school-based curriculum, and amenities like prayer rooms for Muslims and cricket teams for students (Carmichael 2009; Pérez-Milans and Soto 2014).

But schools have had trouble in educating the students they took on for survival. Assimilationist views of education, which see the need to enlighten ethnic minority students through the transmission of Chinese culture and Confucian values, have played out in classrooms (Gao 2012) and in the government’s general approach to ethnic minority students, which ignores fostering “ethnic minority students’ appreciation of their own histories and cultures” (Erni and Leung 2014, p. 125). Furthermore, ethnic minority students have been taught by educators lacking training in approaches to teaching in multicultural classrooms and have had limited interactions with ethnic Chinese students (Loper 2004). Moreover, many students have struggled in English-medium instruction and have shown a lack of proficiency in writing (Carmichael 2009). In the Liberal Studies, a subject that in theory was meant to allow students to explore their identities along with local, national, and global issues, students have encountered teaching materials that have often rendered minorities invisible or cast diversity in a negative light (Jackson 2014), and invisibility at different levels is persistent in the wider society (Gube and Burkholder, Chapter 7, this volume). Finally, research has for over a decade documented the lack

of sufficient and effective instruction for ethnic minority students to master spoken Cantonese and written standard Chinese, a problem perceived as contributing to limited job opportunities and a lack of social integration by ethnic minorities (Loper 2004; Kapai 2015).

Despite this catalogue of concerns, the idea that opportunities for learning Chinese were limited and led to insufficient social integration on the part of ethnic minorities became central in publicly circulated discourses used to explain school failure, higher incidence of poverty, and stunted social mobility for ethnic minority youth. This centrality persisted even as research advocated for an ideological shift beyond Chinese language as the “core issue” (Connelly et al. 2013, p. 209). For example, in addressing through a newspaper commentary the low levels of local university admission for ethnic minorities, the head of the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission (Chow 2013, para. 2) claimed that:

In reality, the hardship ethnic minority students face in accessing higher learning and potential employment opportunities stems primarily from their struggle to master Chinese in their school years. Only 120 non-Chinese-speaking students were admitted to degree courses last year, representing fewer than 1 per cent of the offers of study places made via the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.

If the most significant problem is one of limited Chinese language skills, then the solution lies in increased funding for and provision of Chinese as a second language curriculum, or so repeated media outlets, nongovernmental organizations, researchers, and government officials. Accordingly, the Hong Kong government allocated 200 million Hong Kong dollars toward developing Chinese as second language curriculum and providing additional vocational study opportunities for ethnic minority students (*Chief Executive* 2014).

I first encountered these discourses in 2007 during a study trip to Hong Kong, when I was studying for a master’s degree in equity and social justice in education, and the idea that the struggles of ethnic minority students could be best addressed through a focus on Chinese language teaching seemed incongruent with my previous work with marginalized students in the United States. I pondered: *Where was the focus on having student and teachers reflect critically on the existing social conditions?* It seemed a critical approach to research in Hong Kong could “inform pedagogic efforts to question and challenge domination, oppression, and inequality and the beliefs and teaching practices that dominate them” (Shum et al. 2012). My study of critical approaches to education (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell 2008; Freire 2005; Shor 1999) prompted me to examine how joint investigation with students to read their worlds and name social oppression to transform it could lead to more humanizing and empowering possibilities. With this goal in mind, I arrived at the University of Hong Kong to begin a doctoral study that would test the limits and possibilities of critical pedagogy, as theory and practice, for empowering ethnic minority students.

In the next section, I share what critical pedagogy means to me and how I went about developing it through the method of critical ethnography.

3 Reading Students' Worlds Through a Critical Lens

My research started with an understanding of critical pedagogy as a tool for critical teaching. Along with the research method of critical ethnography, my understanding of critical pedagogy guided my data collection, practices and actions in the field, and data analysis. Critical pedagogy as a field is not defined singularly, and critiques of it certainly exist (Lin 2012; McArthur 2010; Tarlau 2014; Thomson-Bunn 2014), though it generally exists at both a set of theories used to analyze schools and society as well as practices used to empower individuals and groups and build more just societies; it is both a framework for “critical teaching” and an epistemological grounding for broader educational projects and social and political critique (Weiner 2007, p. 66).

My study, falling more closely under the umbrella of critical teaching, was highly influenced by the work of the late Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, and by teacher-researchers in the United States who documented their applications of Freire’s theories to their contexts of working with populations living under conditions of racial and economic subordination. In his seminal work first published in 1968, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005), Freire introduced theory and vocabulary for critical pedagogy teaching that involves people in liberating themselves from dehumanizing situations. He made a distinction between *banking education* and *dialogic education* that relies on *generative themes* and *dialogue* to build *critical consciousness*. Freire argued that we must discount the “banking concept of education” in which teachers merely deposit knowledge into students (p. 72) because it minimizes students’ power to transform reality, and he later advocated for a pedagogy that would build in students a critical consciousness through which they could “read the world” to name and question relations of power in their lives and then open possibilities for action (Shor and Freire 1987).

Such a pedagogy involves a praxis, or a cycle of “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire 2005, p. 51), and problem-posing education projects based on dialogue between teachers and students to find generative themes. Generative themes are the personal conflicts in students’ lives that are parts of larger social patterns, or “common experiences across participants’ lives or relevant to participants’ realities” (Souto-Manning 2010, p. 9), whose study have the potential to lead learners to a “committed involvement” in a struggle for freedom (Freire 2005, p. 69).

Critical educators in the United States applied Freire’s theories and developed additional tools for grounding praxis (Camangian 2008, 2010; Duncan-Andrade and Morrell 2008; Morrell 2002, 2004). Especially useful to my work was the outlining of “vehicles for engagement” by Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008). In their work, vehicles for engagement were the launching pads such as basketball, hip hop music, and films that interested students and could be used to enter dialogue about generative themes and propel academically rigorous work in the classroom.

From the outset, an agenda of creating transformation guided my research. Because I sought to surpass documentation of existing conditions, critical

ethnography was the method most compatible with my goals. Critical ethnography uses the qualitative research method of ethnography as its base but complements it with critical theory to generate research that is explicitly political in purpose. It is “critical theory in action,” an approach in which theory and method are “reciprocally linked, yet distinguishable” (Madison 2005, p. 18) and grants the researcher ethical frameworks from which to act on injustices encountered in the field (Gonzalez 2003; Kincheloe 2003).

In this methodology, my research process was a “bricolage” assembled and altered “in a trial and error manner” as necessity arose (Kincheloe 2003, p. 248). My methods underwent active construction rather than remaining static, “‘correct, universally applicable’ methodologies” (p. 248). Yet a durable set of ethics stabilized my research even as part of it were altered. Of special importance were “Four Ethics” of *Accountability, Context, Truthfulness, and Community* (Gonzalez 2003). These principles required me to unmask my life and privilege in the process of telling my ethnographic story, even if it meant depicting myself in an unflattering light; to describe as fully as possible the political, social, physical, and emotional settings in which my participants and I operated; to be radically open and “existentially naked about [my] purpose and issues in life”; and to maintain solidarity with my research participants (Gonzalez 2003, p. 4). Through these ethics, I hoped to avoid a specific critique of critical pedagogy. Applications of critical pedagogy have sometimes been told through narratives of redemption emphasizing heroic teachers and sidestepping daily struggles and conflict faced in building day-to-day dialogue and practice (Fischman and Sales 2010). Struggle and conflict, in multifaceted manifestations, were present in my research sites, perhaps sometimes *because of* my research, so I was ethically bound to include them in my ethnographic stories.

Field work was carried out at two schools: New Territories School (NTS hereafter) and Industrial Secondary School (ISS hereafter). Both were government-aided schools run by sponsoring bodies and financed by the government, and both had been in existence for about three decades. They had been founded as prevocational schools meant to prepare youth to enter the labor force doing technical work such as carpentry, light electronics, or hospitality services. I collected data at NTS as a participant observer and volunteer co-teacher of junior secondary Liberal Studies. At ISS, I spent 3 years collecting data, employed as a part-time teacher of English and humanities. When I arrived to NTS, the school was in its fourth year of admitting ethnic minority students, and when I arrived at ISS, the school was beginning its second academic year working with ethnic minority students. Both schools admitted these students to cope with declining enrollments of locally born ethnic Chinese students.

Data collection relied on traditional methods from ethnography (Creswell 2002; LeCompte and Shensul 1999) including participant observation in classrooms, school grounds, and social settings out of school, semi-structured interviews, documentation of interactions held in online messaging applications and social media sites, completion of questionnaires by students, gathering documentary evidence such as school records and student work, and writing self-reflexive journals. Critical pedagogy, in combination with critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2001, 2006;

Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000), and a sensitivity toward interaction borrowed from linguistic ethnography and critical sociolinguistics (Rampton 2007; Pérez-Milans 2013) were used during fieldwork to identify generative themes to inject into curriculum and investigate with students and later to analyze data post-fieldwork. Critical discourse analysis allowed me to link language analysis and social analysis by treating any instance of discourse as “simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice” (Fairclough 2006, p. 4). Linguistic ethnography provided analytic tools for interactions that could shape accounts that (1) respect “the uniqueness, deficiency and exuberance of the communicative moment,” (2) recognize there “is no complete or definitive interpretation either for analysts or participants,” and (3) remain “mindful of the scholarly virtues of care, coherence, accuracy, accountability, scepticism and cumulative comparison” (Rampton 2007, p. 4).

The study from which this chapter is drawn provides greater detail of how data and the voices of my participants were shaped into an ethnographic account and spends considerable time dealing with my positioning and dilemmas throughout the research (Soto 2016). For now, it is important to note that critical theories and methods were necessary to help me recognize dehumanizing and oppressive conditions in and out schools and in the everyday discursive practices circulating in my physical and online research sites. At the same time, a critical research approach set up an ethical duty to respond, to the best of my ability given existing constraints, and provided me with tools to take action to transform existing conditions. The next section will now illustrate how data collection and analysis moved into action through critical pedagogy.

4 Alienation Meets Banking Pedagogy

A year of participant observation at NTS revealed tension between teachers’ concern for students and attempts to form amiable relationships and a textbook and exam-based banking concept of education, in which teachers attempted to “deposit” knowledge into students without joint investigation of the world. This tension combined with deficit views of students, and adherence to narratives of individual effort, to place the school’s teachers in weak positions to make sense of and use ethnic minority students’ complex aspirations, identities, conflicts, multimodal practices, and interests, thereby limiting possibilities for humanizing education. Students’ day-to-day experiences, including conflicts around family, friends, and romantic relationships, and interests in popular culture, including love of Bollywood films, were typically left out of the official curriculum and were not used to develop students’ academic literacies or to move them toward collective struggle against marginalization and dehumanization. This was despite enterprising teachers who found ways to develop cricket, hip hop dance, and rock music extracurricular programs popular with students. My year at NTS also led to identifying Bollywood films such

as “3 Idiots,” “Udaan,” and “Taare Zameen Par” vehicles for engaging students with generative themes and academic work.

Useful for getting to know students were the occasions early in my fieldwork at NTS on which I was asked to design and lead lessons in English and Liberal Studies courses. In the first term, I used a lesson on “Where I’m From” poems in which students describe aspects of their lives such as the places, activities, sounds, feelings, foods, and aspirations that define their lives. After using the poem I penned to introduce myself, I guided students in writing their poems.

Poems revealed students’ interests, self and familial expectation, internal struggles and external conflict, and significant variation in writing skills across students. Students frequently shared a desire to achieve a professional status as a doctor, athlete, business person, or teacher while also sharing parents’ reminders to “study hard” and “do your homework.” But also common were lines such as “I’m from sad, lonely, and bored,” written by one girl of Nepali heritage. She added, “I’m from the sound I hear from my neighbour is always fighting at night...I’m from my parents saying study hard, sleep early, don’t play too much games,” juxtaposing a neighbor’s disruptions and her parents’ concerns for her academic achievement and her physical well-being. A male classmate of Nepalese heritage, Sangam, highlighted intense emotions:

Extract 1 “I’m from Love & Hate”³
 I’m from Happiness, Sad, & Anger
 I’m from drinking
 I’m from son
 I’m from “Get lost”
 I’m from McDonald’s
 I’m from Music
 I’m from Love & Hate
 {Sangam, class assignment, November 30, 2010}

Sangam’s poem contains themes I would continue to find during my research at both sites. The lines “I’m from Happiness, Sad & Anger” and “I’m from Love & Hate” contain evidence of emotional clashes and mood swings students at ISS frequently reported to me. In responding to a prompt in the poem template asking students to write common sayings from their parents, Sangam wrote, “I’m from ‘Get lost,’” from which I inferred a possibly strained relationship with a parent. Simultaneously, the poem reflects what I would find to be common forms coping with conflicts or seeking fulfilment by students: “McDonald’s,” “Music,” and “drinking” alcohol, the third being common with boys as young as 13.

At NTS, I also learned that many students faced conflicts around romantic relationships. I began to investigate this theme after seeing numerous posts by students on the social networking site Facebook, in which they commented on or shared images related to crushes and romantic relationships: pining for one, falling in or out of one, or dealing with the complexities of being in one. In an interview with Wafa, a female teaching assistant at NTS of Pakistani heritage, I asked for her insights, as presented in Extract 2.

Extract 2 “The girls no need to...get good education here”

Carlos: Um, I want to know about, um, the girls and some of the teachers talk about how both, um, Nepali and Pakistani, but maybe a little bit more Pakistani, that some of them see that maybe they have no future because their marriage will already be planned for them.

Wafa: Yes. Yes.

Wafa: Actually, you know, in a — I already mentioned because the many of in Hong Kong, you know, is a — majority in, uh, meet more people here in — in Hong Kong. And this kind of people is not well educated. And, uh, also is not, uh, get very good jobs. Many of them security and like, uh, construction worker and same. And, uh, they live in a — I think so is 30 years, over 30 years in Hong Kong here. And they know Chinese very well yeah, but actually the mind is, you know, is not developed here. Same is, you know, the — the old. And so they think, um, the girls no need to, uh, get good education here. Just they, uh, know, um, how to speak and how to write little bit and is enough and, uh, is no problem. But is a — this kind of majority people, however, you know already selected boys and, uh, and, uh, also you know some of the girls, you know, already engaged when is, uh...

Carlos: At what age?

Wafa: Uh, uh, engaged is mostly 10 years old. Yeah, mostly 10.

Carlos: Wow.

Wafa: And after then, you know, is, um, 17 — uh, 16 or 17, they get married.
{Wafa, Interview, July 18, 2011}

In the extract, Wafa explains that some families, including those with decade-long presence in Hong Kong, arrange marriages for their daughters at a young age and may limit the schooling girls receive, phenomena since documented in other ethnographic research (Gu 2014). At ISS, another teaching assistant of Pakistani heritage, Amir, stressed that many poorer families wanted their daughters to pursue further studies but wanted to grant them some future security through marriage. Nevertheless, the prospects of early marriage, including for students of other ethnicities, loomed large and seemed to contribute to the emotional weight given to romance by students.

The emotionally charged lived experiences of students exemplified above were common to both students at NTS and ISS and were most typically met at both schools by banking pedagogies focused on transmitting information from commercially produced textbooks, rather than by exploration of these conflicts. Students were not passively accepting of these pedagogies. Though most often students at NTS and ISS found ways to entertain themselves during lessons focused on banking pedagogies, some students at ISS, through working with me through a critical pedagogy, developed critiques of the teaching practices they encountered. Pramiti, a female of Nepali heritage who was my student for three years at ISS, shared what she saw as the most common teaching practices she encountered during a presentation I set up for an education course at a local university. Extract 2 is from that presentation and is titled “The Pedagogical Sequence”:

Extract 3 “The Pedagogical Sequence”

At the beginning of the unit, teacher tells us the name of chapter in the book.

During the unit the teacher starts to read from the book.

We read along with the teacher.

Raise hand when we need definition or example.

We are given fill in the blanks worksheet or exercises in the workbook.

We are given an essay to memorize for exams.
 A paper exam.
 {Pramiti, presentation slide, March 18, 2014}

At both NTS and ISS, the existing school curricula were not geared toward dialogic inquiry into the generative themes in students' lives but toward memorization of static textbook information delivered by teacher and assessed on an examination, as Pramiti shared. It was clear that guiding students to study what education was and could would be a generative theme to undertake in my critical pedagogy. We will return to Pramiti later in the chapter to learn the alternatives for which she grew to advocate.

5 A Critical Pedagogy Emerges

At NTS, I co-taught the Liberal Studies subject to form one student and designed and led the final unit of the year for one of those classes. At ISS, where the school was in its second year of admitting ethnic minority students, I created a new 3-year junior secondary English and humanities curriculum, thanks to a departmental supervisor who came to support my work and to colleagues who shared a vision of empowering schooling. The curriculum that emerged is one I described as “a negotiated organization of content, materials, activities, experiences, and networks, coupled with the building of safe pedagogical spaces (physical and online) and practices that engaged students in the investigation of generative themes and the building of academic skills” (Soto 2016, pp. 131–132).

In my fieldwork at NTS, I learned that Bollywood movies were popular with students of Nepalese, Pakistani, and Indian heritage, so one day I searched online for the most popular Bollywood movie. It turned out to be a movie well-known by students, “3 Idiots” (Hirani 2009), and after moving to ISS, it became a centerpiece of the junior secondary curriculum I taught there. The film's plot revolved around three friends from economically challenging backgrounds who meet at an engineering college and help each other through personal conflicts while challenging their school's banking pedagogy which emphasized competition. “3 Idiots” became a vehicle for dialogue with students about the generative theme of education.

In classes with ISS students, we studied various models of pedagogy: transmission (banking education), generative (based on co-construction of knowledge between teachers and students), and transformative (critical pedagogy based on creating change in a community). I wanted students to identify how these models could be useful or hurtful to them and how education could both reproduce existing oppression and lead to change. This study of pedagogy was guided by the film “3 Idiots” also facilitated building of English skills such as understanding and describing characters and plot in a story, writing advice letters to characters offering help with their problems, and summarizing events.

Another example of my emergent critical pedagogy comes from a unit I taught in form two dealing with the generative theme of love that centered on the Nepalese film, “Pooja” (Rauniyar 2010), which I learned about after a female student of

Nepalese heritage posted a link to the movie on Facebook in the spring of 2013. “Pooja” tells the story of a teen girl by the same name living in a remote rural village who dies in childbirth while her boyfriend is in Hong Kong seeking economic opportunities. The film deals with themes of motherhood, patriarchy, sexism, love, economic development, and making decisions by examining the events leading to Pooja’s death, to determine responsibility for the tragedy. Pooja, her boyfriend Rumi, their families, and structural social problems are all parties and factors bearing some blame. Along with the movie, we read articles and examined data related to maternal and infant mortality rates in Nepal, Hong Kong, and other parts of the world.

To frame our study of the movie and begin investigating the generative theme of love, I asked students to write and then share their personal definitions of love. Most definitions were similar to the one written by Jagan, a 15-year-old male of Nepali heritage who was considered a troublemaker and a weak student in primary school and by some teachers at ISS when he began in form one. In Extract 4 Jagan connects love to a feeling.

Extract 4 “Love is a feeling”

Well love is feeling that can make happy and sad. True love is love that is you feel like long and lasting. You just keep on loving the same person. Every day your love increase more and more. You feel like your love is worthless without her. It’s like a bright sun to you. When you feel like lonely and sad, you want them to appear in front of you because it makes your dark world to bright.

{Jagan, class assignment, April 16, 2013}

In the course of the unit, students evaluated their definitions of love and determined if the protagonist in “Pooja” had love, based on our reading and analysis of three definitions of love coming from three distinct perspectives, including the black-feminist American scholar, bell hooks, who described love as knowing how to be solitary, and as action, not feeling; an Indian philosopher, who distinguished between “mature” and “immature” love; and finally a Muslim perspective on love, which defined love in relation to community, marriage, self-care, and Allah. For our English writing examination, students answered the question “Did Pooja and Rumi have true love?”. Below is Jagan’s response:

Extract 5 “Love is action not a feeling”

According to bell hooks, an African-American feminist writer, true love mean “knowing to be solitary” and “love is action not a feeling”. We should know how to alone, take care of ourself and help each other. Pooja and Rumi’s does not know how to be alone. For example, when Pooja leaves her home she called Rumi an she takes Pooja with him instead of helping her to take her back to her home. Rumi helps Pooja because he cannot live without Pooja. He don’t know how to be alone. After Pooja becomes pregnant, Rumi went to Hong Kong to work there so that he could make money...When Rumi arrive back to his village, Pooja dies in childbirth. Pooja and Rumi accept each other rather than helping each other. They don’t work together and don’t take care of each other.

{Jagan, English exam, June 11, 2013}

Notwithstanding his grammatical errors, Jagan reproduced the essay genre of writing, introducing a reference to bell hooks, citing evidence from the film to make an argument, using transitions, and reaching a conclusion in this paragraph. The essay examination also forced him and his classmates to look at love from various perspectives so that they might reconsider their definitions, and in this case, Jagan used

the definition provided by hooks to examine love as action rather than his earlier definition of feeling. Some students walked away with new definitions of love and new ways to name the relationships in which they and their classmates sometimes invested much mental and emotional energy.

In presenting this unit to students at a local university in April 2014, Krishna, a female student of Nepalese heritage, reflected that she not only improved her essay writing, vocabulary, and discussion skills but also learned to value her own “mother and taking care of our bodies.” She admitted to having fallen in love before, and theories of love, we learned, “Were helpful to know about couples around me.” Based on our studies, she explained she saw relationships around her, including her own romantic relationships, as based on “immature love” that creates dependence and bondage, not freedom.

I want to be clear that critical pedagogy and the process of empowerment are arduous. At times, students or teachers can identify problems, but not yet have the tools to further analyze them or figure out how to act on them. This was made clear by a form one student of Nepali heritage, Trisha, who participated with me at a conference presentation near the end of my second year teaching at ISS. In Extract 6, we see how she defined some of the difficulties her class encountered that year:

Extract 6 “Without trust, there’s no dialogue”

One problem that I see is that without trust there’s no dialogue, and without dialogue there’s monologue and only transmission education. What that means is that when there’s no trust, we won’t get to interact with each other and we won’t really know who we are, and we don’t share our problems, and the cycle begins again and then there starts the transmission education with the cycle begins again.

{Trisha, university presentation video recording, May 18, 2013}

Creating a critical pedagogy within ISS also led to frequent conflicts with the school’s administration and eventually to the acrimonious departures of four of the five teachers, including me, who had collaborated in developing more empowering practices for the ethnic minority students at the school. While we have all continued to collaborate to support our former ISS students, the young people were left struggling with a major discontinuity in their lives. Following the departure of Lagan, a Nepalese educator at the school, and me, 60 of our students, along with their parents, staged a 2-day boycott of the school in protest and called for a press conference. Pramiti, whose description of banking pedagogy I shared earlier, penned a letter to the school as a student representative of the boycott. The letter included the demands presented in Extract 7.

Extract 7: The boycott’s demand

We demand: 1. an education which addresses our academic, social and emotional needs
2. an education which respects our identity and views it as an essential aspect of our education
3. teachers who can offer effective and flexible pedagogies which maximize the opportunities for us to reach our potential. We are tired of being used simply as pawns to keep the school alive. We require a vision and the strategies the school will implement to achieve it. Without teachers who can develop suitable curriculum, how can we students move ahead and prepare ourselves for the [Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination], university and the world beyond?

{Pramiti, letter to school, October 26, 2014}

She urged for students' holistic needs to be met through capable teachers and appropriate curriculum and pedagogies, along with the vision and practical work to achieve these goals, and admonished the school's use of ethnic minority students to maintain its enrolments.

6 Conclusion: Critical Hope

Sometimes I look back on my years at NTS and ISS and wonder where I went wrong. Could I have spent more energy understanding the struggles of the adults working at the schools, attempting to form more humanizing relationships with fellow teachers and administrators? Did my approach to education and research give rise to a fanaticism that relied on "emotion and sectarianism" (Shudak and Avoseh 2015, p. 468) and unfairly polarized students like Pramiti against her school? Or were my actions as a teacher and researcher justified because they addressed the pressing needs for humanization I found among the students I served? I ponder questions like these often, not always answering them the same way.

Yet, I remain committed to critical pedagogy in Hong Kong and its potential to humanize all our students. As I summarized in this chapter, getting to know students and their experiences in and out of schools and then engaging them in study of generative themes in their lives allowed for us to express more of our humanity to each other. Subsequently, new forms of empowerment emerged. So, I have continued to work with students from ISS in several projects, including teaching a group of them ethnographic research skills (Pérez-Milans and Soto 2016). This past year, I prepared a group of my former ISS students for their English and Liberal Studies Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination. Much greater possibilities lay ahead.

Critical pedagogy in Hong Kong has only taken small steps (Lin 2012) without coalescing into a field or larger movement of educators, students, and communities. Therefore, building a critical pedagogy movement in Hong Kong should address (a) theoretical "critical deconstruction" of Hong Kong society and the experiences of youth in and out of school and (b) increase engagement by researchers, educators, students, and community workers in projects of practical "critical construction" that provide "examples of how teaching and learning can be done alternatively" (Lin 2012, p. 82). Part of the work of critical deconstruction necessitates better defining approaches to diversity in education in Hong Kong (Fleming, Chap. 6, this volume). Erni and Leung (2014, p. 11) have suggested a move from "benevolent multiculturalism" based on fixed notions of cultural groups and promotion of assimilation by dominant groups to facilitate harmony to a "critical multiculturalism" that recognizes cultures and identities as dynamic and requires a "process of struggle and resistance to ethno-cultural hegemony."

Promoting critical construction requires creating institutional spaces in which empowering practices can thrive and developing critical educators and leaders to populate those spaces. To these ends, I envision a secondary school founded on a

mission of social justice education where critical pedagogies can be developed. Preservice and in-service teachers will need to be reoriented toward criticality, and this shift “involves a personal and professional decision to engage in a process of self-transformation,” one in which “teachers must be willing to undergo the process of ‘rebirth’ and to understand why it is necessary” (Allman 2010, p. 172). Rebirth, in both theory and practice, is a process that has been central to my development, and I one expect to undergo again as resituate my teaching (Soto 2016).

Therefore, teacher training and development programs in Hong Kong must join with teachers in breaking “ideological chains of their own formal education, of past training, and the inertia of habit of past teaching” (Peterson 2003, p. 306). In this process, teachers begin by obtaining a philosophy of education that gives them perspective beyond “educational method” (Allman 2010, p. 172). Acquisition of philosophy of education should be supplemented by the cultivation of the ethnographic sensibility required for delving into the cultures and communities of students and for the identification of generative themes, and these tasks in turn call for a critical pedagogy of teacher education in Hong Kong.

These possibilities hinge on the development of school leadership promoting equity and social justice in education. Chiu and Walker (2007, p. 732) discuss this point:

Given the palpable inequities within Hong Kong schools, it is incumbent upon the principal and other school leaders to work tangibly to promote social justice. However, concrete actions by a single or small group of actors, regardless of their position or power, only becomes meaningful if these actions are based on a clear set of authentic, just values shared within the school community. We suggest that reducing inequality in schools requires leaders to clarify understandings of their own value stances and those within their communities and; and to focus change efforts simultaneously on structural and cultural mechanisms.

In this view, building socially just learning communities places a responsibility of reflection on those who lead schools; otherwise, attempts at reducing inequalities within a school “might remain superficial” (p. 733).

The path to greater equity and social justice in Hong Kong education, not just for ethnic minority students but for all students, is grueling, but we must remain patient and persevere. I concluded my dissertation with a call for critical hope (Duncan-Andrade 2009) that provides and develops in students:

1) a material justification for hope through the strength of our teaching and the resources and networks to which we connect students, 2) resilience and strength to pursue a painful road and 3) a value for solidarity with and sacrifice for others (Soto 2016, p. 223).

I offer the same call now. Our critical hope as educators, researchers, and community members “models for our students that the painful path is the hopeful path” (Duncan-Andrade 2009, p. 191). I maintain this hope because I remember Tara’s words, and they remind me of walking into a classroom and talking with students, human-to-human. I did not merely instruct students to take out their textbooks and turn to a page. There was humanity in those classes: sharing our feelings, sharing our struggles, and changing our worlds.

Notes

1. Pseudonyms have been used for the schools and participants.
2. The chapter drew on research from my doctoral dissertation at the University of Hong Kong.
3. Transcriptions of texts and interviews are presented verbatim.

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Parental Involvement and University Aspirations of Ethnic Korean Students in China



Fang GAO and Yiu Kei Tsang

Abstract Parental involvement in education is essential in enhancing university enrollment and maximizing the educational potentials for equality and excellence. This study utilized Perna's (2006) model of parental involvement as social capital in interplay with other types of capital and tested the influence of educational involvement of parents upon university-going aspirations among contemporary Korean youth. A quantitative questionnaire was administered to 298 university students of Korean origin in China. Data analysis revealed that social capital was positively associated with students' educational aspirations through parental interactions with the student and the school. The findings also confirm the value of economic and cultural capital in affecting the operation of social capital-embedded parental involvement, as manifested by the hypothesized intersecting relationship between social capital and other types of capital in this study. This study provides significant contributions to the prevalence of the interacting patterns between social capital and other types of capital, warranting continued work.

1 Introduction

A wealth of literature in university access and choice confirms that parental involvement determines the variation in university attendance, retention, and completion (Kim and Schneider 2005; Perna and Titus 2005). As such, promoting parental involvement becomes vital in university preparation programs and specifically in the development of underrepresented students' university aspirations. Today, it

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appears that globalization and subsequent massive mobility of population exert an impact upon the engagement of parents in education. China's ethnic Korean minority is not an exception. The Korean is the 14th largest non-Han minority nationality with a population of 1,830,929 in 2010 (NBSC 2011). Since China's economic marketization threatens the primarily agricultural-based Korean minority economy, a mass of the Korean adult population has moved toward urban areas of China as well as South Korea for job-seeking (Kim 2003). Subsequent to the increased mobility of the adult population is a growing Korean student population living with single parents (*Danqin*) or, in extreme cases, without parents (*Wuqin*) (Gao 2010). In spite of significant changes of household structure, however, the Korean minority still possesses the highest level of university attendance when compared with other ethnic groups, including Han majority (NBSC 2011). Traditionally, the Korean's accomplishments are attributed to high priority given to education that facilitates Korean parents' economic and sociocultural investment in education (Lee 1986). We thus ponder what challenges mobile Korean parents face in the practices of parental involvement and ask what models of involvement they adopt to sustain Korean children's university participation.

The current study aimed to test the influence of educational involvement of parents upon university-going aspirations among contemporary Korean youth. Educational aspirations are related to implicit and explicit ideas that an individual sets as goals or hopes for educational attainment. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed a three-phase process of university choice, made up of predisposition, search, and choice. Among the three stages, predisposition is referred to as the process through which students primarily develop their own university aspirations or plans. Research literature has pointed to the correlation between parental involvement and university-bound students' development of educational aspirations (e.g., Hossler et al. 1999; Hossler and Stage 1992). In the current study, we concentrated particularly on the predisposition development and interrogated the two main questions: (1) To what extent do social capital-embedded parental involvement effects operate on Korean students' educational aspirations? (2) How does cultural and economic capital affect social capital? In the following sections, we first summarize findings from previous research on capital variables and university access and choice and acknowledge theoretical limitations of the studies and the need to better understand how different dimensions of social capital may interact with other types of capital. We then turn to the hypotheses in the study and discuss the data and methods used, followed by the study results. In the concluding section, the findings are discussed along with implications for future study, policy, and practice.

2 Capital and University Access and Choice

The existing literature in capital and university access and choice intertwines James Coleman's (1988) functionalist interpretation of social capital with Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) more critical sociological insights and often utilizes Perna's (2000, 2006) model. Within the model, parental involvement is primarily defined as social capital

and is conceptualized as a variety of the actual or potential university-relevant resources that can be obtained by parents' possession and maintenance of social networks. Such social capital-embedded parental involvement is comprised of the family-level relationship between a student and his/her parents, the community-level relationship between the student's parents and the parents of the student's friends, and the school-level relationship between the student's parents and school personnel (Coleman 1988).

Family-level social capital consists of (1) level of trust, mutual obligations, and expectations, (2) information channels, and (3) norms and sanctions. Empirical evidence has illustrated that the odds of enrolling in an undergraduate university program may increase with the frequency of parent-student discussions about education-related issues (Gao 2017; Perna and Titus 2005).

Community-level social capital captures parent-to-parent involvement as manifested by intergenerational closure. Studies have shown that parents who know their children's friends' parents have a positive impact on students' academic achievement (Pérez and McDonough 2008).

School-level social capital refers to parental involvement at school through attending parent-teacher associations (PTA), contacting school and teachers about students' performance in school, and engaging in volunteer activities. The extent of school-level parental involvement influences the amount of access that students have to resources occupied by institutional agents at school (Lin 2001; Stanton-Salazar 2004).

Perna's model posits that university entry can be attributed by the effects of multiple types of capital in an additive manner. The model absorbs the economic capital investment (Ellwood and Kane 2000) and sociological-cultural framework (St John and Paulsen 2001) and claims that a person's university enrollment decision varies as a result of calculations of expected costs and benefits (economic capital), as well as sociocultural factors (social and cultural capital).

Economic capital in this model is defined as a person's access to economic resources (e.g., income, wealth, and assets) (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), which play a significant role in youth's decisions concerning university participation (Heller 1997). Cultural capital is relevant to parents' occupation of cultural knowledge, language skills, and dispositions, highly valued in a specific education system (Bourdieu 1986; De Graaf et al. 2000). Cultural capital is key to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. According to Bourdieu, schools privilege the cultural background of students from the dominant class; hence, underrepresented working-class and minority students might inherently be disadvantaged because their parents cannot offer the relevant attitudes and knowledge needed in university preparation and planning (McDonough 1997).

Studies using Perna's model confirm that these capital factors have the significant predictive power to models of university enrollment. For instance, Perna and Titus (2005) used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) and studied the relationship between parental involvement and university enrollment across racial/ethnic groups in the USA. Results unearthed that social capital facilitated university enrollment via parents' interactions with the student, the school, and other parents, net of the effects of other types of capital. And then,

independent of social capital, economic and cultural capital, to a certain degree, respectively, affected the likelihood of enrollment in university.

All in all, Perna's conceptual model and empirical evidence shed light upon the separate and additive contributions of various types of capital to the university choice process, yet failed to account for the interplay among various types of capital, a key in the analysis on capital and educational outcome.

Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) insist that though different types of capital are distinctive from one another, a type of capital is interconnected with other types of capital. Such interconnection is the basic strategy of capital reproduction. In this way, social capital-embedded parental involvement is a sole and robust predictor of students' university choice and entry (Perna and Titus 2005). What is equally important is that the possession of social capital per se is the result of an individual's possession of cultural capital and/or the investment in economic capital. That is, possession of cultural capital by parents enables effective communication between parents and school teachers as institutional agents (social capital). Rather, those families who are less exposed to the capacity to communicate in a cultural/linguistically competent way could rarely capitalize on their cultural/language resources to facilitate social capital for trusted university information. In the same vein, as opposed to high-income families, those economically less-advantaged families barely have privileged opportunities for shifting economic capital into valuable social networks for university-related resources. For Bourdieu (1986), the distribution of capital represents the inherent structure of a society, in which capital interaction embodies power relations, structural inequalities, and social reproduction.

Grounded in this theoretical context, this study aimed to explore the intertwining relationships between social capital and other types of capital in the process of university access and choice. Taking parental involvement primarily as social capital, this study hypothesized that social capital institutionalized as parents' effective communication with the student, the school, and other parents would be likely to immediately and directly affect Korean students' educational aspirations and the operation of social capital would be affected by economic and cultural capital. A look into the dynamic interplay among plural types of capital in the pursuit of university aspirations will allow us to evaluate the policy and institutional arrangement on a holistic basis.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

Two hundred and ninety-eight first-year Korean undergraduate students (78 males and 220 females) were recruited from a selective ethnic Korean university, located in *Yanji*, the capital city of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, where more than 32% (736,991) Koreans resided (NBSC 2011). Participants were selected

based on the set criteria: (1) participants were China-born ethnic Koreans, (2) participants had attended China’s public education system (including both mainstream Chinese schools and schools with an overwhelming Korean student population) at least at senior secondary level prior to attending university, and (3) participants were first-year students enrolled on a degree course in the autumn of 2014, when the study commenced. The purpose was to ensure that the participants still held fresh memories of the university choice process. Table 1 lists the background information

Table 1 Demographic descriptive ($N = 298$)

Variable	% of valid N
Gender	
Male	26.2
Female	73.8
	<i>M (SD)</i>
Age (range = 18–23)	20.17(0.88)
Single-parent (<i>Danqin</i>) family	
Yes	23.3
No	76.7
Living with father	56.7
Living with other male guardian	4.4
Living with mother	64.1
Living with other female guardian	17.8
Living with other adult relative(s)	14.8
Living with non-adult relative(s)	8.1
Chinese language proficiency	
Excellent	33.2
Good	32.8
Average	20.5
Fair	11.1
Poor	3.4
Korean language proficiency	
Excellent	27.3
Good	31.0
Average	18.9
Fair	10.4
Poor	12.4
Mother’s education	
Less than university degree	65.8
University degree	26.1
Postgraduate degree	8.1
Father’s education	
Less than university degree	61.1
University degree	31.1
Postgraduate degree	7.8

of the participants. Their mean age was 20.17 (range = 18–23). All but three participants (who did not report relevant information) completed senior secondary education in China. Ten participants reported that they have stayed in other countries for 1 year or more, but all of them had senior secondary education in China and resided in China at the time of testing. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = excellent, 5 = poor), the difference in the average self-rated proficiency for Chinese and Korean languages (listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills) was statistically significant ($t(297) = 3.02, p < .01$), showing that the participants self-rated a higher proficiency in Chinese than Korean. None of them indicated difficulty in understanding the questionnaire given in Chinese. Furthermore, more than one-fifth (23.3%) of the participants lived in a single-parent (*Danqin*) household at the senior secondary stage. Around 38.9% of their fathers and 34.2% of their mothers received university education or above.

3.2 Instruments

The quantitative survey adopted multiple measures to test the three subscales: social capital, economic capital, and cultural capital. Some questions related to parental involvement in NELS were adapted to reflect the education system and culture in China. Additionally, the modifications have been made in accordance with both quantitative and qualitative feedback from pilot testing.

Social Capital Four dimensions were utilized to quantify social capital including (1) parent-student involvement, (2) parent-school involvement, (3) parent-parent involvement, and (4) disruptions to involvement (Perna and Titus 2005).

The parent-student involvement was measured by a single item about positive relationships between parents and the student and two sub-factors (parent-student discussions about education-related issues and parental monitoring of the student's behavior). The single item measured to what degree the student received emotional support from parents during the period of senior secondary school. The first sub-factor, namely, parent-student discussions, was measured by a composite of six variables that reflected the student-perceived frequency of discussions between the student and parents regarding (a) selecting courses in senior secondary school, (b) senior secondary school activities or events of particular interest to the student, (c) things the student had studied in class, (d) academic performance at senior secondary school, (e) plans and preparation for the university entrance examination, and (f) applying to universities after senior secondary school. The internal reliability of this sub-factor was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). A composite score for parent-student discussions was obtained by averaging the response for each question. The second sub-factor, parental monitoring, was measured by three questions of whether the family had rules about (a) maintaining a certain average grade, (b) finishing homework on time, and (c) attending school every day. A composite score for parental monitoring was obtained by counting the number of rules present in a student's family.

The four sub-factors for parent-school involvement included (1) the frequency of parents' participation in PTA and volunteering work, (2) the parents' knowledge about academic requirements, (3) the frequency of parents' interactions with school personnel about the student's academic issues, and (4) the frequency of parents' interactions with school about the student's behavioral problems in school. Concerning the first sub-factor, that is, the frequency of parents' participation in PTA and volunteering work, a single item was administered to evaluate student-perceived frequency of parents' involvement in PTA and volunteering work. Concerning the second sub-factor, parents' knowledge about academic requirements, three items were used to indicate whether parents know (a) which courses the student was taking, (b) how well the student was performing in school, and (c) how well the student was preparing for the university entrance exam. A composite score for parents' knowledge was obtained by counting the variables of academic requirements the parents knew through interaction with the school. Concerning the third sub-factor, frequency of parents' interactions with school about the student's academic issues, four items were administered to measure student-perceived frequency of parents' contact with school about (a) academic performance (e.g., grades), (b) course for this year, (c) plans after leaving senior secondary school, and (d) course selection for entry into university or college after leaving senior secondary school. The internal reliability of this sub-factor was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$). A composite score was obtained by averaging the response for each question. For the frequency of parents' interactions with school about the student's behavioral problems in school, two items were administered to measure (a) the student's attendance record at school and (b) behavior in school. The internal reliability of this sub-factor was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). A composite score was obtained by averaging the response for each question.

The indicator of intergenerational closure for parent-parent involvement was included and operationalized by the number of parents of the student's friends with whom parents maintained contact and talked about postsecondary plans and the number of student's friends who planned to attend a 4-year university or 2-year college.

For disruptions to parental involvement, an indicator of the family's geographic mobility was included and was operationalized by the number of times that the student's family had moved since his/her senior secondary education.

Cultural Capital Four items were used to measure cultural capital (Downey and Powell 1993; Jeynes 2003; Schmid 2001), consisting of (1) parents' educational level, (2) parental educational expectations on the participants, (3) frequency of communication in Chinese at home, and (4) parents' organization of the student's participation in university-bound cultural classes.

Economic Capital A three-item instrument developed by Paulsen and St. John (2002) was adopted to tap economic capital, including (1) family income, (2) perceived ability to pay "fixed" university costs (e.g., tuition fees), and (3) perceived ability to pay "controllable" costs (e.g., living expenses). Perceived ability to pay

“fixed” costs was measured by whether a student reported that university expenses and financial aid were very important to attend university. Perceived ability to pay “controllable” university costs was tapped by whether a student reported that living at home to attend university was very important.

Educational Aspirations A retrospective item was administered to students evaluating their desired educational attainment during senior secondary education. Responses were anchored on a three-point scale ranging from (1) less than university degree, (2) university degree, and (3) postgraduate degree.

Other Demographic Information Apart from the key constructs on social, economic, and cultural capital, demographic data were also recorded for reference. These included participants’ age, gender, family structure (e.g., whether the participant lived in a single-parent family or not), and Chinese and Korean language proficiency (see Table 1).

3.3 Procedures

In May 2015, the potential sample students were approached, and written informed consent was obtained from students who agreed to participate in this research. The participants were subsequently invited to complete a paper-and-pencil survey, containing questions evaluating parental involvement levels on different types of capital and educational aspirations and questions pertaining to their demographic characteristics and background information. In order to assure the data collection quality, the researchers were present to answer any queries concerning the survey questions. Participants were encouraged to complete all questions, but they could skip questions if they did not feel comfortable to answer. They were also allowed to consult their parents if there was any uncertainty about questions (e.g., family income). Eventually 298 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.4 Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted to evaluate whether the data obtained supported the abovementioned hypotheses. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used when assessing the relationship between categorical (e.g., educational aspirations) and continuous variables of capital (e.g., degree of emotional support from parents). Pearson’s correlation was used when assessing the relationship among continuous variables. A Chi-square test was used when assessing the relationship among categorical variables.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As Table 2 shows, the mean monthly family income among the participants was RMB 6416, slightly higher than the average family income in China (RMB 6087). Only 4.0% and 6.7% of Korean participants reported, respectively, that financial aid and university expenses were very important in university choice, and 8.4% reported that living at home was very important in decision-making. Cultural capital, as measured by parental educational expectations, showed that 88.8% of participants reported that their parents expected them to attain a university degree or above. In addition, 55.7% of the participants indicated that their parents always or often communicated with them in Chinese. This might have facilitated parents' assistance in the university application process. Nearly half of the participants (44.4%) reported that they had joined university-bound cultural classes that were encouraged and paid by their parents. The measures of economic and cultural capital, to some degree, reflect ethnic Koreans' conventional priority given to and investment in children's education (Lee 1986).

Parent-student involvement was first measured by the frequency of parents' emotional support. In Table 2, 25.1% and 42.7% of the participants reported that they always and often received emotional support from parents. The participants also reported that there was a moderate to high level of parent-student discussions about education-related topics ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.88$). On a five-point Likert scale of six items, the most frequently discussed topics were related to university application ($M = 3.59$) and plans and preparation for the university entrance examination ($M = 3.46$). In terms of parental monitoring, over 80% of the Korean parents were reported to have family rules about maintaining a certain average grade, doing homework, and attending school regularly.

For parent-school involvement, about one-third of student participants (34.4%) reported that their parents had participated in three or more school activities such as PTA and volunteering work. Around 85% or more participants revealed that their parents knew which courses they were taking, how well they were doing in school, and their progress for preparing university applications. In addition, there was a moderate level of parent-school communication about students' academic issues and behavioral problems in school. On a five-point Likert scale of four and two items, the average ratings for academic and behavioral issues were 2.91 and 2.89, respectively. The most frequently communicated topics referred to course selection for entry into university ($M = 2.99$) and plans after leaving senior secondary school ($M = 2.96$).

The result appears to unearth a relatively higher level of educational involvement at home, rather than at school, and echoes the sociocultural and economic context in which the contemporary ethnic Koreans live. On the one hand, the Korean parents universally inherited the knowledge-oriented values, embedded in the Korean

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the variables ($N = 298$)

	% of 141 N
	M (SD)
Family monthly income (range = 100–100,000)	6416 (9566)
Importance of university expenses to attend university	
Very important	6.7
Somewhat important	41.8
Not important	51.5
Importance of financial aid to attend university	
Very important	4.0
Somewhat important	38.4
Not important	57.6
Importance of living at home to attend university	
Very important	8.4
Somewhat important	24.2
Not important	67.4
Parents expect student to earn	
Less than university degree	11.2
University degree	49.0
Postgraduate degree	39.8
Frequency of communication in Chinese at home	
Always	30.0
Often	25.7
Sometimes	23.3
Rarely	14.9
Never	6.1
Participate in university-bound cultural classes	
Two or more	18.1
One	26.3
None	55.6
Emotional support received from parents	
Always	25.1
Often	42.7
Sometimes	21.7
Rarely	8.1
Never	2.4
	M (SD)
Discuss about education-related issues (from 1, <i>never</i> , to 5, <i>always</i>)	3.13 (0.88)
Monitor the student's behavior:	
<i>Maintaining a certain average grade</i>	
Yes	81.5
No	18.5
	% of valid N

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	% of 141 <i>N</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>
<i>Finishing homework on time</i>	
Yes	80.1
No	19.9
<i>Attending school everyday</i>	
Yes	90.6
No	9.4
Frequency of participation in PTA and volunteering work	
More than 4 times	17.2
3 or 4 times	17.2
Once or twice	42.4
None	23.2
Parent knows which courses student was taking	
Yes	89.8
No	10.2
Parent knows how well the student was performing in school	
Yes	87.5
No	12.5
Parent knows how well the student was preparing for university exam	
Yes	85.1
No	14.9
	<i>M (SD)</i>
Parent-initiated contact with the school about academic issues	2.91 (1.02)
Parent-initiated contact with the school about behavioral problems	2.89 (1.20)
Number of the student's friends' parents to whom parent talks	
Eleven–more	3.1
Six–ten	5.5
Three–five	27.6
One–two	30.7
None	33.1
Friends plan to attend 4-year university	
All of them	0.4
Most of them	3.7
Some of them	19.9
A few of them	48.1
None of them	27.9
Friends plan to attend 2-year college	
All of them	0.0
Most of them	3.0
Some of them	9.7

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	% of 141 <i>N</i>
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
A few of them	25.3
None of them	62.0
	% of valid <i>N</i>
Number of times family moved	
3 or more times	3.0
2 times	9.7
1 time	25.3
None	62.0
Educational aspiration	
Less than university degree	25.9
University degree	47.5
Postgraduate degree	26.6

culture for over 500 years and resulting in their deep respect for school authority. As revealed by the prior literature, Korean parents believe that their role is to listen, respect, and follow the professional judgment of educators (Kim and Greene 2003). On the other hand, 23.3% of the participants came from single-parent families. *T*-tests indicated that in single-parent families, parents interacted significantly less with the participants ($t(288) = 3.38, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.42$) and marginally less with the schools ($t(291) = 1.90, p = 0.058$, Cohen's $d = 0.28$). Specifically, 43.3% and 35.9% reported, respectively, that they did not live with their fathers and mothers during their senior secondary education. However, 66.9% of participants claimed that their parents talked with at least one of his/her friends' parents, who could be important sources of informational and emotional support. In addition, most of the participants (72.1%) reported that at least a few of their friends planned to attend 4-year university, in contrast to only 38.0% planning for 2-year college. Compared to more flexible channels in parent-student/parent-parent involvement, the findings concur with the arguments in prior studies, revealing the particularly negative effects of physical absence of parents upon the parent-school interaction (Gao 2010). Furthermore, 62.0% of the participants reported no geographic mobility during the senior secondary years so that social capital-embedded parental involvement was not disrupted.

The key outcome variable in this study – *educational aspirations* – revealed that 25.9% of the ethnic Korean participants reported educational aspirations of “less than university degree.” In comparison, 47.5% and 26.6% of them reported aspirations of attaining “university degree” and “postgraduate degree,” respectively, which reflected their parents' high expectations of children's education.

4.2 Social Capital and Educational Aspirations

Table 3 illustrates that several measures of social capital-embedded parental involvement are related to educational aspirations. ANOVA revealed that students' educational aspirations increased with the extent of emotional support they received from parents ($F(2,291) = 3.19, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.021$). Post hoc comparisons with Tukey correction noted that more emotional support was given to the student participants who aspired to attain the postgraduate degree than those with less than university aspiration ($p < 0.05$). Educational aspirations were also associated with the perceived frequency of parent-student discussions about education-related topics ($F(2,288) = 3.48, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.024$). The result illustrated that parents tended to discuss more frequently with students who held the postgraduate aspiration than with those who aspired for a university degree ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, parental participation in PTA and other volunteer works in school was positively related to educational aspirations ($F(2,293) = 3.66, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.024$). The statistically significant difference emerged between postgraduate and university degree aspirers ($p < 0.05$). Educational aspirations were also related to the frequency with

Table 3 Social capital and educational aspirations

	Less than university (N = 77)	University (N = 141)	Postgraduate (N = 79)
Emotional support	3.65 (0.89)	3.76 (0.99)	4.03 (1.03)
Parent-student discussions	3.12 (0.86)	3.01 (0.85)	3.34 (0.90)
Parental monitoring	2.56 (0.84)	2.43 (0.92)	2.65 (0.85)
Participation in PTA and volunteering	2.18 (0.95)	2.19 (0.91)	2.54 (1.19)
Knowledge about academic requirements	2.51 (0.98)	2.61 (0.77)	2.74 (0.77)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	2.97 (0.84)	2.75 (0.95)	3.10 (1.26)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	3.02 (0.99)	2.67 (1.15)	3.12 (1.41)
Contact with other parents ^a	0 = 30.3 1 to 2 = 27.6 3 to 5 = 30.3 6 to 10 = 5.3 11 or 20 = 6.5 20 or more = 0	0 = 35.7 1 to 2 = 33.6 3 to 5 = 22.9 6 to 10 = 5.0 11 or 20 = 2.1 20 or more = 0.7	0 = 30.4 1 to 2 = 27.8 3 to 5 = 32.9 6 to 10 = 5.1 11 or 20 = 1.3 20 or more = 2.5
Friends plan to study 4-year university	3.52 (0.90)	3.69 (0.80)	3.66 (0.94)
Friends plan to study 2-year college	2.11 (0.72)	1.97 (0.83)	1.99 (0.86)
Involvement disruptions	1.42 (0.70)	1.54 (0.80)	1.66 (0.86)

Note: ^aFrequency count (in percentage). Condition means are presented for other variables (SD in parentheses). One participant who did not report the level of desired educational attainment was excluded from this analysis

which parents initiated contact with school about academics ($F(2,292) = 3.20$, $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.022$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,293) = 4.36$, $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.029$). In both cases, post hoc comparisons with Tukey correction revealed that participants with postgraduate aspiration had parents who interacted more frequently with the school (both $ps < 0.05$) than participants with a university aspiration.

These findings should be interpreted with caution since statistically significant differences mainly emerge between aspirations for postgraduate and university degrees. According to the latest data reported by the People's Republic of China Ministry of Education in 2015, the overall gross university enrollment rate was 40%, whereas the net university enrollment rate for ethnic Koreans in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture reached 95%. The sample in this study manifests the fact that all the participants, at the time the study was undertaken, had successfully entered a 4-year university course. Hence, we argue that more nuanced analysis is needed in the value of capital associated with minority status as the increasing data show how Confucian heritage minorities are outperforming native populations in their host countries such as Australia, Canada, and the UK. Nevertheless, the study might be limited by omitted variables, particularly with regard to measures of selective and nonselective 4-year universities. Future research should add these variables for measuring Korean students' educational aspirations.

4.3 *Social Capital and Other Types of Capital*

In Table 4, Pearson's correlation coefficients revealed the significant correlation between family monthly income and the frequency of parent-school contact about academics. The finding demonstrated that parents with higher monthly income tended to initiate contact with the school more frequently ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the importance of perceived ability to pay fixed costs of university education was related to the degree of emotional support received from parents ($F(2,292) = 7.51$, $p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.049$). Post hoc analyses with Tukey correction suggested that participants who stressed that university expenses were very important in the choice process received less emotional support from parents than those who indicated that university expenses were somewhat important ($p < 0.05$) and those who considered them not important at all ($p < 0.01$). The difference between the latter two groups was not statistically significant. This result indicated that the degree of parents' emotional support was positively related to the availability of economic capital, as measured by parents' perceived ability to pay fixed costs of university education.

Apart from the effects of economic capital upon social capital, several measures of cultural capital were also related to social capital (Table 5). For instance, the frequency of parent-student communication in Chinese correlated significantly with parental monitoring and parents' participation in PTA and volunteering ($ps < 0.05$). The positive correlations suggested that the odds for parents to convey norms and

Table 4 Social capital and economic capital

	Income ^a	Fixed costs			Controllable costs		
		Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Very important	Important	Not important
Emotional support	0.09	3.15 (1.04)	3.70 (1.00)	3.97 (0.92)	3.75 (0.94)	3.67 (0.99)	3.85 (0.98)
Parent-student discussions	0.02	2.85 (0.71)	3.13 (0.84)	3.17 (0.92)	3.11 (0.89)	3.24 (0.74)	3.10 (0.92)
Parental monitoring	0.02	2.30 (0.98)	2.59 (0.84)	2.50 (0.90)	2.60 (1.00)	2.47 (0.86)	2.53 (0.87)
Participation in PTA and volunteering	-0.02	2.35 (1.14)	2.07 (0.82)	2.45 (1.09)	2.21 (1.06)	2.26 (1.02)	2.30 (1.00)
Knowledge about academic requirements	0.06	2.47 (0.84)	2.59 (0.84)	2.65 (0.83)	2.75 (0.61)	2.66 (0.77)	2.58 (0.87)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	0.13*	2.96 (0.89)	2.89 (0.97)	2.92 (1.08)	2.80 (1.12)	3.07 (1.00)	2.86 (1.02)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	0.10	3.03 (1.25)	2.81 (1.13)	2.94 (1.26)	2.74 (1.36)	3.00 (1.19)	2.87 (1.19)
Involvement disruptions	0.05	1.55 (0.76)	1.52 (0.75)	1.56 (0.83)	1.72 (0.94)	1.58 (0.81)	1.50 (0.77)

Note: ^aPearson’s correlation coefficients with log-transformed monthly family income (*: $p < .05$). Conditions means are presented for fixed and controllable costs (SD in parentheses)

standards and attend school activities increased with the frequency of communication in Chinese. Parental educational level was also related to social capital. That is, father’s educational level was positively related to the frequency of parent-student discussions ($F(2,285) = 4.14, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.028$), as well as the frequency of parent-school contact about academics ($F(2,288) = 5.67, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.038$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,289) = 5.71, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.038$). Similarly, mother’s educational level was positively related to the frequency of parent-student discussions ($F(2,286) = 8.08, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.053$), volunteering in PTA and school activities ($F(2,291) = 4.92, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.033$), and the frequency of parent-school contact about academics ($F(2,290) = 5.32, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.021$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,289) = 3.76, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.025$). Parents who had a higher expectation of students’ educational attainment offered more emotional support to students ($F(2,288) = 11.57, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.074$). Higher expectation in education was also associated with more frequent parent-student discussions about education-related issues ($F(2,285) = 8.83, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.058$) and a higher level of parent-school contact about both academic ($F(2,290) = 4.86, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.032$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,290) = 5.22, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.035$). Additionally, those parents who encouraged the student participants to go to university-bound cultural classes engaged in more frequent

Table 5 Social capital and cultural capital

	Frequency of communication in Chinese ^a	Father's educational level			Mother's educational level		
		Less university	University	Postgraduate	Less university	University	Postgraduate
Parent-student discussions	0.11	3.02 (0.89)	3.32 (0.90)	3.36 (0.47)	2.99 (0.88)	3.41 (0.89)	3.45 (0.56)
Parental monitoring	0.13*	2.52 (0.88)	2.50 (0.85)	2.70 (0.88)	2.47 (0.89)	2.60 (0.89)	2.63 (0.77)
Participation in PTA and volunteering	0.13*	2.18 (0.96)	2.46 (1.05)	2.44 (1.08)	2.17 (0.95)	2.59 (1.07)	2.25 (1.07)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	0.10 [^]	2.78 (1.04)	3.07 (0.97)	3.44 (0.96)	2.79 (1.02)	3.06 (1.00)	3.45 (1.04)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	0.06	2.74 (1.20)	3.07 (1.17)	3.52 (1.21)	2.78 (1.18)	3.01 (1.17)	3.46 (1.41)

	Parental educational expectations			Participation in university-bound cultural classes		
	Less university	University	Postgraduate	Yes	No	No
Emotional support	3.18 (1.01)	3.73 (0.97)	4.06 (0.92)	3.86 (1.00)	3.71 (0.97)	3.71 (0.97)
Parent-student discussions	2.72 (0.82)	3.05 (0.80)	3.37 (0.93)	3.28 (0.84)	2.89 (0.90)	2.89 (0.90)
Parental monitoring	2.70 (0.59)	2.39 (0.96)	2.63 (0.83)	2.68 (0.75)	2.25 (1.00)	2.25 (1.00)
Knowledge about academic requirements	2.59 (0.91)	2.55 (0.90)	2.70 (0.73)	2.69 (0.76)	2.49 (0.92)	2.49 (0.92)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	2.64 (0.77)	2.80 (0.92)	3.14 (1.18)	3.06 (1.04)	2.66 (0.965)	2.66 (0.965)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	2.58 (0.84)	2.74 (1.10)	3.16 (1.36)	3.02 (1.22)	2.66 (1.16)	2.66 (1.16)

Note: ^aPearson's correlation coefficients with frequency of communication in Chinese ([^]: $p < .1$; *; $p < .05$). Conditions means are presented for parents' education levels (SD in parentheses)

Note: Conditions means are presented (SD in parentheses)

discussions with the participants ($t(289) = 3.77, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.46$), set up more norms and standards ($t(294) = 4.18, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.50$), had a better understanding of participants' academic requirements ($t(289) = 2.08, p < 0.05$, Cohen's $d = 0.25$), and interacted more frequently with the school about academic ($t(293) = 3.23, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.39$) and behavioral issues ($t(294) = 2.54, p < 0.05$, Cohen's $d = 0.31$).

5 Conclusion

The findings from this study address the two research questions. First, this research supports Perna's (2000, 2006) model of parental involvement as a form of social capital that promotes university enrollment, as measured by students' educational aspirations. Several measures of social capital-embedded parental involvement were related to the development of university aspirations. The analyses concluded that social capital was positively associated with students' educational aspirations through parental interactions with the student and the school. That is to say, the general correspondence between social capital-embedded parental involvement and a student's educational aspiration might reflect not only the benefits of parent-student involvement at home but also the ways in which parents interacted with the school and school agents. The result revealed that families were typically perceived as a primary source of social capital for Korean students, especially in relation to their education (cf. Coleman 1988). When compared with parent-student involvement, there was a limited involvement at school and in the community in their importance. The study thus calls on school personnel and university outreach programs to plan positive and creative ways to strengthen parental initiation in parent-school and parent-parent partnerships, specifically to ensure success of the less advantaged students. Schools and tertiary institutions may also partner with Korean community organizations in running university-going workshops and activities.

Second, the findings confirm the value of economic and cultural capital in affecting the operation of social capital-embedded parental involvement, as manifested by the hypothesized intersecting relationship between social capital and other types of capital in this study. The result indicated that parent economic and cultural capital significantly affected social capital. The preliminary analyses provide significant contributions to the prevalence of the interacting patterns between social capital and other types of capital, warranting continued work. Follow-up research can extend the statistical findings to qualitatively explore the patterns of interaction among various types of capital. Additionally, future research may take actual university enrollment including enrollment in selective and nonselective 4-year degree programs relative to non-enrollment into account and examine how the Korean students lacking in one or more types of capital navigate the university choice process.

Although data analyses manifested a relatively high-quality involvement of Korean parents in children's education, this study found that with an increased number of Korean families falling into the category of *Danqin* and even *Wuqin*, Korean

parents might become increasingly weak in parent-student, parent-school, and parent-parent involvement. Therefore, efforts to develop university preparation programs are vested in addressing the continued mobility of Korean adults and their potential underrepresentation in the university choice process (Gao 2017).

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Addressing Social Justice and Cultural Identity in Pakistani Education: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Curriculum Policy



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Abstract Pakistan was set up as a relatively egalitarian and democratic state. However, the trend has been for successive governments to create a more theocratic/ Islamic, less inclusive, and less democratic state especially during the Zia regime. This led to the dominance of a relatively narrow and exclusionary conception of Pakistani national identity—based on the aspirations of the dominant Sunni Punjabi ethnic group. This increased the difficulties of the remaining ethnic and religious groups, whose cultural diversity was less clearly recognized either politically, socially, or educationally—and indeed there was a distinct prejudice practised against them. In the early twenty-first century, the Musharraf regime tried to make changes to this approach through policies based on enlightened moderation—a variant of liberal democracy. Against this background, this chapter presents the findings from a qualitative content analysis of some of the key education policy and secondary school curriculum documents produced during the Musharraf regime. The aim of this analysis was to understand how these policy documents addressed social justice and cultural diversity issues in Pakistan.

1 Introduction

The increased use of the term “social justice” in educational policy documents—spreading from developed countries to developing nations—reflects an aspiration that all students should have access to socially just learning opportunities. However, social justice can be an elusive educational construct, contested, and subject to

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numerous interpretations (Cochran-Smith 2010; North 2006). According to the United Nations (2014):

Social justice is about equality and fairness between human beings. It works on the universal principles that guide people in knowing what is right and what is wrong. This is also about keeping a balance between groups of people in a society or a community. Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations.

Yet efforts to put social justice front and centre in educational policy can be daunting. It implies a heightened and critical awareness of oppression, exclusion, and marginalization within the different contexts of nation states. And change initiatives may involve critique of long-standing systems and policies which have historically produced and reproduced inequality and aspects of social injustice (O'Donnell et al. 2004). Teachers' classroom practice takes its cues from the overarching purpose and mission statements provided by policy-makers. How much emphasis is given to "social justice" imperatives in Pakistan?

Since 1948 successive education policies in Pakistan have generally adopted a political agenda to Islamize the curricula—promoting exclusionary conceptions of Pakistani national identity. The Sunni Punjabi group, which makes up the largest group of Pakistani citizens, is the main proponent of Islamic nationalism. The efforts to build and maintain a monolithic national identity based on an abstract, simplified, and idealised model of Islam have had the effect of alienating non-Muslim minorities within Pakistan, such as Hindus and Christians (Dean 2005; Ali 2010). Analysing Pakistan Studies textbooks produced by the Punjab Textbooks Board in 1997, Zaidi (2011) noted that Pakistan Studies textbooks hardly ever included substantial and even-handed information about the history and culture of different indigenous groups such as the Sindhis or Pathans or Balochis, which to him was a reason for resentment of these groups within the Pakistani polity. Mainstream education in Pakistan arguably became "parochial, exclusionary, hate mongering, and devoid of imparting any values of universalism, humanism, tolerance, objectivity and critical learning" (Nayyar 2003, p. 84). This outcome is, of course, the very opposite of promoting social justice.

The Musharraf regime tried to make changes to this approach through policies based on enlightened moderation—"a variant of liberal democracy" (Ahmad 2004, p. 46). The Federal Ministry of Education significantly amended the language of the country's educational goals, for example, acknowledging diversity and adopting the aims and objectives of encouraging democratic and pluralistic ideals. It further announced that school curricula were being extensively reviewed, updated, and reformed in the light of Islamic principles, Pakistani ideology, religious and cultural diversity, and modern trends so that education could be helpful in the creation of "a just civil society that respects a diversity of views, beliefs and faiths" (Government of Pakistan 2009b, p. 23). Clearly, this shift in political emphasis would have significant potential implications for schools, textbook writers, teachers, and ultimately the students' learning experience. Simply willing social justice ends does not make something happen—especially when that something is complex.

It was not only political developments in Pakistan which impacted upon education policy-making and practices around social justice. Changes in the broader economic, sociocultural, and global strategic landscape further served to complicate educational policy-making. Islamic cultural nationalist orthodoxies were challenged from a variety of directions (Shaikh 2008). The Afghan Civil War and the United States “war on terror” involved Pakistan in geopolitical processes beyond its control (Bergen 2012); transnational business and commercial interests and globalization served to westernize significant portions of Pakistan’s economy; and western culture and values increasingly infused Pakistani society through the ubiquity of the internet and in turn effected political developments across domestic policy-making (Beyer 2007; Buzdar et al. 2016). Globalization brought opportunities for the development of human rights in Pakistan, but it also brought challenges. The accelerating economic and socio-cultural forces in turn served to create a backlash which pushed Islamic nationalism in parts of Pakistan in the direction of shariatization.

This chapter explores how Pakistani policy-makers set about creating curricula and structures which sought to encompass key aspects of educating for social justice and more nuanced understandings of ethnic and cultural diversity. It presents the findings from a qualitative content analysis of some of the key curriculum policy documents in Punjab, Pakistan, created during this period of change and political instability.

2 In Search of Social Justice Articulations: Context of Key Pakistani Policy Documents

The aim of examining curriculum policy documents was to develop an understanding of policy objectives and recommendations with respect to the teaching of Pakistani national identity, cultural diversity, and global perspectives. This aim was linked with a wider study’s overall aim to investigate the current policy-to-practice context for Pakistan Studies in secondary schools in Punjab (Muhammad 2015). Within this broader study, in-depth data, involving three sources of information, were collected to understand three policy contexts: the context of influence, the context of text production, and the context of practice (Bowe et al. 1992; Crawford 2000). Here the focus is upon the first of these contexts, the overarching context of influence. The notions of policy ensemble (Ball 2006) and intertextuality (Rizvi and Lingard 2010) were helpful in identifying these policy documents. A brief introduction to the analyzed policy documents is provided.

The *Objectives Resolution 1949* and the *Constitution of Pakistan 1973* were the two main documents analysed. The aim of examining these overarching constitutional documents was to explore the official policy discourse of Pakistan with respect to commitments to social justice and educating the ethnically and religiously diverse population of Pakistan. These documents were identified through their explicit highlighting in education policy texts. For example, the *National Educational*

Policy 2009 explicitly drew upon the foundational constitutional discourses. The *Objectives Resolution 1949* was a major resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, and it proclaimed that the future constitution of Pakistan would be modelled on the ideology and democratic faith of Islam rather than on a European pattern. It formed the preamble of the *Constitution of Pakistan 1973*—the third constitution of Pakistan (Government of Pakistan 1973). This chapter only analyzes the content of the constitutional articles which directly influenced the education of the ethnically and religiously diverse population of Pakistan.

The *National Education Policy 2009* document (Hereafter referred to as “the NEP 2009”) was developed by the Federal Ministry of Education after consultation with all relevant stakeholders: governments of all federating units of Pakistan, civil society members, educational institutions, academia, teachers, parents, and students (Government of Pakistan 2009b) (for details of this consultation process, see Government of Pakistan 2007). This process of consultation was initiated early in the Musharraf regime and documented in *Education in Pakistan—A White Paper, Document to Debate & Finalise the National Educational Policy* (hereafter referred to as “the White Paper 2007”) (Government of Pakistan 2007). However, a new democratic government—elected in 2008—officially released the NEP in November, 2009, with certain important amendments, most notably, the insertion of a chapter on Islamic Education. According to some critics, this development led to the undoing of reforms introduced by the Musharraf regime (e.g. Jamil 2009).

The *National Professional Standards for Teachers 2009* (hereafter referred to as “the NPST 2009”) were developed by the Federal Ministry of Education (Pakistan) for primary- and secondary-level beginning teachers (Government of Pakistan 2009a). This document was created by the Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan (STEP) project of the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The financial support for the STEP project and for the production of the NPST 2009 document was provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Thus, there were international influences affecting Pakistani articulations of educational policy in relation to social justice and cultural diversity.

The NPST 2009 asserted with blunt frankness that the quality of Pakistani teachers was abysmally low. To raise the quality of teachers, the NPST 2009 identified ten professional standards for teachers: subject matter knowledge; human growth and development; knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills; instructional planning and strategies; assessment; learning environment; effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies; collaboration and partnerships; continuous professional development and code of conduct; and teaching of English as second/foreign language. All of the professional standards influence the quality of teaching of Pakistan Studies in secondary schools in Punjab. However, this analysis specifically examined two standards in detail, that is, “knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills” and “instructional planning and strategies” because of this study’s specific focus on social justice and identity issues.

The National Curriculum for Pakistan Studies 2006 Grades IX–X (hereafter referred to as “the NCPS 2006”) (Government of Pakistan 2006) was introduced by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2006 in order to replace *the National Curriculum for Pakistan Studies 2002*, which had been criticized for its Islamic orientation, insensitivity to cultural and religious diversity within Pakistan, and limited attention to global identity themes (Nayyar and Salim 2003; Lall 2008, 2009). Conversely, the new NCPS 2006 identified the aim of the subject as “to enable [students] not only to understand the factors leading to the creation of their homeland, but also to appreciate various aspects of its ideology, history, culture, geography, politics, economy and strategic position in regional and international affairs” (p. 1). A qualitative content analysis of key messages within these policy documents is provided in the Findings section.

3 Methodological Steps in Pinpointing Social Justice Discourse

A seven-step analysis process commenced with precoding (see Fig. 1). This required careful and iterative reading of the curriculum policy texts, coupled with highlighting of significant passages (Saldaña 2009) in the curriculum policy documents. The

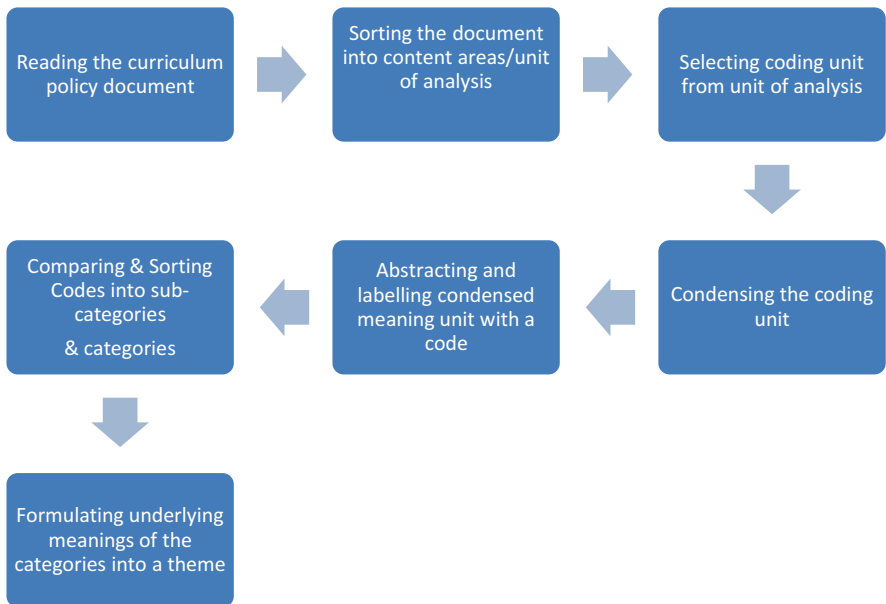


Fig. 1 The main processes of qualitative content analysis as applied in this study

aim of this activity was to examine the diversity of ideas and oppositional perspectives with respect to the focus of the study.

Precoding was followed by a chunking of the data. Each curriculum policy document was broken down into smaller “chunks” or content areas—so that parts of curriculum text dealing with a specific issue were separated. The research in this case focused upon policy articulations related to social justice and internal ethnic and religious diversity.

Having sorted the policy text into content areas, the next step was to code text within each area. The process of data-driven coding involved “the grouping and labelling of data in the process of making it more manageable both for display and to provide answers to the research question/s” (Grbich 2012, p. 259). In this study, each coding unit—“the constellation of words or statements that relate to the same central meaning” (Graneheim and Lundman 2004, p. 106) was the specific “phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means” (Saldaña 2009, p. 139).

In the process of coding, four main strategies—progressive summarising, comparing, contrasting, and subsumption—were helpful in creating subcategories. First, successive summarizing comprised of “paraphrasing relevant passages, deleting from these passages anything that appears superfluous, and summarising similar paraphrases which are then turned into...subcategories” (Schreier 2014, p. 176). Comparing and contrasting were useful in creating subcategories from data originating from different sources. The analysis of the material continued until the point of saturation (Charmaz 2006)—that is, until no additional new concepts were found. Finally, the latent content, that is, the underlying meaning, was formulated into themes (Graneheim and Lundman 2004).

4 Findings

This section provides the findings of the qualitative content analysis of the education/curriculum policy documents. The findings are arranged according to the thematic content areas: cultural diversity, national identity, and global perspectives. There is also a focus upon recommended instructional strategies.

5 Cultural Diversity

Successive Pakistani textbooks have failed to educate students meaningfully about the religious and ethnic diversity of Pakistan (Saigol 2005; Nayyar and Salim 2003). The descriptions of provincial cultures were mainly confined to language and did not extend to their history and contemporary beliefs. Moreover, textbooks represented Muslims simplistically as theologically and geographically homogeneous. The textbooks nowhere highlighted sectarian differences between Sunni and Shia

Muslims (Ali 2008). And other religious denominations such as Christians, Jews, and Sikhs were “othered” through exclusion. How did the NEP and other official policy documents respond to these cultural diversity challenges?

There were two key analytic themes evident in this area. First, it was evident from the policy documents that there was a positive acknowledgment of cultural diversity in Pakistan. Second, the policy documents adopted objectives and recommendations which sought to positively address the problem of educating multi-ethnic and multireligious Pakistan.

The National Education Policy 2009 acknowledged “unresolved” debates as to “how to accommodate non-Muslim minorities” (Government of Pakistan 2009b, pp. 5–6). It did not perceive Pakistan as being mono-ethnic or homogeneous in its religious make-up: There was a realization that Pakistani identity is not shaped by a singular, dominant culture but rather is constituted by “a multitude of cultures and topographies” (p. 10). The NEP 2009 was also aware of the reality on the ground that Pakistani society accommodated a “diversity of views, beliefs, and faiths” (p. 23) and there existed a “continuing debate on how and what religious and moral values were to be taught through the educational system and how to accommodate non-Muslim minorities” (p. 9). The NEP 2009 further identified that “the curriculum [did] not cater to...the variations within the geographical breadth of the country” and this diversity had not been “adequately recognized and assimilated by the education system” (Government of Pakistan 2009b, pp. 5–6).

Having identified the problem, the NEP 2009 aimed “to promote national cohesion by respecting all faiths and religions and recognizing cultural and ethnic diversity” (p. 10). Regarding religious minorities in Pakistan, the NEP 2009 aimed “to provide minorities with adequate facilities for their cultural and religious development, enabling them to participate effectively in the overall national effort” (p. 11). The NEP 2009 also recommended the incorporation of human rights education into the curriculum (p. 36).

There had been no explicit incorporation of human rights issues in the previous curriculum (Ahmad 2003). Similarly, the NEP 2009 also recommended the inclusion of themes such as gender equality, peace education, and interfaith harmony. Overall there appeared to be an unqualified embrace of some significant social justice imperatives. The human rights emphasis represented a significant potential source of transformation.

However, the policy-makers’ recommendations were wary about a religious backlash: “Curricula and awareness and training materials shall be developed for students and teachers in this context, keeping in view cultural values and sensitivities” (Government of Pakistan 2009b, pp. 5–6). These concerns were not insignificant keeping in view the curriculum controversies and the recent history of violent clashes among different cultural communities in Pakistan (Stöber 2007).

The NPST 2009 sets benchmarks for the quality of teaching with respect to the cultural diversity of Pakistan within an Islamic framework. For example, “Standard 3: Knowledge of Islamic Ethical Values/Social Life Skills” specified that teachers should know and understand “the Islamic code of conduct (beliefs, prayers and ethics) in light of the Quran and Sunnah (i.e. Maarooif (Good) and Munkir (Evil),

equality, justice, brotherhood, balance, tolerance and peace)” (p. 11). The NPST 2009 also mentioned knowledge and understanding of “globally accepted values” as benchmarks for the quality of teaching in Pakistani classrooms, but it failed to elaborate these values explicitly. Using the Islamic framework, teachers were asked to value and commit to “respect for individual and cultural/religious differences, and appreciation of the basic worth of each individual and cultural/religious group, to ‘tolerance and celebration of diversity’ and to ‘dialogue as a means to conflict resolution’” (p. 12). The NPST 2009 recommended that teachers should engage in activities—such as the creation of learning communities, the practice of an Islamic code of conduct and Islamic teachings, and the use of Islamic knowledge to deal with issues of human rights—so that benchmarks for the quality of teaching relating to cultural diversity in Pakistan could be met within the Islamic framework.

The NCPS 2006 had one clearly articulated objective that acknowledged the cultural diversity of Pakistan. This objective specified that Pakistan Studies would “inculcate awareness about the multi-cultural heritage of Pakistan so as to enable the students to better appreciate and get used to the idea of unity in diversity” (p. 1). The content and learning outcomes for this objective were also recommended (see Table 1).

The content recommended for this chapter was a deviation from the previous curriculum. For example, the content item—“role of minorities in Pakistan” and the learning outcome associated with this content, “trace the role of minorities in Pakistan with specific reference to Quaid-i-Azam’s speech of 11 August 1947, defining their status” (p. 13)—had not traditionally been part of Pakistan Studies curricula since the Zia era. Moreover, the invitation to explore the major social

Table 1 Pakistan Studies curriculum’s recommended contents and learning outcomes regarding cultural diversity

Contents	Learning outcomes
1. Population	Students will be able to:
Growth and distribution	Discuss the growth and distribution of population in Pakistan
Rural-urban composition	Analyse the rural-urban composition of population and the geographical distribution
Gender composition	Discuss the gender composition of population in Pakistan
Education and literacy	Explain the basic features of Pakistani society and the major social problems faced by it
2. Pakistan Society and Culture	Discuss the educational and health conditions in Pakistan
National	Identify the major features of Pakistan’s culture and commonality in regional cultures leading to National Integration and cohesion
Regional	Trace the origin and evolution of national and regional languages
Arts, dresses, festivals, heritage, crops, and folklore	Trace the role of minorities in Pakistan with specific reference to Quaid-i-Azam’s speech of 11 August 1947, defining their status
3. Pakistan Languages	
National	
Regional	
4. Role of minorities in Pakistan	

Source: National Curriculum for Pakistan Studies IX–X (2006, p. 13)

problems faced by Pakistani society signposted opportunities to explore contested contemporary issues—again a potential departure from long-established practice.

6 National Identity

The policy documents with respect to articulations of Pakistani national identity represented more of a statement of continuity than change. The NEP 2009 aimed explicitly to cultivate Pakistani national identity although also referenced the inculcation of democratic and moral values, human rights, and a sense of personal responsibility and participation in students. It aimed “to create a sense of unity and nationhood and promote the desire to create a welfare state for the people of Pakistan” (p. 10). Moreover, it aimed “to revive the the education system “to cater to the social, political and spiritual needs of individuals and society” (p. 10). However, the message of enlightened moderation articulated in the White Paper of 2007 seemed to have been watered down. In the White Paper, there had been a clear indication of the Musharraf government’s distancing itself from what it depicted as dogmatic ideologies. For example, the White Paper stressed that:

Islam is not and cannot continue to be treated as a static religious dogma, thriving on ignorance and nostalgia. We cannot conveniently detach ourselves from the fundamentals of the religion and depend mainly on politically and ethnically driven interpretations, made well after the life of the Holy Prophet (May peace be upon him). We tend to ignore the fundamentals of Islam as enshrined in the Quran and *Sunnah* without the burden of later interpretations driven essentially by tribal, ethnic, and political considerations. (pp. 3–4)

However, the NEP 2009 took a position on this issue based on more traditional majoritarianism by articulating that “the cultural values of the majority of Pakistanis are derived from Islam” (p. 3). The NEP 2009 argued that “since an education system reflects and strengthens social, cultural and moral values, therefore, Pakistan’s educational interventions need to be based on the core values of religion and faith” (p. 3). There was no distinction made between enlightened and dogmatic interpretations of Islam. There was also no mention of a plurality of Islamic interpretations existing in Pakistan.

The NEP 2009 justified adoption of Islamic values on the basis of the *Constitution of Pakistan 1973*, which emphasised “the need for developing Pakistani children as proud Pakistani citizens having strong faith in religion and religious teachings as well as the cultural values and traditions of the Pakistani society” (p. 3). The NEP 2009 asserted that “all policy interventions shall fall within the parameters identified in the Principles of Policy as laid down in Articles 29, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37 and 40 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan” (p. 3). Nevertheless, the NEP 2009 did not include the text of these articles. Therefore, the *Constitution of Pakistan 1973* was consulted to examine the constitutional articles.

Table 2 provides a description of these articles with regard to education policy in Pakistan. However, Articles 29–30 are not reproduced here, as they were mainly concerned with the naming of the principles and responsibility of each organ and

Table 2 Constitutional justification provided by the National Education Policy 2009 for the adoption of Islamic values

Article no.	Article's description
31	<i>Islamic way of life</i> (1) Steps shall be taken to enable the Muslims of Pakistan, individually and collectively, to order their lives in accordance with the fundamental principles and basic concepts of Islam, and to provide facilities whereby they may be enabled to understand the meaning of life according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah, etc.
33	<i>Parochial and other similar prejudices to be discouraged</i> The State shall discourage parochial, racial, tribal, sectarian, and provincial prejudices among the citizens
36	<i>Protection of minorities</i> The State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the federal and provincial services
37	<i>Promotion of social justice and eradication of social evils</i> The state shall: (a) Promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of backward classes or areas; (b) Remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period, etc.
40	<i>Strengthening bonds with Muslim world and promoting international peace</i> The State shall endeavor to preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic unity; support the common interests of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; promote international peace and security; foster goodwill and friendly relations among all nations; and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means

Source: Constitution of Pakistan (1973, pp. 17–20)

authority of the State to act in accordance with these principles. Similarly, other clauses are also not reproduced here, as they were focused upon issues not relevant to this study.

It is evident from the constitutional articles cited here that Pakistan's constitution explicitly acknowledged the role of Islam in the life of Pakistani society. In addition, it rejected any kind of prejudice among its citizens and sought to safeguard the rights of minorities in Pakistan. It also foregrounded the strengthening of strong ties with the Muslim world and the fostering of friendly relations among all nations.

The NEP 2009 revisited the adoption of Islamic values in Chapter 4 dealing with Islamic Education and reiterated that "the ideology of Islam forms the genesis of the State of Islamic Republic of Pakistan". (p. 23). Its fundamental principles were defined in the *Objectives Resolution of 1949* as follows:

Whereas sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to Almighty Allah alone and the authority to be exercised by the people of Pakistan within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust; And whereas it is the will of the people of Pakistan to establish an order; Wherein the State shall exercise its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people; Wherein the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam, shall be fully observed. (p. 1)

This referencing to the *Constitution of Pakistan 1973* and the *Objectives Resolution of 1949* serves to privilege the notion of Islamic values as homogeneous, shared, uncontested, and non-negotiable, underlining that this is what is needed for developing Pakistani children. Interestingly, the NEP 2009 did not mention Article 22 of the constitution that delineated the rights of non-Muslim minorities with regard to religious instruction in educational institutions. Article 22 clearly stipulates that “no person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own” (Government of Pakistan 1973). Therefore, the teaching of Islamic content to non-Muslim students would be considered as a violation of the constitutional rights of the minorities.

The NEP 2009 identified more Islamic teachings as a solution to minimize increasing intolerance and violence in Pakistani society.

The insertion of a whole chapter on Islamic Education in the NEP 2009 and the broader articulated aim to transform society through placing Islamic humane values at the heart of the curriculum (“Pakistan’s educational interventions need to be based on the core values of religion and faith” (p. 3)) clearly gave the NEP 2009 a strong Islamic orientation.

There was an attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of Islamic ideology and modernity in the NEP 2009. Inspired by the discourse of enlightened moderation, the White Paper 2007 considered moderate Islam as compatible with modernity. Therefore, it endeavoured “to frame school policies and curriculum ‘through a sensible education system’, with more secular schooling and religious education being regarded more as the responsibility of the family” (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, pp. 111–112). Nevertheless, it made the NEP 2009 an awkward intellectual compromise. The Ministry of Education’s vision reflected the Janus-faced nature of Pakistani curricular policy-making:

Our education system must provide quality education to our children and youth to enable them to realize their individual potential and contribute to development of society and nation, creating a sense of Pakistani nationhood, the concepts of tolerance, social justice, democracy, their regional and local culture and history based on the basic ideology enunciated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (p. 10)

The challenges of synthesising Islamic values and more contemporary social-justice-centred discourses were also mirrored in this passage by the challenges of looking outwards and to the West for educationally progressive ideas and ideals whilst at the same time respecting traditional, constitutionally validated, and distinctively Pakistani educational imperatives.

The themes identified in the NEP 2009 were also evident in other policy documents. For example, the NCPS 2006 identified ten objectives for the Pakistan Studies curriculum (see Table 3).

Grouping these Pakistan Studies curriculum objectives into national identity, cultural diversity, and global identity themes suggested that the envisaged NCPS 2006 had a strong national orientation. With the exception of objective six, which

Table 3 Objectives of Pakistan Studies IX–X stated in curriculum 2006

No.	Objectives of Pakistan Studies
1.	Inculcate a sense of gratitude to Almighty Allah for blessing us with an independent and sovereign state
2.	Underscore the importance of national integration, cohesion, and patriotism
3.	Encourage traits of observation, creativity, analysis, and reflection in students
4.	Promote an understanding of the ideology of Pakistan, the Muslim struggle for independence, and endeavours for establishing a modern welfare Islamic state
5.	Acquaint the students with various phases of Pakistan's historical, political, and constitutional developments
6.	Inculcate awareness about the multi-cultural heritage of Pakistan so as to enable the students to better appreciate the socio-cultural diversity of Pakistani society and get used to the idea of unity in diversity in our national context
7.	Enhance understanding of the physical features and human resources of Pakistan
8.	Impart awareness about various aspects of socio-economic activities at national level and the role played by Pakistanis in the development of their society
9.	Highlight Pakistan's strategic position in international politics, especially its relations with neighboring and Muslim countries
10.	Lay emphasis on the rights and obligations of the citizens of an independent and sovereign state

Source: National Curriculum for Pakistan Studies IX–X (2006, p. 1)

nodded respectfully in the direction of appreciating Pakistan's cultural diversity, and objective nine, which was related to global awareness, all other objectives dealt with the various aspects of Pakistani national identity. Moreover, recommended content and learning outcomes flowing from these NCPS 2006 objectives also had a strong national orientation.

The NCPS 2006 divided the recommended contents and learning outcomes into eight chapters (see Table 4):

Again with the exception of Chap. 8, which entails some focus upon cultural diversity, and Chap. 6, which is related to global identity, all other chapters dealt with the various aspects of (relatively narrowly defined) Pakistani national identity (three history chapters, one geography, one economics, and one chapter dealing with the ideological basis of Pakistan—or more appropriately with Islamic ideology). The predominant theme of the suggested content and learning outcomes of the Chap. 1 of the NCPS 2006 was Islamic ideology. The issue of Islam is dealt with in the NCPS 2006 explicitly as policy-makers asserted the centrality of Islam to Pakistani national identity (Table 5).

Some content elements recommended for Chap. 1 were different from the previous curriculum. For example, the “two-nation theory”, which had been traditionally elaborated with anti-Indian/anti-Hindu discourses, now would be explained “with specific reference to economic and social deprivation of Muslims in India” (p. 2).

The themes identified in the NEP 2009 were also evident in the NPST 2009—especially in Standard 3 for the quality of teaching, which stipulated that the teachers should “understand the Islamic ethical values and practices in the light of Quran/Sunna and other religious contexts, and the implications of these values for bringing

Table 4 National Curriculum Pakistan Studies 2006 recommended division of chapters and chapter titles

Chapter no.	Chapter title
Chapter 1:	Ideological Basis of Pakistan
Chapter 2:	Making of Pakistan
Chapter 3:	Land & Environment
Chapter 4:	History of Pakistan-I
Chapter 5:	History of Pakistan-II
Chapter 6:	Pakistan in World Affairs
Chapter 7:	Economic Developments
Chapter 8:	Population, Society & Culture of Pakistan

Source: National Curriculum for Pakistan Studies IX–X (2006, p. 1)

Table 5 Recommended contents and learning outcomes for Chap. 1

Contents	Learning outcomes
1. Definition, sources, and significance of ideology 2. Basis of Pakistan ideology with particular reference to the basic values of Islam and economic deprivation of Muslims in India 3. Two-nation theory: Origin and explication 4. Pakistan ideology: Allama Iqbal's and Quaid-i-Azam's pronouncements	Students will be able to: Define the term ideology Identify the major sources of Pakistan ideology Explain the ideology of Pakistan with reference to the basic values of Islam and socio-cultural milieu of Muslim India Trace the origins and evolution of two-nation theory, with specific reference to economic and social deprivation of Muslims in India Identify the concepts relating to Pakistan ideology in the pronouncements of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-i-Azam

Source: National Curriculum for Pakistan Studies IX–X (2006, p. 2)

national and global peace, unity, and social adjustment” (p. 11). As the curriculum documents did not make a distinction between the required content to be taught to Muslim and non-Muslim students, the NPST 2009 assumed that the all teachers were Muslims and they were assumed to have good knowledge of Islamic “beliefs, prayers, and ethics” (p. 12).

7 Global Perspectives

A concern for social justice and human rights has been at the heart of articulations of the purposes of global citizenship education in developed western nations, including the impact of global inequality and individuals' responsibility to respect the rights of others. For example, Oxfam (2006) in outlining its curriculum for the promotion of values and attitudes in relation to global citizenship, articulated a “commitment to social justice and equity” and a desire in work with 14–16-year-olds to

promote a “willingness to get involved in activities promoting social justice and equity locally, nationally, and globally” (p. 20). How would Pakistani policy-makers respond to global education imperatives?

The NEP 2009 identified as one of the reasons for its promulgation of global education “the challenges triggered by globalization and the nation’s quest to become a knowledge society” (p. 1). The policy explicitly acknowledged that “globalization” has made little impact upon the education system (“a desired response has been missing” p. 1). The policy document referenced the omission of media and culture. The NEP 2009 identified the unprecedented acceleration of globalization in recent years and the opportunities and challenges created by this. The policy also identified the need for respecting cultural “values without regressing into unnecessary anachronisms and parochial insularity” (p. 12).

Consequently, the NEP 2009 aimed “to develop a self-reliant individual, capable of analytical and original thinking, a responsible member of society and a global citizen” (p. 11). This objective of education undoubtedly resonated with global citizenship education language. However, Pasha (2014, p. 2) has argued that “there is no explanation of who a global citizen is, what their roles and responsibilities are and neither does it outline how the development of global citizens will be achieved” (p. 2). Moreover, the recommended policy actions to deal with increasing globalization were ambiguous. For example, the NEP 2009 recommended: “Educational inputs need to be designed with a comprehension of the challenges and opportunities related to globalization. Strategies shall be developed to optimize opportunities and minimize the potentially negative impacts” (p. 13). The NEP 2009 recommendations regarding these “challenges and opportunities” and “negative impacts” were limited to the confines of economic advantage, the global economy, and international competitiveness, and there was no requirement for a broader understanding of global issues and responsibilities informed by social justice ideals.

The NPST 2009 set benchmarks for the quality of teaching related to global perspectives. The policy stipulated that teachers should be dedicated to the “acquisition of current and recent content knowledge of subjects they teach; use of broad knowledge of instructional tools, strategies and pedagogical skills; ethical monitoring and assessing of student learning outcomes; and cultivating in students ethical scholarly dispositions” (p. 1). Nevertheless, these policy imperatives were articulated alongside aspirations “to compete successfully in the global knowledge economy and convert the raw talents of its people into productive asset” (p. 1) rather than the aim to develop the students’ broader understanding of the world.

The NCPS 2006 adopted only one objective with respect to the cultivation of identity beyond national borders: “highlight Pakistan’s strategic position in international politics, especially its relations with neighbouring and Muslim countries” (p. 1). And the NCPS 2006 barely nodded in the direction of “developing skills and higher order thinking”. Unless and until skills or values and attitudes were explicitly identified as an integral part of global citizenship education, there was little reason for Pakistan Studies teachers to take them seriously.

8 Instructional Strategies

How teachers address social justice and equity issues can be as important as what is studied. Exploration of these issues requires open, exploratory classrooms where there is capacity for participation and the practice of active citizenship. With regard to teaching in the secondary school system, there were two key themes evident in the education/curriculum policy documents. First, there was an agreement among the policy-makers that the dominant pedagogies in Pakistan were content-driven and textbook-centred. Second, the suggested teaching strategies to improve teaching quality were liberal and progressive as encouraged in developed nations.

The NEP 2009 identified the problem of the prevalence of “the practice of rote learning which stops the mental growth of the child and blocks innovative learning” (p. 38). The NEP 2009 acknowledged that in Pakistan, “textbook development appear[ed] to be the only activity flowing from the curriculum” (p. 38). Moreover, the NEP 2009 identified the problem of teachers not using the curriculum in their classrooms, “being solely focused on the single textbook assigned to them. Consequently even assessments are based on this textbook and not the curriculum” (p. 38). The NEP 2009 stated that all these contribute to the “practice of rote learning” which has “sinister outcomes”. The NEP 2009 noted that all these elements had been hampering the development of quality education in Pakistan. It proposed a number of policy actions to ameliorate this situation including curriculum development:

Curriculum development shall be objectives driven and outcome based. It shall focus on learning outcomes rather than content. It shall closely reflect important social issues; provide more room for developing the capacity for self-directed learning, the spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. (p. 36)

And the NEP 2009 recommended other actions including reforms to teaching and assessment practices so as to cultivate analytical thinking and critical reflection in students, competitive publishing of textbooks, and periodic reviews of the assessment system. These were potentially significant shifts in the educational landscape and culture in Pakistan. Traditionally, public examinations and assessment in Pakistan have relied overwhelmingly on the assessment of knowledge recalled from officially prescribed textbooks, thus testing only the low-order recall skills of students. The NEP 2009 also recommended: “strengthening the power of reasoning; stimulating active participation; practicing social skills; the promotion of discussion, co-operative learning, inquiry-based learning, field trips, and creative forms of communication” (p. 12).

The NCPS 2006 had similarly underlined the importance of active instructional strategies and allocated a section on recommended pedagogy for Pakistan Studies. The NCPS 2006 advised teachers to shun “the spoon-feeding style of traditional classroom teaching” and to embrace discussion, cooperative learning, and inquiry/investigation (p. 14). It espoused the importance of adopting teaching strategies in terms of their helpfulness in “intellectually engag[ing] the students of varying

degrees of interests, abilities and styles of learning, strengthen[ing] their power of reasoning and stimulat[ing] their active participation through different activities and exercises” (p. 14). However, the NEP 2009 references to the importance of the spirit of enquiry, self-directed learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork had been absent from NCPS 2006 learning outcomes.

The emphasis on progressive instructional strategies in these policy documents was encouraging to contemplate, but their realization in the form of their implementation by the teachers in classrooms was not as easy. The suggested learning outcomes of the Pakistan Studies curriculum and the associated assessment framework tended to work contrary to it.

9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of policy objectives and recommendations regarding the teaching of Pakistani cultural diversity, national identity, and global identity themes both generally and within the Pakistan Studies curriculum. The findings are mixed in relation to overall messages about social justice. Regarding cultural diversity there were some significant steps forward. In Pakistan the initial policy emphasis has been upon recognitive cultural justice—the need to recognize and respect regional and minority ethnic cultures and reflect upon multiple identities (Mills and Gale 2001). It was evident from the policy documents that there was a positive acknowledgment of diversity and that there were some clear recommendations regarding the education of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Pakistani citizenry. There was no explicit or implicit evidence of the othering of Pakistan’s religious minorities—Christians, Sikhs, and Hindus—in the 2006–2009 policy texts. Regarding global identity, there was also evidence of an ambition to prepare students for global citizenship—although ideas were not elaborated and remained somewhat vague. There was also a rhetorical commitment to a range of more active instructional strategies on the part of teachers.

On the other hand, it was evident from the context of influence curriculum policy data that overarching policy documents were centrally concerned with the cultivation and promotion of Pakistani national identity. Islamist and nation-statist visions of Pakistani national identity had been dominant and potent in Pakistan for several decades, and the Pakistan Studies curriculum was employed to promote these visions in order to advance a theocratic agenda. This study’s analysis of the new curriculum policies of 2006–2009 tended to confirm the deeply embedded notion of these traditional Islamic discourses. The political messages of the Musharraf era enlightened interpretations of Islam, and shunning of dogmatic Islam struggled to secure policy purchase. It has been suggested by some commentators that the forces of conservatism are too deeply entrenched to shift policy. Behuria and Shehzad (2013) claim that the Musharraf era curriculum reform was unsuccessful in developing an objective and rational approach to history “because the decades-long hate

campaign has created a mindset so immune to reason that it is almost impossible to redeem the process of history writing in Pakistan” (p. 362).

Events and political and educational policy developments since 2009 have highlighted some of the complexities of policy implementation and the tough context of Pakistani education policies operating in a geopolitical environment where the Taliban and other terrorist groups are active (Shirazi et al. 2014). Recently, the Punjab government has introduced “Supplementary Reading Material” in all public schools of Punjab. This material deals with “the menace of extremism, intolerance, sectarianism and the promotion of tolerance, peaceful co-existence, inter-faith harmony etc.” (Government of Punjab 2015 p. 1). The policy situation was complicated by legislated decentralization of the Pakistani education system in 2010 and by the associated alleged Islamization of textbooks in the Punjab region. As national politics moved back to the right after 2009 and as education was delegated to more conservative provincial centres of government, any green shoots of liberal-democratic reform existed in a less auspicious policy ecosystem. The ideological bent of the ruling Pakistan Muslim league-Nawaz Group in Punjab was represented as wanting to “push back the moderate pluralist agenda in education” (Jamil 2009, p. 11). There were newspaper reports alleging Islamization of textbooks introduced in 2012 by the Punjab textbook board, Lahore.

Education policy documents contain divergent meanings, contradictions, and structured omissions. Trowler (2003) drew attention to a muddling through process as education policy works its way through contestation and compromise at each level of interpretation and implementation. There are a variety of moving parts within educational policy in Pakistan. The National Educational Census of 2005/2006 indicated that there were 227,791 educational institutions providing diverse learning opportunities for 33.4 million students. There were 1.356 million teachers from pre-primary to university stages of education and 270 teacher education institutions (Government of Pakistan 2009c). Provincial interpretation of central government imperatives, textbook interpretation of curriculum injunctions, teacher education responses to a changing educational landscape, the assessment structures of provincial boards of education, and school- and classroom-level operational decisions and choices made by principals and individual teachers all provide policy filters. Information is reworked and re-interpreted as it works through the system and professional in-service development for Pakistani teachers is underdeveloped. The “context of influence” in Pakistani education policy was shifting in the period under discussion but the contexts of text production and of school-based practice in many Pakistani jurisdictions and educational settings were to remain stubbornly resistant to change.

There remains a need for a Pakistan Studies curriculum that is faithful to, and respectful of, distinctive Islamic Pakistani history and heritage yet accommodative of some of the educationally valuable approaches that come with an acceptance of facets of liberal-democratic pedagogy such as multiple perspectives, criticality, and debate and a central positioning of social justice learning imperatives.

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Power Relations and Education of the Korean Minority in the Japanese Karafuto and Soviet/Russian Sakhalin



Jae Park and Irina Balitskaya

Abstract This chapter is on the Korean diaspora community in the Japanese Karafuto and Soviet-Russian Sakhalin Island. Using historiography, it examines the vicissitudes of Korean ethnic minority people who were mostly from the Southern part of the Joseon kingdom. They were forced to stay in the Karafuto/Sakhalin Island, first as conscripts and then cheap labor for mining and fishery. They were subjects of two imperial powers but without a passport, hence, making their repatriation impossible. Under strict and pragmatic ethnic language policies, they suffered periodic ban or closure of “Korean schools” and manipulation of the education curriculum. Thus, it is argued, the Koreans became victims of two imperial systems of difference (ruler-ruled) and exploitation without being allowed to return to their motherland during the Japanese colonial rule of Korea (1910–1945), as well as after the handover of the Southern territory to the Soviet Union as a result of Japanese defeat in the World War II and continued all the way to 1986 when they were allowed to be repatriated under the political slogans of Perestroika and Glasnost (reformation and openness) that the Soviet Union was preoccupied with.

1 Introduction

Education, ethnicity, and equity never remain generationally static. It is widely known that communities in diaspora are subject to the greatest intergenerational variations in their schooling, level of instruction, perceived self-identity, and ability to join the mainstream in terms of social network and mobility. It has been argued that under a strong acculturation process (Berry 2003), for example, diasporic

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communities' mobility, attitude toward learning, and cultural identity can undergo significant subordination under the ruling power structure.

This chapter draws on the literature, statistical information, and archival documents on the Korean diaspora in the Japanese Karafuto and Soviet-Russian Sakhalin Island and their education. "Times" or historical perspective is chosen as the unit of comparative analysis (Sweeting 2014). Among the prevailing forms of histories of education expounded by Sweeting, this chapter uses the "Social Histories," which is perhaps one of the most fruitful perspectives for education researchers to "illuminate cultural and other contextual matters and especially in the planning and processing of their research" (Sweeting 2014, pp. 174–175). Historiography is a methodology of its own standing, and the main theoretical framework of this chapter will be the analysis of power relation suggested by Michel Foucault (1983).

2 Background of the Korean Minority in Sakhalin

Today, there are two ethnic Russian Korean communities with significant differences in geopolitical background, culture, and assimilation/integration processes that set them apart. About 90% of Russian Koreans live in the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia, primarily in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. They are fourth-/fifth-generation descendants of some 170,000 Koreans of the Russia Far East who moved from the northern provinces of the Joseon Peninsula, the Hamgyeong Province in particular, to Primore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Gelb 1995) and were subsequently deported by Stalin to Central Asia. The other 10% currently reside in the Sakhalin Island of the Russian Federation. The present chapter is on the latter diaspora community. We examine their exposure to more than one colonial/imperial education system and their ethnic identity that is authentic neither in the place they now live nor in their South Korean motherland.

With geopolitics as the main focus, the literature of social science and history of ethnic Koreans in Central Asia have been more widely reported than those in the Sakhalin Island. Research on education in either community has seldom been done separately if at all. This chapter is an attempt to fill up that gap by reviewing how the Koreans have regarded education along with their own Confucian heritage cultural identity and practices as a means to belong to the mainstream society, obtain job-related skills, and pursue social mobility (Park 2011).

We submit that a historiography needs to deal with sociological or political concepts that are contingent in time yet determine the notional categories with which we researchers look at the reality, such as the concepts of class and identity. In fact, reinterpretation and self-examination are essential tasks for researchers. For example, the term *nationality* used throughout this chapter means ethnic minority in the political and academic lexicon in the Soviet and even post-Soviet era. *Nationality* assigns to minority people static socio-historical traits. The term *Korean nationality*, for example, implies that Russian Koreans are peninsular Koreans at the core,

and this fact cannot be changed or overridden in spite of many generations of birth and residence in Russian territories. Stalin's definition of *nationality* articulates a static identity which has been known since the late imperial Russia: "historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" (Stalin 2003[1935], p. 9–10).

3 Subjects of Two Empires

Russian Koreans on the Sakhalin Isle, also known as Sakhalin Koreans, constitute the largest ethnic minority in Sakhalin according to the 2010 Russian census, and they represent about a tenth of the total population in the capital city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (Gradoteka 2015).

Japan came into possession of the southern half of the Sakhalin having won the Russian-Japanese War in 1905. Korean immigration to Sakhalin around this period was voluntary but something similar to the indentured labor of the nineteenth century (Park 2013). In the 1930s, a greater number of Koreans arrived to Sakhalin: "The island had large coal deposits and abundant fisheries as well as large forests, so it was of considerable value to the resource-poor Japanese empire. Developmental projects, however, needed cheap labor—labor that was found in Korea, then a colony of Japan" (Lankov 2010, p. 8). When the Pacific War (the Asian chapter of the World War II) erupted, Korean laborers were conscripted under duress by the Japanese colonial military power to work in Sakhalin and exploit the much needed raw materials. Foucault (1983, p. 212) identified three types of struggle against the ruling power structure: first, a domination against several structured categories such as ethnicity, social whole, and categorical belief-knowledge such as religion; second, an exploitation of extant structures to satisfy needs such as industrial productivity; and third, subjection and submission of "others" with corresponding loss of subjectivity.

The Japanese war efforts created a renewed power relation between Korea and Japan. Korean minorities were dominated and exploited and became imperial subjects but without full citizenship. They were simply arms and legs of war efforts.

The conscription of Korean workers to Karafuto was a massive mobilization. According to Yulia Din's archival research in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (*Sotsialno-politicheskoy Istorii Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv*, RGASPI), by 1945, there were some 23,000 Koreans on the island representing about 5–6% of the total population of Southern Sakhalin (Din 2015).

Japanese colonial rule brought about deprivation of culture and language to the Koreans in colonial territories. Any public usage of Korean language was prohibited, and a harsh policy of assimilation was imposed. The colonial education was not only devoid of the use of the Korean language, but it was also utilized to enforce colonial policies: "The [Japanese] Government-General enacted laws legalizing racial discrimination against the Koreans, making them second-class citizens.

Education served as a means of justifying such racism” (Kim 2012, p. 323). In our view, the term “second-class citizens” is an overstatement. Koreans in the southern Sakhalin (“Karafuto” in Japanese) were subjected to deprivation of their native language to the extent of being forced to change their names into Japanese and the work supervisors discriminating among the miners according to their fluency in the Japanese language (Yi 2004). Power usually meets resistance, but when the power distance is huge and its main trait is authoritarian, the machinery of power overrides it all. It rules, subjugates, commodifies, and dehumanizes people in every possible way.

After the World War II in 1945, when the entire Island became a part of Russian territory, the Sakhalin Koreans found themselves locked up on the Island. Political circumstances prevented them from returning to their homeland, now divided into North and South Korea. Initially, the Soviet Government planned to repatriate Koreans back to their native land (Din 2014, 2015), but the plan was repeatedly postponed because of the potential manpower shortage for Soviet Russia. In all local industries such as coal mining, fishing, and logging, a large part of skilled and semi-skilled labor was provided by the Koreans who adapted relatively well to the local climate and conditions (Lankov 2010). They were seen as the ideal labor. Andrei Lankov further says that Sakhalin Koreans were explicitly forbidden to leave the island by the Soviet establishment (2012). It is possible to argue that Sakhalin Koreans’ adaptability skill and manpower were both a blessing and a curse.

After the return of Sakhalin to Russia in August 1945, and with no more nominal Japanese imperial subjectivity (Kim 2012), the Sakhalin Koreans found themselves caught between the Soviet concept of *nationalities* and a lack of official citizenship on papers. Since the imposition of the internal passport system in the 1930s until the fall of the Soviet Union, a Soviet individual inherited his or her parents’ *nationality* as specified in the birth certificate. A person’s ethnic affiliation was recorded in the passport and noted in all identifying documents and was taken into consideration when applying to a university, for employment, for promotion, or for emigration (Khazanov 1995, p. 16). Since only this “primordial” identity was socially and economically recognized within the Russian society, it was taken into consideration when making friends, finding spouses, applying for employment, and so on.

Moreover, the Joseon Peninsula they had left was now divided by the Parallel 38 line into the North and South, and on the brink of a civil war. On the other hand, there was no political will of the Soviet Government to repatriate a readily available Korean blue-collar manpower. While this situation was dragging on for years, “Russia refused to grant them citizenship because Russia had no diplomatic relationship with South Korea. These denationalized people experienced discrimination in residence, education, and jobs and wanted to return to South Korea” (Yoon 2000, p. 43).

Sakhalin Koreans were mostly from the Southern part of the Joseon Peninsula and not from an independent South Korean state. The rationale for refusing repatriation was that the change in the global political situation made it untenable: “With the onset of the Cold War, it became politically impossible for the Soviet Union to allow a large scale relocation of Koreans back to South Korea” (Lankov 2012, para. 6).

Indeed, repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans to South Korea occurred only after 1986 when the Soviet Union was preoccupied with its internal predicaments and reformation.

Sakhalin Koreans were officially considered foreigners but, ironically, without a Korean or any citizenship. The lack of citizenship must have been a great source of hardship. A case in point would be Sakhalin Koreans' marriages with the Soviet citizens. It was explicitly forbidden by the 1947 decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council, "On the prohibition of marriages between Soviet citizens and foreigners," which remained in force until 1969. Even marriage was at the service for the "system of differentiation," but it illustrates the extent in which power relations were set up. The ruling power, be it Japanese or Soviet, acted through "differentiations determined by the law or by traditions of status and privilege; economic differences in the appropriation of riches and goods, shifts in the processes of production, linguistic or cultural differences, differences in know-how and competence, and so forth" (Foucault 1983, p. 223).

4 Desired and Denied Repatriation

The early waves of Koreans were poorly educated and had no knowledge of the Russian language. In addition, they were deprived of opportunities to formally learn or socially interact with locals. They were regarded as limbs put to work and not humans. Without a citizenship, they were denied jobs with prestige or any public posts such as becoming civil servants or teachers. In the 1950s, most Koreans were unskilled workers who made a living at fisheries and mining fields; they did not and could not aspire to upward social mobility, and seldom left their villages. These sustained adversities and uncertainties kept them dreaming of repatriation to their native country (Din 2015).

Soon after the handover from Japan to the Soviet authorities, the latter first felt uneasy about the presence of numerous Koreans. To manage and control the Koreans, Soviet authorities needed intermediaries, interpreters, and educators, for example, Russian managers needed bilingual translators, educators, and journalists to communicate with Korean workers. Qualified Russian Koreans were far away in Central Asia where the Korean population was much more Russified culturally and even politically (Chang and Park 2013; Fuchs 2004). Hence, the Government selected some 2000 politically reliable Koreans in Central Asia and sent them to work in Sakhalin as teachers, journalists, translators, and clerks (Lankov 2009). The Central Asian Soviet Koreans became interpreters and translators between Russian-speaking managers and Sakhalin Korean workers. Some of them became school principals and teachers. Sakhalin Koreans regarded them as "privileged continental Koreans" or "agents of authority." Relations between these two groups remained tense. In other words, the Foucauldian "system of differentiation" increased in number and scope of differentiation. As it will be argued later, only more parties or stakeholders of power will get involved during the era of globalization.

Din (2015) offers archival proofs to argue that the manpower shortage was the first and foremost reason for postponements of repatriation of Koreans in 1947, 1948, and 1950. The repatriation of the Sakhalin Koreans suffered further delays due to the Korean Civil War (1950–1953) and in its aftermath – the politics of the Cold War. In 1953, the Soviet authorities finally announced that Sakhalin Koreans were allowed to adopt Soviet citizenship if they freely wished to do so. However, few Sakhalin Koreans accepted the offer, arguably because of the emotional value of the motherland. In fact, 21,251 out of 30,000 Koreans on the island had no citizenship in 1956 (Lankov 2009). We have to take into account that the so-called Cold War that divided the world between the Soviet Union-led Eastern Block and the Western Europe-American alliance started with the Korean War.

The signs of assimilation were more visible in the Sakhalin island community from the 1960s onward. The Korean community changed significantly when they started to leave Korean enclaves in rural areas to acquire education and jobs in the cities in the mid-1960s. It only confirms that urbanization and assimilation are two sides of the same coin (Khazanov 1995).

In the interpretation of the 1970 Soviet National Census by George and Herta Ginsburgs, the Koreans of *Sakhalinskaya Oblast* (Sakhalin region) are regarded as the *pièce de résistance* compared with other Russian Korean communities (1977). According to this census, there were 35,396 Sakhalin Koreans, representing 54% of the Korean population in the Russian Far East and 35% of the all Koreans living in the Soviet Union. Koreans represented 5.7% of the entire population in the *Sakhalinskaya Oblast*, and 84% of them were urban dwellers.

During this period, the Koreans were assimilated in the matters of language, lifestyle, and economic activities of the host society such as Russian-style naming and the use of the Russian language at schools. Gradually, the Koreans became hardly distinguishable from the local Russians in language use, lifestyle, social relation, and residential choice, although they still maintained strong ethnic preferences in marriage, diet, and rituals. Assimilation, as referred here, should not be “romanticized” and forcibly turned into a cultural phenomenon. If looked at it as an occurrence of power relation, it is not but only the final leg of an oppressive power march. As pointed out by Foucault (1983), assimilation is but a reified later stage of power relation. As mentioned earlier, it starts with a “system of difference” such as government-public and continues with a “type of actualization” by a wide range of top-down maneuvers such as policy formulation, implementation, juridical ruling, granting of a reduced number of rights, and authorizing. These, in turn, rely on a set of “means of actualization” such as compulsory language instruction in schooling and official examination system with planned-ahead selection system that faithfully portrays a functionalist paradigm of education. These maneuvers are never improvised in random locations, but, instead, they take “forms of institutionalization” (ibid. 223) in specific *loci* such as schools (hence “state apparatus” for Althusser) and public exam authorities. All of these sag of policies and control come with credible justifications, which Foucault termed the “degrees of rationalization.” In contemporary education, rationalization is usually actualized with citizenship

education, national/moral education, and a rampant neoliberal priority given to prosperity and limitless growth even at the expense of overt environmental degradation.

When it comes to rationalization in the name of true identity or recognized identity, we need to be on alert as we could unintentionally become subservient to such a rationalization. In our study, for example, the “Koreanness” qua perceived Korean self-identity is relatively weaker among Sakhalin Koreans in objective and behavioral aspects, such as interpersonal relations, than more fiercely defended emotional and psychological aspects, such as native language and ethnic heritage culture. Sakhalin Koreans usually live in extended families where traditions are transmitted from generation to generation and follow cultural practices such as removing shoes, bowing to elders, being reserved around elders, and dining etiquette (Yoon 2000). Preserving the ethnic language and culture has become less important than gaining access to resources available in the mainstream society and advancing one’s socioeconomic status. These findings echo research on the Korean minorities in Mainland China (Gao and Park 2012; Gao et al. 2011). In our view, a theoretical or even scientific attempt to “freeze” identity should be avoided. Tagging or categorizing people into a particular culture as though culture is static and it always resists the mainstream culture, capital, people, and authority are abstractions that should be refused. Indeed, this static categorization that makes people ask questions such as “Who are we?” and “What are they?” (Foucault 1983, p. 212) could be the very instrument of domination. Instead, we should look into the fluidity of identities and how such abstractions push people to face a lack of social recognition and integration (Park 2009).

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s was accompanied by further development in the Sakhalin Koreans’ cultural and political assimilation. As the post-Soviet social transformation made the old restrictions void, it generated among the Sakhalin Koreans a renewed desire to reunite with lost family members, learn the native language, and boost the sense of belonging to an ethnic culture. Not without paradox, an even larger number of Sakhalin Koreans opted for Russian citizenship, which increased migration to the Russian mainland facilitated by the loosening of internal migration controls as well as increased diversification in the roles of Sakhalin Koreans in the local economy. Korean cultural associations, language lessons, national dance clubs, and other analogous organizations began to flourish in this new environment.

For the Korean community, the Soviet political reforms of the 1980s and 1990s signaled the opening of the path to South Korea. However, the real and mass repatriation became possible only after a diplomatic breakthrough of a tripartite agreement over reunification of divided families between Russian Federation, South Korea, and Japan in 1992 (Din 2015, p. 186). Since then, Sakhalin Koreans have managed to integrate into South Korean society with opportunities to reside and work there. In the late 1990s, persistent effort of the Korean activists and their friends, Japan, South Korea, and other countries, jointly funded the construction of a special apartment complex near Incheon. This apartment complex is for elder Koreans who wish to come back to Korea; there are about 2300 elderly Sakhalin Koreans.

By then Sakhalin Koreans were occupied as postal employees, bureaucrats, and even customs and immigration officers. Not only did they hold positions in the civil administration, but they became successful in business and in the attainment of higher education. Thus, some returnees to South Korea came back to Sakhalin because, by that time, the Korean population was rather prosperous and well integrated.

The rapid development of economic and cultural relations between Russia and the Republic of Korea, and the related assistance programs organized by the Russian Government, changed the attitude of the Sakhalin Koreans toward their own unique identity. The latter was no longer absolutely dependent on the ancestral race or geographical location because Sakhalin Island had become an inextricable part of their unique tradition and narrative.

The post-Soviet period for the Sakhalin Korean community indicates a score of complex changes and developments in the nature of Sakhalin Koreans' engagement with their Korean identity and diaspora. After the period of Perestroika, the Russian Government increased communication with South Korea and began to allow the Sakhalin Koreans greater freedom in terms of cultural expressions, occupation, and residency. Since 1989, there has been a remarkable upheaval of interest and pride in issues related to ethnic identity across all *nationalities* of the former USSR.

5 Schooling Between Empires

In articulating Japanese colonial realpolitik of categorizing colonial subjects pinning down the similarities and differences with fully Japanese subjects, Morris-Suzuki argued that Japanese colonial subjects of Korea were regarded as Japanese citizens only nominally and on the international stage. Koreans were listed in the "external family registers" (Jap. *gaichi kaseki*), and they generally educated separately from the Japanese settlers of Karafuto. It was "generally" because at a later stage, Korean children will be sent to Japanese schools where they will be taught to speak Japanese with Japanese as the medium of instruction in "immersion" style. In other words, there was a move from the politics of separation to active assimilation. Tessa Morris-Suzuki is right in cautioning against "defining colonial policy simply as 'assimilationist' or simply as 'discriminatory'" (1998, p. 159), and she does so not because such strategies were not used, but, rather, they were among other strategies.

The education system in Sakhalin during the Japanese occupation had different forms. First, there was a segregated education system for the *Ainu* aboriginal children until early 1930s, which lasted, at least, until 1932 when the colonial government granted full Japanese citizenship to only *Ainu* people (Morris-Suzuki 1998). Second, there was an official education policy for the entire colony, which emphasized the fostering of [Japanese imperial] patriotism, productive skills, cooperation, and diligence. Learning consisted of speaking the Japanese language (writing was often discouraged), moral education, arithmetic, art, and large periods devoted to

practical handicrafts (Morris-Suzuki 1998). Lesson stories from Shinto mythology and the heroic deeds of Japanese military, in short, the post-Meiji nationalism were taught across curriculum (see interesting discussion on the Shinto mythology's role in Japanese nationalist movements in the cited work of Morris-Suzuki).

The Japanese authorities imposed on the Korean population a forced assimilation policy in and through education. There were no Koreans among teachers because they were none in the teachers' College following the Governor's order (Din 2014). In essence, there was no further education for Koreans.

In the postwar period, when southern Sakhalin became a Russian territory, a new political and state system started dictating the conditions of life. One of the most important tasks for the Soviet authorities was to give to the Japanese and Korean populations the basics of Soviet education and to educate them in ideology and politics. Up until 1945, many Koreans were illiterate. In 1958, it was revealed that there were 6106 illiterates on the island – a majority of them Koreans. Seventy percent of these were women. Teachers and party activists were recruited to teach adults, and a special tutorial in the Korean language had been prepared for this purpose (Din 2014).

The first action countering this problem was opening Korean schools on the belief that, perhaps, Korean schools would educate Koreans as Soviet citizens and inculcate in them Soviet ideas and values. Therefore, the teachers were required to have special political training. It was expected that Korean schools would support the ethnic culture of the Korean people. The actual transition from the Japanese to the Soviet education system began in January 1947 upon the completion of the repatriation of Japanese population. Japanese schools were abolished and Korean schools were established instead. The number of Korean schools reached its peak in 1950. According to the Regional Committee of the Communist Party documents kept in the State Historical Archive of Sakhalin Region, there were 87 schools in 1950 (50 primary schools and 37 7-year junior high schools; the number of students was 7000) (Din 2014, p. 180). A second source from the work of Kostanov and Podlubnaya (1994) marks it at 72 (Table 1).

The problem of the teaching staff remained serious throughout this process. At first the graduates of the Japanese schools had taught in Korean schools for many years, but they were not familiar with the Soviet system of education, and they did not have recognized qualifications. To replace a large part of these teachers together with the expanding network of Korean schools, the Regional Party Committee

Table 1 Korean schools in the Sakhalin region 1945–1963

	1945	1946	1947	1949	1950	1955	1958	1963
Primary schools	27	28	28	55	57	32	17	10
Junior high schools	–	8	11	13	15	22	13	11
High schools	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	11
Total number of schools	27	36	39	68	72	54	41	32
Total number of students	2300	3000	3137	4692	5308	5950	7214	7239

Source: Adapted from Din (2014) and Kostanov and Podlubnaya (1994)

invited Soviet Koreans of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Kostanov and Podlubnaya 1994). Thus a Korean Department in the Teachers College of Poronaik in 1952 was established to prepare teachers for the Korean schools (Lim 2012, p. 189).

The Korean language as a medium of instruction could have had an overall positive effect, at least psychologically if not pedagogically. The local Soviet authorities were seen making significant efforts to provide the Korean schools with textbooks and teaching materials in the Korean language, which had to be either translated from Russian or written from scratch. From 1946–1948, a number of textbooks, for example, Arithmetic (grades 4 and 5), Botany (grades 5 and 6), Native Language (grades 1 and 2), and Geography (grade 4), were translated into Korean (Kostanov and Podlubnaya 1994; Lim 2012, p. 189).

However, the referred postwar euphoria of instruction in Korean was doomed. By 1962–1963, many of them had been outdated and did not meet the program requirements. Hence, students from fourth grade and older mainly used Russian textbooks. Textbooks for high school students were not translated into Korean (Kostanov and Podlubnaya 1994). From the outset, this apparently localized “liberal language policy” in Sakhalin was at odds with Stalin’s national language policy reversing Linin’s. Drawing on the case of the Kazakhstan, Yoon argued (2000, p. 44):

Following the Decree of March 1938, Russian was made a compulsory subject in all non-Russian schools and Lenin’s idea of equality of all languages was officially dropped...all Korean schools were closed. In December of 1939, the Soviet government also ratified the acts ‘Concerning Korean Literature’ and ‘Concerning the Removal of Literature in the Korean Language from Book Stores and Libraries.’ As a result, the State Committee for the Preservation of Secrets in Print confiscated and destroyed thousands of Korean books, including those Koreans had brought with them. According to available statistics, 120,000 textbooks were destroyed, including 17,000 textbooks for the study of Korean language. After World War II, Russian language was openly proclaimed as ‘the language of high culture’ and ‘treasure source for other languages’ as well as ‘the language of socialism.’

It comes to no surprise, therefore, that the Russian language was taught to the students in the Korean schools of Sakhalin for 12 h every week in grades 1–3, and 2 to 3 h a day to grades 7–8. Even leisure and extracurricular activities such as school theater plays were loaded with ideological content in the repertoire (Kostanov and Podlubnaya 1994).

It should be noted that Stalin’s language policy and the policy of assimilation in general were implemented through schooling and public education and continued even after his death in 1953. “From Khrushchev to Brezhnev and to Andropov, the Soviet Government continued to make efforts to achieve the goal of the Russification of nationality groups. Brezhnev, for example, campaigned for the fusion of all peoples into a single unit (Soviet People, *Sovetskii narod* in Russian), and was determined to speed up the process of linguistic assimilation” (Yoon 2000, p. 44).

The fast assimilation of the Sakhalin Koreans in the 1960s and 1970s discussed earlier in this chapter has a strong correlation with the Soviet Union-wide educational system and policy on *nationalities*. It could be argued that a substantive part of assimilation and even perhaps Russification occurred quietly in the very Sakhalin Korean classrooms. It also must be said that Stalin’s *realpolitik* regarding the issues

being discussed here completely dismissed the Constitution. For example, the 1933 Soviet Constitution guaranteed the right to education ahead of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also stipulated that "instruction in schools being conducted in the native language" (Supreme Soviet of the USSR 1936, Article 121).

Although the Korean schools were fully supported by the government, they still experienced problems of placement in the dilapidated infrastructure of old Japanese schools. In 1958, the Soviet Ministry of Education conducted an inspection of the Korean schools. Many problems were identified, such as lack of proper curricula, textbooks, and other teaching aids and facilities. The academic performance of students was 80% on average, and it was reported that every six students, one dropped out of school (Kuzin 2011, p. 253).

Regardless of the possible causes, one of the most serious problems for Sakhalin Koreans' social mobility was poor knowledge of the Russian language and the subsequent failure of the Korean youth to obtain professional education and a career. Korean middle school graduates had problems with advanced education, which called for further Russian-language learning to increase chances to access Russian-speaking environments. Until 1956, it was impossible for the Sakhalin Koreans to get into higher education institutions because they were "stateless." From 1956 onward, they were allowed to enter a local pedagogical college but could take no managerial level jobs.

By the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, the situation began to change. Korean children constantly interacted with Russians and quickly mastered the Russian language. Many of them transferred to Russian schools, and the number of Korean children in Russian schools increased steadily. In most cases, the parents themselves preferred to transfer their children to Russian schools. In the academic school year of 1962/1963, 75% of the Korean students with Soviet citizenship studied in Russian schools (Lim 2012, p. 189).

In the early 1960s, the Regional Communist Party Committee and education authorities were scrutinizing the situation of the Korean schools in Sakhalin. The following predicaments were found (Kostanov and Podlubnaya 1994):

1. Insufficient number of textbooks and teaching aids and inadequate school facilities
2. A lower level of knowledge among Korean schools students, especially in the Russian language and literature, not allowing them to pass the entrance exams successfully and continue their education in colleges and universities
3. Higher motivation of Korean parents to educate their children in Russian schools as Russian-language education was necessary to increase chances to succeed in a Russian-speaking environment

Based on the foregoing, the Regional Board of Education consulted the Ministry of Education of the Soviet Union in 1962. The Ministry recommended to resolve this problem locally. As a result of the decision taken by the Sakhalin Region Executive Committee on 13 May 1963, a major change took place. The language of instruction was changed into Russian, and the Korean language was not taught

anymore as a subject. Two Korean schools for working adults (Schools for Working Youth – *shkola rabochei molodyozhi*) were annexed to Russian schools (Din 2014) (Table 1 shows the number of schools in the year of the closure of all Korean schools). In some cases, the process was gradual; some Korean schools continued to operate after 1963 to cater for the children of North Korean families who studied there until they returned to their homeland.

This step has often been described as an attempt of forced Russification as the Sakhalin Koreans were deprived of the opportunity of studying the Korean language for a long time. But witnesses insist that the driving force behind the switch to the Russian-language education were the Koreans themselves. In our view, such an opinion deserves at least some credit because the number of Korean schools has been declining since the early 1950s (Table 1). It is likely that the Korean parents chose for their children a realistic schooling path leading to them becoming engineers, doctors, and professors. In addition, the absence of the diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Republic of Korea probably made them feel that returning to their homeland is rather unlikely any time soon. We assume that perhaps rational and pragmatic decisions prevailed over the emotional motives for education in the native language. It was no lesser a process of assimilation.

6 Echoes of Globalization

From 1963 to the 1970s, there was no Korean school in Sakhalin but, rather, a mixed medium of instruction system. In the cities, the Korean language was not taught because there was not enough demand for it. Because of its importance in Russian and Soviet society, Korean parents sent their children to study in schools with Russian as the medium of instruction (Lee 2011). As argued earlier, this was a period of assimilation into the Soviet community and culture; the younger generations were increasingly at ease with the Russian culture and did not care much about being proficient in the Korean language.

Language is generally regarded as the most significant symbol of ethnicity, and, consequently, linguistic assimilation is considered to be a reliable indicator of ethnic assimilation (Holmes 2008). Since cultural values and identity are transmitted from generation to generation, the degree to which younger generations can speak their mother tongue is an indicator of the likelihood of the intergenerational continuity of ethnic culture and identity (Yoon 2000). By 1990, some two-thirds of Sakhalin Koreans had limited or no knowledge of their ancestors' language, but somehow the Korean cultural heritage survived in the island.

Having realized the challenging task to educate the Korean population, the Soviet authorities made significant progress. The opening of Korean schools for people of all ages has led to the elimination of illiteracy. The national policy of the USSR stemmed from the fact that the Korean people learned their native language. As a result, in 1959, 93.8% of all Koreans called Korean their mother tongue, and Russian, 6%. In the same breath, 59.4% of the Korean population mentioned

Russian as a second language. However, by the time of Perestroika, 63.2% of the Koreans named Russian as their native language, but according to the 2002 Census, Russian was considered a native language by 99.3% Koreans, and merely 0.7% regarded Korean as their native language (Din 2014, p. 195).

Therefore, during the period of Perestroika in the 1980s, both the Russians and Koreans saw with uneasiness the decline in Korean language proficiency. The process of restoring Korean schools in Sakhalin began with the resumption of teaching in the Korean language. This became possible only after 1985, as a result of radical socioeconomic and political reforms in Russia outlining changes within and without the sphere of international relations. State policy toward ethnic groups changed and became, in a way, more democratic.

In 1987, the Korean language newspaper *The Leninist Path* began to receive letters from young Sakhalin Koreans who asked to open schools, start courses, and introduce other forms of learning the Korean language. In March 1988, a special group was organized to produce Korean textbooks. This group involved people who knew Korean and could still speak the language: Sin Dyun Mo (an editor of a local Korean newspaper), Kim Hwa Soon (a director of a Korean broadcasting department), Pak Dyan Ne (a journalist), and Kim Soo Man (Korean Broadcasting journalist), among others (Pak 2007).

In 1988, an elective course of the Korean language was introduced in the Secondary School No. 9 with the support of Korean public activists. Similar elective courses were introduced in secondary schools of other Sakhalin towns and villages. Later, a training course – “The Korean Language” – was implemented in the secondary school curricula and aroused great interest among the Korean population. In 1989, the first NGO “Society of separated families of Sakhalin region” was registered. Meanwhile and throughout the USSR, Russian Koreans’ access to higher education was above Russian average (Table 2).

The Association of Sakhalin Koreans was established in a conference organized by Korean diaspora representatives in 1990. In the following year, the Federal Government accepted the plan of stabilization and development of the education system, which created additional conditions to study native languages, including Korean. Many young Koreans began to study their ancestors’ language as several schools started teaching Korean as a second language. The Korean language was introduced in the curricula of 12 schools in the Sakhalin region in 1991. A year later, a secondary school offering intensive Asian language studies and cultural studies in the capital Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk received the once abandoned status of “Korean School.” In this school, the Korean language is obligatory from year 2.

Today, the Korean language is taught in nine secondary schools in different modalities such as a compulsory second foreign language course and an elective course. The total number of students studying Korean is about 1000 and increasing every year (Lim 2012). However, the process of teaching the Korean language experienced a number of difficulties. There were very little professional educators with appropriate philological education among Korean language teachers. In order to tackle this problem, the Teachers Training Institute of Sakhalin organized special courses with instructors invited from North Korea as mentors in 1988.

Table 2 Level of Education by nationalities in the USSR

Nationality	Total number with higher education
1. Jewish ^a	561
2. Korean ^b	249
3. Georgian	195
4. Armenian	163
5. Kalmyk ^a	145
6. Yakut ^a	144
7. Russian	138
8. Kazakh	119
9. Azerbaijanian	116
10. Ukrainian	108
11. Belarusian	107
12. Uzbek	90
13. Tatar ^a	92
14. Tadjik	79
15. Chuvash ^a	74

Census of 1989 (per 1000) Adapted from Viktor Krieger (2006, p. 260)

^aData extrapolated to the particular nationality's population throughout the entire USSR

^bData from Kazakhstan and extrapolated to entire Korean population in the USSR. The Korean population of Kazakhstan was 103,100 in 1989

The Korean language and other related subjects began to be taught in higher education institutions of the Sakhalin region. In 1988, the Faculty of History of the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk State Pedagogical Institute (now the Sakhalin State University) began training students majoring in History and Korean Language (Bok 1993). The History Department of the same university was transformed into an independent Department of Asian Languages which was headed by Professor Bok Zi Kou. Later in December 1991, the Institute of Economics and Asian Studies was founded where teachers of the Korean language and experts in the field of literature and the Korean economy are trained. Currently, the Sakhalin State University offers bachelor degrees in the following fields: Korean Language Teacher, Korean Language and Literature, and Korean Economy.

South Korean exchange students constitute the largest international student population at the Sakhalin State University, interacting with Sakhalin Korean communities and facilitating cultural and economic exchange. Local students' interest in mastering the Korean language has increased tremendously, and, conversely, some Sakhalin Korean students also study at South Korean universities.

At the initiative of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea, together with regional and City Board of Education of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the Center for Education of the Republic of Korea was established in December 1993. The main objectives of its activities are (Lim 2012, p. 192):

- The organization of an educational institution of general education on the basis of the educational programs of the Republic of Korea
- Training and retraining of teachers of the Korean language
- Acquaintance of Sakhalin population with history and culture of the Republic of Korea
- Holding permanent training seminars for Korean speakers
- Maintaining the connection between schools with Korean language classes and educational institutions of the Republic of Korea
- Organizing training courses for the students of pedagogical college and pedagogical institute

The Korean Cultural Center (*Koreisky kulturnyi Tsentri*) was opened in 2006, and it organizes classes of Korean national music, dances, sport, and games. The Center supports studies of the Korean language, culture, and history, catering to students who are planning to continue their education in South Korea. Both the Center for Education and the Korean Cultural Center have become an important bridge between Sakhalin Koreans and their historical homeland, their ethnic culture, language, and history.

More public organizations and NGOs for Sakhalin Koreans were organized in and around 2010. They play a significant role in the revival of the native language and culture. The current third generation of Sakhalin Koreans congregate somewhere near the Korean Cultural Center in smaller groups, often formed by membership and affiliation to organizations such as a church. South Korean Christian missionaries built about ten protestant churches in the southern Sakhalin creating a space for the third-generation Sakhalin Koreans. About 20–25% of them attend these churches. In 1993, a private religious institution Sam Yuk was founded with the support of South Korean pastors. The institute trains local interpreters to assist South Korean pastors.

Regarding the media and communication, the Sakhalin Korean community owns a newspaper. The “New Korean newspaper” (*Se Koryo Sinmun*) in the Korean language has been in circulation for more than 60 years. Its name was “Korean Worker” between 1949 and 1961 and the “The Leninist Path” between 1961 and 1991. The newspaper’s circulation currently stands at 1500. The number of readers has been dwindling due to the attrition and/or outflow of the older generation of Koreans on the repatriation program to South Korea.

In 2004, the state TV and radio channel established a broadcasting group to conduct programs in the Korean language. The Korean language broadcasts had existed in Sakhalin since 1956, but it had been created to promote the Communist ideology. From Perestroika onward, the main focus of the Korean radio has changed to the problems of Sakhalin Koreans, such as the restoration of spiritual and cultural ties with their historic homeland, reunion of separated families, and the revival of language and traditions. However, due to financial difficulties, television broadcasting in the Korean language was suspended only to resume on August 15, 2004. The Korean channel broadcasts, in both Russian and Korean, news, talk shows, and documentaries about the history and culture of Korea.

Thus, the existing formal and informal education influence the ethnic and cultural revival of the young Sakhalin Koreans despite the fact that many have already lost their native language and cultural traditions. The situation of the third-generation Sakhalin Koreans has changed and is changing. They show a growing interest in knowing more about their roots. Were they to encounter their cultural, linguistic, and educational past and future, they would with a mix of light and darkness.

7 Discussion and Conclusions

Koreans in the Russian Sakhalin Island are mostly South Koreans who were conscripted to work in the resource-rich island during the Japanese colonial rule. After the surrender of Japan in 1945, Sakhalin Koreans were unable to return home due to Soviet economic interests to keep them as workers. They underwent various types of acculturation, namely, separation, marginalization, assimilation, and, currently, integration (Berry 2003). Formal schooling and public education were the main tools of the assimilation policy under the veneer of Soviet citizens' rights stipulated in the Constitutions of 1936 and 1977. This chapter examined history and education of Sakhalin Koreans and discusses the conditions of interaction between Koreans and the host society as well as with "mainland" Russian Koreans. Unlike the Soviet Korean rice farmers in Central Asia who were mass deported from the Primore region of the Russian Far East by Stalin in 1937, the Sakhalin Koreans in the southern Korean peninsula arrived on the island as citizenship-less colonial subjects of Japan, which was in dire need of manpower to exploit the natural resources to sustain the Pacific War. This chapter made a critical review of the history, social context, education, and language of the Sakhalin Koreans.

Our findings indicate that Sakhalin Koreans underwent different types and periods of acculturation (Berry 2003). Under the Japanese colonial rule, Sakhalin Koreans were first marginalized, separated, and then assimilated via Japanese post-Meiji colonial education. After the handover to the Soviet Union in 1945, Sakhalin Koreans were denied of repatriation (while Japanese subjects were allowed) and retained sine die on the island as labor force, "not as humans but working limbs," to borrow from critical Latin-Americanist Jose Carlos Mariátegui (2008 [1928]). Sakhalin Koreans were neither Japanese colonial subjects nor Russians, and they were in a limbo between the Cold War politics and integration/assimilation to the local society.

Education received by the Sakhalin Korean children was merely at the service of Soviet efforts of indigenization or "enrooting" (*Koretnizatziia*), which was arguably a politically correct and distilled form of assimilation called "Russification" that can be traced back to Imperial Russia. Russification was overt in the Tsarist education system. The 1936 Constitution of the USSR, under which the language education policy in Sakhalin was implemented, also guaranteed racial equality and education in the native language (Supreme Soviet of the USSR 1936, Art. 121). However, rather tragically, such rights were largely denied to the Soviet Korean students.

When Sakhalin Korean children were allowed to use their native language, they were being segregated from the mainstream society; when pushed to use the Russian language in formal schooling, they were being assimilated.

The 1977 Constitution of the USSR also guaranteed racial equality and education in the native language. Nigel Grant pointed out that, in practice, the intermediate to small size ethnic minorities did not enjoy these rights (1979). Therefore, it could be argued that under the veneer of the constitutional rights (both in 1936 and 1977), the Soviet “liberal language policy” in Sakhalin was ultimately a lip service. From 1938 to 1982, that is, from Stalin to Brezhnev, a policy of assimilation was imposed on them and irreversibly so.

In his proposal of the “New economy of power relations,” Foucault suggested possible managerial strategies, hence *economy*, for resistance or struggle against power (1983). To resist extant power forms, he argued, there is a need to rationally analyze power from antagonistic positions. In other words, analyzing power is to be done not from an authority position but from a horizontal position, and by looking at concrete effects of power exerted. Furthermore, the struggle should be against a static conception or abstractions of individuals as well as the effects of power such as knowledge production, competence, and qualifications in the field of education. In this regard, the case presented in this chapter is also a caution call for academics in the field to critically examine the very knowledge we generate about ethnicity and identity when they are intersected with power establishment and social mobility.

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Challenges for Interethnic Relations, Language, and Educational Equity in Asia



Christine Halse

Abstract This chapter takes a bird’s-eye view of the insights from preceding chapters by interrogating some of the overarching issues shaping the relationship between ethnic minorities, language education, and educational equity internationally and their implications for the future. It details the worldwide rise in interethnic conflict and argues that academic scholarship, notably from the USA and Europe, has historically dominated thinking about the relationship between ethnic minorities, language, and educational equity. It compares how and why different paradigms and approaches – multiculturalism and interculturalism – have developed in each region and contrasts these with the radically different conditions in Asia. In devising a way forward for societies in Asia, the chapter argues that a key intellectual challenge remains the “category conundrum,” illustrating its manifestation in language policies for ethnic minorities in Asia. Noting the additional influences elaborated by other contributors such as racism, the chapter considers two directions for future research, policy and practice: facilitating “rootedness or belonging” among ethnic minorities and the development of policies and practices framed in terms of the “distinctive social and political contexts, and cultural heritages and traditions within Asia”.

1 Ethnic Minorities, Language, and Educational Equity in Asia

This book addresses one of the most provocative but difficult challenges facing contemporary societies: How to accommodate the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of minority groups to ensure education equity and simultaneously enabling social cohesion and harmony. Even a cursory glance at the daily news reveals the increasing racial and interethnic tensions that have become a global phenomenon

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and touched societies around the world. In the affluent global north, the intensification of racial and ethnic divisions is evident in the anti-immigrant racism in the UK during Brexit, in the Trump administration's ban on entry to the USA from selected Islamic states and its surveillance and deportations of immigrants, and in the demonstrations in Europe following the flood of refugees seeking refuge from conflicts in North Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey.

Similarly, in the global south, many ethnic minorities experience animosity, violence, and exclusion as a routine part of daily life. It is evident across Africa, for example, in the battles for territory between Ethiopia's ethnic Oromos and their neighbors in Somalia; in the violent clashes between the five major ethnic groups in Kenya – the Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, and Kamba tribes – for power and political control of its government; and in the ethnic violence between Nigeria's Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba and the religious conflicts between its Muslim North and Christian South.

In societies across the continent of Asia, rancor and violence also mark the relationship between different ethnic minorities and the social, political, and ethnic majority. They are manifest in the government-sanctioned persecution and brutality of the Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar, in the ongoing conflicts for political autonomy by Muslim Uighur minority and the Han majority in China, in the government violence against ethnic Malay separatists in southern Thailand, and in Malaysia's persistent social, economic, and political discrimination against its Indian and Chinese citizens.

These global conditions make this book timely and necessary. Its focus, however, extends beyond the sort of clashes described above that capture media headlines and the public's attention. Rather, this collection brings together three topics – ethnic minorities, language learning, and education equity – to unpack how these intersect in the lives of minorities in different multilingual contexts ranging from China, Cambodia, Korea, Pakistan, and Hong Kong to Central Asia/Russia. It examines the nuanced dynamics, operation, and effects of interethnic relations, the racialization of discourses and identities, the nature and effects of language policies and practices, the ways these support or undermine educational equity for ethnic minority youth, and how these conditions impact on their social and economic opportunities for the future.

2 Comparing Scholarship Across Geographic Regions

The focus on geographical and multilingual contexts in Asia is significant. Asia is a geographically, ethnically, and culturally diverse region. It is also home to two-thirds of the world's population, the location of the world's largest economies, and increasingly the geopolitical center of global influence and power (see Halse 2015, 2018a).

Since the 1970s, however, international research in education about ethnic minorities, language, and educational equity has been dominated by scholarship on

multicultural and intercultural education in the USA and Europe. This scholarship has differed in foci. In the USA, for example, education scholars have focused on multicultural education, a field that emerged from the Black civil rights movement with a primary concern with issues of race, racism, and discrimination against America's existing, racial minorities: African-American, Indian-American, Hispanic, and Latino (Holm and Zilliacus 2009, p. 3). The emphases in multicultural education have shifted over the decades (Holm and Zilliacus 2009), but the underlying concern of scholarship in the USA for nearly two decades has been "critical multicultural education" (e.g., Sleeter 1996, 1999), otherwise known as "multicultural and reconstructive education" (Banks 2004). Critical multicultural education is firmly committed to the political principles of liberal democracy and the democratic ideals of the USA. Its aim is to promote cultural pluralism and equality, to help *all* students understand and recognize racial discrimination, and to develop the social action skills they need to reconstruct society so that all minorities can participate fully in society and thereby meet the nation's democratic ambitions (Banks 2004).

In contrast, scholarship in Europe has been shaped by the large transnational influx of refugees and immigrants since the collapse of the Europe's colonial empires and the end of World War II. These events have changed Europe's ethnic profile, increased the diversity of its cities, and directed the focus of academic scholarship to effects of immigration on society and education. Mediating these social forces has been the limited information about minorities available in Europe and the effect of such limitation on the character of European scholarship. Data protection laws in Europe classify ethnic and racial origin as "sensitive data" and ban the collection of such information (Simon 2012). As a result, data on language and citizenship are used as a proxy for race, ethnicity, and cultural background. These are inadequate and incomplete labels that do not lend themselves to easy comparison because the type of demographic data collected across Europe varies from country to country (Simon 2012). As a consequence, education scholars in Europe have been less concerned with racialized exclusion, cultural pluralism, and their educational effects. Rather, they have focused on intercultural education. In broad terms, intercultural education aims to equip young people with the skills for mutual respect, dialogue, and engagement with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious groups in ways that facilitate inclusion, participation, equality, and social harmony and cohesion (Council of Europe 2008).

While debates about the differences and relative merits of multiculturalism and interculturalism persist (e.g., Antonsich 2015; Meer and Modood 2011), intercultural education has come to exercise particular sway outside of Europe in countries such as Australia and Canada. At least in part, this is because it has been adopted and promoted by supranational agencies such as United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the way to address the increasing diversity within societies and nations around the world (UNESCO 2001, 2006, 2009, 2013).

Despite these differences, scholarship on minorities in the USA and Europe shares several commonalities that have implications for research on ethnic minori-

ties, language, and educational equity in Asia. In the first instance, their scholarship has been generated by academics born and educated in the West and working in affluent and multicultural liberal democracies. Second, American and European scholars have largely focused on their local personal worlds – the social and cultural contexts in which they live. In this respect, the focus of their academic scholarship reflects the Orientalist disdain that has marked the historical inattention in the West to schools and schooling in Asia generally (Halse 2018a) and toward ethnic minorities in Asia specifically – a phenomenon that has only relatively recently begun to be redressed (e.g., Kymlicka and He 2005; Grant 2011). Third, the theories, methods, and modes of analyses deployed by American and European scholars are grounded in the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment and a democratic sociopolitical tradition, its commitment to its foundational tenets of liberty and equality, and the assumption that democratic principles can transcend the shackles of ethnicity, language, culture, discrimination, and socioeconomic inequality.

Scholarship on minorities in Asia confronts a radically different set of conditions. In broad terms, societies in Asia are more socially and politically conservative than those in the global north; religious adherence is more conspicuous, particularly among Muslims, Hindus, Buddhist, and Christians; and a strong democratic, political tradition is difficult to find. In some societies, the character of democracy and relationship with its military is evolving (e.g., Philippines, Pakistan). Other societies are quasi-democratic (e.g., Singapore, Hong Kong). Others are nondemocratic, communist states (e.g., China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) where the military holds and exercises significant influence and power.

At the risk of oversimplifying the cultures and societies of Asia, compliance and conformity are generally privileged over the destabilizing effects of dissent, and hierarchies are regarded as a necessary norm for the smooth operation of all levels of society. These hierarchies are grounded in different criteria according to the particular circumstances and conditions. These criteria include age, gender, rank, filial loyalty, and a system of wider social relationships based on mutual obligation, reciprocity, and trust. In China, this is known as *guanxi* and considered essential for attaining the attributes of the ideal state: economic prosperity and social and political stability.

Nor is ethnic and cultural heterogeneity a dominant characteristic of most societies in Asia, the two notable exceptions being Malaysia and Indonesia. Having never experienced the influx of immigrants of the USA or Europe, societies in Asia are multilingual rather than multicultural, and the size of their ethnic minority populations is significantly smaller than those of many societies in the West. For instance, ethnic minorities constitute only 8% of the population in Hong Kong, the majority being Han Chinese, 10% in Cambodia where the majority is Khmer, and 25% in Thailand. In contrast, minorities in the USA comprise 39% of the population compared with 61% White, with birth rate modeling predicting that minorities will outnumber the current White majority within 30 years (N-IUSSP 2017). Similarly, Australia is a settler nation. With the exception of its indigenous peoples, its entire population is of migrant heritage, with nearly 50% of its current population born overseas or with a parent born overseas, according to the 2016 census.

Nor can we understate the continuing resonance of Confucian values and standards of social justice in the traditions, structures, and daily life across Asia. Or “the centrality of culture and cultural identity” and the “persistence of culturalism i.e., the defining of all social phenomena in cultural terms” in the how societies in Asia view themselves and frame their interactions with others (Halse 2018a, p. 58).

There is a growing cadre of academic scholarship on ethnic minorities by scholars in Asia. Nevertheless, the global significance of Asia and its distinctive political, social conditions and diverse, multiethnic, and multilingual composition testify to the importance of this collection’s ambition to closely scrutinize the character and interactions between ethnic minorities, language, and educational equity in societies in Asia.

3 The “Category Conundrum”

Nevertheless, as elsewhere in the world, the relationship between ethnicity, language, and educational equity raises the challenge of the “category conundrum.” The categorization of individuals into social groups or categories is an intrinsic part of the way we order our social worlds and constitute our daily lives. Such categories might be based on age, education, occupation, place of birth, family, peer relationships, race, religion, socioeconomic position, physical appearance, or citizenship. Regardless of our desires, category membership is inescapable. As Calhoun (2003) stresses, “it is impossible *not* to belong to social groups, relations, or culture” (pp. 536–537).

Category membership, however, is increasing fluid in today’s globally interconnected world, and this complicates questions about identity and diversity. Nowadays, individuals belong simultaneously to multiple social categories that traverse a vast range of social, economic, and/or geographical locations. These might include, for example, membership of a local sports or hobby club, a transnational kinship group, a multinational organization, or a global, online community. Nevertheless, every social group operates in similar ways by constructing:

...their own social, cultural, linguistic and behavioral patterns that are the accepted, approved norms and ways of being in and belonging to the group [and that] are constituted, asserted and affirmed through the reiteration of specific attitudes, values and behaviours. (Halse 2017, pp.12–13)

These mechanisms work to create the distinctive identity of each social group, differentiate it from others, and shape how each group views other social groups and constructs their social relations with each other.

Herein lies the category conundrum. Despite their inevitability, social categories create physical and symbolic differences and boundaries that work to “constrain the possibilities for individuals to think, act and even imagine different ways of being in the world” (Halse 2017, p. 13). Of course, individuals are not compelled to join or subjugated into particular categories or groups. Nor are they merely passive carriers of a group identity. Membership of a particular group or category can be a function

of personal circumstances, such as country of birth or mother tongue. Or it can be a matter of individual choice and an expression of agency. This is the case when an individual chooses to join the category of “married people” or joins a social club or online network where members share common interests or concerns. Alternatively, category membership can be assigned by social structures and mechanisms that cluster, describe, and classify groups in ways that construct the identity of a society. This happens, for instance, when the state differentiates between refugees, migrants, and the local population, citizens and noncitizens, or when data is collected about race, religion, language, or nationality during a national census. Such categories present themselves as objective, scientific, commonsense way of describing the diverse groups in a society. Such categories, however, are ambiguous, imprecise, and socially constructed artifacts. For example, ought a citizen in an adopted country be categorized as an immigrant or a local? Is someone of Indian heritage part of an “ethnic minority” even when they have lived their entire life outside of India and are unfamiliar with its history, languages, cultures, and customs? Is there equivalency between two people who identify as belonging to the same religion when one is a priest and the other never practices his/her religion?

Nevertheless, the categorizing of individuals has pernicious effects. It assigns identities, constructs differences between groups, and solidifies boundaries that entrench disparities between groups. These are the processes of “boundary maintenance” described by Yuval-Davis (2011). These processes have especially formidable effects when they assign racial and ethnic identities to particular groups because it defines the access of groups to the power and privilege that creates advantages and disadvantages and that shores up inequalities and inequalities in a society. John Crowley (1999) describes such processes as actively contributing to the “dirty work of boundary making.” They inscribe who is included/excluded and entitled/not entitled to belong to a particular social group and the benefits or losses they will experience as a result of being thus identified (Halse et al. 2018).

The dilemma inherent to the category conundrum is that stepping beyond the confines of a particular category or unraveling the knotty problems it creates can appear to be an impossibility. In the end, the only way forward is to expose the workings, boundaries, and effects of social categories; to contest, challenge, and resist their logic and purpose; to shatter their reason for being; and thereby to resurrect the hope for reconceptualizing how societies can be reorganized and the possibilities for social equity.

4 Contesting, Challenging, and Resisting Categories

It is such resistance that is a particular strength of this collection. The chapters unpack the operation and effects of ethnicity and language as social categories in societies in Asia; the ways these boundaries are created, overcome, or maintained; and the implications for educational inequalities. In doing so, the authors uncover sophisticated, nuanced insights into the “diversity of diversity.” They reveal the

variations between individuals who are defined in terms of their ethnic identity and challenge any preconceptions that all ethnic minorities are the “same” and that all ethnic minority youth live in identical socioeconomic contexts and share the same experiences and aspirations.

As the authors highlight, in education and policy circles, majority language education for minorities is viewed variously as a strategy for integration, assimilation, empowerment, and/or social cohesion. Yet majority language education is also a means of defining the identities and boundaries between minority and majority populations. This has dual effects. On the one hand, majority language education can be an inclusive strategy and the means for equipping minorities with the language skills to succeed in school, society, and life. As the examples of China and Cambodia reveal (see Chaps. 4 and 5), bilingual and trilingual language education has contributed to educational equity by developing the social, cultural, and academic capital of ethnic minority youth. It affirms young people’s linguistic and cultural identities while also equipping them with language skills for success at school, in accessing tertiary education, gaining employment, and achieving economic security in the future.

On the other hand, majority language education policies are also threaded with a deficit discourse. They insinuate that the inability to speak/write the majority language is a deficiency of ethnic minorities and assign young people responsibility for addressing this deficit and any consequent suffering or social and educational exclusion they experience if they fail to do so. Such deflection of responsibility is apparent not only in language education policy but also in the attitudes and behaviors of majority individuals, including children, in relation to minority groups (see Halse 2017).

Majority language learning, however, is not regarded as equally beneficial by all ethnic minority students (see Chaps. 2 and 3). In Hong Kong, for example, the value attached to the mandatory requirement to learn Cantonese in school is socioeconomically stratified. It is more valued by minority youth from poor, working-class families because the dominant language is necessary to access lower-paid, local employment, for example, as a construction worker or a shop assistant. However, it is less valued by affluent, globally aspirational minority youth who see their futures tied to the strong mastery of English they view as necessary to access and succeed at an elite university in Hong Kong or overseas and to secure future employment in a multinational organization in a global employment market.

Nevertheless, the privileging of majority language learning inevitably diminishes the transnational linguistic capital of ethnic minorities and the benefits of this capital for a society – a point made by contributors to this collection. The privileging of majority language also ignores how education structures undermine the ability of ethnic minority students to succeed in learning the dominant language and thereby perpetuate educational inequalities. This is evident in Hong Kong, for example, where expertise in written and spoken Chinese is mandatory for all students and often required for university entrance but schools are differentiated based on student ethnicity and medium of instruction (English, Cantonese, or Putonghua (Mandarin), where Chinese and non-Cantonese-speaking students are segregated for language

classes, study different language curricula, and have to meet different competency requirements (see Chap. 2). Majority language learning policies also invariably ignore other social mechanisms that marginalize and disadvantage minorities to produce educational inequities. These include immigration laws that limit/prevent naturalization or citizenship, making it difficult to secure a local passport and access the welfare, health, and housing benefits available to the social majority (Chaps. 8 and 15). Such policies also ignore how repeated racialized micro-aggressions and racism shape the self-esteem and identity of ethnic minority youth, undermine their sense of belonging, encourage early school leaving, and thereby undercut their potential for educational success and achievement (see Chap. 11).

In these ways, educational policy, structures, and systems face a fundamental challenge. They carry the potential to address the inequities that ethnic minority students experience in education. They are also a means by which ethnic minority students are designated outsiders and others to the social majority; ethnocultural differences and boundaries are solidified as the social norm, and education inequities are preserved and perpetuated (Halse et al. 2018).

5 Where to from Here?

Contributors to this collection point to the need to further illuminate the diverse complexity in the positionality and experiences within and between ethnic minorities, to move beyond categories that homogenize and fail to recognize the diversity among ethnic minority youth, and to create policies and practices that nurture educational equity in the distinctive but varied social, political, and cultural conditions of different societies in Asia.

One way forward is to respond to the need for rootedness or belonging by ethnic minorities. This is a desirable, necessary goal but one that requires a broad social lens. Belonging is constructed at the “intersection between the self and the social [and] produced through the co-constitutive interaction of individuals with other people, things, institutions and specific socio-cultural contexts” (Halse 2018b, p. 4). Unraveling how belonging is produced, sustained, or destabilized, what it means and how it is experienced by ethnic minority youth, and the consequences for their educational achievement and future life chances involve close interrogation of uncomfortable, controversial issues. These include discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, racism, inequalities and inequities in education and society, and the possibilities for social justice. This is an especially difficult task if, as theorists and events in the global north suggest, racial classification, racial thinking, and racial/ethnic tensions lie “close to the surface, ready to spring into action” (Amin 2010, p. 1). It is equally difficult if “fears of social fragmentation along ethno-religious lines” compel governments to act to prevent “attacks on their social fabric” in ways that curtail liberty and equity for individuals (Ramakrishna 2008, p. 2).

Such conditions cannot be resolved simply by transporting multicultural or intercultural policies and practices developed in the global north to Asia. New approaches

need to be developed that attend to and are based on the distinctive social and political contexts and cultural heritages and traditions within Asia. It is only by these means that we can begin to address – as the contributors to this collection do – what Bauman (1993) describes as the “burning question” of contemporary life: How to live with the changing diversity within societies on a permanent, daily basis (p. 399).

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