

Governance and Citizenship in Asia

Mengyan (Yolanda) Yu

Instrumental Autonomy, Political Socialization, and Citizenship Identity

A Case Study of Korean Minority
Citizenship Identity, Bilingual Education
and Modern Media Life in the Post-
Communism Transitioning China

 Springer

Governance and Citizenship in Asia

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Preface

This book has been a major part of my Ph.D. research findings, which attribute to multiple field trips to Northeast China and the Korean Peninsula from 2007 to 2012. I have grown up in an environment that has easy access to the Korean minority culture, and later I have been blessed with a number of precious academic opportunities to further research about multicultural and multilingual development in Northeast Asia. On the other hand, working and research experience at both international organizations and tertiary institutions in different parts of the world have also inspired to me to ponder the relationship between civil society and nation-state in terms of citizenship identity socialization. The case of Korean minority is a perfect case to observe both multiculturalism and state–civil society relationship in socializing citizens' identity. Hence with the encouragement from both experts in the field and friends from the two cultures, I have decided to turn what I have observed and analyzed into this book. It is expected that this book could bring a more updated understanding about Korean minority's identity development in China, as well as contribute to the existing theories of citizenship identity and minority studies about China. Readers are expected to renew their evaluation on China's Minority Regional Autonomy policy, and further deepen their understandings of multicultural development in China.

During the writing process of the whole book, I have struggled to minimize my personal feelings by presenting research outputs in close relation with the concepts of instrumental autonomy, political socialization, and citizenship identity. Approaching the end of the writing, I have also improved my understanding of my own research interests and developed many skills to explore answers from theory as well as data. The biggest challenge in life has been my limited time to invest in this book, with other ongoing life commitments during the day, I ended up staying late many nights in the past year to think and write. I have to thank my lovely and healthy daughter Nolia, all the family members, and my private mentor for being who they are and their great company during this whole period, they make the process challenging but meaningful, and I feel very lucky for having so many unforgettable and special moments with them.

It took me a whole year full of nonstop thinking, writing, and editing to finally complete this immature book. Instead of being an end or an answer, this book is more as a start and a stepping-stone. I wish it could contribute to our understanding of relevant issues and encourage many different opinions. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this book to my beloved parents, for whose love and with whose love I would forever carry on my academic research adventure.

Hong Kong
July 2016

Mengyan (Yolanda) Yu

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Chapter 1

Introduction: A Third Trial of National Identity and Minority's Citizenship Identity in Contemporary China

Globalization seriously challenges the traditional authority of state as the flow of ideas and capital accelerates, yet it does not fundamentally deprive state of its decisive power in distributing governing resources to monitor citizens' physical and mental activities. What is commonly acknowledged is that traditional geopolitical boundaries have become more elastic as state has to monitor its citizens' development by respecting universally worshiped value standards while balancing it with its own domestic politics. Western-oriented recognition of democratic politics once dominated the ideological preferences in the Global South, where history and culture have witnessed the rise of diverse types of authoritarian regimes with illiberal democratic politics. The dialogue between state and its citizens in the political context of the Global South, thus represents more complicated dynamic and diversity due to different historical, political contexts and ethnic, cultural backgrounds. New possibilities of multi-ethnic and multicultural politics have been widely explored and observed in expectation to look for a solution in mediating and diversifying the relationship between state and multicultural civil society, which in this research's case is represented by Korean minority students' bilingual education and modern media life at school and their outbound socioeconomic exposure both abroad and at home. European Union's establishment has definitely inspired and encouraged people who long for a new possibility in their multicultural society in many regions, even though it has survived its way out of many concrete challenges. While in East Asian political context, progressive and developmental states instead of politically legitimate regional networks still play a central role in socializing citizens' political and social identity despite of their own cultural and ethnic diversity. Originally conceptualized as a natural process that takes place within a certain society and shapes citizens' behavior as well as identity, political socialization is highly if not dominantly influenced by political ideology and is constantly reinvented as a governmental instrument by nation-states in East Asian political contexts. The intermingled relationship among global capital, nation-state and civil society represents a dynamic negotiating process which constantly territorializes a

geographical terrain and an identity habitus for citizens to develop and realize their achievable “autonomy.”

Due to the cultural and historical complexity, minority governance has been an intricate challenge that People’s Republic of China inherited from the past. Minority autonomous regions annex around 64 % of China’s entire territory along its official national border, they were defined and legitimized by the political authority mainly according to the minority population density within certain geographical area when the Minority Regional Autonomy (MRA) policy was initially adopted in the newly founded People’s Republic of China. Even though the total minority population only takes 9.44 % (Zhang 2013) of the entire Chinese population, with an average poor literacy rate around 85 % compared to the national literacy rate of 99.4 %, all the minority autonomous areas in China bear immense strategic significance as they usually have rich natural resources, frequent transnational communication, and diverse cultural heritage. Hence politically socializing minority people has been on top of the political agenda as an important task ever since the People’s Republic of China was founded. Minority population’s positive and strong identification with the state’s political authority and legitimacy is not only important to the state but also of high relevance to their own identity development. Even though the minority population is small in a numeric sense, the cultural diversity and vitality have provided inspiring data for the observation of state’s political socialization strategy and its impact on minority identity development. What political socialization processes could provide minority with is access to knowledge building, language training, as well as other assets and skills that are expected to eventually equip them with increasing social, human, and financial capital. Previous studies have argued for a negative relationship between the proportion of the minority population and relevant regions’ economic growth as well as social harmony in China (Zhang 2013). It is also true that the wealth gap between minority and majority, also in general between rich and poor, enlarges drastically since the Opening and Reform policy was implemented. The per capita GDP in Chinese minority autonomous regions is 722.58 USD in 2000 and 901.03 USD in 2005 (Zhang 2013). One dominant traditional view is that minority population does not propel a better statehood development and social integrity in China; it is more a burden and a challenge for the state to control and monitor despite its natural resources and symbolic cultural representativeness. The citizenship identity development of Chinese minority citizens is both heterogeneous and homogeneous as a process, as the state has to reinvent ideological guidelines and policy instruments to homogenize cultural identity differences brought along by ethnic diversity toward a unanimous identification with the political authority, while encouraging a possible cultural diversity based upon social equality despite the economic and cultural disparity between different minorities and the Han majority.

CCP has a class-based and developmental phase-oriented view over social political development including minority governance. From the very start of CCP’s reign in China, Mao Zedong had set a clear stance for the Party to emphasize minority regions’ natural resources’ advantage and indispensable strategic

significance. In his *On the Major Ten Relationships*, Mao claims that China has “huge population on vast land with abundant natural resources” (*Dida Wubo, Renkou Zhongduo*), he further clarifies that the “huge population” refers to the Han majority and “abundant natural resources” refers to minority regions, both being China’s unique advantages (Mao 1999, p. 41). The premise of the unity, stability, and prosperity of China has a long tradition of relating itself to secured territorial integrity, thus the attachment and identification to land as a citizen and society member serves as a natural instrument for the state to conduct governance. CCP’s victory against KMT during Chinese Civil War (1945–1950) is based on the guerrilla wars backed by the support of “citadels” (*genjudi*) in rural areas, CCP has since been relying on the solid foundation of rural population’s identification with its political legitimacy yet also conscious of its vulnerable and young relationship with its citizens especially in urban areas of China. The worshipping of minorities’ cultural diversity, massive territory, and rich natural resources has not necessarily invited a more authentic appreciation of their cultural diversity and emancipated identity development, especially compared to the Party’s strategy to develop the Han majority’s economy and culture. Minority population in fact stays in a marginalized position, its comparatively weak education foundation and limited social resources become a convenient excuse for the Party authority to fully preside over the politicized governance process in its autonomous regions. The state invests various resources to enhance the socialization process of minority, such as implementing citizenship education curriculum at school and propaganda campaign programs through media, which are expected to serve as instruments in nurturing pro-regime minority citizenship identity.

China can be considered to have experienced two trials of its national collective identity development in modern history. During the first half of the twentieth century, the spread of Communist ideology has earned CCP the popularity and eventually the political legitimacy among Chinese people, especially in rural areas. Freeing the large amount of rural population from the control of KMT and foreign colonization has planted seeds for common Chinese people’s recognition and identification with the political authority of CCP. Yet soon it was proved that enforcing rigid loyalty to communism ideology and radical application of relevant theories on a massive piece of land have brought more furnaces than joy to the majority population in China. The Anti-Rightist Movement and Cultural Revolution from 1960s to 1970s catastrophically held the country up for decades from healthy development and made it miss one after another epoch-making economic development opportunity. The collective identification with communism had to be superior and suppressive to any other belief in China at all times, the political and ideological perspective become the only legitimate and valid one to evaluate Chinese society’s self-identification as a nation, since worshipping ancient and foreign cultural virtues is either banned or isolated within Chinese society.

The second trial for a collective identity development of Chinese people took place after the Opening and Reform in 1978, when China took the historic step under Deng Xiaoping’s courageous leadership to switch from the non-admittance-of-doubt ideological worship of Maoism and communism to focus on economic

development and ideological emancipation for integration with the outside world. Not only China started repositioning itself closer to the socialism developmental model and market-oriented economy, it also seriously started changing its relationship with the rest of the world. As commented by Deng himself, if China does not change, it will lose its global citizenship. As the country's economy opened to the outside world with a much more flexible ideology orientation, the collective identity and belief of common Chinese people also started transforming as tides of capital and relevant ideas from outside surge into the country more frequently. However, the fading of communism ideology faces a new danger of a collective belief vacuum, how to bring certain cultural value and practices back while maintaining parts of communism ideology as a central tenet to support the regime's political legitimacy thus became the major task.

After decades of rapid economic growth, China is now the second largest economic entity after the United States, a pivotal player in the world economy. It starts sending out signals of catching up ideologically to integrate further into the global mainstream, such as launching *Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank* and proposing the *One Belt One Road* agenda. The national rejuvenation in the post-semi-colonial China has been looking for ancient cultural inspiration and modern ideological motive at the same time to market the idea of *Chinese Dream*, evidence indicates that both political authority and civil society are increasingly getting ready to involve into the process of the third round national identity development at the post-communism stage. Chinese people have passed the stage of resisting foreign invasion and getting political independence, they have also passed the stage of mapping out an economy development path and integrating itself into the world economy. Now with much less material development challenges imposed to the state, both the state and civil society start pondering on its citizens' ideological belief. Chinese people have no excuse but to reflect upon the original questions everyone would ask themselves in order to look for happiness, "who am I, and what I'm supposed to do next?" Unfortunately yet obviously, the answers seem to be complicated and far from being reached for the moment. Suggested solutions include the restoration of Confucianism values, which were considered as an essential component of Chinese culture; the adherence to Communism ideology, which is the cornerstone of the PRC's founding legitimacy; or the gradual transition toward Western liberal democracy, which is considered as a radical solution but would have more global resonance. Striving for a comforting prominent collective national identity for all its citizens is important for China as its ambition does not stay merely on expanding global economic impact, to export its value system and influence the way the world thinks has always been part of the Chinese dream.

Through exploring the model minority's citizenship identity development and the current political context of China, this research tries to answer the major question of how does the state participate in certain political socialization processes to shape Chinese minority's citizenship identity. Among all the Chinese minorities, Korean minority stands out and has earned itself the honorific title of "model minority" out of its long history within Chinese culture even before the founding of modern P. R. China. As a minority represents almost zero confrontation with the

state during the past 50 years, “Koreans in China have been popularly portrayed by the press/media as a model minority primarily with academic success” (Gao 2008, p. 55). The Korean minority, different from other minorities who have been “saved” by the CCP back in the 1930s, was itself an active participant in the local communism movements alongside with Han Chinese and contributed to the shaping of geopolitics in Manchuria with other local ethnicities. Many of them, after the land reform and cancelation of dual-nationality policy implemented by the CCP in the 1940s, chose to stay in China and became Chinese citizen, and most of those who did not choose to stay within People’s Republic of China ended up living in another communism regime of North Korea. Ideologically and culturally they have inherited abundant asset from their ancestors in the past, which allow them to easily identify with the CCP’s contemporary governance philosophy. At that certain time of history, many measures taken by the CCP was indeed out of non-antagonistic political intention but of disastrous outcome, Korean minority had stayed to form a concrete political alliance with the CCP, which was stable until the break of Korean War and Cultural Revolution, after which resumed to an ameliorated momentum again in recent decades. Though the above argument does not necessarily suggest that Korean minority is merely a group of passive and obedient citizens. As a minority with Confucian cultural traditions, Korean minority has selected a civilized path to territorialize its identity habitus as a floating population over the years of coexistence with their Han counterpart. In general, its surviving philosophy is pragmatic which manages a stable balance of power relations between Han and Korean Chinese in the region.

The hypothesis of this book contemplates the nature of autonomy mechanism that Korean minority lives under in China, how has the autonomy policy, which was framed upon geopolitical boundary, served as an instrument to politically socialize Korean minority students’ experience, and eventually forged their identity habitus as a governmental terrain for the Party-led state to govern minority citizens? It is expected that this research would explore the above major hypothesis with field research evidence. Over the two political socialization stages of high school and university, Korean minority students are exposed to public political cultural space territorialized by historical cultural development, ideological evolvement and contemporary political socialization under the state’s hegemony. Through exploring both qualitative and quantitative data collected from multiple field trips, how does Korean minority’s citizenship identity take shape out of the convenience of institutional benefits, as well as socioeconomic and geopolitical development in Northeast China would be explained, *the central hypothesis* assumes that the pragmatic pursuit of socioeconomic upward mobility and cultural pride through an emancipated politicized citizenship status, and the power dynamic between state and both domestic, transnational civil society shaped by the instrumental autonomy, serves as the ultimate answer to rationalize the shaping of Korean minority students’ citizenship identity. However, between the political maneuver of state and transnational socioeconomic activities in civil society, which side overtakes the other in terms of impacting citizenship identity is yet to be explored and explained. As China politically and economically further opens up, socioeconomic inequality

and cultural prejudice minority groups encounter both overseas and domestically are better balanced and compensated by the citizenship pride that institutions strive to provide and guarantee. This entails both cause and consequence of Korean minority's citizenship territorialization processes, that the state's hegemonic power and strong willingness to dominate and politicize its citizens' identification with themselves and the political authority, serves as a cause because it fundamentally decides the political cultural background for minority citizenship development, also serves as a consequence as it becomes a preferred hub which Korean minority citizens consider as their identity habitus to empower themselves with a sense of peace and security. The central argument is that, instrumental autonomy, as a highly politicized and instrumentalized liberal policy mechanism which is consistently implemented within a certain geographical area, serves as the foundation to shape Korean minority's identity habitus, their autonomous life is politicized as an instrument to define geopolitical and governmental boundary and also provides resources beyond the boundary in shaping their identity. The accumulated socioeconomic and cultural assets inherited from the past, the contemporary political context and the future perspective of their development dynamically construct an identity habitus that decisively matter much more than the superficial resources provided by the instrumental autonomy in eventually shaping Korean minority's citizenship identity during the post-communism transiting age in China. Like the three trials of Chinese national identity presented in this chapter, China has been exploring new possibilities of its own citizenship identity while carrying on its ideological mission. Post-communism, as a stage during which China tries to emancipate ideological control over various realms within the society, becomes valuable for researchers to observe the policy adaptation trickled from state level through political socialization process.

China has been undergoing a long and profound transiting stage ever since the late 1970s, reflection and readjustment on its political ideological paths a core issue throughout the process even though the superficial reform appears more economic and social as far as until now. Economically, since it started opening up its economy in 1978, political moves have been providing accompany to better facilitate the implementation of economic policies, relevant to the Korean minority case, it first liberalized its political environment by establishing a series of diplomatic relationships with capitalism countries. After joining the WTO for more than a decade, China made further efforts to not only integrate into but also lead the regional economic development. Yet the dilemma is that the political reform has emancipated the political state machine and civil society to look up to a more universal value but also invited authentic and irreversible challenges to the regime's legitimacy. The post-communism China is having a difficult time in reforming and locating itself politically between the roles of leader and follower, as communism steps out of the CCP's central tenets in governing its citizens, the state has to reexplore a number of historical, cultural assets to socialize its citizens in a less politicized sense but still keep them under the Party's absolute political leadership. Korean minority, bearing both the cultural root of Confucianism, communism and the foreign exposure to the democratic South Korea, turns itself

into a perfect case to interpret the equilibrium of ideological emancipation and politicization regarding its own socialization. The rising state-centered nationalism, the pursuit of Chinese Nation (*Zhonghua Minzu*)'s rejuvenation, and Chinese Dream are prominent examples to prove the state's efforts in looking for a replacement of communism as a cohesive collective belief for its citizens. Instead of replacing the policies with new ones, preferential policies such as autonomy are continuously implemented yet become more instrumentalized and politicized to guarantee the ultimate interests of the political Party. Minority citizen, as a significant component of Chinese citizen, represent more cultural complexity and socioeconomic challenges, the regional autonomy it enjoys naturally poses challenges to the state's ambition in shaping a unanimous collective belief at national level. And minority's regional autonomy exactly explains the state's governance philosophy, which is about adopting policies with instrumental nature but seemingly liberal autonomous style to secure the consistency and sustainability of minority citizens' political belief. By diffusing a still dominant and hegemonic political belief from state level, what changes at times is the strategy that applied to civil society's development, which becomes more flexible and diverse in form and in essence.

In line with the neo-Marxism perspective, this book attempts to understand the citizenship identity of Chinese-Korean minority in the post-communism era. The conclusion reaches to the state's dominant and leading role over other historical and globalization impacts in terms of orchestrating the historical legacy, cultural and political resources to politically territorialize minority's identity habitus. It brings attention to the instrumental nature of MRA policy, as territorializing the identity habitus is expected to happen from top-down, no matter whether the relevant ethnic culture is authentic or not, rather than naturally surging from bottom-up. Although China is smart enough to realize what is the global expectation and adapts what happens domestically in according ways, the strong determination to nourish a pragmatic and politically loyal citizen identity in order to secure its own political legitimacy and authority still primarily stays as the central policy and dominates as the governmental philosophy of the Party. The first half of the conclusion might not be completely new, yet how is this dynamic applied to the case of Korean minority, the so-called model minority, could shed new light on our understanding about how does the Chinese state maneuver politics to govern its multi-ethnic citizens, and to preserve multi-ethnic cultures authentically (Banks 2004; Kennedy 2010; Law 2011).

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Chapter 2

Nation-state, Citizenship Identity, Minority Autonomy: Orchestrating Civil Religion and Ideology Through Political Socialization Process in a Post-communism Asian State

In this chapter, different sections of concepts will be discussed to present how could the power dynamic be possibly formulated between state and civil society under communism ideology and authoritarian political governance. How could the politicized and instrumentalized policy such as autonomy achieve an “appeasement” between state’s political interest and civil society’s pursuit of emancipation in shaping minority citizens’ identity.

Citizenship Identity, Origins, and Way Ahead

Although many scholars had anticipated in the early twentieth century that “primordial phenomena” like nationalism would decline in importance and eventually vanish in the modern and postmodern history (Weber 1980; Fukuyama 1992), history has proved the opposite. Culture and value differences originated from ethnic diversity and various political cultures remain as a major source of conflicts and unrests in many parts of the world. In a big nation with diverse ethnicities, it is often challenging for minorities to tailor their own ethnic identity out of the national identity, especially if the state strives to maintain a strong political authority riding above subnational differences and interests. “A nationalist holds the view that political boundaries should be coterminous with cultural boundaries” (Eriksen 1993, p. 6), this belief has to invite a supreme authority from the state to territorialize a national culture above local and minority cultures, during which process political socialization serves as an important instrument to facilitate knowledge input into citizens’ minds and filter information exposed to them. Nation, thus different from the concepts of state and country, is a politicized cultural concept that could hold up to several or even more different ethnic groups within certain political boundary. Taking the Korean Diasporas for example, people of the Korean ethnicity mainly live in three different political regimes on the contemporary Korean Peninsula, although sharing the same original ethnic culture, they now live under

three political ideologies of socialism (China), communism (North Korea), and democracy (South Korea). The North Korea and South Korea both still carry a strong willingness to reunite with each other and rejuvenate a politically unified Korean nation as a whole, while Korean population in other Asian countries is considered as overseas compatriots migrated outside of the Peninsula at different generations. Members of the Chinese-Korean minority, as Chinese citizens, have been considerably socialized by their state and tend to consider themselves more culturally rather than politically connected to the Korean Diasporas.

Colin Mackerras has discussed the conceptualization of minority by studying the translation of the term “nation” and “minority” in Chinese, which are *Minzu* and *Shaoshu Minzu* separately. The character “*min*” and “*zu*” refer to “citizen” and “ethnicity”, respectively (Mackerras 1994, p. 3), which is more political than anthropological compared to its original English term as it emphasizes “*min*” before “*zu*”; and “*shaoshu*” means the minority’s weakness in a numeric sense compared to the majority “*duoshu*” for the word of majority. Yet as “*shaoshu*” appears before both “*min*” and “*zu*”, so different from the English word, it interestingly refers to minority’s weaker stance as both “*citizen*” and “*ethnicity*” compared to majority in Chinese. This perspective also indicates that in China everyone is considered as a citizen of the regime primarily before they fit in as ethnic member or other social cultural roles, thus a marginalized number as an ethnic group further extends to impact how they are treated as citizens. With both inborn and postnatal factors included, ethnic identity is shaped out of minority’s citizen and ethnic experience in China, under the political supervision formulated and implemented from the top of the political machine. Abner Cohen emphasizes the important relationship between ethnicity identity and political power, he reminds us that “ethnicity is a matter of degree”, which indicates how dependent the development of ethnic minority is on its political circumstances. Sometimes ethnic identity confusion and conflict show up in unthreatening forms, but some other time it might lead to serious violence and bloodshed, as power interaction and its derived form in presentation between the ethnicities and political authority varies. The Korean minority has been crowned the “model minority” in China, yet the absence of superficial contention does not represent the complete success of political socialization, nor there is no depression or grudge accumulated at all. In other words, from peace to riots, there is neither clear boundary drawn nor clear tipping point locked as the contributing factors that lead to identity formation are accumulated over history and contemporary political development instead of taking place overnight. Most importantly, this dynamic of fluidity and mobility exists all the time so it is not up to a fixed status for good, it evolves with history. The potential failure to secure self-esteem and happiness has a latent effect on the superficially harmonious coexistence when we explore deeper into the specific development of certain minorities’ ethnic identity. One typical nonviolent reaction would be the *counter-political-socialization* process during which people embed their social and cultural relationships from other dimensions as a demonstration to the unsatisfying and hegemonic political socialization process enforced by the state. To various degrees minority groups absolutely long for an opportunity to change at least their economic and cultural status in those illiberal