

**AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF HUI, TIBETAN, AND UYGHUR
COLLEGE STUDENT ACCULTURATION IN A PREDOMINANTLY HAN
PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN CENTRAL CHINA**

A Dissertation

by

DIEGO JOSE GARCIA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Yvonna S. Lincoln
Co-Chair of Committee,	Elsa M. Gonzalez y Gonzalez
Committee Members,	Christine A. Stanley
	Antonio C. La Pastina
Head of Department,	Fredrick Nafukho

August 2016

Major Subject: Educational Administration

Copyright 2016 Diego Jose Garcia

ABSTRACT

Even though the People's Republic of China has instituted national policies to provide greater higher education access to Chinese ethnic minorities and facilitate greater maintenance of ethnic minority cultures, limited research exists that examines acculturation and stress coping processes of ethnic minority college students, particularly Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, as they transition from their native communities and autonomous regions to predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education located in urban areas of Central China.

The purpose of the study is to deconstruct the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students enrolled in a predominantly Han public research university in Central China. A discourse on acculturation experiences of ethnic minority college students in predominantly Han universities is critical to developing institutional policies that embrace cultural sensitivity of ethnic minority students in China; adequately represent the heritage of ethnic minorities and help them preserve their cultural integrity; link the content of the education to ethnic minorities' values and worldviews; and ensure that ethnic minorities have the academic and social support in their institutions of higher learning.

The methodological framework that informed the study is a constructivist, naturalistic perspective. The sample consisted of 29 respondents of which 22 were Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur Xi'an Jiaotong University students, and seven Xi'an Jiaotong University staff. Data was derived primarily from two sources: interviews with

respondents; and observations of participants and campus of Xi'an Jiaotong University prior to, during, and after interview sessions. Salient conclusions of the researcher included: Cultural distance is a significant moderating factor impacting how Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents adapt to a predominantly Han university in Central China; the narratives of most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents portrayed a campus climate that is indifferent to their feelings of isolation and loneliness, and where Uyghur students, in particular, prominently encountered microaggressions, passive discrimination and exclusion; Uyghur and Tibetan students have lost confidence in their academic abilities and experience dejection due to rigorous academic demands, partly due to their lack of English and Mandarin proficiency; Xi'an Jiaotong University does not provide sufficient academic and social support to Tibetan and Uyghur students.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wife and daughter whose untiring encouragement and loving support kept my eyes fixed on the grand summit of the doctoral journey. I am eternally indebted to my mother and father for their unconditional love from which I mustered the strength to embark on this journey. I honor my grandparents, especially my grandfather, Papuli, who knew the importance of lifelong learning, and whose words, “put your head down and learn something”, have resonated with me since my teenage years.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to recognize my dissertation committee Co-Chairs, Dr. Yvonna S. Lincoln and Dr. Elsa Gonzalez y Gonzalez, whose advice, guidance and mentorship aided the writing of this study in immeasurable ways. I also wish to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Christine A. Stanley and Dr. Antonio C. La Pastina, for their unwavering support while I pursued a PhD degree at Texas A&M University. I acknowledge my dear colleague, Dr. Marisa Suhm, for her insightful comments and valuable contributions during the making of this dissertation.

I extend my most profound gratitude to the Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants of this study, whose voices will give courage and hope to other *shao shu minzu* students in China. I offer my sincere appreciation to the students, staff, and leaders of Xi'an Jiaotong University, particularly Dr. Gong Hui, who generously supported my dissertation over the last three years.

Agradezco inmensamente el amor que me han brindado mis hermanos (Mickey, Niza y Monica), y doy gracias por la amistad de los Bros (Mike Apel, Francisco Cuadros, Santiago Garcés, Gabriel Montenegro, Práxedes Rivera y Oswaldo Voysest), Felipe Errázuriz y Kevin Rhodes, quienes me han apoyado desde mi juventud y han compartido conmigo los momentos más felices de mi vida.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Conceptual Framework	8
Research Questions	13
Significance of the Study, and Objectives	14
Contents of the Study	16
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE	17
Ethnic Minority Acculturation Research in Higher Education in China	17
Educational Context: Relevant Ethnic Minority Research in Primary and Secondary Schools in China	22
Cultural Context: Hui, Tibetan, Uyghur Culture	26
Historical Context: Overview of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur Socioeconomic Conditions	33
Religious Context: Significance of Religion among Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan Populations	35
Political Context: China’s Policies toward Ethnic Minority Populations Post-World War II	39
Higher Education Context: Brief History of Higher Education in China Prior to 1911	48
Higher Education in China Post-1911 and Ethnic Minority College Enrollment	49
Higher Education Financing in China since 1978	55

College Access and Affordability Barriers for Minorities in China	57
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY	62
Employing Naturalistic Inquiry	62
Research Design	66
Site selection, respondents, and sampling	69
Introducing the study to respondents and developing interview questions	74
Data Collection	75
Interviews	76
Observations	78
Records and documents	79
Researcher reflexivity	79
Member checking	80
Peer debriefing	81
Assurance of confidentiality	82
Data Analysis	82
Unitizing data	83
Coding	83
Categorization and developing patterns	84
Identifying themes	87
Building Trustworthiness	93
Credibility	94
Transferability	96
Dependability and confirmability	97
Working Hypotheses	98
CHAPTER IV DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	100
The Participants	101
Hui students	103
Uyghur students	113
Tibetan students	125
Xi'an Jiaotong University staff	134
The Findings	140
Research question one: What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?	140

Research question two: How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?	166
Research question three: What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?	179
Summary of Findings	182
Research question one: What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?	183
Research question two: How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?	185
Research question three: What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?	186
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	188
Summary	188
Conclusions	190
Research question one: What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?	190
Research question two: How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur	

students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?	195
Research question three: What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?	197
Implications	198
Implications for practice	198
Implications for PRC policies	201
Implications for methodological design	203
Recommendations	203
Academic support	203
Social integration	204
Cultural recognition and cultural identity	205
Recommendations for institutional change: Cultural and institutional demands of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students	209
REFERENCES	211
APPENDIX A	223
APPENDIX B	226
APPENDIX C.....	229
APPENDIX D.....	239
APPENDIX E.....	245

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1	Berry's Bi-dimensional Conceptual Framework	12
Figure 2	Map of Ethnic Minority Dispersion in China	32
Figure 3	Sample of a Unit Card	84
Figure 4	Sample of a Data Card from the Study	86

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1	Chinese Language Groups	28
Table 2	Population Name, Size, and Location of China's Ethnic Minority Nationalities	30
Table 3	Higher Education Institutions and Total College Enrollments in China, 1949-1977	52
Table 4	Ethnic Minority Students at PRC Higher Education Institutions, 1949-1996	53
Table 5	Higher Education Institutions and Total College Enrollments in China, 1978-2006	54
Table 6	Higher Education Government Appropriations and Tuition Rates in China, 1996-2008	57
Table 7	Coomer's Essential Features for Analyzing Interpretive Research	68
Table 8	Ethnic Minority Students Who Participated in the Study	74
Table 9	Categories of the Study	87
Table 10	Emergent Themes of the Study	88
Table 11	Units of Data for Identified Themes of the Study	89
Table 12	Participants in the Study by Interview Number, Student Ethnicity, University Staff, and Pseudonym	103

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have examined cultural characteristics of ethnic minority (*shao shu minzu* -少数民族) groups in the People's Republic of China (PRC), and other studies have widely examined historical, social, economic, and political disadvantages and inequalities ethnic minorities or nationality populations face in the PRC (Zhou & Hill, 2009; Mackerras, 2003 & 1995; Heberer, 1989; Yi, 2008; Trueba & Zhou, 1994; and Postiglione, 1995). Other scholarly works have addressed higher education reforms in China and the impact these reforms have had on ethnic minority populations from an economic and social perspective (Wang, et al., 2011). The research is very limited, however, on the acculturation challenges that ethnic minority college students encounter in predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education in China as they adjust to life in college campuses outside of their native communities.

The People's Republic of China is a complex, multicultural, and polylingual country bordering 13 diverse nations, and populated by 55 officially recognized non-dominant ethnic groups or ethnic minority populations, each possessing distinct cultural differences that are divided into a myriad of ethnic subgroups that speak at least 128 languages (Sun, Hu, & Huang, 2007). The dominant ethnic group in China are the Han people (汉 [漢]), who constitute 91% of the total PRC population, while non-dominant ethnic groups, *shao shu minzu* (少数民族) (literally, peoples with small populations relative to the Han majority), comprise about 9% of the total PRC population,

representing approximately 110 million inhabitants (Sautman, 1999). When Chinese authors refer to a specific subgroup, they use the term *minzu*, which was first used in the late 19th century (Mackerras, 1995) and is invariably translated as race, nationality, and more recently, ethnic group (Zhou & Hill, 2009). In this study, *shao shu minzu* denotes all ethnic groups that do not belong to the majority Han nationality in the PRC.

Most ethnic minority or nationality populations in the PRC live in sparsely populated, underdeveloped, and remote areas that are among the poorest regions of the country, mostly in the country's borders, including the five Autonomous Regions of Xinjiang Uyghur, Tibet, Ningxia Hui, Guangxi Zhuang, and Inner Mongolia (Lee, 2001). The 10 numerically largest ethnic minority groups (Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uyghur, Tujia, Yi, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Buyi) represent about 76% of the total ethnic minority population. Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan populations are of particular interest in the current study as they represent the third-, fifth-, and ninth-largest minority ethnic groups in China, respectively.

Hui, Tibetans, Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities have coexisted with Han people for centuries. Han people have exchanged cultural ties with Uyghur people since the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- 220 A.D.), when they occupied territories of China's western region, the native land of Uyghur people (Yin, 1994). Tibetan people established ties with Han people beginning in the Tang Dynasty (618 A.D.-907 A.D.), and have been subjected to Han rule since the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368 A.D.) in the 13th century. Hui people migrated to China from Arab regions and Persia in the 7th century under the Tang Dynasty, then dispersed throughout all of China (Heberer, 1989).

Hui and Uyghur account for 90% of the Muslim population in China. Hui (around 10.9 million inhabitants) are primarily Sinophone and speak Mandarin, and are the most broadly distributed geographically of all minority groups (excluding the Gaoshan). The Uyghur (9.5 million inhabitants), on the other hand, primarily reside in northwest China in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and speak a Turkic language that belongs to the Altaic language group (Poston, Chang, Deng, & Venegas, 2012; & Heberer, 1989). The Tibetan ethnic groups reside mostly in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, practice Buddhism, and speak Tibetan, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese language group (Heberer, 1989).

Serious inequalities in education exist between ethnic minorities and the Han population (Lee, 2001). While illiteracy rates vary considerably among ethnic minority populations, on average, the illiteracy rate of ethnic minority groups (15.7%) is twice as much as that of the Han (7.3%) (Poston, Chang, Deng, & Venegas, 2014). Children in most ethnic minority groups go on to secondary and tertiary education far less frequently than their Han counterparts (Lee, 2001). Many ethnic minority students who persist and make it to college lack standard Chinese language skills (Adamson & Feng, 2009). Some ethnic minority college students stay in their native provinces or autonomous regions in China to pursue tertiary education, while others engage in difficult journeys from impoverished, peripheral, and isolated rural villages or regions to pursue higher education in predominantly Han universities in inland provinces. A small percentage of ethnic minority students attend national universities outside of their homeland (Sautman, 1998).

In response to education disparities in ethnic minority populations, the PRC has built a network of 15 “Universities for Nationalities” or “Institutes for Nationalities,” six at the national level and nine at the provincial or municipal level (Rhoads & Chang, 2014), including the five Autonomous Regions of China (Tibet, Xinjiang Uyghur, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia Hui, and Guangxi Zhuang). These *minzu* institutions of higher education fill the strategic national function of addressing the diverse needs of the PRC’s ethnic minority population, including access to higher education for ethnic minority students, and promoting ethnic minority culture, language, and history (Rhoads & Chang, 2014). There are 76 higher education institutions in areas with large minority populations (Postiglione, 1995).

The PRC has also established preferential policies that may include provision of extra financial subsidies, textbooks, instruction, and examinations in minority languages; boarding schools (*neidi*) for ethnic minorities in remote areas; admission quotas; and preparatory classes (*yuke ban*) at colleges and universities that benefit ethnic minority students over Han students (Tsung & Clarke, 2010; Postiglione, 2009). According to PRC national education policies, provincial committees with jurisdiction over university admissions are authorized to grant ethnic minority students from remote areas bonus marks in the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (*gaokao*, 高考), and mandate lower college admission cutoff scores (Adamson & Xia, 2011). These policies are designed “to compensate for the scarcity of higher education institutions in minority areas and to integrate minority groups with Han Chinese for the sake of national unity” (Hu, 1970). By lowering the cutoff scores, granting bonus scores to ethnic minority

college applicants, setting college admission quotas, and providing remedial classes, the Chinese government addresses issues of equal access to higher education and tackles uneven distribution of financial and educational resources in ethnic minority areas. (Wang, 2009; Sautman, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Research that documents the social, economic, and political inequalities ethnic minority populations endure in Chinese society is widely available. Extensive studies have also examined the successes and failures of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) education policies toward ethnic minorities, particularly those to promote ethnic languages and culture for purposes of political stability, and other national education policies that require standard Chinese as the *lingua franca* among all Chinese citizens for national strategic economic development purposes (Adamson & Feng, 2009).

Even though the PRC has instituted national policies to increase higher education access to Chinese ethnic minorities and facilitate greater maintenance of ethnic minority cultures, only very limited research exists that examines the acculturation, cultural adaptation, and stress-coping processes of ethnic minority college students, particularly Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, as they transition from their native communities and autonomous regions to predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education located in urban areas of Central China.

A discourse on acculturation experiences of ethnic minority college students in predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education is critical to developing institutional policies that embrace cultural sensitivity of ethnic minority

students in China; adequately represent the heritage of ethnic minorities and help them preserve their cultural integrity; link the content of the education to ethnic minorities' values and worldviews; and ensure that ethnic minorities have sufficient academic and social support in their institutions of higher learning (Postiglione, 1999).

Purpose of the Study

The current study is an exploratory, naturalistic inquiry that engaged thick description (Geertz, 1973) of socially constructed realities experienced by Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students in Xi'an Jiaotong University in Xi'an, a predominantly Han public research university in a large city in Central China. Thick description in the current study involved understanding the acculturation singularities and nuances of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students and interpreting their behavior and interactions.

Geertz (1973) describes thick description as an imaginative act or a process of construction in which the researcher deciphers the actions and behavior of informants in natural settings. It entails clarifying what is transpiring in natural settings where the researcher can reduce the "puzzlement" and unlock the unfamiliar acts that naturally emerge. This study captured inscriptions of social discourse and meanings of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students, while fixing the description in writing so that it could be recorded and analyzed for future researchers for the purpose of enabling "the meaningful expansion of knowledge" in lieu of generalization (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

This task of engaging in the construction of social realities is in some respects elusive. As Geertz (1973) humbly stated, the deeper we delve into the process of

cultural analysis or ethnography, the less complete we realize it is (Spradley, 1980).

Guba (in Lincoln & Guba, 2013) states that “no matter how careful and thorough we are in our explanation, we cannot seem to get across everything that we might have wanted ...” The constructions of acculturation processes practiced by Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students within the context of a Han-dominant university setting in a large city in Central China represented the best the author of this study could do to communicate his interpretations.

This effort, however, is a moving target, so to speak, since social constructions change faster than a researcher can define them (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Because social constructions are subject to continuous change as “available information and sophistication improve” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), the descriptive interpretations and meanings unveiled in this study cannot entirely encompass what the author has set out to accomplish. The author’s hope is that he has constructed a platform that will give voice and recognition to Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students, while making a small, yet valuable, contribution to the research body of ethnography and social science in higher education settings of China.

The purpose of the study is to understand and deconstruct the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students enrolled in a predominantly Han public research university in Central China. The purpose is not to generalize the findings, but to contextualize the acculturation dimensions of ethnic minorities in a predominantly Han public research institutions of higher learning.

When students in the United States transition from secondary to post-secondary institutions, they experience adjustments to new academic and social environments, often developing their identity and purpose, and building mature interpersonal relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In addition to the common challenges in transitioning to college life, minority students in the United States usually experience additional difficulties that often hinder their ability to persist to graduation. Very often, these students experience an aloof campus environment, face exclusion and alienation, have strained relationships with faculty and peers, and face racial microaggressions and discrimination (Palmer, Maramba, & Holmes, 2011). Just as it is critical for higher education administrators and policy makers to understand how minority students adapt to college life in predominantly White research institutions of higher education in the United States, it is equally significant to understand how ethnic minority students in China transition to college campuses in predominantly Han public research universities.

Conceptual Framework

Much of the literature on acculturation has focused on the many conceptual frameworks that illustrate central factors that influence the adaptation of an individual or cultural group into host cultures or the changes that take place in response to environmental demands (Berry, 1997). While the author's own constructions and sense-making activities and those of the Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants have been uncovered and mutually explored through a hermeneutic or interpretive process, and constructions have been compared and contrasted dialectically using various research methods such as interviews, observations, and documentary analysis, this study has

applied a conceptual framework to shed light on the acculturation experiences Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan college students encounter in a predominantly Han research university in Central China. The conceptual framework of the study is grounded in Berry's (1997) acculturation and stress-coping framework.

Berry's framework operates from the assumption that cultural groups in pluralistic or diverse societies in many cases do not share power equally (numerically, economically, or politically), as is the case between Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur non-dominant populations, and the dominant Han population in China. (The terms dominant and non-dominant in Berry's conceptual framework refer to the relative power differences that exist between cultural groups.)

Definitions of acculturation have evolved over time (Zhang & Goodson, 2010). Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) in the 1930s defined acculturation as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come in continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups."

Graves (1967) makes a distinction between acculturation as a collective or group-level phenomenon, and at the individual level, which he labels "psychological acculturation." Graves notes that changes in worldviews of group members result from engagement with other, culturally different groups. Group acculturation is a change in the culture of the group, while individual acculturation is a change in the psychology of a person.

Berry (1997) refers to acculturation as the cultural changes resulting from group

engagement as individuals who live in one cultural environment manage to adapt to new cultural environments after migration. Berry defines psychological acculturation and adaptation as the psychological changes and resulting outcomes that occur as a consequence of individuals experiencing acculturation. According to Berry, adaptation refers to changes that occur in persons or groups in response to environmental demands. Adaptions may be manifested in divergent forms, with some acculturating individuals or groups establishing a “fit” in new cultural contexts, while other groups or individuals may experience conflict resulting in acculturative stress.

Ward (1996) described acculturation as the amount of culture-related beliefs, customs, or behaviors adapted by a non-dominant group member that are part of the host or dominant culture. More recently, research by Kim and Abreu (2001) referred to acculturation as the changes that an individual experiences in values, cultural identity, norms, and behavior, and knowledge resulting from contact with another culture.

Berry (1997) differentiates cultural groups in terms of voluntariness, mobility, and permanence. Some groups become part of the acculturation process voluntarily (e.g., immigrants), while other cultural groups experience acculturation involuntarily (e.g., refugees and indigenous people). Other groups, such as immigrants or refugees, interact because they have migrated to a new location, while others have had the host culture brought to them, such as indigenous groups and “national minorities,” as is the case for Tibetan and Uyghur people. Third, among cultural groups who have migrated, such as immigrants, some are permanently settled into the process of acculturation, as is the case for Hui people, while for others, the process is temporary, such as for

guest workers.

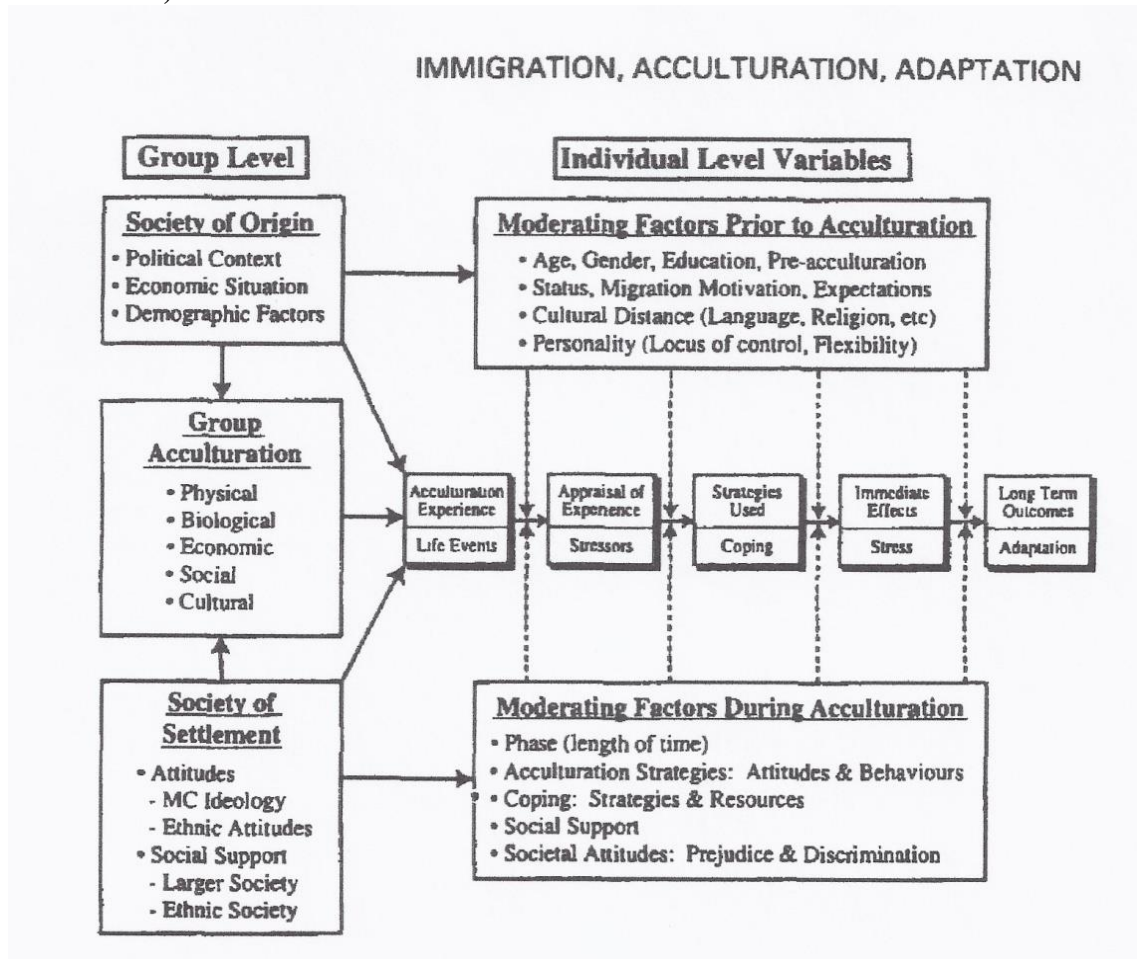
Berry's bi-dimensional conceptual framework considers social or situational variables at the group level, and personal variables at the individual level, that exist in the society of origin, the society of settlement, and factors that together exist prior to, and emerge during, the course of acculturation. At the individual level, Berry's framework describes cross-cultural experience as a significant life event characterized by stress, requiring appraisal of acculturation stressors, and resulting in affective, behavioral, and mental coping reactions. The framework, shown in Figure 1, helps identify those variables that act as stressors and deter the migrant's adaptation to new cultural contexts. The framework helps migrants identify strategies to cope with their stresses.

At the group level, elements of the society of settlement and society of origin are noteworthy in the framework. Political, economic, and demographic conditions that impact individuals in their society of origin need to be discussed, and the degree to which these conditions influence the individual's acculturation is equally important, as well as the social supports available to non-dominant groups.

The framework also considers coping strategies, social support, and acculturation strategies as moderating factors that unfold during the sojourner's acculturation process. Berry (1997) identifies four acculturation strategies: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Individuals in non-dominant groups employ an assimilation strategy when they do not wish to maintain their original cultural identity, but desire

daily interaction with other cultures.

Figure 1. Berry's Bi-Dimensional Conceptual Framework (reprinted from Berry, 1997)



On the other hand, when individuals wish to hold on to their original culture, and simultaneously wish to avoid daily interactions with other cultures, the separation strategy is defined. When an individual wishes to both interact with other cultures and maintain the original culture, an integration strategy is preferred. Finally, when an

individual does not wish to engage in cultural maintenance (particularly for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and wishes to have limited interaction with others (for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then marginalization occurs. The study has identified acculturation strategies that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students experience as they settle into a predominantly Han research university.

The task of the study involved the engagement of an acculturation and stress-coping conceptual framework to understand adaptation, stress, and coping processes that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students experience as they sojourn from their native communities in China to Xi'an Jiaotong University, a predominantly Han public research university located in a large city in Central China.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study:

1. What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?
2. How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?

3. What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?

Significance of the Study, and Objectives

The study is important and relevant for several reasons. First, no literature exists that considers the acculturation and cultural adaptation perspectives of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students within the context of a predominantly Han public higher education research institution in Central China. Consequently, greater understanding is needed on the experiences of these ethnic minority college students in predominantly Han research universities in Central China.

A few studies have examined how Tibetan college students in a Han-predominated national key university in east China cultivate self-worth by claiming their cultural identity (Yi & Wang, 2012); another study analyzed how various ethnic minority students in a predominately Han university in Beijing participate and defend citizen rights and strive for social change (Zhao, 2010); and other research has studied the relationship between identity construction and education attainment among college ethnic minorities from Yunnan (Lee, 2001).

Second, the study draws acculturation comparisons among Tibetan students and students from the two largest Muslim groups in China, within the context of a predominantly Han public higher education research institution in Central China. This type of research has never been documented. Because Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur student

populations are relatively well represented in the research site of the study, the author chose to study these three ethnic groups.

Third, the study adds new knowledge about acculturation characteristics of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur ethnic minority groups. Because the methodical grounding of the inquiry is naturalistic, and therefore value-bound, the author's own values and the values of the Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants have been uncovered and made transparent as they created and co-created knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The author's motives were unveiled and shared with Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents, and the author's own social and political agendas were disclosed from the beginning.

Naturalistic research is an interactive process carried out by the inquirers and inquired upon, and shaped by their personal perspectives, norms, history, social class, race, and ethnicity (Lincoln & Denzin, 2011). The author's own values as a researcher are intermingled with social justice motives, with a moral *raison d'être*, a desire to "level the playing field" for Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur populations.

The statements that emerged as significant objectives in the study were to:

1. Understand the acculturation difficulties Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students encounter in Xi'an Jiaotong University, a predominantly Han public university located in Xi'an, a large city in Central China.
2. Examine stress, coping, appraisal, and adaptation of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students in the context of individual and group influences such as: a) age, b) gender, c) coping strategies, d) command of the Mandarin language, e) length

of stay, f) college degree, g) expectations, h) acculturation style, i) social support, j) society of origin and settlement, and other influences.

3. Identify Xi'an Jiaotong University's policies, services, and social integration programs that facilitate or impair the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.
4. Understand how the college experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students in a predominantly Han research university provide valuable lessons for improving diversity programs and services for ethnic minority students in China.

Contents of the Study

The study is reported in five chapters. Chapter I presents an overview of the problem. Chapter II is a review of the scholarly literature, which provides a historical review of the PRC's education policies toward ethnic minority groups, and describes the social, political, demographic, economic, and cultural context and dimensions of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur groups in China. The methodology that grounded the study is described in Chapter III. Chapter IV reports the data analysis and the findings derived from interviews with Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students and staff at Xi'an Jiaotong University, a predominantly Han public research institution of higher education in Central China, and reports data analysis derived from observations and documents from the research site. The study also contains thick descriptions of the city and campus, and participants in the study. The last chapter has a summary of the findings, as well as conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ethnic Minority Acculturation Research in Higher Education in China

No scholarly studies exist documenting acculturation experiences of *shao shu minzu*, 少數民族) or national minorities, particularly Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students within the context of predominantly Han public research higher education environments in Central China, particularly the Shaanxi Province. Limited numbers of studies have looked at cultural experiences of *shao shu minzu* college students in higher education environments across other geographic regions of China.

A recent, qualitative study by Zhenzhou Zhao (2010), *China's Mongols at University: Contesting Cultural Recognition*, examined social and ethnic inequalities in higher education revolving around the college experiences of Mongol students at three universities in the PRC. The author adopts Nancy Frazer's (1989) model to analyze the concepts of cultural recognition, misrecognition, and discourse analysis. Misrecognition in Frazer's model as status subordination is addressed "by establishing the misrecognition party as a full member of society, capable of participating on par with the rest." (Zhao, 2010). Zhao analyzes policy and student discourse within the context of dichotomy, identifying inconsistencies between the discourse of higher education policies and the discourse of students. Zhao found two contrasting discourses related to cultural recognition of ethnic Mongols; that is, the institution's discourse and the ethnic Mongols' discourse. On the one hand, the university's discourse maintained that ethnic

minority students are respected, supported, and united, whereas ethnic Mongol students experienced discrimination and bias both on campus and off campus, and perceived that university Han faculty and students were unconcerned about minority cultures.

Another qualitative study by Zhao (2010) documented the college experiences of ethnic minority Mongol students in Inner Mongolia Normal University, Beijing Normal University in Beijing, and South China University for Nationalities, in the province of Hubei. These universities represent the three types of universities in China, similar to the Soviet Model developed in the 1950s (Zhao, 2010): Type I universities located in ethnic areas, Type II regular universities (such as Xi'an Jiaotong University), and Type III universities for ethnic minority groups or nationalities. The study explored how ethnic minority Mongol students participated and defended citizen rights in higher education institutions, and adopted Sewell's theory of structure to weigh how state creations of citizenship may be utilized as resources, and applied a microsociological approach to visualize the interactions of different social actors (state-party, higher education institutions, and ethnic minority students).

In her book, *Ethnicity, Education, and Empowerment: How Minority Students in Southwest China Construct Identities*, Maryjo Benton Lee (2001) provided a compelling qualitative case study about the relationship between identity construction and education attainment primarily among Yi, Bai, Naxi, and Zhuang ethnic minority college students in Yunnan Normal University, in the Southwest Province of Yunnan. This book focuses on ethnic minority students in Yunnan who succeed in college despite significant economic, political, and social obstacles.

Benton Lee introduced the theoretical background of symbolic interactionism, employing it as a framework to answer her research questions, particularly how minority college students in the Yunnan Province succeed in institutions of higher learning. The seminal work of Henry T. Trueba and Yali Zou, *Power in Education: The Case of Miao University Students and Its Significance for American Culture* (1994), played a central role in Benton Lee's research and her own examination of ethnicity, education, and empowerment. Trueba and Zhou (1994) examined the college experiences of Miao students within the context of two higher education institutions for ethnic minorities: Beijing Central University for Nationalities and Guizhou Institute for Nationalities. Benton Lee modified and extended Trueba and Zou's theoretical identity construction model to develop a new framework that illustrates how the construction of identity, what she labels as "achievement-oriented selves," helps ethnic minority students succeed in college. Benton Lee also applied Wiseman's (1991) organizational framework to examine the process by which minority students overcome social obstacles, particularly by examining how minority students look up to their reference groups for identity constructions.

Yi and Wang's (2012) qualitative research explored the barriers undergraduate Tibetan students encounter in a predominantly Han research university in the Fujian Province, and how participating in volunteer activities helps Tibetan students build feelings of self-worth. The findings of the study highlight some insightful constructions of Tibetan students who struggle to adapt to college life in a predominantly Han research

University in Fujian Province. Yi and Wang's study provided some valuable comparisons for the present study.

Tsung and Clarke (2010) studied the dilemmas of language, culture, and identity experienced by Uyghur academics at Xinjiang University in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region (XUAR). The authors found that Uyghur academics who took the college entrance examination (*gaokao*) in their native language and who attended primary school in their native language, a phenomenon known as the *min kao min*, expressed that they were at a great disadvantage academically and in their professional careers compared to Uyghur academics who followed the *min kao han* track (ethnic minority students who took the college entrance examination in Chinese and who attended predominantly Han primary schools). *Min kao min* academics also complained that they had fewer academic majors to choose from when they enrolled in higher education due to their poor Chinese language skills. While *min kao han* academics believed they had greater opportunities to select a wider range of academic majors and had better job opportunities after graduation, they were disillusioned about their primary school experiences and felt they had "lost their childhood" due to the academic hardships and learning difficulties they endured while competing with their Han classmates.

Tsung and Clarke also found community divisions and cultural identity dilemmas between *min kao min* and *min kao han* academics. Mother tongue education appears to have strengthened the cultural identity of the former, while Chinese-language education seems to have separated the latter from their cultural and ethnic heritage. *Min kao min*

academics protested the condescending behavior of their counterparts and deplored their allegiance to Han customs. The study clearly underscores how differences in educational backgrounds “led to each group growing up in different linguistic and cultural worlds, resulting in a situation where these two Uyghur groups are divided both socially and culturally” (Tsung & Clarke, 2010).

Clothey’s (2005) research examined how *min kao min* (ethnic minority students who experienced bilingual instruction prior to entering college) and *min kao han* (ethnic minority students who studied under a Chinese-only curriculum before entering college) at the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing negotiate mainstream national values and their ethnic identities. Clothey’s salient findings revealed that many ethnic minorities, including Tibetan, Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongolian, and Kirghiz students, who pursued linguistic majors—both *min kao han* and *min kao min*—demonstrated frustration that their ethnic minority culture was eroding due to the prevailing political and economic significance of the Chinese language. Clothey’s study also revealed that *min kao han* who pursued studies in nonlinguistic majors perceived that their academic preparation made them more modern and marketable in the labor market than *min kao min* who studied minority languages and literature. However, *min kao han* believed it was necessary to preserve their language, which otherwise would be in danger of disappearing.

Educational Context: Relevant Ethnic Minority Research in Primary and Secondary Schools in China

Postiglione's (2009) seminal research with Tibetan and Uyghur populations provides insightful findings of ethnic minority student acculturation experiences in primary and secondary education that are relevant to the current study. Postiglione's research on ethnic minority boarding schools (*neidi*) in inland China has significant contextual relevance to the current study, since many of the respondents in the current study attended ethnic minority boarding schools. The respondents' experiences in *neidi* schools act both as a significant factor in the overall acculturation experience and ethnic integration of the respondents, and as a moderating factor prior to their acculturation experiences in higher education settings.

Tibetans and Uyghurs are of great importance to the PRC. They are among the largest minority groups in China, and while they occupy enormous areas of land rich in natural resources, particularly oil and gas, in western China, they live in underdeveloped economic conditions compared to the Han-populated regions of eastern China. Historically, Tibetan, and Uyghur life revolves around religion: Uyghurs in Xinjiang embrace Islam, and Tibetans, Buddhism. In addition to being at the center of longstanding strategic concerns, Tibetans and Uyghurs have experienced political struggles with the PRC, and both ethnic populations have harbored unwavering separatist movements (Zhou & Hill, 2009). For this reason, the Han central government has strong interests in pursuing political stability and integration efforts in Tibet and Xinjiang.

One of the most contentious PRC preferential policies (affirmed in 1987) has been the *neidi* (inland or hinterland) schools, or “dislocated,” boarding schools that have been established in ethnic Han-concentrated urban areas across China since 1985 to educate top young Tibetan students in mainstream curricula (Postiglione, 2009). *Neidi* schools provide access to better education for ethnic minority children who live in impoverished remote regions with substandard schools (Zhou & Hill, 2009). Ying (1984) reported that 20% of Tibet’s elementary school graduates in 1985 were dislocated from their native communities for junior secondary education across inland China, and 25,000 Tibetan students studied in 89 *neidi* schools in 20 provinces and municipalities (Xiangba, 2005). Building upon the outcomes of *neidi* schools established for Tibetan students, the PRC in 2000 set up similar *neidi* schools for students from the Xinjiang Uyghur Nationality Autonomous Region in 12 inland cities, including Beijing and Shanghai; each year 1,000 Xinjiang minority students enroll in *neidi* schools (Chen, 2008).

Postiglione (2009) argues that the establishment of *neidi* schools has much to do with a national push to “civilize” ethnic minority populations that ultimately dislocates *shao shu minzu* children from their homeland, as with the goal of providing educational access to underserved areas. Postiglione points out that ethnic minority families are not forced to send their children to *neidi* schools, but attendance is highly encouraged by PRC officials and Tibetan cadres as a means to expand ethnic minorities’ understanding of the motherland and achieve political stability and national unity; classes in *neidi* schools are ethnically segregated, and adhere to the common Chinese curriculum except

for Tibetan language and literature courses. Postiglione notes that while the purpose of *neidi* schools is to integrate Tibetans into mainstream Han culture, the ethnic composition of *neidi* classrooms does not reflect this.

Postiglione reported that *neidi* schools for Tibetan students typically display ethnic symbols on campus through murals, sculptures, and other artistic forms, and students are allowed to wear traditional dresses and sing Tibetan songs. While religious symbols are prohibited, students are given the opportunity to participate in Tibetan festivals on campus, and while most *neidi* schools offer Tibetan language and literature as a subject, Postiglione notes that there is limited will to promote the study of Tibetan language and literature. In fact, in Postiglione's study, many students reported that their Tibetan language ability had diminished, and some students regretted not being able to master their mother tongue. In essence, Postiglione recognizes that *neidi* schools adopted a weak and mostly token approach to culturally relevant education of Tibetans. Postiglione's salient findings suggest that Tibetan students acculturated to the dominant Han culture, but generally on their own terms. Namely, Tibetan students did not lose their desire to assert their ethnicity, though the weak approach reflected in *neidi* schools' efforts to transmit culturally relevant education to Tibetans made cultural recognition extremely challenging.

Chen and Postiglione (2009) examined Uyghur students in *neidi* schools through the lenses of social capital theory. Fukuyama (as cited in Chen and Postiglione, 2009) characterized social theory as "an instantiated set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits them to cooperate with one another." Chen and

Postiglione found that while the official position of *neidi* schools for Uyghur students was to maintain ethnic minority culture and ethnic languages, school practices pointed to a completely different outcome, with an emphasis placed on the Mandarin language and a general disregard for the maintenance of Uyghur and other ethnic minority languages. In spite of the significant effort placed on Chinese language as the premium form of instruction in *neidi* schools, the gap between Uyghur and local Han students, as with Tibetan students, in Chinese-language proficiency remains evident, and Chinese-language proficiency appears to be a distinct obstacle in Uyghur students' academic endeavors (Postiglione, 2009).

Chen and Postiglione (2009) found that Uyghur students constructed a bonding form of social capital as a response to the *neidi*'s goal of ethnic integration. This bonding social capital manifested itself in common ethnic norms of daily life; that is, the pervasiveness of the Uyghur spoken language after classes, the observance of Muslim dining and food styles, the preservation of gendered greeting rituals, and Uyghur students' resolve for Uyghur ethnic dressing customs. Postiglione and Chen's research indicates that religion played a significant role in explaining Uyghur ethnicity within the context of a Han mainstream boarding school. Maintaining Uyghur customs and Uyghur language allowed Uyghur students to experience a sense of belonging, sustained their Uyghur cultural identity, enhanced group solidarity, and provided a platform for engaging social capital.

Postiglione (2009) argues that *neidi* schools have revived awareness of ethnic heritage within the national framework, but this tactic could backfire if ethnic minorities

are unable to find stable job prospects in their homeland after graduation. The systematic dislocation of thousands of ethnic minority children in China from their native communities continues to be controversial, and more research is needed to understand the social, cultural, and psychological implications of *neidi* policy.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive literature appraisal of ethnic minority history in China, it is vital for purposes of contextualization to briefly outline salient characteristics of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur culture, ethnic minority policies, the significance of Islam and Buddhism in defining Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur identity, and sociopolitical and economic forces affecting Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur acculturation, particularly the cost of higher education for ethnic minorities in China.

Cultural Context: Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur Culture

Scholars who attempt to categorize ethnic minorities in the PRC would find that China is a conglomerate state developed from territorial conquest of the largest ethnic group, Han, and from a union between Han's multicultural populations over thousands of years. The origin of the dominant Han people emerged from the union of various ethnic groups. Ethnic groups living in the great Changjiang (Yangtze) and Huanghe (Yellow) river basins gradually fused into a distinct nationality known first as Hua and then as Han, that emerged as the dominant ethnic group in China (Fei, 1981). Ethnic minorities in China include indigenous and immigrant groups, national and religious clusters, groups living in a defined territory, clusters inhabiting a large area, groups living in border areas, and groups constituting regions within the dominant Han territory

(Heberer,1989). The vast and complex conformation of ethnic minority groups, as well as the diversity prevalent within each ethnic group, requires China to adopt a varied approach to understanding the distinct social and economic needs of each group and developing ethnic minority policies that take into account their unique and diverse cultural characteristics.

A quick review of the list of language groups represented in China in Table 1 illustrates the diversity of China's *shao shu minzu* (Heberer, 1989). Only two ethnic minority groups, the Hui and She, use the Han Chinese language and form of writing as their primary language; the Yugur use two different languages; and other ethnic groups, such as the Jing, so far have been classified in no language group. In addition, the Manchu language has been headed for extinction since the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) (Heberer, 1989).

Table 1. Chinese Language Groups (reprinted from Herber, 1989)

Language Group	Minorities
<i>Han</i>	Hui, She
<i>Sino-Tibetan</i>	
<i>Sino-Thai</i>	Zhuang, Bouyai, Dai, Li, Mulam, Shui, Dong, Maonan, Gelo
<i>Tibeto-Burmese</i>	Tibetan , Jingpo, Drung, Qiang, Yi, Hani, Lisu, Nu, Bai, Naxi, Jinuo, Lahu, Tujia, Achang, Moinba, Lhoba, Pumi
<i>Miao-Yao</i>	Miao, Yao
<i>Altaic</i>	
<i>Turkish</i>	Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Uzbek, Tatar, Salar, Yugur Mongolian,
<i>Mongolian</i>	Daur, Dongxiang, Tu, Bonan, Yugur Manchu, Xibe,
<i>Tungusic</i>	Hezhen, Oroqen, Ewenki
<i>Korean</i>	Korean
<i>Austriac</i>	
<i>Austro-Asiatic</i>	Va, Bulang, Deang
<i>Austronesian</i>	Gaoshan (Taiwan)
<i>Indo-European</i>	
<i>Iranian</i>	Tajic
<i>Slavic</i>	Russian

The PRC's 55 ethnic minority (*shao shu minzu*) groups constitute about 110 million people, or approximately 9% of the country's total population, according to the PRC's 2000 census (Sautman, 1999). China distinguishes ethnic minority groups from the Han majority on the basis of linguistic and cultural differences as described by Fei Xiao Tong, a notable Chinese anthropologist, who along with other anthropologists, ethnologists, and other researchers, was commissioned by the PRC after World War II to study the difficult and challenging task of identifying and categorizing China's ethnic

minority groups (Fei, 1981). Fei affirms that China's ethnic minority groups have experienced convoluted processes of growth and decline, settlement and migration, and integration and disintegration, since the founding of China during the Qin dynasty (221 B.C.-206 A.D.). Fei recognizes that the complex task of "ethnic identification remains unfulfilled" (Fei, 1981). Ethnic minority groups were categorized according to established fixed standards borrowed from Joseph Stalin's categories for describing ethnic minorities: a grouping of shared history and territory, common language, economic life, and culture (Clothey, 2005).

Most ethnic minorities reside in the nation's western half comprising 50-60% of China's total land area. However, ethnic minorities inhabit all 31 provinces of China. Table 2 (Poston, Chang, Deng, and Vanegas, 2013) lists alphabetically all ethnic groups in the PRC, including the Han *minzu* group, as well as the population size and location of each ethnic minority group, and Figure 2 (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2007) depicts the dispersion of China's major ethnic groups. The top nine largest ethnic minority groups by population size are the Zhuang (16.2 million), followed by the Manchu (10.6 million), Hui (9.8 million), Miao (8.9 million), Uyghur (8.4 million), Tujia (8 million), Yi (7.7 million), Mongolian (5.8 million), and Tibetan (5.4 million).

Historical factors account for the geographic dispersion of each ethnic minority group. Some of the Hui live in compact communities in the Ningxia province, but the rest are scattered virtually in all of China's 31 provinces. Poston, Chang, Deng, and Vanegas (2013) found that the Hui and Hezhen are among the most broadly geographically dispersed nationality groups in China, and the Uyghur, Kazakh, and

Deang have the least geographic dispersion among all the minority groups. That is, the Uyghur compared to the Hui are more likely to live quite concentrated in one geographic area. The Tibetan are moderately dispersed compared to other ethnic minority groups.

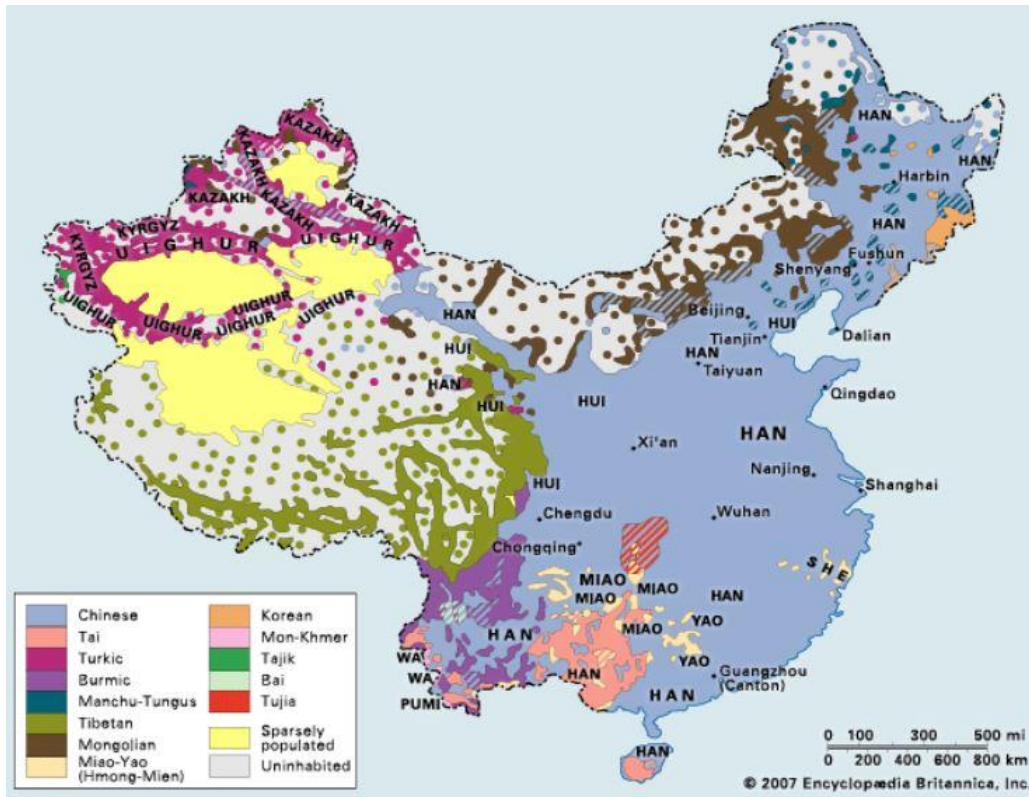
Table 2. Population Name, Size, and Location of China’s Ethnic Minority Nationalities, 2000 (reprinted from Poston, Chang, Deng, and Vanegas. 2013)

Group	2000 Pop	Principal Provincial Locations
Zhuang	16,178,811	Guangxi, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guizhou
Manchu	10,682,262	Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Hebei, Beijing, Inner Mongolia
Hui	9,816,805	Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Yunnan, Hebei, Shandong, Beijing, Tianjin
Miao	8,940,116	Guizhou, Yunnan, Hunan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Guangdong
Uyghur	8,399,393	Xinjiang
Tujia	8,028,133	Hunan, Hubei
Yi	7,762,272	Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi
Mongolian	5,813,947	Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Qinghai, Gansu
Tibetan	5,416,021	Tibet, Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan
Buyi	2,971,460	Guizhou
Dong	2,960,293	Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi
Yao	2,637,421	Guangxi, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guizhou
Korean	1,923,842	Jinlin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Inner Mongolia

Table 2. Continued

Group	2000 Pop	Principal Provincial Locations
Bai	1,858,063	Yunnan
Hani	1,439,673	Yunnan
Kazakh	1,250,458	Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai
Li	1,247,814	Guangdong
Tai	1,158,989	Yunnan
She	709,592	Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangdong
Lisu	634,912	Yunnan
Gelo	579,357	Guizhou
Dongxiang	513,805	Gansu, Xinjiang
Lahu	453,705	Yunnan
Shui	406,902	Guizhou
Wa	396,610	Yunnan
Naxi	308,839	Yunnan
Qiang	306,072	Sichuan
Tu	241,198	Qinghai, Gansu
Mulam	207,352	Guangxi
Xibe	188,824	Xinjiang, Liaoning
Kirgiz	160,823	Xinjiang
Daur	132,394	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang
Jingpo	132,143	Yunnan
Maonan	107,166	Guangxi
Salar	104,503	Qinghai, Gansu
Blang	91,882	Yunnan
Tajik	41,028	Xinjiang
Achang	33,936	Yunnan
Pumi	33,600	Yunnan
Ewenki	30,505	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang
Nu	28,759	Yunnan
Jing	22,517824	Guangxi
Jino	20,899	Yunnan
Deang	17,935	Yunnan
Bonan	16,505	Gansu
Russian	15,609	Xinjiang
Yugur	13,719	Gansu
Ozbek	12,370	Xinjiang
Menba	8,923	Tibet
Oroqen	8,196	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang
Drung	7,426	Yunnan
Tatar	4,890	Xinjiang
Hezhen	4,640	Heilongjiang
Gaoshan	4,461	Taiwan, Fujian
Lhoba	2,965	Tibet
Han	1,137,386,112	majority in all areas, ex. Tibet & Xinjiang

Figure 2. Map of Ethnic Minority Dispersion in China (reprinted from Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2007)



Poston, Chang, Deng, and Vanegas (2013) also found differences in how minority groups are residentially segregated from the Han majority people. Residential segregation as defined by the authors represents the percentage of persons in any particular ethnic minority group who would have to move to other provinces for their rate of distribution across all of China’s provinces to be the same as the percentage distribution of the Han. Their study found that the Hui were among the least residentially segregated or isolated among the Han, while the Uyghur were among the most segregated. The authors found that most nationalities, including the Tibetan ethnic

group, are on average considerably segregated from the Han. The study suggests that most ethnic minority groups are socially different from the Han since they have been spatially or geographically segregated from the majority Han population for hundreds of years.

Historical Context: Historical Overview of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur

Socioeconomic Conditions

The socioeconomic hardship of Tibetans dates back hundreds of years. During the 10th to 12th centuries, when Buddhism entered Tibetan society and Lamaism had spread to every sphere of Tibetan life, powerful high-ranking clergymen, or lamas, joined Tibetan nobility, giving rise to religious-political feudal hierarchies, serfdom, and a stratified society as the Kingdom of Tibet broke up into independent ruling territories (Yin, 1994).

Prior to this period, during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Kingdom of Tibet had frequent contact and cultural exchanges with Central China, and politically arranged marriages between Tang and Tibetan royal families became the norm. The Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) brought the independent Tibetan territories under Chinese rule, and subsequently during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, Tibetan nobility and religious leaders succumbed to the authority and control of the Chinese central government (Yin, 1994). During the Qing dynasty, the religious leadership of Tibet, under the influence of the Dalai Lama, owned vast territories and monasteries. The majority of Tibetans lived under dire feudal conditions, were heavily taxed, and

were overburdened with excessive land rents levied by the nobility, monasteries, and local government (Yin, 1994).

Uyghur people experienced similar harsh social conditions as Tibetans under the rule of feudal systems for many centuries, and have been subjected to foreign influence and territorial invasions. Chinese contact with Xinjiang, known in ancient times as the “Western Region,” dates back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) when Emperor Xuan Di established the Office of the Governor of the Western Han Dynasty (Yin, 1994). Uyghur people—whose name in the Uyghur language means *unity* or *alliance*—link their ancestral origins to the Ding Ling nomads as far back as the 3rd century B.C, and were conquered by the Turkic Kirgiz in the mid-9th century (Yin, 1994). When Xinjiang came under complete Chinese control during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Uyghurs lived under severe feudal rule and exploitation triggering numerous military uprisings in the late 1700s through the mid-1800s.

During the late 1800s, when colonial powers vied for control of strategic national interests in Central Asia, Xinjiang came under foreign invasion, subjecting the Uyghur population and other ethnic minority groups to even more difficult economic and social conditions. Yukub Beg, commander of the Kokand Khanate (today known as Tajikistan), invaded Kashgar in southern Xinjiang and other Xinjiang territories with support from the British, while in northern Xinjiang, the Russians invaded Ili in 1871 and ruled there for 10 years (Yin, 1994). Post-1911, when the Qing dynasty fell, Xinjiang came under the rule of feudal warlords, and for most of the 1930s and the early

1940s, Xinjiang was ruled by a Han from Manchuria named Sheng Shicai, who for most of his regime instituted pro-Soviet policies.

The northwestern area of Xinjiang bordering the Soviet Union was particularly influenced by Soviet society after the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1917 (Mackerras, 1995). Sheng Shicai regarded Muslims a threat to his rule and feared they harbored secessionist and nationalist tendencies. Thus, he waged a strong campaign favoring atheism in Xinjiang from 1937-41, and ordered violent religious persecution against Muslims, which led to social upheaval and rebellions in southern Xinjiang (Mackerras, 1995).

Religious Context: Significance of Religion among Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan Populations

Religion is the single most-important cultural characteristic for many ethnic minority populations in China (Gill & Mackerras, 1999). Vast religious differences exist among the diverse ethnic minority populations in China, with Islam being the indisputable prevailing religion among Muslims, including Hui, Uyghur, and other ethnic minority populations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Other than the fact that most Muslim ethnic minorities in China are Sunni Muslims, they are demographically and sociologically far more different from one another than similar (Poston, Chang, Deng, & Vanegas, 2013). The Hui and Uyghur, in particular, are vastly different. The Hui are primarily Sinophone people who practice Islam and who mostly speak Mandarin Chinese (Lipman, 1997). Their ancestors originated from Middle Asia and migrated to China as far back as the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), and they have been

acculturated into the Han majority culture more so than any of the other nationalities. Gladney (2004) refers to the Hui as the “enigmatic Hui” in search of an ethnic group. The Uyghur, on the other hand, have Turkic ancestry, speak a Turkic language of the Altaic family, and strongly adhere to their ancestral roots. Almost the entire Uyghur population—more than 99.3%—resides in one province, the vast territory of XUAR in western China (Poston, Chang, Deng, & Vanegas, 2013).

The XUAR region is more than one-sixth the size of all China, or 2.5 times larger than the state of Texas in the United States, and its international neighbors consist of Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. One-fifth of China’s ethnic minorities are mostly Sunni Muslims, with the Hui and Uyghur representing the largest Muslim ethnic minority groups among China’s nationalities, accounting for 90% of all Chinese Muslims. The other eight Muslim nationalities are the Kazak, Uzbek, Tajik, Tatar, Kirgiz, Salar, Dongxiang, and Bonan. In 2008, the population of Muslims in China was approximately 23 million, making China the nation with the fifth-largest Muslim population in the world (Poston, Saeed, Khamis, Alnuaimi, & Zhang, 2011). While the Uyghur live primarily in XUAR and share a similar heritage, they are an extraordinarily dissimilar population, characterized by widespread regional and linguistic diversity (Poston, Saeed Khamis Alnuaimi & Zhang, 2011). Muslim life in the south of XUAR, particularly in the Kashgar and Hotan prefectures bordering Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, is generally considered stricter and more fundamentalist than that found in other parts of XUAR, where Uyghurs predominate and Islam has retained many characteristics of the ancient Uyghur folk

religion (Mackerras, 1995). For the Muslim ethnic minority populations, mosques are the epicenter of religious activity, where clergymen maintain substantial authority within society.

Mackerras (1995) points out that Islam functioned very differently in XUAR and among the Hui population in the first half of the 20th century in terms of ethnic minority acculturation. Islam in XUAR has actively resisted the integration of Muslim ethnic minorities within the dominant Han culture, and has fought to preserve the regional identities of Muslim ethnic minority groups. On the other hand, Mackerras notes that Hui Islam does not seem to have rejected the integration of the Hui with the dominant Han and with China in general. According to Dru Gladney (2004), the Islam of the Hui during the Republican Era (1912-1949) tended toward reformism and modernism, with many Hui believing that the Hui and Han cultures were compatible, accepting mosques in Chinese architectural style and learning the teachings of the Koran in Chinese. During multiple visits to the Shaanxi Province where large Hui populations reside, the researcher for this study noticed the influences of Chinese architectural style reflected in the Great Mosque of Xi'an built in the Tang dynasty (618-907). Notable Hui historical figures, such as Zheng He, the famous explorer and admiral during the Ming Dynasty (1365-1644), is credited with major ocean expeditions around Asia and even East Africa in the early 1400s. Hui people have supported Chinese nationalism, with some joining the army during World War II to fight Japan, and even participated in the country's central political institutions of power (Mackerras, 1995).

Another significant religion in China is the lama Buddhism embraced by Tibetans and Mongolians. The principal sect of Tibetan Buddhism was called the *dGe lugs pa*, founded by the great Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), and the political and cultural history of Tibet was controlled for centuries through the powerful religious institutions embodied in Tibetan monasteries (Mackerras, 1995). Prior to the establishment of the PRC, the government of Tibet held power within a theocratic framework in which the supreme political and religious leadership was in the hands of a religious leader, the Dalai Lama, who influenced practically every corner of Tibetan life. In fact, male participation in Tibetan monastic life was mandatory, with Tibetan families expected to offer one son to monastic service, a practice that was highly regarded in Tibetan society (Mackerras & Gill, 1999).

Over the centuries, Islam and lama Buddhism have gained enormous influence over practically every facet of life in Uyghur and Tibetan society, and the cultural identity of many of these nationalities is profoundly intertwined with religion. More or less all the popular festivals among Tibetans, Uyghur, and Hui are based in some way or other on religion (as seen in Losar, the Tibetan New Year; Monlam, the great prayer festival in Tibet; the Corban Festival or Sacrifice Festival celebrated by Uyghur and other Muslim groups in Xinjiang; and the Hui festivals of Hari Raya Puasa, Eid Al-Adha, and Mawlid an-Nabi, among others). Islam and Buddhism have a profound impact on the lives of millions of ethnic minorities, affecting religious beliefs, marriage practices, clothing, diet, social interactions, and other facets of life.

It is not surprising that religion played a pivotal role in determining the cultural identity and heritage of Tibetans, Uyghur, and Hui, influencing their resolve, although at differing levels, to oppose cultural assimilation by the dominant Han. Mackeras (1995) argues that secessionist rebellions in Xinjiang reflect the significance Islam and the Islamic clergy have had in “opposing integration in either of its two senses, that between the Han and the minorities on the one hand and the national integration of China as a single country on the other.” Mackeras also notes that Tibetan clergy have also been more consumed with the preservation of Tibetan culture and “de facto” independence of Tibet than in any practice of cultural integration with the PRC.

Political Context: China Policies towards Ethnic Minority Populations Post World War II

Immediately after the founding of the PRC in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Communist Chinese government formulated its policy on minorities promoting national unity and equality:

“All nationalities within the boundaries of the People’s Republic of China are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves and shall oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People’s Republic of China will become a big fraternal and cooperative family composed of all its nationalities. Greater nationalism and chauvinism shall be opposed. Acts involving discrimination, oppression and splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited.”
(Article 50, Interim PRC Constitution) (Wu, 1973).

The new Constitution of 1949 also specified freedoms for ethnic minorities to develop their dialects and languages, and preserve and reform their traditions, customs, and religion (Article 53). The PRC also marshaled the establishment of autonomous regions: the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR) in 1947; the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in 1955; the Guangxi Zhuang and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in 1958; and the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1965. The intent of these autonomous regions was to grant greater participation of ethnic minority groups in government matters. Loyal ethnic minority cadres (administrators, professionals and Chinese Communist Party [CCP] members) were appointed to positions of leadership. However, in no way did the PRC consider autonomy equivalent to independence, since the 1954 Constitution of the PRC affirmed that “National autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People’s Republic of China” (Wu, 1973).

While the PRC Constitution professed to guarantee certain rights to ethnic minorities, the CCP embarked on a campaign to dislodge the economic and political power of religious institutions in China while suppressing any religious movement that opposed the social changes advocated by the Chinese Communist government. For instance, the Chinese government in the early 1950s initially determined not to interfere with the practice of Buddhism and to leave the privileges of Tibetan monasteries untouched, but this quickly changed after the Lhasa uprising in March 1959 that resulted in the Dalai Lama’s escape to India (Saxer, 2014). In line with CCP policy, the Communist government systematically usurped monastic lands and shattered the political power of Tibetan religious leaders, while curtailed religious freedom became

absolute persecution and cultural destruction during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Mackerras & Gill, 1999). In the long run, religion was considered a hindrance on the journey toward communism (Saxer, 2014). CCP ideology during this era viewed ethnic struggle as irrelevant and labeled it as class struggle within the Marxist discourse (Mackerras, 2003). Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, leader of the radical Maoist "Gang of Four," asked outright: "Why do we need national minorities, anyway?" Her foreboding answer, that "National identity should be done with," reflected the chauvinistic mood during this dark period in Chinese history (Gladney, 1991).

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), mosques, temples, and lamaseries were shuttered in most parts of China, including ethnic minority areas (Mackerras & Gill, 1999). In Tibet and elsewhere, many monasteries were also destroyed, lamas were expelled from their religious dwellings, and mosques were demolished in Xinjiang, Ningxia, and other parts of China. Violent incidents such as the 1975 massacre in Shadian, a village in the Yunnan Province in southern China, marked a new level of severe persecution. Hui people in Shadian demanded the re-opening of a mosque that had been closed during the Cultural Revolution, and formed a militia after their demands were ignored. Fearing the emergence of an independent Islamic state, the People's Liberation Army reacted swiftly by razing the village, an activity that resulted in 1,600 Hui deaths and hundreds of Han casualties (Mackerras, 2003). The CCP's position was that all religion should be suppressed in accordance with Marxist-Leninist ideology, which aligned religion with class exploitation and aimed to exploit the masses.

Dreyer (1976) contends that the policy toward *shao shu minzu* under the PRC has been motivated by aspirations to integrate the institutions and cultural complexities of *shao shu minzu* with those of the predominant Han and Communist ideals. Within the prevailing Communist dialogue, in line with Mao Zedong's dictum, the problem of ethnic minorities in China was one of class structure. Communist discourse states that nationalities and ethnic distinctions will vanish when class differences disappear, and a "homogenous proletarian culture will come into being" (Dreyer, 1976). Policy in modern China has revolved around this discourse.

Yi (2008) maintains that the policy of minority education in China, particularly concerning Muslims and Tibetans in the western region, is shaped by the PRC's fear that the association of ethnicity with religion may weaken the capacity of ethnic minorities to be loyal political citizens in the PRC. The PRC argues this fear is justified given that Tibet and Xinjiang harbor extremist, separatist forces that seek to destabilize and threaten the unity of the country. Xinjiang, in particular, has experienced recurring and heightened violent clashes and social unrest between Uyghurs and Han people from 2009 to 2015, at the cost of hundreds of lives. China has blamed separatists and Islamic militants for the unrest, including those allied with a separatist movement it identifies as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, while exiled Uyghur groups and human rights activists blame the PRC's repressive religious policies and economic marginalization in Xinjiang, including controls on Uyghur culture and Islam.

In 2014, a prominent Uyghur academic, Ilham Tohti, a proponent of better relations between the Central Chinese government and the Uyghur population in

Xinjiang, was jailed for life for allegedly promoting separatism (BBC News, 2014). Official PRC statements on recent violence and social unrest in Xinjiang are difficult to verify through independent sources because the Chinese government tightly controls access to the area, and journalists are closely monitored or sometimes prohibited from gaining access to the region (BBC News, 2014). The author of this paper considered visiting Xinjiang and Tibet to collect data for this study, but was heavily discouraged by University staff at Xi'an Jiaotong University, due to security issues.

After the death of Chairman Mao Zedong in 1976, the PRC instituted widespread reforms that introduced a strong religious revival across China and led to the restoration of many mosques and Tibetan monasteries. The years after 1978 are considered a period of reform orchestrated by the PRC's chief engineer, President Deng Xiaoping (1978-1992). The revised constitution of 1982 endorsed protection for "normal religious activities" as long as they did not interfere with the public order, threaten the health of citizens, or inhibit the educational system of the country (PRC 1982: Art. 36) (Saxer, 2014). In the early 1990s, Jiang Zemin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (1989-2002) suggested that religion was not in conflict with socialism when it adapted as necessary (Saxer, 2014). The author of the current study visited the Yinchuan Nanguan Mosque in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region during the summer of 2013. This mosque was built during Ming dynasty (1368-1664) and demolished during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and rebuilt in 1981. The author observed Hui Muslims freely practicing Islamic rituals and prayers at the mosque.

Zhou and Hill (2009) contributed enormously to the scholarly research on the topic of inequality and the education of ethnic minorities in the 1990s and early 2000s, when China began to frame a new strategy involving ethnic minority issues and revising its laws on autonomy for nationalities. According to Zhou and Hill (2009) this new strategy emphasized China's urgency to accelerate economic development while downplaying the national question of ethnic minority autonomy. Their research notes that China's new strategy seeks to accelerate economic development in ethnic minority areas as the driving engine of China's *shao shu minzu* policy, because the economic disparity between the more economically advanced regions in Eastern China, where most Han live, and the economically less-developed western territory, where most minorities live, is recognized as the key source of ethnic instability in China.

In response to this national strategic challenge and adhering to the PRC's pursuit of "one nation with diversity," China in 2000 launched the "Open Up the West Campaign" as a means to integrate western China with the economically developed eastern regions, reduce economic inequality between the two regions, and augment mobility between the dominant Han areas and western ethnic minority territories (Zhou & Hill, 2009). Concurrently, China was particularly interested in exploiting the rich mineral resources found in the west. Xinjiang holds about 25% of China's onshore crude reserves and almost 30% of its natural gas (Bloomberg News, 2014).

Zhou and Hill (2009) maintain that China's intentions to limit the political power of minority groups and avert the possibility of secession in ethnic minority autonomous areas gave rise to the revision of the PRC's Law on Minority Regional Autonomy in the

1990s, a policy that had been framed immediately after 1949 and passed into law in 1984. Two major unintended consequences surfaced after the law was implemented in 1984. The first related to ethnic minorities' request that the central government give them greater control of their local economies, especially greater access to the profits and products generated in their local economies, something that was not possible under the PRC Constitution. Another unintended problem dealt with the ethnic minority demands for greater local political power in their autonomous areas, and in particular, greater ethnic minority representation in government positions and the legislatures, which presented a grave threat to the central government. The 1984 revision of the law stated that government positions in autonomous regions should be apportioned to as many officials of ethnic minority origin as possible (Zhou & Hill, 2009). The PRC faced a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, it did not want to cede too much authority and over-empower ethnic minority regions, while on the other hand, it realized that reaching a compromise, primarily on issues of economics, was in its best interests.

According to Zhou and Hill (2009), the revised PRC Law on Autonomy for Minority Regions signed in 2001 by the Chinese People's Congress (CPC), granted local autonomous governments more authority in social and economic development, but curtailed ethnic minority's political power. The revised law in 2001 now only requires government agencies in autonomous regions to hire a "reasonable" number of officials of ethnic minority origin, perhaps signaling the PRC's quest to minimize the possibility of internal national instability and power breakdown as occurred in the Soviet Union.

The 2001 revisions also minimized the role of ethnic minority languages and cultures by requiring elementary schools to begin teaching Mandarin Chinese in earlier years in ethnic minority areas, requiring minority government officials to master both Putonghua (oral Chinese Mandarin) and standard written Mandarin Chinese, in essence restating the position of Chinese language as the *lingua franca* and relegating ethnic minority languages to a secondary role in the realm of linguistics. On the other hand, Zhou and Hill (2009) note that the 2001 revisions of the Law on Autonomy for Minority Regions provided some economic allowances to ethnic minority autonomous regions by allowing them more rights in local commerce, taxes, budgets, and finance. On the education platform, the revised law professes to extend the scope of preferential policies by restating the importance of lowered admission standards for ethnic minorities, greater financial support in education, and greater job opportunities for ethnic minorities after graduation. The question remains whether or not these revisions are being vigorously and effectively implemented to “level the playing field” on ethnic minority equality issues.

Saxer’s (2014) compelling scholarly work argues that the PRC’s latest quest to embrace ethnic minority identity and religious practices under the umbrella of cultural “heritage” may be misguided. Saxer contends that China is more interested in dispelling negative worldviews that often position China as a perpetrator of cultural genocide in ethnic autonomous areas like Tibet, than as a genuine ally of ethnic minority cultures and religions. While the CCP has highlighted the social and psychological benefits of religion, especially when conducted privately, its purpose in Chinese society remains

firmly regulated, and remains an obstacle to China's 21st century economic reforms and efforts to integrate western China (Saxer, 2014).

According to Saxer, the concept and modality of cultural heritage as perceived by the Chinese government become more important as the result of several significant events. First, Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the CCP (2002-2012) announced the concept of a "harmonious society" as the guiding standard for China's future development, a concept that proposes economic growth concomitantly with social harmony, and ecological and spiritual well-being. Saxer (2014) contends that the political rhetoric of "harmonious society" emerges as an answer to the damaging effects of rapid economic growth, particularly the effects on China's ecology and social uprooting, while setting an agenda in which religion may play a positive role in China's reforms. Second, China embraced UNESCO's campaign to extend the protection of tangible cultural heritage sites to intangible features, such as festivals, dances, literary works, and even religion and ethnic identity. Still, Saxer (2014) disputes the benevolence of China's intentions to preserve ethnic minority identity, arguing that China's position remains compartmentalized as it seeks to regulate and exert political control of intangible cultural heritage under the watchful eye of the State.

For instance, Saxer (2014) points out that a cultural heritage intangible that has generated great controversy within the sphere of religion and the politics of ethnic minority identity is the concept of the "living Buddha," or the Tibetan institution of *tulku*, or reincarnated lama. *Tulku*, such as the Dalai Lama, is the chosen custodian of the lineage of teachings in lama Buddhism who is given power from childhood over

matters of religion and global issues that surpasses that of the state. Given the political threat the *tulku* institution poses to Chinese leadership, the CCP has focused much attention on the selection process of incarnations and has created guidelines under the State of Administration for Religious Affairs to administer reincarnations of living Buddhas; in fact, the boy whom the Dalai Lama most recently selected as the true incarnation was “abducted” by the CCP and now lives at an undisclosed location (Saxer, 2014).

Another of the controversial cultural heritage intangibles mentioned by Saxer (2014), are the religious pilgrimages of many Tibetans. According to Saxer, recent central government efforts such as roadside checkpoints and other controls have made it virtually impossible for Tibetans to participate in religious pilgrimages.

Higher Education Context: Brief History of Higher Education in China Prior to 1911

For this study, it is critical to highlight the development of higher education in China, and the degree to which ethnic minorities have participated. It is also important to elaborate on the affordability of higher education in China and its implications for ethnic minority access, and how the cost of education may influence the acculturation experience of ethnic minority students in higher education.

While the first institution of higher education in China was established fairly recently, in 1895 under the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) (Gu, 2011), the roots of formal systematic education extend back more than 1,400 years. During the Sui dynasty (589-618), government schools and a civil examination system (科舉; pinyin: *Kējǔ*) were

established for the training of civil service officials. A few decades later, during the Tang dynasty (619-907) under Empress Wu, the civil examination system was perfected as a means of training officials in the imperial bureaucracy and diminish the unchecked political power and influence of the military aristocracy of northwest China (Morton & Lewis, 2005). Intellectuals participating in the civil examination came mostly from elite families who entered imperial schools, and studied examination subjects such as politics, literary and classical studies, mathematics, law, and calligraphy. Literary studies, dominated by classical Chinese literature and Confucianism, espoused a worldview of social hierarchy and order and was considered the most significant subject on the civil service examination. The competitive examination system, which lasted until 1905 during the Qing dynasty, is credited with establishing imperial stability and administrative strength for many centuries (Morton & Lewis, 2005).

During the late 1800s and prior to the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, England, France, the United States, Germany (and other Western countries), Russia, and Japan influenced Chinese politics and society as they competed for control of Chinese trade, territory, and resources. In addition, Western nations in the mid- to latter-1800s introduced new educational standards, Christian missionary schools, and educational academies. Foreign pressure led to the elimination of the civil service examination system in 1905, and the establishment of modern government ministries preceded the downfall of the imperial Chinese era that lasted more than 2,000 years.

Higher Education in China Post-1911 and Ethnic Minority College Enrollment

At the time of the inauguration of the Chinese Republic under the command of

Sun Yat-Sen in 1912, China had one university and 94 professional training colleges; immediately after the creation of the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-Tung) in 1921, 25 institutions of higher education (HEIs) and 68 provincial training colleges were established, modeled after Japanese and American educational organizations (Yang, 2005; Li, 2008). The majority of college enrollments, however, were limited to young people from economically privileged families.

The tumultuous power struggle in China between the National Republicans (National People's Party, or KMT) under the leadership of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek) and the CCP in the late 1920s through 1940s, as well as the war with Japan from late 1930s through the 1940s, limited the growth of higher education. However, the establishment of the PRC in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong brought about revolutionary and dramatic changes in higher education with the introduction of Soviet-style educational systems that favored pro-Communist institutional models rather than pro-Confucian or Western models. About 205 higher education institutions (HEIs) with a total enrollment of about 117,000 undergraduate students were in operation in 1949 (Li, 2008), but this number would increase dramatically during the 1950s. In 1949, only 1,210 undergraduate ethnic minority students were enrolled in higher education institutions in all of China (Sautman, 1998).

As illustrated in Table 3, between 1949 and 1960 the number of institutions of higher education increased six-fold, from 205 to 1,289, and total enrollment peaked at 961,623. College entrance examinations, however, played an insignificant role in the decision-making process of college admissions during this period; in fact, government

officials chose only those college applicants, including ethnic minorities, whose political views aligned with the CCP, even though many applicants lacked academic ability (Li, 2008). Just over 2,000 undergraduate ethnic minorities were enrolled in Chinese higher education institutions in 1951, representing about 1.36% of the total college student population in China (Teng & Ma, 2009).

The exponential surge in HEIs in just two years, from 1958 to 1960, fell under the Great Leap Forward (1958-1963), in which the PRC attempted to surpass industrialized nations through intensive collectivization and industrialization practices. After 1960, however, the number of HEIs steadily declined, and most universities were closed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and college entrance examinations suspended.

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping took over the helm of the PRC (1978-1992) and introduced massive and rapid economic reforms that catapulted China onto the international stage and transformed it into an economic global power. With the disastrous Cultural Revolution era over, Chinese higher education reforms began to transform and rapidly expand HEIs, and the *gaokao* (高考), the National Higher Education Entrance Examination, was introduced.

Table 3 illustrates the number of institutions of higher education and total college enrollments of graduate and undergraduate students from 1949 to 1977 (Li, 2008).

Table 3. Higher Education Institutions and Total College Enrollments in China, 1949-1977
(reprinted from Li, 2008)

Year	Number of Institutions of higher education	New Enrollment Undergraduate Students	Total Enrollment : Undergraduate Students	New Enrollment: Graduate Students	Total Enrollment: Graduate Students
1949	205	30,573	116,504	242	629
1950	193	58,330	137,470	874	1,261
1951	206	51,689	153,402	1,273	2,168
1952	201	78,865	191,147	1,785	2,763
1953	181	81,544	212,181	2,887	4,249
1954	188	92,280	252,978	1,155	4,753
1955	194	97,797	287,653	1,751	4,822
1956	227	184,632	403,176	2,235	4,841
1957	229	105,581	441,181	334	3,178
1958	791	265,553	659,627	275	1,635
1959	841	274,143	811,947	1,345	2,171
1960	1289	323,161	961,623	2,275	3,635
1961	845	169,047	947,166	2,198	6,009
1962	610	106,777	829,699	1,287	6,130
1963	407	132,820	750,118	781	4,938
1964	419	147,037	685,314	1,240	4,881
1965	434	164,212	674,436	1,456	4,546
1966	n.a.	0	533,766	0	3,409
1967	n.a.	0	408,930	0	2,557
1968	n.a.	0	258,736	0	1,317
1969	n.a.	0	108,617	0	n.a.
1970	n.a.	41,870	47,815	0	n.a.
1971	328	42,420	83,400	0	n.a.
1972	331	133,553	193,719	0	n.a.
1973	345	149,960	313,645	0	n.a.
1974	378	165,084	429,981	0	n.a.
1975	387	190,779	500,993	0	n.a.
1976	392	217,048	564,715	0	n.a.
1977	404	272,971	625,319	0	226

Source: Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (various years).
China Education Statistical Yearbook (1949-1981)

The number of undergraduate ethnic minority college enrollments was 36,030 in 1977 and grew to 187,000 in 1996, as illustrated in Table 4 (Sautman, 1998).

Table 4. Ethnic Minority Students at PRC Higher Education Institutions, 1949-1996 (reprinted from Sautman, 1998)

Year	Number of Students	Percentage
1949-1950	1,285	0.93
1950-1951	2,117	1.36
1951-1952	2,948	1.52
1952-1953	5,536	2.56
1953-1954	7,999	3.10
1954-1955	8,883	3.04
1955-1956	14,159	3.47
1956-1957	16,101	3.62
1957-1958	22,421	3.39
1958-1959	28,163	3.47
1960-1961	29,921	3.16
1961-1962	28,729	3.45
1962-1963	24,825	3.31
1964-1965	21,870	3.24
1974-1975	30,607	6.11
1975-1976	36,578	6.48
1976-1977	4,460	5.51
1977-1978	36,030	4.21
1978-1979	37,378	3.66
1979-1980	42,944	3.75
1980-1981	51,220	4.00
1981-1982	53,739	4.66
1982-1983	59,630	4.94
1983-1984	69,633	5.0
1984-1985	94,095	5.3
1985-1986	99,468	5.3
1986-1987	118,735	6.1
1987-1988	125,422	6.1
1988-1989	131,599	6.3
1989-1990	137,948	6.6
1990-1991	141,767	6.9
1991-1992	152,858	7.0
1992-1993	163,224	6.4
1993-1994	178,000	6.4
1994-1995	160,000	5.7
1995-1996	187,000	-

The number of HEIs grew three-fold, from 598 in 1978 to 1,867 in 2006, while the number of undergraduate and graduate enrollments surged from 866,000 to more than 21 million during the same period, as illustrated in Table 5 (Li, 2008).

Table 5. Higher Education Institutions and Total College Enrollments in China, 1978-2006 (reprinted from Li, 2008)

Year	No. of institutions of higher education (units)	No. of faculty members (thousands)	No. of graduate students (persons)			No. of undergraduates (thousands)		
			Total enrollment	New enrollment	Graduated	Total enrollment	New enrollment	Graduated
1978	598	206	10,934	10,708	9	856	402	165
1979	633	237	18,830	8,110	140	1,020	275	85
1980	675	247	21,604	3,616	476	1,144	281	147
1981	704	250	18,848	9,363	11,669	1,279	279	140
1982	715	287	25,847	11,080	4,038	1,154	315	457
1983	805	308	37,166	15,642	4,497	1,207	391	335
1984	902	315	57,566	23,181	2,756	1,396	475	287
1985	1,016	344	87,331	46,871	17,004	1,703	619	316
1986	1,054	372	110,371	41,310	16,930	1,880	572	393
1987	1,063	385	120,191	39,017	27,603	1,959	617	532
1988	1,075	393	112,776	35,645	40,838	2,066	670	553
1989	1,075	397	101,339	28,569	37,232	2,082	597	576
1990	1,075	395	93,018	29,649	35,440	2,063	609	614
1991	1,075	391	88,128	29,679	32,537	2,044	620	614
1992	1,053	388	94,164	33,439	25,692	2,184	754	604
1993	1,065	388	106,771	42,145	28,214	2,536	924	571
1994	1,080	396	127,935	50,864	28,047	2,799	900	637
1995	1,054	401	145,443	51,053	31,877	2,906	926	805
1996	1,082	408	163,322	59,398	39,652	3,021	966	839
1997	1,020	405	176,353	63,749	46,539	3,174	1,000	829
1998	1,022	407	198,885	72,508	47,077	3,409	1,084	830
1999	1,071	426	233,513	92,225	54,670	4,134	1,597	848
2000	1,041	463	301,239	128,484	58,767	5,561	2,206	950
2001	1,225	532	393,256	165,197	67,809	7,191	2,683	1,086
2002	1,396	618	500,980	202,611	80,841	9,034	3,205	1,337
2003	1,552	725	651,260	268,925	111,091	11,086	3,822	1,877
2004	1,731	888	819,896	326,296	150,777	13,335	4,473	2,391
2005	1,792	966	978,610	364,831	189,728	15,618	5,045	3,068
2006	1,867	1,076	1,104,700	397,900	255,900	17,388	5,465	3,775

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics of P.R. China (2005), "Comprehensive Statistical Data and Materials on 55 Years of New China"; National Bureau of Statistics of P.R. China (various years); *China Statistical Yearbook* (2003–2006); Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, "The Statistical Communique of Education Development in 2006."

In 1998, China introduced herculean expansion policies to improve higher education access for millions of Chinese (Ma, 2009). As noted, the number of HEIs more than doubled from 1999 to 2009 under China's higher education expansion policy; HEIs increased from 1,071 to 2,305, and the number of college student enrollments dramatically increased almost five-fold, from 4.4 million to 18.5 million, within just 10 years. The PRC also instituted education reforms to improve efficiencies and build

comprehensive university systems across the higher education landscape by merging specialized colleges with flagship universities. More than 556 universities and colleges were merged from 1993 to 2001 to form 232 institutions (Ma, 2009).

In addition to radically augmenting the number of HEIs and merging specialized universities with larger institutions, from 1995 to 2000 the PRC strategically invested billions of RMB to improve the quality of education at its top universities (Li, 2008). A few significant initiatives, including the 211 Project and 985 Project, became the cornerstones of the PRC's attempt to build world-class HEIs. The 211 Project was designed to support the top 100 universities—including Beijing University, Tsinghua University, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Fudan University, Nanjing University, and Shanghai Jiaotong University—to improve teaching, research, and infrastructure, while the 985 Project sought to transform the top 40 universities into globally renowned research universities (Li, 2008). The PRC government spent over 18 billion RMB (\$2.8 billion) to support the 211 Project, while investing up to 1.8 billion RMB per university through the 985 Project (Li, 2008).

Higher Education Financing in China Since 1978

Prior to the 1978 educational reforms of Deng Xiaoping, China financed higher education entirely through government funding, a practice that continued until the late 1980s. In 1989, a few Chinese universities began exploring tuition and fee funding alternatives, and by 1997, all universities in China charged tuition and fees (Dong & Wan, 2006). During the 1990s, the central government began to decentralize education financing by delegating administrative and financial responsibility in higher education to

provincial governments. This decentralization effort led to the diversification of financing as provincial governments sought financial support from local taxes, subsidies, and public donations (Liu, 2012). However, public donations in China have remained insignificant, accounting for only .7% of all education funds, partially due to a lack of tax incentives (Liangsheng, 2012).

Despite decentralization efforts, competing public services and declining local, provincial, and central government revenues caused by a series of economic recessions across China, has led to a reduction in the rate of government education appropriations, a trend also found in Europe, the United States, and other countries. As a result, net tuition revenue in higher education in China has increased to cover the decline in government funding.

The expansion policy of higher education in China coincided with the use of tuition and fees to fund HEIs. Table 6 illustrates the decline in higher education government appropriations and rising rate of tuition and fees in China (Dong & Wan, 2012). Government appropriations as a percentage total higher education financing declined from 80.3% in 1996 to 47.6% in 2008, while tuition and fees as a percentage of total higher education financing increased from 13.7% to 33.7% for the same period. In 1999, various financial aid programs and low-interest loan programs were established. However, student loan programs are not been available in all HEI's, and most programs have been inadequate (Liu, 2012).

Table 6. Higher Education Government Appropriations and Tuition Rates in China, 1996-2008 (reprinted from Dong & Wan, 2012)

Year	Government Appropriation (%)	Tuition & Fees (%)
1996	80.3	13.7
1997	78.3	14.8
1998	65	13.3
1999	62.5	17
2000	58.2	21.1
2001	54.2	24.2
2002	50.6	26.3
2003	47.9	28.8
2004	45.5	30.4
2005	42.8	31.1
2006	42.9	29.2
2007	44	33.7
2008	47.6	33.7

College Access and Affordability Barriers for Ethnic Minorities in China

While China's efforts to significantly expand college access is undoubtedly a remarkable feat, rising tuition and fees have created serious affordability challenges and disparities in higher education opportunity and attainment for lower socioeconomic (SES) families in China, particularly among rural and ethnic minority populations. Ethnic minority students disproportionately face difficulties in paying college expenses (Sautman, 1998). Tuition costs per student, which represent about less than half of total college costs per student, increased almost three-fold between 1997 and 2006, rising from 1,620 RMB to 4,500 RMB (Yu, 2008). The gap between the cost of college and per-capita income continues to widen. For instance, the average student spends about 10,000 to 12,000 RMB per year for tuition and fees, books, and room and board (Wang, et al., 2011), while the average annual disposable per capita household income is 13,786

RMB in urban China, and 4,140 RMB in rural areas (Zhong, 2011). This clearly suggests that college costs are prohibitive for most families in China, especially rural families and ethnic minority populations. It is significant to note that some authors (Bi, 2009) have found that tuition and fees may reach as high as 19,000 RMB in top-tier universities. Wang, et al.'s (2011) study shows that ethnic minority (*minzu*) students, the majority of whom live in economically disadvantaged autonomous regions on the periphery of China, are the largest under-represented college student population, and 60% of the ethnic minority population is categorized as lower class (earning a net annual income of 500-700 RMB (Teng & Ma, 2009). While the PRC provides financial aid in the form of scholarships, loans, and tuition reduction to some ethnic minority students, resources are limited, implying that existing preferential policies that strive to ensure equal access to higher education are insufficient in the current market economy (Teng & Ma, 2009).

According to Dong and Wan (2008), the decline in the proportion of rural students participating in college relative to the total college student population is most likely due to increasing tuition costs. The proportion of rural college students was about 30% in the 1980s, but by 2004 it declined to 19.2% even though the rural population accounted for 58.2% of China's total population (Wu, 2004). Moreover, higher tuition costs disproportionately impact the choice of college and major for students in lower SES populations compared to wealthier students. Lower-SES students tend to choose majors in agriculture, teacher education, geology, and forestry in lower-ranked universities, while wealthier students select higher-ranked institutions and choose majors

in the medical sciences, languages, arts, law, and other areas that usually lead to more lucrative careers (Chung & Ly, 1999). Zhong's (2011) findings also show that the earnings gap between graduates from lower-tier HEIs and graduates from top-tier universities is widening, indicating that the PRC's higher education expansion policies have not been effective in addressing equality issues.

Education access and affordability discrepancies among lower-SES families are not confined to higher education. In fact, lower-SES families who send their children to high school face similar economic barriers. Families who live in remote villages or rural areas must place their children in boarding schools in urban areas. This means that low-SES families spend an average of about 12,000 RMB in tuition, fees, and room and board to send a child to high school for three years, creating an excessive financial burden and debt for these families, many of whom often take out loans from local money lenders at high interest rates, or borrow from family or friends (Wang, et al., 2011).

Another factor that has exacerbated inequalities in higher education access is the unbalanced distribution of educational resources among China's 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four direct-controlled municipalities (Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Chongqing) and two special administrative regions (Hong Kong and Macao). China's provincial quota enrollment policy dictates the distribution of total university enrollments, which favors provinces or regions and municipalities in the eastern part of China, where economic growth and development is greatest (Wang, et al., 2011). Uneven distribution of education resources across geographic regions has meant that large cities in the most economically powerful regions along the eastern coast have the

largest number of top-tier HEIs, where excessive local enrollments predominate. Having a large number of HEIs in economically rich regions impacts higher education admissions opportunities because local students living in urban cities in these regions have a greater chance of admission to top-tier universities compared to rural students in the poorer, western regions. In fact, higher education opportunity for urban students in 1997 was 3.95 times that of rural students (Wang, et al., 2011). Wang argues that the provincial enrollment quotas in powerful HEIs should be lowered to reduce the enrollment ratio gap between key HEIs and second-tier universities. It is worth noting that the PRC mounted an aggressive economic development plan in the late 1990s to promote stronger economic growth in the central and western regions. However, the uneven distribution of higher education resources between these regions remains a major issue.

China has experienced dramatic changes in higher education since 1978, establishing one of the largest higher education systems in the world. Expansion policies of the late 1990s have allowed millions of Chinese students, including greater numbers of ethnic minority students, to enroll in higher education. However, rising costs of tuition and fees, and uneven distribution of education resources across geographic regions, have created access inequalities among low-SES populations, particularly ethnic minority students. It remains to be seen whether or not China can

tackle the complex barriers facing equal access in higher education among ethnic minority and low-SES populations. Given the trend of rising tuition costs and fees, and lower government appropriations for higher education, the fate of ethnic minority and low-SES populations who hope to attend college and earn a decent income after graduation remains tenuous.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study mainly followed an exploratory and descriptive process to create precise and rich representations of the perceptions of various groups within a particular context, without seeking generalizable conclusions. The study sought the perceptions of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students to understand their acculturation experiences in a predominantly Han research university in Central China. To clearly represent himself in this study, the investigator must disclose his gender, ethnicity, and overall cultural experiences, as well as his educational background. The personal journey of the investigator is described in Appendix D.

Employing Naturalistic Inquiry

The methodological framework that informed the study is a constructivist, or naturalistic, perspective. The process of knowledge creation can be attributed to specific modes of inquiry, frameworks or research paradigms that researchers employ to explain reality or puzzles found in nature and in social interactions. Naturalistic-constructivist inquiry (also known as naturalistic inquiry) in particular, is a framework through which researchers study social phenomena in natural settings, and make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people assign to them (Lincoln & Denzin, 2011). Social reality through the lenses of naturalistic inquiry is relative to the individuals involved in the settings, and to the context in which individuals are situated (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

The problem in this study was to understand and deconstruct the experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students enrolled in a predominantly Han public research university in Central China. Exploring the acculturation experiences of ethnic minority college students in predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education is critical to establishing institutional policies that embrace cultural sensitivity with regard to ethnic minority students in China, and effectively represent the heritage of ethnic minorities while helping them preserve their cultural integrity.

Four fundamental questions direct the process of knowledge creation through which a naturalistic study derives answers to its research questions (Lincoln and Guba, 2013):

1. Ontological question: What is the nature of reality?
2. Epistemological question: What is the relationship between the knower (researcher) and the known (the phenomena being researched)?
3. Methodological question: How do researchers acquire knowledge?
4. Axiological question: Which knowledge is the most valuable to the researcher?

The ontological question addresses the nature of reality. Under the current naturalistic study, it is believed that multiple, constructed realities of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students exist that may be studied holistically through relativistic lenses. That is, no one, single approach is required to understand the social constructions or acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education in the current study. Lincoln & Guba (1985) recognized that there are multiple ways in which “reality” may be constructed

and co-constructed, and events are theoretically open to as many reconstructions as there are persons engaged in them. Inquiry into these multiple realities will diverge, and thereby prediction and control are not likely outcomes, unlike the traditional scientific method in which prediction and control are required to study a single, tangible reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The current study captured multiple constructions and realities characterizing the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents on their university campus.

Naturalistic researchers do not rely on generalization and replication as fundamental goals in naturalistic inquiry. Instead, they strive to formulate “working hypotheses” that illustrate the contextualized experiences of the research participants. Rather than establishing cause-and-effect relationships to explain the struggles of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students on a Han-dominant college campus, the findings of this research were embedded in the “mutual simultaneous shaping” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and interrelatedness of constructed realities and meanings of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students. Therefore, this study was grounded in an interpretivist paradigm in which meaning-making is a process of exploring the acculturation experiences, thoughts, values, and beliefs of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students within the context of various influences including, but not limited to, gender, identity, social, cultural, economic, political, cognitive, environmental, and personal traits.

The epistemological question addresses the relationship between the knower (inquirer) and the known (world). Under naturalistic inquiry, the inquirer and the subject of inquiry interact and affect each other; that is, the Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur

respondents and the researcher in the current study are inseparable. Thus, research within the framework of the current naturalistic study is participatory and subjectivist, and from this, real problems emerged after engaging Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants, and meaning was constructed based on interactions with the natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Unlike the scientific method, which relies on etic research conducted through an objective perspective, constructivist inquiry fundamentally depends on emic research or subjective inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The constructivist approach in the current study embraced the humanness of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants, and valued their rights as equal contributors to the formulation of knowledge.

Naturalistic researchers collect and analyze representations in social settings through hermeneutic-dialectic processes as described by Lincoln & Guba (1989). My own constructions and sense-making activities and those of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants were uncovered and mutually explored through a hermeneutic or interpretive process, and constructions were compared and contrasted dialectically using various research methods such as interviews, observations, and documentary analysis. In essence, the author of this study became an essential instrument for data collection and analysis.

The axiological dimension in naturalistic-constructivism characterizes inquiry as a value-bound process. The values of the author and the values of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur participants were uncovered and made transparent as they created and co-created knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

Research Design

The design of a naturalistic inquiry emerges, develops, and unfolds in a nonlinear process; therefore, the design of the current study could not be given in advance.

Hypotheses that arose from the current study were constantly refined, modified, and expanded via a circular and interactive process during the implementation of the study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). In effect, the research design of the current study sprung from the research itself: Data analysis is open ended and inductive for the naturalist, in contrast to the focused and deductive analysis common in conventional inquiry. Since the form of the data that will ultimately be produced by the human instrument is unknown in advance, the data cannot be specified at the beginning of the inquiry. Furthermore, there are no a priori questions or hypotheses to guide data-analysis decisions; these must be made as the inquiry proceeds. Because the data from naturalistic inquiry are likely to be qualitative, statistical manipulations have little if any relevance; questions of fit, underlying assumptions and relative power are not issues. What is at issue is the best means to “make sense” of the data in ways that will, first, facilitate the continuing unfolding of the inquiry, and second, lead to maximum understanding of the phenomenon being studied in its context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The purpose of the current study is not to construct theory, but to develop a noteworthy and richer comprehension of the acculturation challenges Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students face in a predominantly Han research institution of higher learning in Central China.

Because research design in naturalistic inquiry does not unfold linearly, it does

not possess hierarchical properties; that is, no single element in the design has priority over others. Thus, the elements that encompass the design of the current study, outlined below, are not listed in hierarchical order.

The study adhered to the standards or criteria for qualitative research employed by Brown (1989), and was guided by the following questions:

1. Is the study important and relevant to contemporary practice, given the historical situation of how meaning is interpreted in the study?
2. Are the meanings expressed by Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students respected in the study's interpretation, and does the study do an adequate job of interrelating the parts and the whole of the study to elicit reasonable interpretations?
3. Is the researcher familiar with the subject matter and historical context of the study?
4. Does the author implement research validation processes, and do the interpretive outcomes have important applications for the conduct of life?

Coomer (1984) provides a user-friendly table that illustrates essential features for analyzing interpretive views of research. Table 7 depicts a summary of these features for the study.

Table 7. Coomer’s Essential Features for Analyzing Interpretive Research

Cognitive Interest	Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur cultural adaptation processes can be examined and unveiled through interpretive inquiry, which may have practical implications for designing social policies that impact future ethnic minority college students seeking degrees in predominantly Han institutions of higher learning located in an urban environment in Central China.
Assumptions about values	The respondents’ statements and life stories in the study are laden with values and narratives that can be understood and are vital to discovering meaning in the cultural adaption processes of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students in a predominantly Han institution of higher learning located in a large city of Central China. In this study values mediate inquiry (Guba, 1990).
Assumptions about knowledge	The meanings behind Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students’ story-telling, rather than raw data, are the pillars of knowledge in the study. In accordance with Peshkin (1993), not all qualitative research necessitates generalized conclusions.
Questions Addressed	The questions addressed in the study are context bound, and conceptual assumptions of the phenomenon in question play a significant role in assigning meaning to inquiry. Perception is rooted in beliefs rather than facts, so that context plays a vital role in the way the cultural adaptation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students are interpreted in the study.
Criteria of Validity	Intersubjective reasoning rather than scientific methodology plays a significant role for providing validation in the study of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students’ cultural adaptation experiences in a predominantly Han institution of higher learning located in a large city in Central China.
Purpose and Outcomes	The purpose of the study and its outcomes are driven by the interpretations and meanings that emerge from interviewing Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students in a predominantly Han public research institution of higher learning located in a large city in Central China.

Site selection, respondents, and sampling

The population of this study consisted of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students attending Xi'an Jiaotong University in the Shaanxi Province, and university staff of Xi'an Jiaotong University. While the majority of participants in this study consisted of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, university staff members at Xi'an Jiaotong University were also interviewed to further shed light on the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.

Xi'an Jiaotong University is located in Central China in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, a city with a population of approximately 8 million. Xi'an is an ancient city, historically known as Changan, and was the capital of several dynasties, including the Zhou (1027-221 B.C.); the Xin, the first dynasty that united China (221-206 B.C.); the Han (221 B.C.-A.D. 221); the Tang (618 A.D.-907) and several others (Mortan & Lewis, 2005). According to Xi'an Jiaotong University administrators, about 100,000 Hui people live in Xi'an, with a strong presence in the Muslim Quarter or, as it is known among Xi'an locals, the Muslim Street. Xi'an Jiaotong University is among the top 10 public, Project 985, research universities in China (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007). The CCP instituted Project 985, which aims to develop the top 10 to 12 universities in China as premier, world-class research universities (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007). It is interesting to note that, according to university officials there, Xi'an alone, one of the largest college cities in China, houses more than 113 higher education institutions that serve more than 1.3 million college students.

According to data provided by the university, Xi'an Jiaotong is a premier, national, public university under direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. It is one of China's oldest institutions of higher learning, founded in Shanghai in 1896 as Nanyang Public, and was renamed Jiaotong University in 1921. It is a comprehensive, research university offering programs primarily in science and engineering, with other programs including medicine, economics, management, art, law, philosophy, and education. The university offers 78 undergraduate majors, and awards master's degrees in 242 disciplines and Ph.D. degrees in 154 programs. The university includes 23 schools, eight undergraduate residential colleges, and 12 affiliated teaching hospitals. It has 5,600 staff and faculty, of which 2,686 are full-time teachers, including more than 1,500 professors and associate professors.

Xi'an Jiaotong University's enrollment at the time of the study was approximately 30,000 full-time students, including more than 13,000 master's and doctoral students. Approximately 996 ethnic minority students from 31 provinces and municipalities are enrolled at the university, including ethnic students from the autonomous regions of Xinjiang, Tibet, Mongolia, and Guangxi, and provinces of Hunan, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai, as well as others. The largest ethnic minority population at the research site are Hui (277), followed by Tujia (107), Manchu (106), Mongolian (93), Tibetan (65), and Uyghur (63). Small numbers of other ethnic minority students were also enrolled.

It must be noted that conducting ethnographic research or qualitative studies in Chinese public higher education institutions invariably requires multiple levels of

approval from top-level university administrators. It was critical for the researcher to understand and be aware of the highly bureaucratic, hierarchical, and centralized structures prevalent in higher education institutions in China. The researcher had the opportunity to travel to Xi'an Jiaotong University from 2003 to 2011 on short business trips unrelated to the study. These trips allowed the researcher to strengthen ties with university administrators at the research site that laid the foundation for future fieldwork. Building trustworthy relationships, or *guanxi* (关系), as commonly referred to in Chinese culture, was an indispensable and time-consuming process for developing successful academic and business ties in Xi'an Jiaotong University and building trust and rapport with the gatekeepers of the university to accomplish the goals of the current study. A high degree of coordination with university officials was required to secure office space and translators for interviews with respondents, tours of the site to observe respondents in their natural settings, and site visitations with university staff to obtain data relevant to the study. Attending multiple social activities with top decision makers was equally important for the researcher to build trust and recognition for the study.

Discussions of the study with Xi'an Jiaotong University officials began in spring 2012, and formal approval from university officials was communicated to the researcher in late spring of the same year. It is noteworthy to mention that Xi'an Jiaotong University officials approved the study under the condition that the researcher abstain from engaging in political and religious discussions with respondents. The researcher adhered to these ground rules throughout the data collection process at the research site, while acknowledging that these parameters limited the scope of the study.

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University in late spring of 2012 to move forward with this study using human participants, the researcher conducted the first site visit at Xi'an Jiaotong University in July 2012. Two other site visits in the summers of 2013 and 2014, each lasting approximately two to three weeks, were necessary to finalize data collection.

Purposive sampling was employed to the greatest degree possible to identify Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, plus staff, at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Snowball sampling, a type of purposive sampling, was used in the study. Snowball sampling is a chain or network sampling method that first involves identifying a few, selective participants who meet the criteria the researcher has determined for participation in the inquiry (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). As the researcher completes interviews with the first set of respondents, new respondents are selected via a referral process from interviewed respondents.

Naturalistic inquiry does not rely on statistical generalization or replication, so the use of probabilistic sampling has no relevance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, constructivist researchers employ purposeful sampling, a nonprobabilistic strategy that allows them to explore, understand, and gain in depth insight and rich detail of the particular contexts in a study (Patton, 1990).

Whenever snowball sampling was not possible due to logistical reasons and the inability of the researcher to speak Mandarin, the staff at Xi'an Jiaotong University assisted the researcher with selection of respondents. Cross-language research, which is the use of translators during the research process, was employed in this study (Temple,

2002). University officials at Xi'an Jiaotong University were instrumental in identifying undergraduate English majors who served as translators during the interviews with respondents. While at least one third of the respondents spoke relatively good English, it was necessary to use translators in most interviews due to language barriers. It is also significant to mention that although Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents spoke *Putonghua* (standard oral Mandarin) their primary language was either Tibetan or Turkic, respectively. The researcher acknowledges that the researcher-participant language barrier was a limitation in this study that may have affected the analysis and interpretation of the findings. Member checking, described later in the study, was used to build credibility and minimize language barriers. In addition, the investigator provided a small sample of selected audio recordings of the interviews (excluding identifiers linking the audio recording to respondents to protect the identity of the respondent) to a Chinese graduate student at Texas A&M University to verify the accuracy of translations.

The sample consisted of 29 respondents, of which 22 were Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur Xi'an Jiaotong University students, and seven were Xi'an Jiaotong University staff. A total of seven Hui students, eight Tibetan students, and seven Uyghur students were interviewed. Table 8 presents information on the Xi'an Jiaotong University students and staff selected for this study, including the ethnic minority origin of respondents, the number of interviews for each ethnic minority group, and the trip during which the interviews were conducted.

Table 8. Ethnic Minority Students Who Participated in the Study

Ethnic Minority/Staff	Number of Interviews	Data Collection Trip
Hui Staff	7 3	1 st
Tibetan Uyghur	6 5	2 nd
Tibetan Uyghur Staff	2 2 4	3 rd
Total	29	

Introducing the study to respondents and developing interview questions

The following steps were taken to contact the respondents and complete the interviews:

1. Invitation letters for prospective respondents were prepared in English and Mandarin. The letter was translated from English to Mandarin by a Chinese undergraduate student at Texas A&M University, and reviewed for accuracy by a Chinese graduate student from the same institution. These letters are attached in Appendices B and C. The letter outlined the purpose of the study, requested cooperation in the study, and informed students they would be signing a consent form before participating in the study. In addition, it was noted that the duration of the interview was set at one hour.
2. The investigator relied on the Office of Student Affairs of Xi'an Jiaotong University to assist with the selection of respondents. These staff were asked to send the invitation letter to all respondents before each interview. When

possible, after completing each interview, the investigator identified new respondents via a referral process from interviewed respondents.

3. The first interviews were arranged in July 2012, and took place July 19-24, during which 11 interviews were conducted. The second set of data collection interviews occurred in June 2013, and 10 interviews were conducted June 21-27. The last set of interviews were finalized in June 2014, from June 21-24.

The interview protocol for the study was also translated from English to Mandarin by a Chinese undergraduate student at Texas A&M University, and reviewed for accuracy by a Chinese graduate student from the same institution. A sample of the interview protocol is shown in Appendix B. Interviews were audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim. After reviewing transcriptions and journal entries that had been collected in summer 2012, the investigator decided to revise the interview protocol, and the revisions were approved by Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. To enhance the interview discussion and elicit richer responses from the respondents, the investigator added two questions regarding the respondents understanding of China's higher education preferential policies and their perspectives about differences between Han culture and the respondents' ethnic minority culture.

Data Collection

Data were derived from three sources: (1) interviews with participants; (2) observations of respondents before, during, and after the interview sessions, and observations of the Xi'an Jiaotong University campus, including classrooms, staff offices, student dormitories, and university cafeterias; and (3) analysis of records and

documents. The goal of a researcher during data collection entails constructing reality and knowledge that reflect the native setting and constructions expressed by the research participants. Naturalists transform the native setting and make the world visible through rich descriptions using field notes, reflexive journals, interviews, observations, documents, conversations, photographs and videos, recordings, and memos to one's self (Lincoln & Denzin, 2011).

Interviews

Consent forms written in Mandarin were provided to respondents before interviews were conducted. The consent form in English and Mandarin is shown in Appendix C. The consent form stated the purpose of the study, the intent and procedures to guarantee confidentiality and privacy, a declaration of the right to withdraw from participation in the study at any time, a statement verifying voluntary participation, assurance that no identifiers linking the study to the respondents would be used in the study or in published reports; and the affirmation by the respondents that they would be contacted at a later time if clarification or additional information was required.

The researcher in naturalistic inquiry is the principal instrument for data collection. The human instrument was employed as a means to collect data in this study, because only the human instrument is capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of differential interaction; the intrusion of instruments intervenes in the mutual shaping of other elements, which can be appreciated and evaluated only by humans; and all instruments are value-based and interact with local values, but only the human is in a position to identify and take into account those resulting biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions were audio recorded to capture the respondents' perceptions, constructions, opinions, beliefs, and experiences involving acculturation by Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in a higher education research institution in Central China, and the respondents' perceptions of the changes required at the institutional level to validate the cultural heritage of respondents. Throughout the interviews, which lasted approximately an hour each, informal member checks, in which respondents were asked to confirm, amend, and elaborate the constructions offered, were used repeatedly in order to address the language barrier.

The use of translators in conducting interviews that employ cross-cultural research in China is not easy, particularly when multiple ethnic minority groups are involved in the research project, and when the translators are from the dominant Han population. The translators who assisted the interviewer-researcher were all Han undergraduate students who were eager to interject their own opinions and nuances about particular questions during the translation process. Therefore, the researcher needed to constantly remind the translators before and during each translation session that they were to translate verbatim only the respondents' answers. The researcher also found it difficult to restrain himself from "leading" the interviewees rather than allowing the respondents to reach their own conclusions without interjections. While the translators in the study spoke fluent English, when they had difficulties translating a particular expression or word, they made use of electronic translators that they carried with them.

The researcher also regularly found it difficult to juggle the prohibition imposed by the research site against engaging in political or religious discussions during interview sessions. When respondents expressed a religious or political opinion, the researcher, rather than offering his own reflection about the matter, asked the respondents to elaborate on their constructions as much as possible.

Observations

Persistent and prolonged observations of respondents and the research setting were recorded and logged in great detail through reflexive journals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The investigator took photographs and videos, and analyzed artifacts of the site university. The investigator visited student dormitories, cafeterias, classrooms, and other facilities in Xi'an Jiaotong University to add greater scope to the contextual dimension of the inquiry. On several occasions, respondents invited the investigator to join them for lunch or dinner to sample the ethnic minority dishes offered at the cafeteria at Xi'an Jiaotong University and local restaurants in the Muslim Quarter of Xi'an. These encounters and observations were recorded in field notes, and helped the researcher become more aware of the acculturation conditions and cultural differences among Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan students, and allowed the researcher "to discover the here-and-now interworkings of the environment via the use of the five human senses" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Records and documents

Documents can enhance understanding of the context in question, but in settings like China, document collection can be difficult. For instance, the researcher attempted multiple times to collect documents related to ethnic minority admissions quotas, historical data on ethnic minority enrollments, and financial aid information from the research site, which might have enhanced the process of triangulation, (the application multiple sources of data, methods, or theories that enhance credibility along the course of inquiry), but this was not possible due to the institution's policies (Denzin, 1970). However, the researcher was able to collect Xi'an Jiaotong University's policy related to establishing student organizations on campus (Appendix E).

Researcher reflexivity

The researcher elaborated on his experiences during the research project through reflexive journals to help ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflexive journaling was done before, during, and after each of the three data collection trips to China. This captured observations and logistical information, such as times, dates, locations, and names of respondents participating in interview sessions; methodological issues emerging during the study; thick description of the college campus and facilities, and the researcher's understandings and impressions of acculturation commonalities and nuances of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students; interpretations of participants' behaviors and interactions; as well as my own frustrations, mood, conjectures, and assumptions; and opinions that arose as deeper discernments were reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1995).

Member checking

The researcher conducted member checking extensively during and at the end of each interview to allow the respondents to clarify any meanings or interpretations. Member checking is especially crucial when language barriers are present in international settings, such as China. The researcher endeavored to carefully reword and repeat questions with the aid of a translator, when necessary, to ensure that respondents understood the meaning behind each question. Member checks through triangulation via the use of observations and interviews was employed to verify interpretations and corroborate the representations constructed by the inquirer.

Due to financial resource constraints and work obligations, the researcher was not able to stay in China for long periods. For this reason, the researcher conducted data collection in three different trips. This made it difficult to conduct member checking after the completion of the data collection trip. For instance, the researcher did not conduct member checking over the phone or the internet with respondents after leaving China in 2012 and 2013 following each site visit to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. While the researcher considered sending encrypted documents of transcriptions electronically over the internet after the first and second visits of the research site, the probability of internet security breach and compromise of respondent confidentiality over telecommunication carriers caused the researcher to rule out this option. Thus, member checking in 2014 was conducted with a few of the respondents directly and in person, and the researcher probed the respondents with follow-up questions, and allowed respondents the opportunity to amend the

transcriptions and indicate whether the reconstructions of the researcher were recognizable and reflected their voice.

Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing acted as an external assessment of the inquiry process. A peer debriefer is someone who is “outside of the context and who has some general understanding of the study to analyze materials, test working hypotheses and emerging designs, and listens to the researcher’s ideas and concerns.” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The investigator selected as his peer debriefer a colleague at Texas A&M University who holds a Ph.D. in international education and has traveled and lived extensively in Asia. The debriefer had a general understanding of the topic, and provided valuable advice to the investigator over the last three years by being instrumental in probing questions about the study’s emerging methodological design, and stimulating discussions on working hypotheses after the researcher finished data collection for the study.

The peer debriefer also played a critical role in providing alternative explanations for emerging themes, helping the investigator address any biases that may have arisen during the data analysis and formulation of findings, and assisting the investigator with coping strategies to deal with frustrations and challenges encountered in the inquiry. The co-chairs of the investigator’s doctoral committee, Dr. Yvonna Lincoln and Dr. Elsa Gonzalez, and doctoral committee members, Dr. Christine Stanley and Dr. Antonio La Pastina, provided significant and valuable advice to the investigator since the inception

of the study that enhanced the peer debriefing process.

Assurance of confidentiality

Confidentiality of interactions between the researcher and respondents was ensured in compliance with the consent form signed by all respondents. The consent form, in English and Mandarin, is provided in Appendix C. Other measures to ensure confidentiality that the researcher put into place were identifying all respondents by code, and omitting descriptions that could associate quotations with individual respondents or divulge their identities.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in the study followed an inductive process, rather than deductive process used in conventional investigations. In traditional models, data in deductive analysis are defined a priori as arising from a given theory. However, a naturalist works with data that emerges during the inquiry itself. The researcher sought to analyze data interactively both during data collection and during the data analysis phase. Data collection procedures and working hypotheses in the study were modified or refined whenever necessary after data were analyzed progressively following each set of interviews. New insights and rich representations emerged after data was analyzed for each iteration, and revised hypotheses gave new direction to the study and researcher (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

Data analysis in the study was conducted through a series of interactive phases: organizing the data, coding and unitizing the data, constructing categories or themes, consolidating data, interpreting meaning, weighing emerging understandings, seeking

alternative explanations, formulating hypotheses, and finalizing the study in the form of a case study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After each set of interviews were audio recorded, they were transcribed verbatim during the data collection phase to capture and review unfolding meanings and constructions. Reviewing data was repeated multiple times to examine potential patterns, abbreviated meanings, and synthesis emerging from constructions shared by research participants.

Unitizing data

Interview data in English were transcribed verbatim by the researcher from the audiotapes into computerized files. Then, each transcript was unitized using a word processor, by breaking bits or units of data into segments (words, phrases, or sentences) whose meanings can stand alone. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These separate, stand-alone, meaningful units of data were then printed on 4 x 6 note cards, and labeled with the number of the interview, gender of the respondent, academic classification of the respondent, date of the recording, card number, and page of the transcript. The name of each respondent was typed in a separate confidential file corresponding to the numbered interviews, and pseudonyms were created for each participant. Units were then printed, resulting in 2,431 cards, or units of data. Data were derived from 238 pages of transcripts out of the 29 interviews conducted.

Coding

Unitized data printed on index cards were coded accordingly to guarantee confidentiality, and to enable the researcher to track the original source of each unit of data. The code allowed the researcher to track the date and number of each interview,

gender of the respondent, academic classification of the respondent, card number, and page number of transcript.

A sample of a unit data printed on an index card and coded accordingly is provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Sample of a Unit Card

#	Int. 5 5/7/21/12 F U
	Unit T _____

Pg. #	

The unit card describes:

- # Card number
- Int. 5 Interview number
- 5/7/12 Date of the interview
- F Gender of respondent
- U Academic classification
- Pg. # Page number in transcript
- Unit T Translated unit

Categorization and developing patterns

The unitization process and content analysis of the data allowed the researcher to derive tentative categories. Bryman (p. 542, 2004) notes that content analysis is an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis on

allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analyzed (and the categories derived from it) appeared (Bryman, p. 542, 2004).

Categories were constructed and systematically derived by sorting the note cards of each participant into piles that captured recurring patterns or content which cut across the entire data collected and provided descriptive information about the context from which the units were obtained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During this categorization process, the researcher identified categories and subcategories, which were then consolidated after further content analysis. The name of a category or subcategory was printed on a separate card for purposes of identification and placed on a stack of cards corresponding to a category set. Each category set was analyzed until all cards were matched accordingly with a stack of cards. Miscellaneous cards that did not match to any category were placed in a separate stack and discarded. Categories were then grouped into shared themes that enabled the researcher to subsequently construct descriptive statements of shared meanings across participants.

Figure 4 illustrates a data card selected at random from the completed categories in the study.

Figure 4. Sample of a Data Card from the Study

227	Int. 5	7/21/12	F	U
What kind of stresses did you experience as a high school student? T: Only academic pressure to get into college.				
Pg. 1				

The code in Figure 4 shows that this unit card is number 227, the code describes:

Int. 5 Interview 5

7/21/12 Date of interview: July 21, 2012

F Gender of respondent (Female)

U Academic classification (undergraduate)

Pg. 1 Page number of transcript (page one)

T Translated text

The unit in Figure 4 matched to the category set labeled “Acculturation moderating experiences at individual level prior to entering college,” because the unit described the respondent’s academic experience as a moderating factor which impacted the respondent’s acculturation experience prior to entering college. In Chapter IV, under data analysis and the findings of the study, selected text found in unit cards will be provided to support the results of the study, along with the codes corresponding to the unit card.

Table 9 illustrates the nine categories that emerged during the categorization process.

Table 9. Categories of the Study

Category
1. Descriptive data
2. Acculturation moderating experiences at individual level prior to entering college
3. Motivation to go to college
4. Institutional discourse and society of settlement perceptions of Shao shu Minzu
5. Student discourse and perceptions of institutional support
6. Acculturation stressors and stresses
7. Moderating factors during acculturation at individual level
8. Acculturation Strategy: Desire for cultural recognition/valorization
9. Miscellaneous

Identifying themes

After completing the unitization process, six overarching themes emerged.

These themes are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Emergent Themes of the Study

Themes	
THEME I)	Descriptive Data
THEME II)	Moderating Factors Prior to Acculturation
THEME III)	Institutional Disconnect
THEME IV)	Acculturative Stress
THEME V)	Moderating Factors During Acculturation
THEME VI)	Cultural Recognition/Valorization

Table 11 summarizes the global compilation of themes, categories, and subcategories of the study, including the number of interviews conducted in each data collection trip by type of respondent (Hui, Tibetan, Uyghur, or university staff member), and the total number of cards collected by theme, category, subcategory, and the entire study. The format used in Table 11 was inspired by a qualitative methodological approach used by Gonzalez y Gonzalez (2004).

Table 11. Units of Data for Identified Themes of the Study

CATEGORY	1 st Round 11 Interviews		2 nd Round 11 Interviews		3 rd Round 8 Interviews			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	Hui Students	Staff	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Staff	Hui	Tibetan	Uyghur	Staff	
Theme I) Descriptive Data	63	21	79	66	19	25	91	63	98	91	112	364
1. Descriptive data												
Sub-categories:												
Students												
. Place of Birth	8	0	18	15	7	7	0	8	25	22	0	55
. Age	8	0	6	5	2	2	0	8	8	7	0	23
. Major	8	0	6	5	2	2	0	8	8	7	0	23
. Class standing	8	0	6	5	2	2	0	8	8	7	0	23
. Gender	8	0	6	5	2	2	0	8	8	7	0	23
. Ethnicity of parents	8	0	6	5	2	2	0	8	8	7	0	23
. Financial support	15	0	30	24	2	4	0	15	32	28	0	75
Staff												
. Interaction with minority students	0	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	9	9
. Title and name of department	0	4	0	0	0	0	37	0	0	0	41	41
. Years of service at university	0	3	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	11	11
. Gender	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	7	7
. Ethnicity	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	7	7
Campus characteristics	0	4	1	2	0	4	33	0	1	6	37	44
Theme II) Moderating Factors	282	70	203	200	65	72	34	282	268	272	104	926
Prior to Acculturation												
2. Acculturation moderating experiences at individual level prior to entering college												
Sub-categories												
1) Middle school and high school experiences												
. Journey from homeland to other	23	0	55	37	24	27	0	23	79	64	0	166

Table 11. (Continued)

CATEGORY	1 st Round 11 Interviews		2 nd Round 11 Interviews		3 rd Round 8 Interviews			Total	Total	Total	Total		
	Hui Students	Staff	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Staff	Hui	Tibetan	Uyghur	Staff	Total	
provinces/extended separation from homeland													
. Alienation/loneliness/homesickness	2	0	8	0	1	6	0	2	9	6	0	17	
2) Preparatory/remedial college experiences													
. Perceptions of preparatory/remedial college experiences	10	0	0	12	0	0	0	10	0	12	0	22	
3) Cultural distance													
. Language/religion	125	70	71	61	13	26	34	125	84	87	104	400	
4) Trilingualism	1	0	5	34	11	5	0	1	16	39	0	56	
5) Loss of cultural heritage/erosion of mother language	63	0	26	32	15	5	0	63	41	37	0	141	
3. Motivation to go to college													
Sub-categories													
. Gaokao scores/Institutional ranking	30	0	26	11	1	2	0	30	27	13	0	70	
. Cultural ties	27	0	4	4	0	0	0	27	4	4	0	35	
. External influences	0	0	4	4	0	1	0	0	4	5	0	9	
. Social mobility and pursuit of dreams	1	0	4	5	0	0	0	1	4	5	0	10	
Theme III) Institutional Disconnect	78	43	40	79	13	7	73	78	53	86	116	333	
4. Institutional discourse and society of settlement perceptions of Shaoshu Minzu													
Sub-categories													
1) Staff discourse of Shaoshu Minzu college experiences													
Sub-categories-													
. Shaoshu Minzu attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	18	18	
. CCP discourse student equality	0	32	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	64	64	
5. Student discourse and perceptions of institutional support													

Table 11. (Continued)

CATEGORY	1 st Round 11 Interviews		2 nd Round 11 Interviews		3 rd Round 8 Interviews			Total	Total	Total	Total	
	Hui Students	Staff	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Staff	Hui	Tibetan	Uyghur	Staff	Total
Sub-categories												
1) Institutional support	67	0	19	47	7	3	23	67	26	50	23	166
2) Student demands for institutional support												
. Institutional accommodations	0	4	18	20	4	0	0	0	22	20	4	46
. Cultural accommodations	11	7	3	12	2	4	0	11	5	16	7	39
Theme IV) Acculturative Stress	115	11	86	142	52	44	0	115	138	186	11	450
6. Acculturation stressors and stresses												
Sub-categories												
. Micro-Aggressions/Isolation/Homesickness	16	0	8	79	11	18	0	16	19	97	0	132
. Academic challenges/academic degree misplacement	25	0	52	47	41	22	0	25	93	69	0	187
. Inter-ethnic relations/roommate issues/ inter-ethnic romance	30	11	5	2	0	0	0	30	5	2	11	48
. Government restrictions	23	0	7	6	0	0	0	23	7	6	0	36
. Financial and family concerns	21	0	14	9	0	4	0	21	14	13	0	48
Theme V) Moderating Factors during Acculturation	42	3	51	47	6	12	0	42	57	59	3	161
7. Moderating factors during acculturation at individual level												
Sub-categories												
. Social Support groups												
- Family and friends	32	2	20	26	5	5	0	32	25	31	2	90
- Self	6	0	11	3	0	0	0	6	11	3	0	20
- Faculty and staff	0	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	1	5	1	7
- Extracurricular activities	4	0	19	14	1	6	0	4	20	20	0	44

Table 11. (Continued)

CATEGORY	1 st Round 11 Interviews		2 nd Round 11 Interviews		3 rd Round 8 Interviews			Total	Total	Total	Total	
	Hui Students	Staff	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	Staff	Hui	Tibetan	Uyghur	Staff	Total
Theme VI) Cultural Recognition	38	38	41	48	8	17	7	38	49	65	45	197
8. Acculturation Strategy: Desire for cultural recognition												
Sub-categories												
· Cultural recognition and rediscovering cultural heritage	37	24	31	32	4	12	0	37	35	44	24	140
· Vision for future of their homeland groups	0	14	7	11	2	3	0	0	9	14	14	37
9. Miscellaneous	1	0	3	5	2	2	7	1	5	7	7	20
Total	618	186	500	582	163	177	205	618	663	759	391	2431

Building Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, soundness, and rigor of the study's findings were established through the application of methodological techniques that assure truth value through credibility, applicability through transferability, consistency through dependability, and neutrality through confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The following questions guided the research design to assure trustworthiness:

1. Truth value through credibility: Has the researcher adequately represented the reconstructions derived from the findings and interpretations? Are these reconstructions credible to research participants? (That is, are the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the inquired compatible with the reconstructions the researcher attributes to them?)
2. Applicability through transferability: Has the researcher described in sufficient detail the interrelationships and intricacies of the context relevant to constructions of respondents, such that other researchers can determine the applicability to their own settings?
3. Consistency through dependability: Has the researcher adequately provided an "audit trail" to document the coherency of the study's processes (data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations)?
4. Neutrality through confirmability: Can the data (constructions, facts, assertions) be tracked to their sources, and did the researcher explicitly and implicitly assemble coherent interpretations relevant to the study?

Credibility

Establishing credibility with respondents who supplied data for the study was a central concern throughout the research process. Credibility in constructivism aligns with validity criteria in positivist or traditional scientific research. Within the conventional paradigm, internal and external validity assumes casual relationships between independent and dependent variables and seeks generalization in its findings to arrive to one, true, tangible reality.

On the other hand, constructivism embraces multiple realities as expressed through the constructions and meanings supplied by respondents within particular contexts. It is impossible to understand phenomena relevant to a study “without reference to the context in which it is embedded” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 302). A credible study “has the effect on its readers of a mosaic image, often imprecise in terms of defining boundaries and specific relationships but very rich in providing depth of meaning and richness of understanding” (Erlandson, Harris Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 28). The researcher strived to describe the multiple meanings and constructions shared by the respondents as adequately as possible to build credibility.

Credibility for the study was established using various methodological techniques. The researcher engaged in prolonged engagement, persistent observations, and reflexive journal entries. As mentioned previously, traveling to Xi’an Jiaotong University several times over the last few years was necessary to build rapport and trust with respondents and gatekeepers. The author also had the opportunity to travel to the research site since 2003 on short business trips unrelated to the study. These prolonged

business trips which lasted about two weeks each year allowed the researcher to strengthen relations with university officials at the research site, and laid the groundwork for the current study.

Observations of the research site, including interactions with respondents and university officials during interviews, and visits to on-campus facilities, were captured through reflexive journals. During and after interview sessions, it was vital for the researcher to explain to respondents that their stories would be kept confidential and anonymous via the signing of a consent form; that hidden agendas, whether the researcher's or those of decision-makers at Xi'an Jiaotong University, would not be served; that the interests of the respondents would be observed as much as the researcher's; and that the respondents' input would influence the inquiry process as much as possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 303).

Peer debriefing and member checking also were vital in establishing credibility. An experienced international educator who was a colleague of the researcher, acted as the peer debriefer in the study, and contributed greatly to the study's rigor by examining the study's emerging methodological design, stimulating discussions on working hypotheses and potential biases that may have emerged, offering alternative possibilities for emerging themes, and serving as emotional support during the course of the study.

Member checks were conducted continuously during interview sessions, and the researcher carefully reworded and repeated questions during interview sessions with the aid of translators to ensure that respondents understood the meaning behind each question.

Triangulation and document analysis also aided in building credibility for the study. Triangulation is the application of multiple sources of data or methods that investigators use to use to build credibility in a study (Denzin, 1970). The researcher used audio-recorded interviews, observations of respondents and on-campus facilities, photographs and videos of college facilities, such as student dormitories, cafeterias, classrooms, and staff offices to aid in the convergence of data and build confidence in the study's findings and corroboration with the respondents' constructions. While written documents were difficult to access due to institutional restrictions, the researcher was able to examine a few documents relevant to student organization rules. The documents were translated from Mandarin to English by Xi'an Jiaotong University undergraduate students who served as translators during the study.

Transferability

Thick description and purposive sampling was used to enable transferability of judgement in the study. Conventional inquiry relies on external validity; that is, the extent to which a study's findings can be generalized or replicated to other scenarios or informants (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, & Fehr, 2007). Generalization applies regardless of the context within the same population in the traditional paradigm. In other words, scientific methodology is context free. On the other hand, constructivist studies are context bound. For example, the author's main goal in China was not to develop generalized similarities or comparisons among Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur, or among ethnic minority students relative to various public institutions of higher education in China, but to describe the specifics—to give the context of the study its particular

essence within a case study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 210). Constructivists rely on “thick description” to enable transferability of judgments through case reporting, the preferred mode of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 214).

The researcher provided thick description to unveil the context germane to each interviewee and observation from which future researchers can make transferability judgments. The onus rests with future investigators who wish to transfer or apply the study’s findings to other contexts (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 145). The researcher also applied purposive sampling, rather than the random sampling commonly performed in traditional inquiry. Collection of data from respondents prevails until gaps of information are bridged and redundancy of information becomes apparent. The researcher engaged a total of 29 respondents before redundancy of information became apparent.

Dependability and confirmability

Establishing dependability and confirmability was equally crucial for building trustworthiness for the current study. Dependability in naturalistic inquiry aligns with reliability or consistency, predictability and accuracy of a study’s statistical instrument in traditional inquiry. Reliability in traditional inquiry relies on replication, or the application of equivalent statistical instruments through random sampling under equal conditions repeated over a period of time, which produces similar results (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). On the other hand, consistency in this naturalistic study was achieved through a dependability audit by engaging a peer debriefer who served as an external check on data collection, data analysis, and hypotheses creation.

Confirmability in naturalistic inquiry aligns with objectivity in traditional inquiry. The scientific method seeks to generate findings that are free of the biases of the researcher and thereby neutralize partiality through objective methodology in the form of replicable results and exposure to public scrutiny (Erlandson, Harrison, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The naturalistic researcher, on the other hand, recognizes that no methodology can achieve absolute neutrality from researcher bias. The naturalistic inquirer in the study sought to communicate dependability and confirmability through the use of a peer debriefer with whom the researcher shared insights and analyses. The peer debriefer acted as a quality controller, assuring that data, interpretations, and findings were grounded in the context from which they were derived (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher also made use of reflexive journals, tape recordings, field notes, video recordings, and transcriptions as suitable methods to advance confirmability. Reflexive journals documented the researcher's attitudes, mood, and opinions throughout the data collection phase of the study.

Working Hypotheses

Erlandson, et al., note that "Working hypotheses are general statements applicable to the specific context under investigation ... They are tools used to give guidance to the project and should be progressively modified and refined as patterns of phenomena emerge" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Working hypotheses for this study were developed as the study evolved and the researcher's constructions, questions, and conclusions intertwined with the data collected during interview sessions and observations:

- Ethnic backgrounds of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students impact the degree to which these students experience acculturation in Xi'an Jiaotong University.
- Moderating factors prior to and during acculturation at Xi'an Jiaotong University affect the college experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.
- There is a disconnect between how Xi'an Jiaotong University staff perceive acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students, and how these students perceive their own acculturation experiences.
- Xi'an Jiaotong University does not sufficiently validate or recognize the cultural heritage of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.

Because working hypotheses are context driven and are “considered transient and tentative” for any specific case study, as is the case for this study, it is vital to keep in mind these general statements are specific to experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur studying in Xi'an Jiaotong University (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, p. 60).

In the following chapter, a comprehensive examination of contextualized experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students at Xi'an Jiaotong University will be presented.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The ancient, Chinese proverb that “A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step” (千里之行，始於足下) (BBC News, 2015) defines the lengthy, arduous, yet transformative quest I began in 2012 and culminated in 2016. Traveling to the ancient capital of Xi’an, China, from College Station, Texas, is an ordeal that takes approximately 40 hours by airplane over distances of more than 15,000 miles, and while travel fatigue takes a toll on the body, every voyage to China has a mysterious capacity for captivating and altering one’s mind.

China fascinates visiting sojourners and scholars perhaps because of the profound magnitude and significance of its complex and extensive history. The vast mosaic and wealth of cultures manifested in its diverse populations create a sense of awe and impossibility for anyone who endeavors to comprehend this magnificent country. The task of this study represents a small step I have taken as a beginner in qualitative research to understand and make sense of acculturation experiences of Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan students within the context of a predominantly Han public research university in Xi’an, China, so that the voices of these students and others traditionally marginalized in the periphery might be heard.

This long-awaited chapter in the current study unveils the stories shared by Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students and university staff as co-creators of knowledge in two sections: The Participants and The Findings. In The Participants, I give an overview of

the 22 students and seven staff who volunteered to take part in this study. The Findings section addresses the study's three research questions by employing the emergent themes, categories, and subcategories identified in Chapter III.

The Participants

Interviews were conducted with 22 students and seven staff of Xi'an Jiaotong University. Seven of the 22 students were Hui; eight were Tibetan; and seven were Uyghur. Most interviews lasted one hour, and all interviews were conducted in English with the aid of translators in most instances, and took place in public locations, such as offices and small conference rooms in dormitories at the East and West Campus of Xi'an Jiaotong University.

Approximately 27,000 students reside on the main campus (or East Campus), and 3,000 students reside on the West Campus, located a few kilometers west of the main campus. Interviews with Hui students were conducted on the East Campus, while most interviews with Tibetan, and Uyghur students transpired on the West Campus.

Dormitories or residence halls at Xi'an Jiaotong University are called colleges. The East Campus has six colleges, while the West Campus has two. These are normally five- to six-story dormitory buildings, with some of them, such as Pang Yang College on the East Campus, housing up to 4,000 students. The offices of staff members in each college are located on the first floor, and no one is allowed into a college without first presenting university identification to a staff member at the entrance of the building. A small room inside the building at the entrance serves as sleeping quarters for the gatekeepers of the building. Conference tables at a college typically seat 10 to 12

people, and are equipped with swiveling chairs with metallic arm rests in black upholstery.

The first set of 10 interviews occurred in the summer of 2012, followed by 11 interviews in the summer of 2013, and concluding with eight interviews in the summer of 2014. In this section, I share what I learned from the students as individuals, their academic and career aspirations, their journeys to college, cultural backgrounds, acculturation experiences, and biographical data, including their approximate age range, and education level. While some participants chose to elaborate on their cultural background, career aspirations, and journeys to college, others did not, even after probing with follow-up questions. As a result, the narratives from some of the participants are not as extensive as others. While about a quarter of the students and staff in the study spoke relatively good English, the use of a translator was necessary in most interviews. Quotation references from participants in this chapter are marked with a “T” whenever a translator was required. Words in brackets will be used to clarify the meaning of a sentence or phrase in translated quotations when necessary.

While this section focuses on the narratives of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, also included are the narratives of Xi’an Jiaotong University staff about their experiences interacting with ethnic minority students, years of service, and position and job responsibilities at the university. This added data sheds additional light on the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students. All participant names are pseudonyms. The narratives of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in this section are presented sequentially by ethnicity and interview number, followed by the narratives of

university staff members (Table 12). Table 12 presents the interview number corresponding to each student or university staff member, ethnicity of each student, and pseudonym of each participant.

Table 12. Participants in the Study by Interview Number, Student Ethnicity, University Staff, and Pseudonym

Hui Students	Tibetan Students	Uyghur Students	University Staff
1 - Zheng	12 - Gesar	11 - Ayaz	2 - Wang
4 - Ma	13 - Jigme	15 - Bayat	3 - Sui
5 - Bai	14 - Dhondup	16 - Tura	9 - Yi
6 - Du	17 - Chonphel	18 - Yusup	22 - Tung
7 - Liangyu	19 - Gedum	20 - Ashtal	23 - Ran
8 - Cai	21 - Jampa	24 - Tesek	26 - Chin
10 - Ganzu	28 - Delek	25 - Erkin	27 - Shi
	29 - Dolma		

Of the 22 students participating in the study, 15 were female and seven male, and 19 were at the undergraduate level, while three were at the graduate level. Their ages ranged from 19 years to 29 years. Three of the seven staff members were female, and their years of service at the university ranged from two years to 10 years. Three of the seven staff were of Hui ethnicity, and four were Han.

Hui students

Interview # 1 – “Today, we are family.” Zheng is a Hui undergraduate student in her late teens who was born in a large city in Central China. Zheng identifies ethnically as a Hui student, even though she was raised in an interethnic family, her mother being Hui and father, Han. Her parents pay for her college expenses. Like most Hui students I

interviewed, her physical features are not any different than Han students. Zheng conveyed that while she adheres to the Muslim tradition of abstinence from pork and is aware that she may be different than Han people, she and her mother no longer closely follow religious Muslim and Hui festivals like Ramadan, a month of fasting and prayer in the Islamic religion, as stated by the translator:

T: When she eats she feels she has a conscience; she is different than Han because she don't eat pork. In other situations she does not have this worry... We [they] have a festival that they don't eat anything at daytime until dinner. But in her family just her mom is Hui, so this tradition is not very obvious... She said that when her grandma was alive she had such practice, but now they almost quit it. [Cards #43-45 & Card #55]

At the end of the interview, Zheng shared that she embraced Han people and perceived no differences between the Han majority and Hui: "I just want to say that today we are family. We are not different, I think" [Card # 60].

Interview # 4 – "He drinks alcohol sometimes." The second interviewee was an undergraduate student from the province of Gansu, north of Shaanxi Province, who grew up in the countryside in a farming community with his Hui parents. Before entering Xi'an Jiaotong University, Ma attended a preparatory, one-year college program for ethnic minority students. His *gaokao* (national college entrance examination) scores were too low, so he was required to attend a preparatory college before enrolling at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Ma explained that his parents could not afford to send him to college, and he relies on the government for financial support. "T: Low-income students

receive funding from the government. His parents do not have to pay for anything. His parents cannot afford paying for school” [Cards #180-182].

Throughout the interview, Ma expressed his feelings about Han people, and perceived no differences between him and the Han majority, given that he has interacted with Han people since childhood, and although he is Muslim, he drinks alcohol. “Ever since he was born, he has been surrounded by Han people. It makes him feel like there are no differences between Hui and Han people. . . . He drinks alcohol sometimes” [Cards #200-201 & #206].

Interview #5 – “Sometimes she feels she influences the whole class.” The third interviewee was an environmental studies undergraduate Hui student, Bai, who was reared in a small town in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, north of Shaanxi Province. Her national college entrance examination scores met the admission requirements of Xi’an Jiaotong University, and she was not required to take remedial college courses at a preparatory college. Bai’s parents paid for her college expenses.

Before attending Xi’an Jiaotong University, she traveled out of her home town to attend a high school in Yinchuan, a large city and capital of Ningxia Province. She commented about her experiences living in a big city during high school, and how she became independent after leaving home to attend high school:

T: It is more convenient to live in a big city. The buildings were more advanced. The education is better. The accommodations of school are better. From [living at] home to the dormitory [in high school] she learned to be independent, and she learned how to get along with others, make friends. [Cards #220-225]

While Bai expressed that students at Xi'an Jiaotong University respect her Hui traditions, she felt uncomfortable because her Han friends always need to make accommodations for her religious beliefs when they eat out at restaurants, since she is required to eat halal food, prepared according to Islamic requirements:

T: She said that since students at the university were all over from China, we all have different living habits. It is different. She does not feel good every time she goes out for a dinner; the classmates will consider minority students. They take consideration of her eating habits [customs].

Sometimes she feels it is not appropriate for the whole classmates. She sometimes feels she influences the whole class. [Cards #235-237]

Interview #6 – “I must do this very well like other Han.” Du is a graduate student in her mid-20s pursuing a degree in business administration, with an undergraduate degree in applied sciences from Xi'an Jiaotong University. She was born in a large city in Shaanxi Province near Xi'an, and both of her parents are Hui. She spoke English at an intermediate to advanced level, and has excelled academically. Xi'an Jiaotong University admitted her with a national college entrance examination score below the university's cutoff score. Du explained that the university admitted her with a lower *gaokao* score not because she is a Hui ethnic minority student, but because she received a scholarship for her dancing skills. Du served as the president of the dance society and performed Han dances during her undergraduate years at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Du stated that she did not receive a discount on the national college entrance examination based on ethnicity because she was not born in a predominantly Hui

county: “T: If there is a county that is full of Hui, only the children from there can apply” [Card #266].

She conveyed that teachers and students on campus treated her respectfully and overall she did not feel different from Han students, but she found it difficult sometimes to have close relationships with Han male students due to her Islamic traditions, and while her parents wish for her to find a Hui boyfriend, she felt frustrated that she could not find one, because only a few Hui students attend graduate school:

I do not feel very different. The most important difference is food. Before I went to university, I ate at home. When I came to the university, I felt some difference because of food. Sometimes when I want a Han boy, this boy’s family maybe they cannot accept me because of dinner and lunch. . . . My parents want me to find a boyfriend, but cannot find one, Muslim. . . . Right now not many Hui students have master’s degrees. [Cards #298-299]

It was apparent during the course of the interview that while Du embraced her Hui identity, she felt she did not know much about her own culture. She also explained that growing up among Han people made her realize she needed to focus on her academic studies and excel academically, like Han people: “In fact, I’m not know very [much about] this culture, because I have much homework to do in my high school. I must do this very well like other Han” [Card #340]. She also commented that she differs from other Muslim students because she interacts with Han students, while other Muslim students self-segregate: “Some Muslim at JU, they often close themselves. They maybe only have Hui friends. They don’t want to meet other new Han friends. So I

think if you open yourself to others, you can comfortable at this university” [Card # 329]. Du commented further about her opinion of Islam, and how as a religion it is not as open as other worldviews such as Christianity.

Interview #7 – “I think the Hui are much like Han.” The fifth interviewee was a graduate student pursuing a degree in physics, who finished her undergraduate degree in the same major at Xi’an Jiaotong University. Liangyu’s hometown is in the Henan Province, about two hours by fast train to Xi’an. Both of her parents are Hui. Liangyu has mastered the English language relatively well, and did not require the assistance of a translator during the interview.

Although Xi’an Jiaotong University granted her five bonus points on her national college entrance examination scores, she was not required to attend a preparatory college for ethnic minority students before enrolling. Liangyu’s good academic standing allowed her to receive scholarships during her freshman and sophomore years, after which her parents paid her college expenses. She also worked as a physics tutor during college to supplement the financial support she received from her family and pay for college living expenses.

Her experience at the university had been positive and she felt respected and valued on campus. Liangyu emphasized that she has worked diligently in her academic studies, and also had time to participate in student clubs, such as the astronomy club and the student union: “JU is a wonderful place to study. And people here are very nice and they study hard. During the first year, I just participated in some clubs, and still work hard in my studies” [Cards #358-360]. She felt comfortable living with Han people

because she has interacted with the dominant culture since primary school, and she said Han people are not that different from Hui: “In fact, I have been living and studying with Han since I was a child. So, I can get along with them ... In fact, I think the Hui are much like Han, not that different ...” [Card # 377]

Interview #8 – “His grandparents don’t ask him to strictly obey the customs.”

Cai demonstrated great interest in the current study and asked many questions about why I was carrying out the research project at Xi’an. Our engaging conversation extended the interview to more than 90 minutes. Cai grew up in Yinchuan, the capital of the Ningxia Autonomous Hui Region, with his Hui parents. He attended a preparatory college with 1,000 other ethnic minority students for a year in Jiangxi Province, in southeast China, before enrolling in Xi’an Jiaotong University. His experience at the preparatory college was less fulfilling than he imagined: “T: The policy requires them one year to take the course, but they don’t learn too much during the year. It is part of the policy” [Card #386]. He explained that 30 to 40 students who attended remedial courses with him in the Jiangxi Province also were enrolled in Xi’an Jiaotong University.

Cai’s parents paid his college expenses. Overall, his experience at Xi’an University had been positive, and he perceived that Han students and professors treat him respectfully and the same as other Han students. He also expressed that his classmates are curious about his Hui customs and sometimes teased him, but respect him: “T: Sometimes his classmates do not understand his customs, but they always respect his customs, and sometimes they make jokes but it is just joking, and he can accept it” [Cards #418 & 419]. Cai mentioned that Han students are only superficially curious about Hui culture, and do not know the roots of Islam. When

asked whether or not it was important to teach Han students about Hui culture, he explained that since Han people lack interest in religious matters, they may not find this topic relevant to their lives:

T: He does not eat some kind of foods [such as pork], and his classmates ask him, “Why don’t you eat them?” They [Han] are curious why he does not eat their [Han] delicious foods, and they [Hui] feel pity about it, because they [Han] do not know the history of Islam ... Most Chinese don’t believe in some beliefs. So if they [Han] know something about minorities it is not helpful to Chinese people. Most Chinese people are not closely attached to a certain type of religion. So they might not believe in a God, Allah, or Lord, so he thinks religion may not help them in their lives. Most Han students are only curious about the customs, and things that Hui people express in daily life. They behave different. They are only curious about diet. They are not curious about deep things. He said that since we [Han] are only exposed to superficial things that we [Han] only ask him about those kinds of things. [Cards #429-431, 440-446]

Furthermore, Cai elaborated that most Hui people are integrated into Han society, but some Hui from remote areas continue to hold firm to their Islamic roots. However, he and his family no longer practice some Hui traditions like Ramadan, and his grandparents have advised him that it is more important to have good relations with people than follow traditions:

T: Hui people are widely distributed in China, so he thinks it won’t be too troublesome for them to fit in. He says that maybe there are Hui people that feel a little different who come from their hometown to the new environment

because he lives in the capital of Yinchuan, and others live in small towns or remote areas. For capital minority students [students who live in the capital city] they behave a little different from people who live in the remote districts, because the minority people who live in remote districts are more pure. Their customs and traditions are strictly obeyed. He doesn't have [practice] Ramadan ... His parents does not practice [Ramadan] as well. One point is that his grandparents don't ask him to strictly obey the customs, because they think it is better for him when he goes out to get along with others. [Cards #452-457, 460, & 461]

Interview #10 – “Chinese people don't have faith.” The last Hui respondent was a recent graduate of Xi'an Jiaotong University who received a master's degree in engineering, and a bachelor's degree in engineering from a university in Henan Province. His English verbal skills were strong enough that I did not require a translator during the interview with this respondent. Ganzu was raised in a small town in the Gansu Province, and both of his parents are Hui. His parents paid his college bills at Xi'an Jiaotong University the first year, and thereafter, the funds he received from an academic scholarship and a student worker position at the university were enough to cover his college expenses.

His undergraduate and graduate experiences interacting with Han students were pleasant overall: “They are very easy to live with and to communicate” [Card #596]. Ganzu shared his philosophical explanation about why young Hui and Han students in college understand each other and find it easy to communicate with one another, and how their focus in academic issues

is more important than worrying about ethnic issues and the problem of terrorism in the world.

He also perceived that Chinese media do not portray Muslims as terrorists:

Maybe I think the reason is we are both little boy. There are no other ideas in their minds. And also you know, the year I entered my college it is 2001, the day before 9-11. This is the big reason. Muslim is not described as terrorist people in the television. I think this is another big reason. And also my classmate, my roommate, even they know, don't know about this *mintzu*, but they respect, and they don't have another ... they don't have other ideas about this ... Maybe this is different from America. In China, students are focused on study, and don't care about what happen around the world. [Cards #597-599]

Before concluding the interview, Gansu excused himself to find a restroom to wash his hands. Muslims were celebrating Ramadan at the time of the interview, and in the evening after 7 p.m., he needed to have a drink to break his fast. Gansu shared his opinion about the problems Chinese face in contemporary society, how young Han people believe religion is mere superstition, and how this problem conflicts with Hui culture:

I think the problem is our relationship to Chinese society. Most Chinese people don't have faith, and in their mind faith is something like ghost. They think this ghost is something wrong ... I do not know how to say. I, it is "*mishi*." It is superstitious. Not only Islam, but other faiths. Chinese people think all the faiths, not only Islam, and other faiths are superstitions. Superstition is something foolish. Less technology. . . . Yeah foolish people, they have such opinion in their minds. This is formed by the whole society around the years.

Recently, when I talk to my colleague he said why Chinese society has so many problems, you know cheat, selfish, don't care about other person. The root reason of this problem is that Chinese people don't have faith. So in recent years, people think faith is superstitious, only young people, old people have old opinions. [Cards #632-634]

Uyghur students

Interview #11 – “She is very used to Han community and culture.” The first Uyghur interviewee in the study is an undergraduate college of medicine student in her last year at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Ayaz was raised in a predominantly Han prefecture, Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, northwest of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Both of her Uyghur parents are college-educated and paid her college expenses. She studied in a *min kao han* (a Chinese-only curriculum) in elementary and secondary school before entering Xi'an Jiaotong University. She also studied at a preparatory college for one year in the Hubei Province before entering medical school.

Ayaz did not wear a hijab, a head covering worn by some Muslim women. She felt that she was treated the same as other students on campus, had good relations with other ethnic students including Han, and explained that she is comfortable interacting with Han students because she was raised living with Han people :

T: She said, uh, because she used to be in Han schools, she used to go to kindergarten and middle schools that use Han language, Mandarin language, so she is very used to Han community and culture. And she trained herself to be very confident, and she doesn't feel any different treatment for her different

nationality. And she feels all the same, she feels she is treated all the same with other Han students. And, uh, she, in her room, they have four students in her room in the dorm, and one of them is Tibetan, and two of them are Han, and she is a Uyghur student, and she feels they get along harmoniously, and all her classmates treat her all the same. [Cards #672-675]

While she wishes to interact with other Uyghur students on campus, including male Uyghur students, she is too busy with her academic studies and prefers to spend time alone. She wishes to return to Xinjiang to pursue a master's degree in medicine, and marry an Uyghur man someday:

She is determined to have a husband of the same Uyghur nationality, but the stress from academics is very heavy, is very hard, so she does not have time to socialize, so she does not know a lot of Uyghur boys in college here, and she ... oh, for her master's degree, she is going back to Xinjiang Province to the medical university of Xinjiang to finish her medical degree ... And she wants to meet Uyghur boys there ... She said, uh, the reason she does not have a lot of Uyghur friends is first, she does not have a lot of time to socialize, and second she is kind of a loner. She likes to do her stuff by herself, and does not like to go to noisy places with a lot of people. [Cards #678-683]

Interview #15 – “And she feels a little Hananized.” Bayat is a freshman, Uyghur student pursuing a degree in clinical medicine, and was reared in the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, near the borders with Kazakhstan and Russia, northwest of Xinjiang. Her Uyghur parents did not attend school beyond middle school. Bayat

applied to attend a *neidi* school (a boarding school for top ethnic minority students in inland China) but her grades in elementary school were not high enough to qualify for a boarding school outside of Xinjiang. Therefore, she finished elementary school and secondary school in *min kao han* (a Chinese-only curriculum) schools near her hometown. However, Bayat was happy she did not leave Xinjiang because she stayed near her family, and she had heard that *neidi* schools are quite strict:

T: She said she attended the exam when she graduated from elementary school. She didn't make the score though [*laughter*]. When she was in high school she felt it was not a bad thing she stayed in Xinjiang Province, because first of all, her home is closer, she can go home. And second, she heard that the middle school and high school in other Provinces are really strict. [Cards #963-965]

Bayat voiced some of the differences she perceived between the Han majority and Uyghur people.

T: She said the most different is religion. Out of religion, they have food difference because they have to eat Halal. And behavioral differences, like when they finish eating, they have to pray . . . She says you pray before eating, they pray after eating. [Cards #978-981]

Bayat attended a one-year preparatory school in Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and she shared her experiences and perceptions about preparatory college. Her experiences at the preparatory college served as moderating factor before her acculturation experience at Xi'an Jiaotong University:

T: Before she went on to preparation year, she felt it was really not that necessary because it was a waste of time because she was a good student. She felt it was not necessary to learn all the things she already knows again. That knowledge was easy for her. But for other minority students it might be difficult, especially English. Some of them may even not have an English course before. And for most of the students like her, they had fun in preparation year. They traveled together. They explored the world together. They learned how to deal with relationships with others together. Now she feels it was necessary to have that year. [Cards #1022-1025]

Interview #16 – “She is afraid of being left out.” Tura is a freshman, Uyghur student from southern Xinjiang who is studying chemistry and wishes to become a medical doctor. She wore a hijab (a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women) during the interview. Her parents are both Uyghur, and her father attended a three-year college, while her mother did not receive a tertiary education. Tura received financial support to pay for college in the form of government loans and private scholarships, and her parents paid for part of her college living expenses. Before attending Xi’an Jiaotong University, Tura studied in a *neidi* school (a boarding school for top ethnic minority students in inland China) in Beijing for three years during high school after completing middle school in Xinjiang. Tura expressed it was “very difficult” [Card #1037] to be away from her hometown in Xinjiang when she attended high school in Beijing.

Tura feels like an outsider because she cannot communicate well in Mandarin, there are limited number of Uyghur students on campus, and she does not have many friends at Xi'an Jiaotong University:

“T: Her Mandarin is not very good so she cannot communicate with others. She is afraid of being left out.” ... And also due to the cultural difference, ah, she doesn't have many friends here. Because there isn't many Uyghur people here.”

[Cards #1065 & 1068]

Interview #18 – “We have our own history and are very proud.” Yusup is in her in third year studying clinical medicine as an undergraduate student at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Her college-educated Uyghur parents pay for her college expenses. Yusup grew up in an ethnically diverse region of Xinjiang, the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, northwest of Xinjiang near the borders with Russia and Kazakhstan, where she attended *min kao han* (Chinese-only curriculum) elementary and secondary schools. Her English verbal skills are advanced, and there was no need for a translator during the interview.

Yusup shared her perceptions about her ethnic identity, the cultural differences she perceives between Han and Uyghur people, and how proud she is about her ethnic roots:

First of all, I am Muslim. My race, we're all Muslims. And the eating culture is different. Then, um, let me think. I think it is two very different cultures ...Uh, our reading and spoken language are different ... And, uh, we like to dance a lot, and we like to sing and stuff like that. We have our own history and are very proud of ...You know, everywhere I go people ask, because I look a little bit different from Han people, a little bit. Why they ask about my race or

something, I tell them a lot, including history. I am proud of that, spreading my culture. [Cards #1219-1227 &1259-1261]

While Yusup articulated how she did not have any fears about going to Xi'an for college because she grew up in a diverse environment where Han people live among 37 ethnic minorities [1253-1255 Int. 18 6/25/13 F U Pg.6], she felt disappointed about how Han people perceive her as a foreigner or outsider:

They [Han] speak to me in Chinese, and they ask me if I understand that. And they ask me so weird questions like, do you guys go school on horse, riding a horse? [*laughter*] And do you live beyond the Sahara? and stuff like that ... I felt a little bit disappointed, because, um, not matter Xinjiang or any provinces, I think we belong to one country. And I have no idea that people from outside Xinjiang, they can't be so strange about the culture in Xinjiang. We are one of the part, and they treat us like we are from another country. [Cards # 1265-1267]

Yusup has also felt "very uncomfortable" [Card #1281] in classroom interactions with instructors at Xi'an Jiaotong University: "Um, the teachers when they are in class they talk a lot, and they say, 'Students from Xinjiang, do you understand what I said now? [I] Yeah'" [Card #1281].

Interview #20 – "We have the religion, um, it's a big difference." Ashtal is a junior civil engineering student from the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, northwest of Xinjiang near the borders with Russia and Kazakhstan. His Uyghur parents only completed schooling up to primary school, in Xinjiang. Ashtal's father passed away

when he was one year old. He pays for college expenses through student loans and receives financial assistance from his relatives. He attended primary and secondary schooling in *min kao min* (ethnic minority students who experienced bilingual instruction prior to entering college) schools. Most of his elementary and secondary schooling was conducted in the Turkic language, his mother tongue, and he took Mandarin language courses as a secondary subject. He speaks English relatively well.

During Ashtal's first year at Xi'an Jiaotong University he remembered how homesick he was, and how his classmates seemed too busy to socialize with him:

At that time everybody is very busy. I miss my friends, and every time I am eating a meal. Actually before I came to this school I am always eating a meal with my friends, talking and joking, but I came to this school the surroundings disappeared, so I very missed my home. And usually my friends in this school is very busy. [Cards #1455-1457]

Ashtal is an outgoing individual and is proactive about improving his Mandarin language skills. "Yeah, because my Chinese is not very good, so I always communicate with my classmates, and this way I can improve my Chinese level." He stated that religion is a significant element of his ethnic identity: "Uh, it's a totally different culture. For example, dressing, meals, um, how I can I explain to you. . . . For example, we have the religion, um, it's a big difference, I think" [Card #1440 & 1442].

Ashtal also shared how emotionally distraught he felt when classmates at Xi'an Jiaotong University probed him about recent terrorist attacks involving Uyghur people in

Xinjiang and around China [1493-1492 Int. 20 6/27/13 M U Pg. 8]. This subject is addressed under The Findings section below.

Interview #24 – “Don’t change us into the way you like or don’t like us.” Tesek is an advanced English-speaking Uyghur freshman from the Hotan Prefecture, close to the border of northern Tibet, India, and Pakistan, in southern Xinjiang, and pursuing a nursing degree. Her parents are Uyghur. She attended primary and middle school in Hotan, where the Turkic language was the medium of instruction, and she later traveled out of the Xinjiang Province to attend high school in the Guangdong Province at a *neidi* school (a boarding school for top ethnic minority students in inland China). Tesek paid for her college expenses through student loans and government scholarships, and she also received some financial support from her parents.

She wore a hijab (a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women). It is noteworthy to mention that Tesek wished to be interviewed accompanied by two of her Uyghur freshman classmates. She stressed that due to her Uyghur religious beliefs, she is required to be accompanied by Uyghur female friends when meeting with a male figure. Tesek was one of the most eloquent and insightful student participants in this study, sharing valuable and extensive narratives about her acculturation experiences in Xi’an. Tesek’s constructions below, while lengthy, are worth sharing because they clearly underscore impressions of her acculturation journey at Xi’an Jiaotong University and provide rich data for the study.

Tesek described her identity within an intersectional context along the lines of religious beliefs, ethnicity, gender, family ties, citizenship, and profession: “There are

many definitions. I am Tesek. I know I am a girl, and I am with my parents. I am Muslim. I am Uyghur, and I am a citizen, and I want to be a great nurse” [Card #1777]. She defined cultural differences between Han and Uyghur people primarily along religious variances:

The first thing is we have religious beliefs. Most people in Han nationality don't have religious beliefs, you know. I think it is the most, biggest difference between us. Another difference I can think of is in our diet. They eat something we are not allowed to eat. You know we Muslims are allowed to eat halal food. [Cards #1779-1780]

Tesek pointed out that her first few days on campus at Xi'an Jiaotong University were overall positive, and she felt welcomed:

Yes, at that time most of the students are of Han nationality, but they have been so warm and so kind to us. The first thing I felt in the college life is that I was touched by the ... I was really moved by their sincerity. And some girls came to me and they came to shake hands with me. And they said here is my phone number and if you need anything, you can call me. [Cards #1752-1756]

While Tesek felt welcomed during her first days on campus, she tactfully conveyed how impatient and distressed she became when Han students unceasingly probed her with questions about her ethnic origin and Islamic customs:

Another thing is, when I came here, some people don't understand much about our customs and culture. Maybe sometimes they are very curious,

and I tell them what they want to know. And sometimes they ask all kinds of questions. Sometimes they will say that they know too little about Xinjiang or our nationality. They may say it is not very developed in your area. Do you use camels or go to school? That kind of questions, and sometimes I find myself quite impatient with them. [Cards #1757-1764]

Tesek shared a room with three other students, two Han and one Uyghur. She stated that she gets along with the students, but sometimes conflicts arose when her Han roommates complained about her praying early in the morning or late at night:

Sometimes we, you know we have our prayers, five per day, and sometimes early in the morning to the night, and sometimes I will get up so early in the morning and stay up late in the evening, and they may feel they are disturbed. They can't sleep well, and I will tell them that is the time I make my prayer and I should allow this rule. And they will ask me, can you do this a bit earlier? After I explain the reason, and how to do that on time, and sometimes I come to the dorm too late because of my studies in the library, and then I do it at that time. And after we communicate, they may become more understanding. [Cards #1857-1858]

Tesek believed that cultural misunderstandings between Han and Uyghur people can be addressed through dialogue and mutual respect:

I think in most occasions I was respected by people around me, but that is just misunderstandings. After they know more and more about us they will come to

understand us and respect us. I think the most important thing is understanding and communication. Just like there are two Han students in our dormitory, we are getting along well, and they will also come to ask me “do you find it offensive if I wear these kinds of clothes, like to short or to exposing?” And they may feel uneasy. I will say to them it is your freedom, and you just wear as you like. As long as there is understanding we can get along very well. [Cards #1802-1805]

Interview #25 – “They look us with different eyes, and I can sense they look at us.” Erkin is an Uyghur freshman in her first year at Xi’an Jiaotong University studying forensic science, and she hopes to become a medical doctor. She was born in Kashgar, southern Xinjiang, near the border with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, and both of her parents are Uyghur. After finishing elementary school in Kashgar, where classes were taught in the Turkic language, she went to Urumchi, the capital of Xinjiang, to attend a predominantly Han middle school. Subsequently, she left Xinjiang and traveled to the Guangdong Province for high school at a *neidi* school (a boarding school for top ethnic minority students in inland China). Erkin paid her college expenses through student loans, with her parents providing some financial assistance. Erkin wore a *hajib* (a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women). She wished to be interviewed in the presence of other Uyghur female students because it is forbidden in Uyghur culture for men to engage with women in public places without the presence of family members or other women. Erkin and her Uyghur

friends whispered to each other in Turkic and giggled during the interview, perhaps to diffuse their nervousness.

Erkin shared her ordeal when she traveled from Kashgar to Xi'an by train and bus for the first time to attend Xi'an Jiaotong University: "And we, two girls, take bus from Kashgar to Urumchi for 34 hours, and then to Xi'an in 32 hours, we take a train. On the train there are only three Uyghur in the train. All the other are Han" [Card #1896]. When I asked her how she felt about her long trip to Xi'an, she explained how it was such a difficult journey for her and her friends, and she expressed how alienated they felt traveling in a predominantly Han train:

Not good. Our dress is different than them. They look us with different eyes, and I can sense they look at us. Then we come to Xi'an station, we are fresh there. We don't know where is our school. We can only look at our maps in our hands. We came here at night, at eleven, so it was too late. [Card #1897]

Erkin expressed how estranged she felt at Xi'an Jiaotong University, and how sometimes she wished that Uyghur students should be allowed to have a cafeteria for Muslim students only, highlighting how she wished to hold on to her original culture, and simultaneously wished to avoid daily interactions with the predominantly Han culture. She explained that Han students used their own chopsticks at the Muslim cafeteria on campus, and this was problematic for her because Han students ate pork with these same chopsticks in other, non-Muslim, cafeterias on campus. Therefore, she felt offended by this because pork is a forbidden food item in Muslim culture. Xi'an

Jiaotong University offers cafeterias for Muslim students on the East and West campuses to accommodate the cultural needs of the ethnic minority Muslim population, but Han students frequently eat at these cafeterias as well:

T: The Han students also go to the cafeteria and they use chop sticks and Muslim bowls, and they use all the same things with us [Han]. They [Han] may eat pork, and then they may use the same chop sticks and other things. That is not so good. ... They [Uyghur] don't want the other students [Han] to come into the cafeteria. [Cards #1916-1917]

Tibetan students

Interview #12 – “Sometimes they hurt somebody.” Gesar is a freshman, Tibetan student from Lhasa, majoring in public affairs. She received student loans, and her parents, who are both Tibetan, provided some financial support to pay her college costs. She attended elementary school in Tibet where classes were taught in the Tibetan language, and at the age of 11 left Tibet to the Jiangsu Province to attend middle school at a *neidi* institution (a boarding school for top ethnic minority students in inland China), and later traveled to Beijing to complete high school at another *neidi* institution.

While she has not faced conflicts with Han students or faculty on campus at Xi'an Jiaotong University, Gesar shared some of her perceptions about the differences she finds between Tibetan and Han culture, and explained how Tibetans prefer to socialize primarily with other Tibetan students:

T: First of all religion. The Han doesn't have any religion. They [Tibetans] are Buddhists. And second of all different approaches to deal

with things. She doesn't elaborate. And the third is the thoughts of Han. She felt that the Han, in order to pursue wealthiness, things like that, they [Han] don't care how to get there. They just do it."... They [Han] don't mind what their approaches are. Sometimes they hurt somebody." ... Um, but for them [Tibetan], they are more calm ... She feels the Tibetan people are really shy when socializing with others. They don't feel like getting closer to others actively, so most of them stay in their group of Tibetan students. [Cards #746-749 & #771]

Interview #13 – “He wants to go back to Tibet because he wants to take care of his family.” Jigme was a senior Tibetan student from Lhasa, studying forensic science. His Tibetan parents did not attend college and do not speak Mandarin. While Jigme received a small scholarship from Xi'an Jiaotong University to offset some of his college living expenses, his parents paid for the majority of his college education, approximately 12,000 RMB per year. Like most Tibetan students in this study, Jigme left Tibet at an early age to attend middle school and high school at *neidi* institutions (boarding schools for top ethnic minority students in inland China). He completed middle school in Zhejiang Province, and then attended high school in Jiangsu Province.

As a senior student, Jigme felt adjusted to life on campus at Xi'an Jiaotong University. While Jigme “T: doesn't feel any really significant cultural or daily life stresses” [Card #840] at Xi'an Jiaotong University, his main concern is to take care of his family in Tibet when he graduates from the university: “T: [H]e wants to go back to Tibet because he wants to take care of his family, his parents. His parents are pretty old.

He has an older brother, who is working in provinces other than Tibet, so he feels he must be responsible for his parents.” [Card #828]

Interview #14 – “Tibetan people encourage each other.” Dhondup, unlike other Tibetan students in this study who studied in boarding schools in inland China before enrolling at Xi’an Jiaotong University, finished elementary and secondary education in Tibet. He was a sophomore from the highland plateaus of the Shitgatse (Xigaze) Prefecture, south of Tibet bordering Nepal and Bhutan, pursuing a degree in management and public policy. His parents are Tibetan, and his father attended a three-year college to study Tibetan language, while his mother did not receive tertiary education. Dhondup received student loans, and his parents provided some financial support to pay for his college expenses.

Dhondup shared his thoughts about salient differences between Han and Tibetan people, and wished to note that his hometown is not as developed as other areas in China:

T: He said that Tibetan people cares more about religion belief. This is the big difference between Han and Tibetan people. And he said that Tibetan people is more, how to say, simple or authentic. Kind of that way. Um, and Han people in his impression, Han people is more diligent to make money. Yeah, that’s the difference. ... Because of geography features they live in the plateaus. They have some different living habits and tools Their transportation is not very well developed. So ...Yeah, it is not very good so they have to ride horse. [Cards #880-884]

While Dhondup expressed that he did not have any fears about going to college in Xi'an, because he believes Han people are kind to each other, he experienced isolation on the Xi'an Jiaotong University East Campus [906-907 Int. 14 6/24/13 M U Pg. 7]. The Xi'an East Campus has fewer Tibetan students than the West Campus: "T: And when he just came to Xi'an he felt a little bit isolated because there aren't many Tibetan people here." [Card #913]

He shared his insights about why college was important to him, particularly his desire to improve the economic well-being of Tibet, and he stressed that Tibetans work together to help one another: "T: ... His nation needs to be modernized. The whole people has to develop themselves, to be better, and this pushes him to move forward." ... Tibetan people encourage each other." [Cards #927 – 928]

Interview #17 – “He has been out of Tibet more than 10 years.” Chonphel is a senior Tibetan student from Lhasa pursuing a degree in forensic science. He had been out of Tibet since he was 12 years old, like most Tibetan students in this study, and attended middle school and high school in *neidi* institutions (boarding schools for top ethnic minority students in inland China) in the Zhejiang and Hunan provinces, respectively. His parents are Tibetan, and his mother attended a two-year college, while his father did not receive tertiary education. Chonphel's parents paid his college expenses.

Chonphel wished to return to Tibet, his ancestral homeland, to pursue a professional career: "T: ... he feels very special emotions about Tibet. He has been out of Tibet more than 10 years. He wants to return home after his education. And he feels

that a job will help him with his career more” [Cards #1146 – 1148]. Chompel feels he has adapted to Han culture because he has been out of Tibet for many years interacting with Han people. However, he struggles and faces language barriers in college like all the Tibetan students in this study. :

T: He doesn't feel too much pressure as to his friends and relationships or anything like that. Because he has been out for so many years he is used to solving problems by himself, move on and be himself again. He is used to these sorts of things. He mainly feels pressure about academics.

[Cards #1172-1173]

Language constraints and academic issues will be discussed in detail in The Findings section.

Interview #19 – “Tibetan students are really shy, they don't feel like speaking up.” Gedum was a junior student from Shitgatse (Xigaze) Prefecture, south of Tibet bordering Nepal and Bhutan, near the Himalayas, pursuing a degree in public affairs. She attended middle school and high school in *neidi* institutions (boarding schools for top ethnic minority students in inland China) in the Tianjin Province and Beijing, respectively. Gedum experienced intensive acculturative stress leaving her homeland as a young girl. Her experiences in middle school will be discussed in The Findings section.

Gedum practiced Tibetan customs through rituals, such as drinking butter tea, a popular tea commonly consumed in Xigaze, each day to sustain her Tibetan identity at Xi'an University:

T: She says first of all, uh, they made, there is here a Tibet butter tea. They made Tibet butter tea every morning after they wake up ... Yeah, and you make the tea out of it. And every day after they wake up they make the tea for themselves and for their friends later. They drink this tea whether they are thirsty or not. They drink it every day. [Cards #1349-1350]

Gedum commented on the differences she has observed between Han and Tibetan people. She believed that Tibetans are quiet and shy, and some Xi'an Jiaotong University counselors have told her that Tibetan students are shy and reserved. On the other hand, she believed Han people live a hectic life:

T: Tibetan students are really shy, they don't feel like speaking up. They don't uh, communicate with strangers voluntarily. She said that in her dorm there is a kind of counselor, that we talked about before, the counselor told her that Tibetan students from lower years, like freshmen and sophomore, they are really shy and they don't talk to her that much. She feels kind of frustrated. She says Tibetan people are really shy ... But here everybody seems so serious and their lives are so faced paced. [Cards #1357-1358 & #1364]

Whenever Gedum felt frustrated, she would speak to her Tibetan classmates to regain a sense of belonging among students from her own ethnicity: "And sometimes when she feels a little frustrated, she will talk to Tibetan homies, Tibetan students here and try to release some pressure" [Card # 1361].

Interview #21 – “She feels a little pity about her Tibetan language.” Jampa was a senior Tibetan student from Shitgatse (Xigaze) Prefecture, south of Tibet bordering Nepal and Bhutan, pursuing a degree in public affairs. She attended *neidi* institutions (boarding schools for top ethnic minority students in inland China) to complete her middle school and high school studies in the provinces of Anhui and Liaoning, respectively. She paid for college expenses through student loans. Her Tibetan parents did not finish elementary school.

Jampa explained that Tibetan students who attended middle school and high school in Tibet, rather than *neidi* institutions, preserved their Tibetan language proficiency. Even though Jampa felt she gained personally from her experiences studying in *neidi* institutions after leaving Tibet as a young girl, she was disheartened about having lost her Tibetan language proficiency:

T: She never wished to go the other way in middle school or high school, but when she was a freshman she learned that some students who attended middle and high school in Tibet, they got admitted from universities here. So she noticed that those students were really good at Tibetan language, and she felt a little bit regret at that time. But now she thinks that these personal experiences and development was better for her to be out of Tibet, but she feels a little pity about her Tibetan language. [Cards #1569-1570]

Jampa felt compelled to share an experience that caused extreme grief and stress in her life during her first year at Xi’an Jiaotong University. Her “older father” passed

away while she was a freshman. Jampa's mother had married two men who were brothers. Fraternal polyandry, a phenomenon in which a wife takes two men as husbands, is commonly practiced among impoverished families in rural areas in Xigaze, Tibet:

T: When she was a freshman, her father passed away. ... She said they have this tradition, when two brothers get married with one wife in her hometown, so she has two fathers. A younger and an older one. The younger one goes out to do some business. The older one stays at home and works on the fields. The younger one loves them, but does not communicate much on the emotional level, but the older one is really communicative and he talked to the children more ... The older one passed away. Because the children loves him, and respects him very much, her mom didn't feel like telling her the bad news at that time. But usually when she called at home, um, she would ask how is my father and that kind of question. So her mother thinks she couldn't delay this thing any longer, so after one week her mother told her. At that time with her good friend and her roommates at that day she broke down. That one semester was really difficult for her. But then she got busy studying and got used to it after one semester. [Cards #1611 & #1613-1615]

Interview #28 – “I think they cannot understand the students.” Delek was a freshman from Lhasa, Tibet, studying forensic science. She left Tibet at 11 years old, and attended middle school and high school in *neidi* institutions (boarding schools for

top ethnic minority students in inland China) in the province of Liaoning and the municipality of Chongqing, respectively. Her parents are Tibetan, and they paid for Delek's college expenses.

While Delek stated that she had become accustomed to living among Han people outside of Tibet, she constantly yearned to return to her homeland: "I always want to go home. But I can't. I have to have a strong life." When asked whether or not she was comfortable sharing her college struggles with Xi'an Jiaotong University staff, she said: "I think they cannot understand the students" [Card # 2045].

Interview #29 – "I have been outside for eight years." Dolma had left Tibet eight years earlier, when she left her homeland to attend *neidi* institutions (boarding schools for top ethnic minority students in inland China) and complete middle school and high school in the Zhejiang and Guangdong Provinces. She was a Tibetan freshman in her early 20s from Lhasa, pursuing a degree in forensic science, and although she had hoped to enroll in medical school at Xi'an Jiaotong University, her *gaokao* (national college entrance examination) scores did not meet the admission requirements for this major: "T: The entrance examination does not allow for her to become a doctor, so right now she is a legal examiner" [Card #2112]. Dolma's parents are Tibetan and they fund her college education.

Dolma shared a few of her impressions about cultural variances between Han and Tibetan people, particularly her dislike for Han people's fast-paced lifestyle: "Tibetan people like to live in a comfortable atmosphere. They don't like a fast life" [Card #2097]. While Dolma felt she has benefited from her experiences over the last eight

years living in predominantly Han environments, she expressed how difficult it has been for her to be separated from her family and homeland in Tibet to pursue education in inland China: “I think that my life is too short, but I am strong. I have been outside for eight years. . . . It is too sad for me that it has been eight years I haven’t been with my parents. But I think everything has two sides. It has helped my future” [Cards #2149-2150].

Xi’an Jiaotong University staff

Interview #2 – “It is hard for the situation now in China.” Wang was a Hui Xi’an Jiaotong University alumnus who had been working as a staff member there for two years. His comments as a Hui university staff member provided rich insights about acculturation college experiences of Hui students. He explained the differences he perceives within the Hui population, particularly Hui students who are born in traditional Muslim families, and students who grow up in interethnic families:

This depends, because there are many ethnic students in from China, and there different Chinese. It is two different kind of Hui, one of the Hui whose child grow in family where all are Muslims, and they just . . . another kind of situation a girl where his father is not Hui. Not traditional Muslims. So the second type of Muslim, they do not have too much difficulty to get used to university’s life. But for the first type of Hui ethnic minority, because they grew up in a Muslim family they may face some difficulties when they go to college, and the difficulty is from different types, from cultures and customs. [Cards #71-76]

Wang stated that Hui students come to him for advice because they share his values: “T: He said that as a staff, many students talk with him because they share the same values” [Card #112]. Wang believed it would be beneficial to create student organizations to teach students about minority customs and cultures, but this is not possible in China: “It is very necessary ... it is hard for the situation now in China.” [Cards #104-105]

Interview #3 – “Except for religion, we look the same.” Sui had been a staff member at Xi’an Jiaotong University for two years. He graduated from Xi’an Jiaotong University with a master’s degree in business administration. Sui explained how Han and Hui people share a similar language and are alike physically, and he pointed out that religion is the primary difference between the two cultures:

Chinese is mother language. Their own language. From child they speak Chinese. Hui and Han people have many friends between them. Except for religion we look the same. Not different. Hui and Han accept each other. For example I have many Han friends. [Cards #144-148]

In spite of the similarities Sui identified between Han and Hui people, he also shared some of his own challenging college experiences, particularly the stresses he encountered interacting with Han students who questioned his Hui customs. In addition, he noted how interethnic romantic relationships may be a significant stressor for Hui and Han students:

Some customs of Hui, Han people do not understand. It may take some stress. Why don’t you eat pork. It is delicious. So always we are stressed.

And you know, most Hui don't drink. But at party, cheers, cheers, cheers. It is very stress. And there are other [stresses], if a boy like a girl, and the girl like the boy, maybe their parents protect the Hui boy or Han girl. But the parents don't allow, because of different customs, different religion. ... Some students pray in the morning and being stared by others with curiousness causing pressure on students. People, Hui students feel pressure because Han students don't understand. [Cards #133-140]

Interview #9 – “They should be integrated with Han.” Yi is a Hui staff member who had been working for Xi'an Jiaotong University for seven years as a student counselor. Yi could not recall the ethnic minority backgrounds of students he counsels each year, but stated he provides counseling to about five ethnic minority students annually. Yi believed that other than religion, Hui and Han students share similar characteristics, and Hui people have integrated in Han society:

If you want to know the different ethnics on campus, I think it is not big problem in JU. You know Xi'an has many Hui ethnic around the Bell Tower, at Muslim street, they are all Muslims. They are all Hui ethnic. They look the same as Han. ... The Hui ethnic here is from Tang dynasty. They come from the Arab world to Xi'an and they settle down, and they live here more than 1,000 years. They should be integrated with Han ethnic. [Cards #537-538 & #541-543]

Yi recognized that Hui students from rural areas, such as the Ningxia Province, may elicit stresses that are different than those found among Hui student who live in

urban areas [576 Int. 10 7/24/12 M S Pg. 5]. He also recognized that Tibetan, and Uyghur students face greater challenges than Hui students: “Perhaps for Uyghurs there are some problems because the ethnic. The students from Xinjiang, their study has some problems. The students from Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, and Ningxia” [Card #547].

Interview #22 – “They don’t have the feeling that they are different from others.”

Tung, a Han employee, had been working at Xi’an Jiaotong University for eight years as an advisor for one of the colleges on the West Campus, and as the head of the Chinese Communist League in the college (as dormitories are called in China). There were 1,000 students living in the college managed by Tung, and approximately 29 were ethnic minorities, including Uyghur, Tibetan, Hui, and Tujia, among others. Throughout the interview, Tung emphasized that ethnic minorities are treated equally on campus, experience no language barriers, and face the same challenges as Han students:

T: They don’t have the feeling that they are different from others ...

Actually those minorities who study with majorities in high school, they feel very adaptable while in the university. They don’t feel they are minorities. They don’t have the feeling that they are different from others. ... They were treated as equal with Han majorities. So they basically face the same stresses as majorities [Han] students ... She says there is no difference in their level of Mandarin. [Cards #1707, #1718 & #1726]

Tung revealed that when students approach her about challenges they may be facing on campus, she advised them to cope as any mature person would: “T: During the

freshman year she has told her students that “you are university students you should behave mature. If there exist some difficult cases in daily life, you should try to cope with them by yourselves, because you are mature, you are not kids anymore” [Card #1712].

Interview #23 – “He said there basically exist no differences with the Han majority.” Ran was a Han employee who had worked at the university for 10 years, and now was an advisor of a large college of 1,500 students on the West Campus, as well as secretary of the Chinese Youth League of the college. The college where Ran served houses more than 135 minority students, including Hui, Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian, Yao, Zhuang, Kasak, and others. Ran asserted that no differences exist between Han students and minority students: “T: He said there basically exist no differences with the Han majority. He said there are no difficulties in daily life, or in language. And he said minority students have good relations with Han majority students” [Card #1654]. He also affirmed that ethnic minority students face similar academic challenges, and have the same economic challenges as Han people:

T: Basically, they face the same challenges with Han majority students.

And there are no special issues. He mentioned that in some special cases, only one or two, some minority students have difficulties in learning.

There exist no economical differences between the minorities and Han majority because we have policies for them. [Cards #1656-1657]

Interview #26 – “So he relaxes himself and so he is not focused on his studies.”

Chin was a Han alumna of Xi’an Jiaotong University, and had been employed there for six years. She worked in the student affairs office, and served as an advisor in an East Campus college (dormitory) that houses approximately 4,000 students. She had interacted with only about 12 ethnic minority students at the college, including Hui, Zhuang, Mongol, Uyghur, and Tibetan; her involvement with ethnic minority students had been minimal.

The majority of students she advised were engineering students. Ran pointed out that some ethnic minority students face academic issues, but she attributed their academic challenges to personal issues. She believed that ethnic minority students who benefit from preferential policies do not focus on academics because they are allowed to pass their classes with lower examination scores: “T: His grades are not that good, but he there is a policy for minorities that you can enter the university at a lower score. But college life is not so restrictive. So he relaxes himself and so he is not focused on his studies” [Card #1958].

Interview #27 – “Hui students are more kind and pure.” Shi was a Han employee who had worked for 10 years as a student affairs advisor and secretary of the Chinese Youth League at a college (dormitory) that houses 2,500 students on the East Campus of Xi’an Jiaotong University. She had limited contact with ethnic minority students, but was familiar with some of the academic difficulties Tibetan students faced on campus. She seemed to sympathize with Hui students: “T: From her perspective minorities are

more kind than majorities [Han]. She says that if Han students were in the same shoes as Hui students, they will find that Hui students are more kind and pure” [Card #2012].

The Findings

The aim of this study was to address particular questions in an effort to ascertain the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students who enroll in a predominantly Han public research university in Central China. The remainder of this chapter will provide responses to each of the study’s research questions.

The data included 29 interviews, 22 of which were with Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students at Xi’an Jiaotong University, and seven with staff there. Seven of the 22 Xi’an Jiaotong University students were Hui, eight Tibetan, and seven Uyghur. Interviews and observations elicited 2,431 data units derived from 238 pages of transcripts. All data units have been arranged into categories and subcategories, identifying the number of units of data from each of the ethnic minority respondents, namely Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, as well as staff of Xi’an Jiaotong University. A compilation of all the categories for this data analysis was provided in the previous chapter. From these units, 618 correspond to Hui participants, 663 to Tibetan participants, 759 to Uyghur participants, and 391 to staff of Xi’an Jiaotong University.

Research question one: What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?

Moderating Factors Prior to Acculturation

The struggles and challenges that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students face during their acculturation experiences in a predominantly Han research university in Central China are tied to the moderating factors these students experience prior to entering tertiary education. Some of the moderating factors that help address this question include the students' experiences in boarding schools in inland China (*neidi*) and preparatory colleges, and cultural distance; that is, how different the society of origin and the society of settlement are within the context of language, religion and other cultural elements.

Middle school, high school, and preparatory college experiences. Thirteen out of 22 students in the study attended either preparatory college or boarding schools (*neidi*) in inland China. Two out of seven Hui students attended preparatory school; seven out of eight Tibetan students attended *neidi* schools; and five out of seven Uyghur students attended either *neidi* schools or preparatory colleges.

Tibetan students, in particular, who attended *neidi* schools leave their homeland for extended periods at the age of 10 or 11 to pursue secondary education in inland China. Most of them remain separated from their homeland for seven to eight years during middle school and high school, and have the opportunity to visit their families in Tibet only a few times: “She didn’t go back home after four years in middle school, and when she was in her first year in high school she went back during the Spring festival, and never went back again during the three years in high school” [Card #1564].

Tibetan, and Uyghur students often face alienation, homesickness, and loneliness during their experiences in *neidi* schools:

First thing I am crying for hours ... it was my first time away from home, from my parents, and all of my friends too" [Card #1879]. "Um, she was homesick; she didn't adapt well to the environment, so when she called her mom, she was like crying and begging her to come back home. [Cards #1341-1343]

One of the Uyghur students from a small town in southern Xinjiang, who left her hometown to attend a predominantly Han middle school in Urumchi, the capital of Xinjiang, expressed feelings of anxiety when she was placed in a predominantly Han dormitory: "There are some problems with communications with our teachers, first year. And it is my unlucky time, and in my junior year, there is only one Uyghur and 60 Han, for my first time. Stress" [Card #1883].

While most Tibetan, and Uyghur students in *neidi* schools experienced homesickness, they formed strong bonds with students from their own ethnicity to cope with their loneliness:

T: Actually they were homesick. But the students were in the same situation, and they were also Tibetan students so they don't feel lonely. And they stay very happy together. [Card #2028]

T: At the beginning she felt it was very difficult for her, uh ... Um, her peers are all Tibetan students, so she felt she had some company, but

missed home a lot. She hasn't gone home in those four years. [Card # 732]

Some of the Hui and Uyghur students who attended preparatory college for one year prior to entering Xi'an Jiaotong University expressed disappointment about the quality of education they received, but felt the experience prepared them for their transition to undergraduate school:

The policy requires them one year to take the course, but they don't learn too much during the year. It is part of the policy. [Card #386]

She said the language school she attended after high school before her freshman year in Hubei Province is a big help for her to transition from high school to university life, because she studied Mandarin, Japanese and English, and she studied Japanese for two years in college. [Card #696]

Cultural distance-religion and language. Respondents among Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students unanimously agreed that religion was the prominent characteristic distinguishing their ethnic minority cultures from the dominant Han culture. When asked about the differences between Han and Uyghur culture, the narratives of Uyghur respondents firmly aligned religion with their ethnic identity:

The first thing is we have religious beliefs. Most people in Han nationality don't have religious beliefs, you know. I think it is the most, biggest difference between us. Another difference I can think of is in our diet. They eat something we are not allowed to eat. You know we Muslims are allowed to eat halal food. [Cards #1779-1780]

The narratives of Tibetan respondents also exhibited profound links between religion and Tibetan identity:

T: He said that Tibetan people cares more about religion belief. This is the big difference between Han and Tibetan people. And he said that Tibetan people is more, how to say, simple or authentic. Kind of that way. Um, and Han people in his impression, Han people is more diligent to make money. [Cards # 880 – 881]

T: First the most important of all is religion, because most people are Buddhist ... Um, she feels the most important differences is belief, because uh, they are religious growing up, their religion has a big influence on their childhood, their process growing up. [Cards #1574 & #1581]

T: They are Buddhists, and they believe that what goes around comes around. Um, they have a previous life, and they have a next life after this one. They have to be kind in this life. So if they do a lot of evil it will come in the next life. [Cards #1351-1352]

Uyghur and Tibetan respondents displayed greater cultural distance compared to Hui respondents. That is, Uyghur and Tibetan students felt less integrated in the dominant Han culture. While all Hui students expressed adherence to the Muslim custom of abstaining from pork, they were aware that Hui culture is evolving and most felt they were not strictly following Hui traditions. Some of the Hui students also expressed that Islam should be more open and change over time:

But I think Hui have different branch of the Muslim. Some branch allow alcohol, and some not. And some people obey the rule very strictly, but another not. Some say no pork is OK, but another has been in a restaurant where they serve pork. [Card #560]

In fact our traditions are a bit difficult for me because I have to study. I do not follow the traditions [fasting] because I have to eat to study. Some traditions I cannot follow. [Cards #381-382]

I have some options [opinions] about my belief. I think Islam should be more open ...Yes. Because we hear about some peace not happen in some Muslim countries. I always feel because Muslims don't open to others I hope that my religion can embrace your, like Jesus. I have some classmates from Jesus. They are minority, but she joined Jesus. Jesus can embrace others, but Muslims didn't accept everything ... Yes, I think it [Islam] can develop with the social step, with society step. [Cards #341-343]

It is noteworthy that while Uyghur respondents seemed far more culturally distant from the dominant Han culture compared to Hui respondents, it appears that Uyghur respondents are not culturally monolithic. That is, cultural variations exist between Uyghur respondents from northern Xinjiang and Uyghur respondents from southern Xinjiang. Uyghur respondents from northern Xinjiang seemed to be relatively integrated into the dominant Han culture:

T: She grew in the northern part of Xinjiang so she has a lot of Han friends. She lives in a Han environment with a lot of Han elements. So she doesn't feel very different from the Han culture. She's really used to it. And she feels a little *Hananized*. [Cards #982-984]

Another Uyghur respondent from northern Xinjiang explained that Uyghurs from southern Xinjiang normally wear the hijab, and although she adheres to Islamic values, she chooses not to follow this tradition. She seemed perplexed about the reasons why some Uyghurs choose to wear the hijab and others do not: "Yeah, so when I travel to the south part other people wear it, and I am a little bit confused. I don't know if it is the culture or if that is what a Muslim should do."

Trilingualism. Cultural identity of Uyghur and Tibetan populations is as deeply intertwined with religion as it is with language. Unlike most ethnic majority Han counterparts who studied only Chinese (oral Putonghua and standard written Chinese), Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents have experienced trilingualism studying their mother tongue, Chinese and English (Adamson & Xia, 2011). Competence in English has been a prerequisite for admission to higher education since 1978, but many ethnic minorities, such as Uyghur and Tibetan populations, live in low-resource areas where access to English teaching is difficult (Adamson & Xia, 2011). All Tibetan respondents learned and communicated in their mother tongue at home, learned Mandarin as their second language, and had poor to no English skills. Uyghur respondents also spoke their mother tongue at home. Three out of seven Uyghur respondents, on the other hand, demonstrated relatively good command of oral English, while most Uyghur respondents

indicated they had difficulties communicating in Mandarin. In contrast, all Hui students indicated they had good command of oral Mandarin, while only three out of seven Hui respondents had relatively good English verbal skills. Tibetan respondents reported having experienced difficulties academically because they lacked good Mandarin and English language skills:

T: He feels a little bit stressed about his English. When he went to middle school he was not good at Mandarin let alone English. He never studied English at elementary school. He was not good at English, and he was not interested either. So he was not interested in high school. Right now he feels a little bit difficult thinking in English. [Card #1174]

T: He says they also need to learn English, so they have three languages to learn at the same time. It is a little overburden. [Card #901]

T: When he come to Xi'an, just came to Xi'an, there was a language barrier. He learned Mandarin late, comparatively late to other people. So his Mandarin was not very good when he was a freshman. [Card #912]

T: [S]he feels it was really hard because the first year she came here the Tibetan students failed a lot of courses, especially for advance math and English. [Card #1367]

Most Uyghur respondents also reported experiencing language barriers and significant stress managing Mandarin and English, while competing academically with Han students at Xi'an Jiaotong University.

And because our first language is Uyghur, and our second language is Chinese, and our third is English for another language, we may sometimes find it very difficult to translate in these kind of languages. And in our families, Uyghur, we rarely speak Chinese. And in this environment we are always speaking Chinese. So it is quite difficult to keep up with them and in studying. [Cards #1787-1789]

Um, because my Chinese is not very good. My English, I started to learn English after I came to University... So I that time everybody was very busy, preparing exams. And I felt very stressed. How can I pass the exams? Uh, other students in my classes have already, at that time have already started more than ten years of English. Yeah, I felt very stressed ... Because I learned Chinese as one of my majors, I never, as I said before I finished my primary school in my mother tongue. All of my books were written in my mother tongue ... Yeah. After I came to Xinjiang University, my books is written in Chinese. And after a few years of experiences I came to this University and all of the books are written in Chinese, some of them are written in English. I felt very stressful. I had some difficulty in understanding. Other [Han] students in my classes can understand the books. At one time I should repeat, reading it again and again, then I can understand. [Cards #1460-1471]

It appears that language barriers—the lack of Mandarin and English proficiency—accentuate cultural distance and act as significant stressors particularly for

Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents as they struggle to acculturate to the predominantly Han environment in Xi'an Jiaotong University. In accordance with Berry's Bi-Dimensional Conceptual Framework (Berry, 1997), significant cultural differences between Tibetan and Uyghur respondents and their Han counterparts make it more difficult for these ethnic minorities to adapt culturally to the predominantly Han campus.

Loss of cultural heritage/erosion of mother language. In addition to having difficulties learning Mandarin, most Tibetan respondents were distraught about losing command of their mother language after leaving Tibet at an early age to pursue middle school and high school in *neidi* schools in inland China far away from their homeland and families: "T: She said they stopped learning Tibetan language, um, after elementary school, in middle school and high school...she said the level of her Tibetan right now is at elementary school level" [Card #737].

Another Tibetan respondent felt sorrow for lacking reading and writing Tibetan language skills, and although she communicates to her family in her mother tongue, she has difficulties understanding the Tibetan written language:

T: She said that when she calls home they use Tibetan language to speak, but as for reading and writing she may still be in elementary level. Um, if she is to read some Tibetan language book, it will be really difficult for her...She's really sad that she has forgotten her Tibetan language. [Cards #1373, 1374 & 1377]

One of the Tibetan respondents who communicates over the Internet with Tibetan friends and follows Tibetan forums online, also revealed that many Tibetan

students who attend *neidi* schools in inland China feel remorse about leaving Tibet and have experienced loss of proficiency of their mother tongue: “T: When she go online and to the forums of Tibetan students, there is a universal regret for go out of Tibet to pursue further education because they forgot their Tibetan language” [Card #739].

Acculturation Stressors and Stresses

Academic challenges/academic degree misplacement. While all Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents faced academic stress, particularly during their freshman year in college, Uyghur and Tibetan respondents seem to have greater difficulties academically. Uyghur respondents felt they lacked time to engage in extracurricular activities because they spent most of their time struggling with academics: “T: She is always busy with her study so she doesn’t have much to do other things.” [Card #1064]. “T: She feels that for this campus it is a little bit foreign life because everybody is stressed out with their academics” [Card #1012]. “T: [T]he stress from academics is very heavy, is very hard, so she does not have time to socialize” [Card #679].

Uyghur respondents also conveyed how challenging and emotionally demanding it was for them to compete with their Han counterparts, and how this has led to loss of confidence in their academic abilities:

I thought I got a great mark in my college examination exam. And I surely did in my area, and, but when I came here, they [Han] all got like more than 100 higher than me, all my class roommates, and that makes me feel so terrified. [Card #1291]

I find there is distance between us. I am that kind of person that wants to do everything at top level. But when I find there is distance I get discouraged. So I try so hard, but sometimes it is useless. [Card #1808]

Another Uyghur respondent, a nursing major who aspired to be a medical doctor, shared how trying it was for her to keep up with lectures taught in Mandarin:

I think the biggest pressure comes from our studies ... There is differences between students because of academic grades. Sometimes I try so hard ... So there are differences in our studying, so when we are in class we find speed is so quick sometimes. Sometimes lectures are very quick, very fast. [Cards #1783-1786 & 1807]

She also voiced profound disappointment about how difficult it was for her to contemplate the idea of transferring into medical school from nursing school. Only the top three students with the highest grade point averages in any given major at Xi'an Jiaotong University are eligible to transfer to another major: "And sometimes I feel so pressured, because I find it to be so hard to be the top five students or top three students in class. I sometimes really feel discouraged" [Card #1809].

Tibetan students appeared to be similarly stressed academically, experienced dejection due to the rigorous academic demands on campus, and felt they could not keep up academically with their Han classmates: "T: He mainly feels pressure about academics. When he fails a course he feels a little bit depressed...he is a little worried that he cannot keep up with other students. And he is worried that he may fail courses" [Cards #1134-1135 & 1173]. Some freshman Tibetan respondents also faced academic

challenges in large classes where access to faculty support is sometimes limited: “T: For her freshman year, those classes are very big. They have a lot of students. The teacher cannot focus on individual concerns” [Card # 1597]. In addition, some Tibetan students experienced academic stress because they could not transfer to other majors due to their low grade point averages in their existing majors [2044 Int. 28 6/14/14 F U Pg. 3].

Moreover, another Tibetan respondent realized she was not academically prepared for college compared to Han counterparts:

T: She feels, first, the foundation, academic background was not as strong as others. Even if she worked pretty hard and listen to the lectures carefully, she might still fail the class...their knowledge in some areas are not so strong as some other students. [Cards # 760, 767 & 769]

Furthermore, Tibetan, and Uyghur students expressed disappointment and disillusion because Xi’an Jiaotong University had placed them in majors that were of little interest to them:

T: She talked about the lack of flexibility of our school. I am not sure why, she said not a lot of people right now are learning their major, they are mostly forced by their environment. If it was up to her she would learn art, or something like Buddhism, but art is not promising in Tibet right now. She feels she is forced to learn her major. [Cards #1396-1399]

Some Tibetan students also feared the prospects of returning to their homeland unable to find jobs in their respective majors:

T: Now he is thinking more about his future, because there is one more year before his graduation, and he heard that police may or may not hire medical examiners, and if they won't he will have to do other jobs that will have nothing to do with his major, so he feels it is quite a pity to give up five years of college knowledge. [Card # 1140]

On the other hand, most Hui students reported experiencing similar academic challenges compared to Han students: "T: He feels no differences with his Han student classmates" [Card #412]. A Hui student explained that although she had not devoted sufficient time to her academic courses because of her extensive involvement in college-related extracurricular activities, she felt confident about her grades: "Because I am active I have not much time, I have not spend much time studying. However my studying is not bad. My grades, my average grade is over 80" [Card # 12]. It is worth mentioning that most Hui and Uyghur respondents pursued majors in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, while all the Tibetan students pursued social science subjects.

Microaggressions and isolation/homesickness. Most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents expressed feelings of isolation and loneliness at Xi'an Jiaotong University, and many Uyghur, Tibetan, and Hui respondents experienced microaggressions or verbal and nonverbal slights that communicate negative messages based on the ethnic minority status of respondents. Tibetan and Uyghur respondents who lived in dormitories and took classes on the East Campus at Xi'an Jiaotong University were especially conscious of their feelings of isolation, perhaps because the population of ethnic minorities on the

East Campus is significantly lower than on the West Campus. One of the Tibetan students residing on the east campus voiced his feelings of isolation: “T: And when he just came to Xi’an he felt a little bit isolated because there aren’t many Tibetan people here” [Card 913]. Another Tibetan respondent, who resided on the East Campus, revealed how she felt marginalized and unprotected in a predominantly Han environment, and indicated that all Tibetan students who study in inland China experience homesickness: “T: She felt that after she entered the university, the Tibetan students became fewer so she felt a little bit unsafe for her, psychologically she felt most, that most students are Han majority.” “I wanted to go home...” [Cards #2040-2041]. “T: It is an ordinary [common] phenomenon for Tibetan to be homesick” [Card # 2048].

Most Uyghur respondents had significant experiences of microaggressions, passive discrimination, and exclusion at Xi’an Jiaotong University. Some Uyghur respondents perceived that Han students feared them and did not wish to speak with them, so they struggled to feel accepted by the predominantly Han campus community:

T: Because there are some cultural differences between Uyghur people and Han people, so many Han people are afraid to be friends, because they [Han] fear they [Uyghur] may hurt them, or something to lose. Han people don’t know... They are afraid I might hurt them. Han people are afraid of Uyghur people. [Cards #1062 & 1063]

In this university most of the students do not talk to students like us. [Card #1908]

Some Uyghur respondents sensed microaggressions with Han students when they mispronounced words in Mandarin during classroom discussions: “Sometimes if you read these words incorrectly, the meaning may be changed. Some students may start laughing at you, and you feel hurt.” [Card #1810]

Other Uyghur respondents indicated that Han people wished to assimilate Uyghurs into mainstream Han culture, and voiced anger about the hostile environment they faced on campus while desperately demanding to be respected and understood:

T: For example, they [Uyghur] seem to express themselves in this way.

But Han people do not like the way they [Uyghur] express themselves, so they [Uyghur] have to change it. But it is difficult for them [Uyghur] to change. [Card #1070]

Sometimes I will get silent or I will get angry. And later and later they will come to understand me. And another thing is what we our wearing. We are Muslims. In our religious beliefs, our body, except our face and hands, are not allowed to be seen by other men, except our relatives, our parents, our brothers. We are asked to wear [clothes] in a modest way, not that part of clothes that exposes too much of your body. And they may ask you, hey, don't you feel so hot in those clothes? And I told them, we are hot but we also feel happy because it is our custom and we should wear these clothes. And sometimes if they keep asking and asking, I will once again not have patience. I think if they want to understand us, if they want to like us and appreciate us, just appreciate the way we are.

Don't change us into the way you like or don't like us. It is not the way I like or appreciate. And sometimes they may ask me, why do you wear clothes like this? And I will tell them in our religious belief it is our protection to wear [clothes] like this, and not to be hurt by other people, especially men, you know... I just hope that they would be respecting and understanding of our way of wearing clothes, especially girls, and hope they would appreciate that. [Cards #1765-1774 & 1801]

Another Uyghur respondent expressed that ethnic minorities face insurmountable hurdles, and explained how he personally endured profound feelings of guilt and stress associated with the recent terrorist incidents in his homeland, Xinjiang. He felt Han students at Xi'an Jiaotong University consistently badgered him with questions about terrorism in Xinjiang, and while he desperately wished to explain to them that Xinjiang is a safe place, he struggled internally how to manage his feelings of guilt:

There is always stress for us, minority students. A lot of obstacles. ..
Yeah. OK, one stress I feel very, very...I do not know how to manage it, how to handle it. Um, [silence and hesitation] In recent years it always happens something very bad. That is very, actually affecting my life...
After I came to this school, some of the students are talking about, asking me: Did you see the terrorists? Or something like this. These questions, I feel very guilty. Even if I am not part of that mess, chaos, I feel very guilty. Yeah, yeah. But, after that, continuing something like this, at that time I feel very stressed. .. Yes. And they asked me, did you see the

terrorists? This kind of thing always happening in Xinjiang. Um, because they don't understand the conditions in Xinjiang, they always ask me these kind of questions. Actually, I don't know how to answer them. I always answer them, don't worry, it's safe. We shouldn't worry about that... To be honest, until now I cannot find the effective way to handle this stress...I don't want to share these kind of things with others...If someone mentions this, for example, in cafeteria some of my students, friends says, oh, today in Xinjiang happened this kind of thing. Ok, I said, I read that news. But inside me there is something. I can't say. So the only way is to go to the soccer field. After one or two hours I feel a little bit comfortable. [Cards #1477 & 1493-1502]

Another Uyghur student voiced how Xi'an Jiaotong University had ignored the cultural needs of Uyghur students in regard to providing adequate bathing facilities where Uyghur students could take showers privately according to their cultural traditions. She made the decision to take showers in a private facility off campus because the West Campus offered only shared bathrooms:

Yes, it is public, and everybody is in there. You don't have anywhere to hide. But in Muslim culture you gotta have somewhere to hide from others ... And it's so nerve wrecking. I have to find other places to, my own ... Yeah, I went out and find somewhere. It's private, you know for one person. [Cards #1293-1296]

Some Hui respondents also expressed frustrations about microaggressions arising from questions Han students have about Muslim customs: “Some customs of Hui, Han people do not understand. It may take some stress: ‘Why don’t you eat pork?’ It is delicious. So always we are stressed” [Cards #133-134]. However, all Hui respondents felt integrated in Han society, and since the Hui population at Xi’an Jiaotong University is the largest ethnic minority group on campus, coupled with the large presence of Hui people living in Xi’an, Hui respondents expressed a sense of well-being on campus: “Except for religion we look the same. Not different. Hui and Han accept each other” [Cards #146-147]. “T: As far as she knows, she lives in Xi’an, there are many Hui people here, so it is very convenient because there are many restaurants for Muslims” [Card #252].

Inter-ethnic relations/roommate issues. Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents live in dormitory rooms on campus that accommodate four students in each room, and while the ethnic composition of roommates varies by room, most respondents reported sharing rooms with multiple ethnic minorities and Han students. A few Uyghur and Hui respondents reported having roommate relation conflicts with Han students emerging from cultural issues:

Sometimes we, you know we have our prayers, five per day, and sometimes early in the morning to the night, and sometimes I will get up so early in the morning and stay up late in the evening, and they may feel they are disturbed. They can’t sleep well, and I will tell them that is the time I make my prayer and I should allow this rule. And they will ask me,

can you do this a bit earlier? After I explain the reason, and how to do that on time, and sometimes I can go to the dorm too late because of my studies in the library, and then I do it at that time. And after we communicate, they may become more understanding. [Cards #1857-1858]

Most respondents, however, seemed to have experienced positive interactions with Han and other ethnic minority roommates, and developed amicable relations with their roommates. A Tibetan student explained how important it is to communicate with Han students when encountering cultural differences: “T: She said that when she encountered cultural differences between her roommates, she will try to explain her culture first, and uh, she tried to adapt to each other” [Card #1359].

Inter-ethnic romance. Inter-ethnic romantic relations between Hui and Han students emerged as a common stressor among some Hui respondents. Some Hui respondents, including male and female respondents, reported having cultural dilemmas dating Han students and experienced stress because they have been unable to develop romantic relationships:

T: He felt a little bit stressed when he wanted to find a girlfriend, and every male student feels stressed to find a girlfriend.” [Card #407]

It is hard to find a boyfriend. My family does not like Han boyfriend.

They like to help me find a Hui boy. But in this school there are not so many. So it is difficult to find a boyfriend ... Sometimes when I want a Han boy, this boy’s family maybe they cannot accept me because of dinner and lunch [Muslim customs]. [Cards #282-284 & 299]

One of the Hui staff respondents who studied at Xi'an Jiaotong University as an undergraduate also reported that inter-ethnic romance between Han and Hui students is a major stressor among Hui students: "If a boy like a girl, and the girl like the boy, maybe their parents protect the Hui boy or Han girl. But the parents don't allow, because of different customs, different religion ... It is a main problem, big problem" [Cards #137-139].

Financial and family concerns. Most Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan respondents received financial support from their families to cover college expenses at Xi'an Jiaotong University, while a few also received government scholarships and/or student loans. Some respondents reported that college expenses at Xi'an Jiaotong University, including tuition and fees, room and board, and textbooks ranged from 12000 to 14000 Yuan per year, or approximately \$2,100 U.S. dollars, which aligns with the national statistics reported for average college expenses in China (Wang, et al., 2011). While this study did not collect data on respondents' family incomes, it is reasonable to infer that college costs are prohibitive for most respondents (Sautman 1998). It is also noteworthy that the parents of most respondents did not attend tertiary education, and some of them did not complete secondary education.

Even though most respondents did not mention financial concerns as a major stressor in their college experience, some respondents voiced apprehension about the huge financial sacrifices their families experience to pay for their college education. A Tibetan student expressed the daunting difficulties his family has had to endure to pay

for his college education. He also felt responsible to return to his homeland in Tibet to care for his family after college:

He said it is pretty difficult [financially] because his father is retired. He used to be cook in a school, and his mother doesn't have a job. They saved, save and save, and save." [Cards #844-845]

[H]e wants to go back to Tibet because he wants to take care of this family, his parents. His parents are pretty old." [Card #828]

An Uyghur respondent, whose father died when he was a young boy, shared how his close family relatives have supported him financially to supplement the student loans he receives to pay for college education. He also worried about this family's wellbeing while attending college in Xi'an:

[M]y father had three sisters. Uh, one of them is a doctor, you know doctor? Uh, they are already retired. One of them is a worker ... they get me economic support ... otherwise my mother cannot afford it, tuition.

[Card #1513]

In my whole family, me and my sister's husband, there is two females. After I can to this school I always worry about how they handle things in the family.

That became stress." [Card #1473]

Government restrictions. While Xi'an Jiaotong University officials restricted the researcher from engaging in political and religious discussions with respondents, it was not uncommon for some respondents, particularly Uyghur, to express anxieties laden with political and religious inferences. An Uyghur respondent shared the frustrations he

faced with government restrictions that prevented him from obtaining a passport to travel abroad for educational purposes: “I cannot understand one thing. In recent years it’s very hard to get passports for us, you know. Well, if I need to, it is very hard even for the [Uyghur] students if they want to go outside to study” [Card #1539]. While the researcher was not aware of Chinese government policies that specifically restrict Uyghurs from traveling abroad, one university official at Xi’an Jiaotong University shared informally with the researcher that China is concerned about Uyghurs joining terrorist organizations when they travel outside of the country.

An Uyghur respondent also insinuated how it is becoming more difficult for Uyghurs to find government jobs in Xinjiang, where Han have immigrated in great numbers over the last decade seeking economic opportunities: “[J]ust take Xinjiang as an example. If you want to work for the government, there is always for example, I don’t have the statistic, for every 7,000 government workers there is only 1,000 for minorities” [Card #1478]. In 2014, the BBC reported that major economic development projects in Xinjiang have brought prosperity to large cities in Xinjiang, attracting young and technically talented Han Chinese from eastern provinces. Some critics believe that Han are given the best jobs and the majority of Han prosper economically, fueling anger among Uyghurs (BBC News, 2014). Another Uyghur respondent mentioned that she was concerned about students from Xinjiang who wear the traditional Uyghur burqa, because they might face greater acculturation barriers in adjusting to life on campus at Xi’an Jiaotong University, as well as racial discrimination in finding employment after graduation, due to their religious customs [Int. 19 6/25/14 F U].

Institutional Disconnect

Institutional discourse and society of settlement perceptions of *shao shu minzu*.

Institutional disconnect emerged as a recognizable and recurring theme from the narratives shared by Xi'an Jiaotong University staff, particularly Han staff, juxtaposed against the perceptions shared by most Uyghur and Tibetan respondents. As mentioned previously, the researcher interviewed seven staff members, four of whom were Han Chinese and three, Hui staff members. Most Han staff respondents perceived acculturation struggles of Uyghur and Tibetan students in the society of settlement, that is, the campus of Xi'an Jiaotong University, through the lenses of Chinese Communist Party ideology. As mentioned in Chapter II, according to Communist discourse, nationality and ethnic differences will disappear when class distinctions vanish, and a "homogenous proletarian culture will come into being" (Dreyer, 1976). Han staff respondents view differences between Han students and ethnic minorities along an imaginary, homogenous landscape where equality eventually prevails as the common denominator for all Chinese citizens, including Han and *shao shu minzu*. This CCP discourse of student equality is evident from the narratives shared by a Han staff respondent from the West Campus, who expressed his perceptions about the struggles of Uyghur and Tibetan students: "T: He said there basically exist no differences with the Han majority. He said there are no difficulties in daily life, or in language. And he said minority students have good relations with Han majority students" [Card #1754].

Another Han staff respondent from the West Campus affirmed her belief that differences between Han students and ethnic minority students are nonexistent because

ethnic minorities who attend *neidi* schools have already adapted to Han society after interacting with Han students in secondary education. She also stated there are no language difference between Han and ethnic minority students:

Those minority students have little differences with Han majorities, because when they were in high school they were studying in the provinces with other majorities [Han]... They were treated as equal with Han majorities. So they basically face the same stresses as majorities [Han] students ... She said there is no difference in their level of Mandarin ... There are no economic differences between Han and Minority students. [Cards #1703, 1718, & 1726]

Shao shu minzu attitudes. Most Han staff respondents stated that Uyghur and Tibetan students faced struggles on campus primarily because of their personal attitudes, lack of discipline and self-control, and inability to adapt to the more-demanding college environment, in contrast to the cultural and academic deficiencies identified by Tibetan and Uyghur respondents: “T: Basically it was caused because they, one or two students mainly lost their self-control. It has nothing to do with living habits [culture] only because after they went to the university they lose self-control” [Card #1719]. “T: The main stress they face is adapting to the university environment. And maybe some instance their academic scores are very low, but mainly it is cause by the difficulties to adapt the university environment” [Card #1716].

Another Han staff respondent commented that ethnic minority students, including Uyghur and Tibetan, face academic difficulties because the national

preferential policy for ethnic minority students that allows them to be admitted to college with lower *gaokao* scores causes them to become complacent in college: “T: This student is a little bit special. His grades are not that good ... there is a policy for minorities that you can enter the university at a lower score. But college life is not so restrictive. So he relaxes himself and so he is not focused on his studies” [Card #1958].

When the researcher asked Han staff respondents whether or not they had received any multicultural, or diversity and inclusion training to advise ethnic minority students, they replied that no such training exists on campus. Some of the staff adamantly rejected the idea of undertaking such training because in reality all ethnic minorities “are treated equally” [Card #1721].

Both Hui and Han staff respondents reported that Hui students face similar struggles on campus as their Han counterparts because Hui students are integrated into Han society: “Because Hui people and Han people have almost the same culture ... Chinese is their mother tongue, their own language, from child they speak Chinese” [Card #144]. “You cannot tell by looking at a Hui person whether or not they are Han or Hui” [Card #548]. Hui staff respondents seemed to have a deeper understanding of the complex struggles ethnic minority students face on campus, while most Han staff had superficial explanations about cultural differences between Han majority and ethnic minority students. Most Han staff referred to cultural distinctions between Han and ethnic minority students utilizing general statements such as “living habits” [cultural traditions] and broad statements about differences related to religion:

T: Actually there are not many differences with each other. The differences are mainly living habits. For example, Hui minority are Muslim.” [Card #1720]

And sometimes they [Muslims] do not eat pork, and they don’t allow majority students to mention words like pork or something like that.”

[Card #1998]

About the Uyghur and Xinjiang minorities, they like to sing and dance, so they like to attend many activities to show their talents and dancing. [Card #1967].

Research question two: How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?

Moderating Factors during Acculturation

Moderating factors during acculturation at the individual level. Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students rely on various support groups and stress-coping strategies when they face difficulties during their acculturation experience at Xi’an Jiaotong University. Support groups and stress-coping strategies act as an empowering mechanism to help Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur adapt to the cultural environment in a predominantly Han university.

Family and friends: Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents relied on family or friends as support groups during their acculturation experiences at Xi’an Jiaotong University, and most Uyghur and Tibetan respondents, in particular, counted on friends

from their ethnic group when they faced acculturative stress. Two Tibetan students, one from the West Campus and another from the East Campus, shared their concerns and troubles with Tibetan classmates when they encounter stress: “T: And sometimes when she feels a little frustrated she will talk to Tibetan homies, Tibetan students here and try to release some pressure [stress]” [Card #1361]. “T: Just like her friends, she shares her stresses with other Tibetan friends” [Card 2049]. Another Tibetan respondent said Tibetan students form strong bonds within their ethnic group because they feel inhibited about socializing with those outside their Tibetan circle of friends: “T: She feels Tibetan people are really shy when socializing with others. They don’t feel like getting closer to others actively, so most of them stay in their group of Tibetan students” [Card #771].

An Uyghur respondent from the West Campus sought the support of her Uyghur roommate when she experienced emotional struggles: “My roommate, she is an Uyghur too ... Like some kind of emotional things, I gotta find my roommate because she is very understanding” [Cards #1308 & 1310]. Some Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents also called their friends in their homeland for support, and another Tibetan relied on her family as her primary support group: “T: She will call some of her friends and talk with them and she will forget about her stress” [Cards #1077, 2133, & 1816].

Some Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students also relied on upperclassmen from their ethnic group for guidance, advice, and emotional support. A Hui student shared how upperclassmen provided a sense of community for her: “And there are some students older than me, they provide help about my studies, about my life. They often organize some activities, and they often communicate with me about my studies, and my life”

[Card #18]. Another Uyghur student depended on upperclassmen for advice: “The first thing is, maybe I will find some of my friends, and some other friends in the upper grades, because they are experienced. They were freshman so they can me some advice” [Card #1810]. A Tibetan student also relies on Tibetan upperclassmen for help: “T: And uh, second, she will go to other Tibetan students who are in the higher years, like sophomores, juniors for help” [Card #774].

Faculty and staff. A few respondents relied on faculty and staff as support groups. Only one Tibetan respondent and two Uyghur respondents from Northern Xinjiang sought support from faculty when they face academic stress. “T: As to academic stresses, he usually goes to the teachers and friends” [Card #831]. “And the teacher, the counselor, I was just, talked aboutYes. He’s very supportive of me” [Card #1313]. Another Tibetan student mentioned she did not seek counseling from faculty because she felt they do not understand her: “I think they cannot understand the students” [Card # 2045].

Self. Some respondents across all three ethnic groups in the study believed that in addition to relying on support groups for advice, emotional support, and understanding during their acculturation journey in a predominantly Han environment, it was equally important to be self-reliant when encountering difficult times. One Tibetan voiced how important it had been for him to solve problems on his own, especially after being separated from his homeland for many years, since middle school:

T: Because he has been out for so many years he is used to solving problems by himself, move on and be himself again ...When he is stressed he will go to the

study room, and think about his problems or issues for the future. Then he will come up with a solution by himself. He doesn't feel like going to someone else for help. [Cards #1164-1665 & 1164]

A Hui respondent expressed how important it was for him to keep an upbeat attitude and act independently when facing struggles and adversaries: "Have a good mood and then face it. If you do not have a girlfriend then you try to find one. If you are not doing well at school, you try to study" [Cards #422-424]. Another Uyghur respondent stated that she tolerated difficulties in life by finding solutions to these problems on her own: "T: Whenever she bumps into a problem, she tolerates it, and then tries to find a solution. She says that when you find a problem, you should try to find a solution and solve it" [Card #693].

Extracurricular activities. Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students engaged in a variety of extracurricular activities to cope with acculturative stress as college students at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Some Tibetan and Uyghur students relied on their religious practices and beliefs as a means to cope with stress. An Uyghur respondent sought inner peace by reading the Koran: "Another thing, the most efficient way is I can read the Koran, you know? Every time I feel no meaning, discouraged so much, I can read the Koran, and I feel so relieved. I feel so comfortable with reading the Koran, and after finishing reading it I feel cheered up again." [Cards #1812-1813]. A Tibetan respondent expressed how his religious beliefs sustained him when he felt lonely: "T: And also, he believes in Buddhism. And believes people are all kind. If you treat other people well they also treat you well." A Hui staff respondent also suggested that religious practices

help Hui students cope with stress: “T: He says prayer is a good way to deal with stress” [Card #117].

Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents engage in sports or physical activities to manage stress. Some Tibetan students play basketball or go jogging to release stress: “T: He said when he feels stress he usually plays basketball with his friends” [Card #823]. “T: When she feels it is hard to bear, she will go jogging, sometimes with some music with her” [Card #1603]. Another Uyghur student played soccer to manage stress: “When I play soccer I don’t like to think anything else. After for a while the pressures is disappeared. And then there is a lot of things I should do, to study. I forget the pressure.”

Other Uyghur students sung outdoors or listened to music to cope with stress: “I go to the playground in the evenings and sing. I sing very loud. You know, in the dark nobody sees your face, but everybody knows it’s me because only I do that” [Cards # 1303-1305]. Another Uyghur student socializes with Westerners and practices his English on the West Campus of the university to release acculturative stress: “Sometimes every semester we have an English corner in Shishu. OK, I go there at the English corner and there are English corner [people] from all of the countries, American, Canadian, Australian” [Card #1492].

Student Discourse and Perceptions of Institutional Support

Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents in the study sought support groups as a means to manage acculturative stress at Xi’an Jiaotong University. However, while most respondents wished they had access to institutional support systems or services,

such as university-supported ethnic student organizations or multicultural centers, to help them with their transition to college in a predominantly Han university, these services are nonexistent there. In fact, most Han staff respondents stated that ethnic minority student organizations were unnecessary: “T: He said that there is no need for such an organization or department for them, because he thinks that both majority and minorities they are facing the same problems” [Card #1678]. On the other hand, a Hui staff respondent believed the development of ethnic minority student organizations on campus was vital, but insinuated that due to political issues, it was challenging to have such organizations: “T: It is very necessary. It is hard for the situation now in China. It is difficult right now” [Cards #104-105]. And while some Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents noted that ethnic minority students occasionally gather informally on campus with their ethnic peers to celebrate cultural festivities, sometimes with financial and organizational support from Xi’an Jiaotong University, they revealed that such student organizations had never been officially established on campus.

When asked whether the creation of ethnic-minority student organizations at Xi’an Jiaotong University was important to them, most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents answered positively. Uyghur respondents viewed the establishment of an Uyghur student organization as a vehicle to create a sense of belonging and cohesion for Uyghurs in the university community: “The Uyghur students can be more united, and can cope with their problems together. If we have problems, we can help each other. And we can understand more about our problems” [Cards #1848-1849]. Other Uyghur respondents commented that the existence of an Uyghur student organization would

allow Uyghur students the opportunity to teach Han students about their culture, and facilitate communication between Han and ethnic minority students: “T: She feels that if they have the organization here about their culture, more people will understand in multidimensional ways their customs and culture” [Card #705]. “T: She says that if there is such organization, Han people will have a way to know Uyghur culture, so they may promote the communication between them” [Card #1083].

Tibetan students were equally supportive about the establishment of ethnic-minority student organizations. Some Tibetan students suggested that having a Tibetan student organization on campus would be a source of great pride for them and stimulate Tibetans to learn about their own history, while creating interpersonal support and social interaction: “T: Yes, he feels a student organization for Tibetan students will help them because he felt he would be very proud to see others promoting his culture or others knowing his culture” [Card #1171]. “Um, I think it can help us understand about Tibet, yes, and exchange our lives. Yes, I think it can help us. Yes, we can discuss about our history” [Cards #2144-2145]. While the student affairs office at Xi’an Jiaotong University has established processes for students to request student-run, on-campus activities, a Tibetan student said she had not sought approval to start a Tibetan student organization because she feared the request would be denied. “We have time, but have not tried it. Because we think it can’t succeed. We are afraid it can’t succeed so we haven’t tried it” [Card #2147].

Most Hui students and Hui staff respondents also supported the idea of creating a Hui student organization, while a few believed Hui student organizations were not

necessary, since most Hui students feel integrated in Han culture: “I think if the club is built, um, other people will learn about *mintzu* [ethnic minorities]. Other people can learn about the culture of minority people. Yeah, they can learn much about our culture” [Card #42] [335 Int. 6 12/21/12/ F G Pg. 5]. A Hui staff respondent wished the university took action to create ethnic minority organizations to assist the acculturation needs of Muslims, and wished the investigator of this study could intervene to advocate for the creation of ethnic student organizations at Xi’an Jiaotong University:

T: He said that as staff at the university, he says we hope [we] will have such official clubs and organizations just like in your American universities to offer help to Muslims. And he also mention that if you have the opportunity to meet our leaders in our university, you can help introduce such kind of reality to the leaders. So this is one of his wish to create these kind of organizations in the future. [Cards #110-111]

Student Demands for Institutional Support

Cultural accommodations. Tibetan and Uyghur respondents voiced diverse opinions about how Xi’an Jiaotong University should implement institutional changes to better serve their acculturation needs while helping them adapt to the predominantly Han environment. In general, they demanded cultural accommodations from the university to support their desire to preserve their cultural identity. An Uyghur student wished the university recognized major religious Uyghur holidays:

The first thing I can think of is our festival. Because we have our religious festivals, two most important religious festivals. Many people

here don't know about our festivals. On that day we will have our classes with other students. And sometimes when we want to go outside to celebrate, we have to ask the teachers' permission. Because I cannot skip the class, you know. We have to ask for permission of our teachers. Ramadan and Corban. I hope the university officials, they pay a bit more attention to our cultural, traditional festivals. I think there are some ways they can make the students, also the teachers to understand more about our festivals. Sometimes we are minorities here, and when we are having our festivals I hope, we really someone will have some kind of nice words, like happy New Year; we want to have some kind of nice words said by them. We will feel better. [Cards #1843-1846]

Another Uyghur student wished the university provided advising and counseling services for Uyghur students to help them transition to college life and address their unique cultural needs, as well as facilitate social interactions and interventions between Han and Uyghur students to build a welcoming campus and prevent microaggressions:

Maybe there can be campus lectures to talk about the Uyghur culture to Han people so that Han students will know what the Uyghur culture is and so they want to, maybe they will begin to communicate with Uygher people. They [Han] won't be afraid of [Uyghurs] hurting them ... She wishes the students and the teachers can provide more support because they [need] much longer time and effort to deal with the language barrier. She hopes the students a teachers would like to communicate with them to

know what the difficulties they have and what they think. [Cards #1084 & 1087]

An Uyghur student, Yusup, also pointed out the need for creating culturally sensitive bathing facilities or stalls on campus that protect the privacy of Uyghur students when they take showers: “And showers is another one. Yes, most important one.” [Card #1318] As mentioned in this chapter, Yusup decided to shower in private bathing facilities off campus because the university lacked these facilities.

Another Uyghur who felt marginalized, experiencing microaggressions and a sense of otherness on campus, seemed quite agitated by the fact that Han students who eat in the campus Muslim cafeteria often use their personal chopsticks, which they also use in other dining places where non-halal food is served. She suggested the university should have a Muslim cafeteria exclusive for Muslim students: “T: They [Uyghur] don’t want the other [Han] students to come into the cafeteria. They eat other food [pork] and use the same things [utensils] as us” [Card #1917].

Tibetan respondents also voiced the importance of having access to Tibetan language courses to help them reconnect with their cultural identity: “Oh, I think we should have a class to practice our language, our mother language ... In our daily life, we can practice it, yes, we can forget it” [Cards #2143-2144]. In addition, Tibetan respondents conveyed the significance of having access to Tibetan staff who understand Tibetan culture and who could assist them with their acculturation challenges: “T: And the school can also hire some Tibetan lecturers so that when they have any problems they can go to them” [Card #780]. “As to the new services, the university may provide,

he prefers the psychological support ... Yes, maybe some teacher to help them to take time to adapt to the new environment” [Card #937]. A Hui staff respondent also acknowledged the significance of providing Hui students access to Hui advisors who wish to validate their cultural identity: “T: He said that as staff, many students talk with him because they share the same values ... The most important is that since they have such [same] religion and beliefs they choose to ask help from their religion. These kind of communication from such beliefs can help them solve these problems in reality [real life]” [Cards #112 & 114-115].

Institutional accommodations, Tibetan and Uyghur respondents, in particular, conveyed the need for greater institutional support in the form of tutoring services and Mandarin lessons to help them cope with their academic difficulties. Although most Tibetan respondents stated they received some tutoring support from graduate students, they expressed the need for more tutoring services in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects: “The school is providing some graduates to help with their math. She wants some more academic help” [Card #1404]. Some Tibetan and Uyghur respondents also requested help with Mandarin lessons. An Uyghur student from northern Xinjiang stated that Uyghur students who study in *min kao min* schools (bilingual instruction for ethnic minority students prior to entering college) need the greatest help with Mandarin lessons:

T: She feels that the students who came from the Uyghur schools at home, they come here and have some problems in communication, and they also have some problems in pronunciation in Mandarin. ... She feels that

college can provide them some institutes that teach Mandarin, and have English corners. She feels if we have Mandarin corners they can correct the pronunciation of Uyghur students, and other issues. This will help.

[Cards #712-713]

A few Tibetan and Uyghur respondents also expressed concern about the lack of financial support from Xi'an Jiaotong University. An Uyghur student stated that the university should provide greater need-based financial aid:

I recommend the university should separate the financial support from scholarship different ways. Scholarship shouldn't be dependent on student grades. But for financial support they should think about family income ... even loans; one of my brothers [Uyghur classmate] signed up for the loans, but after two years he didn't get the grades so he didn't get the loan. [Cards #1520-1521]

Cultural Recognition

Cultural recognition and rediscovering cultural heritage. Tibetans and Uyghur respondents were particularly insightful about their quest to teach others about their cultures, and their zeal to return to their homeland after finishing college at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Their desire to seek recognition from the Han community, and their hopes and aspirations to return home and reconnect with their culture, may serve to strengthen their ability to cope with acculturative stress on campus. An Uyghur respondent sought cultural recognition from the place of settlement—that is, the campus community—by disseminating and teaching Han people about her culture: “I am proud

of that, spreading my culture. When they ask about my race or something, I tell them a lot, including history. We have our own history and are very proud of [Cards #1227 & 1260-1261]. A Tibetan respondent also expressed her longing to tell others about her culture: “T: She feel it is necessary to promote their own culture. There are some Han, Mongolian, and Hui friends in her circle. She has taught some Tibetan language to them, and she has introduced some customs and traditions as to food, and clothes and something else, and she love to do that” [Cards #1623-1624].

Another Uyghur student enthusiastically shared her desire to return to Xinjiang to pursue graduate school in the medical field and marry an Uyghur man: “As to relations she is determined to have a husband of the same Uyghur nationality ... she is going back to Xinjiang Province to the medical university of Xinjiang to finish her medical degree” [Cards #678 & 680]. A Tibetan respondent wishes to return to Tibet to rediscover her mother tongue: “And she will go back to Tibet to work, so she determined that when she has free time she will learn more Tibetan language” [Card #1380].

Vision for future of their homeland. Tibetan respondents in particular were eager about returning to Tibet to build a brighter future for their homeland. Their aspiration to return to their cultural roots strengthens their resolve to overcome the challenges they face in college. A Tibetan respondent shared his vision for the future of Tibet:

T: About 90% of [Tibetans] will go back to Tibet and they will go some important department in Tibet and help the development. His nation needs to be modernized. The whole people has to develop themselves, to be better, and this pushes him to move forward. [Cards #927 & 939]

Another Tibetan student expressed her resolve to preserve the cultural identity of Tibetans: “T: She feels obliged to carry on her heritage to the next generation” [Card #1379].

Research question three: What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?

Motivation to Go to College

Gaokao scores/institutional ranking. Most respondents in the study decided to enroll at Xi’an Jiaotong University because their national college entrance examination scores (*gaokao*) met the university’s admission requirements, and most recognized that Xi’an Jiaotong University is one of the best higher education institutions in China. However, most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents struggled to meet the admissions requirements of Xi’an Jiaotong University. An Uyghur respondent conveyed her thoughts about why she chose to apply to Xi’an Jiaotong University: “[A]ctually first of all, you got to go to a great university in China, to a good a good education system. It’s like, um, a good university means everything sometimes” [Cards #1191-1190]. Another Uyghur respondent highlighted that she decided to pursue tertiary education outside of Xinjiang because the education system in inland China is better: “The education level is higher than in Xinjiang University” [Card #1036]. A Hui respondent also decided to apply to Xi’an Jiaotong University because he believes it is the best in the region: “JU is the best, not one of the best, in the northwest of China.”

It is worth noting that more than a quarter of the Tibetan and Uyghur respondents had applied to other universities in inland China, but their *gaokao* scores did

not meet the requirements of those institutions. An Uyghur respondent shared her motivations to pursue higher education and the hardships she endured studying for the *gaokao*, while voicing her unrelenting desire to excel academically as Han students did and apply to a top university in China:

We have ambitions to be as good as Han nationality. Chinese is not our first language, but I think as long as we try, I hope that someday we will be in the same grade [level] and we will be admitted to these universities ... because in Xinjiang education is not so developed so we have to fight for the opportunity of education. And we have to study hard and hard to apply for the opportunity. And everyone want to be in the top universities in China, and we are admitted to this university by our grades in *gaokao* The first time, I participated in the college entrance examination, and I applied to Nanjing University, because my elder brother was also in Nanjing University ... but I failed the examination, so I went back to Hotan and I studied one more year and I participated in the examination again and I applied to Xi'an Jiaotong University and I came here. [Cards #1820, 1836, & 1839]

A Tibetan student applied to Xi'an Jiaotong University because it offered the academic program he wished to pursue: "T: When he was applying to universities, only this university had an ME [medical forensics] program" [Card #802]. Another Tibetan student expressed how pleasantly surprised she was when she received the admissions letter from Xi'an Jiaotong University because

she believed she had not performed well on the *gaokao*: “T: She didn’t do so well in her college examination. Her first choice was a university in southwest China, and second is in northeast part of China, and the third choice is in Xi’an” [Card #2034].

Cultural ties: Most Hui respondents believed the large population of Hui ethnic minorities and significant presence of Hui culture in Xi’an positively influenced their decision to study at Xi’an Jiaotong University. The narratives of a Hui student from the Ningzhia province clearly demonstrate the importance cultural ties play in the decision making process of Hui students who choose to study in Xi’an:

T: As far as she knows, she lives in Xi’an, there are many Hui people here, so it is very convenient because there are many restaurants for Muslims, but her friends who go to the south part of China to go to go to the university, there are less Hui people, and there are less Muslim restaurants ... so she can easily get used to live here. [Cards #215, 252-253]

Another Hui student from the Gansu province also affirmed that the prevalence of Hui culture and Muslim community in Xi’an partially motivated him to study at Xi’an Jiaotong University: “Another reason I went to JU was because it is easy to drink and eat. Do you know halal? It is easy to find halal food in this city” [Card #581]. A few other Hui respondents commented that the geographic proximity of Xi’an to their hometown positively impacted their motivation to study at Xi’an Jiaotong University: “Because I like Xi’an, and it is not very far from my hometown” [Cards #349-350].

Social mobility and pursuit of dreams: Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents aspire to good jobs and successful careers when they graduate from Xi'an Jiaotong University. A Tibetan respondent indicated his desire to return home and acquire a good job: "T: He wants to return home after his graduation. And he feels that a job will help him with his career more" [Card #1148]. An Uyghur student also commented on her monetary motivation to attend college in Xi'an: "If you get a good education you are going to find a good job, make good money or anything like that" [Card #1192]. Another Uyghur student, who is pursuing a degree in medicine, indicated that studying medicine has been her long-time dream: "She said she has always wanted to be in the medical field ever since she was little" [Card #670].

External influences. Some Tibetan and Uyghur respondents remarked that external influences, such as friends, family, or teachers, partially motivated them to attend Xi'an Jiaotong University. A few Uyghur respondents revealed how their peers and teachers influenced their choice to attend Xi'an Jiaotong University: "Our teacher always speak about this university. And I am very interested in coming here" [Card #1893]. "T: Just a friend of hers tell her you can apply for medical school in Xi'an Jiaotong University and she did it, like an incident meant to be" [Card #647].

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to address specific questions as a means to understand and deconstruct the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students enrolled in a predominantly Han public research university in Central China. Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents voiced their distinctive opinions,

struggles, and aspirations, and the following pages summarize their narratives that emerged from each research question posed in this study.

Research question one: What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?

The struggles and challenges Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents faced during their acculturation experiences in a predominantly Han research university in Central China are linked to moderating factors prior to entering tertiary education. These moderating factors include the acculturation experiences respondents encountered in *neidi* schools and preparatory college, cultural distance, trilingualism and loss of cultural heritage. Most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents have faced alienation, homesickness, and loneliness during their time in *neidi* schools, while forming significant bonds with students from their own ethnicity to cope with their challenges.

Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students unanimously agreed that religion was the salient element distinguishing their ethnic minority cultures from the mainstream Han culture. Uyghur and Tibetan respondents, in particular, exhibited greater cultural distance compared to Hui respondents; that is, Uyghur and Tibetan respondents felt less integrated in the dominant Han culture relative to Hui respondents. Furthermore, language barriers (lack of Mandarin and English proficiency), increase cultural distance and act as significant stressors, particularly for Tibetan and Uyghur respondents as they struggle to acculturate to the mainstream Han culture at Xi'an Jiaotong University.

In addition to facing hardships learning the Mandarin language, most Tibetan respondents were distressed about losing command of their mother language after departing Tibet at an early age to attend middle school and high school in *neidi* schools throughout inland China, where the language of instruction is the *lingua franca* of the Han dominant culture.

During their college experiences at Xi'an Jiaotong University, most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents also expressed feelings of isolation and loneliness, and many Uyghur, Tibetan, and Hui respondents experienced microaggressions or verbal and nonverbal affronts that conveyed undesirable messages based on the ethnic minority status of the respondents. Some Uyghur respondents, in particular, pointed out that the Han population intentionally tries to assimilate Uyghurs into mainstream Han culture, and feared that the CCP deliberately sets restrictions targeting Uyghurs, such as preventing Uyghurs students from obtaining Chinese passports. Similarly, while all Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents faced academic stress, especially during their first year in college, Uyghur and Tibetan respondents seem to confront greater obstacles academically compared to their Hui peers.

Even though most respondents seemed to have had positive experiences interacting with Han and other ethnic minority roommates in on-campus dormitories, a few Muslim respondents, namely Uyghur and Hui students, described struggles with Han roommates arising from cultural misunderstandings, particularly religious issues. Some Hui respondents also seemed to struggle with interethnic romantic relationships, and reported having religious dilemmas while dating Han students. Furthermore, some

Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan respondents voiced apprehension about the significant financial sacrifices their families must endure to pay for their college education.

While it is demonstrably evident that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents experience acculturation struggles to various degrees during their college journeys at Xi'an Jiaotong University, the staff of the university, particularly Han staff, seem to be vastly disconnected from the acculturation realities of ethnic minority students, especially the acculturation challenges of Uyghur and Tibetan students.

Research question two: How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?

Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents in this study lean on numerous support groups and use various stress-coping strategies when they encounter acculturative stress during their college experiences at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Support groups and stress-coping strategies empower Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents to adapt to the predominantly Han environment at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents seek the support of family or friends during their acculturation journey at Xi'an Jiaotong University, and most Uyghur and Tibetan respondents, in particular, rely on friends and upperclassmen from their own ethnic group to cope with acculturative stress. On the other hand, few respondents relied on university staff or faculty to address acculturative stresses they face on-campus.

Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents also relied on extracurricular activities, such as sports and physical recreational activities, to manage stress, and some

of the Tibetan and Uyghur respondents depended on their religious practices and beliefs as a means to cope with stress. In addition, other Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents relied on their own personal mental processes to assess and manage their difficulties on campus.

Even though most respondents, primarily Tibetan and Uyghur respondents, wished they had access to institutional support systems or services to assist with their transition to college, such as university-supported ethnic student organizations or diversity and inclusion centers, these services are not available at Xi'an Jiaotong University. In fact, Han staff respondents indicated such services were not necessary. Tibetan and Uyghur respondents heartily voiced their opinions about the institutional and cultural accommodations Xi'an Jiaotong University should consider.

Research question three: What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?

Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents decided to pursue academic studies at Xi'an Jiaotong University because they aspire to good jobs and successful careers. Some Hui respondents expressed that the large Hui population and prominent Hui cultural ties in Xi'an significantly influenced their decision to enroll at Xi'an Jiaotong University, and some Uyghur and Tibetan respondents were influenced by friends, family members, or teachers who encouraged them to study at Xi'an Jiaotong University.

While most respondents acknowledged that Xi'an Jiaotong University is a leading higher education institution in China, some Tibetan and Uyghur respondents did

not have Xi'an Jiaotong University as their top choice for college. They applied to other universities in inland China as their first choice, but their *gaokao* scores did not meet the requirements of those institutions. However, most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents are compelled to finish tertiary education and are inspired by a deep yearning to build a promising future for their homeland.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapters in this dissertation were the introduction, review of the literature, methodology, and data analysis and findings addressing each research question. This chapter unveils a summary of the study, conclusions extracted from the results, an overview of the implications emerging from the results, and recommendations for additional scholarly studies.

Summary

This exploratory case study examined the narratives of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students to comprehend their acculturation experiences in a predominantly Han research university in Central China. An examination of acculturation experiences of ethnic minority college students in predominantly Han public research institutions of higher education in China is essential to developing institutional policies and initiatives that recognize, value, and respect the cultural heritage and rights of *shao shu minzu* populations.

The researcher visited Xi'an Jiaotong University over three trips between July 2012 and June 2014. Xi'an Jiaotong University is one of the top 10, public research universities in China, with a student population of approximately 30,000, of which approximately 1,000 are ethnic minority students. The sample consisted of 29 respondents, of which 22 were Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur Xi'an Jiaotong University students, and seven were Xi'an Jiaotong University staff selected through snowball

sampling, a type of purposeful sampling described in Chapter III, to the degree possible. Whenever snowball sampling was not feasible due to logistical reasons and inability of the researcher to speak Mandarin, the staff at Xi'an Jiaotong University helped the researcher with the selection of respondents. Cross-language research, the use of translators during the research process, also was engaged in this study (Temple, 2002).

Rigorous interviews and observations were employed to assemble the narratives of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students. Data collection in this study was achieved mainly through the human instrument as described in Chapter III, and data, including narratives and constructions, were gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions. The researcher engaged an interview protocol that was modified and expanded as the study advanced. In addition to the interview protocol, the collection of demographic data was vital. This covered ethnicity, ethnicity of parents, age, academic major, gender, academic class standing, and financial aid information. Interviews with participants; observations of respondents before, during and after the interview sessions; and observations of the Xi'an Jiaotong University campus (including classrooms, staff offices, student dormitories, and university cafeterias); and analysis of records and documents were primarily examined through qualitative analyses.

It must be noted that the process of data collection in this study was subject to restrictions imposed by Xi'an Jiaotong University that limited the scope of the study. The leadership of Xi'an Jiaotong University asked the researcher to "abstain from engaging in political and religious discussions with respondents." Despite this limitation, rich data were collected, from which major themes and categories were

identified. These themes and categories provided answers to the research questions for the study and impelled recommendations for further studies.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be derived from this study that merit consideration with respect to the acculturation experiences of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in a predominantly Han research university in Central China. The following conclusions were reached:

Research question one: What struggles and challenges do Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students encounter during their acculturation experiences within the context of a predominantly Han public research university located in an urban center in Central China?

The researcher concludes that cultural distance is a significant moderating factor influencing how respondents adapt to the predominantly Han environment at Xi'an Jiaotong University, a Type II, regular university in Central China. Cultural distance in the study is primarily defined along the contextual spectrum of cultural differences in religion and language that exist between the dominant Han culture and the ethnic minority cultures of the respondents. In addition, in accordance with Berry's bi-dimensional conceptual framework, which guided this study, this research affirmed that the greater the cultural differences, the less positive the cultural adaptation of respondents. Clearly, the results of this study indicate that most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents experience significant difficulties adapting to a predominantly Han cultural

environment, as evidenced from the stresses Uyghur and Tibetan respondents face as students at Xi'an Jiaotong University.

The research in this study indicates that religion is a central, cultural characteristic for most respondents, particularly Uyghur and Tibetan students. Religion plays a pivotal role in determining the cultural identity and heritage of Tibetan, Uyghur, and Hui respondents, and has influenced the resolve of respondents, particularly Tibetan and Uyghur respondents, although in varying forms, to oppose cultural assimilation by the dominant Han culture. Uyghur and Tibetan respondents displayed greater cultural distance compared to Hui respondents. That is, Uyghur and Tibetan respondents felt less integrated in the dominant Han culture. It also appears that most Uyghur and Tibetan respondents' desire to lean on and preserve their religion and maintain their ethnic language strengthens their ability to cope with acculturative stress at Xi'an Jiaotong University. The research in this study also reveals that most Uyghur and Tibetan students strive to maintain their culture and language as a means to create a sense of belonging, sustain their cultural identity, and enhance group solidarity.

These results suggest that most Hui students have incorporated an integration strategy to cope with their acculturation experience in a predominantly Han environment. In other words, Hui respondents choose to interact with the Han culture while maintaining their original culture. Uyghur and Tibetans respondents, in contrast, seem to have adopted a hybrid acculturation strategy that combines integration and separation strategies. Uyghur and Tibetan respondents seem to prefer to socialize with

students from their own ethnicity while holding on to their ethnic culture, and passively interacting with the dominant Han culture primarily in classroom and dormitory settings.

Further, it is evident that language barriers, in the form of a lack of Mandarin and English proficiency, heighten cultural distance and elicit significant stress particularly for most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents who are academically unprepared and struggle compared to their Han counterparts. While the official position of the mainstream government is to maintain ethnic minority culture and ethnic languages, practices at Xi'an Jiaotong University paint a completely different picture, with an emphasis placed on Mandarin-language instruction and general indifference to the maintenance of Uyghur and Tibetan languages and culture. Similar to what Postiglione's research (2009) revealed in *neidi* schools, it also appears that despite the significant effort placed on the Chinese language as the premium form of instruction at Xi'an Jiaotong University, the gap between Uyghur and Han counterparts in Chinese-language proficiency, as with Tibetan respondents, remains evident, and Chinese language proficiency seems to be a salient obstacle in the academic endeavors of Tibetan and Uyghur respondents.

This study also concludes that most Tibetan respondents lost proficiency in their mother language after leaving Tibet at early ages to pursue middle school and high school in *neidi* schools, later attending predominantly Han universities far from their homelands. These respondents face a double-edge sword, in that they lack the Mandarin-language proficiency needed to excel academically at Xi'an Jiaotong

University and face distress and disillusionment because they also have lost proficiency of their own ethnic language.

The narratives of most Tibetan and Uyghur respondents, especially those residing on the East Campus of Xi'an Jiaotong University, where there are fewer Tibetan and Uyghur students, portrayed a campus climate that is indifferent to their feelings of isolation and loneliness, and where Uyghur students, in particular, prominently encountered microaggressions, passive discrimination, and exclusion. In fact, a vast disconnect exists between the narratives of Han staff, and Uyghur and Tibetan respondents. Han staff seem to be disconnected from the realities of Tibetan and Uyghur respondents, and adhered to the perception that no academic, language, or other differences exist between the Han majority and ethnic minority students at Xi'an Jiaotong University.

Furthermore, results in the study revealed that Xi'an Jiaotong University does not provide sufficient academic and social support to Tibetan and Uyghur students, nor does it offer multicultural or diversity training to its staff. The data in this study also seem to underscore the reality that institutional policies at Xi'an Jiaotong University fail to facilitate maintenance of Uyghur and Tibetan cultures. In fact, some Han staff rejected outright the idea of multicultural training for Xi'an Jiaotong University staff because they perceived that all university students face the same challenges on campus. This is problematic for an institution of higher education whose tenet is to foster a healthy and supportive environment for all students, including ethnic minority students who face greater academic and social integration obstacles compared to their Han counterparts.

This study also concludes that although Hui respondents seemed relatively integrated into the Han dominant culture, some Hui respondents faced difficulties coping with interethnic romantic relationships, and reported having religious quandaries when dating Han students. Furthermore, some Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan respondents voiced anxiety about the financial difficulties their families face to pay for their college education.

Another noteworthy conclusion in this study is that Tibetan, Uyghur, and Hui respondents adapt to the predominantly Han cultural environment and experience struggles in Xi'an Jiaotong University in various forms. The vast and complex conformation of ethnic minority groups, as well as the diversity inherent in each ethnic minority group, requires institutional leaders at Xi'an Jiaotong University to adopt different approaches and interventions to understand the distinct, social-cultural needs of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, while developing initiatives and policies that take into account the unique and diverse cultural characteristics of these students.

For example, this study found that while Uyghur respondents seemed far more culturally distant from the dominant Han culture compared to Hui respondents, it appears that Uyghur respondents are not culturally monolithic. That is, cultural variations exist between Uyghur respondents from northern Xinjiang and Uyghur respondents from southern Xinjiang. Uyghur respondents from northern Xinjiang seemed to be relatively integrated into the dominant Han culture. Also, Hui and Uyghur respondents who studied in *min kao han* middle schools and high schools (predominantly Han schools) seemed more integrated in the dominant culture.

Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to building a welcoming environment and striving to integrate Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan students into the social and academic community at Xi'an Jiaotong University should be avoided. Instead, providing adequate academic support that considers the distinct needs of ethnic minority students, enhancing social interaction that incorporates the unique cultural characteristics of ethnic minority students, and efforts to preserve students' cultural identity should be considered to help address the struggles and barriers these students face.

Research question two: How do individual coping strategies, resources, and social support affect cultural adaptation/adjustment and acculturation stress of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students during their educational journey in a higher education setting?

The Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in this study rely on support groups and stress-coping strategies when they face difficulties during their acculturation experience at Xi'an Jiaotong University. These support groups and stress-coping strategies empower Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students and aid them managing acculturative stress in a predominantly Han university. The majority of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents rely on family or friends as support groups during their acculturation experience at Xi'an Jiaotong University, and most Uyghur and Tibetan respondents, in particular, count on friends from their own ethnic group. These bonds of friendship with peers of their own ethnic community may provide interpersonal support and cohesion and increase the sense of belonging these students experience in a predominantly Han setting. Tibetan and Uyghur students also rely on upperclassmen from their own ethnic group for guidance, advice, and emotional support. Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students also

participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, such as sports and physical activities, to cope with acculturative stress at Xi'an Jiaotong University. In addition, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, in particular, depend on religious practices and beliefs as a means to cope with acculturative stress.

While most respondents, particularly Tibetan and Uyghur students, wished they had access to institutional support systems or services, such as university-supported ethnic minority student organizations or multicultural centers, to assist them with acculturation, Xi'an Jiaotong University does not offer these services. The establishment of ethnic student organizations may serve as vehicle to create a sense of belonging, recognition, and cohesion, particularly for Uyghur and Tibetan students, and may facilitate interpersonal communication between Han and ethnic minority students. Uyghur and Tibetan students' desire to seek recognition from the Han community and reconnect with their own ethnic cultures may serve to strengthen their ability to cope with acculturative stress on campus.

Tibetan and Uyghur respondents voiced varying demands for institutional and cultural accommodations from Xi'an Jiaotong University to help them preserve their cultural identity and help them succeed academically. This study concludes that Tibetan and Uyghur respondents require further Mandarin-language training and academic support during their first years of college, particularly for students who have attended *neidi* schools and *min kao min* schools (where they received bilingual instruction prior to entering college). In addition, it is vital that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students have access to trained staff and counselors who understand their cultures and validate their

ethnic identities. Xi'an Jiaotong University should hire trained Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur counselors and staff to serve as advisors for these students.

Research question three: What are the motivating factors that influence Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students to go to college in urban settings away from their society of origin?

Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in this study decided to pursue tertiary education at Xi'an Jiaotong University because their national college entrance examination scores (*gaokao*) met the admission requirements of the university, and they acknowledged that Xi'an Jiaotong University is one of the top institutions of higher education in China. Their decision to attend college was driven primarily by their desire to get good jobs and pursue successful careers when they graduate from Xi'an Jiaotong University. However, it is noteworthy to mention that more than a quarter of the Tibetan and Uyghur respondents in this study had applied to other universities in inland China, but their *gaokao* scores did not meet the requirements of those institutions. In addition, the results of this study indicate that Hui students are motivated to study at Xi'an Jiaotong University because they valued, and were attracted to, the strong presence of Hui culture in Xi'an.

While Tibetan and Uyghur respondents wish to get decent jobs and pursue prosperous careers once they graduate from Xi'an Jiaotong University, some are uncertain about their ability to find jobs within their fields of study after graduation. Some of the Uyghur students, especially, insinuated that Uyghur people in Xinjiang may not have the same job opportunities as Han people. As mentioned in the previous chapter, critics believe that Han people are given the best government jobs, and

government organizations favor Han job applicants over Uyghur job applicants, fueling discontent among the Uyghur population (BBC News, 2014).

Implications

The present exploratory and naturalistic study advances a number of opportunities for future research that may refine and further elaborate these findings. In this section, I briefly highlight some of the implications for future investigation and practice that stem from the study. The questions raised in this section are intended to aid in setting a research agenda for constructing institutional initiatives that seek social justice expressions while facilitating greater maintenance of Hui, Uyghur, and Tibetan culture.

Implications for practice

How can the academy conduct acculturation research of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students in higher education institutions in Central China when researchers are restricted from engaging in religious and political discussions? This study was conducted on the premises and campus of the predominantly Han, Type II, research university, Xi'an Jiaotong University. Most interviews with Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students took place with the help of Han student translators appointed by the university through the office of the Communist Youth League. It is possible that respondents felt inhibited to freely speak their mind within this restricted environment, especially concerning sensitive topics such as religion and politics. The study could be extended in longitudinal ways by interviewing Tibetan and Uyghur respondents in unrestricted

settings in their homeland before they enroll in *neidi* schools and after they graduate from predominantly Han, Type II research universities in inland China.

What are the concerns and fears Han students have when interacting with Uyghur students? The present study focused on the narratives and voices of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur college students. Future scholarly studies should also investigate how Han students view Uyghur, Tibetan, and Hui students in predominantly Han, Type II universities. Uyghur students, in particular, mentioned that Han students fear Uyghur students. Focus groups with Han, Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents may generate constructive dialogues and findings that may be of interest to acculturation studies.

Do multicultural centers or ethnic minority student organizations inhibit the educational system of Xi'an Jiaotong University? The revised 1982 PRC Constitution endorsed protection for “normal religious” activities as long as these activities do not interfere with the public order, threaten the health of citizens or inhibit educational systems of the country (PFC 1982: Art. 36) (Saxer, 2014). Findings in this study suggest that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students welcome the possibility of establishing ethnic student organizations at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Given that religion is intertwined with the cultural identity of Tibetan and Uyghur people, ethnic minority organizations may be viewed by the mainstream, dominant Han culture as religious organizations. While most respondents wished they had access to institutional support services, such as university-supported ethnic student organizations or multi-cultural centers, to aid them with their transition to college, these services are not available. In fact, most Han staff respondents stated that ethnic minority organizations were not necessary. It may be

informative for future scholarly studies to investigate whether ethnic minority student organizations inhibit the educational system of Xi'an Jiaotong University or other Type II universities.

Which interventions and institutional initiatives are effective in addressing the disconnect between the narratives of Han university staff and narratives of ethnic minority students? The present study has shown that Han staff respondents seem to view differences between Han students and ethnic minorities within an imaginary, homogeneous landscape where equality eventually prevails as the common denominator for all Chinese citizens, including Han and *shao shu minzu*. In addition, most Han staff respondents in the study believed that Uyghur and Tibetan students face struggles on campus primarily because of their personal attitudes, lack of discipline and self-control, and inability to adapt to the college environment, as opposed to the social-cultural integration challenges and academic deficiencies identified by the Tibetan and Uyghur respondents. The disconnect between the narratives of Han staff respondents and those of Uyghur and Tibetan respondents has institutional implications for Xi'an Jiaotong University and other Type II research universities in China. Future studies should look at institutional initiatives and interventions that effectively train and educate student affairs staff, counselors, and faculty about the struggles Uyghur and Tibetan face in Type II universities.

Why are Uyghur and Tibetan ethnic minority students not seeking professional advice/counseling from Xi'an Jiaotong University support services? The findings in the present study revealed that only one Tibetan and two Uyghur respondents from northern

Xinjiang sought support from faculty when they faced academic stress. The findings also revealed that few ethnic minority students seek counseling support from professional counselors on campus. In fact, a Tibetan student had not taken the initiative to visit university counselors for advice because she felt that Han staff do not understand the needs of Tibetan students: “I think they cannot understand the students” [Card #2045]. Future studies should investigate whether university counselors and student affairs advisors are effectively trained to advise ethnic minority students, and systematic multicultural training models and initiatives should be explored.

How can extracurricular activities enhance interethnic relations? Most Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur respondents in the present study engage in sports or physical activities to manage stress. The use of sports-related activities to improve interethnic social contact and understanding merits further research.

Implications for PRC policies

What are the implications of systematic dislocation of thousands of ethnic minority students who study in *neidi* schools? The present study depicts a grim picture of the emotional experiences Tibetan students encounter in *neidi* schools. Tibetan respondents reported feeling lonely, homesick, and dislocated while attending *neidi* schools, and these feelings continue during their college experiences. The systematic dislocation of thousands of ethnic minority children in China from their native communities continues to be controversial, and more research is needed to understand the long term social, cultural, and psychological implications of *neidi* policies.

Are preferential and *neidi* policies effective in closing the education and economic gap between Han college students and ethnic minority students? Tibetan and Uyghur respondents in the present study who studied in *neidi* or *min kao min* schools voiced concerns about finding jobs in their fields of study after graduation. It may be of interest to conduct a longitudinal study to investigate job placement rates for these students. This may shed light on the effectiveness of *neidi* policies and preferential policies in closing the education and economic gap between Han and ethnic minority students.

The present study also found that Uyghur and Tibetan students have lost confidence in their academic abilities and experience dejection due to rigorous academic demands, partly due to their lack of English- and Mandarin-language proficiency. Competence in English has been a prerequisite for admission to higher education institutions in China since 1978, but most respondents in the present study, particularly Tibetan and Uyghur students, lacked English-speaking skills. Longitudinal studies on *neidi* schools merit consideration to uncover the barriers Tibetan and Uyghur students face that prevent them from achieving greater Mandarin and English proficiency at the college level.

As mentioned in Chapter III, Zhou and Hill (2009) noted that the 2001 revisions of the Law on Autonomy for Minority Regions in China professed to extend preferential policies by restating the importance of lowered admission standards, greater financial support in education, and greater job opportunities for ethnic minorities after graduation.

The question remains whether or not these revisions are being vigorously and effectively implemented. More research in this area merits attention.

Implications for methodological design

The methodological design of the present study might also be extended in future studies by incorporating Tibetan and Uyghur translators during the data collection phase, and providing bilingual text for the analyses and presentation of data. Tibetan and Uyghur translators who conduct interviews in their mother tongue with Tibetan and Uyghur respondents, respectively, may recognize linguistic nuances and interpretations that are lost in translation, so to speak, when translations are administered in Mandarin. Research by Lincoln and Gonzalez y Gonzalez (2008) found that it is critical to present qualitative data in the original language of respondents: “Studies suggest that units (e.g., quotations or actual pieces of qualitative data) be presented in the original language as well as in the language for presentation—many times in English—supporting the idea that the local or indigenous-speaking reader will have available the complete meaning of the unit and its context” (Lincoln & Gonzalez y Gonzalez, 2008).

Recommendations

In this section, recommendations are summarized into three areas of concern: academic support, social integration, and cultural identity.

Academic support

To enhance the college experience of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, while helping them achieve their academic and career goals, more efforts should be taken to prepare them academically. This process should be started in *neidi* schools and

preparatory colleges, and further promoted at the college level. These students should be provided with adequate academic support, including remediation and developmental courses, academic enrichment programs, academic advising and counseling, tutoring programs, and proactive interventions (diagnostic testing). It is essential that Xi'an Jiaotong University establish special learning centers where students can hone their written and verbal Mandarin skills, develop learning strategies, and practice test-taking techniques.

A strong communication network among trained advisors, faculty, and administrators may be essential in providing adequate support for these students. Further research should consider comparative studies of Native American and ethnic minority students, particularly Tibetan and Uyghur populations. Cibik & Chambers (1991) demonstrated the significant role that institutions and their faculty play in facilitating academic integration among Native American college students. It may be of particular interest to study how trained ethnic minority staff and counselors may contribute to academic integration of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.

Social integration

Further studies on the relationship of social integration and cultural adaptation of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students on predominantly Han college campuses merit consideration. Some studies conducted in the United States found that the more support Native American students receive, the more involved these students feel in the college environment. These studies also showed that Native American students who receive adequate peer support and faculty engagement experience fewer feelings of exclusion

and loneliness. Peer support groups also provide a “sense of balance” that helps enrich their college experience (Palmer, Maramba, & Holmes, 2011). Peer mentoring programs that link upperclassmen and lowerclassmen from the same ethnic minority population, particularly for Uyghur and Hui students, is especially significant.

Creation of student-based groups is important in providing Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students with adequate interpersonal support and cohesion. Social peer mentors can also help minority students increase their social interaction and build successful interpersonal relationships. Peer mentors play a significant role in helping students find trust and comfort in social interactions, and may serve as social role models. When students gain the support of their peers, they may feel more motivated, accepted, and optimistic about reaching their academic goals. Their desire to seek recognition from the Han community and their hopes and aspirations to return to their homeland and reconnect with their culture may serve to strengthen their ability to cope with acculturative stress.

Cultural recognition and cultural identity

Cultural integration of minority students may be better understood by applying current theories of racial and ethnic identity development. During the first years of college, students develop their identities and go through the process of acculturation, which implies psychological and social adaptation that allows them to function in two cultures (Torres, 2003). Minority students become socialized into new cultural environments and are forced to make choices “between their culture of origin and the majority culture” (Torres, 2003). Their successful integration into the new cultural

community depends on their ability to find a proper balance of the spectrum from low to high acculturation and avoid marginalized characteristics.

The college experience of ethnic minority students also could be enhanced by creating settings that increase empowerment, which help “marginalized or oppressed individuals and groups gain greater control over their lives and achieve reduced societal marginalization” (Maton, Hrabowski, Ozdemir, & Wimms, 2008). This process could be facilitated by the creation of cultural recognition settings at all institutional levels (classrooms, programs, and support services in institutions of higher education) that would be likely to enhance the acculturation experience and academic achievements of ethnic minority students. As is well documented in racial studies in the United States, high levels of identity development are realized by exploring the cultural heritage of one’s own group, acquiring a sense of security about one’s racial or ethnic identity, and developing a sense of commitment to the concerns of one’s cultural group (Tatum, 1997). This also is seen in studies such as that by Maryjo Benton Lee (2001), which examined how Yi, Bai, Naxi, and Zhuang ethnic minority students in southern China overcome social obstacles, particularly by examining how minority students look up to their reference groups for identity constructions. Similar studies may be extended in Type II research universities in Central China and other regions of China.

University programs that link ethnic minority students with their native homeland, particularly for Uyghur and Tibetan ethnic minorities, who experience greater cultural distance, may prove effective for improving both their sense of well-being and academic achievement. New institutional models that incorporate the dynamics of

cultural heritage recognition and cultural identity in their on-campus social support efforts may empower students to embrace their cultural identity as an anchor to their values while improving the chances of academic success for ethnic minority students.

The results of the present study indicate that Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students seem to reaffirm their desire to maintain their cultural identity. Therefore, Xi'an Jiaotong University should incorporate educational initiatives and policies that reinforce the cultural identity and cultural capital of these students. Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students "should not be required to leave their identity at home" but rather be provided "with the cultural capital necessary to succeed in an educational system" (Jensen, 2011).

Xi'an Jiaotong University must also address Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students' cultural concerns by integrating special academic courses on issues of diversity, ethnic identity development, and intercultural dialogues. Culturally authentic centers, diverse student organizations, multicultural clubs, and other culturally enriching activities may help these students adapt to the predominantly Han environment at Xi'an Jiaotong University. Social activities that specify the ethnic identity of these students may help them retain their cultural uniqueness and preserve a positive feeling about their heritage. In essence, social groups that reflect the students' culture of origin may help them acculturate in predominantly Han environments.

The vast and complex conformation of ethnic minority groups, as well as the diversity inherent in each ethnic minority group, requires institutional leaders at Xi'an Jiaotong University to adopt varied approaches and interventions to understand the distinct social-cultural needs of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students, while developing

initiatives and policies that take into account the unique and diverse cultural characteristics of these students.

The relationship between cultural identity and academic success has been described in various studies of Native American college students that demonstrate that culture and resistance to assimilation are significant issues (Flynn, et al., 2011). Wright (1991) describes the experience of Native American college students as a continuation of their social struggle to achieve academic success in their own terms, while maintaining their cultural identity and resisting assimilation. Huffman's (2001) resistance theory and transculturation hypothesis help shed light on the role of cultural identity in mitigating academic barriers among Native American, postsecondary students. Huffman's findings suggest that Native American college students who are able to gain strength and confidence from their cultural identity while adapting to the rigors of college life are more likely to excel academically compared to students who have been culturally assimilated or students who are unable to adjust to college life (Larimore & McClellan, 2005). Similar studies that explore the nexus between cultural identity and academic success, particularly for Tibetan and Uyghur college students in Type II research universities, should be considered. Understanding the culture and worldviews of Hui, Tibetan and Uyghur college students plays a crucial role for institutional counselors, staff, and faculty in helping students transition from secondary to postsecondary institutions. In particular, institutions of higher education should understand the unique cultural characteristics and salient cultural values of these ethnic minority populations.

Recommendations for institutional change: Cultural and institutional demands of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students

The voices of Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students should be heard, and their needs should be validated and considered by the leadership at Xi'an Jiaotong University.

Salient wishes of Hui, Uyghur and Tibetan students are restated in this section.

In particular, Xi'an Jiaotong University should:

- Show greater recognition of major religious holidays for Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.
- Provide advising and counseling services for Uyghur and Tibetan students to help them transition to college life and address their unique cultural needs, as well as facilitate social interactions and interventions between Han, Uyghur and Tibetan students to build a welcoming campus and address microaggressions.
- Help establish ethnic minority student organizations for Hui, Tibetan, and Uyghur students.
- Build culturally sensitive bathing facilities or stalls on campus that protect the privacy of Uyghur students.
- Offer Tibetan-language courses to Tibetan students to help them improve their mother-language proficiency and reconnect with their cultural identity.

- Provide greater institutional support to Tibetan and Uyghur students, particularly students who attended *neidi* and *min kao min* schools, in the form of remedial courses and tutoring services in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and Mandarin-language instruction.
- Offer greater need-based financial aid to ethnic minority students.

REFERENCES

- Adamson, B. & Xia, B. (2011). A case study of the college English test and ethnic minority university students in China: Negotiating the final hurdle. *Multilingual Education, 1*(1).
- Adamson, B. & Feng, A. (2009). A comparison of trilingual education policies for ethnic minorities in China. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 39*(3), 321-333.
- Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., Akert, R. M., & Fehr, B. (2007). *Social psychology*. (4th ed.). Toronto, ON: Pearson Education.
- BBC News (2015). *Learning English moving words*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/movingwords/shortlist/laotzu.shtml>.
- BBC News (September 26, 2014). *Why is there tension between China and the Uighurs?* Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-6414014>.
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation and adaptation. *Applied psychology: An international review, 46*(1), 5-68.
- Bloomberg News (Aug 27, 2014). *Guanghui wins approval to import crude as China opens Xinjiang*. Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-08-28/guanghui-wins-approval-to-import-crude-as-china-opens-xinjiang>.

- Bradenburg, U. & Zhu, J. (2007). Higher education in China in the light of massification and demographic change. *Arbeitspapier*, Nr. 97.
- Brown, Marjorie. M. (1989). What Are the Qualities of Good Research? *Home Economics Teacher Education*, 9, 257-297.
- Bryman, Alan (2004). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cibik, M. A., & Chambers, S. L. (1991). Similarities and differences among Native Americans, Hispanics, Blacks, and Anglos. *NASPA Journal*, 28(2), 129-139.
- Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey.
- Chen, Y. (2008). *Muslim Uyghur students in a Chinese boarding school: Social recapitalization as a response to ethnic integration*. New York, NY: Lexington.
- Chen, Y., & Postiglione, G. A. (2009). Muslim Uyghur students in a dislocated Chinese boarding school: Boarding school social capital as a response to ethnic integration. *Race/Ethnicity*, 2(2) 288-309.
- Chung, Y., & Ly, G. (1999). The affecting factors in students choosing college under fee charging system. *Journal of Higher Education (China)*, 2, 31-39.
- Clothey, R. (2005). China's policies for minority nationalities in higher education: Negotiating national values and ethnic identities. *Comparative Education Review*, 49(4), 389-408.
- Coomer, D. (1984). Critical science: Approach to vocational education research. *Journal of Vocational Education Research*, 9(4), 34-50.

- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Hawthorne, New York, NY: Aldine.
- Dong, H. & Wan, X. (2012). Higher education tuition and fees in China: Implications and impacts on affordability and educational equity. *Current Issues in Education, 15*(1-7).
- Dreyer, J. T. (1976). *China's minority millions*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Encyclopedia, Britannica (2007). *China: ethnic composition*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Han-Asian-people>.
- Erlandson, D. A., Harris, E. L., Skipper, B. L., & Allen, S. D. (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Fei, X. T. (1981). *Towards a people's anthropology*. Beijing: New World Press.
- Flynn, S., et al. (2011). An emergent phenomenon of American Indian postsecondary transition and retention. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 90*, 437-449.
- Frazer, N. (1989). *Unruly practices: power, discourse and gender in contemporary social theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.
- Gladney, D. C. (2007). Cyber-separatism, Islam and the State of China. In C. J. L. & G. E. E. (Eds.), *Identity conflicts: Can violence be related?* (pp. 91-112). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

- Gladney, D. C. (1991). *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic nationalism in the People's Republic*. Council on East Asian Studies. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gonzalez y Gonzalez, E. M. (2004). *Perceptions of selected senior administrators of higher education institutions in Mexico regarding needed administrative competencies* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://libcat.tamu.edu>.
- Graves, T. D. (1967). Psychological acculturation in a tri-ethnic community. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 23, 337-350.
- Gu, J. (2011). Harmonious expansion of China's higher education: new growth pattern. *Higher Education*, 513-528.
- Guba, E. G. (1990). *The alternative paradigm dialog*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishing, Inc.
- Heberer, T. (1989). *China and its national minorities; Autonomy or Assimilation?* Armonk, New York, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Hu, C. T. (1970). *The education of national minorities in Communist China*. Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
- Huffman, T. (2001). Resistance theory and the transculturation hypothesis as explanations of college attrition and persistence among culturally traditional American Indian students. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 40(1), 1-23.
- Jensen, U. (2011). Factors influencing student retention in higher education. *Summary of Influential Factors in Degree Attainment and Persistence to Career or Further Education for At-Risk/High Educational Need Students*. Pacific Policy Research.

- Kim, B. S. K. & Abreu, J. M. (2001). Acculturation measurement: Theory, current instruments, and future directions. In Poterotto, J. G., Casa, J. M., Suzuki, L. A., & Alexander, C. M. (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Larimore, J. & McClellan, G. (2005). Native American student retention in U.S. postsecondary education. *New Directions for Student Services*, 109, 17-31.
- Lee, M. B. (2001). *Ethnicity, education, and empowerment: How minority students in southwest China construct identities*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, Limited.
- Li, H. (2008). Higher education in China: Complement or competition to U.S. universities? *American universities in a global market*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Liangsheng, Y. (2012). Financial policies for education in the national medium-and long-term educational reform and development guideline (2010-20). *Chinese Education and Society*, 45(3), 37-49.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Denzin, N. K. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Gonzalez y Gonzalez, E. (2008). The search for emerging decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: Further strategies for liberatory and democratic inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 784.

- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast West, Inc.
- Lipman, J. N. (1997). *Familiar strangers: A history of Muslims in northwest China*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- Liu, J. (2012). Examining massification policies and their consequences for equality in Chinese higher education: A cultural perspective. *Higher Education*, 64, 647-660.
- Ma, W. (2009). The prospects and dilemmas in Americanizing Chinese higher education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 10, 117-124.
- Mackerras, C. (2003). *China's ethnic minorities and globalisation*. Abingdon, Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Mackerras, C. (1995). *China's minority cultures: Identities and integration since 1912*. Melbourne, Australia: Longman Australia Pty, Ltd.
- Mackerras, C. & Gill, L. H. (1990). *Portraits of China*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

- Maton, K. I., Hrabowski, F. A., Ozdemir, M., & Wimms, H. (2008). Enhancing representation, retention, and achievement of minority students in higher education: A social transformation theory of change. In M. Shinn, & H. Yoshikawa (Eds.), *Toward positive youth development: Transforming schools and community programs* (pp.115-132). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morton, S., & Lewis, C.M. (2004). *China, its history and culture*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Palmer, R. T., Maramba, D. C., Holmes, S. L. (2011). A contemporary examination of factors promoting the academic success of minority students at a predominantly white university. *College Student Retention*, 13(3), 329-349. doi: 10.2190/CS.13.3.d.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Peshkin, Alan (1993). The Goodness of Qualitative Research. *Educational Researcher*, 22(2)2, 24-30.
- Postiglione, G. A. (1999). Introduction, state schooling and ethnicity in China, in Gerard A. Postiglione (Ed.), *China's National minority education, culture, schooling, and development* (pp. 3-19). New York: Falmer Press.
- Postiglione, G. A. (1995). *National minorities and nationalities policy in China*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

- Postiglione, G. A. (2009). Dislocated education: The case of Tibet. *Comparative Education Review*, 53(3), 483-512.
- Poston, D. L., Chang, Y., Deng, X., & Venegas, M. (2014). The demography of China's minority nationalities. In Saenz R., Rodrigues, N. & Geronimo, D. (Eds.), *International handbook of the demography of race and ethnicity*, ISBN 978-90 481-8890-1.
- Poston, D. L., Khamis Alnuaimi, W. S., Zhang, L. (2011). The social demography of China's Muslims. *Modern China Studies*, 18(1), 16-55.
- Redfield, R., Linton, R., and Herskovits, M. (1936). Memorandum on the study of acculturation. *American anthropologist*, 38, 149-152.
- Rhoads, R. A., & Chang Y. (2014). Narratives of change at minzu university of china: internationalization, marketization, and ethnocultural development. *Comparative Education Review* 58(1), 47-72.
- Sautman, B. (1998). Affirmative action, ethnic minorities, and China's universities. *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal*, 7(1), 77-115.
- Sautman, B. (1999). Expanding access to higher education for China's national minorities: Policies of preferential admissions. In Postiglione, G. A., *China's national minority education: Culture, schooling, and development* (pp.173-210). New YorkNew York, NY: Falmer Press.
- Saxer, M. (2014). Re-fusing ethnicity and religion: An experiment on Tibetan grounds. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 2(2014), 181–204.

- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Sun. H., Hu, Z., & Huang, X. (Eds.) (2007). *Zhongguo de yuan* [The languages of China]. Beijing, China: Shangwu Yinshuguan [The Commercial Press].
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Temple, B. (2002). Crossed wires: Interpreters, translators, and bilingual workers in cross-language research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(6), 844–54.
- Teng, X. & Ma, X (2009). Preferential policies for ethnic minorities and educational equality in higher education in China. In Zhou. M. & Hill A. M. (Eds.), *Affirmative Action in China and the U.S.: A dialogue on inequality and minority education* (pp. 83-98). New York, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Torres, V. (2003). Influences on ethnic identity development of Latino college students in the first two years of college. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(4), 532-547. doi: 10.1353/csd.2003.00444.
- Trueba, T., Zou, Y. (1994). *Power in education, the case of Miao university students and its significance for American culture*. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.
- Tsung, L. & Clarke, M. (2010). Dilemmas of identity, language and culture in higher education in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Vol. 30, No.1, pp. 57-69.

- Wang, T. (2009). Preferential policies for minority college admission in China: Recent developments, necessity, and impact. In Zhou, M. & Hill, A. M. (Eds.), *Affirmative action in China and the U.S.: A dialogue on inequality and minority education* (pp. 71- 81). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wang, X., et al. (2011). College education and the poor in China: documenting the hurdles to educational attainment and college matriculation. *Asia Pacific Education, 12*, 533-546.
- Ward, C. (1996). Acculturation. In Landis, D., & Bhagat, R. (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training*, pp. 124-147. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishing, Inc.
- Wiseman, J. P. (1991). *The Other Half: Wives of Alcoholics and Their Social Psychological Situation*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Wright, B. (1991). American Indian studies programs: Surviving the 80s, Thriving in the '90s. *Journal of American Indian Education, 30*(1), 17-24.
- Wu, S. (2004). The comparative analysis of the students' cost about attending school and getting employment between public and private universities. *Education and Economics, (China), 2*, 6-10.
- Wu, Y. (Ed.) (1973). *China: A handbook*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Great Britain.
- Xiangba, P. (2005). Xizang zizhiqu jiaoyu zhi [*Education annals of the Tibetan autonomous region*]. Beijing: Tibetology Press.
- Yi, L. (2008). *Cultural exclusion in China*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

- Yi, L., & Wang, L. (2012). Cultivating self-worth among dislocated Tibetan undergraduate students in a Chinese Han-dominated national key university. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 33(1), pp. 63-80.
- Yin, M. (1994). *China's minority nationalities*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.
- Ying, F. (1984). Ying Fatang tong zhizai zhonggong Xizang Zizhiqu san jie er ci quan wei kuoda huiyi shang de jianghua [Comrade Ying Fatang's speech in the second enlarged plenary of all committee members of the third Tibet Autonomous Region Committee of the CPC]. In Shen shi zizhiqu shaoshu minzu jiaoyu gongzuo wenjian xuanbian 1977–1990 [*Selected documents on ethnic education in provincial, municipal, autonomous regions, 1977–1990*], ed. Guo Fuchang. Chengdu: Sichuan Ethnic Press.
- Yu, Y. (2008). Wei daxue xuefei er Bianhu [defending for college tuition]. *Jiaoyu Pinglun (Educational Review)*, 1, 20-24.
- Zhang, J., & Goodson, P. (2010). Acculturation and psychological adjustment of Chinese international students: Examining mediation and moderation effects. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(5), 614-627.
- Zhao, Z. (2010). *China's Mongols at university*. Plymouth, United Kingdom: Lexington Books.
- Zhao, Z. (2010). Practices of citizenship rights among minority students at Chinese universities. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 40(2), 131-144.
- Zhong, H. (2011). Returns to higher education in China: What is the role of college quality? *China Economic Review*, 260-275.

Zhou, M. (2010). The politics of bilingual education and educational levels of ethnic minority communities in China, *Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 4(2), 125-149.

Zhou, M., & Hill, A. M. (2009). *Affirmative action in China and the U.S.* New York, NY Palgrave Macmillan.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER FOR INTERVIEWEES
(ENGLISH AND MANDARIN VERSIONS)

Invitation Letter for Interviewees (English Version)

Dear student/staff/faculty:

Greetings. The student affairs office at Xi'an Jiaotong University has provided your contact information to me. I am a Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University in the United States. As part of my doctoral studies, I am conducting a research study that involves exploratory questions about cultural adaptation processes ethnic minority students experience in higher education settings in Xi'an, China. The purpose of this study is to understand how ethnic minority college students adapt to life at higher education institutions in urban settings.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be completing a consent form which I have attached for your review.

Please let me know when is a good time for you to meet with me for one hour for an interview at Xi'an Jiaotong University. I look forward to your reply over email.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Diego Garcia

diego@msc.tamu.edu

979-845-8770

Texas A&M University

Invitation Letter for Interviewees (Mandarin Version)

亲爱的老师、同学们，

您好！

我是美国德州农工大学的一名博士生。作为我博士研究课题的一部分，我在研究西安少数民族学生在大学期间的文化适应性问题。该课题旨在研究少数民族大学生在城市中的文化适应过程，为此我们需要在交通大学进行大约一小时面对面的采访。西安交通大学负责学生工作的相关部门向我提供了您的邮箱，如果您愿意参与这项研究，请认真阅读并填写附件中的同意书，并告知我您方便接受采访的时间。期待您的回信。

Diego Garcia
diego@msc.tamu.edu
979-845-8770
Texas A&M University

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (ENGLISH VERSION)

Interview Protocol

Questions for Ethnic Minority Students

1. Tell me your story of how you came to Xi'an Jiaotong University? How has your transition been from your community to Xi'an?
2. Describe your culture, and what differences exist between your culture and the Han culture, if any.
3. What types of stresses (challenges) have you faced, and how did you handle these? (Have you had any stresses with academics, cultural, financial, relationships or others?).
4. How have you been treated at the Xi'an Jiaotong University campus and community of Xi'an?
5. Have you used any services at the Xi'an Jiaotong University campus to help you transition into college life?
6. What services did you find most helpful, and why?
7. Do you suffer from any stress as a college student?
8. What has been the most stressful situation for you as a college student?
9. How do you handle stress?
10. What kind of coping strategies did you use to manage stress?
11. Who are your main support groups when you are having stress?
12. What suggestions do you have to improve the services on campus for ethnic minority students?

13. What suggestions do you have for ethnic minority students who may have faced stresses as students in Xi'an.
14. Why are preferential policies for ethnic minority students important?
15. What differences do you see between the Han and your ethnic group?

Interview Questions for Administrators

1. In your opinion, what are the most common sources of stress/challenges ethnic minority students face on campus?
2. Have you had the opportunity to service/counsel any ethnic minority students? What have these experiences revealed to you regarding the types of stresses ethnic minority students face?
3. How are these stresses/challenges different from other students?

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INSTRUMENT TO OBTAIN INFORMED CONSENT

(ENGLISH AND MANDARIN VERSIONS)

Consent Form (English Version)

Project Title: An Exploratory Case Study: Understanding Cultural Adaptation of Chinese Ethnic Minority College Students in Higher Education Environments

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefit you normally would have.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

You have been asked to participate in a research study that involves exploratory questions about cultural **adaptation in higher education settings for Chinese ethnic minority college students in Shaanxi, Ningxia, Xinjiang, and Tibet, China**. Chinese ethnic minority college students who travel in China outside of their native communities to undertake college studies experience culture shock in divergent ways as they settle into college campuses and communities in urban areas. This research study is an exploratory case study to understand cultural adaptation and stress-coping processes employed by Chinese ethnic minority students in institutions of higher education in China, and the implications this may have for improving on-campus services available to ethnic minority college students in higher education institutions in China. **You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a college student in China or because you are an administrator or staff member of a higher education institution in China who has interacted with college ethnic minority students in China.**

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a college student or college administrator or staff member in China or a college student or college administrator from a university in China.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

Up to 35 participants will be enrolled in this study.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO BEING IN THIS STUDY?

The alternative is not to participate.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IN THIS STUDY?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a question/answer interview. This study will take approximately 1 hour. There may also be a follow-up interview session of approximately 30 minutes, if needed. Your participation may be audio recorded.

WILL VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BE MADE OF ME DURING THE STUDY?

Optional recordings:

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study to facilitate the data collection process, only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

The risks associated with this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

There is no direct benefit to you by being in this study. What the researchers find out from this study may help enhance college services for Chinese ethnic minority college students in China.

WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS TO ME?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

WILL I BE PAID TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

WILL INFORMATION FROM THIS STUDY BE KEPT PRIVATE?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Dr. Yvonne Lincoln and Dr. Elsa Gonzalez and Diego Garcia will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in locked file cabinet; computer files protected with a password. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

WHOM CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator, Dr. Yvonne Lincoln and Dr. Elsa Gonzalez, professors at the department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University, can be called at 979-845-2716 or emailed at ysl@tamu.edu or Elsa@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Co-Investigator, Diego Garcia, at 979-845-8771 or at Diego@msc.tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the Texas A&M Human Subjects Protection Program office.

- Phone number: (979) 458-4067
- Email: irb@tamu.edu

MAY I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT PARTICIPATING?

You have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study, there will be no effect on your student status. You can stop being in this study at any time with no effect on your student status.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire, signed consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR’S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter Date

Printed Name Date

Consent Form (Mandarin Version)

项目标题：探索性案例研究：了解中国少数民族大学生在高等教育环境中的文化适应

我们邀请您参与这个由德州A&M (农工)大学所做的研究项目，请阅读这张表格以便了解该研究内容。表格中提供的信息将帮助您决定是否要参与该研究。如果同意参加，您将需要签署这份同意表；倘若不愿参与，也不会有任何惩罚或使您失去任何正常应有的东西。

为什么做这项研究？

这项研究是关于陕西,宁夏,新疆,以及西藏地区少数民族学生在大学生活中的文化适应问题。在离开本族团体到中国西安这类都市中念大学的中国少数民族学生中，随着他们对校园环境的融入，常体验到这样或那样不同的文化冲击。离开本族团体到城市就读的少数民族大学生在适应校园环境的过程中经常遇到不同形式的文化冲击。) 这项探索性调查旨在了解这些在西安高等教育机构中少数民族学生的文化适应、他们所采纳的压力处理过程、以及对上述知识的了解可能为提高该群体校园服务质量带来的影响。(这项探索性研究旨在了解中国高校中少数民族学生的文化适应问题，面对压力的应对策略，以及高校对此可改善的方面) 作为西安交通大学或西安其他高校的学生或教职员工，你们与在西安的少数民族学生有过交流和互动，所以在此，我们邀请您参与这项调查研究中。

(作为中国高校的学生或教职员工，你们也许与少数民族学生有过交流和互动，为此我们邀请您参与到这项调查研究中)

为什么我被邀请来参加这个研究？

您被邀请为研究的参与者主要是因为您是西安交通大学或西安其他高校的学生或教职员工. 行政人员。(您被邀请参与这项研究是因为您是中国高校的在校学生、教职员工或行政人员)

研究参与者大概多少人？

大概招募约35名参与者。

有什么其它方式可以参与到这项研究?

这是唯一的方式.

我将要（需要）在这项研究中做什么?

如果您同意参与到这项研究中的话, 那么您将参与到一个问答式访问. 时间大约一小时. 之后如果需要的话,或许还有半个小时的跟踪访问.您的参与过程将可能被录音.

(如果您同意参与此研究, 那么您将参加大约一小时的问答式访问. 之后若有需要, 或许会有半小时的跟踪访问. 采访过程可能会录音。)

你们会对我参与到这个研究的过程进行录像或者录音吗?

自愿录制:

研究人员只会在获得您允许的情况下进行录音, 因为音频可以有效地帮助收集数据资料. 请根据您的意愿选择以下选项.

_____ 我愿意 (同意) 在我参与这项研究的过程中被录音.

_____ 我不愿意 (不同意) 在我参与这项研究的过程中被录音.

我参加此项研究会有风险吗?

此项研究所涉及的风险是非常小的, 小过你平常生活中遇到的小风波.

我参加这项研究会有什么好处吗?

虽然您不能直接从这项研究中受惠到什么. (虽然参与者不会从该研究中直接受益,) 但是研究结果很可能会帮助中国高校提高对少数民族学生的校园服务.

我会有什么损失吗?

除了您会花去一些时间,您不必为此研究花费/损失任何东西.

我会在这项研究中得到经济报酬吗?

您不能得到经济报酬.

研究中所涉及的信息会保密吗?

此研究所记录的信息都是保密的.任何关于您的个人信息都不会以任何刊物的形式公开发表.所有的研究信息除了Lincoln博士 (老师),Gonzalez博士 (老师)以及Diego Garcia以外,其他人均无知晓途径.

关于你提供的信息都将保存在一个上锁的文件柜里;电脑文件也会有密码保护.这份同意表将安全地存放在一个官方区域.

关于你的信息将会在法律保护的范围内保密收藏.只有主要调研人员以及研究相关工作人员可以知晓其中信息 管理机构的代表比如人力研究保护办公室或者类似机构比如德州A&M大学人力资源保护组可以接触到关于你的记录,但是他们的接触只是为了确保研究正常顺利进行,以及信息得以正确收集.

我可以向谁咨询更多有关信息?

您可以通过电话联系主要调研人(Lincoln博士 (老师)和 Gonzalez博士 (老师),他们均为德州A&M大学教育行政与人力资源发展系的教授)说明您对于这项研究的考虑(顾虑)或投诉.)联系电话是 1-979-845-2716,您也可以通过发邮件到ysl@tamu.edu 或 Elsa@tamu.edu.您还可以联系协同调研员Diego Garcia,联系方式如下: 1-979-845-8771 或 Diego@msc.tamu.edu

如有任何关于您作为研究参与者的权利的问题,或者您有任何问题,考虑(意见),投诉,不能联系到主要调研员的情况下,您还可以联系德州A&M大学人力资源保护办公室.

- 电话: (979) 458-4067

- Email: irb@tamu.edu

我能就参与研究改变主意吗?

你可以自行决定是否参与这项研究. 你可以选择不参与或者随时中止参与. 如果你选择不参与这项研究,或者中途停止参与这项研究,你的学生身份都不会受到任何影响.

同意申明

我同意参加这项研究,也知道签署这份表格并不代表放弃任何法律权利. 所有(研究相关的)步骤,风险及参与好处(收益)都已解释清晰,我的疑问也已全被解决(我对此没有任何疑问)。我知道倘若有新的关于该研究的信息,我将会在第一时间被告知,负责人也会告知我什么时候可以离开此研究。我可以就任何疑问再次提出问题。我将保留一份自己签署的这份同意表。

参与者签名

时间

印刷的姓名(正楷姓名)

时间

调研员保证书:

我和(或)我的代理人都已对参与者详细解释过关于这项研究的细节.在此我保证签署这份同意书的参与人员都已清楚他/她在参与中的要求,收益,以及风险.

研究人员签名

时间

印刷的姓名（正楷姓名）

时间

APPENDIX D

POSITIONALITY: THE PERSONAL JOURNEY OF THE INVESTIGATOR

Positionality: The Personal Journey of the Investigator

To clearly represent myself in this study, it is important to disclose my gender, ethnicity, and cultural experiences, as well as my educational background. I was born in Chicago, Illinois, where I lived for the first three years of my life with my parents, before moving to Cali, Colombia, my father's native country. I attended a private American elementary and secondary school in Colombia and had the opportunity to interact with American and other international students whose parents had moved to Colombia for temporary business assignments at major U.S. multinational corporations or diplomatic offices stationed in Colombia.

During my youth, I had the opportunity to travel through Colombia's rich and diverse geographic regions, meeting different ethnic populations across the country, including African Americans and indigenous native populations. I also traveled overseas to neighboring countries in South America, and Greece, the ancestral grounds of my mother. These formative years laid the foundation for my interest in global cultures and curiosity for cross-cultural studies. Having been raised in a multicultural environment has served to spark and stimulate my desire and passion for international cultures.

After completing high school in 1981, I moved to Colorado, where I enrolled at the University of Colorado, Boulder, a predominantly White public research university, to pursue a degree in economics. College life in Colorado was one of the most memorable times of my life, in spite of my limited finances as a student. Boulder is a gem of the Rocky Mountains where the sun shines almost 365 days every year—a paradise for outdoors lovers. I could not have selected a better college campus. I had

spent most of the early years of my youth in Cali, Colombia, exploring the rain forest, and camping in the Andean mountain range, where I learned to love Mother Nature's beauties. It was not a coincidence, therefore, that I selected CU-Boulder for my undergraduate studies. The university also attracted students and faculty from around the globe, with whom I had a chance to interact and learn about their cultures.

My transition to Boulder was both thrilling and challenging. My partial immersion into American culture at a private American school in Colombia as a young man did not quite prepare me for acculturation stress in the United States. I was raised in an upper-middle-income family in Colombia, where my racial position as a Latino, European American, granted me greater social and economic privileges compared to most minority populations, including the native American and African American populations, in Colombia. When I settled into the University of Colorado as an undergraduate student, my interactions with students, most of whom were Anglo American, made me realize that I did not belong to the White dominant population of American society. In fact, I quickly realized the meaning of being a minority, a phenomenon I had not experienced growing up in Colombia. There were moments during the first semester of my undergraduate year, while I was struggling with cultural identity questions and longing for family ties in Colombia, that I contemplated dropping out of college, but the support groups and friendships I made guided me through the process of adaptation of college life. This experience in college at CU Boulder partially ignited my interest in acculturation issues.

After completing my second year at CU Boulder, I decided to leave the university and go backpacking through Central America during the spring semester. My primary goal was to reach Nicaragua to learn about the Sandinista revolution that had succeeded in removing General Anastasio Somoza, one of Latin America's notorious dictators. I worked as an interpreter for U.S. newspapers and American journalists, and interacted with many young, idealist, international travelers who were equally interested and as impassioned about the Sandinista revolution.

Unfortunately, what I saw and experienced in Nicaragua during these historical times of the early 1980s changed my opinion about the motives of the Sandinista revolution. I concluded that the Sandinista leaders were no more interested in creating a democratic country for the benefit of the Nicaraguan people than they were preserving and holding on to their newfound power. I was disenchanted about the outcome of the Sandinista revolution, but nevertheless content I had taken up this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to immerse myself in the culture and life of Nicaraguan people during the tumultuous political times of the early 1980s.

After four months of journeying through Nicaragua and Central America, I returned to Colorado and completed a bachelor's degree in economics in 1986. I immediately applied for graduate school at Texas A&M University, and concurrently worked as an intern at the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C., for six months.

My transition to Texas A&M University was difficult in some respects, as I needed to adjust to the conservative culture of the campus. Unlike Texas A&M

University, where most students adhere to conservative values, CU Boulder was an eternal spring of radical and liberal thinking. CU Boulder was known as one of the radical bastions of social activism during the late 1960s and early '70s, along with the likes of Berkeley, and its liberal roots were still alive in the 1980s. On the other hand, Texas A&M University lay at the other side of the social-political spectrum, a 180-degree shift in reality. What Boulder lacked in Republicanism, was offset leaps and bounds by College Station's feverish inclination for conservatism. Nevertheless, the welcoming environment at Texas A&M University and its excellent academic programs made for an enriching experience while I completed a master's degree in agricultural economics.

My degree in agricultural economics would take me to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington, D.C., where I worked for two years traveling through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, helping promote U.S. agricultural products through various federal export programs. It was during this period that I had the opportunity to travel to China and other Asian countries for the first time, and where my fascination with Chinese culture emerged.

After working in Washington, D.C., I was employed at the National Honey Board as the director of international marketing, and worked as an international marketing consultant for a few years, traveling in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. I would later return to Texas A&M University in the mid-1990s to pursue a graduate degree in finance. During my second graduate degree at Texas A&M University I began working for the Office of Latin American programs at the university's International

Programs Office, where I coordinated various international student leadership programs. This job and my former international experiences would then open the doors for me at the university's MSC L. T. Jordan Institute for International Awareness, where I have been working for the last 15 years promoting international awareness, experiential learning, and cross-cultural and student leadership development programs.

The last 15 years working at the MSC L. T. Jordan Institute for International Awareness allowed me to travel to China numerous times, and establish collaborative work with Jiaotong University in Xi'an, China, where I managed an internship program each summer for Texas A&M University students. My experiences in China and academic collaboration with staff, administrators, and students at Jiaotong University, and my own struggles as a young student adapting to college life in the United States, ignited my interest in the current study.

APPENDIX E

**XI'AN JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY
STUDENT ORGANIZATION APPROVAL PROCESS**

The Procedure of Applying for A New Association

- ① Materials that are needed:
- Association Managers' Application Form
 - Students' Associations' Registration Form
 - Students' Associations' Registry Form
 - Associations' Trial Application Form
 - Advisor's Recommendation Form
 - Identification Letter by the Registered Unit
 - Regulations of the Association
 - Financial Statements and Budget
 - Transcripts of the First Manager of the Association

The organizer hands in the main materials ① that are needed to the Students' Association Union (SAU)

Nine materials of the whole will be examined and verified by the Department of Affairs of SAU. Among the materials, the form of "Association Managers' Application" should be verified by the Work Department of Youth League Committee (YLC) of the organizer's college and be signed and sealed by the manager of the college. Another form named Students' Associations' Registration Form should contain suggestions of the registered unit and their advisors.

After the materials being verified, the organizer hands in those materials to YLC and gets those materials verified, then the manager of YLC signs and seals on the two forms that mentioned above.

Those materials then are handed in to the Public Security Office of the university and are verified and the manager of the office signs his name and seals on the two forms.

After being verified, the organizer hands in all the materials to the Department of Affairs of SAU. And the organization can step into the trial periods.