



How assimilated is the Mongol Community in contemporary Inner Mongolia?

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Inner Mongolia is home to an abundance of natural resources such as coal, rare minerals and natural gases. Surprisingly though the population size is 24 million, only 17% is the ethnic Mongolian while Han makes up for 79%.

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To what extent is the autonomy of the Mongol community affected?

LAND GRABBING

● **“Illegal land grabs and colonisation by Chinese (Han) farmers and miners, supported by the Chinese Communist regime, are the source of human rights problem in Mongolia”** - SMHRIC (Wickenkamp, 2013).

● Approximately 50% of grassland suffers from “grazing-induced degradation” only in the past three decades (Su et al., 2017).

● Forced to settle in urban blocks or relocate from rural yurts (FlorCruz, 2011).

HUMAN RIGHTS

● Rushed trials, no proper legal defense allowed, some convicted to 7 years of prison for “sabotage” and “destruction of property. (Wickenkamp, 2013)

● **“Wife of one of the herders was beaten unconscious with an electric baton...as riot police tried to prevent family members from entering the courtroom”,** (Wickenkamp, 2013)

● “Daily basis” - Enghebatu Togocho

● Curfew established and communication halted (“Mongolian Professors Held”, 2016).

ENVIRONMENT

● **“China's policies toward ethnic minorities aim at assimilating them, while facilitating the exploitation of the natural resources found on their territories,”** Nicholas Bequelin, senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

● According to Greenpeace, water table dropped by 100m, due to mining companies’ scant regard for water usage and also grass or goats (“Inner Mongolia has become China’s model of assimilation”, 2017).

● Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu claims that **“Local authorities are trying to protect the local environment”** and **“outside forces”** are exacerbating tension (FlorCruz, 2011).



(Lu, 2014)



(Reuters, 2015)

(SMHRIC, 2015)

Does economic development contribute to assimilating Mongolian people?



(Nomadic pastoralism and Ordos city)

Three groups of Mongols in Inner Mongolia: pastoral Mongols, agricultural Mongols and urban Mongols. The majority of Mongols now belong to last two groups.

LIFESTYLE

“Maybe in the future, we will never live like a traditional Mongolian; our ethnicity will disappear, and the Mongol will disappear”

● Mining and desertification destroys local ecosystem and there exists more than 500,000 resettlement cases (Nick, 2013).

● Overgrazing is blamed for desertification, and laws are issued by government to protect rangelands in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Han, 2011).

● Rich resources such as coal, natural gas, and rare earth bring huge Han immigrants. Now the Mongol only constitutes 17% population (Martin, 2014).

JOB MARKET

● Resettled nomads struggle to find jobs in cities since they can not speak mandarin (Nick, 2013), and younger generation go to Han Chinese school to find jobs (Han, 2011).

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

“Fast paced economic development and marketization within China during the past few decades has been particularly detrimental to Mongolian culture and language as they have been greatly pushed aside”-(Han, 2011)

● Commodities inside store is the same as everywhere else in China without bilingual packing.

● Internet games and Pop culture is dominated by Chinese stars.



Even those Mongol singers or stars will pursue better career development in the Han Chinese environment using mandarin.

● Many urban Mongols do not read or speak Mongolian at all.

● Due to 2006 China language Usage survey, within the sample, the percentage of Mongol able to speak Han Chinese is 71.38%, and the percentage of Mongol able to speak Mongol is 75.52%.

● Economic interest drives Mongol families to send their children to Han Chinese school, and by the end of 2005, only 38.2% Mongols enrolled in Mongolian school.

Does education promote cultural assimilation to Mongol people?

DOMINANCE OF HAN EDUCATION

Tendency towards Han schools is created in virtue of the **comparative superiority in the education quality, modernization of Han society and globalization of Han culture**. When the comparison level of Mongol group is above the other, people will join and remain into the Han group which can provide them with more valuable rewards (Kelley & Harold, 1978). The risen enrollment of minorities in Han schools also leads to a disinhibitory effect through observational learning which reinforces the trend.

- Through students: **Aspirations on their prospects**
Less difficulties to receive higher education?
Broader choices to their academic studies?
More opportunities for career development?
- Though family members: **Decision making**
Minority school or Han school?
Mandarin or Mongolian language?

“I entered a Chinese-teaching school because it would offer me more opportunities....Some of my friends' parents actually know how to speak Mongolian but still talk in Mandarin at home.”



- Though ethnic minority institutions:
Set up some Mandarin-teaching or English-teaching courses to raise the schools' competitiveness?

INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

- **Ideology**
The educational institutions in China emphasize **national spirits** to build up students' sense of belongings, the stress on homogeneous national identity is actually a kind of forced assimilation promoting sinicization (Kottak, 2005).



(e.g Hoisting a flag every day, entering young pioneers and starting wearing red scarves since Primary 3)

- **Bilingual Language in-education policy**
Mandarin is one of the core subjects for Mongol students attending ethnic minority schools, the policy strengthens the socialization into national ideologies (Yang & Wu, 2009). Linguistic assimilation is shown by a decline in Mongolian language capability and an increase in Han Chinese language capability over the 10 year time span (Han, 2011).

PREFERENTIAL POLICY

- **Incentives to study in Han schools**
Up to 20 marks can be added if minorities attend han schools and apply for the *Gao Kao*.
- **Incentives to study in ethnic minority schools**
Students can have the university entrance exam in their own language but need to pass the Mandarin exam.
→ **Ethnic segregation is common** (Postiglione, 1998)
They grouped inside the ethnic schools and their own ethnic circle resulting in less contact with Han people.
- **How would it be after entering universities or graduation?**