Many Chinas

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China is one of the most ethnically diverse and multicultural national states with a huge geographic, linguistic and cultural heterogeneity in its population. Though it is thought that China is a monolithic country and not one with multiple ethnicities. Many people believe that China is one nation having a one majority population which is Han, with some insignificant minorities at the border areas. Generally, the discussion related to the cultural uniformity of China is often taken for granted and China is regarded as a homogenous state. This essay disagrees with this concept about the Chinese population. I argue that China not only has a diverse cultural ethnicity but it also has significant cultural differences within the majority population of China which is known as the people of Han. Through the era of the Cold War, cultural and ethnic diversity is continuously increasing in China with a rising diverse view politically(Florent, 2004). To understand China in the 21st century, the cultural nationalism within the majority and minority groups should be discussed effectively. The nationalism of China is referred to as a monolithic national identity rather than considering nationalism in a huge range and as several cultures nationalism. In this essay, I have regarded cultural nationalism as the cultural aspect which is used in representing people's identity, aspiration, and history for defining the nation. The process of cultural nationalism is the one through which cultural aspects are used for acquiring nationalist objectives either through the state or through its people. China is one of the diverse nations bigger than the United States(“How diverse is China in terms of culture and language? - Quora,” n.d.). The Chinese government officially recognized almost fifty-six ethnicities and each ethnic group speaks their own language. China's physical geography is also huge; it includes plateaus, deserts, low plains and rain forests. China does not have any dominant or official religion. Most of the Chinese citizens do not practice religion. Some of the common religions in China are Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Taoism. Generally, the major area of China is based on the Han ethnicity and the minority groups live in frontier zones. China has a total minority population of almost ninety-one million people, who reside in every province and region. They speak a huge range of languages, four of the largest language families include Turkic-Altaic, Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European, and Austro-Asiatic. These are the most important groups for China in terms of international and domestic relations. These nationalities' importance increased significantly, same as that of the population on the borders on both sides. Han, recognized as the majority nationality, is based on ethnically and diverse populations which consist of eight not mutually understandable language groups which include Yue, Wu, Gan, Hakka, Xiang, Mandarin, Northern Min, and Southern Min. Cultural diversity exists even in these Chinese subgroups.

Regardless of the growing awareness of enormous ethnic and cultural diversity in China, there are still some conflicts related to minority groups. Most of the studies related to China are primarily based on state issues related to religion, politics, family, and economics with minor attention given to the issues related to cultural diversity impact. When ethnic diversity is discussed, it is mostly based on the official minorities’ studies which are marginalized generally to the sociopolitical and geographical borderlands society of China. The total estimated official minorities are almost 91 million while the groups Tibetans, Uyghur and Mongols form 9% of the total population of China. No one ever gives attention to ethnicities outside these groups. In this essay, I will discuss types of cultural nationalism and ethnic identity of China(Florent, 2004). I will also discuss a few reasons that have been neglected previously which is the reason why we are unable to identify other ethnic groups in the 21st century.

Soon after the formation of the People’s Republic of China, Beijing state planners sent some of the researches to the country border region for the identification and recognition of various cultural groups(Gladney, 2004). Out of the 400 separate Chinese cultural identities, only 41 nationalities are mentioned in the first census which happened in 1953 and it is increased to 53 nationalities in 1964 and then to 56 nationalities in the census of 1982 and 1990. Almost 350 groups that applied for nationality identification remained unrecognized in China. It is revealed in the census of 1990 that there were over 749,000 individuals who remained awaiting and unidentified. It means that these groups are ethnically different but are not officially categorized in nationality through the state. Most of the groups that remained unrecognized either belonged to Han's majority and some are linked with the other minorities that have few similarities. From the 1934 to 1935 Long March, the leaders of Chinese communists familiarized with the vibrant ethnicity of China. This march led them towards the most concentrated China minority area. Nowadays, no one is focused on the concept based on the self-determination of the minority. Han comprises the majority population and is the major revolutionary force of China. The reason that several minority groups remain unauthorized is that the identification of particular groups in China is categorized as the single Han majority group. It played a basic role in developing a unified nation of China. Chinese are internally ethnic people but are unified when the foreign nation interferes. The minorities who were more backward in the past, have now become civilized and advanced. Also, the minorities who reside in the border areas of China are segregated in the different areas of the country. However, only 9% of the minority population reside in such areas that are rich in mineral resources and they cover 60% of the area of the country. Most of the minority population still lives in the border areas. Now, there is a significant increase in the minority population control which is described as ethnicity in modern China. Through analysis, it is also found that the population of Han increased by 10% from 1982 to 1990, while the population of minorities enhanced by 35%. Though the overall Muslim population increased by 30-40%, the restriction of the one-child policy in China excludes several minority groups. Through research, I also found that several Chinese reforms that are associated with privatized agriculture, political freedom and market economy are first allowed in the minority areas(Wu, 1991). However, in China, minorities are not represented as barbarians. They are represented as cultural and colorful in the public media. Since 1949, various earliest differences among local nationalities and cultures in China disappeared and weakened. Such occurrence is considered a result of various factors. The Mandarin language prevails in media and school. The uniform social, as well as political ideology, is spread through Youth League and Women Federations. The state has taken control of media and there has been uniformity among social organizations from 1950 to 1980. In addition, there is suppression in the local practices of the religion as well as secularized development. This uniformity blurred the difference between the majority and minority groups. Most of the Han families through several regions are now settled in the main developing cities of the country and the minority groups are relocated near the Han settlement. This relocation also played a significant role. Despite the trends of uniformity, there also exist few intensification signs of sentiments and ethnic awareness within minorities. The 1990 census reported that a huge number of communities and individuals claimed the status of minorities. Few groups are raised dramatically after the 1982 census in which most of them include Xibe, Gelao, Manchu and She. By this, the demand for school texts as well as the other publication is increased in the minority groups. State, in some of the ways, encouraged various ethnic expressions. In most of the graphics and paintings, minority themes are encouraged strongly. The television and media also encouraged minorities’ performances and shows. This attention is making the unity of the Han group stronger.

The concept of understanding Chinese, as well as non-Chinese, is extremely complicated. The single word of English language Chinese misses several meanings. Chinese language, both spoken and verbal, has various terminologies which are used to reflect cultural, ethnic as well as national factors. Such terms evolved over time while some have been initiated currently and some began before Christianity. These single terms alone could not explain the critical Chinese identity situation. The current concept of China should be understood under the context of the recent political history of China.

Han is the official identification of minority diversity as well as regarded as leftovers by earlier historians. Similarly, the scholars and state also regard minority groups as the representation of Chinese society's earliest stages. Furthermore, the Han regard themselves as the carriers of rational thinking, modern technology, and science. They also say that they protected the rights of minorities. In short, China has given significant rights to the minority population.

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