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# The Paradox of Ethnic Minority Development in Beijing

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## **Abstract**

The educational attainments of Beijing's permanent ethnic minority population outperform or are on par with the dominant, local Hans. Yet, the Han demographic disproportionately dominates the high-wage, education-intensive employment sectors. What accounts for this paradox? What does this signify regarding the management of ethnic difference in the capital city? And how do we improve this situation? Drawing upon recent research, this paper will offer sociological explanations to answer these questions. Moreover, it will further suggest strategies for enhancing the development of ethnic minorities in Beijing.

## **Keywords**

ethnic minorities, Chinese studies, social development, education and employment analysis, assimilation, urban studies

## **Introduction**

The management of urban, ethnic difference has become a very topical subject in recent times. However in China, the discussion of ethnic difference is often directed towards the country's Western provinces, where a sizeable, under-developed ethnic population exists. Little is written about China's growing ethnic minority population in the relatively developed urban centers. In Beijing, for example, a megalopolis with a population of nearly 11.595 million permanent residents (Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau 2005),<sup>1</sup> local officials have stressed a loud confidence that

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis throughout the paper will only examine the permanent population. Another

the municipality promotes and respects the “religious affairs”, “education”, “culture”, and “sport” of ethnic minority groups within the city. In fact, interviews in late 2006, with officials from the Beijing Municipal Commission of Ethnic Affairs point to the Muslim population – comprised of approximately 300,000 persons spanning 10 ethnic groups, including the Hui, Uyghur, Ozbek and Kazak – who practice their religion in the city’s 80-odd mosques, as a successful case study in managing ethnic difference. Officials argued this illustrates that policies, from the local to the national level, were successful in promoting ethnic tolerance. Moreover, this also illustrated that discussing the management of ethnic difference in the relatively developed urban spaces of China was not necessary, given this rosy reality.

Yet despite long-standing policies to integrate ethnic minorities, Beijing has had a deep history of strained ethnic relations and tensions, rather than a Confucian-inspired Socialist vision of harmony in ethnic interactions (Mittenthal 2002; Mackerras 1994). For example, the separatist activities of the 1990s in Tibet and Xinjiang trickled down to the streets of Beijing, where severe crackdown on Tibetan and Uyghur activities occurred. During the period of former President Deng Xiaoping’s State funeral (February 1997) bus bombings in Beijing signalled Uyghur contempt for the Chinese state (Rudelson and Jankowiak 2004; Mackerras 2001). Similarly, during the march for Tibetan sovereignty, the Beijing government forbade any meetings among Tibetan community associations. To this day, there still resides a stigma among key local government circles that such ethnic community associations are there for malice – suspected of encouraging drug trade or inciting “rebellious activities”. While the integration of ethnic minorities into the urban milieu is a matter of great importance for Beijing’s development, suffice to say, it is conducted in a background of tense ethnic relations.

Even upon closer examination of Beijing officials’ example of the Muslim population as a success story, empirical evidence suggests that widespread assimilation is occurring – more acutely among the younger generations.

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3.649 million people – the registered transit population – are not included as they do not have *hukou* (permanent residence) status in the capital districts. Among this group, an estimated 15–20% are ethnic minorities, who in the majority work in labour-intensive jobs (Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau 2005).

When visiting numerous mosques in Beijing, one is immediately struck by an older age demographic that visits regularly. Investigating further, several members of the mosques revealed that their children do not practice or adopt the Islamic culture. They assert their children are Beijingers, educated within a Han-dominated community. Their female children do not wear headscarves; the males do not wear Islamic topees. They do not eat traditional foods, save to occasionally go to “ethnic” restaurants (that are, for the most part, not even staffed or owned by ethnic minorities) which are increasing in popularity among Beijingers. But even moving away from the obvious (ceremonial) cultural rituals, their children do not speak the minority language fluently, they are, in the eyes of the Muslim interviewees, products of education and employment systems that promote a Han-dominated culture. Although from the local, municipal level (Beijing Minority Rights Protection Policies) to the national level (most prominently, the 1999 National Minorities Policy), government policy documents promote and preserve ethnic minority rights and traditions on paper, empirical evidence suggest a degree of assimilation among members of ethnic minority groups in Beijing.

More worrisome, socio-economic indicators suggest a growing paradox in Beijing’s ethno-development. When examining local ethnic minorities’ education attainments, they outperform or are on par with the Han population. However, when analyzing the ethnic demographics of those working in high-wage, high-educated and skilled-intensive employment sectors, Hans dominate. What accounts for this paradox? What does this mean tangibly, in respect of the management of ethnic difference in Beijing? And, what steps can we take to improve this situation?

This paper will draw upon recent findings investigating the integration and social development of ethnic minorities in Beijing. The paper will proceed in four sections. First, it will detail exactly what is meant by ethnic difference in the Chinese context, as the logic of ethnic difference is fairly distinct relative to world terms. This will be followed by outlining the background conditions to Beijing’s strategies for managing ethnic difference, from a historical and policy perspective. The third section will form the basis towards understanding the paradox of ethno-development. In the last section, this paper will suggest future steps that ought to be taken to improve the management of ethnic difference, in view of reducing the effects the paradox of ethno-development presents in Beijing.

## 1. Ethnic Difference in China

Although innumerable theories of ethnicity have been developed (Thompson 1989), including primordialist theory (Geertz 1973: 260; Shils 1957), modernization theory (Hettne 1996: 15), and neo-Marxist or class approach to ethnicity – including class segmentation (Reich et al. 1973); split-labour market (Bonacich 1972); internal colonialism (Gonzales-Casanova 1965); and world systems theory (Wallerstein 1979) – they all allow that ethnicity is a potent force under certain conditions (Anderson 1991). Moreover, all theories ultimately point to different mechanisms and accuse different social actors of using ethnic division to their advantage. In essence, they generally emphasise that ethnicity is a relation, rather than an immutable force.

In China, the concept of ethnicity is fairly straightforward and by some sociological accounts rigid (Mackerras 1994), stemming from the controversial categorization of official ethnic minorities by the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1949. When the CPC came into power they commissioned studies to categorize ethnic groups within the boundaries of the People's Republic – whom in 1953, numbered over 400 plus registered groups. After detailed research and field work investigating ethnic minorities' social history, economic life, language and religion, studies found that there was a lot of overlapping and a significant number of groups that claimed to be separate, actually belonged to existing groups (albeit with different names). As a result, 38 ethnic minority groups were officially recognized in 1954; and by 1964, another 15 were identified, with the Lhoba ethnic group added in 1965. The Jino, were added in 1979, solidifying the official 55 ethnic minority groups of China.<sup>2</sup> In determining what constituted an “ethnic minority group”, four official criterion were used: (1) Distinct Language – While there are virtually hundreds, perhaps thousands of dialects spoken across China, a minority language is not simply a dialect. It is a language with distinct grammatical and phonological differences, such as Tibetan. Twenty one ethnic minority groups have unique writing systems. (2) A recognized indigenous homeland within

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<sup>2</sup> The 55 ethnic minority groups of China are: Achang, Bai, Bao'an, Bouyei, Bulang, Dai, Daur, De'ang, Dong, Dongxiang, Drung, Ewenki, Hani, Hezhen, Hui, Gaoshan, Gelo, Jing, Jingpo, Jino, Kazak, Kirgiz, Korean, Lahu, Li, Lisu, Loba, Manchu, Maonan, Miao, Mongba, Mongolian, Mulam, Naxi, Nu, Orogen, Ozbek, Pumi, Qiang, Russian, Salar, She, Shui, Tajik, Tartar, Tibetan, Tu, Tujia, Uygur, Va, Xibo, Yao, Yi, Yugu, Zhuang.

the boundaries of China. (3) Distinctive customs, ranging from dress, religion, foods. (4) And, a strong sense of identity – although at times, loosely interpreted.

Although the categorization of 55 ethnic minority groups was a step forward from Sun Yat-sen Nationalist Party's 1911 denial of the existence of different ethnic groups in China; and from the derogatory names commonly used to refer to ethnic minority groups (officially abolished in 1951), criticism was rampant as it reduced the number of recognized ethnic groups by eightfold. In fact, the *wei shibie minzu*, literally the “undistinguished ethnic groups”, presently total more than 730,000 people. Examples of these groups include the Gejia, Khmu, Kucong, Mang, Deng, Sherpas, Bajia, Yi and Youtai (Jewish). The number of “undistinguished” ethnic groups could even rise, as most commentators do not include groups that have been classified into existing groups, such as the Mosuo who were effectively assimilated into Naxi or the Chuanging into Han.

The question remains, what is the purpose of officially classifying ethnic minority groups in China? Official ethnic minorities are guaranteed equal rights under China's constitution and are given numerous preferential treatments. China's National Minorities Policy (1999) best articulates this idea:

All ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the ethnic minorities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's ethnic groups. Discrimination against and oppression of any ethnic group are prohibited” (Section II, Paragraph 3).

Due to the “special rights” and preferential treatments afforded to ethnic minorities, the status of an ethnic citizen cannot be altered at discretion.<sup>3</sup>

A strong example of China's preferential treatment towards ethnic minority groups can be seen in formal education. Institutions of higher learning and vocational secondary schools often give preferential treatment to applicants of ethnic minorities. Usually this equates to lowering qualified

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<sup>3</sup> Save in the situation where a child is born by parents of different ethnic backgrounds. Here the ethnic status will be determined by the parents before the child reaches 18 years of age. However, when the child reaches 18, s/he can choose which parent's ethnic status s/he chooses to adopt. By the age of 20 no alteration can be made. In practice, the large majority adopts the ethnicity of their father.

entry marks to be accepted into enter institutions of higher learning. Some universities may set ratios between ethnic minorities and Han applicants for there incoming class. Ethnic minorities who come from poorer income geographical clusters may also be granted even lower qualified entry marks to enter higher education. Minority students enrolled in ethnic minority oriented specialties are also provided with generous scholarships, and in numerous occasions, pay no tuition and are granted a monthly stipend. In the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing, for example, there is even a bridging program – with tuition paid in full by the CPC – designed to select high achieving ethnic minority secondary school students to come to the university to prepare them to enter Beijing’s top universities, such as Peking or Tsinghua. The CPC also gives special assistance to ethnic minority students enrolled in primary and secondary schools. The law stipulates that ethnic minorities are not charged any fees when it comes to compulsory education. Beginning in 1987, all students enrolled in ethnic schools are entitled to tuition-cost bursaries. In many boarding and semi-boarding primary and ethnic high schools, students get monthly stipends. What we will see in the following sections is that this idea of preferential treatment in education, an affirmative action program so to speak, has played a tremendous role in increasing the education levels of ethnic minorities in Beijing – even to the point where it has surpassed the Han population.

## **2. The Background Conditions to Beijing’s Ethno-development**

Unknowing to many, – even some locals – Beijing’s demographics encompasses all 55 ethnic minority groups, who total nearly 600,000 registered persons (National Bureau of Statistics 2005).<sup>4</sup> As one of China’s largest urban communities, Beijing’s history has been littered with diverse ethnic groups interacting with one another as a result of high internal migration and regional conflict. Over the last 2,000 years, the Han people of Beijing have prospered, in spite of repeated invasion by numerous ethnic empires. With every invasion, each ethnic group has assimilated into the Han

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<sup>4</sup> Han Chinese represent 95.69% of the population in Beijing; Manchu (1.84%), Hui (1.74%), Mongol (0.28%), Korean (0.15%), Tujia (0.06%), Zhuang (0.05%), Miao (0.04%), Uyghur (0.02%), Tibetan (0.02%).

culture. The example of the Manchus who ruled Beijing from the 17th to the early 20th Century best illustrates this case. Throughout most of the Qing dynasty, both Hans and Manchus lived side by side, in spite of repeated invasion attempts by Tibetan, Mongolian and Uyghurian – who likewise, ultimately mixed among the population of Beijing. The ruling Manchus faced a major dilemma. On the one hand, they sought to preserve their distinct ethnic group-identity, however, to keep power they had to respect the existence of varying ethnic minority groups within the empire (Rawski 2001). In the late 19th century, Manchus gradually assimilated into the emerging dominant Han Chinese group. Interestingly, it is this shift that played a major role in overthrowing the Manchurian control of Beijing and the Chinese empire led by Sun Yat-sen.

In present day Beijing, the city is dominated by a Han Chinese population whereby many are descendants of Manchus, Mongolians, Uyghurians, and Tibetans, but identify themselves as Han. The most recent significant wave of internal migration that added to the ethnic minority population has been the result of university students from minority regions around the nation coming to the capital city for studies, and eventually attaining residency in Beijing. Certain groups such as Tibetans and Uyghurs harbour resentment against the majority Han, due to the CPC's treatment of their large populations in the Western provinces. While other groups such as the Zhuang, Manchu and ethnic Koreans are well assimilated into the Beijing community and inter-marriage among Han Chinese is the norm.

In respect of ethnic minority protection policies, the Beijing government has adhered to five basic principles that echo the intentions of China's National Minorities' Policy – which in theory should be respected in local social policies. The first is an adherence to equity and unity among ethnic groups (Section II, Paragraph 1). Here, "equality among ethnic groups means every ethnic group is a part of the Chinese nation, having equal status and enjoying the same rights and duties in every aspect of political and social life according to law". The second is that "all ethnic groups can participate as equals in the management of state and local affairs" (Section II, Paragraphs 8–10). Third, all official ethnic groups have the freedom and right to use and develop their own spoken and written languages (Section II, Paragraphs 18–20). Fourth, education for minorities must be developed to "improve the quality of the minority population" (Section IV, Paragraphs 23–26). And finally, Section V guarantees the



preservation of cultural heritage of ethnic minorities such as “famous historical monuments, scenic spots and rare cultural relics”. The end goal is to create “a favorable social environment for ethnic groups... to treat each other on an equal footing and to develop a relationship of unity, harmony, friendship and mutual assistance among them” (Section II, Paragraph 1).

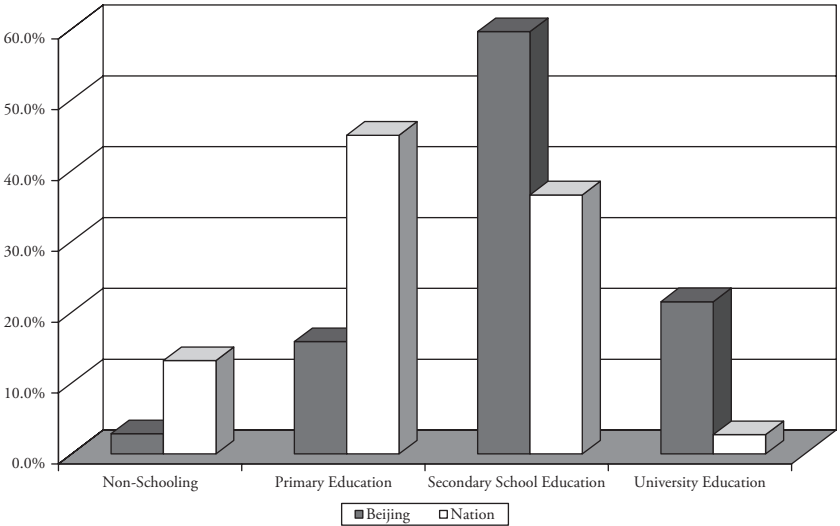
### **3. The Paradox of Beijing’s Ethno-development**

Tangibly, the fourth principle, improving education for minorities, has been the most successful one implemented in practice among Beijing’s social policies. When examining the education attainment of ethnic populations, Beijing clearly outperforms the rest of the nation as Figure 1 demonstrates. Owing to the high number of ethnic primary and secondary schools in the city, as well as an emphasis in social policy to constantly improve education for ethnic minorities, secondary school education attainment in Beijing outperforms the national average by 23.1%. More impressively, the city takes advantage of the high number of universities within its boundaries – totaling 77 universities in 2004 – whom for the most part, practice an effective preferential treatment system for ethnic minority entry, as outlined in the first section. This has contributed to Beijing enjoying an 18.8% higher average in university education attainment than the national one.

However, when comparing Beijing’s residents (Hans and ethnic minorities combined) a similar trend is observed, whereby they have a relatively higher educational level than that of other regions. One can thus simply dismiss these education figures on ethnic minorities as a clear case of a relatively developed urban environment, stacked with greater financial and teaching resources outperforming the not-so-developed areas, where a significant number of ethnic minorities reside throughout the nation. Yet, Figure 2 illustrates a very interesting trend that provides further insight into the success of Beijing’s education outputs for ethnic minorities. What is observed is that even the ethnic minority population in Beijing outperforms or is on par with the Han population in education attainments. In the key university education attainment statistic, ethnic minorities outperform Hans by nearly 5%. What this tells us is that the management of the education for ethnic minorities in Beijing, as measured by education

**Figure 1**

Education attainments of ethnic populations – Beijing vs national average (2000). *Source:* Calculations based on the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics and Renmin University's School of Statistics data sets (translations by author).

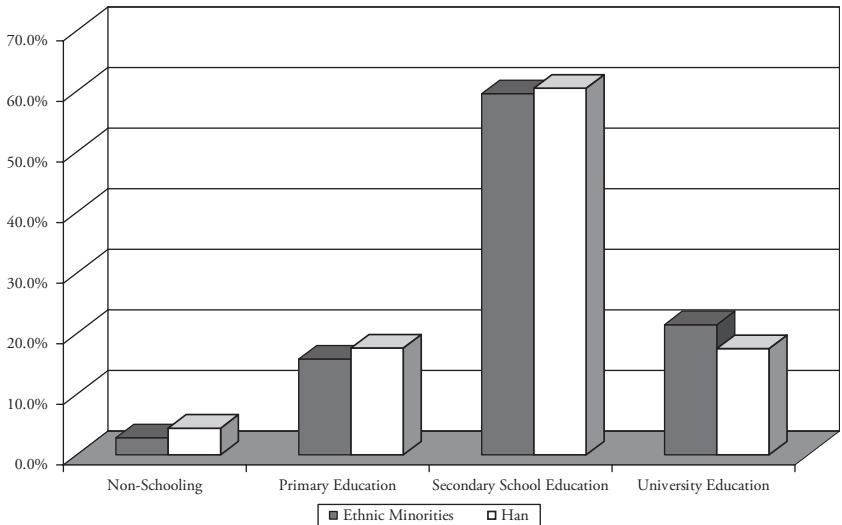


attainments, has been successful. Such outcomes should be met with some praise, as ethnic minorities and Hans in Beijing are statistically provided with a similar education output. A large part of this success is due to the preferential treatment that ethnic minorities have received throughout the education system. In the near future, with dramatic increases in the proportion of Beijing residents attending university, it is likewise expected that this trend will continue to hold.

Notwithstanding, an interesting paradox seemingly arises when examining the ethnic demographics of those working in high-wage, education-intensive (HWEI) employment sectors in Beijing. One will expect given similar education attainment levels among the ethnic minority and Han populations of Beijing, this will be reflected in the ethnic demographics of HWEI employment sectors. Rather, when looking at Figure 3, we see Hans dominate these very sectors. Bearing in mind the average, pre-tax wage is RMB 34,191 (USD 4,400) per annum, Hans dominate each

**Figure 2**

Education attainment of Beijing's population – Han vs ethnic minorities (2000). *Source:* Calculations based on Renmin University's School of Statistics data sets (translations by author).

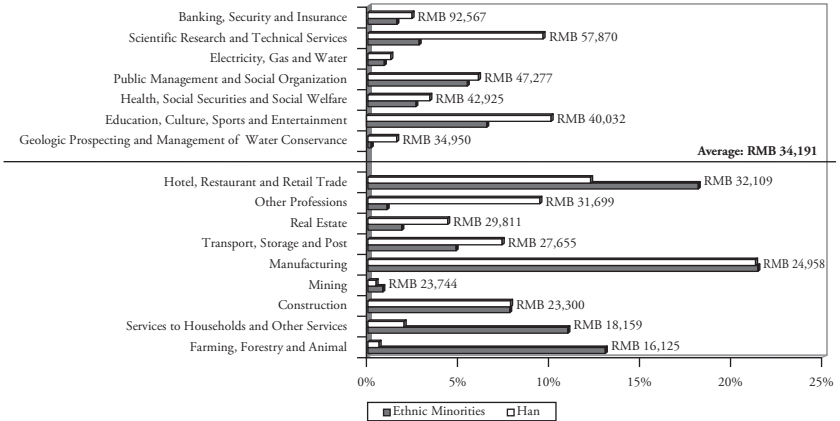


employment sector above this. Put another way, only 20% of the ethnic minority population work above the average pre-tax income in Beijing – which virtually comprises only HWEI employment sectors. The remaining 80% of the ethnic minority working population can be found in labour-intensive employment sectors (e.g. farming, forestry and animal; construction; manufacturing; and, hotel, restaurant and retail trade).

One possible explanation behind this paradox may be that the HWEI employment sectors are dominated by an older, working generation. Thus the younger, highly-educated, ethnic minority generation has yet to reap the benefits of higher wages in HWEI employment sectors. While this may hold true when examining many developed nations, Beijing's HWEI employment sectors are dominated by those under the age of 40 (National Bureau of Statistics 2005). As such, the idea that it is just a matter of waiting to see educated ethnic minorities breaking through the ranks of HWEI employment sectors does not hold to a great extent. There is something more to this that goes beyond statistical analysis.

**Figure 3**

Beijing's employment breakdown (%) and average pre-tax wage (per annum) by sector – Han vs ethnic minorities (2005). *Source:* Calculations based on the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics and Renmin University's School of Statistics data sets (translations by author).



Ethnographic work conducted in Autumn 2006 revealed a very troubling situation for educated ethnic minorities working in the city. There is a general stereotype in HWEI placements that ethnic minorities will have a more difficult time adapting to the working environment and are thus, less likely to be employed. Among 75 interviews I conducted with working, university educated-ethnic minorities, 64% responded they were unable to advance in their working placements as their bosses saw them as ethnic minorities.<sup>5</sup> 48% responded they had a difficult time finding jobs in HWEI

<sup>5</sup> The interviews were conducted by the author from September to December 2006. Conditions required that this process be conducted sensitively and with little attention drawn to both the interviewer and interviewees – to create a safe and comfortable environment to discuss this topic. Participants were recruited from sites known to have large numbers of ethnic minority groups, i.e. ethnic associations; universities (e.g. Beijing University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University, Central University for Nationalities); distinctive ethnic economic enclaves (e.g. Niujie area); ethnic restaurants; and near religious sites. A typical interview began by approaching a candidate and engaging in friendly small talk. The intentions and the nature of the research were then clearly explained. Participants were chosen systematically (generally asking every fourth person), and a balance in terms of age, gender

employment sectors as they were negatively stereotyped by their potential employers. Although the majority of ethnic minority respondents have lived their entire lives in Beijing, the main stereotypes perceived were language difficulties and vast differences in (family and working) culture.

The case of Khang, a young, PhD educated, female of Tibetan ethnicity best illustrates this situation. Khang graduated from one of Beijing's (and China's) top universities, Peking University, and immediately sought job prospects. When applying to HWEI placements, Khang faced a lot of challenges convincing her prospective bosses that she was capable. As it is a common requirement when applying for a job placement, her (ethnic) nationality was written on the resume and career folder (a file which contains your education – including transcripts, teacher appraisals – and working history – including former work placements appraisals and recommendations). Beyond that, her facial features revealed that she was not Han. Her prospective bosses often asked about the Tibetan culture and what it is like living there. According to Khang, this was done in a very patronizing manner. Khang lived her entire life in Beijing, and the knowledge that she knew about Tibetan culture was passed down from her parents. Out of 12 HWEI job interviews, Khang received one offer, which she accepted. In her present job, at a very prominent Chinese corporation, she finds that her co-workers always treat her differently as she is an ethnic minority. They always ask about her “hometown” and the Tibetan way of life. She reveals her office workers cannot see her as simply Chinese. “There is still prejudice [among her coworkers] although not malicious”, but nevertheless they cast her as an outsider in the office. She believes she is not able to climb the corporate ladder due to the fact she is perceived not to fully understand the Han-dominated working culture.

Khang's case is not unique. Throughout my interviews these were common documented cases. Although young, educated ethnic minorities should on paper have better prospects finding a HWEI placement, evidence suggests otherwise for many. At core, this may be the result of Hans believing there are fundamental differences between ethnic minorities and themselves – from language/dialect spoken to cultural rituals. While most of the ethnic

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and ethnicity were sought. An additional 40 interviews were conducted with local academics; policy makers in government and non-government agencies; as well as, key stakeholders (e.g. religious or community association leaders) in Beijing's ethno-development.

minorities interviewed grew up in Beijing, can speak Mandarin Chinese fluently, with no noticeable accent, and are assimilated into the Han culture, many in HWEI sectors still believe, in effect, that their ethnicity could possibly be a disadvantage in the workplace. It is for this very reason that the paradox of ethnic minority development in Beijing, to a large extent, continue to hold true.

#### 4. Improving the Management of Ethnic Minorities in Beijing

As we have seen, Han prejudice (either intentional or not) in the workplace plays a significant role in explaining the paradox of ethnic minority development in Beijing. Steps to improve the management of ethnic minorities will require the attention of three main actors: the government, community and the individual.

Although Beijing government's policies towards education have been successful on most accounts, whereby ethnic minorities have achieved similar or exceedingly higher education attainments than the Han population, further policies to improve representation in the workforce is needed. There is, in effect, an affirmative action policy in education for ethnic minorities, thus the logic can be extended to the workplace environment. However, when querying ethnic minorities and stakeholders about this possibility it is met with strong opposition. In fact, an overwhelming 96% of respondents answered an overwhelming "no" to this proposition. In many respects, the notion of affirmative action in Mandarin denotes a negative connotation. Two words are often used to describe it: *zhao gu* – "to take care of" or *you hui* – "discount" or "special". By implementing an affirmative action in the workplace it is seen as signaling to Hans that ethnic minorities are different, inferior, and are in need of government assistance to get ahead.<sup>6</sup> This in

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<sup>6</sup> There also seems to be a group of ethnic minorities – especially the younger generation – who believe that preferential treatment and affirmative action in education are not needed for ethnic minorities in Beijing, as they have the same access to resources as Hans. However, change in this policy – to target more affected areas – is not a priority for the CPC at this juncture. The internal CPC's logic is ethnic minorities across the board have a disadvantage in education. As such, national policy should not differentiate between relatively developed urban areas and the opposite.

turn, further perpetuates negative stereotypes and increase prejudice of ethnic minorities – the very idea that fuels the paradox of ethnic minority development in Beijing. What is accepted by those interviewed, is that government should attempt to promote, in a very covert manner, more ethnic minority leaders in the workforce, especially in the upper echelons of management in HWEI public and private workplaces. Consensus in the manner in which this should be conducted, however, has not been fully recognized.

The local Beijing government can also initiate programs to improve the perception of ethnic minorities within the city. Through my observations and interviews mentioned, a reoccurring theme was realized – namely, ethnic minority realities are not fully understood by the local Han population. Hans, for the longest time, have had an isolationist policy for many ethnic minorities. There has been, to a large extent, a mentality among many Hans that their “culture is better”, stretching over the last 5000 years, and even more acutely in Beijing. There is a lot of ignorance when it comes to ethnic minorities’ livelihoods, especially in the urban context. The local government can play a major role in reducing the stereotypical imagery of ethnic minorities as being “backward”, “barbaric”, and having an urban culture that is dramatically different than Hans. It may be beneficial, for example, that local education authorities promote cultural education in the elementary and secondary school curriculum – teaching about the history and traditions of ethnic minorities in a non-patronizing and non-commodifying manner. Combating deep-seated prejudices is a difficult proposition for any government social policy. However, this does not mean that local government cannot implement strategies to assist in changing a commodified perception of ethnic minorities among many urban Hans.

Local ethnic community associations can also be a valuable resource in improving the situation for ethnic minorities in employment. At present, ethnic associations act as a social forum or an information point to promote ethnic minority issues (e.g. Muslim Association of Beijing; Tibetan Information Centre). Ethnic associations can play a greater role in providing support for urban ethnic minorities, by acting as a networking mechanism to encourage greater access to HWEI work placements. Support from local government can go a long way in assisting in this venture. As mentioned, there is still a stigma of distrust among many local government officials towards such community associations – whom believe they are

there for malice. One would hope this line of thinking will slowly change over the course of time. Ethnic associations can be an impetus for providing a greater network for employment prospects in HWEI sectors.

It is at the individual level where most opportunity lies for growth in improving the ethnic minority representation in HWEI sectors. Young ethnic minorities, who are soon-to-be university-graduates, have the greatest chance of breaking through the barriers of HWEI sectors. They can adapt to the rapidly shifting, urban lifestyle of Beijing most effectively. Most have lived in Beijing their entire lives and often experience a dual life. They are socialized within the dominant Han culture and although they may not practice their family's ethnic traditions, they have garnered some understanding of their own ethnic culture. With a projected increase in the ethnic, university population in Beijing, the next generation of ethnic minorities have a chance to rid the paradox of ethnic minority development in the city. Unfortunately, this cannot be fully accomplished on their own education attainments alone. It is necessary that both government and ethnic community associations work to create a more favourable and accepting environment in Beijing's HWEI sectors.

## Conclusion

It is the present-day CPC's stated goal to build a *Xiaokang* society, that is, to build a "well-off", "equitable" and "harmonious" society. In many respects this goal has been successfully achieved when examining educational attainments among ethnic minorities in Beijing. This is a point of applause as many like-oriented communities, Chinese or otherwise, have not succeeded in getting to this juncture. But another key ingredient in achieving a *Xiaokang* society is to have equity in the employment market. It is troublesome that ethnic minority education attainments are not reflected in the HWEI employment sectors of Beijing. It is even more troublesome that a major reason for this paradox is due to Han stereotypes, that because of one's ethnicity, it is perceived there is a barrier to effectively work in HWEI employment sectors. It is prudent that local government and ethnic community associations take a lead and not simply rest on the laurels that ethnic minority development is vastly superior in Beijing than China's Western provinces or other Chinese urban areas. The



comparison should be made between Hans and ethnic minorities within the capital city. The effective management and promotion of ethnic minorities demands this. Hopefully as Beijing becomes ever more reliant on practicing ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’ – i.e. practicing principles that encourage the invisible hand of the market – this will not greatly amplify social and economic rifts along ethnic lines due to the growing paradox of Beijing’s ethnic minority development.

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