The making of minority language policies in Chinese schools. Street-level bureaucracy and curriculum decisions in Xishuangbanna, Southwest China

Vom Fachbereich Gesellschaftswissenschaften
der Universität Duisburg-Essen
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Dr. rer. pol.

genehmigte Dissertation

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Tag der Disputation: 3. Februar 2015

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Acknowledgements

Doing interviews for this thesis has meant both investigating into Chinese schooling and learning about my interview partners' thoughts at the same time. I remember an interview situation that illustrates these two modes of doing fieldwork. At that day my interview partner, a teacher at a village school in the mountains of Xishuangbanna, had shown me the run-down school buildings, and she had described in detail how institutions force her to teach in ways that the thinks are not in the interests of the students. It was a pretty sad and disillusioning tour, but one that was nevertheless immensely enlightening for my research. Later, after that part was done, and after we had visited the village and her garden, we sat upstairs in her wooden stilt house at the fire and came back to the topic of teaching. Now our conversation was different. She asked me about my experiences with schooling in Germany, and, despite all differences, we soon came to agree on the joy of teaching, of interaction in the class, and of mutual learning. In the combination of both the discussion about policy implementation at her school and the more general discussion about teaching we felt the deeper sense of what teachers, scholars, and students do: trying to understand ideas and perspectives.

Doing fieldwork was for me rides through the heat in packed busses heading to far villages; it was endless hours of concentrated work in a foreign language; and it was days and nights of typing interview material into a laptop in hotel rooms. But it was also laughing with students when I tried my best to pronounce Dai sounds and when they, actually much faster than me, learned their first English; it was deep conversations with villagers in the privacy of their houses; and it was intense sharing of thoughts with teachers. These moments, and indeed the ideas that these moments have developed for this thesis, would not have been possible without the support by my interview partners at the schools in Xishuangbanna. Their openness to my research, their welcoming attitudes, and their willingness to share their experiences with me have been the greatest sources for my work. I would like to express my sincerest thanks to them.

I have produced this thesis at the DFG Research Training Group 1613 "Risk and East Asia" at the University of Duisburg-Essen. I am grateful not only for the financial support, but even more so for the study opportunities through this program. Furthermore, I am grateful to Renmin University in Beijing for invitations that allowed me to conduct fieldwork in Xishuangbanna.

Besides these organizations, however, there are of course many more people to thank for their support for this thesis, from developing early ideas, to enabling fieldwork access, to discussing the final product. For this support I would like to thank the

Professors Thomas Heberer, Karen Shire, and Fleming Christiansen in Duisburg; Jürgen Henze in Berlin; Teng Xing, Yu Xianyang, Zheng Xinrong, and Luo Jihua in Beijing; and Li Hong in Kunming. Apart from these Professors, however, I would also like to thank my friends and fellow researchers at the Institute of East Asian Studies in Duisburg and at the diverse institutes in China. Their ideas produced in formal workshops and informal meetings have been invaluable inspirations for me.

Last but not least I want to express my gratitude to family and friends who have continuously supported me in Berlin, Duisburg, and China during the work on this thesis.

1 Introduction

I enter a classroom in a primary school in Xishuangbanna[1], Southwest China. The daily course in Dai language writing has just begun, and students engage in diverse activities for ethnic minority language learning. Children of pre-school age write pages full of stories in Dai script, they discuss their stories with their classmates in both Dai and Chinese language, and the room's walls are covered with Dai vocabulary cards and students' products. When I ask the teacher in this class about her own role in designing this tuition, she explains that this class is a bilingual experimental project, she mentions that she has participated in teacher groups that determined the content of textbooks, and she says that she can choose the methods for today's' class on her own.

I approach a different school, two hours by bus on a bumpy mountain road away. This school conducts Dai language tuition as well, but this time the picture is completely different. A teacher writes Dai syllables on the blackboard, bored students copy them, and repeat the sounds in chorus. The empty walls feature nothing but a few posters that in Chinese language call students to develop skills for the country and for their own careers. Although I don't speak Dai, I understand that even after two years of learning Dai script the students still struggle with the basic graphemes and are not able to write sentences so far. After an hour the course is over and the students continue with learning a different subject taught in Chinese. Later I have the opportunity to ask the teacher in private about her role in this tuition. In the beginning she seems embarrassed about the class, but then she speaks her mind. She is angered that the school leaders don't allow her to teach more Dai. The school leaders, she says, have decided that education in Chinese language is more important. She explains that she must follow these demands, but that in her regular classes she still uses every now and then a few Dai words, as she thinks this helps students to follow class.[2]

The differences in the education of non-Chinese languages at Chinese schools point to a competition of different approaches in education management in China. On the one side education in China is very standardized. Content and methods in Chinese school

[1] All place names and personal names will be transcribed here in Pinyin, the official standard for writing Chinese in the Roman alphabet that has largely replaced the former Romanization systems for Chinese (Coulmas 1996, p. 408) (the only exception are country names, which will be referred to with the current official English names, e.g. China or Myanmar). This rule will be also applied to references to Xishuangbanna (西双版纳), for the region's place names, and to names of ethnic non-Han persons. Although some literature refers to these names with Romanized transcriptions of the Dai sounds (such as Sipsonpanna for Xishuangbanna or Muang Ham for Meng Han, see e.g. Hansen 1999 and Borchert 2008), I will use the official Pinyin system based on Chinese in order to allow comparison with Chinese literature and to reflect the references that interview partners made in my Chinese-language interviews. Furthermore, for the convenience of the readers, this text also does not include any Dai writing in its main body.

[2] Both the schools and the teachers will be introduced in greater depth later.

education have to follow goals that are determined in top-down manner, such as propagating ideas of patriotism and learning knowledge that the state defines as important for economic development. In combination with goals to “civilize” ethnic minorities and to bind them with the nation, school education for ethnic minority children is especially obliged to follow standardized rules. On the other side, and partly due to the same reasons that call for standardized education and strong control over curriculum, the Chinese government also calls for new approaches towards diversity in education, for student-orientation in the curriculum, and for localization of decision making. It could not only be argued that any type of school education requires a certain degree of adjustment of teaching towards the backgrounds of students and a given classroom situation, but the Chinese government has also proposed to reform the institutions of school and curriculum management towards models where teachers and school leaders have more discretion to make decisions in the interests of the students, while at the same time new accountability measures shall still continue to guarantee the hierarchical control over the “output” of education.

With these seemingly mutually competitive approaches the reforms of the Chinese education system are located amidst worldwide discussions on the modes of policy implementation, of governing schools, and of decision making at schools on the one side and the quality of education on the other side. Many have argued that school-based decision making improves the quality of education, but often these discussions have ignored goals that governments, if one likes it or not, aim at with education at schools.

I argue that the case of implementation of minority language education in China provides an enlightening source to study education policy implementation at schools that not only, and perhaps not even mostly, aims at of improving the quality of education, but that instead is more guided by goals as diverse as cultural protection, appeasement of potentially rebellious ethnic groups, and raising access to Chinese language education.

Many studies that have investigated the specific policies of minority language education in China produced valuable insights into the relations between the political system, party ideology, and ethnic minority policies in China. Some scholars found intensive relations between the concept of an “ethnic hierarchy” and ethnic policies. Others, who scrutinized the effects of these policies on the life of ethnic minorities in China, have found that some programs of minority language education have brought tremendous benefits for students. However, they also found that other programs have not only failed to equalize educational access or to raise students’ attainments, but that

these programs have also increased the burdens for students. Most of these studies, however, lack in ability to understand the processes that happen between policy formulation and outcome, since their analytical frameworks lack in measures to capture implementation. In light of these research gaps the two above mentioned school observations raise questions that reach beyond the individual schools: Why are there such large differences between schools in how they implement curriculum polices in classrooms? How does decision making at school level affects policy implementation in China? What are the outcomes of this process on the quality of tuition delivered at schools? How does the Chinese party-state balance the call to raise educational quality by diversity with the risk of allowing education against ethnic party lines? How do these processes confirm or challenge our understanding of policy making in China?

The "bottom-up" perspective of the street-level bureaucracy approach provides a useful tool to analyze the processes of implementation. Contrary to many "top-down" approaches that perceive policy deviation as failure and that aim at smoothening implementation in the interests of the policy makers, the street-level bureaucracy approach aims at understanding implementation by investigating into the perceptions and interests of policy implementers such as social workers, police officers, or teachers, who as government employees represent the state towards citizens, but who at the same time as service providers at "street-level" are also in constant and closest contact to clients. I argue that this approach supports understanding the implementation processes of minority language education policies in China.

Analysis of this case can also contribute to theory development. Literature on implementation has produced elaborate insights into the effects of implementation decisions, but there is still a need to develop frameworks that combine perspectives on implementers' decisions with analysis of how implementers interact with institutional settings of discretion and accountability.

With this thesis I intend to bridge the two literatures of policy implementation through school-based decision making on the one side and ethnic minority policies in China on the other. Against the background of the changing institutions of educational management in China this study is intended to contribute to an understanding of policy making at school level by shedding a light on the relation between institutions and decisions of street-level bureaucrats in policy implementation in China.

Through analysis of the case of implementation of minority language education policies at schools in Xishuangbanna, a prefecture at the Southwestern tip of China with a multiethnic and multilingual population, I intend to scrutinize how institutional settings of

school and curriculum management affect decision making by teachers and principals on policy implementation. For this endeavor I will introduce into both the institutions of schools management and the policies on minority language education in China, and I will analyze in depth how school personnel perceive both, how they react, and how they legitimize their decisions. This analysis will be based on examples from several schools in Xishuangbanna, where I have conducted interviews with teachers and principals, government officials and students, where I have observed classes, and where I have collected textbook materials, images, and school-internal documents. Based on this analysis I will discuss what these examples indicate for our understanding of the effects of institutions on street-level bureaucrats' decisions in policy implementation.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is structured into three parts. In the first part I will provide an overview on the existing literature on studying policy implementation from the bottom-up perspective at schools in general, and at Chinese schools specifically, and I will summarize research directions on ethnic policies and minority language education policies in China and in Xishuangbanna. In this literature review I will discuss current research issues and research gaps. Based on this, I will in the second part of this introduction outline the design and methodology of my study. I will introduce my research question, the variables, and my hypothesis, I will elaborate on the benefits and caveats of case study designs, I will outline the fieldwork and data analysis that I have conducted for preparation of this thesis, and I will discuss ethical issues of the study methods. In the third and final part of this chapter I will outline the structure of the complete thesis.

1.1 Literature review and research gaps

Scholarship has produced already an intensive stock of literature on ethnic education policies in China. However, there are also several research gaps and a lack of combining findings from different literatures. In the following I will present a literature review on firstly issues of policy implementation at schools in general, and secondly issues of ethnic policies and minority language education policies in China and in Xishuangbanna, specifically. In order to prepare developing the research question for this thesis, I will summarize here both the findings and the current gaps in literature.

1.1.1 Policy implementation and school-based decision making

Policy implementation has been in the center of political sciences for decades already, but instead of producing one overarching implementation theory there are rather specific approaches to analyzing implementation. The so called "bottom-up

approach" is especially suitable to study implementation processes at school level, as the rich literature shows.

Bottom-up perspectives on policy implementation

Implementation research aims at understanding the processes that happen when policies are put into practice. In detail, however, depending on different interests of scholars the frameworks to analyze implementation differ tremendously. Since the groundbreaking work of the founding fathers of policy implementation research, Pressmann and Wildavsky (1979 (1973)), the so called "top-down" perspective has been a dominant approach. Scholars under this approach rested their studies on concerns about what might lead to the observed differences - perceived as failures - between policy goals as formulated in programs on the one side and outcomes that did not reach to these expectations on the other. From their perspective, policy researchers should uncover these failures and suggest measures of how governments can secure smooth implementation, for instance through wise choice of instruments (Hogwood, Gunn 1984).

However, ever since the "textbook approach" (Nakamura 1987) of studying policy implementation under the control focus has been criticized for being unable to depict the diversity of implementation processes, alternative approaches from a "bottom-up" perspective have been developed. These approaches aim at understanding implementation through the actions, motivations, and interests of the implementers (Elmore 1979). The "street-level bureaucracy approach", as famously developed by Lipsky (1980), argues from a bottom-up perspective that "street-level bureaucrats" such as police officers, social workers, or teachers as government representatives at street-level are central actors in implementation processes who, due to both the lack of information of superiors and the necessity of local and ad-hoc decisions, shape policy measures and outcomes tremendously, and in fact even "make" policies. According to students of this approach street-level bureaucrats are entangled within complex nets of discretion and accountability and these bureaucrats' interpretations of the triangle of policies, institutions, and interests (their own interests, those of their superiors, and those of their clients) affects their decision making. Combined with normative discussions on the role that decisions by the street-level bureaucrat should play in implementation, but also with new considerations of governments' possibilities to steer implementation under democratic imperatives of governance have updated this discussion (Huber, Shipan 2002; Barrett 2004; Carpenter 2001; Christensen, Lægreid 2006).

Implementation studies from the "bottom-up approach" have contributed to understanding the policy implementation process as governed by implementers' actions

and interactions. The finding by Saetren (2005) that the frequency of scholarly work on implementation studies continuously rises indicates that approaches to study implementation are already mature enough to inform studies in a variety of fields. On the other side, there is also a lack of understanding the factors that inform implementers' decisions. In contrast to calls to combine the top-down with the bottom-up approaches into one overarching, but perhaps illusionary implementation theory (Matland 1995; Hill, Hupe 2009) there seems to rather be a need to specify existing analytical approaches for particular policy fields and to combine the perspective with these fields' institutional settings.

Institutions in implementation by school-based decision making

Policy implementation at schools has been a field that scholars from the bottom-up perspective have especially scrutinized because the differences in student background and classroom situation constantly require teachers and school leaders to make decisions on how to implement, adjust, or even reject policy implementation[3] and because these decisions at school level are critical for educational policy implementation (Weatherley, Lipsky 1977; Odden 1991a; Datnow 2000; Honig 2006b). While early research such as that by Murphy (1991) still has seen deviation in implementation as a problem, later scholars such as Malen (2006) have begun to look at education policy implementation through a multitude of eyes, especially through the interests and strategies of school staff in order to understand how communication between different actors at schools affect these actors' policy understandings, their evaluation of choices, and finally their decisions.

Scholars of education policies have come to regard decisions on curriculum policy (a "settled, coherent plan or course of action with respect to curriculum matters" (Walker 2002, pp. 124–125)) that establish standards, testing, time allocation, student placement, textbooks, or teacher qualifications through instruments such as mandates, financial transfers, or capacity building as one of the main areas where school staff shapes policy implementation (Elmore, Sykes 1992; Hansen, Roza 2005).

The categorization of these decisions, however, is still under discussion. Where Kärkkäinen (2012) simply distinguishes between decisions on "What should be taught"

[3] Education is here understood according to the OECD's definition as "organized and sustained communication designed to bring about learning.[…] Organized means planned in a pattern or sequence with established aims or curricula and which involves an educational agency that organizes the learning situation and/or teachers who are employed (including unpaid volunteers) to consciously organize the communication" (OECD 2003). In this thesis I will discuss education almost exclusively as formal education, namely as "education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions, which normally constitutes a continuous ladder of full-time education for children and young people" (OECD 2011b, p. 271).

and “How should it be taught” other have categorized in more detail. Bacharach and colleagues (1990) for example, have identified 19 areas of school-based decision making on issues from expenditure decisions, to content of tuition, to classroom assignment.

The scope to make curriculum decisions at schools depends on various institutional settings, but under the impression that “education policy demands arguably have become more complex” (Honig 2006a, p. 1) scholars under the perspective of street-level bureaucracy have especially scrutinized the web of discretion and accountability at school settings. Both the vertical accountability towards superiors and the horizontal accountability towards students, parents, or the local community have been found to limit school staffs’ scope for decision making. On the other side, however, accountability reaches also its limits due to the need for local deviation according to students’ needs (Leithwood, Duke 2004). In the “trilemma” between requests from policy makers, clients, and own interests, teachers and school leaders thus constantly make decisions which not only affect the implementation of curriculum policies in their classroom, but which also affect the institutional shape of accountability itself when school personnel for instance create school-based management structures, control information flows, organize interest groups, or avoid evaluation altogether (Honig, Hatch 2004; Malen 2006; Figlio, Ladd 2008; Hooge et al. 2012). With these approaches scholars of education policy implementation have connected theoretical contributions of decision making process analysis with the more practice-oriented (and sometimes normative) discussions on the value of decentralized education, diversity in education, and local community control of schools. These have been discussed intensively around the globe by scholars who argue that school-based decision making under certain accountability measures increases the quality of delivered education (Fullan 2007; Law, Nieveen 2010; Bruns et al. 2011).

International comparative studies such as the one by Kärkkäinen (2012) or by King and Guerra (2005) have also shown that the institutional settings for school-based decision making on policy implementation differ largely between countries. In detailed lists of the modes and locations of decision making the latter authors compare, for instance, decision making between central government, local government, and school level. However, a glance through the literature exemplifies that there is still a gap between the already quite extensive knowledge about the differences in institutional settings and these settings’ effects on decision making within schools at specific countries. While organizations such as the OECD publish country studies from a macro and system-oriented perspective, theoretical contributions in handbooks and readers of education policy implementation published in English are still based overwhelmingly on examples

from the US education system, which raises questions of general applicability of these findings. In order to establish a diversified basis for theory development on educational policy implementation more studies on the relation between institutions and actor behavior at schools need to be conducted worldwide.

Studying policy implementation at Chinese schools

China's tremendous shifts between centralization, decentralization, and recentralization in various policy areas (Hawkins 2000; Wong 2009) make this country arguably to one of the most suitable ones to study the effects of institutional changes on policy implementation. Decentralization under "fragmented authoritarianism" (Lieberthal 1995) has not only triggered several implementation gaps and inequality in access to social services (Wong 2009; Shue, Wong 2007), but on the other side it also supported specific modes of policy making, such as experimentation (Heilmann 2008). Implementation processes at the local level are especially worthwhile studying in order to understand how shifts between central and local control have affected implementation behavior. A wide range of scholars interested in the modes of Chinese policy making discovered the strong role of local cadres in the policy implementation process. O'Brien and Li (1999) have argued that decentralized cadre management and the end of mass campaigns have increased cadres' discretion to choose between different policy goals and means under "selective policy implementation." Others have contributed analysis of the sometimes detrimental effects of this discretion on policy implementation at the local level when decisions are made against the local population (Zhou 2011b; Göbel 2011). Heberer and Schubert (2012) and Heberer and Trappel (2013), by contrast, have argued that the complex evaluation system between soft and hard targets under purposefully vague policy guidelines not only causes counteractions by cadres to secure, for instance, autonomy and career prospects, but that this system also triggers group cohesion as a measure to prevent individual cadres' misbehavior and corruption. These contributions have shed light on the effects of accountability on implementation decisions against the background of the Chinese political system, but they also have shown that there is a need to specify these mechanisms for individual policy fields.

Education policy in China is a field where studies of implementation processes against the background of changing institutional settings can unveil specific mechanisms of decision making by local level government agencies and street-level bureaucrats. Many of the plentiful studies on reforms in the Chinese educational system (Pepper 1996; Mok 2005; Wang 2003; Ryan 2011; Postiglione 2006) have come to see reforms of the Chinese

system of funding and managing education to be caught in the middle of waves of centralization, decentralization, and recentralization (Hawkins 2000; Mok 2003; Qi 2011b).

These reforms have been scrutinized under various perspectives. On the one side scholars have investigated the reforms in education funding and management as shifts between governmental levels. In an early article Paine (1992) described how vertical and horizontal negotiations shift the power of the educational bureaucracy. Other contributions have shown that the shift of funding responsibility from township to county, for instance, has increased the power of counties in oversight over schools (Zhou 2012a). On the other side, scholars who studied the effects of changes in school management on the relation between schools and government agencies have come to see the newly introduced accountability mechanisms such as external and internal evaluation schemes, performance-related pay, and promotion according to educational output as means to increase control over schools, that, although locally diversified, have increased pressure on educators and school managers (Lee et al. 2011; Lai, Lo 2006; Tian 2011). Others have scrutinized new means such as school-based curriculum and school-based responsibilities to apply for project funding as spaces for school-based decision making (Zhong, Tu 2013; Li, Shuai 2010).

Scholars differ in the evaluation of institutional decision spaces for schools in China. While Zhong and Tu (2013) and Law (2011) argue that school-based decision making in China is already a current phenomenon in China, which should be increased as a motor for educational development, others conclude that institutional settings leave hardly any room for school-based decision making, as “the autonomy of schools only exists to limited degrees, with schools controlled by quota systems, standardized curricula, and assessment systems” (Wong 2006, p. 55). This issue, however, points to the middle of educational policy implementation in China. On the one side, Chinese schools as overwhelmingly state-owned and state-organized organizations are closely tied to state bureaucracy, but on the other side requirements of policy adjustments in the classroom are also valid in China. How can we understand the role of schools in policy implementation in China? How can we describe and analyze Chinese schools as state organizations that at the same time seem to have some specific space for decision making?

Two gaps in the literature currently prevent answering these questions. Firstly, there is a lack of detailed analysis of the effects of these institutions on different types of schools programs. International comparative studies that also include China (e.g. King, Guerra 2005) describe the larger picture, but lack in analysis of the micro-level of schools. On the other side, we know that institutional settings for schools in China not only differ

between regions, but also between schools. Dello-Iacovo (2009, p. 244), for instance, speaks of the differences between regular schools and the "shining examples" of pilot schools. How do these differences affect the space for decision making at schools?

Secondly, there is a need for a close look at the consequences of these institutional settings on implementers' behavior. While few studies have begun to shed a light on teachers' and principals' perceptions of policies and institutions (Chai, Wang 2011; Peng et al. 2013), these studies often still lack in systematic analysis of actions at schools. Law (2011, p. 163), for instance, found that Chinese teachers engage in reforming schooling by "contributing to the betterment of education by using their own academic theories and practical wisdom", but his study lacks in analysis of how these contributions translate into an outcome that goes beyond the individual classroom lesson. I argue that an analysis of the decisions of teachers and principals in the implementation process of a specific policy could bridge this gap in the literature by connecting both the institutional background of school management with actor behavior measured in output at school level.

1.1.2 Ethnic policies and minority language education in China

The field of minority language education in China[4] offers rich opportunities to study the decisions and implementation behavior of policy implementers at school level, as diversification is an inherent approach in minority language education. However, studies in this field have also shown that education policies for ethnic minority students are closely connected to ethnic policies and language policies. In the next paragraphs I will introduce both the literature on ethnic language and minority language education policies in China, before in the last part of this sub-chapter I will shortly review the literature on Xishuangbanna, the location for this case study.

Before I will review this literature, however, there is a short remark in order on the background of the authors introduced here. Firstly, contributions published within

[4] Scholars refer to minority language education also as heritage language education or mother tongue language education. In connection with education in languages other than the children's mother tongue (mostly the national language or majority language) this type education is called bilingual education (Baker, Prys Jones 1998, pp. 2–3). According to García (2011) bilingual education uses both the children' mother tongue languages and the other language as language of instruction and it serves to enable students to function across cultures. However, in China the term "bilingual education" (双语教育) or more precisely "Ethnic-Chinese bilingual education" (民汉双语教育) denotes not only to those models that use Chinese and minority languages as language of instruction, but it also denotes to those models that use Chinese as a language of instruction to teach language knowledge in one of China's ethnic minority languages (少数民族语言) (for differentiation from the concept of Chinese-English bilingual education see Feng 2005). To avoid these terminological ambivalences, I will use the term "minority language education" to refer to both the teaching through ethnic minority languages and teaching knowledge about these languages.

China and those published outside China differ in their research interests. Chinese scholars (or more precisely: scholars with Chinese citizenship who publish in China) and foreign scholars who publish in majority in English often use similar methods and both often agree in a critical evaluation of, for instance, inequality of access to social services or differences in livelihood of ethnic minorities in China. However, articles published in China often see governmental ethnic policies overwhelmingly as positive and they merely call for small adjustments, whereas articles published outside China seem to be more interested in concepts such as "nation" or "ethnicity", which are behind the policies and which are often shaped by the state.

Secondly, there is a lack of voice of scholars from those ethnic or linguistic communities where research is conducted. Despite the growing number of contributions by Chinese and foreign scholars, members of these ethnic groups are still lacking behind in both the numbers of publication and in their ability to affect national and international academic discussions. Beyond some rather uncritical policy descriptions (Ai 2001b; Dao 2001; Dao 2006) there are only few publications available by scholars of, for instance, Mongolian, Tibetan, Uigur, Yi, or Dai ethnicity from within China that have been able to contribute to larger discussions on ethnicity in China among the international academia (Nima 2008; Harrell, Ma 1999; Caodaobateer 2004). This lack of voice can constitute a sincere problem in writing about ethnic groups in China when academic discourses are largely disconnected from the discourses within ethnic groups.

Nevertheless, in light of inadequacies that a distinction between contributions by "Chinese scholars", "foreign scholars", or "ethnic minority scholars" must necessarily involve, I will organize the following paragraphs not by origin of the scholars, but by the issues they write about, and only when there are striking differences between the literatures published within China and without China, I will specify these under the respective topic.

Ethnic policies

Over the last decades scholars of diverse disciplines, backgrounds, and interests have created a profound basis of understanding ethnic policies and minority language policies[5] in China. Research on ethnic policies in China has been interested especially in

[5] The Chinese case adds specific issues to In addition to the apparently ever-lasting discussions on the definition of "ethnicity" and "nationality". Generally, in this thesis I understand ethnicity according to Brubaker's (2002) definition as a process of flexibly categorizing and constructing identity and group-belonging of individuals, that is employed by individuals or governments to justify specific actions. In China's official terminology, this process-focused understanding is countered by a state-directed distinction of ethnic groups into 56 official categories that since more than 30 years have withstood approaches to re-

two large fields: the relations between identity and policies on the one side, and the relation between social policies and exclusion of ethnically defined groups on the other side.

At least since the 1980s researchers on Chinese ethnic policies have become increasingly interested in the impact of cultural policies on ethnic identity. Research has often discussed the ethnic identification project through which China's current 56 officially recognized ethnic groups have been categorized. Scholars have established since long that this process not only lacked in accurately depicting ethnic identities, but more importantly that is was politically motivated by the state's intent to appease ethnic groups (Zhou 2003, 2012b; Gladney 1996; Guo 2004).[6] Moreover, the ethnic identification mirrored also ideologies of "ordering humankind" (Blum 2001) into a pyramid of cultural development stages that sees the Han on the top of everyone else. Analysts of Chinese cultural production such as film, newspapers, or stage entertainment have shown that presentations of ethnic groups materialize these ideologies into images. Although the rhetoric of describing ethnic minority groups in these media has changed from problem to virtue-orientated depictions of peaceful and happy people living in intact nature and society that the (Han) audience yearns for, it is still largely dominated by images of the Orientalized, feminized, exotic, and irrational other (Schein 1997; Senz, Yi 2001; Hoddie, Lou 2009). Scholars have interpreted ethnic policies in the cultural realm as "civilization projects" (Harrell 1995) based on the approach of the Chinese government to impose a mix of Confucian beliefs of the educated person and socialist perspectives of societal development stages combined to a "quality" discourse that not only targets each Chinese citizen, but especially ethnic minorities (Jacka 2009; Dello-Iacovo 2009). Whether discussing these projects under the concept of "internal colonialism" (Gladney 1998; Sautman 2000), or depicting the process as activities by individual cadres and entrepreneurs to marketize ethnic cultures for tourism purposes (Bai 2007; McCarthy

classify (see detailed discussion in chapter 4). Additional difficulties arose when until the 1990s official documents in China translated the term "minzu" (民族) as "nationality", until the then State Commission on Nationality Affairs decided to use the English translation "ethnic group" instead (Zhou 2003, p. 94). The following renaming of the Commission into "State Ethnic Affairs Commission" indicated this shift, whereas renaming the English translation of the "中央民族大学" from Central University for Nationalities into the Pinyin-based name Minzu University of China also indicates that the usage of the term "ethnic groups" is still disputed. In order to keep up with literature on China I will not use the term "indigenous peoples", but rather speak of "ethnic groups". In order to distinguish more clearly I will refer to what Chinese academic and official literature terms "民族" with the term "ethnic registration" and to the ethnic belonging that interview partners expressed I will refer to with the term "ethnicity". In many cases both categories overlap, but in other cases people make clear distinctions between their official registration and their own feeling of ethnic belonging (see for instance Harrell's (2001b) discussion on ethnic groups).

[6] Note that the references in this literature review merely indicate the most relevant examples out of the already large number of case studies. In order to increase the readability of this text, I have also omitted remarks such as "e.g." in the references of this part of the text.

2009), scholars generally agree that state activities have tremendous effects on shaping, threatening, or branding ethnic cultures in China.

Other scholars are more interested in the reactions of those who are affected by ethnic categorization. Scholars such as Harrell (2001b) or Hsieh (1995) try to understand conceptualizations of identity by analyzing the processes of self-definition of ethnic groups, for instance in cultural and educational choices (Yi 2008). Scholars in this field have since long pointed to insufficiencies of official ethnic categories in delineating ethnic distinctions from the perspective of individuals and groups, e.g. when individuals' descriptions of own belonging differ from official categories (Harrell 2001a, 2001b). Globalization and cross boarder identities have additionally contributed to the increasingly complex issue of ethnic identity in China (Mackerras 2003). Nevertheless, even processes of individual identity formation are determined by the state, or at least as a response to it (Shih 2002; Kaup 2000). Studies have shown that schools and universities prescribe ethnic affiliation of students, for instance by ethnic segregation, by describing ethnic groups in pejorative terms in textbooks, and by defining the educational process for ethnic minority students as "modernization" (Bass 2005; Zhao, Lee 2010; Borchigud 1995; Bulag 2010; Postiglione et al. 2011). Some studies have shown that groups take political actions to change ethnic categorization (Heberer 1989) or that individuals apply for ethnic realignment of their status (Hoddie 2006a). However, altogether people in China seem to accept the overall ethnic registration as a marker for a specific identification in state organizations such as schools (Schoenhals 2001).

A second field in ethnic policy studies lies in in-depth analysis of the political system of ethnic representation and of the outcomes of economic and social policies on wellbeing of ethnically defined groups of people. From the perspective of policy making, scholars, in the tradition of international discussions (e.g. Kymlicka 1995), have been interested in how minority rights can be best protected in the political system. Especially scholars from outside China have shown that the current political system is ineffective in representation of ethnic minorities and have called for reforms towards improved political representation (Heberer 1989, 2013), whereas scholars inside China generally rather emphasize accomplishments of the existing mechanisms of representation or altogether call for a "de-politicized" treatment of ethnic issues by shifting the focus from political representation to a mere emphasis of cultural diversity without political representation (Ma 2007).

Concerned with policy outcomes much research has focused on the economic wellbeing of ethnic minorities and their access to social services. Especially quantitative

studies have shown that poverty is higher among ethnic minorities in China (Gustafsson, Sai 2009a) and that governmental budgets allocated for social services are lower in localities inhabited by ethnic minorities than those inhabited by ethnic Han (Zeng, Ding 2010). Although most scholars have acknowledged the positive effects of measures such as financial transfers, abolition of study fees, or preferential access for ethnic minorities to higher education, they have also shown that ethnic population continues to have lower access to social services such as education (Shen 2004; Zhu 2010; Hannum, Wang 2012). Not only human rights organizations point to the rising tensions related to these inequalities (Human Rights in China 2007), but some scholars have also warned that inequality might lead to political instability in China. Although the concept of "stability" still awaits further definition for the case of China, authors such as Dreyer (2000; 2005) and Sautman (2005) have described economic inequality, a lack of representation, and the cultural dominance of the Han in non-Han regions as a cause for local grievances.

After several decades on publishing in Chinese and non-Chinese languages on ethnic issues in China, there have been many accomplishments, but at the same time it also seems time to move on. Firstly, although ethnic studies have produced detailed insights into ethnicity and identity in China we must also see that not each policy in the ethnic field aims foremost at shaping identity. Blum's remarks from 2002 on the obsession of Western authors with identity issues in China are still valid today: "It is difficult to accept the fact that people in China can accept what appears clearly to us [non-Chinese scholars] as an unnatural, arbitrary system" (Blum 2002, pp. 1301–1302). Pointing to the state sheds a light on how the state shapes identity, but this perspective faces the risk to ignore findings of neighboring disciplines. Concerning environmental policies and educational policies that are implemented in ethnic minority areas a larger perspective on these policy fields can help to understand the structures and goals of these policies beyond the ethnic component. Even policies on education in minority languages that target ethnic communities or ethnic culture directly are embedded in policy goals of the educational system. A combined perspective on both policy goals of educational and ethnic policies enlarges the view, and arguably provides a suitable way to understand ethnic policies against their background of given institutions.

Minority language education

The goals of minority language education, heritage language education, and bilingual education have been discussed by educators and politicians, but also by academics in the fields of education, psychology, linguistics, or social sciences. Some scholars have begun to critically analyze the linguistic and cultural perspectives behind

these discussions and established categorizations of frameworks in bilingual education (García 2011; Freeman 2007; May 2008). Those advocating for the need of mother tongue education argue from a variety of perspectives. From a human linguistic rights perspective mother tongue language education is a right of linguistic minority groups, from the language endangerment perspective minority language education can prevent language death and cultural loss, and from the perspective of education sciences it has been argued that tuition in the language that students speak at home increases students' educational attainments (Fishman 1998; Sasse 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson 1995a; Baker 2006; Freeman 2007). Only few voices have been raised to argue against education in minority languages, but those who did argued that such tuition confuses students, consolidates social segregation, and generally threatens the national language usage (Duignan 1998).

For the case of China most scholars have argued in favor of what is here called minority language education or bilingual education (Lam 2005; Xiong 2004; Li 2008b; Cobbey 2007; Zhou 2012c). Some Chinese scholars argue specifically from the perspective of the state. Fang (2010, pp. 76–77), for instance, argues that bilingual education is "a need to secure national unity", that it "helps [the students] to enter mainstream society", and that it builds up students' ability for "reception of patriotism and socialism". Others, for instance organizations that conduct bilingual education in China, argue more specifically with the use of mother tongue education for students' progress in learning Chinese (SIL - East Asia Group 2010).

Analytical work has shown that China's minority language education policies are closely connected with policy goals in other areas, such as a tool in China's "language engineering" projects to propagate newly created or reformed scripts or to revitalize scripts through school education (Zhou 2003; Lam 2005). However, these approaches have also caused grievances among the targeted population, including public demonstrations, which some scholars have analyzed as "source of potentially great conflict" (Schluessel 2007, p. 272).

Through diverse case studies at different localities throughout China, academics have produced detailed insights into the outcomes of minority language education policies on educational attainments, on language usage, and on language perceptions among students and the general population (Cobbey 2007, Zhao, Zhao 2010a, 2010b; Zhou 2012c; Wang, Postiglione 2008; Teng, Wang 2011; Feng, Sunuodula 2009; Qi 2003; Tao, Yue 2002a; Xu 2012b; Tsung 2009). Many studies also include detailed comparison between the different models of bilingual education that are conducted at Chinese

schools and elaborate on the timing and the methods used in class (Tsung 2009; Dai, Cheng 2007). Although these studies have pointed to several achievements of bilingual education in China, they have also pointed to a plethora of problems, such as underfunded programs, the lack of textbooks and teachers, constantly decreasing school hours reserved for minority languages, termination after primary school, disadvantages in college entrance examinations, low support by parents, and a generally low level of usability of minority languages in the job market.

However, what these studies often lack in is an analysis of the processes between the policy formulation and the measured outcome. Many studies perceive policies as fixed programs that are implemented without changes and describe the outcomes as direct effects of these policies (Xiong 2004; Ai 2001b; Fang 2010). Under this perspective scholars have not been able to assess implementation at the school-level. The perspective of "spaces" defined by minority language policies, which students of Hornberger's (2005) ideas on the spaces for bilingual education have been actively used as an analytical framework for worldwide studies (Menken, García 2010), could support deepening the studies on China. As Chinese policy documents are comparatively vague and as the above mentioned institutional shifts in China's education system have widened the space for local curriculum decisions, it seems worthwhile to take now a close look at implementation processes against the background of specific institutions of Chinese school management in order to understand how local decisions by implementers shape the implementation of minority language education policies at Chinese schools.

Xishuangbanna in ethnic policy case studies

Research on ethnic minority policies in China has often focused on particular localities, ethnic groups, or languages as a basis for case studies. There are studies in Chinese literature on each single recognized ethnic group and also on many non-recognized ones. Journals such as the "Ethnic Research" (民族研究) publish extensively articles on ethnic issues of specific groups, and there are many book series on ethnicity and ethnic policies for individual ethnic groups available at Chinese book shops. In 2002 Blum wrote that in English-language literature not every group is represented, but that "the ethnic map is being filled in" (Blum 2002, p. 1289). After more than ten years the number of research outputs has increased, and today it seems already impossible to conduct a comprehensive list of academic work on all of these groups.[7]

[7] For a summary of research in English language on ethnicity in China organized by ethnic groups see footnote no. 1 in Blum (2002, p. 1289), and for a newer account refer to West (2009). See also journals such as "Asian Ethnicity".

Xishuangbanna, a prefecture in China's Southwestern province Yunnan, has been a location for a considerable number of studies on ethnicity and languages. Besides overall historical accounts and descriptions on the culture of selected individual ethnic groups (Yan 1999; Yu 2006) much research has been devoted to questions of ethnic belonging in this multi-ethnic locality. Especially ethnicity (and sometimes cross-border ethnicity) of the Dai as a group with a pre-revolutionary ethnic distinction that was contested and remodeled by the identification project has been in the focus of ethnic studies in Xishuangbanna (Hsieh 1995; Borchert 2008; Panyagaew 2010). Besides these basic accounts of ethnicity scholars have analyzed the effects of, for instance, urbanization, migration, or agricultural changes on ethnic interactions (Cai 1997; Hansen 2005; Sturgeon 2012; Xu et al. 2014; Evans 2000).

In addition to these rather general changes in society and economy in Xishuangbanna, scholars have identified cultural policies as a major factor in shaping ethnic cultures. Studies that have analyzed the cultural production between state and non-state sectors have brought to light effects of state activities of transforming images of cultures in Xishuangbanna for the purpose of branding the region externally as exotic tourist destination, but also to propagate ideas of multiculturalism towards Xishuangbanna's population (Komlosy 2009; Li 2010). Furthermore, the renewed state activism towards promotion of selected ethnic minority cultural items, including support for the religious revival of Theravada Buddhism, has been interpreted as means of the state to present itself as benevolent administrator of ethnic issues (McCarthy 2009). Quite in the opposite direction, other studies have investigated into the reactions of the people whose culture is branded, marketized, or promoted through these measures. Davis (2003; 2005), for instance, who conducted in-depth ethnographic studies on the cultural production among the Dai found that behind the public "front stage" cultural production by Han and by Dai who "have learned to present themselves in ways that Chinese officials (and tourists) would find appealing" (Davis 2005, p. 177) there are also lively modes of "back stage" cultural production that include the recitation of century-old music.

Education, and especially bilingual education, has been analyzed by several scholars as a means to engage ethnic minority populations with the state and with majority society. Through detailed accounts of the history of education in Xishuangbanna (Wang, Mi 1998; Hansen 1999) we possess now an understanding that education conducted specifically for ethnic minorities and organized by organizations such as Buddhist temples has been and still continues to be a major element in education in

Xishuangbanna. However, accounts of this type of education have also brought to light the changes in the modes of tuition and the difficulties that conflicts with school education create for students. Hansen (1999), for instance, based on officials' statements about perceived differences in "developmental levels" between Dai and Han culture in education, identifies stigmatization towards ethnic minorities in Xishuangbanna's schools. Luo (2011), informed by the discussion on modernization ideologies in Chinese education, describes that the double burden of "modern" Chinese and "traditional" Dai education builds up burdens for students in terms of time pressure, stress, and uncertainty about their own cultural standing.

There is comparatively plentiful official data on minority language education in this region. Official statistics of the province, prefecture, and county Bureaus of Education regularly also include some data of bilingual education and indicate for instance the number of students who receive education in minority languages, the number of teachers who are active in this field, or the number of textbook volumes produced (see Table 1).

Title in English	**Title in Chinese**	**Periods of publishing**	**Examples of data sets**
China Statistical Yearbook	中国统计年鉴	yearly	overall schools, classes, students, teachers
Educational Statistics Yearbook of China	中国教育统计年鉴	yearly	overall schools, classes, students, teachers
China Educational Finance Statistical Yearbook	中国教育经费统计年鉴	yearly	overall educational expenses
Yunnan Yearbook	云南年鉴	yearly	overall schools, classes, students, teachers textbook approval province-wide programs research activities
Xishuangbanna Yearbook	西双版纳年鉴	yearly	overall schools, classes, students, teachers prefecture-wide programs research activities
Xishuangbanna Records of Education	西双版纳傣族自治州教育志	irregular, last edition: 2010	overall schools, classes, students, teachers students and teachers by ethnicity prefecture-wide programs students and teachers in bilingual classes
Jinghong Yearbook	景洪年鉴	yearly	overall students, classes, teachers city-wide programs research activities
Mengla Yearbook	勐腊年鉴	yearly	overall students, classes, teachers county-wide programs research activities
Menghai Yearbook	勐海年鉴	yearly	overall students, classes, teachers county-wide programs research activities

Table 1: Sources for official statistics on education in China from national to county level with relevance to Xishuangbanna. Note: Individual volumes will be referenced in later chapters.

However, there are also several caveats to this official data. Firstly, since educational statistics in China generally only seldom indicate ethnicity of students or teachers there are limits to analysis for instance of educational budgets or educational attainments in relation to ethnic share of school population. Secondly, official statistics in Xishuangbanna, similar to other educational statistics in China (see Henze 1992) often

suffer from caveats in clarity of definitions. The statistical yearbooks on school numbers in Xishuangbanna, for instance, sometimes list small school points as separate schools, but sometimes they list them under the administrative central schools. These caveats prevent comparison to some degree. Together with caveats concerning the quality of statistical data due to political pressures (see in-depth discussion below) these statistics can be used for background information, but they must be complemented by additional research sources.

In addition to official statistics scholars have contributed case-study research results on minority language tuition at schools in Xishuangbanna and on its outcomes. There are descriptions of prevalence and models of bilingual education in Xishuangbanna authored by university and college researchers (Qiu, Yang 2000; Qi 2003; Xu 2012b) and by educators or officials who work in ethnic minority language education in Xishuangbanna (Dao 2001, Ai 2001a, 2001b; Dao 2006). Both groups of authors analyze the current situation of bilingual education at schools in Xishuangbanna, sometimes under reference to official statistics, and focus on the achievements and current problems, such as a lack of teachers or a lack of school hours assigned to minority language education. These authors generally agree on the need of minority language education for students in Xishuangbanna and they express satisfaction with the overall policies, although they also note that minority language education could be improved. Specific project descriptions by activists in those social organizations that conduct bilingual education programs in Xishuangbanna have added more details to the picture (Cobbey 2007).

Some studies have aimed to address the effects of bilingual education on language skills, usage, and attitudes among speakers statistically (Xue 1999; Wang 2001). One study, for instance, that compared Dai language skills and language choices between students of bilingual classes and Chinese-only classes at several primary schools in Xishuangbanna indicates that bilingual education has large effects on students' Dai knowledge and skills, and that students undergo a process of language change towards Chinese in accordance to language usage outside and inside schools (Zhao, Zhao 2010a, 2010b). These results point to the strong effects of bilingual education policy implementation on language preservation, but they also show that language choice and usability in schools depend on more variables than merely single programs.

Other scholars have analyzed bilingual education in Xishuangbanna much more critically when they scrutinized the ideology behind bilingual language policies. Davis (2003), for instance, remarks that tuition in the reformed or new Dai script at schools

drives Dai speakers away from the traditional and religious literature written in the traditional or old Dai script. Hansen (1999) argues more generally that preference towards Chinese over Dai, as expressed in curricula, officials' prejudices, or classroom practices, creates an environment for acculturation of ethnic minority students, rather than active development of the usability of minority languages.

This literature has contributed to establishing insights into both the policies and the outcomes of bilingual minority language education in Xishuangbanna. However, there are also several research gaps. Firstly, there has been comparatively much examination of minority language education in Dai, but only few studies (Hansen 1999) included Hani, Jinuo, or one of the other official and unofficial ethnic minority groups and languages in Xishuangbanna. When literature discusses ethnicity this limitation seems to reflect the regional approach of ethnic representation in the Chinese political system that attributes regions to selected ethnic groups, so that scholars in these regions tend to focus on issues of these selected groups only. In the area of ethnic minority language education, however, the focus on Dai language education under neglect of education in the other languages, seems to derive more from the characteristics of bilingual programs in Xishuangbanna that almost exclusively target Dai speakers. Here, I argue, the focus on Dai language education studies in Xishuangbanna can be justified. Although it is worthwhile discussing why there are no policies and programs specifically for Hani, Jinuo and the other minorities in terms of questions on policy implementation Dai language programs offer more material for analysis of specific program designs, policy instruments, or outcomes than hardly existing programs for other languages in Xishuangbanna do.

Secondly, there has been little engagement between the political science literatures and the ethnographic literatures. Previous studies on minority language education in Xishuangbanna have generally chosen not to use frameworks of policy analysis and policy implementation, but instead focused on ethnographic frameworks of identity production. Apart from pointing to motivations of "the state" as an imagined monolithic block, this literature does not specifically explain the dynamics and complexities of policy making and implementation. This leads to the awkward situation that we know much about policy goals in Xishuangbanna and about the outcomes, but only little about the processes that happen in between.

In sum, literature has contributed already considerably to our understanding of minority language education policies and outcomes in China, but there is a gap in grasping decisions made during the implementation processes at schools. The

comparatively plentiful quantitative and qualitative data on Xishuangbanna can build a basis for research in this direction.

1.2 Design and methodology of the study

Considering the findings and shortcomings of the current literature I have developed a research question and several subsequent hypotheses that combine both the bottom-up perspective of implementers' decision making on ethnic minority language education policies with the institutional settings at Chinese school management. In order to investigate this research question I have conducted a case study analysis on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. In this section I will outline the research question, the variables, and hypotheses of this study, before I will provide an overview on the case study design, on the fieldwork that I have conducted in Xishuangbanna, and on the methodology and hermeneutics of data analysis that have informed this thesis. In the last paragraphs I will discuss ethical guidelines and specific issues for this thesis.

1.2.1 Research question, hypothesis, and innovative approach

As the literature review above has indicated we now have a well-developed knowledge that decisions of street-level bureaucrats matter largely in policy implementation. We also know that the state uses institutions to steer ethnic minority policy implementation in schools, but that these institutions are subject to change and diversification. However, the literature review has also shown that we lack in understanding the exact processes of decision making at school level when policies demand localization and diversification, but institutions continue to require standardization and accountability. In regard to the case of minority language education policy implementation in Xishuangbanna, a suitable example that can build up on diverse programs for ethnic minority language education at schools and a comparatively rich data basis, I propose the following **research question** for this thesis:

How do institutional settings of school and curriculum management affect the implementation of minority language education policies at school level in Xishuangbanna?

The **variables** in this research question can be summarized with the following few statements (all definitions will be introduced in greater depth in the subsequent chapters):

As independent variable I define institutional settings of school and curriculum management in China at those schools in Xishuangbanna that offer minority language education. Considering the perspective of actor-centered institutionalists who view

institutions as a combination of the rules sanctioned by governments and courts and the social norms that require specific behavior of actors, I will thus include both the rules of school and curriculum management through, for instance, evaluations, placements, or textbook distribution on the one side, and the social or professional norms that exist on correct behavior of school personnel in China on the other side. Several of the institutional settings for management of minority language education at schools are general rules that can be found at other schools throughout China as well, but some of these institutions differ for minority language education. One task for this thesis will be to carve out these specific institutions and to show their manifestations at schools.

As dependent variable I define the implementation outputs of public policies for formal ethnic minority language education, that is either tuition in one of the non-Chinese languages in China as content matter (with instructions in Chinese) or tuition that employs these languages as language of instruction in class. The focus will be on public schools (understood as schools that are funded and managed by the state) that ever have or currently do conduct minority language education.

As intervening variable I will scrutinize in this thesis the decisions of school personnel on the implementation of minority language policies. Implementation of policies will be understood as "putting policies into practice" specifically at schools, as these are the most local part of government bureaucracy. With the terms school personnel I refer to everybody who works at schools, but especially I refer to teachers engaged in teaching this type of education, and to school administrators such as principals and vice-principals who are involved in organizing minority language education at school-level, whereas under the focus of tuition decisions party secretaries at schools will be only marginally discussed. With the term decisions on the implementation of minority language education policies I understand all those decisions by school personnel that affect the implementation of these policies through schooling, from organizing students, to assigning classrooms, to content choice.

Although in this thesis I will also briefly introduce other actors such as staff at Bureaus of Education and the Ethnic Affairs Commissions[8], as well as parents and students, I will discuss these actors here merely as source for input for school-based actors, but in order to focus on decisions at school level I will not scrutinize for instance government-internal bargaining processes or motivations for parents' actions in depth. Nevertheless, through analysis of interactions of school personnel with the educational administration, with students, and with parents the effects of these actors' actions on

[8] See remarks on the translation of these two agencies in chapter 4.

schools will be constantly included in the thesis, and will form a major part of the conclusion.

Locally, this study focuses on Xishuangbanna, a prefecture in Southwest China, that not only has a special geographical position and political situation that has been described as one of the “margins of China” (Sturgeon 2013), “upland socialist South-East Asia” (Turner 2013) or as a part of “Zomia” (Scott 2009), but that is also a region with some of the most vivid bilingual education programs in China. In terms of time period, I will focus in this study on the situation of minority language education at the time of my fieldwork visits to Xishuangbanna in the years 2011 to 2013, but I will provide also background information on the historical development of the current situation.

My **hypothesis** to this research questions has several parts:

Firstly, I argue that decisions by school staff have large effects on the implementation of minority language policies at schools. Although Chinese schools as part of state bureaucracy are closely bound to state ideology low mechanisms of personnel evaluation in minority language education as a measure to allow for local diversity open up larger spaces for school-based decision making in this school subject than in other subjects. The specific mix of ethnic language policy requirements at schools as state agencies on the one side and low accountability in minority language education on the other side presses school personnel to implement these policies, but it also allows for discretion to shape implementation by decisions on tuition or on usage of resources.

Secondly, I propose that under this discretion teachers and school leaders orient decisions largely to their own interests and beliefs. Under the given absence of guidelines for minority language education in Xishuangbanna school staff is pressured to interpret vaguely formulated policies based on their own understandings of, for instance, the usage of minority language education for students’ educational attainments or for the protection of local culture. I hypothesize that school staff uses this discretion to shape policy implementation according to their own material and non-material interests and beliefs, including professional beliefs of their role in supporting students’ careers and beliefs of the value of ethnic minority cultures. I argue thus that ethnic or professional differences within school staff result in different decisions.

Thirdly, I argue that these specific processes of decision making produce more diversity in minority language education than in other school subjects. The various decisions that individual teachers and principals at schools make on the implementation of minority language education policies combine to a large variety in tuition models between schools.

This study follows an **innovative approach** to the study of minority language education policy implementation in China. Whereas previous literature has either analyzed ethnic minority language education merely from the perspective of government ethnic ideology in policy formulation or from the perspective of outcomes of minority language education programs at schools (see literature review), with this thesis I will introduce a specific perspective on the implementation decisions at schools. For this I will use a framework that combines analysis of street-level bureaucratic implementation decisions with analysis of institutional settings of accountability systems at schools. To my knowledge, with this thesis the street-level bureaucratic framework is for the first time employed to analysis of minority language education in China. I expect that this framework will produce unique insight into the implementation decisions of school personnel at Chinese schools, which previous literature was unable to grasp.

The **objective** of this study is to develop a detailed picture of implementation processes of minority language education policies at Chinese schools, which informs theory development in policy implementation studies. This explorative study belongs to the heuristic type of case studies which "inductively identify new variables, hypothesis, causal mechanisms, and causal paths" (George, Bennett 2005, p. 75). Consequentially, this study is not intended to depict minority language education in all its varieties in China, but to deliver insight into causal mechanisms of policy implementation under the specific conditions of school management at the observed schools. The findings from this study will contribute to the development and refinement of theoretical approaches to study policy implementation from a bottom-up street-level bureaucracy perspective.

1.2.2 Case study design

The following study will approach the research question by analysis of a case study. I will analyze the institutions of school management and the policies on minority language education policies in China, and I will analyze in depth, based on examples of schools in Xishuangbanna, how school personnel perceive both, how they react, and how they legitimize their decisions. For this approach I employ case study analysis.

Benefits and trade-offs of case studies

Case study research is a suitable approach to study the questions outlined above. Case studies as "the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases" (Gerring 2007, p. 20) are typically small-N studies that use qualitative methods. Case study research has specific benefits compared to large-N cross-case studies, but it also comes with certain trade-offs.

Summarizing the case study approaches that Gerring (2007) and George and Bennett (2005) discuss, the benefits of case studies are in understanding heterogeneous and complex situations. Case studies are useful for approaching a new phenomenon to generate hypotheses, as they allow to consider more details; they can establish internal validity of a causal relationship within a case; they can produce insights into causes or patterns as they allow for deep analysis and thick description; they are suitable to grasp heterogeneity and complex causalities that cross-case studies cannot reflect; and, finally, they are a choice at hand when there is rare data on the whole population.

At the same time, however, this approach is unlikely to falsify hypotheses or to establish representativeness within a population. Nevertheless, as George and Bennett (2005, p. 30) argue: "Case researchers do not aspire to select cases that are directly 'representative' of diverse populations and they usually do not and should not make such claims." Instead, case study research should be seen as part of the larger kaleidoscope of studies that can provide results within their parameters. To situate case study research it might be useful to combine small-N case studies with a literature-based introduction into the larger population of cases or to combine "a more superficial analysis conducted on a larger sample" with "an intensive case study" as Gerring (2007, p. 22) recommends to use the advantages of a case study but at the same time to not lose sight of the whole population of cases. I will follow this advice in my own case study research by combining an outlook on the overall situation of the population with an in-depth analysis of three cases.

A case study on schools in Xishuangbanna

In my study I will analyze minority language education policy implementation at schools in Xishuangbanna. This analysis will contain two parts. Firstly, I will analyze in detail the policies for ethnic minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Xishuangbanna is one of China's regions with comparatively plentiful policies for ethnic minority language education that include instruments from textbook provision, to model school projects, to teacher trainings. An analysis of policies from province to county government agencies will establish not only a picture of the policy goals and implementation modes, but it will also present the requirements that Bureaus of Education forward to schools.

Secondly, I will analyze decision making on policy implementation at schools in Xishuangbanna against the background of the relations between schools and the Bureaus of Education. According to official data some 16 percent of schools in Xishuangbanna currently conduct minority language education in Xishuangbanna and an additional

unknown number of schools have formerly conducted such education here (see all sources and discussion of data in later chapters). Within these 50 to 150 schools minority language education is conducted under different institutional settings. Although all schools as public educational agencies are part of government bureaucracy they differ with regard to how the government supports, requires, and controls implementation of minority language policies here.

On a continuum between no support for minority language education and most possible support, the schools analyzed in this thesis will be grouped into three types: firstly, schools that I will call "showpiece minority language education schools" with support by large programs that not only offer resources, but that also largely interfere in curriculum planning; secondly, schools that I will call "resource supported minority language education schools" where programs allocate few resources to schools for a specific subject, but don't interference in curriculum planning; and thirdly, schools that I will call "left-alone minority language education schools" that formerly conducted minority language education with support by programs, but where this support officially or unofficially has been terminated in the meantime. This distinction is helpful for understanding the diversity of situations of minority language at schools in Xishuangbanna, which will be in the center of the first part of this study. It must be understood, however, that this distinction is not a clear cut one, but a provisional tool to view different stages on a continuum.

Following a trend in school research to focus on documentary and ethnographic analysis of case study schools (Böhme 2008), I will specify my project through documentary analysis of decision making at three case-study schools. These schools will be selected according to what Gerring (2007, p. 89) describes as the "diverse case" technique of case study selection: choosing cases that "illuminate the full range of variation". Although representativeness in this technique cannot be compared to cross-case studies, it combines the advantages of indicating the range of possible cases with in-depth analysis of individual cases. Since randomization with the purpose of representativeness for case studies is generally unreliable (Gerring 2007, p. 87) I selected three case study schools after review of several schools in Xishuangbanna according to explanatory character for the research question. In order to balance depth and breadth of the study I will analyze decision making at these schools, but will include further observations of a dozen or so other schools in Xishuangbanna.

1.2.3 Fieldwork at schools in Xishuangbanna

For my research project I have chosen qualitative methods for case study analysis. These are, according to Gerring (2007, p. 20), in "methodological affinity" to case study research. During a period of altogether nine months from September 2011 to March 2012 and April 2013 to May 2013 I conducted fieldwork mostly in different localities in Xishuangbanna (from the urban areas of Jinghong to the rural parts of the prefecture) and for introductory purposes also in the national capital Beijing and in Yunnan's provincial capital Kunming. I employed three methods for gathering data: collection of written materials, interviews, and classroom observation. Here I will introduce these three ways of obtaining data, before I will conclude with a summary of the outcomes and problems that I encountered when I employed these methods in the field.

Access to the field through schools in ethnic minority areas in China

Gaining access to informants in China has been described as holding specific barriers for scholars. With reference to the highland regions of China, Laos, and Vietnam, a region that Turner (2013) has called "upland socialist Asia", Petit (2013) argues that doing interviews in authoritarian states suffers from specific difficulties, such as the barriers to gaining research permits, the dependency on officials and their contacts, or the censorship in project descriptions. Arguably fieldwork in those regions in China that are inhabited largely by non-Han groups or that have obtained official "autonomous status" (see detailed discussion in later chapter) is affected by these barriers even more severely, since authorities might fear that the researcher either is interested in uncovering ethnically-related unrest that the authoritarian state wants to cover, or that the researcher is himself or herself a source for such unrest. In order to deal with these potential barriers it seems wise to rely on multiple sources for fieldwork access at the same time.

In my case, access to the field was provided through several ways. Firstly, I was able to gain support from researchers at the Minzu University, Renmin University, and Normal University in Beijing, who not only through official invitations but also through recommendations to former local research partners opened first doors for me. Officials at government agencies in Xishuangbanna have been a second channel to gather information, either as interview partners or as providers of contacts to schools. This approach to do research "in the footsteps of the Communist party", as Hansen (2006) has called it, made interviews with government officials and school leaders possible who otherwise might have denied interviews, but at the same time this approach also faced the risk that interview partners feel obliged to confine their answers to the official lines of

argumentation. To counter this risk I not only assured them that their answers will not be reflected to their superiors, but I also employed a third method to gain access to interview partners at schools. Through recommendation by friends I was able to meet informants in a less formal way at villagers' homes or at the school ground, where my informants often welcomed me, volunteered to answer my questions, and allowed to visit the schools. Many times school staff accepted my offer to teach English classes in order to gain closer contact with both students and teachers. Through a combination of all three roads I established deep contacts to people in Xishuangbanna from diverse background, such as students, parents, grandparents, teachers, principals, government officials, and monks, who provided me with insights into their perceptions of minority language education in Xishuangbanna.

Collection of written materials

In order to gain an overview firstly on the most recent academic research on minority language and bilingual education in China and secondly on the available data on the case study region, I collected a vast range of literature at bookshops, online, and in libraries in Kunming and Beijing. In addition I collected official local government statistics, policy documents, and newspaper articles on bilingual education in Xishuangbanna. Furthermore, during my visits to selected schools in Xishuangbanna, I was also provided with documents describing school-internal procedures and student data including test results. Finally, my interview partners gave me school textbooks on the core subject in minority languages, specifically edited school textbooks for language education, and locally produced textbooks on so called "local knowledge" about the cultural and ethnic history of Xishuangbanna.

School visits and classroom observations

The second part of my fieldwork activities in Xishuangbanna consisted of visits to 33 schools, kindergartens, colleges, and universities with the major focus on primary schools. Here I observed classes, made intensive notes, collected additional material and took photos of each institution. These visits can be divided into two schemes: firstly, short-term visits for a duration of half a day to one day in order to gain a broader overview of the situation of the educational institutions in the prefecture and secondly long-term visits to selected case study schools with durations of three to seven days each.

The short-term visits brought me to a large variety of mostly rural schools in Xishuangbanna. These visits were partly arranged by Chinese advisors and friends, and partly arranged by myself. Although differing in detail, they often followed similar

procedures, namely formal interviews with the school principals or kindergarten heads, followed by a guided tour through the school and formal or informal talks with individual teachers. Furthermore, I was often asked to teach English sessions, which I happily did, since it gave me the opportunity to engage with students in formalized, but still fruitful discussions, most often in Chinese.

After gaining an overview of the situation in the prefecture I conducted intensive case-studies at three primary schools in different localities of Xishuangbanna. Here, I stayed at each school three to seven days observing classes and interviewing teachers and students at school and at home. Becoming part of the school by teaching English and by regularly sitting in the classes, I observed the implementation of the language curriculum, student-teacher communication, living environment of the students, daily life at school and so forth. Following examples of many other scholars who have conducted research on education in relation with ethnic issues through class room observation in China (e.g. Hansen 1999; Schoenhals 2001; Luo 2011).

My analysis at the schools covered four main interests: implementation of formal tuition in minority languages and informal bilingual language instructions in class; processes and problems of learning Chinese by non-Han students in school; language choices inside and outside the classroom; and liberties of school personnel and students to influence curriculum and classroom activities. Additionally, I collected data on student performance in regular school exams. Despite the limited validity of exams and grades, these lists in combination with teachers' remarks on individual students allow analysis of student performance in relation to ethnicity and mother tongue.

Interviews

Conducting interviews has been one of the main methods in my fieldwork. I conducted interviews with more than 100 respondents in Xishuangbanna on issues of minority languages education here (see Table 27 in appendix).[9] These interviews have been conducted in analytical cycles, which means that I have approached some interview partners for several times, with breaks in between to review the questions and answers (Froschauer, Lueger 2003). In Kvale's (2008) differentiation between the factual and the discursive goals of interviews, these interviews followed two purposes: on the one hand, they aimed at gaining a factual overview of the schools and the influences that actor groups have on the decision process; on the other hand, they served as a tool to extract the actors' perspectives within contrasting discourses. The informants can be divided into

[9] In this paper I will indicate the ethnicity of interview partners as official registration, but specify language skills and language attitudes on an individual basis.

three groups, namely experts, involved actors, and educational recipients. Interviews with partners from each category have their particular goals. However, some informants may fit into more than one category, such as school principals who are experts in school administration, but who often also teach.

As the first group of interviews I conducted expert interviews with officials and academics in China. Expert interviews, which according to Gläser and Laudel (2010) target on informants' knowledge and insights, are an efficient method of collecting official statements, but especially in the case of government officials there is the risk that official statements conceal personal opinions of interview partners (Berry 2002). I used expert interviews to target government officials and administrative staff at the Educational Bureaus for collecting data on governmental programs, regulations, and policy documents. Additionally, I have conducted expert interviews with Chinese academic scholars in order to gain information about recent research projects and to situate my own research project within current academic discussions in China.

Through formal interviews with altogether twelve educational officers of the Bureaus of Education and the Ethnic Affairs Commissions from Yunnan Province level to Xishuangbanna Prefecture level to Jinghong, Menghai, and Mengla County/City level and with several members of Chinese social organizations or international NGOs, I gained insights into the activities of the respective governmental agency in terms of promoting minority language teaching and implementing bilingual programs for schools, such as editing, publishing and distribution of textbooks, the arrangement of teacher trainings, and the evaluation of minority language tuition programs. As a matter of fact, all officers for bilingual programs in Xishuangbanna at the prefecture level and below are Dai, which might be a factor in explaining the strong privileges of Dai tuition vis-à-vis the languages of other ethnic minorities in Xishuangbanna. Considering that the existence of bilingual school programs depends here strongly on the administrative leaders' commitments, it was rewarding to examine these actors' influences and interests.

The second group of informants is comprised of school personnel in Xishuangbanna who do or do not conduct education in minority languages. Principals and vice-principals were often my first counterparts, since my research at school depended on their permit. At most of the times, they welcomed my research, sometimes even arranged further interviews with teachers and other informants, provided me with basic school statistics, and explained their own roles in setting language educational strategies and rules at their schools. In order to gain information about teachers' abilities to shape arrangements at schools through language decisions in the classroom, I have interviewed

at large numbers of teachers each visited school and kindergarten. I have discussed with them not only their evaluation of the respective school and individual subjects such as Dai language classes, but also their liberties, boundaries and strategies for decision making on teaching. Many teachers were more than willing to help me understanding their situations in the schools. Several teachers utilized these talks as a means of comforting their own frustrations with the schooling situation, with students or parents. The most fruitful interviews were on the one side those with teachers who officially teach Dai, Bulang, or Hani language, as these provided invaluable insights not only in the needs and obstacles of language minority language programs at school, but also on their own role in shaping the respective tuition. On the other side, teachers who face language barriers to students of non-Han mother tongue have been sources for understanding informal bilingual strategies in class beyond the official programs.

Since the bilingual training of teachers is a crucial issue for success or failure of minority language tuition programs and since teachers mentioned such training repeatedly as a decisive factor in their career I also approached teacher training colleges. I interviewed lecturers for Dai language at the Xishuangbanna Teacher College and the Yunnan University of Nationalities and lecturers for Hani language from the Hani Research Association. At the teacher college, I additionally interviewed college students of a degree program who are going to be kindergarten teachers. These interviews with future kindergarten teachers were not only informative about teachers' attitudes towards minority cultures and languages, but even more about the limits of choice in study programs.

Students as the recipients of education and thus being most directly affected by educational decisions were the third group in schools that I approached in order to understand their positions and interests on minority language education. Focussing on students in primary schools, but also interviewing several groups of students from middle schools and high schools, I engaged in plentiful discussions. I employed two methods for interviewing students: formal group discussion in class and informal talks after class. In class, I made use of the request by the schools to teach English and "foreign culture" to their students. After some English tuition, I was able to ask questions about their feelings towards school and especially towards Dai language classes. The second mode of engaging with students was through interviews outside the classroom. Constantly being surrounded by students, I was able to engage in several discussions with smaller groups of students without the teachers or parents being present. Students eagerly showed me

their campus while we discussed issues of ethnicity, language usage, and perceptions of their schools.

Finally, I also approached parents, grandparents, or siblings of ethnic minority and Han students in order to investigate into their perceptions and decisions in terms of educational choices for the children in their families. At their homes, during work in the fields, and also when they waited to pick up their children after school, I interviewed family members of students who I met in the schools. Many informants in this group welcomed me and were willing to answer my questions, especially when I was introduced through mutual friends. In fact, not a few parents were in anger about educational decisions that their children were expelled to, such as the obligation for Han children to study Dai writing, and they eagerly wanted me to write down their complaints into my note book.

Fieldwork outcomes and problems

The above mentioned methods proved useful for generating a large variety of different types of data for this thesis. My shelves are now filled with secondary studies on minority language education in China and with textbooks in these languages, I have read the most relevant regulations, I have collected files full of statistics on student results at my case study schools, I have hundreds of pictures on schools and schooling stored, and last but not least I have interview material that Chinese assistants have transcribed and that I have coded with the software Maxqda.

Luckily, many of the difficulties that I had anticipated did not materialize. Firstly, it proved to be easier than I had thought to find interview partners. Through the three strategies of gaining access to the field described above I was able to speak to a variety of interview partners from different professions, ethnic backgrounds, and ages. The "sensibility" of issues such as ethnic relations, governmental attitudes in dealing with ethnic conflicts, or simply the issue what a teacher is to do when he or she can't or doesn't want to fulfill demands from superiors were for many of my interview partners no reason to not speak about them. Quite the contrary, for many interview partners the interviews have been a chance to leave off steam and to speak about troubles that they have experienced. Sometimes they expressed the hope that things might better when research makes them public. Language issues, to name a second concern, have also not materialized as a problem for doing interviews. Most interview partners spoke Chinese (which I am fluent in) and for those elderly people and very young children who only spoke Dai, Hani or one of the other languages (that I unfortunately don't understand) there were always people around willing to translate.

On the other side, the methods also encountered several limits. Firstly, the method of gaining contacts through the "snowball method" (one interview partner recommends interviews with other interview partners) was extremely helpful to gain access to many and diverse interview partners, but combined with the not always easy travel conditions in Xishuangbanna and the large distances between schools this try-and-error method of approaching interview partners based on recommendations without knowing much about their position or the quality of data that they could offer proved also to be extremely time consuming. Secondly and still related to the issue of time, the schedule of my fieldwork visits needed adjustment to the school schedules in Xishuangbanna. Not only had I to consider the various festivals of the diverse ethnic groups for scheduling interviews, but also the summer and winter breaks of schools. As most of my interview partners at schools asked to schedule interviews merely during the semester, I had to carefully adjust the schedule to these demands. Thirdly, for some interview partners it proved necessary to schedule multiple interviews, as especially officials at the Bureaus of Education were initially reluctant to provide more information than I already knew from official publications, and only after several visits they had developed enough trust and understanding of my research interests that they were willing to discuss issues such as problems of their work, their own perceptions of contacts to school personnel, and even the quality of the official statistics.

Additionally, the data produced through this fieldwork also must be seen under certain caveats. Firstly, due to limits in time of research and in access I was not able to interview government officials at higher hierarchical positions than the Province Educational Bureau. Neither the national Ministry of Education or the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, nor members of the People's Congresses were willing to agree on interviews. Due to this limitation I am unable to assess internal bargaining processes on minority language education programs between governmental agencies. Secondly, I was unable to measure the outcomes of bilingual education, for instance student language attainments. Such research would have required quantitative methods and very different approaches. However, since my research question firstly aims at decision making within schools and not on decision making with the governmental administration and since it secondly also aims at the outputs of decisions in the classroom, but not on the linguistic or educational outcome for the students, both issues are rather minor caveats.

1.2.4 Data analysis and hermeneutics

The fieldwork produced data of immense use for this thesis. Before I will start elaborating on the results that these materials produced, a few remarks are in order on

the quality and reliability of these data, and on how I have proceeded in analyzing this data.

Quality of the data

Official data on minority language education in China, in Xishuangbanna, and at the case study schools serves as important background information for my study. The data provided in yearbooks and other official statistical compilations gives basic information for instance about the numbers of schools, students, or teachers who are involved in minority language education. Specific data on case study schools adds to these data sets and fills at least some of the gaps of yearbook data (see both above).

However, there are also caveats in order in analyzing this data with respect to the limited reliability of official Chinese statistical data on education generally, and minority language education, specifically. Some scholars[10] have criticized official Chinese data mining for lacking accuracy due to a lack of training for personnel in the statistical departments (Yu 2013), others have argued that the structure of statistical data acquisition in China prevents control of central authorities over local acquisition preferences (Moser 2009). Reliability of educational statistics must be further questioned when data is used to prove that required quotas in the education system are fulfilled. According not only to school personnel, but also to officers within the Educational Bureaus the pressure to fulfill schooling rates of 100 percent makes leaders, village heads, and local educational bureaus deploy measures to forge statistics, e.g. by calling students who already dropped out from schooling specifically back for the days of school evaluations. Additionally, official statistics in education often lack in clarity of central variables, such as a distinction between gross and net schooling rates (Henze 1992, p. 155).

In sum, educational statistics on educational data in China suffices for interpretation, as long as the researcher is aware of the caveats and employs measures to counter these caveats, as Henze (1992) argues. For my project I have employed three measures to improve the usability of statistical data. Firstly, I have questioned the data's plausibility through comparison with data from other regions in China and in some cases through comparison with data from other countries. Secondly, I have investigated into the modes of official data acquisition for those statistics that I use. Through formal and informal discussions with students, school personnel, and staff of the Bureaus of Education I was able to understand some of the modes of how official statistics were

[10] Other scholars, such as Ban (2012) or Qi (2003), use data without any further consideration or even mentioning the origin of official statistics.

forged. In one case staff of the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education even provided me with the "real" numbers that the Bureau established before it was pressured to polish them. Thirdly, I have balanced the official statistics with in-depth investigation at school-level, where I have not only collected data from individual schools, but where I have also discussed the contrasts between official data and school situations with school personnel.

Similar to statistical analysis qualitative data also must strive for validity and relevance. In order to secure the validity of my case study I combined several tools that handbook authors such as Silverman (2010) recommend. Firstly, I employed method and data triangulation through comparison of the case study analysis with other schools in the region and through combining the three methods observation, interviews with teachers, and review of official documents. Secondly, throughout the data analysis, I have employed data respondent validation through discussing interpretations with interview participants, with non-involved school teachers, and with other scholars in the field. Thirdly, I carefully added analysis of rhetoric to the analysis of "facts" when I not only discussed the factual situation of minority language education with my interview partners, but also discussed their choice of wording with them.

Analytical methods

Hermeneutics as the method to interpret data can denote to anything between purely depicting what has been found at the ground to enriching the material by putting it into context. However, as Willig (2013, p. 137) writes, "every interpretation is underpinned by assumptions which the interpreter makes about what is important and what is worth paying attention to, as well as what can be known about and through the data."

In my analysis of the data I follow the "grounded theory" approach insofar as I treat the material as source to generate theories, I have conducted circular fieldwork of data gathering, analysis, and again data gathering. At the same time, however, I have also used coding paradigms based on the street-level bureaucracy policy implementation decision making framework outlined above to structure the material. Codes such as interpretation of policies, interactions, decisions, and justification of decisions have guided my analysis. Through several rounds of work with the software Maxqda I have firstly coded the interview material under "structural coding methods" to gather topic lists based on research questions, secondly I have coded statements by informants under the "evaluation coding method" to identify participant positions, and thirdly I have coded observations at schools under the "descriptive coding method" (see for coding methods Saldana 2012). The categories deriving from these codes have guided my analysis.

A special issue in analyzing interviews has been to "decipher" the differences between official and unofficial language codes in the interviews that Thøgersen (2006) has described as a typical linguistic problem for researchers on China. Through additionally discussing the material with students, informants, and research assistants in China I have confirmed and enriched my understandings and translations of the material.

1.2.5 Ethics

The last words in this methodological part shall be devoted to ethical issues, since in a certain way these bridge the data collection and analysis. Ethical codes of conduct in planning, conducting, and publishing research have become standard for all major academic disciplines (Christians 2005). For this research I have adhered to the codes of conduct by the German Research Foundation DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft 2013) and the University of Duisburg-Essen (Universität Duisburg-Essen 7/16/2004), which stipulate, for instance, that researchers are obliged to discuss remaining uncertainties in their research results, to honestly indicate contributions by others, and to document all results. In addition, there are specific requirements for interview-based projects, as handbooks on qualitative research discuss (e.g. Miller et al. 2012; Christians 2005). Silverman (2010, pp. 153–154) summarizes that the most prominent ethical demands for qualitative research are "voluntary participation and the right to withdraw; protection of research participants; assessment of potential benefits and risks to participants; obtaining informed consent; not doing harm." Additionally, ethics must also be contextualized to the different research disciplines, as one author (Russell 2013, p. 113) reminds us: "Ethics is not first and foremost prescriptive, but better characterized as integrative, inter-disciplinary and interpretive." This contextualization must consider, for instance, the cognitive abilities of the interview partners and situational factors such as power structures during the interview. In order to contextualize the relevant ethical issues, I will here (in addition to the general ethical concerns outlined in the above mentioned literature) discuss three issues: informed consent, positionality of the researcher, and protection of privacy of informants.

Informed consent has been established since long as major requirement for research, and especially for interview-based research (Silverman 2010). However, this requirement contains two ideals that are sometimes difficult to achieve, as Miller and Bell (2012) explicate. "Informed" means that participants in research understand the goals of research and what will happen with the information that they provide. However, the changing research interests during flexible studies and possible limits of cognitive understanding of participants into what they are consenting to can both make reaching

this requirement difficult. “Consent” means that participants voluntarily and without coercion participate in the research. However, the control of explicit or in-explicit power structures between researchers, participants, and so called “gate keepers” can at times be beyond of the researchers’ control. Transferred to my case this means that informed consent of children or employees at school, for instance, under the presence of the teachers or superiors might face some caveats. In order to avoid these caveats I developed strategies for my research project to avoid these situations. Firstly, I have scheduled interviews with teachers mostly for separate meetings without principals, and often at teachers’ homes. Secondly, I started interviews with students only after teachers had left the classrooms or at localities outside the classrooms. Thirdly, in all cases of interviews with children I have not only gained the approval of either the parents or the teachers, but I have explained the goals of my research to the students. By adjusting my explanations to the students’ cognitive levels I hope to have made my research and the potential consequences as clear as possible to my interview partners.

Probably in any research, but especially in research that is interested in ethnicity, the researcher should be aware of his or her own position. Specifically referring to the diverse concepts of race, ethnicity, and culture Milner (2007) warns that non-reflected positionality can threaten the validity of research results. He recommends that researchers together with reflect these concepts participants before, during, and after a research project, which means for the researchers to reflect their own racial and cultural heritage, the positions of the participants, the representation of race, culture, and ethnicity in research, and the context of these concepts in the researched community or society. In my own research project I have followed this advice by not only profoundly investigating into concepts of ethnicity, race, and nationality in the literature on China and in categorizations established by the Chinese government (see discussions in later chapters), but I have also discussed ethnic belonging and different concepts of “being minority” with my interview partners.

Finally, for all research it is of utmost importance to protect the informants from any harm resulting from providing data. Although it has been pointed out that some informants actually want to be named in the research output as a matter of ownership over their own testimonies (Silverman 2010, p. 167), confidentiality of interview material is one of the main measures to follow this stipulation. Since many of my interviews touched “sensitive” issues for the informants, for instance teachers’ reactions when they can’t fulfill their duties, it was especially necessary to make the interview material anonymous. For this reason I have refrained from providing the real names of my

interview partners or their schools, but instead I have developed a code system to refer to interviews, to schools, and to other organizations.[11] Furthermore, none of the pictures attached to this text refer to specific schools, but are merely examples of schools that I have visited during my fieldwork.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

In this thesis I will present an analysis of ethnic minority language policy implementation at school level, based on a case study of Dai language education policies in Xishuangbanna. The thesis will consist of seven chapters, from elaboration of the general analytical framework of policy implementation at schools, to presentation of specific ethnic and educational policies, to discussion of institutional settings at schools in China, to analysis of my case study.

Following this introduction the next chapter will introduce the analytical framework for this thesis. In this chapter I will firstly review a framework to analyze street-level bureaucratic policy implementation at schools, secondly I will operationalize this framework for the field of ethnic minority language curriculum decisions by school personnel, and thirdly I will visualize a combined analytical framework.

In the third chapter I will specify the framework by outlining the institutional spaces that determine school personnel's options for decision making on the implementation of curriculum policies specifically in China. In this chapter I will introduce the institutional settings of school personnel management in China, before I will discuss how these settings shape decision making space for street-level bureaucrats in relation to curriculum decisions at Chinese schools. I will elaborate the roles that institutions assign to teachers and principals and I will show how reforms in accountability systems towards Chinese school staff widen and limit the space for school-based decision making.

In the fourth chapter I will outline principles of ethnic minority language education policies in China. In the first section of this chapter I will introduce structures of ethnic policy making in China, such as the ethnic autonomy system, and I will present organized actors for ethnic minority language education in government agencies, in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and in societal organizations. In the second section I will introduce minority language education policies and instruments in China, before I will discuss the problems that these policies meet. With this chapter I will show how language

[11] Generally, I refer to schools by a numeral index (see appendix). For the three case study schools I additionally use three pseudonyms, which I have created by combining the syllable "Meng" (勐, meaning in Dai "small place in flat land", which is often used in Xishuangbanna's toponyms (see extensive discussion by Luo 1999), with the Chinese syllables for one (yi), two (er), and three (san).

ideologies, structures of policy making in China, and ethnic policy goals all produce specific policies for ethnic minority language education in China.

In the fifth chapter I will introduce to minority language education in Xishuangbanna, specifically to Dai language education. After an overview on Xishuangbanna's social, political, and linguistic characteristics, I will elaborate in more depth on the situation of minority language education in Xishuangbanna. I will introduce to the main governmental and non-governmental actors in policy making here, to the tools of policy programs for minority language education, and to official statistical data on the current situation of minority language education at schools and other educational organizations in Xishuangbanna. This chapter will prepare the ground for analysis of my case study, where I will critically discuss the meaning of these policies and policy instruments for schools.

In the sixth and main part of this thesis I will analyze in depth the decisions at several case study schools as defined by different institutional contexts of minority language programs. Here I will elaborate on the ways how school principals and teachers use institutionally defined spaces for decision making on minority language curriculum. Interests, policy understandings, and outcomes will be in the center of this analysis. This chapter will be a unique analysis of the decision making processes in policy implementation against the background of minority language education tuition in Xishuangbanna. It will be based on interview data with teachers, principals, students, and parents, on my own observations at schools in Xishuangbanna, and on analysis of statistical data obtained at the case study schools.

In the final chapter I will review implications of the case study findings for our understanding of the role of street-level bureaucrats in policy implementation in China. In the first section of this chapter I will reconsider the framework of street-level bureaucratic policy implementation in China. Based on my findings I will propose here to include sub-processes of implementers' interpretations of institutional spaces into the street-level bureaucracy framework. In the second and third section I will discuss the chances of school-based decision making for pressing issues in two Chinese policy fields. I will discuss on the one hand how the relations between institutional settings and street-level actors' decision making at schools in China affect the chances of minority-language education to raise the quality of educational outcome and on the other hand under what conditions school-based decision making on ethnic minority language education can provide an option for reforming ethnic policy making in China towards community representation beyond approaches of ethnic group distinction and autonomous regions.

A short summary of the main findings and an appendix with the table of references, the index of interview partners and visited educational organizations, the relevant legislation and curriculum schedules, maps on Xishuangbanna, and a selection of images from schools in the region will conclude this thesis.[12]

[12] Translations of Chinese terms are not specifically listed in a glossary, but are directly annotated at their first appearance in the text.

2 Framework: Street-level policy implementation at schools

As this thesis deals with the implementation of policies through school-based implementers, there is a need for an analytical framework that combines an actor-centered policy analysis with reflection on the institutional settings at school level. The bottom-up approach of analyzing policy implementation through decisions by street-level bureaucrats elaborated first by Lipsky (1980) provides a suitable perspective to analyze the policy implementation processes. However, as a central variable in this perspective is the discretionary decision making of implementers, we must combine this perspective with an analysis of the institutional settings that govern discretion in social policy implementation, especially accountability systems of a given institutional setting.

With this chapter I will introduce an analytical framework of street-level implementation of curriculum policy that focuses on the relation between institutional settings at schools and school staff's implementation decisions on ethnic minority language curriculum management at schools. In light of the still largely diverse and developing approaches to understand implementation (Barrett 2004) and in notion of Winter's (2006) dictum that looking for one overall implementation theory is rather utopian I will present here merely selected elements of an analytical framework than a fully-fledged implementation theory. This allows for a deductive and explorative, but nevertheless focused, perspective in the analytical part of this thesis.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part I will present the bottom-up approach of analyzing policy implementation by observation of street-level bureaucrats' decision making against the background of a given institutional setting. The combination of Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy approach with an actor-centered perspective on institutions allows me establishing a first intermediate summary on the relations between implementers' decisions and institutions. However, only the second part, where I operationalize these considerations against the specific context of minority language curriculum policies for schools and where I consider specifically the relation between accountability systems, school staff as street-level bureaucrats, and school-based decision making will make the bottom-up approach to policy implementation analysis fruitful for this thesis. In the third section I will combine both parts into a framework of curriculum policy implementation by school-based decisions, which I will briefly summarize and visualize.

2.1 Street-level policy implementation framework

Policy implementation can be seen as a specific stage in the policy cycle where policies are put into practice (Jann, Wegrich 2007, p. 44). This stage is situated between

agenda setting (including problem definition), policy formulation (including decision making),[13] implementation, and evaluation.[14] Considering this position of the implementation stage in the cycle, DeLeon (1999, pp. 314–315) defines simplistically: "Implementation is what happens between policy expectations and (perceived) policy results".

However, approaches to analyze the processes within this stage are multiple. The bottom-up approach to policy analysis at the street-level of service provision will be in the center of this section. The first part will introduce the bottom-up perspective, before the second part will elaborate on the role of street-level bureaucrats in this process. The third part, finally, will show how an institutional perspective can add to understanding the spaces for decision making by street-level bureaucrats.

2.1.1 Top-down and bottom-up policy implementation theories

Theories that attempt to define the complexities of implementation differ in their perspectives on the very process, the mechanisms, the contributing factors, the goals, and the obstacles in this stage. The diverse theories have been grouped into two approaches: the "top-down" and the "bottom-up" approach (Hill, Hupe 2009; Elmore 1979; Matland 1995; Winter 2006). These approaches differ not only between focusing on different actors and processes, but also in the evaluation of policy modifications during the implementation stage. The top-down approach aims at smoothening implementation processes and views departures from original policy designs as systematic faults. The bottom-up approach, by contrast, views policy implementation as a process defined by the implementing level and understands deviation thus not as fault, but as a constituting element of the process. While top-down approaches contributed to our understanding of the process-character of policy implementation, it was bottom-up approaches that brought to light the outstanding role of decisions by implementers. In the following I will

[13] Some scholars group policy formulation and decision making together, since clear separation between both is "very often impossible" (Jann, Wegrich 2007, p. 48).

[14] The policy cycle is an approach to structure the policy process into different stages. Some scholars subdivide and extend the original seven phases into up to 18 stages (e.g. Dror 1983). However, probably since too small subdivisions often lack in analytical clarity most models of the policy cycle limit the number of phases to less than ten, as Parson's (1995, pp. 78–79) overview shows. As a heuristic device it helps policy analysts to move beyond single institutions and to perceive policies as a continuous and cumulative process rather than as static objects (Parsons 1995). Despite the criticism towards this approach for assuming unrealistic sequences, for lacking explanatory elements, for suspecting goal orientation of all policies, for ignoring elements that do not contribute to problem solving such as rituals or symbolic policies, and for expecting an idealized cyclical process where policy evaluations directly inform new policies (Nakamura 1987) the policy cycle is still a tool that is commonly used to frame specific theories and to "communicate" between the specific approaches (Jann, Wegrich 2007, p. 57).

review the bottom-up approach to policy analysis in contrast to the top-down approach, before I will discuss the need to re-evaluate and further develop the bottom-up approach.

Top-down approaches

Top-down approaches define implementation as "what develops between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something, or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action" (O'Toole 2000, p. 266). Theorists and empirical researchers from this approach aim at understanding the factors that contribute to observed differences between government intentions and outcomes. Pressman and Wildavsky (1979 (1973)) found that the policy implementation process includes bargaining processes at specific "decision making points". Top-down implementation scholars who aim at smoothening the process thus regularly recommend to reduce the number of veto points (Pressman, Wildavsky 1979 (1973)), to write clear scenarios (Bardach 1977), to formulate statutes that precisely define problems and assign responsibilities (Sabatier, Mazmanian 1981), to adjust statutes to the respective context (Ingram, Schneider 1990), and to wisely choose suitable steering instruments (Hood 1983; Salamon, Elliott 2002; Hood 2007; John 2011; Le Galès 2011).

Studies from a top-down approach contributed to our understanding that policy implementation is more than a simple putting into practice of policies, that it involves bargaining and interests, and that implementation processes are often beyond the control of the agencies that formulate policies. However, several assumptions of the "top-downers" have been criticized for creating unrealistic functionalities and for the inability to capture the internal processes and motivations that lead to resistance by the implementing agencies. Nakamura (1987, pp. 147–149) argues that top-down approaches are unable to explain policy implementation under vague policies, policy changes or in non-hierarchical environments. Especially the advice by top-downers to reduce veto points, their hope for a "game fixer" with unlimited power (Bardach 1977), and the recommendations for general hierarchical tightening have all been seen not only as unfruitful but also as a barrier to understanding the necessity of changes in policy intentions during implementation (Barrett, Fudge 1981; Hall, McGinty 1997).

Bottom-up approaches

Bottom-up approaches differ from top-down approaches in several aspects. Top-down and bottom-up approaches both acknowledge the divergences that policies meet through implementation, but the latter perspective turns the analysis of implementation "upside down" (Winter 2006, p. 153). While top-downers stress those factors that are

within the control of policy makers, bottom-up approaches focus on those factors that policy makers cannot directly influence: the knowledge and abilities of problem solving as well as the bargaining powers at the local level. When top-down theorists view these influences as frauds to hierarchy, bottom-uppers see implementation as a set of dispersed and decentralized processes in which complexity and deviation is not only the standard but also a source for outcome improvement (Elmore 1979, p. 607). Continued negotiations and bargaining between policy-makers and implementers become productive ways to improve policies. In this sense, top-downers were challenged by the call to replace the focus on "conformance" in the sense of forced implementation with the criterion of "performance" in the sense of mutual and consensual reaching of agreements on output goals (Barrett, Fudge 1981). This perspective has been uphold ever since by defenders of the bottom-up approach who claim that today's policy analysis still needs to internalize this shift (Barrett 2004).

Elmore (1979) describes under the term "backward mapping" the general approach of bottom-uppers to policy analysis. Starting from the observed behavior of actors in light of a specific problem, the researcher asks for the factors that inform this behavior. According to Elmore (1979, p. 612), these factors are to be found at "organizational operations" by "those organizational units and coalitions that have the greatest likelihood of delivery-level performance". Implementation analysts under this perspective focus on behavior of implementers (measured as output[15]) rather than merely comparing policy intentions with outcome (Winter 2006).

Taking up the shortcomings of the top-down approach, a competing approach gained momentum in the 1970s and 80s to explain implementation processes from a different perspective as "a process of interaction and negotiation, taking place over time, between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends" (Barrett, Fudge 1981, p. 4). The implementation process has thus "no clear, decisive end point" (Elmore 1979, p. 611), but is rather an outcome of constant interactions between diverse actors. The contributions of researchers such as Lipsky (1980)), Elmore (1979),

[15] John (2011, p. 4) defines outputs as "what policy systems produce in the form of laws, financial decisions, organizational changes, new rules and so on, which are designed to achieve an objective." Policy outcomes, by contrast, he defines as "the consequences of these intended – and sometimes unintended – decisions, which are desirable state of affairs." Referring specifically to implementation, Lane and Errson (2000, p. 60) specify that "'outputs' refers to measures decided by and implemented within a political system, while 'outcomes' stands for the consequences of these outputs within as well as outside the political system". In some cases, however, the distinction between input, output, and outcome might be blurred. For instance, changes in financial indicators in relation to a specific policy might be analyzed as changes in resources provided for policies (input), as tokens that reflect the actions by fund providers (outputs) as well as the intended or unintended results of policies (outcome) (see further examples in Hill, Hupe 2009, p. 9 and in Lane, Ersson 2000, p. 61).

Barrett and Fudge (1981), and Hull and Hjern (1987) received the label "bottom-up approaches" due to their unifying focus on the power of the "implementing" or "lower" level to shape policies altogether. These early contributions have been further fine-tuned for a range of policies such as social service policies (Evans 2010), school policies (Elmore 2004) or general administration (Sossin 1993).

Combinations and re-evaluations

After years of division between top-down and bottom-up approaches (Blum, Schubert 2011) scholars have set out to develop theories that combine insights of both approaches by acknowledging the rules and regulations as well as the behavior of implementers. These "third generation approaches" (DeLeon 1999) often take environment and context as additional factors that define actor's behavior. Matland's (1995) approach, for instance, sees actors' policy implementation decisions defined by resources, power, contextual conditions, and coalition strength, which combine to a matrix of conflict and ambiguity. This approach points to the necessity to combine both context and decisions, but lacks in explaining the mechanisms between those variables. The "multiple governance framework" proposed by Hill and Hupe (2009) similarly introduces a perspective that differs along the "organizational structure" and the "individual", but that also lacks in understanding the relation between both.

However, since according to Winter (2006) creating a single all-embracing implementation theory is rather utopian[16] the focus now should be on specifying how individual variables interact under specific frameworks. The street-level bureaucracy framework, for instance, contains already notions of the binding character of institutions. An analytical focus on these institutions with the support of insights from actor-focused institutionalism can thus establish a framework that contains both the structuring mechanisms of institutions and the effects of implementers' behavior on implementation.

2.1.2 Implementation decisions by street-level bureaucrats in state agencies

The bottom-up perspective focuses on implementers since implementers' interest-driven decision making shapes the implementation process and thus the outputs of policies. In the following I will present constituting characteristics of three elements: street-level bureaucrats, institutional contexts for decision making, and patterns of practice.

[16] Approaches such as the one by Berkhout and Wielemans (1999) that, under the aim of including all possible variables result rather in confusion than in explaining relations, show that reduction is necessary. As Matland (1995, p. 146) remarks: "A literature with three hundred variables doesn't need more variables: It needs structure."

Street-level bureaucrats in state service agencies

The notion of "street-level bureaucracy" can be seen as the main point of reference in the bottom-up approach. It was praised for shedding light on the "real world" (Evans, Harris 2004, p. 872) as opposed to the normative ideas of top-down theorists. Developed famously by Lipsky (1980) this framework argues that policy implementation is determined by patterns of practices that are based on implementers' discretionary decisions. Policy implementers' beliefs, motivations, and interests are thus main drivers for policy implementation, but the scope for decisions is again determined by institutional settings. The variety of "multiple, sometimes competing sources of influence" (Meyers, Vorsanger 2003, p. 251) creates dilemmas for street-level implementers.

According to the bottom-up approach individuals in implementation agencies have a political role in assigning the allocation and distribution of resources. Elmore (1979, p. 612) describes the importance of implementers in light of policies: "Policy can direct individuals' attention toward a problem and provide them an occasion for the application of skill and judgment, but policy cannot itself solve problems." Barrett and Fudge summarize that this approach "sees implementers not as passive agents on the receiving end of policy, but as semi-autonomous groups actively pursuing their own goals and objectives" (Barrett, Fudge 1981, p. 23).

Lipsky (1980) coined the term "street-level bureaucrat" to describe implementers such as police officers, social workers, or teachers, who as social service providers are in close contacts to citizens or clients. As professionals they are bound to professional standards of client orientated service-provision.

On the other side, when these service providers work at public institutes or agencies such as in the police service, hospitals, or schools they are also part of the local government. As bureaucrats they are bound to administrative hierarchies under the local government administration. They are agents of the state and thus advocate state policy goals. Through their supervisors at the implementational organizations they are also the most localized arm of government. Evaluation mechanisms connect them with local government agencies.

This double role as bureaucrats in government agencies and as service providers to clients constitutes a basic dilemma of street-level bureaucrats when policy goals of government differ from and clients' expectations, as Lipsky further argues. On the one side, street-level bureaucrats are bound to implement state policies, but on the other side they are required to consider clients' needs. Being caught in between interests of the state and interests of the clients this dilemma shapes street-level bureaucrats' daily work.

On the other side street-level bureaucrats gain strength within the implementation process from their expert knowledge. Similar to other "bureaucrats" in Weber's sense their knowledge on the field provides them with advantages over politicians,[17] but their professional training in service professions such as in medicine or teaching potentiates this knowledge.

Actions of street-level bureaucrats matter in several ways. Firstly, street-level implementers' decisions affect policy implementation largely since the behavior of individuals adds up to organizational behavior (Winter 2006, p. 153). As public service provision takes up large amounts of state budgets and affects directly the lives of citizens, street-level bureaucratic behavior becomes an important factor in determining the conditions of citizens' livelihood. Furthermore, policy formulators react to social problems often with establishing more posts for street-level bureaucrats. Lipsky (1980, p. 7), referring to problems of equal access to social services, argues: "It is far easier and less disruptive to develop employment for street-level bureaucrats than to reduce income inequality." Secondly, the behavior of street-level bureaucrats also affects state-society relations. Citizens perceive public service programs through state agents and evaluate services on basis of these agents' fairness and responsiveness to their problems (Lipsky 1980). Thirdly, the decisions of street-level bureaucrats as located at the nexus between central and local requirements adjust policies and thus increase potential outcomes (Cline 2000, p. 554). In this respect street-level bureaucrats have not only "considerable agency during implementation" (Malen 2006, p. 97), but can, with some exaggeration, be seen as the real "makers" of policies (Lipsky 1980, p. 9).

Interests

The role of street-level bureaucrats as bureaucrats and professional service deliverers to clients at the same time determines also the interests of this specific actor group. Scharpf (1997, p. 21) argues that since human action "occurs in social organizations and organizational roles (institutionally and culturally defined) with clearly structured responsibilities and competencies and with assigned resources that can be used for specific purposes only" actions within these roles must be explained "with reference to cultural and social definitions of the role and to the institutionalized rules associated with its proper performance." Scholars of street-level implementation (e.g.Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody, Leland 2000; Meyers, Vorsanger 2003) have

[17] The dominance of administrative tasks in policy implementation makes bureaucrats to experts. In Weber's (1994 (1946), p. 18) terminology: "The 'political master' finds himself in the position of the 'dilettante' who stands opposite the 'expert'."

established that there are at least four factors that motivate street-level bureaucrats' interests. Firstly, street-level bureaucrats as individuals aim at making their own job comfortable and at maximizing own profits and personal gratification. Secondly, however, street-level bureaucrats are also part of bureaucratic hierarchy and thus need to adhere to superiors. Thirdly, street-level bureaucrats as professionals in, for instance, care-taking, policing, or teaching are bound to their professions' norms and beliefs on objectives and suitability of treatments. Finally, as street-level workers regularly work closely with clients, street-level bureaucrats might also have the interest to satisfy clients' expectations and needs.

street-level bureaucrats are caught in a dilemma when these interests conflict with each other, when policies lack in sufficient implementation means (financial, time, human resources), or when policy goals are unclear or even contradicting. On the one side, they are bound to policy goals and hierarchies, on the other side these goals often stand in contrast to clients' needs. As service to both interests is restrained by limited resources, the work of street-level level bureaucrats is characterized by a contestant dilemma that they regularly have to "work with inadequate resources in circumstances where the demand will always increase to meet the supply of services" (Lipsky 1980, p. 81). Under this dilemma street-level workers try to seek practices that support them in reducing workloads, improving services, and meeting the demands of both clients and superiors.

Decisions and practices

Implementers pursue various strategies[18] to serve these interests inside and outside the bureaucratic arena. According to Malen (2006), who builds up on Bardach (1977), implementers might choose inside the bureaucratic arena one of the following strategies: They might shift the goals of policies, adopt them merely superficially, or select only parts of policies for implementation; they might ration and husband limited resources or use resources for other goals than formulated in policies; they might dissipate own energies by slowing down processes or by excluding clients from services; they might engage in bargaining processes with their superiors over policy implementation. Outside the bureaucratic arena street-level bureaucrats might appeal to

[18] Malen (2006, p. 88) defines "strategies" as the "efforts to exert influence". Some authors (e.g. Bardach 1977) call these strategies "games" to describe choices of bureaucrats in bargaining situations in a "dynamic interplay of influence among diverse actors" (Malen 2006, p. 104). However, due to the potential confusion with analytical methods of game theory I avoid the term "games" at this point altogether.

legislation or judicial authorities or they might build coalitions with civil society, for example by joining public protests (see Table 2).

Bureaucratic arena	Examples of strategies	Results
inside	division of resources husbanding resources superficial adaptation shifting goals selecting policy parts for implementation dissipating energy	dilution appropriation
outside	appealing to higher legislation and judiciary coalition building with societal actors	nullification amplification

Table 2: Examples of implementers' implementation strategies, after Malen (2006) and Bardach (1977))

Under these strategies street-level bureaucrats constantly have to make decisions. In order to simplify their decisions they develop "patterns of practice" as routines. These patterns "tend to limit demand, maximize the utilization of available resources, and obtain client compliance over and above the procedures developed by their agencies" (Lipsky 1980, p. 83). Street-level bureaucrats, for instance, might ration services to clients, they might reserve resources for those clients who they perceive as most likely to react to treatments, they might husband resources for later usage, or they might change their expectations towards their own work and towards their clients (Lipsky 1980).[19]

These strategies can lead to policy nullification, amplification, dilution, or appropriation. Top-down implementation researchers such as Pressman and Wildavsky (1979 (1973)) or Bardach (1977) focus especially on outcomes that they see as disturbance of policy intentions, a perspective that has been called "misery research" (Hill, Hupe 2009, p. 75). However, several newer studies from the bottom-up perspective have exemplified that the strategies by street-level bureaucrats lead also to policy improvements as measured for example in client satisfaction (Maynard-Moody, Leland 2000). These studies have studies have shown that decisions by street-level bureaucrats can lead to appropriation of policies especially when policy goals are unclear or contradicting, when they lack implementation means, or when they lack in clear assignment of responsibilities (Winter 2006).

2.1.3 Institutions in street-level policy implementation

In the previous sections I have elaborated on the decision making by street-level bureaucrats as an integral part of social policy implementation. However, the position of street-level bureaucrats and their options to effect implementation is defined by institutional settings. Norms of expected behavior of street-level bureaucrats, but also

[19] Sometimes these different strategies overlap. Social service workers studied by Maynard-Moody and Leland (2000), for example, developed methods to evaluate the worthiness of investments to clients by testing clients' responses to small scale treatments before they decided to offer services and rationed resources until they saw success of treatment.

regulated accountability measures define the spaces for individual decisions. I argue that policy analysis from a bottom-up approach of looking at decisions by street-level bureaucrats can benefit from combining the actor-centered perspectives of decision making with an institutional analysis of the settings that define the spaces for this decision making. With this inclusion of those institutions that govern discretion at state agencies, the state, which was somewhat beyond the focus of Lipsky's original framework of analyzing implementers' decisions, enters the analysis again as a precondition for understanding the position of implementing agencies, especially in political systems where these agencies are closely bound to state directives (such as the case of China, which will be discussed in depth in chapter 3). In the following paragraphs I will thus outline some approaches to actor-centered institutionalisms before I will introduce with more depth into the spaces for discretionary decision making provided by accountability measures.

Actor-centered perspectives on institutions

Institutions define the scope in which decision making at street-level happens. New institutionalists in political sciences, after the early configurational approaches and the behavioralist turn in the middle of the 20th century, seek to redefine both the roles of institutions and actors.[20] Scott (2008, p. 6) formulates:

> "Current institutionalists do not call for a return to 'configurational history', but do seek to reestablish the importance of normative frameworks and rule systems in guiding, constraining, and empowering social and political behavior."

One of the main differences in the broad variety of new institutionalisms rests in "the role which they allow for human agency" (Peters 2005, p. 158). Actor-centered approaches to institutionalism, such as the varieties proposed by Scharpf (1997)[21] and Ostrom (1982; 2005; 2007), define the roles of actors as strong but analyze their scope of actions against the background of institutions.[22] Scharpf (1997, p. 34) declares that his own approach

[20] The resurgence of institutionalism in the 70s and 80s has been said to have developed as a consequence of rising importance of "modern" social, political, and economic institutions (March, Olsen 1984, p. 734). However, it also developed as a re-evaluation and further development of former approaches in institutionalism (Scott 2008).

[21] Fritz Scharpf and Renate Mayntz cooperatively formulated and published the "actor-centered institutionalism" initially in 1995 (Mayntz, Scharpf 1995), but Scharpf developed this concept in full depth only in his book from 1997.

[22] This literature treats institutions as independent variables that determine actors' behavior. The opposite question of how actors' behavior shapes institutions has been dealt with elsewhere (e.g. Ostrom 2007).

> "gives equal weight to the strategic actions and interactions of purposeful and resourceful individuals and corporate actors and to the enabling, constraining, and shaping effects of given (but variable) institutional structures and institutionalized norms."

Institutions in this approach are sources of structure. Scott's (2008, p. 48) definition indicates this structuring element of institutions:

> "Institutions are comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life."

Through this structuring function institutions also indicate the possibilities for interests, decisions, and actions of actors, as Scharpf (1997, p. 41) formulates: "Once we know the institutional setting of interaction, we know a good deal about the actors involved, about their options, and about their perceptions and preferences."

Institutions rarely prescribe only one option for actors, but they "leave considerable scope for the strategic and tactical choices by purposeful actors" (Scharpf 1997, p. 42). This institutional scope of choices defines also the scope of tolerated, requested, or limited behavior of implementation agents. Hornberger (2002) and Johnson (2009) both term the space defined by the institutional settings and the specific policies as "implementational space" that is "opened up" by institutions and that can be filled by implementers with actions and meaning. Institutions that define the borders of this space have thus an enabling, but also a limiting character for implementers. The choice of instruments can affect this space, since instruments define "the extent of legitimate coercion" (Howlett, Ramesh 2003, p. 195) from compulsory to voluntary with a broad range of mixed shapes in between.

However, as approaches that focus on the relation between institutions and actors are rather heuristics devices than theories that would produce law-like generalizations, the specific effects of institutional settings on actor behavior must be examined against the individual cases. Scharpf (1997, pp. 29–32) writes that his approach produces modules of possible relations, but that the connections remain theoretically unclear unless they are situated in real-world settings defined at the macro-level of political systems.

Discretion and accountability

Two concepts of this "real world" of institutions are especially relevant for street-level bureaucratic implementation decisions: discretion and accountability. Both concepts have been much discussed and their evaluation has been a distinguishing difference between top-down and bottom-up approaches (see literature review chapter). With the discussion on the shift from a traditional bureaucratic paradigm to "New Public

Management" modes of governing, the question of how much discretionary power bureaucracies ought to have erupted once more.[23] As Lipsky (1980, pp. 15–16) has already put it in his early writings: "The search for the correct balance between compassion and flexibility on the one hand, and impartiality and rigid rule-application on the other hand presents a dialectic of public service reform."

Discretion is a principle that allows leeway for agencies that are situated within ministerial structures. Different to the concept of autonomy that describes a distance of agencies that are independent and disaggregated from the ministerial bureaucracy and that have the legitimacy and reputation to decide on own issues (Carpenter 2001, p. 16), discretion means here the capability of bureaucratic agencies to individualize policies within a given leeway. It "consist of the departure of agency decisions from the positions agreed upon by the executive and legislature at the time of delegation and appointment" (Calvert et al. 1989, p. 589). At the same time, however, it is still "part of a contractual arrangement between politicians and an agency that they establish" (Carpenter 2001, p. 17).

This leeway expressed in an arrangement is thus relational to the degree of supervision by higher agencies and the legislature. The relationship between "dilettante" and "expert" in Weber's terminology (see above) requires discretionary decision making by executive actors. Even under governance in the sense of including more actors into provision and evaluation of public services, the importance of bureaucratic expert knowledge is far from vanishing (Le Galès 2011).

The street-level bureaucracy framework argues that discretion is an inevitable element of policy implementation. Lipsky (1980, p. 15) writes that "certain characteristics of the jobs of street-level bureaucrats make it difficult, if not impossible, to severely reduce discretion." He argues that discretion can be found in all areas where street-level workers need to make decisions beyond handbooks and that require adjustments to individual clients. Elmore summarizes that discretion should be seen as a "device for improving the reliability and effectiveness of policies at the street level" (Elmore 1979, p. 610). Evans and Harris (2004) argue that the professionalism of street-level workers justifies defending discretionary power of these actors against new paradigms of managerialism.

Discretion, however, is not to be confused with a complete absence of rules, but is bound to accountability towards higher echelons, clients, or the general public.

[23] For a detailed discussion on the historical roots of the involved paradigms see Lynn (2001) and Meier and Krause (2003).

Accountability "functions when those who are delegated authority have to account for what they are doing with this authority or responsibility" (OECD 2011a, p. 78). It can be directed towards higher echelons (vertical accountability) or towards peers or other stakeholders in society (horizontal accountability) (Hooge et al. 2012). For street-level-bureaucrats supervision by higher echelons ("administrators"),[24] internalized professional codices ("occupational norms"), and evaluation by clients and the general public ("community norms") all can limit the scope for discretion (Lipsky 1980).

Nevertheless, accountability can never be absolute. According to Lipsky (1980, p. 159) modes of accountability are restrained by at least three caveats. Firstly, administrative control reaches its limits when superiors rely on information that can only be provided by those levels that are to be evaluated or when the complexity of social work prohibits standardization of evaluation criteria. Secondly, in cases of contradictory policy goals, accountability is in danger of resulting in symbolic or irrelevant action. Thirdly, in cases where satisfaction with social service provision could be only evaluated by clients, higher levels face the difficulty of systematically transforming these subjective evaluations into objective evaluation systems. Lipsky (1980, p. 17) argues that administrators are interested in achieving results in line with policy goals and agency goals, but that street-level workers are generally interested in minimizing workloads and maximizing personal gratifications. With regard to management, Lipsky further claims that administrators generally favor hierarchical structures, whereas service providers at the delivery level strive for larger discretion in decision making.

In sum, discretion and accountability must be seen as two sides of one coin. They define a flexible space rather than an absolute status. In the words by Evans and Harris (2004, p. 876) this space is "not an all-or-nothing thing", but consists of multiple dimensions of bargaining based on factors such as the distinct institutional settings in bureaucratic administration, the characteristics of the profession, the level of specification of tasks, and the ideological perceptions of the need for steering discretion at the ground. For street-level bureaucrats accountability measures define spaces for implementation decisions. Analysis of decision making within implementation processes must thus incorporate these dimensions.

[24] These practices of hierarchical control of bureaucrats contain "the mechanisms and instruments used by the government to intentionally influence the decisions and the behavior of the agency in order to achieve government objectives" as materialized in "hierarchical, market-like, and/or network based" control techniques either before implementational decision making (rule setting, approval requirement etc.) or after (monitoring, sanctions etc.) (Lægreid, Verhoest 2010, pp. 4–5).

2.1.4 Intermediate summary: Viewing actor decisions against institutional background

The concepts outlined above indicate that firstly decisions by implementers at street-level have tremendous effects on the policy implementation process, on outputs, and outcomes. Scholarship from the bottom-up approach has since long found that policy implementation is not a linear process of transforming policies into outcomes, but that through a complex set of sub-processes implementers adjust, shape, and even "make" policies. The decisions by street-level bureaucrats, as Lipsky has called policy implementers in social service delivery, shape thus not only the outcomes of specific policies, but they also determine how government agencies serve clients and how citizens view the state that provides these services. Secondly, however, the concepts outlined here also indicate that the actions by street-level implementers are shaped by institutional settings. Lipsky (1980) interprets decision making by street-level bureaucrats as a process under dilemmas between orientation towards superiors, towards clients, and towards own interests, but these dilemmas exist only insofar as institutional settings allow for several options. The spaces for discretionary decision making created by institutions are thus major factors in the policy implementation process.

An analytical model that combines analysis of actor decisions with the institutional background for decision making must be able to grasp the interactions between both. In this model implementation is seen as a process located between policy formulation and the policy outcome, that s made up of street-level bureaucrats' decisions. The model views the institutional environment that surrounds actors as a combination of specific settings of accountability that shape the discretionary space for decision making.

However, scholarships on implementation (see for instance the overviews in Matland 1995, DeLeon 1999, Winter 2006, and Hill, Hupe 2009) has also indicated that there is not a single "implementation theory" that could cover implementation under all settings, and instead there is a need to specify analytical frameworks for particular policy fields in order to establish models that reflect relations and processes of "real-world choice situations" (Scharpf 1997, pp. 5, 32). In the next chapter I will operationalize these considerations for school-based decision making on the implementation of minority language curriculum polices, before I will conclude with a combined model of curriculum policy implementation by school-based decisions. In the summary of this chapter I will outline this model.

2.2 Operationalization: School-based decision making on minority language policy

Implementation of education policies, and specifically implementation of curriculum policies, is a suitable field to study the effects of institutions on decisions by street-level bureaucratic implementers in several aspects. Firstly, due to the specifics of the teaching process that rests on the close interaction between students and teachers and on students' pre-existing knowledge curriculum policies cannot be implemented without adapting learning goals and methods to students' knowledge and of the learning environment (McLaughlin 1991). A bottom-up perspective for curriculum implementation analysis is therefore suitable to grasp how implementers' actions change the adaptations of curriculum policy (Snyder et al. 1992). Secondly, institutional settings at schools provide specific conditions for decisions by implementers that allow grasping behavior of street-level bureaucrats in an outstanding way. A plethora of institutional settings that govern implementation of policies at schools, such as assessment measures, funding instruments, or regulative tools define school staff as "bureaucrats". At the same time, however, close contacts to students and professional ethics of school staff position teachers and school administrators as service-providers who work for their clients at school (Weatherley, Lipsky 1977).

School-based decision making on minority language education is an area where the framework of implementers' decision making can be studied extensively. Not only are "events at the school level […] critical to reform implementation" (Datnow 2000, p. 120) but especially in ethnic minority language curriculum institutional settings can be expected to allow for larger discretionary spaces than in other curriculum policies, as minority language education per se aims at adjustment to local needs of students or language communities.

In the following paragraphs I will provide an outline of how relations between implementers' decision making and institutional settings are distinguished in curriculum policies in general, and in policies for ethnic minority language education specifically. Firstly, I will define the various types of curriculum and curriculum policy implementation at school. Secondly, I will outline how institutional settings of school-management, especially discretion and accountability, shape the space for school-based decision making on curriculum policy implementation. Finally, I will elaborate the role of teachers and principals in the implementation process and I will refer to items of school-based decision making on curriculum implementation.

The purpose of this chapter is to specify the analytical framework towards curriculum policy implementation at schools. I will thus outline the principles of curriculum polices and the mechanisms of how institutional settings shape these. The specific institutions of school and curriculum management in China, however, and the actors in minority language education implementation at Chinese schools will be introduced only in later chapters.

2.2.1 Minority language curriculum policies for schools

Curriculum policy and ethnic minority language curriculum is the enacted tuition and its outcome in educational organizations, but at the same time it is also an output of educational policies. In the following paragraphs I will define curriculum and its relation to policies and policy instruments.

Curriculum and curriculum policies

There are various definitions of the term "curriculum".[25] Walker (2002, p. 5) , for instance, defined curriculum as "a particular way of ordering content and purposes for teaching and learning in schools". Porter and Smith (2001) distinguish four types of curricula: the intended curriculum as written down in curriculum standards, guidelines, or frameworks; the enacted curriculum that students engage with; the assessed curriculum embodies in tests; and the learned curriculum as achievements and knowledge that students gain during their studies. Additionally, curriculum can be also distinguished according to the location where it is "made". Kärkkäinen (2012) distinguishes between central-level curriculum and school-based curriculum. In her definition the central-level curriculum refers to the decisions made at the national and the local levels of government, whereas school-based curriculum refers to decisions made at school level by individual staff, school boards, or local community committees. Both curricula affect each other, and especially the set-up of the central-level curriculum has the potential to shape the space for school-based curricula. The central-level curriculum can define "the content of education by indicating aims, content areas and minimum attainment targets with guidelines and examples of interpretation […] and teachers' practices", but it can also merely "describe general objectives and educational practices leaving significant room for curriculum decision making by schools and teachers" (Kärkkäinen 2012, p. 11).

Summarizing these distinctions, I understand curriculum policy here as a product of allocating authority and distributing influence over curriculum decisions (Elmore, Sykes 1992, p. 203) and as "an integral part of general educational planning and governance"

[25] See for instance the diverse understandings of curriculum collected in Pinar et al. (1995).

(Walker 2002, pp. 124–125), whereas I understand the implementation of these policies as a process of policy adaptation by school personnel in all types of the above outlined curriculum. Analysis of curriculum policy implementation will thus focus on bargaining, adaptation, and decision making in this process.[26]

Policy formulators use a variety of instruments to shape the content of curricula. Schwille et al. (1983) list six types of curriculum policies: standard and guideline policies, student testing policies, time allocation policies, student placement policies, textbook policies, and teacher qualification policies. Elmore and Sykes (1992) provide examples of more specific instruments. Mandates, understood as "rules governing the action of individuals and agencies", for instance, require schools to offer specific courses. Inducements, the "transfer of money to individuals and agencies in return for certain actions" provide funds to schools in order to adopt a specific curriculum. Capacity building, the "transfer of money for investments in material, intellectual, or human resources directed to long-term production of desired results" can be found in funding university programs to develop new curricula. The "transfer of authority among individuals and agencies in order to alter the nature of societal relationships by which public goods and services are produced", finally, can, for example, establish independent teacher training centers that support teachers and develop materials (all quotes Elmore, Sykes 1992, p. 191).

It has been said that the higher the level of prescription, consistency, authority, and power, the stronger those instruments are in implementation, but it has also been said that the strength of these policy instruments also depends on the congruency with institutions such as laws, professional education norms, and the possibility of teacher participation in the development of curricula (Schwille et al. 1983). Others argue that curriculum instruments develop strength when the approaches are consistent throughout the complete implementation process (Ogawa et al. 2003).

Minority language education curriculum

Curriculum in minority languages[27] combines the three measures language policy status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. Specific multilingual curriculum policies aim at creating as many spaces as possible for multilingual settings in schools under the goal to shift language paradigms from monolingual towards

[26] Malen's (2006, pp. 83–84) statement that educational policies "tend to be adopted and implemented through political processes that reflect the relative power of contending groups more than the relative merits of policy options" supports this strong role of political bargaining in curriculum policies.

[27] See definition of minority language education in chapter 1.

multilingual paradigms (Hornberger 2002, p. 42), but they also depend on what has been described by Hornberger (2002) as a multilayered "ecology", such as language usage in different domains or policy goals such national unity. They affect concepts of inclusion, exclusion, assimilation, and diversifiction (Creese 2010), but also issues of minority rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson 1995b) and protection of cultures (Sasse 1992).

In its design minority language education can follow a diversity of goals, models, and means. García (2011), with reference to Hornberger (1991), distinguishes between four categories that affect the choice of language education in schools. "Linguistic goals" indicates the broader outcome of bilingual education in terms of language usage in a given society; "direction" distinguishes between the one-way models of language learning only by the minority and two-way models of mutual language learning by both the minority and the majority speakers; "cultural ecology" refers to the cultural goals of bilingual education of shifts either towards to majority culture or to multiculturalism; "linguistic orientation", finally, denotes to the perspective that policy makers use to define the issue of multilingualism as problem, right, or resource for society and speakers. Combining these categories, García proposes to view bilingual education as embedded in four frameworks, the "subtractive-transitional", the "additive-maintenance", the "recursive-developmental" and the "dynamic-poly-directional" framework (see Table 3).

	Subtractive-transitional	**Additive-maintenance (enrichment)**	**Recursive-developmental (revitalization; heritage)**	**Dynamic-poly-directional**
linguistic goal	monolingual-monoglossic	bilingual-monoglossic	bilingual-heteroglossic	bilingual-heteroglossic
direction	one-way	one-way	one-way	two-way or multiple-way
cultural ecology goal	monocultural	minorities: bicultural majorities: monocultural	bicultural	transcultural
linguistic orientation: bilingualism as…	problem	resource for minorities	right and resource	resource for whole society

Table 3: Frameworks of bilingual education, based on García (2011).

However, this diversity of possible frameworks indicates two issues. Firstly, the concepts and goals of minority language education can differ tremendously. Comparative analysis of bilingual and minority language education models throughout the world has shown that, there are large differences between countries, languages, and even schools, depending on linguistic, ethnic, and social beliefs (Beardsmore 2011; Menken, García 2010). In the case of China, for instance, ethnic policy making and changing linguistic ideologies concerning the value of minority languages have triggered development of a variety of general frameworks and specific models, as I will discuss in depth in chapter 4.

Secondly, on basis of these frameworks, scholars of minority language curriculum implementation have pointed to the strong role of implementers at school level in

appropriating and in fact "making" minority language policies at schools. Hornberger (2002, p. 30) argues that "multilingual policy is essentially about opening up ideological and implementational space in the environment" and in a later article she writes that these spaces must be "carved out from the bottom up" (Hornberger, Johnson 2007, p. 512). Policy instruments, such as the making of curriculum plans that define target groups, goals, timing, and exit criteria, the hiring and training of staff, and the publishing and delivering of textbooks all determinate the level of standardization of teaching in a specific subject (Beardsmore 2011), but the implementation of these instruments depend on how actors use the provided spaces.

2.2.2 Discretion and accountability in school-based decision making

Activities and decisions on implementation of curriculum policies at school-level are, similar to implementation of other policies, determined by the institutional settings that define decision making power of actors.[28] Elmore and Sykes (1992, p. 192) write: "Embedded in any set of curriculum policies […] is a set of implicit or explicit assumptions about the allocation of public authority among institutions, public and private."

Since public schools are the most localized arm of the state in education provision (and especially in Chinese schools, as will be discussed in detail in chapter 3) they are also the location where accountability institutions shape implementation processes. Measures such as regular evaluations demand adherence to standards defined by policy makers, but at the same time, policy implementation at schools also rests on discretionary decisions made within schools. The space between discretion and accountability is a major location for decision making at schools.

Discretion and school-based decision making

The scope for discretionary decision making at school level is determined by the degree of decentralization or delegation of authority from educational bureaucracy to school-internal actors. Decentralization in educational governance can contain delegation of decision making authority to several groups within and outside school. Ferris (1992) distinguishes between "administrative decentralization" and "political decentralization". Administrative decentralization, in his understanding, means a shift towards decision

[28] Approaches to study decision making at school level vary between focusing on decisions at the school as an entity and focusing on decisions of individuals within schools. Bacharach and colleagues (1990) refer to these two approaches as the "single-domain approach" and the "multiple-domain approach". They elaborate that in the single-domain approach "researchers combine all decisions into a single dimension, examining participation in decision making as an aggregate organizational characteristic", whereas researchers in the multi-domain approach "adopt the decisions as the unit of analysis and identify several domains of decisions" (Bacharach et al. 1990, p. 129). As I investigate with this text into the role of street-level bureaucrats within schools, I will follow the latter approach.

making within schools, whereas political decentralization refers to empowerment of parents or the community to govern schools, for example by market-based control or by community empowerment.

Decentralization of educational policy making employs delegation of authority to school-level as one instrument in order to raise efficient usage of resources or to legitimize policies (Chapman et al. 1999). School-based decision making (sometimes called school-based management, see Marsh 2009, pp. 137–138) is "the systematic and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operation within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum and accountabilities" (Hansen, Roza 2005, pp. 2–3, citing Brian Caldwell 2005). In effect, this means "turning over several aspects of local education systems" from politicians to school-level professionals (Odden 1991b, p. 318), but it also increases implementers' opportunities to bargain on policy implementation according to their own preferences.

School-based decision making has been proposed as a means to improve educational performance, as it allows the implementing level to use informational advantages to adjust policies to the needs of students. Ferris (1992, p. 336) writes that its underlying principle is that "those closest to the students are in the best position to judge their needs and abilities and, hence, to choose the most suitable methods and technologies for successful learning." Due to the principal-agent problem in policy implementation, it can be more costly for central levels, if possible at all, to gather information on diverse local conditions at schools in order to make policies, than delegating decision making to informed agents at school level (Ferris 1992). School-based decision making by implementers can build up on the variety of school-based capacities that higher levels do not possess and cannot mandate, such as local expertise, routines, resources, and local motivations (McLaughlin 1991).

However, granting discretionary decision making authority to schools presents a "Janus-faced problem of local will [when it] raises the question of who ultimately controls the schools: professional teachers […] or political leaders […]" (Odden 1991b, p. 319). Decentralization approaches meet conflicts when politicians are unwilling to transfer authority, but at the same time they demand problem solutions from schools (McDonnell 1991). Although delegation of power in educational decision making not necessarily reduces the role of state politicians it faces the risk that the interests of school-based decision makers differ from politicians' own interests. In a "trade-off" between potential educational gains and the diverging interests of school-based actors politicians can

choose to limit decentralization of decision making authority to merely selected issues or they can establish accountability systems that allow discretion to specific degrees, but relate it to performance measurement (Ferris 1992).

Accountability

Accountability systems towards schools limit school-based discretion. As a means to counterbalance the principal-agent problem of educational supervision (Ferris 1992) accountability in education systems has three purposes: to increase the legitimacy of school-based decisions when accountability measures link decisions with achievements in school performance systems, to account the quality of educational services (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency), and to improve services (Hooge et al. 2012, p. 8).

Accountability systems differ in their general approach of what to evaluate, who is eligible as evaluators, and what designs should be used for evaluation. Generally, accountability systems vary between vertical approaches, where schools and teachers are accountable towards higher echelons of superiors, and horizontal approaches, that focus on accountability towards peers and community stakeholders, such as students or parents. Vertical approaches can be divided into firstly regulatory approaches that focus on school-internal processes measured in compliance with regulations and secondly performance approaches that focus on tuition outcomes measured, for instance, in students' test results (Hooge et al. 2012).[29]

These accountability systems are often installed top-down, but sometimes they are also installed by school personnel themselves. Honig and Hatch (2004) argue that schools "craft cohesion" among the school staff in three ways: creating collective decision making structures (e.g. establishing school-based management teams), maintaining these structures (e.g. providing measures for staff development), and managing information for decisions (e.g. setting school goals as formal and informal school rules). All three activities serve the purpose of streamlining school staff with school-based strategies and goals. Teachers may wish for such accountability. Informal rules and formal standards developed by school-based teacher communities, for example, provide guidance for decisions under conflicts within schools and they guide the "sense-making" process by teachers when they interpret policy goals (Spillane et al. 2002).

[29] Evaluations systems differ further in the specific approaches between status-based evaluations that measure a current status of schools compared, for instance, to national averages, and growth-based evaluations that measure year-to-year school development of schools. Furthermore, they can vary in terms of evaluation sequences and in choice of target groups (e.g. students or teachers) and the set of indicators (e.g. subject tests, drop-out rates, retention rates, parental satisfaction, or the equipment of schools with teachers and teaching materials) (Figlio, Ladd 2008).

Both the vertical and the horizontal evaluation system can result in accountability of schools and individuals. Factors of classroom achievements add up to school outcome (Creemers 1997, p. 118). Hence, some accountability models of external evaluation explicitly target at evaluating teachers, for instance their performance, and choose teacher-based sanctions or rewards, such as performance-based promotions and salaries (Figlio, Ladd 2008).

The space for discretionary decision making at schools is defined by the scope of accountability, but both mutually reflect each other. Hooge and colleagues (2012, p. 6) found that "increased school autonomy often goes hand-in-hand with stronger accountability standards". In this respect, enlarged discretionary decision making authority for schools must not be confused with complete school autonomy on the one side or with complete community control on the other. Spaces for discretionary decision making, by contrast, can be described as a flexible space that allows for specific local school-based decisions, that is also limited by measures of school accountability. Both school-external and school-internal accountability systems enforce cohesion with policy goals, but at the same time they also provide guidance for decision making, uphold legitimacy, and may support identity of school staff with school-defined goals. They are thus not necessarily and always institutions that schools hesitate to take over, but they can also be welcomed by school staff.

2.2.3 School-based decision making by school personnel

Educational policies involve a large variety of actors.[30] Focusing on the "subset of primary policy actors […] that are directly and necessary participating in the making of policy choices" (Scharpf 1997, p. 71) school personnel[31] has been termed "visible

[30] Malen provides a non-exhausting list of this "host of 'visible and hidden' participants such as government officials, educational administrators, teachers, students, parents, community groups, mayors, foundations, professional associations, corporations, education reform organizations, policy networks, and lay publics" (Malen 2006, p. 86). She divides this wide array of actors into those that are directly involved such as service providers and supervisors on the one side and the "'potential partisans' who may have an interest in the policy area" (Malen 2006, p. 86) on the other side.

[31] The terms school staff and school personnel are used interchangeably in this text. The OECD distinguishes four categories of educational personnel: "i) instructional personnel; ii) professional support for students; iii) management/quality control/administration, and iv) maintenance and operations personnel" (OECD 2003). In this text I will focus on two groups: teaching (instructional) staff and administrative (management) staff. The OECD defines teaching staff (in this thesis summarized as "teachers") as: "professional personnel directly involved in teaching students. The classification includes classroom teachers, special-education teachers and other teachers who work with a whole class of students in a classroom, in small groups in a resource room, or in one-to-one teaching situations inside or outside a regular class. Teaching staff also includes department chairpersons whose duties include some teaching, but excludes non-professional personnel who support teachers in providing instruction to students, such as teachers' aides and other paraprofessional personnel" (OECD 2011b, p. 400). Administrative staff refers in this thesis to school leaders, and especially to principals (elsewhere called "headmasters" or "head teachers"), as these hold "overall responsibility for the operation of an individual school within a wider

participants" (Malen 2006, p. 86) and "important stakeholders" (Kärkkäinen 2012, p. 36) who can contribute knowledge and experiences to curriculum making, implementation, and innovation (Kärkkäinen 2012, pp. 36–37). Studies have pointed to "the significance of the actions and choices of teachers" for school change (McLaughlin 1991, p. 151). Odden (1991b, p. 307) concludes in his overview on educational implementation research that "teacher commitment [is] necessary for successful educational change efforts."

Teachers' and principals' choices are defined by their roles as street-level bureaucrats. Although teachers and principals have different responsibilities and decisions to make, the street-level bureaucracy framework sees both groups as caught in similar dilemmas between their role as professionals who serve educational needs of clients and their roles of bureaucrats entangled in hierarchical structures. In the following paragraphs I will present some approaches of grasping how these roles define teachers and principals as street-level bureaucrats; how they shape school staff's interests, beliefs, and identities; and finally how this can affect curriculum-related decisions.

Institutionally defined roles of teachers and principals

Principals are expected to coordinate tuition and its environment at a school-wide level. Under discretionary decision making they can use leadership, trust, or co-operation with other school bodies and staff as means to implement decisions (Ferris 1992, p. 340). Leithwood and Duke (2004, pp. 106–107), summarizing research on school leadership, list ten managerial tasks of school leaders from distributing financial and material resources to anticipating predictable problems, to managing the staff and student body. Accommodating policies by higher levels "in ways that assist with school improvement goals" and "buffering staff as to reduce disruptions to the instruction program" (Leithwood, Duke 2004, p. 107) are key managerial tasks that contribute to discretionary policy appropriation by school principals.

Teachers are similarly in a position to accommodate policies, but their tasks are less directed to the whole school, but more to the instructional situation of the classroom. Instructional leadership, as defined by Leithwood and Duke (2004, p. 96), relates to "the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students". Teachers can use discretion in classroom-decisions to appropriate requirements to their specific students and the specific teaching situation. As many authors have argued the teaching profession requires latitude to make discretionary

system run by the central bureaucracy" (Pont et al. 2008, p. 22). In chapter 3 I will further delineate the meaning of instructional and administrative staff specifically in China, and in chapter 6 I will investigate into the specific positions and responsibilities of school personnel at my case study schools.

decisions. Lipsky (1980, p. 15), for instance, argues against instructions for teachers "since the philosophy prevails that to a point every child requires a response appropriate to the specific learning context". Ferris (1992, p. 340) writes that "teacher empowerment [is] a mechanism to bolster teacher morale and enhance teacher performance and, hence, student performance."

Internal and external accountability structures define the roles of school staff in policy implementation, which at times creates pressures for school staff (Schwille et al. 1983) . Nevertheless, school-based actors are not merely passive recipients of accountability systems, but they also develop strategies to counter these systems. They "may wish to avoid accounting for their decisions, practices, and outcomes" and according to these preferences they may work to "give accountability relationships a symbolic or fake character" (Hooge et al. 2012, p. 17). School staff can, for instance, manipulate the pool of students in tests or they can forge test results (Figlio, Ladd 2008). According to Ferris (1992) such behavior depends on the design and approach of the accountability system. When the measurement, for instance, is deemed problematic or when it measures performance that depends on factors such as students' home learning conditions that are beyond the reach of school staff, teachers and principals are more likely to resist accountability systems.

Role-defined interests of teachers and principals

The double role of teachers and principals as bureaucrats and educational professionals shapes different, sometimes conflicting, interests in relation to teaching. As bureaucrats, teachers and principals are mandated to stand in for policies decided on higher levels, measured by accountability systems. As educational professionals, however, their understanding of educational goals might sometimes differ from those policies. Demands by parents and students, for instance, can contrast with demands by superiors. As individual workers, finally, they might have the interest to reduce workloads and to strive for promotion or material benefits. These different roles create dilemmas for both principals and teachers when strict policy implementation would counter professional or personal interests or when unfunded policy goals stand in contrast to the lack of resources at school level (Weatherley, Lipsky 1977).

Specifically on the issue of minority language education, however, educators might have more and specific interests. Ethnicity as a relational concept that individuals

use to make decisions[32] adds additional layers of interests for street-level bureaucrats at schools. Case study research has established that ethnicity plays a strong role in defining educators' interests. Educators' own language experiences, for instance, might motivate them to support students on gaining access to languages (Freeman, Johnson 2010). They might have the interest to improve students' learning or enable students to participate in school life through education in minority languages (Hélot 2010). They might also, to name a final example, have an interest in promoting a specific language through schooling, for instance to revitalize lost languages (Valdiviezo 2010). However, as Creese (2010, p. 33) reminds us, researchers should also avoid a "naïve and innocent view" of the minority language teachers' motivations who just might be "tired of just one more initiative to change". These examples indicate that minority language curriculum adds complexity to the interests of street-level bureaucrats at schools. In this thesis I will investigate into how interests of teachers and principals in minority language education depend on these complexities in China.

The beliefs and understandings of teachers and principals about policies play a decisive role in their decision making on implementation. McLaughlin (1991) argues that policy success depends on the beliefs of the implementers about the policy. Odden (1991b) distinguishes between two types of commitment. A "commitment to try a new program", he declares, can be built before a program starts, for instance, through awareness sessions or through respecting teachers' concerns in the program design. A "commitment to a program", by contrast, emerges only during or after the program by teachers' evaluation of the results of a program. In any case, however, in Odden's view teacher commitment can only develop within the frameworks of teachers' understanding of a policy or a program. Spillane et al. (2002) write that these frameworks depend on three issues: implementers "cognitive structures" (e.g. previous knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes), their professional and personal situation, and policy signals for interpretation.

[32] In this thesis I will follow Brubaker's (2002, p. 167) remarks that "ethnicity, race and nation should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals — as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded and enduring 'groups' encourages us to do — but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms." Brubaker argues that ethnicity can be studied as "practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events" (Brubaker 2002, pp. 167–168). In this sense, and in reflection of Anderson's (1991) understanding of the imagined nation, I will see ethnicity of school staff here as a current status of imagined and expressed belonging of individuals that affects individuals' decision making. The specific conceptualization of ethnicity by the Chinese state will be discussed in chapter 4.

Curriculum implementation decisions by teachers and principals

Decentralization of education policies allows discretionary decisions on curriculum, budget, personnel, and school administration (Ferris 1992, p. 338). Curriculum decisions can be distinguished between decisions on the content and the pedagogies (Hansen, Roza 2005). Kärkkäinen (2012) reflects these two dimensions by two questions: The question "What should be taught?" describes the content and planning of curriculum. It includes decisions on course content, program design, and subject selection. The question "How should students be taught?", by contrast, points to issues of instruction. It covers decision making on the selection of methods, textbooks, assessment structures, and periods of instruction (Kärkkäinen 2012).

Teachers' and principals' decisions on curriculum can contain a variety of issues. Schwille and colleagues (1983) name four fields of teacher decisions concerning curriculum content: the time allocated for a subject, the choice of topics, the share of content between students, and the definition of achievement goals for students. Bacharach and colleagues (1990), refer to 19 areas of school-based decision making from classroom assignment to deciding on expenditure (see Table 4).

Areas of school-based decision making	
1. school assignment	11. budget development
2. standardized test policies	12. how to teach
3. classroom assignment	13. expenditure priorities
4. grading policies	14. books available for use
5. student assignment	15. staff hiring
6. reporting procedures	16. books used
7. student removal	17. performance evaluation
8. student rights	18. staff development
9. facilities planning	19. student discipline
10. what to teach	

Table 4: Areas of school-based decision making (source: Bacharach et al. 1990, p. 136).

However, these lists of decision making areas must be seen as case-sensitive, as they depend not only on the specific institutional setting of a country's school system, but also on the policies in question. For minority language education, for instance, case study research has shown that teachers and principals can make specific decisions, such as emphasizing the value of minority languages towards students, adjusting their own classroom language to the students' mother tongue, adding language-related explanations to content matter, or even prohibiting the use of specific languages in class (see examples in Creese 2010; Hélot 2010; Freeman, Johnson 2010).

Teachers and principals as street-level bureaucrats develop patterns of practice to simplify these decisions. In order to fill the spaces provided by policies and institutions teachers and principals use "simplification systems" that "provide a set of 'appropriate' responses to external demands" (Honig, Hatch 2004, p. 20). Pressured by the dilemma of

policy demands that exceed their resources in terms of time, energy, or tuition equipment, teachers can, for example, engage in rationing educational services or in simplifying bureaucratic procedures. Weatherly and Lipsky (1977), for instance, found in their study that teachers who were required to assess students' special education needs referred to practices such as rationing the number of assessments, short-circuiting bureaucratic forms, or forcing parents to agreements instead of explaining issues. On the other side, educators also use strategies to explicate and to justify their own decisions. Freeman and Johnson (2010), for instance, found that especially when it comes to decisions in minority languages, a heavily disputed issue, teachers and principals also use research results for their argumentation for specific models of education.

Curriculum decisions by school staff can result in policy changes. Teachers' strategies of neglect, adaptation, or resistance, for instance, can result in policy dilution; strategies to select policies strategically can lead to policy appropriation; strategies to appeal to authorities, to build coalitions with third-parties, or to join public protests may result in policy nullification, but they might also result in policy amplification when school staff successfully frames policy goals as community benefits (Malen 2006).[33] In terms of minority language education actions of school-level personnel may not only result in appropriation of language policies in the classroom (Freeman, Johnson 2010), but they may also unfold effects on the standing of a language in a community and on the educational chances of students who speak a specific language, as examples from diverse language settings show (Creese 2010; Valdiviezo 2010).

2.3 Combined analytical framework and transferability to Chinese case

In this chapter I have elaborated an analytical framework that approaches implementation through the bottom-up perspective of the street-level bureaucracy framework, but combines it with an institutional perspective on implementational spaces provided by the structure of accountability systems. In the following paragraphs I will firstly summarize this framework and secondly I will outline questions for transferring this framework to the case of China which will guide the specification in the next chapters.

[33] Some research conducted in the US and in Europe showed that teachers' actions outside bureaucratic school organization, e.g. organizing street-protests or joining forces with other societal groups, successfully affected legislation (McClure 1991; Fullan 2007; Shipps 2003). However, these actions require conscious and concerted efforts and are thus often not only reduced to single issues, but limited to those institutional settings where organized action is a possible option. Malen (2006, p. 103) writes that these influences often "may be more an ideological ideal than an empirical reality" and concludes that policy dilution and appropriation as strategies within the bureaucratic arena are more likely outcomes in schools than nullification and amplification as strategies outside the bureaucratic arena.

2.3.1 School-based decision making in curriculum policy implementation

Scholarship on implementation has produced several frameworks and approaches to policy implementation. The bottom-up perspective, as I have indicated in this chapter, is a useful approach to view policy implementation as a process that is directed by street-level implementers' decisions. These implementers' specific position in hierarchical systems, that on the one side bind them to state directives, but on the other side also call for local diversity and discretion, shape decisions on policy implementation. However, scholarship has also shown that the variables that define the space for discretionary decisions by implementers depend on case-specific institutional settings, such as accountability systems and professional norms. In police work, teaching, or nursing, as examples mentioned by Lipsky, street-level bureaucrats are all required to make decisions, but the space to do so differs between the various fields of social service provision.

With this chapter I have introduced a combined framework for school-based decision making in curriculum policy implementation, which allows for analysis of implementers' decision making against the institutional settings of the specific policy field of educational policy. This framework focuses on the implementation process between curriculum policies and their corresponding policy instruments on the one side and the outcomes of teaching at schools. It views the implementation thus as a process with policy inputs and outcomes, but at the same time this process is shaken, defined, and "made" by school personnel's decisions and their simplifying "patterns of practice" (Figure 1 visualizes this process).

Decisions and patterns of practice by school-personnel in implementing curriculum at school-level are seen as intervening factor in this process. Decisions by school-staff concerning curriculum elements such as teaching methods, assignment goals, and the usage of teaching materials have a key position, as they affect all stages of curriculum from the intended to the learned curriculum.

However, in this framework school-based decisions are embedded in institutionally defined spaces of discretionary decision making. Institutional settings of accountability systems in school and curriculum management shape this discretionary space, which in turn defines the options for school-based implementers. The space created by institutional settings thus affects the modes of how interests, policy understandings, and professional roles of school staff shape policy outcomes.

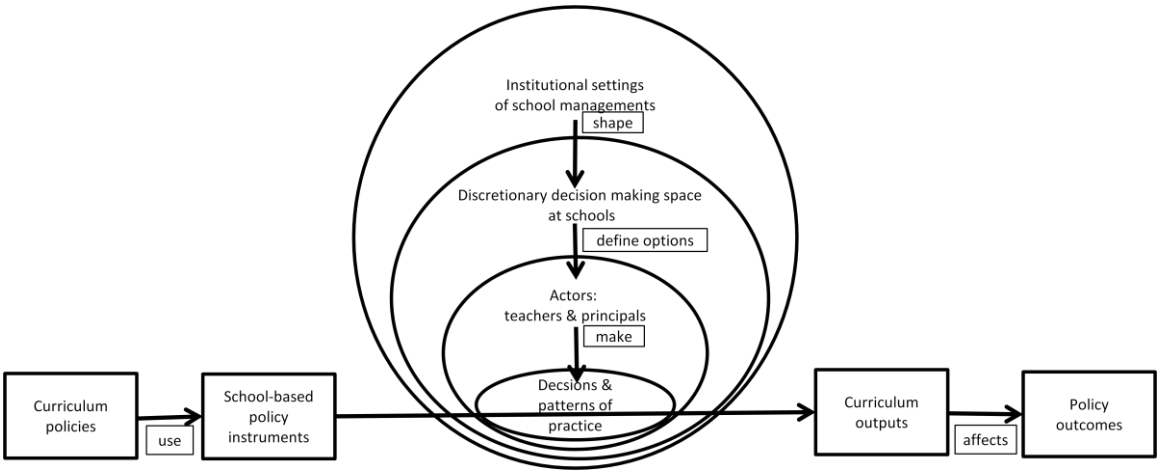

Figure 1: Analytical framework of school-based decision making in curriculum policy implementation.

This framework allows grasping the complex interplay between policies, institutions, and actor decisions at school-level when it comes to implementation of curriculum polices. However, there are several caveats in order: Firstly, this model defines policies and institutions as independent variables. Although several studies have pointed to the power of teachers to shape institutions both inside and outside the bureaucratic arena (see literature review in introductory chapter), these activities will not be reflected in the present framework for the benefit of a focus on the binding forces of institutions. Secondly, this approach analyses exclusively actions, decisions, and motivations by street-level bureaucrats at school level. Interests of other actors, such as parents, politicians, or students are beyond the reach of this framework and will appear merely as sources of control or as response to decision making by school personnel, whereas the mechanisms that produce specific interests of these actors can only be touched marginally as a background. The focus on school staff must thus ignore several aspects of policy making outside schools, but at the same time it allows to focus on the specific conditions that shape policy implementation within schools.

2.3.2 Transferability of framework to Chinese case

Employing the outlined framework I will analyze implementation processes for education in ethnic minority languages in China. Generally, this framework is designed to be applicable to political systems different from Western democracies, as it is open to various institutional settings. Different from the original framework of street-level bureaucracy as proposed by Lipksy that assumes a strong role of citizens in controlling the state and its agents, the modified framework presented here is by definition open to various institutional settings. The institutionalist perspective that is applied here approaches implementation processes from one step beyond, as it transforms the focus from the mere dilemmas of implementers to analysis of the institutional settings that

distribute power between actors. Instead of resting in one specific and unquestioned political system, this framework thus opens up to various political systems, as it perceives institutions as manifestation of a given political system.

However, transferring this framework to the case of China raises several questions. Firstly, the framework presented above focuses on the institutional settings for policy implementation at schools. However, institutions of personnel management and accountability differ between countries, and even within a single country there might be multiple approaches to personnel management and myriads of institutional settings. How can the framework include these diverse settings and how can it filter those institutions, even the informal or unwritten ones, which have the largest effects on decision making at school level? In order to approach these questions I need to specify the institutional settings of school and personnel management in China in detail against the background of the state's ideology towards school-based decision making in the educational process and its institutional manifestations. Only through this intermediate step I will be able to understand the roles that the Chinese state attributes to schools as implementers and to depict the modes of how schools in China are bound to the state while similarly enjoying discretion.

Secondly, as the framework analyzes implementation of individual policies there is a need to specify the policies in most possible clarity. However, how about cases when these policies are complex, when diverse policies compete with each other, when policy goals and policy instruments are unclear, or when the approaches and goals of policy formulating actors differ from those of state agencies? As I have outlined in this chapter ethnic minority language education can follow various linguistic, social, and cultural goals and it can employ diverse instruments. For analysis of minority language education policies in China I need to specify the framework by minority language education instruments and the policy goals of specific actors in the educational and ethnic governmental administration in order to grasp the specific interests and reactions of implementers within the government and at schools.

In the next two chapters I will specify the framework for the case of minority language education policy implementation in China. In the immediate next chapter I will discuss in depth the specific institutional settings for curriculum implementation by school-based decision making in China. I will here discuss how the competition between approaches to diversify curriculum in China on the one side and a new focus on accountability of school personnel on the other shapes the spaces for school-based decision making in China. In the next-but-one chapter I will introduce into the policies for

ethnic minority language education in China. Here I will discuss how multiple and at times blurred policy goals provide specific challenges to implementation processes. In the summary of each chapter I will discuss how the framework outlined above must be adjusted against the specifics of minority language education policy implementation in China.

3 Institutions and decision making spaces for street-level bureaucrats at Chinese schools

According to the framework outlined above institutions define the spaces for implementation decisions by street-level bureaucrats. Institutions of curriculum and personnel management at schools, such as regulations on the share of central and local curriculum, the accountability and payment systems of personnel, and norms of teacher behavior at schools all shape the space that school personnel has for making decisions on curriculum policy implementation.

School management in China, similar to that of many other countries in Asia (Cheng, Townsend 2000), has been subject to reforms in structures, incentives, and definitions of spaces for school-based decision making under the goal of education for "visions of a modern, technologically driven society, where investments in human capital are considered crucial to economic development" (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 281). However, neither the goals nor the implementation of these reforms are clear-cut (Tang, Wu 2000; Dello-Iacovo 2009) and curriculum and school management at Chinese schools oscillate between diversity and standardization. On the one hand, new modes of governing schools established measures of increased control over school personnel under the idea that curriculum has to unify thinking among students. On the other hand, reform agendas demand a more localized curriculum that centers on student diversity and demands more discretion for school personnel to determine tuition.

The institutional settings that have developed out of these diverse and sometimes conflicting reform agendas can be expected to shape the space for school-based decision making by principals and teachers at Chinese schools. But what are the main institutions that affect these decisions? How do institutions such curriculum tables, norms on teachers' roles, and school evaluation mechanisms define the space that school personnel in China as street-level bureaucrats can use to adjust curriculum to the local needs, to make their classes more exciting for student, to follow their own ideas of good teaching, or simply to lower their own workloads?

In this chapter I will elaborate on the relationship between institutions and street-level bureaucrats at Chinese schools by shedding a light on the spaces that institutions of school management provide for decision making at school-level. In the first part of this chapter I will thus introduce into the basic modes of personnel management and personnel accountability at Chinese schools, before in the second part I will elaborate specifically on curriculum and how these structures define the spaces for decision making by school staff as street-level bureaucrats in China. By investigating in depth into the

institutional settings as the central part of the policy implementation model outlined above, this chapter will lay the ground for a more specific analysis of the spaces and decisions on minority language education in Xishuangbanna in later chapters.

3.1 Institutions of personnel management at Chinese schools

Under consideration of the perspective of institutions as a combination of "regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements" (Scott 2008, p. 48) which guide actor behavior but which can also open up spaces for discretionary decisions (see chapter 2), an analysis of institutions of personnel management at schools must cover both formal management structures and informal rules of behavior. Transferred to the case of school management in China, two institutional settings are especially of relevance for personnel management. On the one side, institutions such as guidelines and societal discourses on appropriate teacher behavior assign to teachers a position between representatives of the state at local level and autonomous decision makers in the classroom. On the other side, institutions of school management, such as personnel evaluations establish mechanisms in school management that affect personnel deployment, training, and pay.

However, management of educational affairs at schools in China, including organizing and funding of schooling, curriculum, and personnel, experienced major shifts over the last years from centralization to decentralization and again to recentralization. In the following sections I will provide an overview on the main institutions of personnel management at Chinese schools: guidelines that define expected school staff behavior, institutions that distinguish school staff into professional levels and grades, the system of hiring and promoting school staff, and internal and external evaluation mechanisms. For this endeavor I will firstly introduce into the basics of schools and school personnel in China. In a second part I will introduce into the organizational structures of school management in China. In a third part I will discuss how these structures translate into accountability of schools and school personnel.

3.1.1 Schools and school personnel

Schooling is a major domain of state activity in China, and roles and norms of behavior of school personnel are defined by institutions determined by the state. However, there is much diversity within both schools and personnel. In the following paragraphs I will illustrate this diversity with a short overview on basic characteristics of both.

Schools in China

The Chinese formal educational system[34] is composed of two major stages: basic and higher education. Basic education includes the following sub-stages: early education of a varying length either in pre-school classes attached to schools or in independent kindergartens, six years of primary education at elementary schools, three years of secondary education at junior middle schools, and another three years at senior middle schools.[35] Higher education includes tertiary education at diverse forms of colleges and universities (Sun 2005; Yang 2010).

Education from pre-school classes to ninth grade has been made compulsory in 1986, and educational access continuous to raise (Sun 2005; Yang 2010). Through different government levels' "shared responsibility for compulsory education" (Zhang, Zhao 2006, p. 265, see also below) enrollment rates from primary to secondary and to higher education have constantly increased since the end of the Cultural Revolution (Editorial Board of China Educational Statistics Yearbook 2012). Furthermore, since the beginning of the 2000s nine-year compulsory education became free of charge for local children in gradual steps from the Eastern regions to the Western regions and from urban to rural areas (Chai, Cheng 2011), and increasingly also for migrant children (Schnack 2010). However, the fees for upper secondary and for tertiary education, fees for reading and writing material, for school uniforms, and for boarding, as well as expenses for private tutoring can amount to large burdens for families.[36]

There is a large diversity of schools in primary and secondary education in terms of administration, size, and educational quality. In terms of administrative control schools can be divided into public and private schools.[37] Public schools are the main provider of

[34] This dissertation deals exclusively with what the OECD defines as formal education, namely "education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions, and which normally constitutes a continuous 'ladder' of full-time education for children and young people" (OECD 2011b, p. 371). Informal education, e.g. private lessons, education at home, adult literacy, etc. will be only marginally touched in this text.

[35] The Chinese term "中学" has been translated as "secondary school", "high school", or "middle school". I will use the term "middle school" here, since this connotes closest to a literal translation of the Chinese characters.

[36] Additional fees in officially free education systems can constitute tremendous barriers to education (Tomasevski 2006). In China, the so called "miscellaneous fees" have been major barriers to school visits (Brown, Park 2002) until these fees from the 1990s onwards have been banned step by step (Zeng, Ding 2010). However, at the schools I visited students had to pay for school uniforms and school food. Although the fees were only small relative to the average income (uniform fees were below 100 RMB and fees for food were a few RMB per meal) they can amount to burdens for poor families or for those with several children. Furthermore, private tutoring is an increasing phenomenon that adds further educational costs to families, especially in urban areas (Yu, Ding 2011).

[37] The meanings of the terms "public schools" and "private schools" are not to be confused with those in the USA or Great Britain, but rather refers here to the Chinese context. In this text I will refer to the distinction used by the OECD (2004, p. 301) which classifies a school as public when "ultimate control rests

education in primary and secondary schooling, whereas private education in this sector is comparatively small and mostly a phenomenon of urban areas.[38] Furthermore, public primary schools are distinguished into central schools (中心学校) and branch or satellite schools (分校). Central schools are administrative entities with a school principal who is responsible towards the Bureaus of Education (see below), whereas satellite schools are branches of central schools.

In terms of size, primary schools can be distinguished into so called "complete schools" (完全小学) that cover all prescribed subjects for grades one to six and "teaching point schools" (教学点)[39] that due to a lack of teachers or due to small student populations offer only limited subjects and classes, typically merely classes from grade 1 through 3 or 4 (Mo et al. 2012, p. 423). An extreme case has been schools that have only one teacher who teaches all students together in one room (一师一校). Due to school mergers (see below) this type of school ceased to exist in most parts of the country, except some regions in China's West (Shao et al. 2012). Furthermore, there is a distinction between boarding schools and schools without boarding facilities. Especially schools in rural areas often provide boarding facilities for students with long distance school ways. Boarding schools control students' communication, activities, and use of time more than non-boarding schools (Hansen 2012, pp. 127–128).

Concerning the location of schools some sources differ between rural schools (located in townships) and urban schools (located in cities). This distinction refers to

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with a public education authority or agency or a governing body […], most of whose members are appointed by a public authority or elected by public franchise" and private when "ultimate control rests with a non-governmental organization […], or if the Governing Board consists mostly of members not selected by a public agency." In China the term for this type of schools is "schools run by the people" (民办学校), whereas the literal translation "private schools" (私人学校)" is used only to describe schools before the founding of the Peoples Republic (Xu 2002). For further distinction of private schools, e.g. into elite schools, and a discussion on the dependencies of private schools from government-run schools in China see Lin (1999) and Shui (2009).

[38] With a number of merely 5,000 out of roughly 300,000 private schools occupy only a small part of the primary and secondary schools in China (Editorial Board of China Educational Statistics Yearbook 2012). According to Lin (1999) with exception of a few "elite private schools" most private schools in China offer lower educational quality than public schools. Private schools must hence be understood as low-quality alternatives for those children who are rejected by regular and public schools, such as migrant children and local unregistered children of parents who exceeded the birth limits of the one-child policy (so called "black children", 黑孩子, see Greenhalgh 2003). Schools for migrant children, for example, were informally founded in the 90s and 2000s with teaching facilities of extremely low quality, classes of up to 70 students, unprofessional staff, and dangerous buildings (Han 2004). These schools for migrant children are now, under large local diversity, increasingly engaged in processes of formalization, registration, and even management through government agencies (Schnack 2010). In rural areas those schools that were formerly organized and funded by the villagers themselves (Lin 1999) have been transformed especially in the 90s into public schools, and village-paid teachers were either added to the pool of public teachers or dismissed (Wang 2002).

[39] These schools are often located in villages, where they are called "village teaching point" (村小点).

responsible government agencies (county and township on the one side and city and district on the other), and it does not necessarily reflect occupation of students' parents or usage of land around schools. In close relation to this, schools can be distinguished according the quality of educational infrastructure and tuition available. Rural schools are much disadvantaged in educational infrastructure compared to urban schools, which is related to the underfunding of schools in rural areas (Guo 2007; Gong, Tsang 2011).

However, the status of schools is subject to changes. Since the 90s school merging of smaller schools into larger school compounds with moving students from village day-time-schools to central boarding schools became a common measure to equalize educational quality between schools and to lower costs (Fan 2009). It has been reported that half of the Chinese rural schools closed between 2002 and 2012 (Zhang 2012b). This process included large movements of students and staff, activities to erect new school buildings, and extension of the boarding school system. Although school mergers have been praised in the state media (Zhang 2012b), critics point to social and psychological problems for families and students. They argue for a reconsideration of the merger program and for slowing down its pace or at least improving the management of boarding schools in order to achieve educational improvements (Mo et al. 2012; Fan 2009). Although it remains to be seen if public pressure will force the government to slow down or to halt this policy, the trend clearly is towards more centralized schools and more boarding schools.

School personnel in China

Teachers and principals or vice-principals are the main staff responsible for teaching affairs at schools.[40] Chinese scholars distinguish between administrative staff and teaching staff (e.g. Wang 2003). However, in many cases principals also teach and teachers are also involved in administrational work. So called "Reference tables for criteria for authorized size of personnel in schools" prescribe the scheduled numbers of principals and teachers for schools, which range between one and two teachers per class and one to three principals and vice-principals per school (Wang 2003, p. 105). However, as studies repeatedly have shown the actual number of teachers who serve at schools is often below the required quota, and especially at rural schools there is lack in teaching personnel (Peng et al. 2013).

[40] Additionally, especially larger schools have support staff, such as cooks, nurses, and guards who work in schools or the adjacent school enterprises (Wang 2003, pp. 105–106). As this staff is not formally involved in curriculum decision making, it will not be discussed here.

Most teachers at public schools today are hired by the governmental posting system as government employed and managed teachers (公办教师), but temporary teachers (代课教师), who are hired by local Bureaus of Education on temporary basis, still continue to be a common phenomenon especially at rural schools. After the policy to equalize the status of teachers brought a slow end to the system of hiring private teachers (民办教师) who were hired, funded, and managed by school communities for several decades (Wang 2002), the problem of understaffing at schools become again prominent. Facing both the notorious underfunded educational system and the difficulties in finding qualified staff especially in China's Western regions the educational bureaucracy started to hire temporary teachers in addition to the regular teaching force. The system of private teachers was thus succeeded by the system of temporary teachers, but the responsibility to fund these teachers was transferred from the local school community to the local educational bureaucracy. In a study conducted in Gansu province, Robinson and Yi (2008) found that most temporary teachers are paid much less than the regular public teachers, although they are qualified to be teachers and many possess qualifications equivalent to those of regular public teachers, and although all of them have workloads and responsibilities equal to that of regular teachers.

Apart from the distinction into public, private, and temporary posts, both teachers and principals are distinguished by a ranking system of professional positions. The "Compulsory Education Law" (National People's Congress 4/12/1984, § 30) defines three teacher levels: low, middle, and high. However, this ranking is more diversified at local level. County Bureaus of Education distinguish teacher positions into five ranks – intern (newly hired), third class, second class, first class, and superior – according to years of teaching and assessments (Wang 2003). Teachers with higher ranks enjoy a higher salary and have better chances to be transferred to more prestigious schools. Additionally, due to increased social prestige they can, important in times of low formal salary, charge higher fees from parents for extra-curricular activities, such as summer classes (Ding, Lehrer 2007, p. 193). Additionally, there are distinctions in the occupational position of teachers in schools. "Backbone teacher" (骨干教师), for instance, is a term used to describe teachers who due to received trainings are seen as leaders in educational reform and development at schools (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 282). Class teachers (班主任) are those teachers who head one specific class and who are especially involved in administrative tasks of this class. According to regulations such as the "Regulation on Classroom Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools" (Ministry of Education 8/12/2009) both groups receive additional subsidies to their salaries and enjoy reduced teaching hours.

Applicants for teacher posts and principal posts in schools have to fulfill minimum requirements of academic achievements, which differ between school levels. Regulations define the minimum requirements for teaching positions at pre-school and primary school: holding diploma of pre-school teachers' training institutions or diploma from secondary normal schools. Applicants for junior and senior secondary school teaching posts must hold at least a diploma from normal universities or a Bachelor degree from other universities. Applicants for principal posts must generally hold diplomas of one level higher than is required for teacher positions and they must additionally have teaching experiences (Wang 2003, pp. 111–113).

However, not all school staff fulfills these requirements. Although methods such as increasing the frequency of in-service teacher trainings, firing unqualified teachers, recognizing alternative ways of achieving formal qualifications, and enlarging the pool of universities with teacher education all have resulted in an increase of the academic achievement levels of teachers in China (Robinson, Yi 2008, p. 36), low formal qualification of teachers persists especially in China's rural areas (Peng et al. 2013).[41] The mismatch between academic titles of teachers and the subjects that they actually teach is higher in rural schools than in urban schools (Peng et al. 2013). Furthermore, temporary teachers with lower academic qualifications are especially employed in rural areas (Robinson, Yi 2008), since young university graduates hesitate to apply for posts there.[42] Government programs such as the Free Teacher Education program brought more students to rural schools, but the program seems to lack in durability.[43] Similarly, hiring

[41] Paine and Fang (2007) argue that teacher trainings in China generally face three challenges. Firstly, pre-service and in-service teacher education in China were for a long time separated into different training organizations, a situation detrimental for control and cohesion; secondly, time and resources invested in teacher trainings have been low and have been only recently increased; thirdly, the large disparities between rural and urban teacher qualifications adds further difficulties to organize unified teacher education programs.

[42] In a study by Wang and Gao (2013, pp. 70–72) university students of teacher programs largely hesitated to teach at rural schools. They named as reasons for their hesitation financial constraints and a lack of opportunity for personal and professional development. Additionally they saw rewards for teaching at schools as unattractive compared to other jobs' rewards, they perceived rural areas as being too remote and isolated to offer excitement, and their jobs as lacking opportunities for learning and career.

[43] The Free Teacher Education program offers university students scholarships, free accommodation, and exemption from study fees, in exchange for a contractual obligation to serve two to ten years at rural schools (Wang, Gao 2013, p. 68). However, many students are willing to break the contract despite the consequence of having to pay back stipend and study fees. In a study most students said that they have been attracted to the program by its financial incentives, not by conviction of the need to bring education to rural areas, which may cause low motivation to actual teaching (Wang, Gao 2013, p. 70). Furthermore, positions in rural schools can constitute additional harshness to students who grew up in different environments. One teacher, interviewed for my research project, who has been transferred through this program to a remote village at the border to Laos to a school with low infrastructure and strong rates of drug abuse among the students' parents, complained not so much about teaching in general, but more about the difficulties of teaching in an environment that she experienced as foreign and unsupportive (TE-10_ST-04_2012-01-06). To sum up, as this program targets students who otherwise could

temporary, non-qualified or underpaid teachers does not contribute to creating a stable and motivated teaching force at rural schools. Under these conditions the lack of formally qualified teachers in rural schools can be expected to continue.

3.1.2 Organizational structures of school management

Scholars divided management of schools in China into two distinct areas: external management by the Bureaus of Education as responsible governmental department and by Party organization, and internal management by principals or committees within schools (Yang 2010). Institutional settings of hierarchy and discretion differ between both modes of management, but in some areas they overlap. Accountability measures of personnel, for example, rely in large degrees on cooperation between the Bureau of Education and school-internal advisory groups. Two characteristics of educational management structures in China are their local diversity and the constant reforms. In the following paragraphs I will provide a small glimpse of school organization structures, including graphical visualizations of examples.

Government structures of school management

Public schools in China are executive branches of educational bureaucracy, represented by the "educational line" from the Ministry of Education at the central government level down to the County Bureau of Education (see also chapter…). The Bureaus of Education at the diverse administrative levels run schools as "social units" (事业单位), similar to theaters or hospitals (Zhong 2003, p. 53), which means that the administrative level in the educational bureaucracy directly responsible for managing schools differs with the level of the schools. Within the location of a given county we find offices and social units that are under the jurisdiction of the township, of the county, of the city or prefecture, and of the province. In rural areas, generally speaking, rural primary schools are under the jurisdiction of the townships, secondary schools within the townships fall under the jurisdiction of the counties, and higher education is governed by the prefecture or the province (Zhou 2012a). Similarly, personnel appointment and funding of schools differs between schools of different levels. Principals for primary and junior secondary schools are appointed by the county government, but principals for senior secondary schools are appointed by city or prefecture government levels (Lai, Lo 2006, p. 297).

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not afford university tuition instead of those who have a passion in teaching, it seems highly questionable if the schools' teaching force can sustainably benefit from these future teachers.

However, school management is affected by reforms and is thus subject to changes. The "county-as-the-main-pillar" reform not only shifted funding responsibility, but also school management from township to county (Zhou 2012a).[44] Liu and colleagues (2009, p. 464) depicted the line of responsibility for management of rural elementary schools in China[45] from county government (represented by the County Bureau of Education), to township government (represented by Township School District Governor), to individual schools. Figure 3 visualizes this hierarchy of responsibilities for school management.

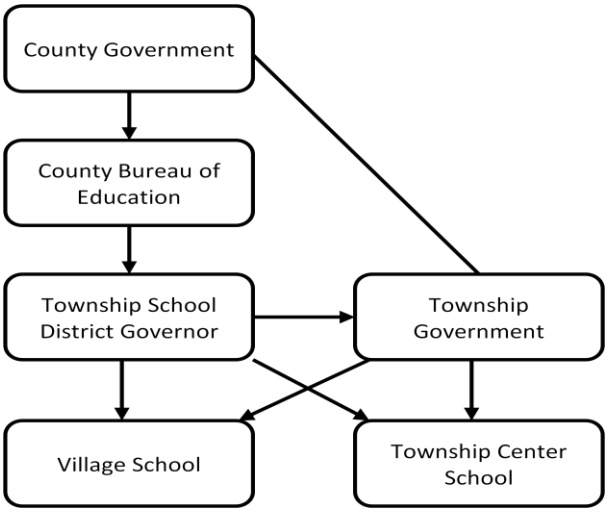

Figure 2: The administrative structure of external school management at county level, after Liu et al. (2009, p. 464).

Since this reform was implemented with locally different paces, there exists a large variety of school responsibilities. In a survey among more than 50 counties Liu and colleagues (2009) found five models of school management based on the question of who appoints principals and teachers: township government managed, county government managed, district governor managed, district governor and township government jointly managed, and county education bureau and township government jointly managed districts. However, with the shift of fiscal responsibility for educational provision from township to county level in the course of the "county-as-the-main-pillar" fiscal reforms between 2002 and 2008 (see above) educational management in most rural localities in China is now located with the County Bureau of Education (Liu et al. 2009, pp. 467–468). Within the Bureaus of Education so called educational superintendents are responsible for supervision of schools, for raising additional funds, and for reporting to municipality or

[44] Murphy and Johnson (2009, p. 450) called this an "unintended effect" of the mentioned financial reform.

[45] Since this dissertation deals exclusively with schools in China's rural areas (see chapter 3), management of urban schools will not be discussed here.

province government and to the public (Cravens et al. 2012). Additionally, school supervision is also conducted by a series of supervision agencies above the county level (Hawkins 2000, pp. 447–448). The Educational Supervision Agency and the local agencies together "are responsible for assuring that the various laws and regulations are followed by local authorities and educators" (Hawkins 2000, p. 448).

Party structures of school management

Additionally, the Chinese system of school organization also secures party control over schools. On the one side, each school has a party secretary, the so called "branch secretary", who controls the implementation of party line at schools by conducting ideological seminars and by supervising party meetings at schools. The "dual system of control" through educational staff and the party secretary has been seen as the heritage of two distinct times in China's history of controlling work units such as schools. Before 1985 the role of party organizations at schools was much stronger, but after the 1985 educational reforms principals became the "pre-eminent authority" in schools, and the role of the party secretary in running educational organizations has been much reduced (Bush et al. 1998b, pp. 137–138).

On the other side the Party also controls schools through Party organizations such as the Workers Union, the Communist Youth League, and the Young Pioneers. These organizations are not concerned with organization of daily tuition, but with "ideological work". The Communist Youth League and the Young Pioneers, for instance, train students in Party ideology and serve as recruitment tool for future cadre positions. They "train[…] young people to become citizens in the Communist state by shaping their concept of organization as well as their organizational practice," (Hansen 2012, p. 125) for instance through a system of student associations and student cadres within a class and within the school (Hansen 2012).

Both the Party secretary and the student organizations at school are in a middle position between external management through the CCP and internal self-organization. On the one side they bind school personnel (and students) to a hierarchical party structure parallel to the government structure. Party secretaries, for instance, report on their progress in propagating party ideology at school to school-externals, and are held responsible for activities at school. At the same time, however, party organizations at the schools show elements of grassroots organizations when they organize for instance student elections. According to Hansen (2012, p. 138) the party organizations aim not at "blind Party loyalty and obedience", but rather at "a 'modern' form of socialist form where ideally citizens *by their own will* [emphasis in source] contribute to the collective

through individual initiative under clear guidance and within the fixed framework of the party-state." With this, party organizations control staff and students at schools, but they also demand initiatives, innovations, and self-management by party members at school.

Internal structure of school management

Laws such as the Compulsory Education Law or the Teachers' Law define organizational structure, hierarchies, and responsibilities of personnel posts in Chinese schools, and they divide the internal organization into distinct departments, offices, or groups. Additionally schools can also describe these structures and responsibilities in school-based handbooks or school statutes.[46]

According to a summary by Bush and colleagues (1998b, pp. 137–138) the "principal's office", the "teaching affairs section", the "general affairs section", the "teaching and research group", and the "subject groups" are the major subdivisions of school administration.[47] The principal's office is the highest authority within the school. The office includes one principal and at larger schools several vice-principals. Below the principal, administrative positions are bundled in two departments.[48] The "teaching affairs section" is headed by a vice principal or an especially appointed teacher and is responsible for administration of all teaching. The "general affairs section" is similarly headed by a vice-principal and/or the General Affairs Director. It is responsible for all administration concerning infrastructure, financing, and teaching materials. Additionally there are committees[49] to support teaching and school-based research, such as the "teaching and research group", the "class head groups", and the "lesson preparation groups". All of these groups "comprise […] teachers working together to develop curricula and pedagogy" (Bush et al. 1998b, pp. 137–138). Ni and colleagues (2011, p. 119) found in

[46] In the internet one finds a variety of such school-based handbooks and statutes for public access, see for instance Mengla Middle School No. 1 (date unknown): Menghai No. 1. Middle School Guide for Public Information, http://doc.baidu.com/view/173f8fd376a20029bd642dba.html or Tonggang Middle School No. 3, (2011/4/9): School Constitution, http://tgsz.jlthjy.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=612. Furthermore, there are templates for school-based statutes by school administrators: see JSJYTB (2012-01-04): School Constitution, http://blog.jysedu.com/?uid-1909-action-viewspace-itemid-41587 (all links last access August 1st, 2014).

[47] Additionally, some schools run own factories or farms as a legacy from times when schools had to generate their own income to pay teachers or to provide food for school population (Bush et al. 1998b, pp. 137–138).

[48] The names of these departments are sometimes translated as "committees" and sometimes "sections" (Yang 2010, p. 82; Bush et al. 1998b, pp. 137–138).

[49] The "teaching and research group" consists of selected teachers from the respective subject departments. Each teacher is organized into one such group. Additionally, teachers can also be organized into "class head groups" (only for class head teachers) and into "lesson preparation groups" (groups of teachers of one subject or teachers who teach students of the same grade) (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 285).

a study that these groups are “indispensable parts” of schools, as teachers discuss their teaching methods and curriculum reforms here.

One formal working mode to conduct educational and general administration is to convene to meetings. In the “principals working meeting”, for instance, all principals and vice-principals of the school meet to discuss the daily issues of the school. Similarly, in “administrative affairs meetings” and “teaching and research meetings” staff meets regularly to decide on issues in their respective areas. Finally, in a “staff meeting” all teachers and staff convene once a year, and the principal reports here (Yang 2010, p. 82).

The shape and scope of actual organizational structure varies to large degrees between schools. Firstly, the number of administrative staff and posts differs between schools. Schools with fewer than ten classes often only have one principal, one administrator for teaching affairs, and one administrator for general service affairs, whereas larger schools can have more vice-principals and middle-administrators (Wang 2003, pp. 105–106). Secondly, in some schools the positions of branch secretary and principal are hold by two different persons, but at others the principal may also serve as branch secretary. Bush and colleagues write that the lack of party secretaries is a sign of flatter hierarchies especially at smaller schools (1998a, p. 186). Finally, there are large differences in organizational structures between central and satellite schools (for definitions see above). School leaders in satellite schools are merely called “branch school managers” (分校负责人), and although they actually conduct much of a principal’s work, they are subordinate to the central school’s principal. The central school principal, in turn, takes overall responsibility on the central school and satellite schools towards the Bureau of Education. Administrative responsibilities are thus shared between branch and satellite schools, and the pool of administrative staff at branch schools is consequently smaller. Similarly, teacher organizations at branch schools are less diversified. Here “teaching and research groups”, “class head groups” or “lesson preparation groups” are all bundled into one.

Due to this diversity visualizations of the organizational structure of schools in China can merely reflect administrative division at particular schools. With Figure 4 I present an exemplary chart of the organizational structure of one of my case study schools.

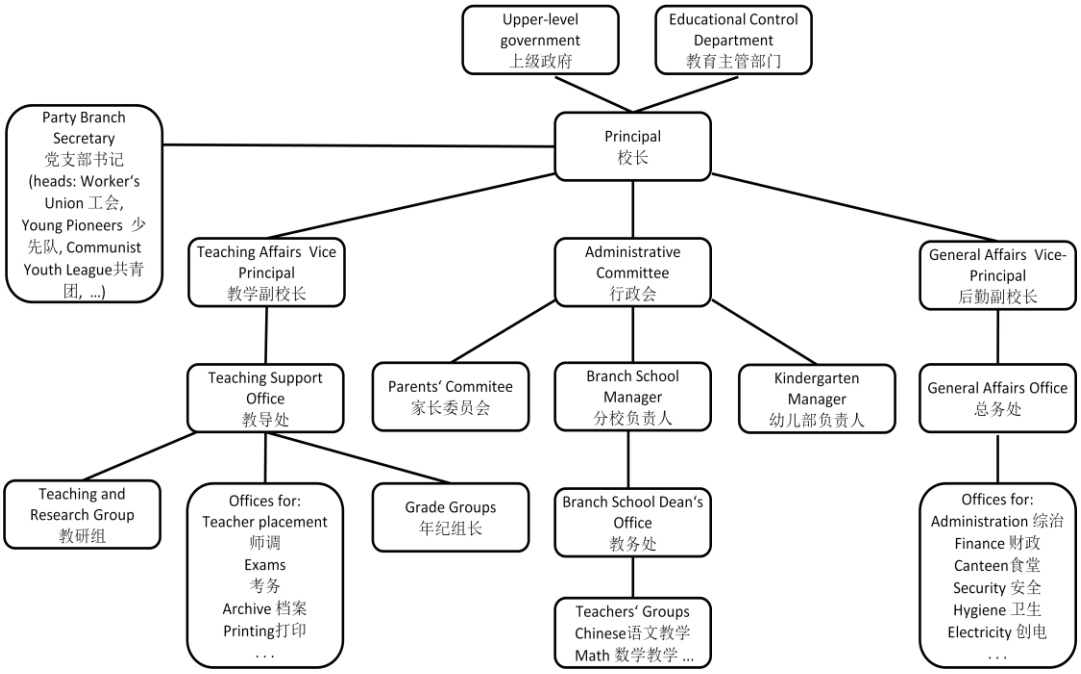

Figure 3: Exemplary chart of internal organizational structure of Chinese school with branch school, after school no. 9's internal administration manual with author's translation form Chinese to English.

3.1.3 School and personnel accountability

School and personnel accountability can be strong measures of management in education. Both have been introduced only lately in China by promulgation of respective legislation, such as the Teachers Law in 1993, and by installing accountability systems that effect professional careers, benefits, and social prestige of teachers and principal, but the trend, similar to other countries in Asia (Cheng, Townsend 2000), is clearly towards standardization of educational management. However, implementation of several institutions for teacher and principal evaluation are still lacking behind the expressed goal of modern, standardized, and objective educational management. In the following paragraphs I will provide an overview on Chinese accountability systems of both school and personnel.

School accountability

Local governments in China use evaluations as institutionalized approaches to control schools. Under principles that claim to support school development[50] both school-internal and external evaluation mechanisms developed by governments, scholars, and

[50] To name an example: Pudong school district in Shanghai holds that evaluations should be guided by the following principles: "the developmental principle (encouraging schools continuous development), the subjective principle (establishing the space for autonomous decisions), the collaborative principle (emphasizing trust and collaboration), the staged principle (paying attention to school differences and diversity), and the stimulating principle (stressing the longitudinal comparison with other schools" (Lee et al. 2011, p. 34, citing Lee, Ding, and Song 2008 p. 151)).

school personnel became central institutions of controlling schools in China (Lee et al. 2011, p. 34).

The modes and frequency for local school evaluation differ locally, as they are determined by city, prefecture, or county Bureaus of Education. A document by Xishuangbanna prefecture, for instance, lists the following measures for evaluation: interviews with teachers, consulting teacher materials, seeing through teachers' corrections of students homework, seeing through the routine records of the Class Preparation and Research Groups at school, conducting a questionnaire survey, writing a report and giving advice for improvements to schools and county education bureaus (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2012).

Similarly, localities differ in the criteria used in evaluations. Generally, policy documents and administrative regulations require basing evaluation criteria on legal provisions.[51] However, criteria on individual evaluation items differ. Lai and Lo (2006, p. 295) note that performance indicators in Shanghai are based on two aspects: schooling conditions (including school administration, teacher administration, and logistics administration) and educational quality (including admission rate, retention rate, social activities). In a collection of evaluation criteria used in China's schools Tian (2011)[52] found a variety of different criteria, from general provision of funds to specific effects of educational provision, such as student enrolment rates, graduation rates, or attrition rates (see tables 29 and 30 in appendix). Many criteria involve infrastructure at schools (e.g. school-ground space, school buildings, or textbooks), others approach the quantity and quality of a schools' staff pool (measured in student-teacher ratio and the formal academic qualifications of teachers).

However, as scholars of China's curriculum reforms have repeatedly bemoaned (e.g. Dello-Iacovo 2009), evaluation hardly ever includes criteria on pedagogies or educational outcomes beyond the rate of student graduation or student attrition. Although many school-based reform plans for local curriculum include evaluation, these evaluations are seldom implemented and the majority of schools surveyed in studies never experienced evaluations on school-based curriculum (Li, Shuai 2010, p. 30). Student

[51] General policy documents such as the "Opinions on the Responsibility in Executive Law Enforcement" (State Council 7/9/2005) require more specification by local administrative regulations. The "Mengla County Bureau of Education Measures for Evaluation of Executive Law Enforcement" (Mengla Bureau of Education 3/18/2008), for instance, demands that the evaluation of executive agencies in the educational sector should include questions such as "Do schools have the legally required certificates? Do the measures of law implementation at school follow legal standards? Does the school archive school documents according to the law?"

[52] Tian cites Qi, Ye, and Ye (2009): 政府绩效审计 [Governmental Achievement Audit], Beijing: China Modern Economy Publishers.

achievement in standardized exams remains to be one of the main criteria for school evaluations. This focus on quantitative school evaluations is a major barrier to implementation of curriculum reforms for "quality education" in the sense of student-centered education.

Schools are ranked in strict orders based on evaluation results. Although the system of differing between key point schools and regular schools has been officially terminated and has been banned e.g. by the Compulsory Education Law (National People's Congress 4/12/1984, § 22), schools are still ranked according to their quality differences. The local County Bureaus of Education compile school ranking tables[53] that contain criteria such as schooling rates in the school district, percentage of students with excellent grades in math and Chinese, and drop-out rates. These tables are meant for internal use within the educational administration. As the Bureaus of Education use these rankings to increase or reduce benefits for schools, for instance in terms of budget or staff quota,[54] evaluation results have thus direct effects on school infrastructure, teaching quality, and resources. Scholars and school personnel, however, criticized these evaluations for being unfair, since under such mechanisms well-performing schools receive more chances to develop than low-performing schools (Lee et al. 2011, p. 34).

Furthermore, much information about a schools' ranking is also publically available. Schools, to begin with, present plates of specific program awards prominently at the door and announce assessment results publically. School quality is also visible in school infrastructure. Finally, information about student-related criteria, such as graduation rates of schools, can be leaked to the public. With these and other ways of collecting information about school criteria parents can be informed about a schools' ranking and its reputation. With this information at hand parents, especially in urban areas, can make decisions on preferred schools for their children to visit.[55]

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[53] These tables are called "tables of educational quality examination results" (教学质量检测成绩统计表). So called "tables of allocated personnel" (定编统计表) list firstly the number of staff, distinguished by full-time teachers, part-time teachers, and non-teaching staff (such as guards, secretaries, or electricians), and secondly the number of classes and students in each class. Some local Bureaus of Education publish these tables online (see e.g. Suzhou City Education Net (2014/01/03): Suzhou City First Senior Middle School Educational Quality Examination Results Table, accessible at http://www.szjy.gov.cn/Item/17852.aspx, last access April 7, 2014), but others seem to keep these tables merely for internal use.

[54] In Shanghai and Shenzhen, for instance, local Bureaus of Education not only rewarded the best-ranking schools with additional funds between 200,000 and 800,000 RMB, but they also increased the quota of teachers for best ranking schools by two to three percent (Lai, Lo 2006, pp. 295–296).

[55] This phenomenon is especially relevant in urban areas where it is geographically easier for parents to choose between schools. Although government regulations have been established that guarantee students a school place within the local school district, selecting schools is still common in urban areas, partly with the involvement of paying additional fees to schools of preferred choice or even

Personnel accountability

The management of personnel at Chinese schools by educational bureaucracy underwent tremendous changes since the late 1980s. In Maoist times school personnel management has been described as “multiple hierarchies of authority, status, and income, as well as labor force of poor skills subject to intrusive and arbitrary discipline” (U 2004, p. 2), but since the beginning of the reform period elements to modernize staff administration have been introduced.

Centralization and standardization of personnel management have been major drivers of this “modernization”. Reforms caused centralization of personnel management when the shift of funding responsibilities for primary and junior secondary schooling from township to county (the so called “county-as-the-main-pillar” reform in educational funding, see above) was accompanied with a similar shift in personnel management in order to tackle the problem of strong divergences in school personnel deployment.[56] Similarly, beginning with the promulgation of the Teachers Law in 1993 that considered school teaching for the first time as a profession in need of professional standards beyond loyalty to party and state (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 280), reforms lead to standardization of personnel management. A major theme of teacher management regulations was the quest of how to develop standards for the teaching profession under the goal of “modernizing schooling”, to use teachers as “tools to shape human capital”, and to ultimately advancing the nation’s economic, technical, and moral development (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 281).

For evaluation of principals the “principal responsibility system” has been introduced in the 1980s. Subsequent legislation, e.g. in the Compulsory Education Law (National People's Congress 4/12/1984, § 26), confirmed this approach. Goals have been to improve school quality and to encourage the transfer of principals from urban to rural schools by raising incentives for principals there. The idea behind this is that “principals are expected to lead changes at the school level AND cater for the central government's demands for performance and accountability" (Qian, Walker 2011, p. 194). Under this approach principals gained more autonomy to decide on issues such as hiring teachers, using school funds, and to supervise teaching, but at the same time accountability

payments to corrupt school leaders (Wong 2008). In rural areas, however, school choice is much more limited due to scarcity of alternatives within the reach of villagers.

[56] The pay-gap between urban and rural teachers, the delayed payments of salaries for village teachers, and the generally underfunded staff system in economically disadvantages regions all caused lacks of quality and quantity of teaching staff in rural areas (Li et al. 2007).

measures also to evaluate principals' performance (Zhao et al. 2008).[57] One measure has been shifting evaluation criteria for promotion of principals from "political" criteria of party membership to "professional" criteria of school leadership and school performance. A new ranking system of a "professional career ladder" based on criteria of school performance and management capabilities under the goal of "moral integrity" of leaders in schools was introduced.[58] However, as Qian and Walker (2011, pp. 198–199) show, this new career system was only partly implemented, so that today principals' careers only partly depend on performance-related factors such as educational output, but non-performance-related factors such as school size continue to be used for evaluation and decisions on promotion of principals as well.

Concerning teachers there are several evaluation mechanisms present in Chinese schools. According to Paine and Fang (2006, p. 286) teachers are faced with three kinds of institutionalized evaluation mechanisms: self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and external evaluation. Firstly, teachers are expected to evaluate their own tuition by themselves by using textbooks and teacher handbooks as guidelines. According to the authors newly hired teachers regularly use these books to learn about curriculum requirements, but even advanced teachers orient their teaching to these books. Secondly, teachers are evaluated by peers within the schools. After visiting each others' "open classes" (公开课) teachers discuss methods in teacher groups afterwards. Thirdly, there are top-down evaluations by inspection teams that consist of officers from the local bureaus of education, school principals, and superior instructors, who conduct classroom visits or who evaluate statistics such as students' attrition rates. The former two evaluation methods have been the predominant modes for schools to determine and hold teaching standards, but recently top-down external evaluations become more prominent. In light of the three co-existing modes China's personnel evaluation system has been called a "mixed or hybrid model of accountability" (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 286).

[57] Some scholars have argued that the "teaching and research groups" as the assembly of teachers are the actual power holders, as they "form powerful interest groups with specialist knowledge and principals have to negotiate with the teaching deans to lead these groups. In extreme circumstances, teachers may be able to secure the dismissal of principals if there is significant opposition to their plans." (Bush et al. 1998a, p. 188). However, according to the "principal responsibility system" the principal is responsible for all outcome of schools and he or she will be sanctioned when the school's decisions cross specific red lines, for instance, when schools reject or expel entitled students of the school district in compulsory schooling age, when they levy fees for enrollment, or when they use un-authorized textbooks (National People's Congress 4/12/1984, §§ 26,57,58).

[58] The moral goals of school leader evaluation include elements that Heberer and Trappel (2013, pp. 1049–1050) have described with respect to cadre evaluation as traditional approaches to control and change attitude and behavior of cadres: "de (moral quality), neng (capability/skills), qin (work attitude/diligence), ji (achievements) and lian (integrity/incorruptness)". As many policy documents describe principals as well as teachers as moral leaders in schools, moral values, in addition to standardized evaluation indicators, can similarly be seen as basis of school personnel management in China.

External evaluations differ much between localities and even between schools due to the lack of centralized regulations on criteria for teacher evaluations (Wang 2003, p. 123). According to Ding and Lehrer (2007, pp. 193–194) external evaluations at Chinese schools can use a selection from the following criteria: teaching skills (measured in students' graduation, attrition to higher schools and colleges, and quality of classroom tuition); methods in class (new methods used); academic education of teachers (years of education and quality of visited college, based on a five-level ranking system of China's colleges); teachers' abilities to monitor students and to detect problems; teachers' enthusiasm and concern for students; and teachers' general work ethics. Similarly also the modes and the degree of transparency in evaluations differ between localities and even between schools. Studies found that some schools publish individual results after evaluations, but that other schools merely summarize teacher grades at the end of the year without publicizing the exact scores (Liu et al. 2009, p. 469). Some items in evaluation catalogues are clearly defined, such as students' grades in major subjects, but others, such as the item "working ethics" are less clearly defined. Nontransparent methods and criteria, however, face the risk of detrimental effects for teachers' perception of evaluation fairness and teachers' willingness to cooperate.[59]

Despite this large diversity in criteria the new accountability measures have large effects on management of school personnel. Three areas of personnel management have been especially affected: personnel deployment, personnel development, and pay. In teacher deployment (employment and promotion) the system of the iron rice bowl with a guarantees life-long employment irrespective of individuals' performance has been replaced with accountability measures based on educational degrees and performance (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 281). Now teachers and principals sign contracts called "education objective-accountability agreement assessment" that define their responsibilities. The outcomes of teachers' and principals' performance determine their chances for promotion and transfer to other schools. Underperforming principals and teachers can be fired (Lai, Lo 2006, pp. 295–296). Similarly, personnel development has been standardized and taken into accountability systems. Teacher trainings that have been formerly seen applicable for merely those teachers who did not meet certain requirements, are now defined as an integral part of the job for all teachers (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 283). Local governments established requirements for teachers to attend annual minimum course

[59] Teachers at Chinese schools surveyed by Liu and colleagues (2009, pp. 469–470) perceived evaluations as fair when they knew about the procedures. Other scholars noted that teachers perceive evaluations that include student outcomes but that don't consider student conditions (such as the share or students with special needs) as unfair and that those evaluations that increase teachers' workloads without leading to benefits for teachers result in anxiety of school personnel (Lee et al. 2011, p. 34).

hours in teacher training seminars,[60] and promotion depends on fulfilling these requirements (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 283). Finally, institutions of accountability affect teachers' pay and their working conditions. In addition to already strong local divergences in pay[61] the introduction of performance-based pay in 2009, under which 30 percent of teachers' and principals' pay is determined by performance as measured in evaluations,[62] brought additional differences in pay. Now the pay of high earning teachers can double that of low earning teachers at the same school (Ding, Lehrer 2007, p. 193). Evaluations also determine teachers' ranks and chances for promotion to higher ranking schools with often better school infrastructure. These schools not only have what Han (2013, p. 74) calls "non-monetary conditions at school workplace" such as better teachers' offices or classroom equipment, but they also provide more possibilities for teachers to earn additional income through extra-curricular activities, such as tutoring (Ding, Lehrer 2007, p. 193).

3.2 Spaces for curriculum decisions by street-level bureaucrats at schools

Scholars have argued that school-based decision making by school personnel can be a motor for educational development in China (Zhong, Tu 2013; Law 2011; Li, Shuai 2010). Similarly, the central government argues for school-based decision making as part of a strategy to raise educational quality (Ministry of Education 6/26/2012), although it initiated decentralization of school management and funding in the 1980s and 1990s initially merely to tackle financial constraints (Lai, Lo 2006; King, Guerra 2005). The shift

[60] In some localities these requirements can be quite demanding. The Shanghai government, for instance, stipulated that teachers must attend at least 240 hours of training in five years in order to keep their current job positions and that they must attend the double amount of course hours when they want to proceed to higher positions (Paine, Fang 2006, p. 283).

[61] School teacher's pay is determined by county governments and follows the pay of local government officials (State Council 12/17/2008). Furthermore, local governments can provide additional teacher subsidies based on locality, such as subsidies for teachers who work at rural or "remote" schools. In some counties these local divergences can amount to several thousand RMB per year (Li 2014).

[62] The "Guidelines for the Implementation of Performance-related Pay in Schools in Compulsory Education" from 2008 (State Council 12/17/2008) stipulate that from January 1st, 2009 the salary of all principals and teachers shall be determined as "performance-related pay" (in addition to teachers' other benefits such as housing or medical insurances) as a means to reduce the turn-over rates of teachers, to encourage teachers to work at rural schools, and to establish incentives for teachers to deliver "quality education". In detail this means firstly that teachers shall be paid equally to local officials, secondly that their salaries are made up of a "basic performance pay" (基础性绩效工资) of 70 percent and an "encouraging performance pay" (奖励性绩效工资) of 30 percent, and thirdly that all other bonuses are prohibited. The "encouraging performance pay" of teachers' salary shall be determined by criteria that the school defines democratically, and that of principals shall be determined by the local Bureau of Education. Although scholars found that the democratic participation in determining the performance-related pay still lacks behind and that the goal of equal pay for teachers within one county has not been reached (Chai, Wang 2011, p. 113) the performance-related pay can be seen as a powerful mode of controlling teachers' performance in China.

towards school-based decision making can be interpreted as a new turn towards decentralization.

Nevertheless, institutional settings concerning educational decision making in China are an issue that is more complicated than a mere central-local dichotomy. Decentralizing decision making power to schools is bound by a variety of institutions; and the spaces that these institutions provide are flexible and diverse. With this section I aim at shedding a light on the spaces in which street-level bureaucrats in China can and do make decisions on curriculum. In the next paragraphs I will outline the meanings of school curriculum and curriculum management in China, before I will discuss how institutions of personnel and curriculum management shape spaces for school-based decision making. In the last sections of this sub-chapter I will scrutinize lists of school-based decision areas provided in the literature and the role of school-personnel as street-level bureaucratic decision makers in these areas.

3.2.1 School curriculum and institutions of curriculum management

Curriculum in the Chinese educational system has to fulfill many purposes: preparation of students for the labor market, enhancing development of the country, training moral values, and educating citizens to love the motherland, to name just a few. With such far-reaching goals one would assume that the Chinese state is preoccupied with regulating and standardizing curriculum. In contrast, however, localization, diversity, and student-centeredness have been major agendas in the latest reform of curriculum and curriculum management. Although some scholars have argued from a perspective of cultural determinism that curriculum at Chinese schools is a stable expression of an Asian "collectivist culture" in distinct opposition to the individualistic attitudes of "the West" (Kennedy 2013), an analysis of the changing face of the Chinese curriculum shows that curriculum itself and the ways curriculum in China is managed are constantly changing. The question between uniformity and diversity has been a major issue in this reform perspective (Bahry et al. 2009; King, Guerra 2005). Under the focus of the effects of reforms that according to the Chinese government aim at "quality" in both curriculum content and in tuition methods I will here introduce into the diverse forms of curriculum, teaching practices, and management of curriculum implementation in China.

Reforms in curriculum and teaching practices

Until the late 1980s Chinese governmental regulations provided merely for a unified national curriculum.[63] Scholars such as Bahry and colleagues (2009, p. 111) criticized this central curriculum for being overly oriented towards the coastal and economically developed regions and for setting unachievable standards for underdeveloped schools in Western and in poorer regions. Similarly, unified content has been largely seen as unsuitable to support students in discovering their own environment. For ethnic and nomadic minorities, for instance, the centrally unified curriculum has been criticized for creating "alien" cultures that set large barriers for educational access (Postiglione et al. 2011).

Curriculum reform started slowly, but in several rounds[64] with a wide range of policy documents and regulations (see selection in Table 5) it became one of the central issues in the education policy agenda of the Chinese central government, thus reflecting both global debates and internal pressures within the Chinese educational system (Bahry et al. 2009). From the 1990s onwards the Chinese central government initiated government-lead reforms on school curriculum that aimed at increased diversification, local suitability, and a change of teaching methods. In policy documents, such as the "Outline on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform" the Chinese government writes that curriculum in China's schools needs to follow modern developments in order to educate students to socially responsible, patriotic, and knowledgeable citizens (Ministry of Education 6/8/2001). Some scholars argue that the reform movement started as reaction to criticism by parents, scholars, and educators (Adams, Sargent 2012). Ryan (2013, p. 82), by contrast, argues that the reform was based on considerations of economic needs when she writes that "[r]eform in education […] resulted from the recognition of the skills, especially creativity and innovation, that China needs to continue to prosper and to become more than just the 'world's factory'."

[63]Literature on curriculum in China focuses on the officially regulated curriculum as supported by educational laws and regulations. Although local curricula have been taught unregulated already since the times of the Republic of China (see for example the local textbook collection by Ou and Luo (2009)), these locally diverse curricula have not been recognized by legislation until the late 1980s.

[64] Wu and Meng (2010, p. 70) distinguish three stages of curriculum reform: the initiation stage in the 1980s with the first discussions on the need of new localized curriculum; the adjustment stage in the 90s; and the stage of defining and developing new curriculum models since 2000.

Date	Chinese title	English title[65]
1986	中华人民共和国义务教育法	Compulsory Education Law
1988	九年制义务教育教材编写规划方案	Scheme for Editing Nine-year Compulsory Education Teaching Materials
1992	九年义务教育 全日制小学、初级中学课程计划(试行):	Curriculum Scheme for Nine-Year Compulsory Education Fulltime Primary and Middle Schools (draft)
1993	中国教育改革和发展纲要	Outline of Chinese Education Reform and Development
1999	面向 21 世纪教育振兴行动计划	Plan to Promote the Operation of Education in the 21st century
2001	基础教育课程改革纲要(试行)	Outline on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform (draft)[66]

Table 5: Selection of major policy documents on curriculum reform in China. Modified after Wu and Meng (2010, p. 70).

One of the major changes in curriculum of the last years has been a shift towards more local diversity. For decades the uniformity of Chinese curriculum has been emphasized as a symbol of China's unity, but the curriculum reforms at the turn of the new century shifted the agenda towards more diversity (Bahry et al. 2009, p. 123). After several steps of diversification in curriculum[67] the "Outline on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform" from 2001 distinguished for the first time in detail three different curricula: the national, the local and the school-based curriculum (Wu, Meng 2010; Qi 2011b).[68] In addition to standardized subjects such as math, Chinese[69], foreign Languages, ideology and politics, history, biology, etc. (see detailed description of subjects in appendix) there are now also local subjects such as "three-life education"[70] that only schools in some selected provinces have introduced, and school-based subjects especially on local history, ethnic customs, or other fields such as "population education", "national defense education", or vocational trainings (Sun 2005). The national curriculum is the mandatory curriculum that all children during compulsory education from grade one to nine undergo. It "reflects the basic requirements and quality standards that all students are expected to meet" (Wang 2010, p. 30), and textbooks differ only marginally between localities. The local curriculum, by contrast, is a means to adjust the content of national

[65] English titles are based on own translations from the documents' Chinese titles.

[66] Literature in English language offers various translations of this policy document: "Guidelines on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform" (Ryan 2013, p. 82), "Guidelines of Basic Education Curriculum Reform" (Zhong, Tu 2013, p. 14), "Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline" (Dello-Iacovo 2009, p. 243), and "Outlines of the Reforms in Basic Education Curriculum" (Wang 2010, p. 29).

[67] Curriculum diversification has been first mentioned in the Compulsory Education Law from 1986 and has been reaffirmed in the "Scheme for Editing nine-year Compulsory Education Teaching Materials" from 1988. The "Curriculum Scheme for Compulsory Education Fulltime Primary and Middle Schools" from 1992 allowed schools for the first time to expand on the national curriculum and to design "activity courses" in addition to the national curriculum for up to six percent, see Wu and Meng (2010). The curriculum for senior secondary schools, for instance, has changed already 8 times since 1978 (Sun 2005, pp. 22–23).

[68] Chinese literature refers to the nationally unified curriculum as 国家课程, to the local curriculum as 地方性课程, and to the school-based curriculum as 校本课程 (see e.g. Luo 2007; Wu, Meng 2010).

[69] A literal translation of this subject's Chinese title 语文 would be „language and literature".

[70] "Three-life education" (三生教育) is a subject developed by the Ministry of Education of Yunnan Province that is centered on hygiene and safety in school. It aims, among other goals, at teaching children to cope with learning stress (Zhou 2010).

subjects locally and to develop specific local subjects in areas such as history or geography. In subjects such as moral or health education, for instance, the local curriculum also functions as a test field for curriculum experimentation ahead of national expansion. The school-based curriculum as the third type is intended as a means to develop schools' profiles and to support adjustments to students' needs. It is supposed to "supplement the shortages of the national and local curriculum and [to] increase the relevance of school curriculum to individual schools and students" (Wang 2010, p. 42). It covers subject matter such local culture, local literature, music, and drawing, and it is taught with materials that are developed at the school level by school staff (Li, Shuai 2010).

However, these three curricula have an unequal share in the amount of scheduled classroom hours. The "Outline on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform" from 2001 defines a clear set of subject share for schools in compulsory education. According to this share, 80 to 84 percent of school hours are reserved for the national curriculum and merely 16 to 20 percent can be used for the local and school-based curriculum (Bahry et al. 2009, p. 111). Kennedy (2013, p. 5) writes, referring to the curricula of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, that "the liberalized elements of the curriculum are always secondary to the examined curriculum that remains the most potent force in the region's educational provision." The development of school-based curricula has been found to "remain in the preliminary stage" (Li, Shuai 2010, p. 33) due to vague conceptualizations of school-based curriculum development, lack in support for schools, and the overwhelming influence of exams that force schools to shift resources from school-based subjects to the nationally unified subjects (Li, Shuai 2010).

Apart from the localization of curriculum the reforms also aim at a change in the traditional teaching methods. Government and scholars in China alike proposed reforms towards "quality education".[71] The traditional system of learning and teaching in Chinese schools has been called "examination-oriented", "promotion-oriented", "textbook-driven", and "teacher centered" (Adams, Sargent 2012, pp. 4–5; Bahry et al. 2009, p. 110; see also Pepper 1996). Exams have been major determinants of educational success. Teachers' lecturing and teachers' questions support students merely to learn the textbook content, but not to reflect content critically. Despite its vagueness the term "quality

[71] The Chinese term 素质教育 has been translated into various English terms: "competence education", "quality education", "essential qualities education", and "character education" (Dello-Iacovo 2009, p. 242).

education”[72] nevertheless became a term to call for reforms in education methods in order “to encourage and enable a move away from a transmission approach to teaching and learning and towards the development of an 'autonomous' learner” (Ryan 2013, p. 82). Dello-Iacovo (2009, p. 243) lists a catalogue of measures that the Chinese government proposed to enhance quality education: reduce students’ workloads and the importance of exams; limit school hours and the number of books to be purchased; mandate 12 weeks of holidays; cultivate students’ curiosity; and conduct experiments in class instead of rote learning. Zhong and Tu (2013, pp. 19–20) summarize the changes in a before-after comparison: curriculum objectives shall be transformed from knowledge-based to all-round developmental goals; fixed and academic structures are intended to open up to balanced and flexible structures; unified and difficult content shall center more on students’ interests; passive and rote learning shall make room for communication and cooperation-based learning; examination-centered learning shall be changed to diversified value-added assessments; and central government management shall be supplemented by local management.

After more than ten years since the initiation of the curriculum reform in 2001 scholars attested a varied diagnosis of its effects on actual classroom tuition. Zhong and Tu (2013), for example, found in their study on schools which conducted curriculum reforms between 2005 and 2009 that teachers internalized the meanings of the reforms. Ni and colleagues (2011, p. 118) found in a study that math teachers "hold a more dynamic view of mathematics" after the reforms, that they "used more learning tasks with higher cognitive demands", and that they asked "more questions that required students to describe procedures leading to their answers." However, other studies indicated that the “quality education” reforms hardly induced any changes in actual classroom practices. Dello-Iacovo (2009), Wang (2011), and Adams and Sargent (2012) found that especially in rural areas and in classes that prepare for college entrance examinations the share of teacher-centered methods (e.g. teacher lectures) and student-

[72] Although pointing to a “highly contested“ (Woronov 2009, p. 568) concept that “lumps together […] apparently unrelated educational issues” as diverse as the universalization of the nine-year compulsory education, curriculum reform (including moral, technical, and health education), aesthetic education, inclusive education for children with disabilities, and education for ethnic minorities (Dello-Iacovo 2009, p. 242), this term nevertheless developed into a major term in both governmental documents and people’s discourse (Woronov 2009). The “quality” (素质) discourse connects with discourses on the correct attitudes of citizens and the concepts of the “harmonious society“ as a rhetoric for community building and governance (Tomba 2009). It is especially used to describe an assumed lacking-behind in moral or educational qualities of rural population, peasants, women, and ethnic minorities and is thus used to mark distinctions between social groups (Jacka 2009, p. 526). In the educational arena practices under the slogan of raising personal qualities such as assessment of students’ ability to govern their bodies and minds have been described as a form to achieve governmentality among students (Woronov 2009, pp. 578–579).

centered methods (e.g. discussions) did not change, that new curricula have not been implemented, that new textbooks lack connection to reality, that teachers did not receive sufficient trainings and refused to change their teaching methods, that examinations continue to play a central role in curriculum planning as a means to determine students' educational and job opportunities,[73] and that new concepts have not been considered by school staff. Dello-Iacovo (2009, pp. 248–249) concludes that the reforms have failed and that "despite some very inspirational educational reforms at some schools, the essential nature of Chinese schools remains unchanged."

Despite these caveat both the discussion about the need to reform educational methods and the calls for curriculum diversification at the local level have "opened up" an "ideological space" (Johnson 2011) for local curriculum agendas which actors at local governments and schools in turn can use to change specific aspects of curriculum. Although the standardized and nationally unified subjects changed less than scholars of the Chinese education system might have wished for, the chance to add local subjects on top of the standard curriculum has the potential to challenge previous models of curriculum management. The next paragraphs will discuss these models.

Centralized decentralization of curriculum management

Not only the content, but also the management of curriculum at Chinese schools has experienced major reforms over the last decades.[74] The tone in policy documents that describe "curriculum management" (课程管理) as a summarizing term for development and implementation of curriculum policies at school level recently changed towards a new emphasis on power within the combined making and implementation of curriculum. "The Outline on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform" from 2001 proposes a clearer distinction between the power to develop curriculum at national, local, and school level and recommends including expert consultations, public discussions, and

[73] This unchanged strong role of exams has not only met criticism. Studies showed that many parents, for instance, are also in favor of exams, as they perceive exams as a fair means to achieve equality in opportunities based on educational merits (Dello-Iacovo 2009, p. 247).

[74] Some scholars point to global trends in education reform and argue that China has been affected by these trends similar to other regions in Asia. Cheng and Townsend (2000, p. 319), for instance, write that the search for effective schools, the increased use of market forces in educational provision, the development of educational standards, the shift to decentralized educational management, and the development of new curricula and examination practices have been common trends in reform in a number of Asian countries, including China. However, not only have comparative studies (e.g. the one by King and Guerra 2005) shown that China differs from other Asian countries in its mode of educational governance, but numerous studies on the Chinese development have also illustrated (e.g. Pepper 1996; Hawkins 2000) that instead of blindly copying global trends China's reforms in educational management rather follow experimentation.

experimentation as methods to implement these reforms. In the newer document "Ruling schools by law - Outline for Implementing a Modern School System" the Ministry of Education (6/26/2012) uses terms such as "democratic control" over curriculum implementation, the "rule of law" in school governance, and the "guaranteed freedom" of schools, teachers, and students.[75] Chinese scholars have picked up this new tone and have discussed the need to increase local responsibility (Wu, Meng 2010), legitimacy (Zhong, Tu 2013), and democratic control (Li 2013) over curriculum policy and curriculum management.

Nevertheless, despite this new emphasis traditional institutional settings of top-down control continue to determine curriculum policy implementation. Some have argued that static institutions such as the examination system with its long history in imperial China (Elman 2000; Berry 2011) are distinct manifestations of "Chinese pedagogic culture" that prevent implementation of imported "Western pedagogic cultures" (Yin et al. 2014). Others have argued that the persistence of institutions amidst the changes of China's educational system is connected to policy implementation that uses experimentation, flexibility, and "vagueness" to create innovations through local implementation diversity (Paine 1992). [76]

Starting with governmental conferences and documents in 1985,[77] fiscal and management responsibility in the Chinese education system was at least partly shifted from central to local and from state to private actors. The reforms towards more decentralization and marketization complemented the state's provision of educational services in higher education and – to lesser degrees – in primary and secondary education with service provision by private actors, and it shifted fiscal responsibilities to local government levels and to families (Hawkins 2000; Mok 2009). The major motivation for this centrally-induced decentralization has been to reduce financial burdens from the center: "[A] much hoped for outcome [has been] an educational system that would more nimbly respond to economic needs" (Hawkins 2000, p. 445).

The "Outline on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform" from 2001 (Ministry of Education 6/8/2001, § 16) mentions for the first time a three-tier system of curriculum

[75] However, the terms used for reform goals differ between the targeted educational organizations. According to the "National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020" (State Council 7/27/2010) institutions of higher education shall strengthen their autonomy in areas as diverse as research, administration, and the usage of funds. Primary and secondary schools, by contrast, shall merely "perfect the school administration system" by including external experts and by enlarging principal's responsibilities education. For all educational institutions, however, reforms shall result in more "democratic supervision" of educational organizations.

[76] For experimentation and flexibility in Chinese policy implementation see also chapter 4.

[77] For instance the "Decision of the CPC Central Committee Reform of China's Educational Structure" from 1985, see Hawkins (2000, pp. 442–444).

management: the national, the local, and the school-based curriculum management (国家、地方和学校三级课程管理). According to this document the national level is responsible for overall curriculum planning, for establishing national criteria for national curriculum subjects, for deciding about the share of school hours for subjects, and for facilitating experimental projects. Local educational bureaus (i.e. bureaus on provincial, city, prefecture, or county level) are responsible for developing local plans to implement national curriculum and for drafting plans, targets, and criteria for local curriculum. The school level, finally, is not only responsible for implementing national and local curricula, but also for identifying educational needs of the local community and to develop school-based curriculum plans (Wang 2010, pp. 29–32). This three-tier system follows two contrasting principles at the same time. Firstly, the new system aims at a clearer distinction between the three administrative levels of central, local, and school curriculum management for individual subjects when it distinguishes responsibilities between these levels. At the same time it confirms hierarchical dependency when it defines that schools and local educational bureaus can develop own curricula only under the supervision of the next higher administrative level.

Curriculum management in China today is characterized by both elements of centralized and decentralized control. On the one side curriculum management, in the shadow of broader education policy reforms, experienced shifts towards decentralization. Fiscal decentralization brought increased discretion to local levels and schools, which especially urban schools use to offer private tutoring in the afternoon or during holidays (Ryan 2013, p. 84). Furthermore, under the trend to “marketize” educational service provision in China (Mok, Tan 2004) textbook publishers have been encouraged to publish textbooks, teachers’ handbooks, and additional classroom teaching materials since 2001, so that government agencies can choose between different textbooks at sub-national levels. Finally, the possibility to draft local curriculum standards for local and school-based curricula brought additional decentralization effects (Qi 2011b, pp. 30–31).

On the other side, however, structures of hierarchical control limited decentralization of curriculum management. Firstly, the center is still active in drafting educational legislation (Hawkins 2000, p. 447). Secondly, the Office of National Education Inspectorate (Qi 2011b; Cravens et al. 2012) has installed a system of supervision for educational administration and schools (Qi 2011b, p. 32) that aims at “assuring that the various laws and regulations are followed by local authorities and educators” (Hawkins 2000, p. 448). Thirdly, in the distinction between national, local, and school-based curricula discretion is limited to the local and school-based curriculum and cannot exceed

20 percent of the overall delivered curriculum (see above). Fourthly, textbooks have to undergo a review process under supervision by the next higher administrative level (see above). Fifthly, standardized testing continues to guarantee a high level of supervision over schools and local educational bureaus by higher levels. Standardized student tests determine the evaluation of educational success of students and schools as “a powerful tool to impose the national standards and requirements to Chinese schooling" (Qi 2011b, p. 34). Finally, some policy areas that have been decentralized in earlier reforms have been recentralized again. In the areas of educational financing, for instance, the shift of financial responsibility for funding compulsory education from township to county level in 2008 and the increase of financial transfers from the center to less developed regions especially in China’s West has recentralized major financial responsibilities recently (Zhou 2012a).

In sum, decentralization of power in curriculum management in China must be understood as a more complex issue than a mere shift of authority between three clearly defined tiers. Qi (2011b, p. 36) notes that “the central state has no real attempt to diversify Chinese education system by transferring its decision making authority to lower levels”. Instead, reforms have been used to constantly readjust the relationship between the center and the local level. The center conducts the pace and direction of this reform. Hawkins (2000, p. 452) notes: “China's decentralization fits the general definition of a transfer of authority (particularly financial) and decisionmaking from higher to lower levels but it is less clear whether this is a complete devolution or more of a delegation of authority. Decentralization in China appears to have characteristics of both“. This can also be seen in curriculum management in China. Institutions for curriculum management bind the diverse levels of curriculum management together under hierarchical control, but at the same time they allow for local discretion. This “seemingly paradoxical mixture of centralization and decentralization” (Qi 2011b, p. 34) must be seen as a network of shared, but constantly re-negotiated responsibility for curriculum development and implementation that opens up spaces for local decision making and for bargaining at the local level.

3.2.2 Institutional spaces and areas for school-based decision making in China

Institutions for management of school, personnel, and curriculum define a flexible space for school-based decision making. In the following paragraphs I will elaborate on the mechanisms of how institutions provide spaces and set limits to school-based decision making, before I will illustrate the flexibility of this space and the need for local interpretation.

Spaces for discretionary decisions at schools

The above discussed institutional settings of managing schools, school personnel, and curriculum provide for some space for school-based discretionary decisions. Firstly, schools in China can use school-based resources to organize their own affairs. Although study fees have been largely abolished, some schools continue to demand fees from "out of plan students" who reside outside the schools' catchment area (Wong 2006, p. 47). Furthermore, schools run additional enterprises such as farms or factories on the school ground (Bush et al. 1998b). Especially after kindergarten education experienced a rapid growth (Gao, Zhang 2011) the fees that schools collect from adjacent kindergartens can be used for school purposes as well. One of the case schools that I visited for my study, for instance, spent additional income generated by running a kindergarten to purchase school infrastructure (e.g. surveillance cameras) or educational materials (e.g. books and a piano) (PR-12_2012-01-17).

Secondly, the organizational structures and measures of school and personnel management allow for discretion as well. In external school management structures the principal responsibility system defines principals as educational managers who can and should make decisions to improve the educational outcomes of their schools. Similarly, in school internal organization the "Staff Representatives Assembly" and other committees have been established to represent teachers' interests and to guarantee teachers' participation in school matters. Teachers also participate in peer-evaluations and in school inspection teams.

Thirdly, the curriculum and actual necessities of teaching practice in the classroom allow for discretionary decision making, especially since local and school-based curriculum have been on the agenda of education reforms. Schools can shape the planned, delivered, and tested school-based and local curriculum of up to 16 percent and thereby build up a specific school-profile (see above).

Finally, the diversity of tuition practices in the classroom, that, as any other area of street-level service delivery, has to rely on adjustments to clients' needs, has been re-affirmed by the official "quality education" discourse. Student-centered methods, incorporation of local knowledge, and curriculum content that is oriented towards students' interests all require a certain space for teachers to make decisions in the classroom (Lai, Lo 2006, p. 300).

Limits of Spaces for discretionary decisions at schools

At the same time that institutions allow for discretionary decision making by schools, they also limit the space for such decisions. Firstly, schools' possibility to generate income on own discretion is limited. Since study fees have been abolished the largest share of educational financing derives again from the state (Editorial Board of China Educational Statistics Yearbook 2012; Mok 2005). Furthermore, schools' discretion to spend remaining self-generated income is limited to those areas that governmental inspectors agree upon. Finally, as principals have assured me (e.g. PR-12_2012-01-17), schools can only cooperate with civil society organizations or accepts donations if the local Bureaus of Education agree.

Secondly, although organizational structures have been set to establish school autonomy and democratic participation by school personnel, mechanisms in both areas are limited by the actual distribution of power. The Staff Representatives Assembly, that has been installed to represent staff in school-based decision making, has been found to merely "present and legitimize the decisions of the senior staff members" (Lai, Lo 2006, p. 299) and regular teachers have hardly any say in this committee. Furthermore, since Teacher Unions in China lack power to represent teachers[78] teachers also lack the means to formulate policy demands in a legal and organized structure.

Thirdly, the institutional space for local and school-based curricula is limited by the dominance of standardized curriculum subjects. Not only are more than 80 percent of the delivered curriculum reserved for these unified subjects, but institutional settings such as the exam focus and the teaching-by-the-book method in schooling (Wang 2011) provide these subjects with more importance in the school system than local school subjects.[79] Furthermore, schools are required to use only those textbooks and to teach only those local curricula that have been approved by the Bureaus of Education and to select content in line with basic educational and state ideology, such as ethnic harmony, patriotism etc. (National People's Congress 4/12/1984, §§ 26,57,58).

Finally, the space of school personnel to make autonomous decisions is limited by evaluation mechanisms that measure teaching success in student exam grades and attrition rates (Wong 2006, p. 50). As long as there is a continuous lack of evaluation criteria of individual student development and student centered teaching (Dello-Iacovo

[78] With the China Education Trade Union (CETU) China has the worlds' largest union of teachers, but this union's is rather set up to control teachers than to represent teacher's interest, as it lacks means to bargain for teachers' interests for instance through strikes (Loveless 2000, pp. 255–256).

[79] This imbalance of importance of curriculum further limits local curriculum. Scholars reported that schools often use the time reserved for local curriculum for further teaching in the regular and standardized subjects in order to improve students' exam results in these subjects (Li, Shuai 2010, p. 35).

2009) the increase and standardization of personnel evaluations continues to limit the space for discretionary decisions of teachers.

The flexibility of spaces for school-based decision making

The above elaborated parallel existence of institutional settings that widen the space for school-based decision making on the one side and those that limit this space on the other indicates that the borders for this space are flexible. This flexibility derives from two constituting characteristics of decentralization of decision making in educational policy implementation in China: the paradox of centrally-driven decentralization in China's education system, and the unclear responsibilities in educational management.

Decentralization of China's educational policy has been largely driven by the central governments' activities to delegate power, rather than by local governments' and schools' activities to gain these powers. The process of educational decentralization has been steered by the central government, which made recentralization under policy goals such as raising equality in educational access in inter-township comparison comparatively easy (Hawkins 2000). Similarly, the central government shifts decision making authority to schools under slogans such as "quality education" or the "principal responsibility system". However, the term "autonomy" seems to be unsuitable to describe the space for school-based decision making in China when it is understood as the power to permanently make decisions without being subject to accountability. Instead, this space can rather be understood as temporary delegation of decision making power of specific items to schools under accountability that can be withdrawn once policies change.

The space for school-based decision making in China is defined by unclear or vague institutional boundaries. Several organizational structures in the Chinese educational management are unclear, for instance the power of school committees or the share of responsibilities between townships and counties (King, Guerra 2005, pp. 183,197). Policy documents that use vague language to describe responsibilities and power of organs in educational management contribute to this vagueness.[80] Furthermore, policies concerning educational management are implemented in different scope and pace at different localities within China. Shifting funding responsibility from township to county, for instance, took in some regions several years with at least five intermediary steps, as Liu and colleagues (2009) observed in Gansu province. In connection with

[80] Examples for vague language can be found in many policy documents in China. The "Outline for Ruling Schools by Law" (Ministry of Education 6/26/2012), for instance, proposes that school management should respect "democratic participation" of school staff, students, and society, but neither defines it this term nor does it provide measures to guarantee participation.

continuous reforms local diversity leads to unclear institutional settings at local base, since implementers cannot always be aware of the current state of reform in their locality, and literature cannot depict the pace of local reforms on national comparative scale either.[81]

3.2.3 Areas of school-based curriculum decision making in China

A few scholars provide lists on issues of school-based decisions in the educational system in China. In comparison to other scholars King and Guerra's (2005) catalogue of the changes of educational decision making in three educational decision areas in secondary education (instructional matters, personnel management, and resources) in the Asian countries China, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Laos between 1998 and 2003 is the most detailed one.[82] These two scholars distinguish between four loci of decision making (central government, intermediate government, local government, and school) and between two modi of decision making (decisions made in full autonomy on the one side and decisions made in consultation or within a framework on the other side). Table 7 indicates their findings for the case of China.

[81] Contradicting descriptions and evaluations of the power of specific actors in the educational system in China are common in the literature. Some scholars describe the Staff Representatives Assembly, for instance, as main holder of decision making power in China's schools (Bush et al. 1998b), whereas other see this assembly as a committee to merely inform teachers about decisions made elsewhere (Lai, Lo 2006, p. 299).

[82] Wong (2006), for instance, writes that school finance, educational goals, school management, personnel and staffing, curriculum setting, and student recruitment are all effected by school-based decision making in China, but lacks in specific descriptions of decisions in these areas.

Key decisions	1998	2003
Instructional matters		
Instruction time	A	A
Designing programs of study	A	A
Defining course content	A	A
Choosing textbooks	b	c
Teaching methods	D	c
Mode of grouping students	D	D
Support activities for students	D	D
Creation/closure of schools	c	c
Creation/abolition of grades	A	A
Setting qualifying exams	A	c
Credentialing	c	D
Methods for assigning students' regular work	d	c
Personnel management		
Hiring teachers	D	c
Hiring principals	c	c
Fixing teacher salaries	d	c
Fixing principal salaries	d	c
Career of teachers	D	d
Career of principals	c	c
Resources		
Allocation to school for teaching staff	c	*
Allocation to school for nonsalary current expenditure	D	c
Allocation to school for capital expenditure	C	c
Use in school for capital expenditure	C	c

Table 6: Table: Locus and mode of key decisions in lower secondary education in China, 1998 and 2003, after: King and Guerra (2005, p. 185). Note: Indicated are locus and mode of decision. Decisions made in full autonomy: A: central government; B: intermediate government; C: local government; D: school. Decisions made in consultation or within framework: a: central government; b: intermediate government; c: local government; d: school. *: left void in source.

According to the authors, educational decision making in China was in 2003 more decentralized than in the other four countries of this study. The central government decides in merely four items, namely defining instruction time, designing programs of study, defining course content, and creation or abolition of grades. These four items are also centralized in the other surveyed countries, which according to the authors "reflect[s] the widely held belief that the education system helps promote a national identity as well as shared values" (King, Guerra 2005, p. 185) and that central governments are reluctant to grant autonomy on these issues.

In China the "intermediate government level" (provincial government) and the "local government level" (county and township government) both have been much more powerful in 2003 than those in the other countries of this study. Although this study does not sufficiently show differences between township and county responsibilities, it becomes clear that local government levels are especially involved in financing of education and personnel management.

There are only few items in 2003 that the authors see as clearly school-based: grouping students, support activities for students, credentialing, and determining teachers' careers. Interestingly most of these items are, similar to the items under central

governmental control, in the area of instructional matters, which indicates that the content of teaching is decided by the government, but choosing the methods of teaching this content is left to schools' discretion.

The table indicates also trends concerning shifts in decision making in China. Firstly, the mode of decision making for several items has changed from unregulated and autonomous decision making to coordinated and regulated modes. The number of decisions under "full autonomy" decreased from 13 in 1998 to 7 in 2003, whereas at the same time the number of decisions made "in consultation or within a framework" increased. Secondly, the number of school-based decisions decreased from 6 in 1998 to 4 in 2003, which further contributes to the low prevalence of school-based autonomous decisions. These shifts reflect several of the changes in institutional settings that have been discussed above. The increase of personnel management decisions that are made in the mode of "consultation under frameworks", for instance, is an outcome of the constant increase in regulations concerning the management of schools and personnel. The shift of resources allocation from schools to local government is related on the one side to the intensified and standardized responsibilities of government to fund schooling and on the other side to the progressive abolition of school fees. The shift of responsibility for choosing teaching methods from schools to local governments, to name a final example, is as an outcome of increased regulation of curriculum by local government.

However, educational decision making in China is much more diverse than the study by King and Guerra depicts. Firstly, both modus and locus differ between localities. What for comparative reasons has been subsumed under the label "China" differs regionally. The presence of local curricula, for instance, depends on how much the provincial government is willing to develop own subjects. Secondly, the scope for local or school-based decisions differs between "core subjects" such as math and Chinese on the one side and subjects such as local history on the other. Thirdly, the scope for local decisions also differs between schools levels. College entrance examinations play a stronger role in secondary schools than in primary schools, and in higher classes than in younger classes, so teachers' autonomy in first-grade classes to make decisions for example on class content can be expected to differ from that of teachers in the last grades of secondary schools. Similarly, the autonomy of "shining examples" (Dello-Iacovo 2009, p. 244) of pilot schools, elite schools, or private schools strongly differs from that of regular schools. If schools are well-equipped personnel they might be able to run projects to develop school-based curriculum or they might send teachers to trainings, but if they

lack these resources their space to make discretionary decisions can be much more limited, for instance when teachers cannot attend trainings due to the lack of staff who could cover for those on leave (Brock 2009). Finally, abilities and chances to take over responsibilities for decision making also differ between individual teachers. As several studies (e.g. An et al. 2007; Peng et al. 2013) have, not surprisingly, shown that teachers in China react differently to outside stimuli of reform it is only consequential that the scope for school-based curriculum development and curriculum decisions also depends on individual teachers' capacities and interests.

To summarize, there are only a few items where school personnel can act as the sole decision maker, such as decisions concerning teaching methods (e.g. the amount of homework, the share of lecturing, or the degree of response to students' concerns), but in several areas school personnel can make decisions in coordination with other actors (e.g. participation in local or school-based curriculum development projects or defining the feedback provided on school-based teacher evaluations). However, in light of the flexibility, these lists can only provide a general picture and must be specified for specific localities, specific decision areas, and specific understandings of power and autonomy.

3.2.4 School personnel as street-level bureaucrat decision makers in China

According to the model of bottom-up street-level bureaucratic policy analysis outlined in the theory chapter institutions define the position and the options of street-level bureaucrats in policy implementation. The sections above have indicated that diverse institutions of accountability and discretion shape the space for decisions by school personnel at Chinese schools. However, in this section I will argue that institutions also shape the role and the benefits that street-level bureaucrats at Chinese schools can gain through decision making. In the next paragraphs I will thus introduce into the modes of how institutions define the roles and interests of school personnel in Chinese policy implementation.

Institutionalized roles of school personnel as street-level bureaucrats

Institutions define the roles of school personnel as street-level bureaucrats in China. First and foremost, through various mechanisms reaching from teacher education, to hiring by the governmental Bureaus of Human Resources, to pay-determining evaluations, Chinese school staff is heavily entangled with institutions defined by the state. These institutions define school staff as members of state organizations. Through connecting implementation behavior with hiring, pay, and promotion these institutions

pressure school staff to accept roles, and as Xu (2012a) writes, the acceptance of these roles increases with time of working at schools.

Additionally, norms of teacher behavior demand that school staff represent state ideologies. The Chinese state uses schooling as a tool to establish and safeguard ideological values such as patriotism, “social stability”, and party leadership over societal matters, as many authors repeatedly have argued (Hansen 2013, 2012; Kipnis 2011, 2007). School personnel have to fulfill roles of implementers of these political goals and values, and fundamental opposition is unlikely to be tolerated by government and supervision agencies. Teachers are expected to fulfill their role as speakers’ of state ideology, to accept the initiatives organized by state, and to arrange their teaching accordingly (Lai, Lo 2011).

Furthermore, norms on teacher behavior, as institutionalized for instance in legislation, formulate expectations on the moral and professional roles of both teachers and principals. The Compulsory Education Law (National People's Congress 4/12/1984, §§ 28–29), for instance, specifies that teachers shall be “a model of virtue for others” and that they shall be “loyal to the cause of the education of the People”. In addition stakeholders in politics and society, such as politicians, colleagues, and parents, uphold expectations towards teachers. To abide to moral codes and to political ideologies; to have kind, happy, confident, and diligent personalities; to achieve high student outcomes; and to continuously evaluate and improve their own teaching are only some of the moral requirements that scholars have found in teacher evaluation material (Peng et al. 2013). Similarly, principals are expected to be “trustworthy to implement educational guiding policies, laws and regulations" and they "must be a paragon of virtue and learning, must have strong leadership ability and management skills, and must be committed to a career in education" (Wang 2003, pp. 111–113).

At the same time, however, institutions also place school personnel in a role of service providers who are expected to consider the interests of the clients. Scholars have argued that expectations on teacher behavior are rooted in Confucian tradition with its “system of hierarchy and respect [that] has influenced heavily conventional views of teachers and students where teachers were highly respected and seen more in the role of a strict but benevolent parent" (Ryan 2013, p. 81). These scholars argue that this value system is still the basis of the evaluation of teaching quality in China, in contrast to evaluation systems of “the West” which have been said to focus more on elements of school and societal environment (Peng et al. 2013). Despite the oversimplifying cultural

determinism of this perspective it indicates some norms in Chinese discourse that frame teachers as decision-makers.

The new focus on localized curriculum and on reforming teaching methods towards students' interests, students' needs, and students' conditions requires additional teacher autonomy. Coupled with ideas of educational "modernization" documents such as the Teachers' Law (National People's Congress 10/31/1993) or the Outline to Rule Schools by Law (Ministry of Education 6/26/2012) established the formal terminology to provide schools with larger spaces for discretionary decisions. A societal discourse on teachers' roles as moral leaders and experts who can be trusted with some degree of autonomy provide some space for teachers' discretion.

These institutional settings affect the decision making by school personnel. In a study by Wang (2011) teachers said that institutionalized norms, such as being held accountable to timely "finish" textbooks within a term, cause them to adjust their tuition to teaching according to the book as a defensive strategy. Even if students don't learn the content, teachers at least can say that they have done their job. Another study by Lai and Lo (2011) has observed that teachers in China, even when they felt uncomfortable with curriculum guidelines or when they feared student resistance, "did not dare to publicly express their disagreement" (Lai, Lo 2011, p. 236).

Chinese teachers and administrative school staff experience the typical street-level bureaucrat dilemma between hierarchical control by superiors and client orientation, as defined by Lipsky (1980). On the one side, institutions require to make decisions according to hierarchical structures. Wong (2006) writes about an institutionalized "dependency culture" between patrons and workers at Chinese schools based on accountability, that places teachers in a dependent position towards their superiors in school, and that makes school leaders dependent from government administration. On the other side school personnel also perceive that they are required to consider students as clients in their decisions. Studies found that school personnel in China also reflect on the learning progress of students. Wang (2011, p. 163) argues that at Chinese schools "students are one of the most important circumstantial factors for teachers to decide on the teaching strategies." In light of these contrasting accountability foci Chinese teachers and school leaders perceive, as studies have argued (Peng et al. 2013; Yin et al. 2014), the diverse expectations between leaders in classrooms and the more stepped-back role of enablers of student-centered tuition as a dilemma that causes stress to teachers and administrators, especially for older teachers and teachers in schools of large class sizes.

Interests of school personnel in school-based decisions

Institutions define not only the role of teachers and principals in decision making, but they also determine how specific decisions can benefit principals' and teachers' interests. Although policy documents such as the Teachers Law prescribe that teachers shall foremost consider interest of students and the nation (National People's Congress 10/31/1993), teachers as humans and workers also hope for gaining personal benefits, such as higher salary, work security, or reductions in workloads, and institutions shape how school staff's decisions benefit from decisions.

Ranking, as a first example of institutional settings, determines teachers' and principals' personal benefits, such as salary, housing, or the chances to get promoted to better equipped schools or to localities with higher living standards. Since, as was discussed above, teacher ranking is based on evaluation criteria that focus on students' end-of-term exam results in major subjects such as math and Chinese the institutional settings reward teacher decisions that improve these outcomes, such as increasing students' workloads in these two subjects. Similarly, institutionalized evaluations that determine principals' careers mainly by factors of school performance as measured in student attrition rates pressure principals to make decisions that improve these results, for instance by scheduling more human resources within the school to higher classes for preparation of college entrance exams. In their study on teachers in China Ding and Lehrer (2007) found that the possibility to improve ranking was a major factor in teachers' decisions in class. Similarly, Qian and Walker (2011) found that principals aim at improving positions in order to be promoted to schools with high ranks.

Institutions that regulate local curriculum can similarly affect the benefits that principals and teachers gain by decisions on implementing this curriculum. Since the standard subjects are more often included in teacher evaluations, teacher deployment schemes, and teacher trainings (see above), teachers benefit from choosing these subjects in their own college or university education, from investing more own resources in terms of time and energy here, or from applying for teacher trainings in these subjects. On the other side, teachers and principals can also benefit from establishing additional local curriculum, for instance when it increases parents' choice for a specific school, which used to increase school personnel's income through parents "sponsorship fees" until these fees have been made illegally (see above), and still continues to increase school staff's chances for additional income through private tutoring.[83]

[83] The notorious "Olympic Math", a specific Math course, exemplifies how one subject leads to a nationwide "school selection rush". When in the early 2000s secondary schools started to select students

However, the modes of how institutions reward specific decisions with benefits for school staff can only insufficiently be generalized. Firstly, since institutional settings related to school-based decision making are often flexible, changing, and unclear decision making by school personnel according to institutional spaces can thus only happen within processes of interpreting policies and institutions. Secondly, institutional settings differ between localities, subjects, and schools. Finally, institutions may be able to define specific rewards, but the degree of how much school staff wants these rewards depends on individual preferences. In this respect institutions can affect decisions by school personnel, but they must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, looking at individual institutional arrangements and individual teachers' interpretations of these arrangements.

3.3 Summary of chapter and specification of framework

In this chapter I have introduced to the institutional settings that define the space for curriculum decision making by school staff as street-level bureaucrats at Chinese schools. Two contrasting characteristics of curriculum and school management define this space: central unification and standardization on the one hand and flexibility and local diversity on the other hand. Government-lead reforms in curriculum management have opened up spaces for local curriculum due to new approaches for student-centered "quality education". However, these spaces have been confined to a small percentage of school hours and non-core subjects. Similarly, institutions of school and personnel management provide for and actually demand decision making by school personnel. Schools are requested to develop own profiles, to manage staff, and to establish school development plans. At the same time, however, reforms in personnel management established new institutions of accountability, for instance by regularized school evaluations, mandated personnel trainings, or performance-based pay.

Institutionally defined spaces for school-based decision making place principals and teachers in a position where they can make discretionary decisions on a range of issues, but the institutions also prevent full autonomy of decision-makers at school level. Institutionalized norms of teacher behavior, for instance, call for decision making by the expert in the classroom, but they also define school staff as members of state bureaucracy. Similarly, new approaches to localized curriculum demand that school personnel adjust curriculum to local needs, but at the same time personnel accountability

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according to their achievements in privately tutored Olympic Math courses, schools created a market for private Olympic Math at public elementary schools and private tutoring schools. Due to connections between leaders of public schools and private learning institutions this brought a fortune to some school leaders (Li, Fan 2011, pp. 78–81).

measures pressure school staff to make decisions according to unified standards. In sum, the role of street-level bureaucrats at Chinese schools can be described as constantly moving between discretionary decision-maker and bureaucrats in state-governed agencies.

Institutions, however, often merely provide “blurred” spaces for school-based decision making. This chapter has thus also shown that generalized assumptions on decisions by teachers and principals can only be drawn to very limited degrees. First, this chapter has elaborated on general institutional settings for schools and for the main curriculum, but what about the distinct institutional settings for individual subjects? Institutions such as teacher evaluation, school internal teacher representation, or teaching norms follow national unified guidelines, but one can assume that for local subjects, such as local history or minority languages, there are different institutional settings, different approaches, and different perceptions of the value of diversity in place. Second, due to flexible and unclear institutional settings lists of modes and loci of decision making can merely summarize decision making areas on a national basis, but cannot provide sufficient information about decision making at local and school level. Local differences in institutional settings, the pace of reforms, and the goals of policies define spaces for decision making at schools in much variety. Third, although institutional settings of curriculum and personnel management have been standardized, their effects on curriculum decision depend on how school personnel interact with institutions. Teachers’ and principals’ interpretations and usage of institutions, their fear of sanctions, and their knowledge of tolerated behavior can be expected to filter institutional boundaries for school-based decision making spaces. The flexibility and unclear definitions of institutions in school management in China amplify this role of school personnel.

These findings call for two adjustments of the analytical framework of school-based decision making in curriculum policy implementation that I have introduced in the previous chapter in the way how the framework understands the institutional settings of school management and how it depicts discretionary decision making spaces at schools.

Firstly, the framework views institutional settings of school and personnel management as force that shapes the spaces for discretionary decision making. In the case of personnel accountability at Chinese schools the institutional settings establish blurred boundaries for this discretionary space. On the one side institutions such as evaluation-based unified student exams demand top-down implementation of educational policies, but on the other side a lack of control and teaching guidelines also

enables decision making by school staff. With this diverging space the framework is suitable to grasp dilemmas of school staff in China as street-level bureaucrats that, in light of dilemmas of diverging policy goals and tuition demand that exceed the resources at schools, must engage in constant decision making. At the same time, however, this finding also calls to adjust the framework in its understanding of these dilemmas to the Chinese case. As first adjustment the framework needs to understand dilemmas for street-level bureaucrats different from those in Western democratic countries. Whereas the street-level bureaucracy framework originally perceived dilemmas for street-level bureaucrats as deriving from different demands by clients (citizens) and by superiors (in government agencies), educational institutional settings of personnel management in China merely provide power to supervisors in government agencies such as the Bureaus of Education and the Bureaus of Human Resources, but schedule hardly any participation by parents or students in the supervision of school staff. Instead of focusing on the conflicting pressures by citizens and superiors, analysis under this framework must thus include a focus on how different and sometimes conflicting approaches to personnel management within the government agencies create dilemmas for school personnel and how school personnel interpret these spaces.

Secondly, the framework views institutions from an actor-centered institutionalist perspective as a force that shapes the possibilities for decision making by actors. This chapter has shown that institutions provide large spaces for school-based decision making, but it has also shown that the spaces differ tremendously between specific decision making areas. While school staff in China generally is able to make decisions on tuition matter within the classroom, for instance, school staff is to much less degrees involved in decision making on financing education. The second requirement to the framework is thus that it will need to distinguish between the effects of institutional settings on decision making in specific areas of schooling. Accordingly analysis of decision making at Chinese schools will need to conduct separate rounds of analysis of how specific spaces affect individual decisions.

In the next chapters I will pick up these calls for adjustments by focusing on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Firstly, I will answer the need to include diverging institutional settings of local and non-standardized school subjects by specializing on one of the most localized school-subjects in China: minority language education. I will discuss if and how institutional settings differ for ethnic minority language education from other subjects and how policy goals demand local diversity for minority languages. Secondly, I will address the issue of local diversity by spotlighting

institutions at one particular place and at selected schools. I will analyze the role of ethnic autonomy as well as cultural and linguistic characteristics of a region and institutions of educational management in minority languages on the example of school in Xishuangbanna. Thirdly, I will pick up the need to include the effects of principals' and teachers' understanding of the vague institutional settings at Chinese schools in the main empirical part of this thesis which will center on the question of how school personnel interpret and make use of institutional spaces in curriculum decision making at selected case study schools.

4 Minority language education policies in China

Ethnic minority language education policies are a suitable example to study policy implementation at delivery level, since these policies directly target or at least are developed against the background of diversity in students' mother tongues. In this chapter I will outline the basic structures and instruments of minority language education policies in China in order to provide an understanding of the policies and their sources. These general outlines of policies in China will lay the ground for the more specific investigation into structures, policies, and implementation procedures in Xishuangbanna.

China as a multi-ethnic and multilingual country provides exceptional conditions for minority language education policies. According to the sixth census from 2010 8.49 percent of the countries' 1,3 billion citizens were registered as one of the 55 official non-Han ethnic groups, of which the largest groups are Zhuang, Hui, Manchu, and Uighur with populations of each more than 10 million (Editorial Board of China's Ethnic Statistical Yearbook 2013, pp. 624–625). Similarly, with an estimated number of over 100 languages[84] China is linguistically extremely diverse. There are languages of several of the world's major language families.[85] They use different phonology, semantics, and syntax, and more than 30 employ even specific scripts (Zhou 2003, p. 129; Teng et al. 2011, p. 1).[86]

This diversity is a linguistic resource, but speakers' linguistic shift towards Chinese, which as the national language enjoys an outstanding position compared to the so called "minority languages", resulted in endangerment and even extinction of several of these languages.[87] With currently at least 135 vulnerable, endangered or extinct languages

[84] The exact number of languages can only be estimated due to a lack in accurate data. Firstly, the last national survey that focused specifically on minority languages was conducted between 1986 and 1988 and targeted speakers of 37 languages in China. The census of the year 2000 included again some questions on the usage of languages, but merely on respondent's ability to speak Chinese and not on what other languages they may speak (Leading Office for Research on the Situation of Usage of Language and Script in China 2006). The census surveys of the following years excluded questions on languages altogether (Bradley 2007b). The ethnic composition described in the census surveys delivers some hints, but one cannot deduce the actual language knowledge and language usage by individuals from this data. Furthermore, since the ethnic surveys are limited to the official ethnic categories, they cannot provide information about the different language varieties that are sometimes subsumed under umbrella terms, for instance the categories Dai or Zhuang (Zhang 2011b). Finally, among linguistic academics the classifications of languages, languages families, and dialects are not undisputed (Klose 2001, pp. 13–18).

[85] The genetic classification approach arranges languages into groups and subgroups according to lexical, morphological, and other characteristics. "Families" such as Tai-Kadai, Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European, or Austronesian are the broadest categories in this scheme (Klose 2001).

[86] For detailed descriptions and maps on the spread of China's languages see Australian Academy of the Humanities, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1987 and Crissman 2012.

[87] Under the term "language endangerment" and "language death" linguists describe a process where external factors such as political measures or media push individuals to not use a language anymore, which results in lexical simplification and language decay (Sasse 1992). Scholars distinguish between safe, endangered, and extinct languages. A language is considered safe, when it is used by speakers of all ages,

(Moseley 2010)[88] China is among the countries with the highest number of endangered languages[89] worldwide, which not only has major effects on the diversity of languages globally, but also on cultural heritage conservation in China.

Ethnic and language policies specifically regarding these ethnic minority groups and languages are a specific policy field in China that serves purposes as multiple as protecting cultural heritages, raising social benefits for specific groups, or securing national political unity (Shih 2002). These policies base on institutional settings of ethnic and language politics that have been created decades ago, but still continue to shape policy making and implementation in China.

In this chapter I will outline policy goals and instruments for ethnic minority language education at schools in China. However, in order to understand the background of these policies I will connect them with the structures of policy making in China in general, and with structures of ethnic policy making in particular. In the first section of this chapter I will thus outline the structures and actors in ethnic minority policies in China, before in the second section I will discuss specifically minority language education policy goals, approaches, and instruments.

4.1 Structures and actors of ethnic minority language education policy making in China

In this section I will discuss the structures of ethnic minority language education policy making in China, since these structures define the scope of governmental and non-governmental actors that are involved in policy formulation and in designing programs before implementation at school level. Structures and conflicts of ethnic policy making will be discussed in the first part, whereas the second part will focus on how vertical and

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when it is taught to next generations, and when it is used in major domains. The category "endangered" covers a broader variety: a language is "endangered, but stable" when children still learn and speak it at home and the transmission to next generations is secured, but the language is not used in school, work or other public domains. Once children speak a language not anymore to their peers, the language is termed "instable". Once children stop to learn a specific language as their mother-tongue and only adults or only the grand-parent generation speaks the language it is categorized as "definitely", "severely" or "critically endangered". Finally, when a language is no longer spoken anymore by anyone, it is classified as "extinct" (Klose 2001). Large compendia such as the "UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger" (Moseley 2010) or the "Atlas of the World's Languages" (Moseley et al. 2007) use these classifications to establish the status of each of the world's languages.

[88] See for the latest language evaluations also: www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/index.php, last access 2013-11-12.

[89] According UNESCO statistics only a few number of other countries had larger numbers of vulnerable, endangered, or extinct languages in 2013: India (197), the USA (191), and Indonesia (146), see UNESCO: Language Atlas: www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/index.php, last access 2013-11-12. A UNESCO research team estimated that until the end of the 21st century 90 percent of the world's languages of today will be extinct (UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages 2003, p. 2).

horizontal structures of administrative division translate into administration of ethnic minority language education policies in China.

4.1.1 Structures and conflicts of ethnic policy making

Two approaches have been particularly influential for policy making and implementation in China, but also for citizens' identity. The ethnic identification project on the one side as an approach to base ethnic policies on group-based rights continues to determine parts of the official identity of each Chinese citizen and for distinguishing preferential access to some governmental services. The approach of autonomous regions, on the other side, is the major approach for area-based ethnic policies and distinguishes administration and policy making of complete regions. Both approaches, however, face major challenges, and their effects are far from guaranteeing ethnically-based autonomy to individuals or groups.

Ethnic groups and ethnic identification

The ethnic identification project[90] has been a large academic approach to distinguish Chinese citizens into different ethnic groups that in its basic distinction still exists today. Based on the idea of "ethnic nationality" (Minzu) under united citizenship and nationalism that China's Nationalistic and Republican movement, and especially Sun Yat-sen, propagated in the early 20th century (Gladney 1996, p. 85) the Communist government started in 1956 a project to distinguish ethnic groups.[91]

In theory four criteria borrowed from Stalin have been applied: groups of individuals should be distinguished as ethnic groups when they speak a common language, reside in a common territory, have a common economic life, and a common culture (Heberer 1989). However, these criteria have been challenged already after the first round of investigation. Not only have proponents of the Anti-Right movement demanded to abandon research on religion and instead to focus merely on distinction of development stages of groups based on economic life in preparation for socialist re-organization (Stone-Banks 2004), but the criteria have been also applied rather flexible out of strategic concern as a reward for those groups that either supported the Communists during the Long March or that have been deemed potentially dangerous to the new government (Heberer 1989; Zhou 2003; Guo 2004).

[90] In Chinese this project has been called "ethnic identification" (民族识别). As Blum (2001, pp. 62–63) writes, this term, however, does not relate to understandings of identity as "individual self-sufficiency and consistency", but rather is intended to distinguish groups and to sort individuals into these groups.

[91] See discussion on the translation of the term "Minzu" as "ethnic group" in footnote 5.

With establishing recognition of today's 55 groups (in 1979 the Jinuo have been recognized as the 55th and so far last group) the identification process has been "effective in delineating ethnic boundaries" (Guo 2004, p. 202). However, the identification project also created long-lasting dissatisfaction among a number of groups and individuals. Firstly, during the identification process many groups who have considered themselves as distinct have been identified as belonging to larger groups. 85 percent of the more than 350 groups that have applied for group identification have been identified either as Han or as one of the other non-Han ethnic groups (Gladney 1996, p. 92). In the aftermath several groups signed petitions for re-identification, but not always with success (Heberer 1989). Secondly, individuals also have been identified under categories different from what they themselves consider their identity, such as decedents of Han migrants in ethnic minority regions (Heberer 1989, p. 34). In reaction to this perceived feeling of inadequate identification, but arguably also due to the benefits that recognition as member of ethnic groups means, individuals have successfully applied for realignment of ethnic registration (Hoddie 2006b).

Despite these flaws the ethnic identification project continues to be a major mechanism of governing China's population. The project has not only succeeded in establishing newly created categories that individuals in China employ to view others and themselves today,[92] but it also continues to be the basis of ethnic policies directed at individual citizens, such as exemptions from birth-control or preferential access to higher education.

Ethnic representation and administration

The second approach of ethnic politics is the establishment of ethnic autonomous regions. Based on the dual principles of firstly providing minority protection rights to ethnic groups rather than to individuals and secondly of attributing ethnic minority rights to local representation, selected ethnic groups have been granted nominal autonomy over a limited range of policy fields (Heberer 1989). These areas have a larger share of non-Han population and are expected to serve the specific needs of one or more ethnic

[92] Although categories of ethnicity and national belonging are largely shaped by the party-state (Christiansen 2004), these categories have been taken over by Han as well as by ethnic minority groups. Not only the Han use these categories to distinguish themselves as modern, clean, and urban from "the others" that are perceived as less civilized, less hygienic, and less rational (see e.g. Blum 2001), but also those classified as non-Han accepted the categories of the ethnic identification project as classifiers for group belonging. See for instance Gladney's (1996) account of how groups of people who hitherto had little in common except believing in Islam accepted the shift of the term "Hui" from its original meaning of "Muslim" to an all-embracing ethnic category "through a dialogue of self-examination and state-recognition" (p. 97). See also Kaup's (2000) account of the Zhuang identification project.

groups.[93] Many autonomous areas have been excluded from nationwide shifts to urbanize the administrative division (Zhang, Meng 2013). Although the number of autonomous areas has been reduced over the time (Zhang 2012a) they are still the main approach for ethnic self-administration.[94]

Ethnic groups in these areas enjoy a specific degree of autonomy, guaranteed by laws such as the "Regional National Autonomy Law".[95] Two particular measures in the realms of personnel and policy making have been subject to this autonomy. Firstly, the Regional Autonomy Law stipulates that the chairs or vice chairs of the local People's Congresses as well as the leaders in government should be composed of members of the respective designated ethnic group. Secondly, local People's Congresses and governments are granted the right to make own laws and regulations that diverge from the national ones (Article 19, 20). This right especially covers policy fields such as culture and education, but also economy (Di 2004). Administrative autonomy can thus unfold effects on policy making through two ways. On the one side, it can be expected that designated minority areas more often run unique policies and programs than regular areas. On the other side, the stipulation that government leaders are members of the local ethnic groups might have effects on the making or the alternation of policies that are especially connected to the identity of ethnic groups such as cultural practices or representations.

In sum, however, the right to autonomy is strictly limited to selected policy areas, it does not provide for independency of groups or regions, and citizens cannot sue governments on basis of this law (Gladney 1996, p. 91). Instead, the autonomy for ethnic

[93] In theory autonomous areas were only established in localities with a high percentage of non-Han population (Di 2004), but in reality the share of non-Han population of China's designated autonomous areas differs extremely. In 2006 the share of non-Han population in designated autonomous minority prefectures, for example, varied between 16.9 and 95.8 percent (Lai 2010, pp. 69–70). This large variety has been partially caused by shifts in population after the establishment of the respective autonomous areas due immigration of Han people. However, it also shows that autonomous areas were not established purely according to statistical ethnic shares, but also due to strategic consideration of granting autonomy as appeasement for specific groups.

[94] In 2006 there were 155 such areas at province, prefecture, and county level and more than 1000 at township level (Lai 2010).

[95] The autonomy area system changed over the history of the People's Republic. Based on the promise by the Communist Party to provide autonomy to ethnic minorities in exchange for help during the Civil War, the autonomy system gained momentum in the 40s and the 50s by the ethnic identification projects. During the Cultural Revolution ethnic autonomy eroded, but was re-established again in the Reform Era (Heberer 1989; Lai 2010). Until 1984 the regional autonomy was much under-regulated and the promise for autonomy to ethnic groups still awaited realization. As a reaction to demands of non-Han delegates at the People's Congress the Regional Autonomy Law (民族区域自治法; English literature uses various translations: Law on Regional Autonomy, Regional National Autonomy Law, Minority Regional Autonomous Law, Law of the PRC on Regional National Autonomy) was promulgated in 1984 (Heberer 1989). Since this was the first time minority issues were dealt with in a "basic law" (Lundberg 2009), this "upgrading of minorities, their autonomy, and their self-administrative bodies" (Heberer 1989, p. 43) meant a large step for the regularization of ethnic autonomy.

regions in China has been described rather as a "limited administrative autonomy" (Lai 2010, p. 66).

Conflicts and "de-politicization"

Political ethnic relations in China are contested through several problems. These can be roughly distinguished into three areas: lack of political representation, economic disadvantages including exploitation of resources, and cultural conflicts caused by an ideology of Han cultural supremacy.[96]

Economically, ethnic minorities suffer from lower income and disadvantaged occupation compared to Han. Although "in economic terms, the minorities are much better integrated into the Chinese nation-state than ever before" (Mackerras 2004, p. 164) poverty is especially high among ethnic minority people in Western and rural regions (Gustafsson, Sai 2009a). Although poverty is rather related to factors such as local land resources than directly to ethnicity, ethnicity is a factor in determining how people can react to poverty, when for instance job discrimination[97] or difficulties for migration disadvantage especially ethnic minorities (Gustafsson, Sai 2009b).

In the cultural realm ethnic policies have been similarly contested. Policies under an approach that has been termed by Harrell (1995) as "civilizing project" and that combines Confucian ideas of the value of the cultural person with Communist ideologies of social stages of development have been perceived by "peripheral groups" as approaches to force acculturation and, in the end, assimilation. Cases where the state promotes ethnic minority cultures for marketization purposes (McCarthy 2004, 2009; Davis 2005) confirm the perception "that the PRC government is concerned foremost with national unity and economic development, and is only interested in protecting minority culture insofar as it can bring benefits to these overarching goals" (Human Rights in China 2007, p. 31).

In the political realm, as has been pointed out many times (see e.g. Heberer 1989, 2013; Lundberg 2009; Lundberg, Zhou 2011), the promised autonomy for ethnic minorities suffers from several caveats. Firstly, there are limitations inherent in the Autonomy Law itself. Due to the obligation for governments of autonomous areas to seek review of laws and regulations by higher levels, local governments are unlikely to produce

[96] This categorization summarizes Heberer's (2000) five sources of ethnic conflict in China: collective memory and historical knowledge; political sources; economic sources; cultural conflicts; new conflicts due to economic and social change and due to breakdown of authority.

[97] Ethnic discrimination in employment is officially prohibited in China, but nevertheless numerous accounts of discrimination against Uighur and other ethnic minority job applicants (Human Rights in China 2007; Lee 2012) indicate that this practice is common.

any regulations that would go against the main goals of superior levels. Instead "the State leadership shows the way by pointing to the areas that the so-called autonomy can be exercised, creating a case-by-case 'balance' between local or minority interests and the central interests" (Lundberg 2009, p. 411).[98] Consequently, only few such separate regulations for autonomous areas have been formulated, especially in areas of culture and social life such as the Marriage Law or the Inheritance Law.[99] Secondly, the main principles of hierarchical control and evaluation as well as the trickle-down approach of ordering and funding policies from the higher to the lower levels both remain unchallenged. Policy experiments have to adhere to major lines of the central government, similar to experiments in regular non-ethnic regions (Heilmann 2008). Thirdly, the supremacy of the Han-dominated party over government remains untouched. The law stipulates only that the highest officials in government and People's Congress should be of the respective ethnic minority, but the more influential party positions are unaffected. Fourthly, there is a lack of democratic control. The meaning of autonomy is limited to the ethnicity of its leaders, but does not establish mechanisms of controlling these representatives by all members of the respective ethnic group. Policies that diverge from national standards not necessarily are materializations of genuine preferences of the respective ethnic group. Summarizing these caveats scholars stress that the Regional Autonomy Law "cannot be considered as providing adequate minority protection" (Lundberg 2009, p. 402). There must be more institutional changes before the autonomy system is able protect interests of ethnic groups to meaningful degrees.

In light of these problems conflicts on ethnic representation, cultural self-determination, and economic participation have been constantly present in China. The separatist movements that have developed as reaction to perceived or real oppression by the Chinese state especially in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Sichuan gained internationally much attention (Mackerras 2004). Arguably even more important are reactions such as cross-border or internal migration, segregation in social life, or the revitalization of local cultures including religions (see Heberer 2000; McCarthy 2009), as considerably more people used these reactions to change their own life and to change society in ethnic communities (Kaup 2000; Mackerras 2003). However, these reactions must not

[98] The Law of Regional Autonomy (National People's Congress 12/1/1984) stipulates that the organs of autonomous areas need to ask higher levels for permission to flexibly carry out or to halt national regulations (Art. 19,20) and that the organs shall place the interest of the state as a whole above anything else (Art. 7). The principle of "democratic centralism" that organizes party hierarchy from center to local shall not be challenged by this law (Art. 3). In this regard, hierarchical structures guarantee that autonomous regulations will be formulated only in those areas that the central level agrees upon.

[99] By 2003 only 133 self-government regulations and 384 separate regulations have been formulated (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2005, § 3).

necessarily be considered as a threat to "stability"[100] as "dissident minorities do not have the strength to force the government to accept their demands for separatism or true autonomy" (Dreyer 2000, p. 139), but rather as a symbol of individualization and diversification that can be found in other parts of Chinese society as well (see for these social changes e.g. Heberer 2013).

Although the growing diversity combined with ethnic minorities' demands for economic and cultural participation make changes in ethnic politics necessary, scholars of China's minority politics disagree on the direction of these changes. On the one side there are scholars who argue that the political system needs to be changed towards a real representation and empowerment of China's ethnic minorities. Heberer (2013), for instance, argues that the protection of minority rights needs more democratic control. He concludes that even under federalism real autonomy for ethnic minorities can be only reached when minority regulations are coupled with democratic reforms. On the other side there are scholars who propose to change the political representation of minorities in exactly the opposite way. Ma (2007), for example, argues that the area autonomy system contributed to an unwanted "politicization" of ethnic groups. He calls thus for a "de-politicization"of ethnic issues in order to shift political activism of ethnic groups towards patriotism for the Chinese nation. In any case, as far as these large systematic changes are not on the horizon, both the group-based ethnic identification approach and the ethnic autonomous area approach continue to be major elements in ethnic policy making. They find their expression in individual policy fields, such as language policies and education policies, which will be discussed below.

4.1.2 State and party actors in ethnic minority language education policy making

A multiple set of actors is involved in formulating ethnic minority language education policies in China, in designing policy tools, and in establishing programs for minority language education. Due to the large role of the state in school education in China, governments are the main corporate actors, sometimes supported by activities of social organizations. As the purpose of this section is to layout the origins of policies and

[100] Although commonly used in politics and academia (e.g. Shambaugh 2000; Sautman 2005; Dreyer 2005, 2000), the concepts of stability and instability are not well-defined, and seem to be used as umbrella terms to refer to the various consequences of societal changes in China. Even if one only looks at the "stability" of party rule, dependencies are difficult to establish. It is, for instance, unclear if ethnic conflicts destabilize the rule of the CCP when they demand democratic representation, of if they not merely provide an opportunity for the party-state to strengthen its legitimacy by showing its role as defender of national stability.

instruments that reach schools, I will limit the perspective here to corporate actors[101] at government level and at the level of social organizations. The power of individual parliamentarians, governmental offices, or externals such as parents to influence the policy formulation process[102] will thus not be discussed at this point.

In the next paragraphs I will introduce into the general structures and responsibilities of government agencies and social organizations in minority language education in China against the horizontal and vertical administrative division in China. At this point I will describe the main structures of actors in this field, whereas the individual agencies responsible for programs in Xishuangbanna will be introduced in chapter 5.

Horizontal and vertical government division in policy making in China

The political-administrative system of government in the People's Republic[103] is divided vertically and horizontally into a system of several layers that have been described as "tiao-kuai system", which refers to a system of double control of government agencies at a particular local division ("kuai kuai") on the one side and within the functional line of the ministries ("tiao tiao") on the other side (Lieberthal, Oksenberg 1988, p. 141; Mertha 2005). This system on the one side allows for extensive control of the executive, but on the other side it also pays tribute to the large diversity of interests between the individual agencies. Academia has described China as being "among the most decentralized countries in the world" (World Bank 2007a, p. 33) and as "fragmented authoritarian state" (Lieberthal 1992; Mertha 2009)

Horizontally ("tiao tiao"), the government is divided into several ministries and committees, but at the same time there is a parallel system of party organization, a duality that stretches through all vertical levels.[104] However, as a major element of Leninist organizational practices both government and party interact very close with each

[101] Corporate actors are according, to Flam (1990, p. 6), those organized actors "which participate directly in (policy-oriented) decision making, are formal organizations, have a real constitution and a real membership, purport to represent the interests of their membership, but often have been challenged for misrepresenting these interests by both internal and external critics, and, therefore, can be said to also pursue autonomous, member-independent interests." Individuals, by contrast, are defined here as those actors who aim at influencing decision making, but who are not organized into membership organizations based on constitutions.

[102] At this point it will suffice to refer to the rich literature on the role of individuals in governmental agencies, such as literature on the role of cadres in policy making, especially in the implementation stage (O'Brien, Li 1999; Göbel 2011; Heberer, Schubert 2012). Research also pointed to the specific role of leading ethnic minority cadres or heads of government as agenda setters for minority language education (Caodaobateer 2004; Bulag 2010) .

[103] For description of the legislative organs such as the People's Congresses and the People's Consultative Conferences refer to Zhong (2003) and Heilmann (2004).

[104] It must be noted, however, that this division is not based on the Constitution, but on observation of actual share of power as delegated by higher levels (World Bank 2007b, p. 34). This explains the power of the center to shift institutional structures according to perceived necessities (Mertha 2005) .

other. Decisions on major policies are first made within the party committees, before being promulgated and implemented through government (Heilmann 2004; Zhong 2003). The government is parted into diverse ministries, committees, bureaus, and other locally diverse agencies. This variety creates room to adjust structures to local conditions, but at the flip-side of the coin it also creates the possibility to create agencies merely as reward for loyalties. Zhong (2003) for example, reports of massive over-staffing of agencies at the county and the township level. The unclear division of responsibilities between these agencies has been said to lead to inefficiency and to implementation gaps (World Bank 2007b).

Vertically ("kuai kuai"), the political system is divided into five levels: 1) central level; 2) provinces, autonomous regions, directly-administered municipalities, special administrative regions; 3) prefectures, prefecture level municipalities; 4) counties, county-level cities, urban districts; 5) towns, townships, street offices. Village administration and residents communities as grassroots units are excluded from this division (see Figure 2) (see further Heilmann 2004 and Joseph 2014).

One of the major local differences is the existence of prefectures. Although from 1978 onward in many localities the administrative power of prefectures have been reduced or the prefectures as an administrative entity has been abolished altogether in favor of direct management through cities and provinces according to the "city-leading-county" (市管县) approach (Chien 2010) a number of designated minority autonomous prefectures were left untouched due to above mentioned principle of ethnic autonomy. The Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture is such a case, so that here the prefecture has an intermediary role that elsewhere is already taken by cities, and the city of Jinghong is hierarchically at one level with the counties Mengla and Menghai.

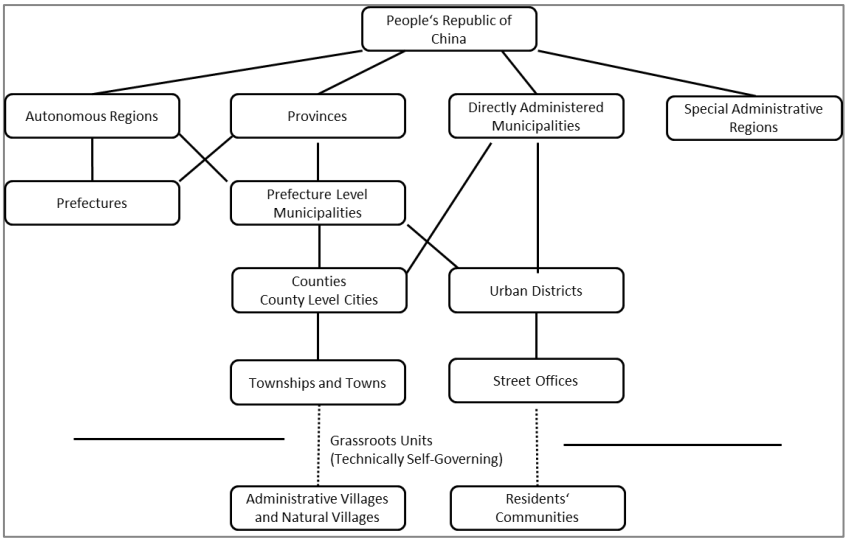

Figure 4: Administrative division in the PR China. After Joseph (2014, p. 9).

The vertical and horizontal structure of the "tiao-kuai system" is mirrored in the relations of the individual agencies and offices within the government. Binding and non-binding relationships relate each agency with other agencies (Mertha 2005; Zhong 2003). The major element of controlling lower levels through superior levels is the evaluation of individual officials through a regular, formalized, and rigid evaluation system (Heberer, Trappel 2013).

However, the position of agencies within the administrative levels is also subject to changes. Through a process that has been dubbed "soft decentralization" (Mertha 2005) many offices or "service-oriented units" (事业单位) that formerly belonged to the counties have been shifted to the jurisdiction of the cities or prefectures (Zhong 2003). This advanced the power of higher levels and decreased the autonomy of counties and of townships, but it also increased the diversity of actor relations at the local level. Within a given county we find now offices and social units that are under the jurisdiction of the township, of the county, of the city or prefecture, and of the province. Schools are an example of this diversity: Rural primary schools are officially under the jurisdiction of the townships, secondary township schools fall under the jurisdiction of the counties, and higher education is governed by the prefecture or the province (Zhou 2012a).

Policies are made within these structures through a system of "nested hierarchy" (World Bank 2007b, p. 34) in which the local and the central levels fund policy programs together. Lower levels must apply for funds and have the responsibility to contribute own funding. Although some scholars described this system as hindering smooth implementation due a lack of coherence (Chien 2010) and as a source for funding lacks for social services[105] it is also a mechanism that allows for flexibility in implementation by the local levels, which is vital in a country as large and socio-economically as diverse as China. In result, policy making is characterized by intergovernmental interdependencies as well as by bargaining between government agencies and individual officers (Lieberthal 1992; Blachford 2004).

[105] Especially the process of "soft decentralization" resulted in several negative consequences for service provision at the lower levels when higher levels took more lucrative offices and lower levels were left bereft of possibilities for revenue making (Zhong 2003; Mertha 2005). Furthermore, after expenditure from national to sub-national levels, local governments have been faced with a burden of unfunded mandates, which leads in consequence to the under-provision of social services and the introduction of extra-budgetary activities by local governments (Wong 2009). Efforts to centralize some of the major expenditures of local governments to higher levels are a reaction to this problem. Responsibility for provision of compulsory education, for example, that used to be one of the major expenditure burdens for township governments (World Bank 2007b), was shifted to large degrees to county and province level (Ho, Niu 2013).

Educational and ethnic government agencies

State actors are the main organizers, funders, and evaluators of educational policies in the basic education stage in China, whereas private tuition plays only a major role in higher and pre-school education and in tutoring (Deng 1997; Mok 2009).[106] China's government budgets for education contain mostly three positions: teacher salaries, school buildings, and miscellaneous expenses such as teaching material, salaries for non-teaching staff, and school activities (Zhou 2012a). Before 2002, all administrative levels from center to township contributed to these expenses, but townships carried the largest portion of it. A major reform of educational funding in 2002 under the slogan "county as the main pillar" shifted funding responsibilities completely from townships to county governments, which improved the overall funding situation (Zhou 2012a), but through special transfers and programs, such as earmarked project funds to rebuild dangerous school buildings, the central level and the provincial governments (and to smaller parts also social organizations and inter-provincial support programs[107]) still contribute a large share to the educational expenses. As an effect of the "governing through projects" approach a variety of governmental actors are involved in the funding of compulsory education in China.[108]

Governmental agencies play also a considerable role in school-based education in minority languages. From the early departments of minority languages that existed from the Qin to Qing dynasty to the apparatus for educational and ethnic affairs in the People's Republic minority language education was always an issue closely connected to the state's interests and thus subject of diverse actions by state actors (Dai, Cheng 2007).

In legislation the formally highest actors in the People's Republic are the National People's Congress, the sub-national People's Congresses, and additionally the Consultative Conferences with a high number of ethnic minority delegates, each with

[106] In the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s financial sources for education provision in China relied heavily on fees levied upon students and parents, but with the abolition of study fees for compulsory education this burden decreased considerably (Yu, Hannum 2006; Murphy 2007).

107 There are numerous examples for such projects. An example for contributions by comparatively wealthy provinces is the so called "partner program" (对口支援), in which one province in the East partners with one province in the West to support the latter's schools or teacher trainings. The most famous social organization that contributes to educational infrastructure in China is Project Hope that by donations from citizens erects school buildings and dormitories in poor villages.

[108] Zhou (2012a, p. 213) criticizes this phenomenon for lacking in two points. Firstly, he argues, there is lack in transparency and democratic control, when funders in Beijing who lack the ability to control local implementation instead of the local parliaments and governments decide about the set-up of local education. Secondly, in his observation, local governments tend to withdraw funds that were originally reserved for educational purposes, so that the educational sector does not benefit from additional central funds.

specific committees on minority and educational issues.[109] However, the de-facto decision-maker on all levels concerning the basic policy directions are the party organizations and committees, as all major decisions are first discussed and agreed upon by the Standing Committee of the Party and only after government promulgates them (Zhong 2003, p. 58). Nevertheless, although the People's Congresses and even more so the Consultative Conferences are extremely limited in their authority and still have "a long way to go toward becoming a meaningful legislative, supervising, and representative democratic institution" (Zhong 2003, pp. 63–64) they have important functions as transmitter of interests of the social groups that they represent. Even if delegates' proposals are not implemented directly, the People's Congresses and the Consultative Conferences at the diverse levels as agenda setters on the one hand and as mediators between social groups and governmental decision makers on the other push decision makers to deal with these issues.

In the executive realm two main lines are responsible to implement minority language policies: the nationalities administration and the educational administration. Both parallel lines exist from the central to the local levels in their own structures. In some cases responsibilities are clearly distinguished, in others they overlap. Horizontally the minority and the educational administration are in a "kuai"-relationship at the level of ministries under the State Council. Vertically both the ethnic and the educational administration have bureaus at all levels of administrative division from the central to the local under the "tiao"-relationship (see also Table 11 in chapter 5 on the example of Xishuangbanna).

The nationalities administration is headed at central level by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission[110] and finds its counterparts at the province, the prefecture and the county level (called Bureau at both latter levels). Their task is to participate in the coordination of all policies that are related to ethnicity and thus to secure the rights of the ethnic minority groups. Its main working field is to run and coordinate scholarship about ethnicity and ethnic culture, which includes research on languages and surveys on the economic situation of minorities. Through a system of Nationality Universities the State Ethnic Affairs Commission oversights much research related to ethnicity, but it is also engaged in the training of minority students and minority cadres. The Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature and the Department of Education

[109] On the national level, for example, there is the "Nationality Committee of the National People's Congress", which is "responsible for working out enactments concerning national minority problems" (Blachford 2004, p. 104).

[110] In 1998 the agency changed its English name from State Commission on Nationality Affairs to State Ethnic Affairs Commission (Zhou 2003, p. 94).

and Science are the divisions responsible for dealing with minority language education. The central-level State Ethnic Affairs Commission names the "participation with the harmonization of bilingual education" as one of its responsibilities[111], but developing actual programs for individual language promotion at school level is left to the provincial and local Bureaus. In contrast to Blachford's (2004, p. 104) evaluation that the State Ethnic Affairs Commission has "considerable powers", it must be seen clearly that this ministry is rather "weak" compared to the education ministry, as its budget is considerable smaller.

The educational administration as the second line responsible for minority language education is equipped with a comparatively large budget[112] and is responsible for organizing, guiding, and supervising all educational matters from kindergarten to university, to adult education (Deng 2010). It is divided into four different vertical administrative levels from center to counties, depending on the locality. The central Ministry of Education (MOE) is "dedicated in formulating concrete regulations, guidelines, and overall plans" (Qi 2011b, pp. 31–32) for minority language education and organizes conferences on minority language education to propagate language ideologies and to share local implementation experiences. The Provincial Bureaus engage with minority language education mostly through publishing textbooks and through organizing teacher trainings. Prefectures, cities, and counties additionally can also hire teachers for minority language education. Schools (sometimes referred to as the fifth level, see Deng 2010, p. 126) are the most local executive organ (the role of schools within party-state structures has been explained in depth in chapter 3). [113]

Party organization

Closely interwoven with the state agencies are the organizations of the Communist Party of China (the CCP) in the party-state of the People's Republic. With its double structure of party and state organizations party organizations continue to be present in all organizational levels of government and social units. At county level, for instance, the Party apparatus is organized from the Standing Committee of County Party,

[111] See State Ethnic Affairs Commission: http://jykjs.seac.gov.cn, last access June 11, 2014.

[112] At some administrative levels, especially at county level, educational expenses accumulate almost to half of the government's yearly expenses (World Bank 2007b, p. 33).

[113] Townships as well as villages are not included in this list since their role in education is very limited. After a wave of decentralization of funding responsibilities in 1985 townships and families themselves used to be the major providers of educational funding (Qi 2011b), but in 2001 all educational funding responsibilities of townships were transferred to counties and the school fees levied on parents were gradually abolished (Zhou 2012a). The main role of townships and village heads is now to guarantee that all children in compulsory schooling age attend school, but they do not run educational programs at schools.

to the General Office, to specific Bureaus and Offices such as Bureau of Cadre Files, the Women's Association, or the Communist Youth League (Zhong 2003, p. 58).

Although the CCP has reformed its ideology (from revolution to modernization and development), the modes of party membership (inclusion of more social groups than before), and the management of party personnel (standardized system of personnel management under collective of leaders instead of rule by autocrats) (Heberer 2013, pp. 74–75), the CCP still continues to lead state, society, and economy through the following mechanisms: representation of party branches in all state organizations and social units, determination of personnel politics by party, party membership of all state leaders, party rule over military, participation of central party committees in formulation of main laws (Heberer 2013, p. 81).

However, the influence of the CCP on specific decisions varies. Zhong (2003, p. 55), for instance, writes that merely "all major" decisions, and especially decisions regarding "economic matter", must be approved by the Party, whereas decisions in other areas are left to the individual government agencies.

In ethnic minority issues the Party approach is generally to balance potential ethnic conflicts by installing Party membership beyond ethnic registration. Not only has the percentage of ethnic minority members in the Central Committee of the CCP increased compared to the Maoist era, but the CCP also actively uses its organizations to recruit and train ethnic leaders (Li 2008a, pp. 6–7). Ethnically indifferent citizenship under one Party state has been thus discussed as new mode for ethnic governing (Ma 2007).

However, the approach to represent a multi-ethnic country with a party that is build up in majority by Han and that is "is dedicated in its organizational structure to the levelling of all ethnic differences" (Heberer 2013 p. 11) faces the risk that ethnic minority people perceive the CCP as hostile. Not only is the percentage of non-Han party members lower than the share of non-Han people in the population (Heberer 2013, p. 78), but many non-Han see the Party as organization of the Han. Heberer (2000, p. 7) writes that although citizens of all ethnic groups have been affected by the political movements such as the Cultural Revolution

> "there is one important difference: these movements were perceived by the Han as movements for which their own political leadership was responsible, but by non-Han as movements for which the Han and their party were responsible. In the first case it is considered as a political conflict, in the second case as an ethnic one. The trauma of those years, when all ethnic and religious differences were regarded as hostile and reactionary, has not simply disappeared."

Nevertheless, ethnic minority language education seems to be only a minor issue of party organizations. Not only is there no particular party organization responsible for

ethnic minority language education, but also have interviewed officers in the Bureaus of Education and the Nationality Affairs Commissions said that the Party does not interfere with their day-to-day decisions, which indicates a that the Party views minority language education as less important than other minority issues (see also discussion on the role of party secretaries in the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education in chapter 5 and the discussion of branch secretaries at the case study schools in chapter 6).

Social organizations

Social organizations[114] have emerged in China since the 1980s and 90s as a reaction to loosening bindings between society and state, but also as a reaction to growing diversification of interests. Social organizations in China, different from many "pressure groups" in Western Democracies, have much less access to participation in the formal political system (Heberer 2013, pp. 131–132). Their actions of social service provision are more bound to governmental organizations and depend on cooperation with these, as for instance Gransow (2009) shows on the example of poverty alleviation organizations.[115] In the field of education Chinese social organizations fulfill rather the role of service-providers than that of advocates for under-served and under-represented groups. Arguably social organizations that work in the educational realm have to embed themselves even more into the political system of the state than organizations that provide non-educational services since their activities often rely on state-controlled schools.[116]

Social organizations also play a role in providing resources for minority language education in China. Firstly, there are national and international social organizations, such as the US-based NGO SIL[117], that conduct projects in minority language education at schools. Secondly, there are university-based projects by teams of researchers who develop projects that combine research with supporting schools, for instance projects by

[114] Chinese social organizations are sometimes differentiated into non-government organizations, quasi-government organizations, and government-organized non-governmental organizations (Gransow 2009; Ma 2005). Since all of these organizations, in theory, are required to embed to some degrees with state organizations I will use here the wider term "social organizations" only.

[115] Factors such as the request to register with state agencies, financial dependencies from state funding, and exchange of personnel between state agencies and social organizations contribute to the close relations of Chinese social organizations with the state (Ma 2005).

[116] An example is the work by social organizations for educational access of migrant children in Chinese cities as an example of organizations focusing on a specific group of children who suffer from educational exclusion. Instead of rallying migrant workers to protest for educational access for their children, for example, social organizations in Chinese cities rather engage in providing education by sending teachers to migrant schools (see examples discussed in Schnack 2010).

[117] See SIL East Asia: http://www.eastasiagroup.net/, last access June 10, 2014.

the Minzu University in Beijing.[118] Thirdly, so called "ethnic research organizations" as associations of researchers, officials, and citizens of a specific ethnic or language group[119] conduct also projects for minority language education (see examples in Zhao 2012). Religious organizations based on temples or mosques, finally, are engaged in minority language education when for instance understanding of religious texts requires reading skills in minority scripts.

However, the scope of activities by these organizations is very limited. Firstly, as has been said above, social organizations in China are limited in their activities to specific permitted areas, and in education they need to cooperate with the Bureaus of Education. Furthermore, especially religious organizations face tight limits of action due to strict state control (Heberer 2013, pp. 179–180). Ethnic organizations, similarly, are bound to state control, and individual ethnic leaders have often been incorporated into state organizations or academia.[120] Finally, as the membership and financial resources of these organizations are restricted[121] their output in terms of resources or programs is additionally limited.

4.2 Minority language education policies

In the previous section I have outlined the basic structures that define both ethnic minority policies and the scope of actors involved in policy formulation in China. In this section I will show how these approaches affect minority language policies in general and policies for ethnic minority languages, specifically. I will here outline firstly the

[118] See e.g. Ou, Luo (2009) on a cooperation between the Minzu University and local schools throughout China to develop local textbooks.

[119] Organizations of this type are generally centered on one specific ethnic group and conduct activities to promote knowledge and research on the culture or language of this group (see examples presented by Li and Chen 2010). Similar to other organizations these research organizations are also closely connected to the state, for instance financially.

[120] After the consolidation of rule by Chinese Communist Party in ethnic minority areas some of the potentially rebellious former ethnic leaders have been placed in research organizations to submit their knowledge to the new rulers under a highly controlled environment. The former Dai king of Xishuangbanna, Dai Shuixun, is a prominent example of such incorporation. After he was forced to resign as king he become a victim of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, but after his rehabilitation he was provided with a post in the People's Consultative Conference and with a position at the Yunnan Nationalities Institute where he published several books on Dai language. The way how Baidu, a government-controlled online encyclopedia, presents this former king as an excellent scholar, as a morally upright family father, and as a contributor to ethnic culture preservation shows that this approach of incorporating old ethnic elites into academia is still today seen as a success (see http://baike.baidu.com/view/308305.htm, last access Dec. 17, 2013).

[121] To my knowledge there are no corporate actors for parents and students beyond school level that would advocate for minority language education or that would implement programs in this field. Parents can potentially determine policies by their market force through choice of schools, but only few parents use this instrument, since firstly the scarcity of rural schools often prevents school choice, since secondly religious education is not a permitted alternative to state-run schooling; and thirdly since there seems to be a lack of interest among parents in minority language education (see discussion in chapter 5).

approaches in minority language policies that the Chinese government promoted between language engineering, language protection, and language hierarchization. Secondly, I will outline how these approaches translate into policies and policy instruments instruments for education in minority languages at schools and other educational organizations in China.

4.2.1 Approaches in minority language policies in China

Language policies have a strong position in shaping ethnic identity, but they have also been an object of repeated struggle. Although the Chinese government often tried to legitimize ethnic language policies through notions of "linguistic logic" or "economic needs" (Zhou 2004b), minority language policies also reflect political ideologies between assimilation and diversity. Zhou (2003) distinguishes three phases of language policy in China: the "first pluralistic stage" (1949-1957) when the government supported the development of minority languages, the "monopolistic stage" (1958-1977) when minority language speakers were forced to use Chinese and the Chinese script, and the "second pluralistic stage" (1978 until today) with a new interest in language diversity and liberalization of minority language policies. Instead of providing a historical review – which can be found in Zhou (2003) and Lam (2005) – I will summarize in the next paragraphs the main elements and effects of current minority language policies in China with specific reference to language and script identification, language engineering, and the struggle between promoting minority languages versus promoting Chinese.

Language and script identification

Similar to the ethnic identification project the newly established Communist government in Beijing started projects to identify languages and scripts of the ethnic minorities in China. Teams of state-owned research institutions have conducted language surveys based on criteria of linguistic genetics since the establishment of the People's Republic (Zhou 2003, p. 22). However, categorization of languages in the People's Republic was never a purely linguistic exercise, but was always also a question of political dimensions. Although scholars who rendered the verdict on the status of languages claimed that the categories were based on linguistic factors (Zhou 2004b) the central government in Beijing used language and script recognition as a political-strategic tool in securing support by those ethnic groups that were deemed important enough to receive autonomy in language issues. Ethnic groups that were politically organized, that resided at the borderlands, that were historically less integrated, or that cooperated with the Soviet Union during wartimes where considered a potential threat to unity and had their

languages quickly recognized, whereas small inland ethnic groups had to wait for decades (Zhou 2003).

According to this identification project scripts have been categorized into the officially recognized scripts, the unofficial experimental scripts, and the completely unrecognized scripts. Each category of scripts still today receives different treatments in the complex and powerful language work schemes of research and government. Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, Uyghur, and Kazakh were immediately recognized as complete so that their scripts were allowed for teaching. Zhuang followed later. Dai, Naxi, Xibe, and other scripts were classified as incomplete and commonly unused and their tuition in schools was decided to be "experimental". For several languages such as Uyghur, Zhuang, Yi, and Hani commissions developed new writing systems based on either the Roman or the Cyrillic alphabet (Zhou 2004b). The remaining scripts, which were often used only by very small communities or only in limited domains, were completely unrecognized by governments and research teams, despite efforts by individuals or informally organized groups of intellectuals in the respective speaker group to apply for script identification. These scripts are not allowed to be taught in schools or used in state media.

Language engineering

Based on this categorization, Chinese linguists employed "language engineering" to reform many minority scripts.[122] Governmental agencies have developed computer fonts for some minority scripts.[123] Especially those scripts which had – despite rich literatures and former use in administration – failed to gain the "complete" status had to undergo several rounds of "simplifying" reforms or where completely abolished in favor of Roman or Arabic script, accompanied especially in the "monopolistic stage" by prohibition of using the traditional scripts (Zhou 2003). Although after Mao's death some script reforms have be reversed (Blachford 2004) the reforms resulted not only in confusion within the speaker group but also in massive drops in literacy in the respective language (see the example of Dai script in chapter 5).

This project of language engineering, including the imposed shifts from indigenous or Arabic scripts to a Pinyin-based alphabet, was an output of nationalism that aimed at binding ethnic groups to mainland China by controlling the sphere of communication. On

[122] "Language engineering" has been also used to reform Chinese language, for instance in Putonghua standardization and in script reforms (see Rohsenow 2004; Lam 2005).

[123] The exact number of available input systems is under constant change. The White Paper from 2005 (2005, § 5) lists four input systems: Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Korean, Yi, but in the meantime such systems have been developed also for other languages, see e.g. Yin et al. (2011).

the one side, it has been argued that only through "changing the backward status of the ethnic minorities could real equality among the ethnic groups be achieved" (Zhou 2004b, p. 57). Script reforms have been seen as a tool to fight poverty and exclusion. On the other side, reforms often included a push towards Han-Chinese. For example, the enforced replacement of the Arabic writing for Uyghur language by Roman alphabet in the 60s was - under social engineering ideology of the Great Leap Forward – labeled as a necessary step for the sake of simplifying printing and reading, but imposed also a cut from history and literature on Uyghurs. The reform, however, was short-lived and soon after Mao's death local governments on request by language communities shifted the script back to the Arabic system (Blachford 2004).

Minority languages versus Chinese promotion

Several laws and documents promulgate the protection of the right to use minority languages and the responsibility of the state to develop and promote language diversity. China not only ratified many international treaties for the protection of minority language rights,[124] but the protection of minority rights also resulted in comparatively "impressive" (Lundberg 2009, p. 404) numbers of regulations. The Constitution (National People's Congress 12/4/1982), for instance, specifies that ethnic groups have the right to use and develop their own languages (Art. 4), and the Regional National Autonomy Law (National People's Congress 12/1/1984) stipulates that autonomous organs must guarantee the freedom of the nationalities to use and develop their own languages (Art 10), that autonomous authorities should use minority languages while carrying out their functions (Art. 21), and that cadres should learn minority languages (Art 49).[125] The central government's White Book on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2005, § 5) lists the following measures to promote minority languages: collecting traditional written and oral literature, creating software for writing systems, researching and exhibiting "minority culture" in scientific research volumes and museums, publishing books, newspapers, and magazines as well as broadcasting via radio and TV in minority languages.

In practice, however, these policies are countered firstly by inequality between Chinese and minority languages and secondly by inequality within the group of minority

[124] Such as International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (Loper 2012).

[125] A law specifically for the spoken and written minority languages that would guarantee the usage of minority languages was proposed and set on the agenda of the National People's Congress during the making of the "Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language", but it was never ratified (see Lundberg 2009: 405-6).

languages. Chinese language, for instance, is promoted by institutions of the educational system, by the large media availability in Chinese, and by a generally higher image of Chinese, uttered even by party leaders of the autonomous regions (Dreyer 2002). Additionally, policy measures such as language research, development, and usage differ between the more supported minority languages of "fully developed" status, the less supported "experimental" minority languages, and the unsupported and unrecognized languages (Zhou 2003). Although the central government at times uses minority languages, e.g. it publishes documents of the National People's Congress in different scripts, but at local level minority languages are much less used. The low level of government staff's knowledge in minority languages and the lack of official signage in minority scripts has been said to both cause barriers for citizens who don't speak Chinese in approaching government agencies, and it is has been said to cause low quality in governmental interventions, e.g. in conflict investigation (Zhou 2004a). In broadcasting and newspaper printing, "perhaps the only arena where the government has done a relatively good job" (Zhou 2004a, p. 88) the government runs specific programs in minority languages[126] because it views control over media as source of control over citizens. In education, finally, minority languages fill a specific place, but often this place is not only limited to small parts of the curriculum, but has over the last years even further been reduced (see below).

In effect, language policies in China have been more successful in promoting Chinese language as lingua franca than in promoting minority languages. The state has reached the goal of Chinese-based "linguistic citizenship" (Zhou 2012b, p. 20) for many citizens, but on the flipside of the coin the preferential policies towards Chinese have caused not only language death (see above), but made language issues a major point of grievances among minorities. Minority advocate groups outside mainland China regularly criticize the language policies of the Chinese government for "inadequate protection of cultural identity" (Human Rights in China 2007, p. 38), and inside China ethnic clashes have erupted on the issue of feared cultural loss by language shift (Wong 2010).

4.2.2 Minority language education policies and instruments

Policies on the realm of ethnic minority languages can tremendously affect the level of endangerment of languages since education in minority languages is an important

[126] A White Paper by the Information Office of the State Council of People's Republic of China (2005, § 5) lists the following numbers of publications and broadcasting stations in minority languages as of 2003: books: 4,787 titles, totaling 50 million copies; magazines: 205, totaling 7.81 million copies; newspapers: 88, totaling 131.30 copies; local radio stations broadcasting in 15 languages; local TV stations broadcasting in 11 languages. Compared to the large numbers of books and nationally available TV programs in Chinese language these figures indicate the dominance of Chinese in media.

factor in determining the status, the development, and the usability of minority languages (Sasse 1992). At the same time, however, policies on ethnic minority language education can follow multiple purposes such as raising the educational attainment of students, lowering language-related educational barriers, or binding ethnic minority students to schools (Hornberger 2005). In the following paragraphs I will outline policy goals, legislation, policy instruments, models, and problems of minority language education in China…

Policy goals

Official statements define a plethora of purposes for minority language education policies. According to the Decision on Deepening the Acceleration of Reforming the Development of Ethnic Education (State Council 7/7/2002, § 1) minority education should "increase the scientific culture of China's minority ethnics, accelerate the economic development and social progress in ethnic minority regions, strengthen ethnic unity, maintain social stability in ethnic regions, and safeguard national unity." Some Chinese scholars present in a similar tone lists of goals of minority language education. Fang (2010), for instance, writes that this specific education is a prerequisite for a bilingual society, a method to improve minority education in general, a hope and wish for the minorities, a prerequisite for educating highly qualified human resources among the minorities, and a need for national security.

What appears in official statements as a harmonious set of goals, however, is in detail a mélange of several not always congruent goals between national unity based on a national language on the one side and ethnic and linguistic diversity on the other. These contrasting goals are reflected also in the different approaches of the various governmental agencies. The ethnic administration as the agency responsible for researching ethnic cultures for instance defines linguistic diversity at schools as a policy goal, but the education administration measures policy success in educational attainment under nationally unified standards oriented towards Chinese, such school grades in Chinese Language and Literature or college entrance rates .

This diversity of policy goals provides a blurred picture for the learners, as Lam (2008) points out. For Chinese speakers the policy goals are clear: they are encouraged to master the national standard Chinese (without local dialects) and additionally English. For ethnic minority speakers, however, the policy goals are much less clear: On the one side, policy documents and laws define again and again bilingual usage of Chinese and minority languages as a right, but on the other side speakers see that policies clearly favor Chinese. According to official ideology, speakers are expected to develop into "masters of both

minority and Chinese" (民汉精通) who are equally competent in both languages (Feng 2005). The current Chinese education system leaves the question of how to reach this "idealized conception of bilingualism" (Feng 2005, p. 532) often to the learner.

Legislation

Legislation on ethnic minority language education followed the ideological changes in minority language policy described above. During the "first pluralistic phase" the government issued several plans and decisions for the promotion of education in minority languages, but during the "monopolistic phase" of the Cultural Revolution it terminated these policies completely, only to renew them during the "second pluralistic phase" again.[127] Today, minority language education has been promulgated as a state goal, as a right of the ethnic groups in the constitution and in several laws, and as a task in the long-term development plans (see Table 5).

Promulgated by	Promulgation or revision	Title in English	Title in Chinese
National People's Congress	2004	Constitution	中华人民共和国宪法
	2006	Compulsory Education Law	中华人民共和国义务教育法
	2001	Regional National Autonomy Law	中华人民共和国民族区域自治法
	2000	Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language	中华人民共和国国家通用语言文字法
State Council	2010	National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020	国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要, 2010-2020
	2002	Decision on Deepening the Acceleration of Reforming the Development of Ethnic Education	国务院关于深化改革加快发展民族教育的决定

Table 7: Selection of major national policy documents on minority language education and Chinese language education in China (compare also with annotated table in appendix). Sources: National People's Congress 12/4/1982, 4/12/1984, 12/1/1984, 10/31/2000; State Council 7/27/2010, 7/7/2002. Note: This table includes laws, plans, opinions, and regulations on national level. Examples of local regulations and so called "administrative measures" (办法; 管理办法) will be documented in the chapter on Xishuangbanna.

The Constitution establishes that "[a]ll nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or to reform their own folkways and customs" (Art. 4). The Regional National Autonomy Law stipulates that schools shall use textbooks and teach minority languages if conditions allow for that (Art. 37). The National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development describes in more detail that the central and the local governments shall promote bilingual education and that both levels shall "respect the right of ethnic minorities to use their own ethnic minority scripts for education" (Art. 26-27).

[127] See historical overview on minority language education legislation in Teng, Wang (2009, pp. 336–339). For an extensive list of national regulations on both minority education and language regulations in China refer also to Si (2011) and to Cultural Information Office of the National Committee on Ethnic Affairs (2006).

However, legislation on ethnic minority language education suffers from several caveats. Firstly, minority language legislation in China suffers from the generally low binding strength of laws (see also Potter 2010) as they don't provide for law suits based on violation of language rights. Secondly, minority language education legislation has a low position compared to other legislation and especially compared to legislative acts that demand education in Chinese language. Not only do laws such as the Constitution or the Educational Law stipulate that Chinese language shall be the major language in Chinese public affairs including education, but legislation also specifies standards for education in Chinese language in more depth than education in minority languages. The "Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language", for instance, stipulates that the standard language of education shall be Chinese and that teachers be proficient in Chinese (Art. 9 and 19). Specific regulations stipulate the minimum standards of these requirements. The Outline for Chinese Language and Script Education at Full-time Nationalities Secondary and Primary Schools (State Council March 1983), for instance, has already in 1982 stipulated that ethnic minority students shall know 1,300 characters and 2,500 words when they complete junior high school. For minority languages the proposal for a similar law has been abolished (Lundberg 2009, pp. 405–406).

In sum, legislation on minority language education suffers from a low level of binding strength towards the executive and from a lack of detail compared to legislation on Chinese language education. As scholars have found in other countries (Churchill 1986) legislation on minority language education in China established a "symbolic value" of minority languages and it strengthened the argumentative position of individual actors within the administrative divisions in interdepartmental bargaining, but due to its vagueness legislative accounts seem to be less important than actual decision making during implementation.

Instruments: teacher training and textbook production

In light of diverging policy goals policy instruments[128] are also extremely diverse and differ regionally. Experimentation as a major model of Chinese policy implementation,

[128] Policy instruments or - to use a synonym - policy tools bind different stages of the policy cycle together as "subject of deliberation and activity in all stages of the policy process" (Howlett 2011, p. 22). Policy research has been busy in categorizing policy instruments since long (see Hood 1983, 2007). In a newer contribution Howlett (2011) distinguishes four main categories. According to this organizational tools are government actions that directly affect policy output and delivery, for instance the direct provision of public services through government or quasi-governmental organizations as well as the establishment of networks with other service providers. Authoritative tools, by contrast, are those tools by which governments steer the behavior of targets by the use of authority. Examples are direct governmental, delegated, or voluntary regulations. Financial tools are defined as those tools that encourage or discourage actor behavior by creating financial incentives for example through taxes, grants, or subsidies. Information-

for instance, leads to a diversity in models and instrument application between localities.[129] Within this diversity a range of instruments is used for these interventions, but especially employing and training bilingually trained teachers and funding and delivering textbooks in minority languages to schools have been discussed in the literature as important measures of minority language education internationally (Beardsmore 2011) and in China (Xiong 2004; Tsung 2009; Cobbey 2007), and shall thus presented here in detail.

School teacher pre-service education as one of the major instruments in bilingual education policies is in China highly controlled by the state and became ever more formalized and centralized over the last decades. Since the abolition of the private or substitute teacher system in China (see chapter 3) public colleges and pedagogical universities (so called "Normal Universities") are the main providers of those degrees that entitle to serve at public schools, and many school positions require Bachelor or Master Degrees. However, despite several non-didactical study programs on minority languages in China's colleges and universities,[130]only very few universities in China offer teacher education specifically in minority languages (Su 2013; Zhang 2011b). Furthermore, the fact that after the end of the "teacher positioning system" (the "bianzhi system", see Brødsgaard (2002)) graduates from bilingual programs cannot be sure to find employment anymore and jobs in bilingual teaching positions are rare, only very few college students are interested in such majors (Wang, Chen 2012).

Textbook publishing[131] as another instrument in the tool box of bilingual education has been also largely used by the Provincial and sub-provincial Bureaus of

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based tools, finally, are those tools that aim at communicating or limiting information for example by information campaigns, publishing research, or censorship.

[129] Implementing policies through experimentation and model projects, so called "pilots", is a major mode of policy making, testing, and learning in China, where local governments develop own solutions to policy problems within centrally defined spaces, with the outlook to popularize successful innovations (Heilmann 2008). Bilingual education policy in China resorts to models and local experiments as well. Following the experimental policy approach government agencies start a program, choose a relatively small number of schools or classes as pilots (试点学校/ 试点班) and implement education projects on a trial basis there. In theory, these models should be short-termed and subject to regular evaluation. This approach has the benefit that it encourages local innovations and inter-school competition. However, at the same time it produces, by default, also inequalities when only selected schools or classes receive investments. One can assume that government agencies tend to choose project schools that have already a relatively good basis in order to raise the probability of success in their projects. This approach bears thus the risk that not the neediest receive investments but only those that either have good connections to government agencies or that have an already well-developed educational infrastructure.

[130] Especially minority teacher colleges (民族师范学校) offer these majors. Nationality Universities, by contrast, rather train researchers in minority languages than teachers (Teng, Wang 2009).

[131] Books for use in Chinese schools have been distinguished into three types: firstly, textbooks that are published by the provincial Bureaus of Education on core subjects, such as Math and Chinese with largely unified content; secondly, local textbooks that are edited and published by province, prefecture, or county agencies on subjects that are not nationally standardized, e.g. the "Three life" textbooks on hygiene

Education and the Ethnic Administration to promote minority language education. As the Chinese state controls the content and delivery of school textbooks[132] the Bureaus use funds and structures to approve, print, or distribute textbooks also in minority languages. Three instruments are of particular importance.

Firstly, the state controls a large share of the writing and editing process of textbooks. In minority language education, the state produces textbooks in math and Chinese Language and Literature that are translated from Chinese to the respective local minority language and then published bilingually with the minority script under or beside the Chinese script (the so called “Ethnic-Chinese contrastive teaching materials”, 民汉对照教材) and textbooks that aim specifically at learning one minority language. The former type of textbooks is produced by the Provincial Bureaus of Education, but the latter type, due to the local specifics of minority language education in China, is typically produced locally by prefecture or county level (Ou, Luo 2009). The number of these textbooks has been said to have increased nationally since the "Plan for the Reform of Basic Education Curriculum" emphasized in 2001 the value of local and “experimental” textbooks (Zhang 2011b), but the actual usage in class can be expected to differ locally.

Secondly, the state keeps control over each textbook edition that is supposed to reach schools by a process of textbook approval conducted by specific committees. Since 1986 all textbooks for primary and secondary school must be reviewed by the review committees at higher levels (Chen 2002). According to the “Provisional Procedures on the management of approval of primary and middle school textbooks” (Ministry of Education 6/7/2001) textbooks edited by county or prefecture level are to be evaluated by a committee on province level, and textbooks on the national curriculum subjects edited by

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education by Yunnan Province (Editorial Board of 'Live life living' no date) and "Underground treasures" on Yunnan’s natural resources (Editorial Board of Yunnan Province Local Compulsory Education Teaching materials no date); thirdly, school-based textbooks that staff of a particular school (often with outside support) developed for their school. Education legislation encourages the development of all three types (Teng et al. 2011, p. 48) and all three are commonly found in Chinese schools. Scholars from the Minzu University in Beijing, for instance, collected in a large study more than 2000 local or school-based textbooks from all over China (see Ou, Luo 2009). Furthermore, there are books that teachers and students can additionally buy for classroom preparation, such as the so called “books to support learning” (辅助读物), “books for outside class” (课外读物), and “teacher books” (教师用书) (Zhang 2011c). Sometimes schools also edit and print handbooks by themselves, hand them out to their teachers and demand that teachers prepare their lessons according to these handbooks.

[132] The state uses these mechanisms also to control the ethnic ideology transmitted in textbooks. According to a study by Zhang (2011c, p. 66) the state expects that textbooks in minority languages and especially those that present local culture convey three ideologies to students: “Ethnic unity, patriotism, love your hometown.” Textbooks that were published about 20 years ago depicted ethnic minorities as culturally underdeveloped groups that are in need of help by the Han (Bass 2005). Although today textbooks rather emphasize the value of local culture, unity and support of ethnic groups under one nation are still the major themes of depicting ethnicity in textbooks.

provinces are additionally reviewed by the State Textbooks and Approval Committee. Only textbooks that are deemed suitable by these Committees will be printed.

Finally, the state controls printing and school-delivery of textbooks. Nationally or provincially unified textbooks are produced by a monopoly of a few number of officially designated school textbook publishers under state control. County governments deliver textbooks to schools, which hand them over to students free of charge (Qi 2011a).

Models

Notwithstanding the extensive discussions especially on the differences in tuition models[133] there are several communalities among minority language education models in China. Firstly, minority language education is amidst an overall decreasing trend. Despite the caveats in available statistical data[134], statistics suffice to indicate a general trend of decreasing student numbers in minority language education programs in China. In Yunnan, for example, the cumulated number of students in bilingual classes fell from 478,050 (or 10.85 percent of all primary school students) in the year 2004 to 165,000 (3.89 percent) in 2011, which is a decline by 65.48 percent (Xiong 2004; China Education Daily 2011; Yunnan Bureau for Statistics 2012).[135] Research documented the decline in student numbers specifically in education programs that use newly created scripts such as Zhuang, Buyi, Dong, or Miao language (see examples in Teng, Wang 2011). Even in localities that report large numbers of students in bilingual education[136] the figures also indicate a rise of Chinese education that has substituted the former minority-languages-only tuition.

[133] Some scholars (e.g. Tsung 2009; Dai, Cheng 2007) describe these models regionally defined and term models as "Southwestern model" or "Tibetan model". These distinctions indicate specific constellations of minority language education in China, but they ignore the differences within localities and.

[134] Official Chinese statistics often refer to the "rate of coverage by bilingual education" (接受双语教育覆盖率). These statistics, however, are only of limited use, since the very definition of who counts as bilingual student embraces students of different language backgrounds who underwent different tuition programs in terms of length, goals, and curriculum. Furthermore, the official statistics lack in reliability concerning student numbers. To begin with, figures published are merely based on student numbers that the schools provide to their supervising agency. Schools might feel compelled to report higher numbers of students in minority language classes in order to show that they fulfill the required general schooling rates, which results in false numbers of overall students (see also remarks on statistical data in introductory chapter). However, underreporting drop-out students has presumably fewer effects on statistics on bilingual education programs in primary schools because the drop-out phenomenon is here less severe than in middle schools.

[135] These sources refrain from explaining the origin of the statistics and must thus be treated with care. However, during interviews officials at the provincial Ministry for Education and at the Yunnan Province Ethnic Affairs Commission confirmed the general trend of a decline of bilingual education in Yunnan.

[136] Statistics from some counties in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Yanbian report an increase of bilingual education coverage rates of up to 100 percent in primary school (Wang 2012) and pre-school (Minzubao, http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/Home/report/381940-1.htm, last access 2013-06-18). However, the accuracy of these statistics must be questioned,, since the goal of raising bilingualism overlaps here with the goal of popularizing pre-school education, where local governments must meet hard targets that are set

Secondly, the majority of localities offer minority languages merely in primary schools and kindergartens,[137] but conduct all education at secondary and tertiary schooling in Chinese.[138] The limitation to the primary education sector is due to the function of minority language education in China as serving as intermediary tool to support ethnic minority students learning Chinese, but once they are able to use Chinese, the then "useless" minority language education is terminated. In terms of timing the so called "pyramid-model", a head-start in minority languages followed by slow substitution by Chinese tuition, seems to be common among the large majority of bilingual tuition in China, but some localities also schedule models of abrupt language shifts from one grade to the other (Tsung 2009). In both models, however, the national and the local governments follow the goal to include ethnic minority students into the mainstream education and to use language as a tool to bind ethnic minorities socio-linguistically to the rest of China.

Thirdly, minority language education is conducted mostly in rural areas with a high share of ethnic minority population and populations of low household income[139], but hardly ever in urban regions or in regions with high Han-shares in the population.[140] Both

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on national level. An official at the Education Bureau in Xishuangbanna told me during an informal talk that since the statistics on pre-school education have to meet predefined targets, officials in all Educational bureaus are pressured to forge the statistics. At this point I am unable to evaluate the reliability of the above mentioned reports.

[137] The situation of bilingual teaching at kindergartens differs extremely between the regions. This is related to different understandings of the purpose of pre-school bilingual education. In Xinjiang, bilingual education serves as added Chinese education to the regular Uighur education that dominated for decades in pre-school education. The region has already a large coverage of bilingual kindergartens due to governmental initiatives (Ma 2009; Zhang 2010). In Yunnan, by contrast, bilingual education is understood as adding minority languages to the regular Chinese education. In this province there are only very few kindergartens that offer education in minority languages. During a discussion with more than 30 kindergarten leaders from regions with large non-Han populations all over Yunnan I found that only one kindergarten offered Arabic writing classes for Hui children, but none of the others offered education in minority languages.

[138] Literature reports vivid minority language education at elementary and middle school level (see e.g. Bao 1995; Wulan 1997; Fang 2010; Ma 2009; Cobbey 2007; Wang, Postiglione 2008; Tsung 2009; Zhou 2012c; Kuang 2004; Dao 2001; Jiang 2001; Dai, Cheng 2007; Schoenhals 2001), but there is hardly any such education in higher education. Xinjiang, probably China's region with the most vivid higher education in minority languages, step by step expelled Uighur language from teaching at University level since the 2000s "in order to address the employment difficulties of minority graduates" (Ma 2009, p. 208). Today Uyghur education in Xinjiang, similarly to Mongolian education in Inner Mongolia, has been largely reduced to elementary schools and pre-school classes (Ma 2009; Fang 2010; Wulan 1997).

[139] Both the rural and the ethnic minority population in China - with a few exceptions, e.g. the Koreans - are on average financially disadvantaged compared to urban and Han population (Gustafsson, Sai 2009a). Similarly, children of ethnic and rural families have lesser pocket money, wear cheaper clothes, and receive less gift-money for spring festival (CYRC China Youth Research Centre 2007). Related to family income children in rural and especially in designated poverty areas have much lower rates of educational access (Hannum, Adams 2009), and attainment and drop-out rates are here higher than those at urban schools (Wu, Zhang 2010; Wang et al. 2011).

[140] Iredale et al. (2001, p. 116), for example, report that Mongolian language education used to be conducted at three schools with more than 2000 students in the City of Hohhot in earlier times, but that in

contribute to a perception of ethnic minority education as a model suitable for "peripheral people" (Harrell 1995) in the meaning of economically deprived ethnic groups who live far away from the assumed cultural, political, and economic center, but not as suitable for people residing in the assumed centers, neither for Han nor for urban ethnic minorities.

Fourthly, minority language education is conducted often at rural schools and thus of schools that have in average lower quality and reputation.[141] The limitation to rural schools, that has been reported from many countries in the world (see e.g. Jones, Martin-Jones 2004), is due to several reasons. Firstly, it has been argued that rural areas in China suffer from a lack of Chinese-speaking teachers, which makes tuition in minority languages the only option (Ma 2011a). Secondly, minority language has been argued to be used as a tool to attract especially children of rural families who are critical towards urban Han life, as Postiglione et al. (2011) show on the example of Tibetan nomadic herders. Thirdly, from the perspective of language planning, minority language education for rural children who more often still speak non-Chinese languages as mother tongues is deemed to be more fruitful for the goal of language preservation. Fourthly, as rural children more often suffer from language-related barriers minority language education is used especially in these areas to support non-Chinese speaking children (SIL - East Asia Group 2010). Finally, parental support for minority language education is more likely to be higher at rural localities, whereas in urban areas resistance against such education can be expected to be higher, since in urban areas parents have more expectations for their children to visit higher education, and they have more choices to choose schools.[142]

1996 there was only one Mongolian language school with 600 students left, whereas in rural areas Mongolian education was much more vivid. From Honghe Prefecture in Yunnan a statistic registers almost all schools that conduct bilingual education as rural schools (Wen 2011).

[141] The lower quality of rural schools has been observed also in other countries. Harrison and Busher (1995) summarize three problems of small rural schools. Firstly, small rural schools are unable to deliver a curriculum as diverse as that of urban schools due to limits in staff and material. Secondly, the cultural and geographical environment leads to isolation of pupils, to teacher professional stagnancy, and to a lack in preparation of rural students for the requirements of urban societies. Thirdly, small rural schools are cost-inefficient and school development is thus hindered by limited funds. In China, this is additionally related to the underfunding of schools in rural and minority areas (Guo 2007; Gong, Tsang 2011; Zeng, Ding 2010), which, for instance has resulted in higher prevalence of so called low-quality "minban" private teachers in rural and ethnic minority areas (Iredale et al. 2001, p. 118). The image of ethnic minority villages being "under-developed", "uncivilized", and "at the margins" (Litzinger 2000; Murphy 2004) may further provide difficulties for educational administration to find teachers who are willing to serve in village schools.

[142] In China the desire for minority language education is higher among the rural population than among the urban population (Tsung, Cruickshank 2009, Zhao, Zhao 2010a, 2010b). In other countries, by contrast, rural parents who require more education in the national language perceive activists who try to implement minority language education programs as "outsiders trying to impose disadvantageous educational changes" (Coronel-Molina 2011, p. 148). There is a need for more research on attitudes of Chinese parents' and their possibilities to exercising pressure on government.

Fifthly, minority language education can be mostly found at public schools and kindergartens and only seldom at private ones. Since private education is still a comparatively small phenomenon that is mostly located in urban areas[143] demand in private education is rather for education in Chinese than in minority languages.[144] This, however, is not only an indicator that the fate of minority language education lies in the hands of the state, but it is also an indicator that the general population does not deem minority language education in schools or kindergartens worth for investing their own money (see discussion on language attitudes and actions by parents in chapter 5 on the example of parents in Xishuangbanna).

Finally, with respect to the four frameworks of minority language education that have been introduced in chapter 2, China follows largely models of the "subtractive-transitional framework", where children who are perceived as lacking Chinese abilities receive mother-tongue tuition in non-Chinese languages under a gradual change towards Chinese. Although there have been tuition models under the "additive-maintenance framework", that is the tuition in minority languages and Chinese throughout all formal educational levels (see examples mentioned by Bilik 1998 and Ma 2009), these programs seem to be an issue of the past. Similarly, "recursive-developmental" minority language education for language revitalization has been conducted, for example after script reforms of Uighur and other languages, but with the end of the large language engineering projects these models also terminated (Rohsenow 2004). The "dynamic-poly-directional framework", finally, that aims at transculturalism through mutual learning, has not been reported from any model in China. Although there are increasingly popular models of teaching English as a language of instruction to elite urban children (Feng 2005) literature does not report any models that teach minority languages to Han children.

[143] The merely 5,000 private schools (Editorial Board of China Educational Statistics Yearbook 2012) in China occupy only a small part of the schooling sector. Only the minority of these private schools are what Lin (1999) has called "elite" schools that offer better quality than the public ones. The majority of private schools are low-quality alternatives for those children who are rejected by regular and public schools, such as migrant children or so called "black children" who were born into families that exceeded the birth limits of the one-child policy (see Greenhalgh 2003). Schools for migrant children, for example, were informally founded in the 90s and 2000s with teaching facilities of extremely low quality, classes of up to 70 students, unprofessional staff, and dangerous building structures (Han 2004), but are now increasingly engaged in formalization and management through government agencies (Schnack 2010). In rural areas most private schools that used to be organized and funded by villagers themselves have been transferred into regular public schools, and the teachers have been added to the pool of public teachers (Lin 1999; Wang 2002).

[144] Literature reports very few cases of private elite education in minority languages in China. Fang (2010, p. 54), for example, writes of a private school in a rural Uyghur-only language area in Xinjiang that offered especially Chinese education for children of families who were unsatisfied with the surrounding Uyghur schools. However, this phenomenon seems to be very small, as for instance none of the private educational institutes in Xishuangbanna falls into that category.

However, since implementation of the above mentioned instruments rests mainly with provincial and sub-provincial Bureaus of Education application of these instruments differs largely between regions. In Xinjiang, for instance, Uighur education is sometimes taught throughout all grades in primary school and even in secondary schools (Ma 2009), but in Yunnan minority language education is generally taught only at primary schools (Tsung 2009). Moreover, there are even differences within provinces, prefectures, and counties. Within Xinjiang, for instance, some counties schedule bilingual education from the first grade, others start with Chinese only, and others continue for some years with Uighur education before they introduce Chinese (see examples in Ma 2009). These divergences in policies on the one side reflect the categorization of languages into different development stages. Korean, Mongolian, and Tibetan bilingual education, for instance, has been fully revived after the interruption of the "monopolistic stage", but minority language education in Naxi, Miao, and Dai until today remains in the "experimental" mode, and for Bai, Buyi, and Dongxiang there are even less options for minority language education (Zhou 2001). On the other side, however, the fact that even within one language and within one administrative division education models differ indicates that not only the polices, but even more so the actions of implementers shape the outcomes of minority language education in China. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Implementational problems

Implementation of minority languages at school level meets a set of barriers caused by education policies and by societal changes. In the societal realm migration caused higher linguistic heterogeneity also in school communities, which according to authors such as Xiong (2004) might make minority language education in schools difficult. In Xinjiang, for instance, following large immigration of Han Chinese, authorities terminated Uighur and Kazakh language education at several schools (Ma 2009), and similarly Tibetan education in Sichuan has been said to have been become more difficult in light of immigrating Han population (Tsung 2009).

In addition the low usability of minority languages in many domains caused difficulties in educational programs, e.g. difficulties of textbook translation into languages with limited vocabulary (Tsung 2009, p. 175). More barriers exist when minority languages are excluded from usage in public domains, when there are no books available apart from textbooks, and when all other school subjects except the courses for minority languages are taught in Chinese. Under these circumstances minority language promotion

through schools meets a lack of legitimacy and risks to lose students' and teachers' willingness to engage in teaching and learning minority languages and scripts.

In the realm of educational policies minority language education suffers from additional difficulties. Scholars such as Xiong (2004) have argued that programs for minority language education lack in resources, for instance to produce textbooks or to hire bilingual teachers.[145] More importantly in terms of origins and stability of resources, however, seems to be the low and unstable position of minority language education in legislation. Teng and Wang (2009, p. 339) formulate with precaution: "Legislation on ethnic minority education has been started to gain attention, but we can also say that policies and legislation on bilingual education is still immature." In a more direct way one could also say that for the sake of Chinese language education legislation on minority languages is kept under-developed on purpose. Whatever the reason, this underdevelopment has serious detrimental effects on the stability of projects and on students' educational careers, when for instance even successful minority language education projects that raised students' overall education achievements and contributed to language protection have been abruptly terminated in favor of Chinese, thus resulting in severe bends in students' educational careers (see e.g. examples mentioned by Nima 2008, Ma 2009, Tsung 2009, and Postiglione et al. 2011).

Educational policies in fields other than minority language education also endanger minority language education sustainability. The policies of forced school mergers, to name an example of China's educational policies that recently resulted in much grievances (see remarks in chapter 3), have caused linguistic heterogeneity at schools. More generally, but arguably more influential, are institutional settings of the school and college entrance examination systems. When these examinations can be only taken in Chinese the usability of minority language education for the students is limited, and so is, as will be discussed in later chapters, also the motivation of teachers to conduct this type of education.

[145] The complaint about a lack of teachers, however, refers to very different issues in China's various regions. Due to the lack of nation-wide statistics on the number of bilingual teachers this complaint can be substantiated only on a local basis. In those regions where education in minority languages used to be a strong branch of school education, supply of teachers who are fluent in minority languages, such as Uygur or Kazak, was never a problem, but finding Chinese speaking teachers often was. The "problem of bilingual teachers" (Teng, Wang 2009, p. 496) means here a shortage of teachers who speak sufficient Chinese (Fang 2010; Cai, Du 2013). In regions such as Yunnan, by contrast, where education in Chinese language was much wider spread already for decades the "problem" refers not to teachers' Chinese language skills, but to the difficulties of finding teachers who can teach in minority languages. In these latter cases teacher scarcity can be a serious problem for bilingual programs in smaller languages, which resulted in some cases in the expiration of bilingual programs (see examples reported by Blachford 2004 and Tsung 2009).

4.3 Summary of chapter and specification of framework

In this chapter I have elaborated on the structures, policies, and instruments of minority language education policy making by government agencies in China. This overview has shown that both the making of and the approaches to ethnic minority language education policies are deeply rooted in the Chinese political system. Structures of policy making in China, from the general vertical and horizontal division of government administration to the approach of ruling minorities by ethnic group distinction and by partial regional autonomy are all mirrored in the making of ethnic minority language policies. Similarly, minority language education policies also reflect goals of language policies and ethnic policies in China. The strategy to "pacify" potentially separatist ethnic groups by granting the right to use ethnic minority languages in schools, while at the same time promoting Chinese language, for instance, aims at hedging minority languages in education to small areas.

At the same time this chapter has also shown that narratives of a suppressing state that enhances language death by force are too short-handed. Instead, this chapter has shown that there is a large gap between formulation and outcomes of ethnic minority language education policies in China. Many policies for the support of ethnic minority languages are contested by policies that demand an ever increasing share of tuition in Chinese language. Compared to the vague policy guidelines for ethnic minority language education the outcomes of tuition are less than satisfying. This chapter's detailed analysis of instruments and structures has shown that there are a plethora of policies and instruments to support minority language education at schools. Lam's (2005, p. 153) summary that "[w]hile the Chinese government does not suppress minority languages, in the sense that there is a stick to force minority learners to convert to Putonghua, there is certainly a carrot to attract them to do so" must be complemented by a view of how the carrots and sticks work specifically.

These findings call for two adjustments of the analytical framework of school-based decision making in curriculum policy implementation in the way how the framework understands policies and instruments. Firstly, the framework as outlined in the previous chapter depicts policy implementation as a process of putting one policy into practice. However, for the case of ethnic minority language education in China there are multiple policies with diverse and sometimes even conflicting goals. School education policies aim, for instance, at binding ethnic minority groups to the majority society and the state by a unified education and at the same time they aim at promoting diversity as a promise to China's ethnically defined groups. Accordingly the item "policies" in

framework needs to be adjusted to capture this diversity. The framework needs to capture policies not as clear-cut single policies, but rather as a complex field of policies with blurred, competing, diverse policy goals that require selection by implementers, and to analyze policy implementation not as a one-way process, but to include interpretation and selection by implementers.

Secondly, the framework as outlined in the previous chapter understands policy instruments as policy manifestations that reach schools. In the case of ethnic minority language policies in China, however, due to the diversity of actors, agencies' complex vertical and horizontal relationships, and experimentation as policy making approach policy instruments for ethnic minority language education at China's schools are diverse and differ locally tremendously. Not only the modes of textbook provision or teacher training, but the very basic models and frameworks of ethnic minority language education differ between China's regions, languages, and even between schools. The framework needs to capture this diversity of instruments by distinguishing between those instruments that aim merely at symbolic actions and those that enable school staff to conduct specific tuition. With this selection the framework will be enriched by analysis of how implementers take over, make use of, or even ignore instruments.

Under this specified framework the findings of this chapter indicate two lessons for the further proceed of this text, which all will be addressed in the next chapters. Firstly, the differences between policy formulation and outcome indicate that decisions by implementing agencies have the power to shape policy outcomes. A large part of the problems of ethnic minority education policies relates to problems of implementation, such as lacks of resources, shifts in models, or competition by other policies. As these complexities meet at the implementation level, policy analysis seems to be good advised to not only analyze policies as formulated in documents, but to analyze how instruments and structures translate into policy implementation at the street-level, in this case at the school-level. In relation to the contrasting policy goals introduced here and the variety of the actors that are involved in minority language education, schools receive an intermediary position as implementation base of policies. Secondly, the short outline of ethnic minority language policies and outcomes in China also shows a large variety of models, instruments, and outcomes in this diverse country. This finding indicates the need to specify policies, instruments, goals, and outcomes against the background of a specific region, which I will elaborate in the next chapter for the case of Xishuangbanna.

5 Field: Dai language education in Xishuangbanna

With this dissertation I analyze policy implementation of minority languages at the example of case study schools that are situated in Xishuangbanna Prefecture in Southwest China. In order to understand implementers' decisions there are a few notes in order on the background of the people, the languages, and the policies of the region. In the first section of this chapter I will hence provide an overview on the political, social, educational, and linguistic situation in Xishuangbanna. In the second section I will outline the settings of minority language education in Xishuangbanna, from the actors in government agencies and social organizations to the policy instruments and to the current situation of tuition. Based on statistical data, literature, and interviews with government officials this chapter will draw the background for the analysis of school-based policy implementation decisions in later chapters.

5.1 Overview Xishuangbanna

Xishuangbanna is a political entity of prefecture level in the Southwestern Chinese province Yunnan. At the same time, however, due to its historical, ethnic, and economic characteristics Xishuangbanna can also be seen as a distinct cultural region. In a study on regions in China the geographer Krechetova developed the concept of "economic and cultural complexes", which in the author's understanding are given when an area is characterized by three properties:

- "Homogeneity of material and spiritual culture among the population of a territory (or regular alteration of the limited number of groups of people with different cultures);
- Homogeneity of economic characteristics (or regular alteration of groups of people with different characteristics of economy);
- Closer relationships between the economy and culture of population of an area than between economy and culture of population of this area and other areas." (Krechetova 2011, § 5)

Under this perspective Krechetova defines Xishuangbanna as one unique economic and cultural complex, comparable to complexes such the "Tibetan Plateau complex", or the "Eastern Yunnan complex". According to this author, Xishuangbanna's specific agricultural traditions of plough-based land cultivation, the low share of ethnic Han in the population, the economic dependency on tourism, and the linguistic history of Dai language and script allow to speak of Xishuangbanna as one distinct area (Krechetova 2011, § 55).

In this section I will pick up this notion of a cultural and economic area, that in the case of Xishuangbanna overlaps with political and administrative divisions, and provide information on those cultural, economic, and political characteristics of the region that affect the possibilities, the need, and the difficulties of minority language education in

Xishuangbanna. In the first paragraphs I will provide an overview on the geographical and economic situation, followed by an overview on the administrative and educational situation, before I will conclude this part with a short outlook on the ethnic characteristics of this region. In a second part to this overview I will specifically describe the linguistic situation in Xishuangbanna as a prerequisite to analysis of minority language education at the prefecture's schools.

5.1.1 A border prefecture: Social and political overview Xishuangbanna

Geography and economy

Xishuangbanna is in a middle position between China and South-East Asia. Politically located at the Southwestern edge of China in the province of Yunnan (see Figure 6 in appendix for map), in terms of natural geography this region resembles much of the neighboring countries Laos and Burma as part of the "Greater Mekong Subregion", named after the Mekong, a river that connects Xishuangbanna with its Southeast Asian neighbors (Xu et al. 2014). With its subtropical climate the mountainous region offers unique flora and fauna in China and has been described as a "biodiversity hotspot" (Martin 2013, p. 29). Although this biodiversity is under threat due to an increase in rubber tree plantations (Xu 2006; Xu et al. 2014)[146] Xishuangbanna is biologically still an outstanding post in China. Geographer Grumbine (2012, pp. 83–84) describes the differences in landscape when he notes his impressions of a journey along the Mekong River:

> "Tracing the Lancang from northern Yunnan into Xishuangbanna, a traveler passes into a different world. Without leaving the province, you swap snow leopards for elephants and tigers, fir trees for rubber and rice, the Himalaya for the old world tropics. Xishuangbanna's seasonal rain forests are unique, the northernmost extension of tropical Asia in China."

Economically Xishuangbanna has experienced in the last few years an economic boom with a yearly steady increase in average income per person between 15 and 20 percent over the last years (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2013, § 5). This growth is connected, among other factors, to the agricultural shifts towards rubber plantations, to Xishuangbanna's intermediary position between China and Southeast Asia, and to the growing tourism industry. In terms of income Xishuangbanna's population benefitted from the increase of rubber tree and banana tree plantations, as well as from the increase in tea prices, although the collateral decline in space for food production for the local market has threatened food security (Xu et al. 2014). The development of trade and

[146] Pictures in Martin (2013) illustrate the resulting change of landscape.

traffic between Xishuangbanna, the rest of China, and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia has contributed further to the economic growth (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2013, § 5). Finally, tourism to Xishuangbanna, "one of the most popular tourist destinations in southwest China" (Hansen 2004, pp. 73–74), advanced from 7 million tourists in 2010 to 12 million in 2012, generated a revenue of 13 billion RMB in 2012 (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2013, § 11) created jobs in the tourism industry and shifted labor markets from agriculture to service industry (Evans 2000).

The specifics of this economic boom had also effects on migration and the ethnic share in Xishuangbanna's population. On the one side, 67 percent of Xishuangbanna's permanently registered population is registered as "agricultural population" (农业人口) (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2013, § 11), and the high profit margins in agriculture have made farm jobs or farming the families' fields also attractive for young people. Secondly, due to the increased job chances in Xishuangbanna – and arguably as interview partners insisted also a consequence due to the region's natural beauty – the region has transformed from a place where people migrate away to an immigration destination for migrant workers from other parts of the country. Whereas interview partners could lively recollect how they went in the eighties and nineties to Thailand to seek jobs none of them saw this today as an attractive option anymore. Instead, the region is now a destination for migrant workers who seek jobs in the service sector or at the plantations. Xishuangbanna's population has increased between 2000 and 2010 by 14 percent, and much of this through immigration (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2011, § 5). This immigration has, in addition to the earlier state-directed migration by Han-settlers (see below) contributed to a change in the ethnic share of Xishuangbanna's population.

Amidst this economic growth, however, there remain large gaps in income. Not only earn Xishuangbanna's urbanites with on-average yearly 18 thousand RMB three times the income of rural population in the region (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2013, § 11),[147] but there are also large differences in income within the rural population. Generally speaking, those who have been fortunate enough to reside in villages in the valleys, where growing rubber trees can generate high income, where compensations for newly built streets or airports bring additional income, or where urbanization made renting space for factories or housing possible, some villagers had the opportunity to make a fortune, whereas villagers in mountain villages with less developed infrastructure

[147] These figures, it must be said, can represent real incomes only to small degrees as they don't reflect non-monetary benefits from work and they don't reflect differences in living expenses between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, travelling through the region easily confirms differences in income-related living standards such as car ownership.

and, due to the high altitude without possibility to grow rubber trees, participated less in the region's economic raise.

Politics and administration

Before the establishment of the People's Republic Xishuangbanna was a kingdom of villages ruled by an ethnic Dai monarchy under a king in Jinghong (the "cao phaendin").[148] This king's authority, however, was limited internally and externally. Firstly, as the court was unable to enforce certain standards throughout the kingdom, such as religious or linguistic unifications, Xishuangbanna at that time must be rather seen as a confederation of several states (Borchert 2008, pp. 116–117).[149] Secondly, the courts' authority depended on relations with the neighboring strong Chinese empire. Xishuangbanna had to pay tributes to Kunming, and from time to time there was a Chinese army stationed in Meng Han. However, since both the tribute system and the military presence of the Chinese state were rather nominal, scholars tend to view Xishuangbanna, similar to the Nanzhao kingdom, as an independent state (Hsieh 1995). Since the court in Jinghong respected the nominal supremacy of the Chinese empire, the relation was rather marked by co-existence than by resistance and conflict (Borchert 2008, p. 166).

Beginning with the 1910s until the 1950s Xishuangbanna was side-effected by the political changes in China, but the Dai elites and the dynastic families continued to play influential roles even under the new rulers of the Republic and the People's Republic in China. After the founding of the Chinese Republic in 1911/12 the Chinese also established administration in Xishuangbanna, but the monastic family continued to rule in practice (Hansen 2004, p. 55). During the civil war the People's Liberation Army entered Xishuangbanna and at 23rd January 1953 the kingdom was officially dissolved and the new autonomous district Xishuangbanna was established. However, even then and although "the PLA's entrance into Sipsongpanna represented a fundamental change in the relations between China and Sipsongpanna" (Borchert 2008, p. 115) the new rulers left Dai elites in leading positions.[150] Since then top-level positions such as the local branch

[148] Hsieh explains that under the Dai monarchy villages, and not clans were the basic cultural, political, and social unit, conferring benefits to members that lineage did not offer. In this respect, the author argues, lineage "never developed into the clan, nor was primordial ethnic identification sought from the lineage or descent line" (Hsieh 1995, pp. 304–305).

[149] "Sipsongpanna", the Dai origin of the Chinese geographical name Xishuangbanna, meaning "twelve townships" (Davis 2005, p. 8), indicates the confederative character of the kingdom.

[150] The Dai king was a central figure for identification of people in Xishuangbanna. Even after the last Dai king Dai Shixun had resigned, he continued to be perceived as a symbol reflecting nostalgia for the old monarchic home country of Dai people outside China, as Hsieh (1995, p. 304) argues in light of "tens of

secretary of the CCP in Xishuangbanna have been Han cadres, but other positions, such as prefectural governor have been filled with ethnic Dai (Hansen 2004, p. 55).[151]

Today Xishuangbanna's administrative status is that of a prefecture in Yunnan Province. It is divided into three county-level entities: Menghai County, Mengla County, and Jinghong City (see Figure 7). On the next lower level the area is divided into 31 townships and one street office, and below that 220 village committees support administration. With 966 km of international borders to Laos and Myanmar the region is a major trading hub and a gateway to China's connections with its South-East Asian neighbors (Xishuangbanna Government 2010).

Xishuangbanna has been established as China's first autonomous district (which was later renamed into an autonomous prefecture) (Xishuangbanna Government 2010). This autonomous status covers, similar to other autonomous regions in China (see chapter 4) decision making on multiple policy arenas, especially on culture, but also on economy. Regulations such as the "Stipulation of the Autonomy of the Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province" stipulate that government in Xishuangbanna is implemented by the ethnic Dai[152] and that although the local government has to follow instructions and laws from higher levels it can "flexibly implement" or even stop implementation of policies (Yunnan Province People's Congress 9/8/1987).

However, the autonomous status of Xishuangbanna has been evaluated very differently. Some authors, and especially Chinese authors, have claimed that the autonomous status of Xishuangbanna "terminates ethnic barriers, solves ethnic conflicts, develops ethnic friendship, and advances ethnic unity" (Yan 1999, p. 468). Beyond these general slogans, other authors, however, have been much more critical towards the implementation of autonomy in Xishuangbanna. Firstly, as has been said in chapter 4, the concept of regional autonomy in China is limited to specific policy domains, it suffers from a lack of democratic control, and main positions in the party depend on Han control. Autonomy of Xishuangbanna Prefecture is similarly limited by these principles. The prefecture's government, for instance, depends on the relations with Yunnan Province and its Han-controlled party, the CCP branch secretary is an ethnic Han, and the party is not controlled by democratic elections by citizens. Secondly, especially in Xishuangbanna

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thousands" of Dai people who kowtowed to the former king during his visit to Chiang Mao in Thailand in 1986.

[151] The current branch secretary of Xishuangbanna is since 2012 Chen Yuhou, an ethnic Han who graduated in Yunnan's Qujing; the current prefectural governor is since 2013 Luo Hongjiang, an ethnic Dai from Jinghong.

[152] Dai autonomous areas can be only found in Yunnan. Xishuangbanna Prefecture, together with Dehong Prefecture are the largest such entities, followed by several Dai Autonomous Counties in the Prefectures of Honghe and the Cities of Yuxi, Enmao, and Lincang.

granting autonomy under the rule of the Dai has been seen by members of the other ethnic groups as continuation of the Dai kingdom and was opposed by groups such as the Hani or the Jinuo who demanded more representation for their own ethnic groups (Hansen 2004, p. 56). Thirdly, increasing disputes about resource exploitation between Han-farmers, local minority farmers, and corporations additionally threaten autonomy of local population (Hansen 2004, p. 70).

Ethnicity

Xishuangbanna is inhabited by a multiethnic and multilingual population. The census from 2010 (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2011) reports that only 30 percent of the 1.1 Million inhabitants are registered as the national ethnic majority group Han, whereas 70 percent are registered as minority ethnic groups, of which the Dai are the largest group (see Table 8).[153] Over the last decades the Han become the largest ethnic group, whereas the share of the Dai decreased to the second position. Compared with 1956 the share of registered Dai among the population strongly decreased by nearly 50 percent, and at the same time the share of Han quadrupled. The state-orchestrated mass immigration from the mid-1950s onwards, but also later individual migration by Han from the Inner Chinese regions (mostly from Hunan), has increased and continues to increase the share of Han in Xishuangbanna (Hansen 2005).

Year	Ethnic group	Population	Share in population
1956	Han	17,905	7%
	Dai	128,700	50%
	Total	258,645	100%
2010	Han	340,431	30.03%
	Dai	316,151	27.89%
	Hani	215,434	19.01%
	Lahu	61,504	5.43%
	Yi	66,731	5.89%
	Bulang	47,529	4.19%
	Yao	22,266	1.96%
	Jinuo	22,124	1.95%
	Miao	19,055	1.68%
	Total (and within these ethnic minorities)	1,133,515 (793,084)	100% (69.97%)

Table 8: Official ethnic composition of Xishuangbanna's Population. Source for 2010: (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2011), for 1956: Xishuangbanna guotu jingji kaocha baogao, cited in McCarthy (2009, p. 73). Note: data shows long-term registered residents in Xishuangbanna, but neither foreigners, nor unregistered migrants.

Although ethnic registration of the groups in Xishuangbanna, similar to other ethnic groups in China, lacks in accurate description of people's identity, people use ethnic categories to describe their own identity. The category Dai, for instance, that has

[153] In addition to these officially recognized groups there are also non-recognized groups, such as the Ake or the Pin, whose members are officially registered as members of one of the ethnic groups (in this case Hani and Bulang), but who sometimes define themselves as ethnically distinct (Dai, Sheng 2012).

been created by Chinese ethnographers at the negotiation table in Beijing in 1951 to embrace a variety of ethnic groups in Yunnan that had historically little contact, dressed differently, had mutually unintelligible languages, and used different writing systems, and which also ignores historical relations between people in today's China with people in Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos has been said to be "a testament to the productive power of these discourses and technologies of control" (Borchert 2008, p. 117).[154] Despite all these caveats not only did all of my interview partners knew their own ethnic registration and that of the people close to them, but they also often referred to this ethnic registration as a major point of their own group belonging, as a source for their demands for cultural protection, and as a reason for their own choices in terms of language use at home.

Ethnicity serves in Xishuangbanna not only as a marker for individual identity, but it is also used as a marker to sort ethnic groups in hierarchical orders. In interviews that Hansen (1999) conducted in Xishuangbanna lay people as well as government officials expressed beliefs of developmental statuses of ethnic groups that place Han at the top of a pyramid, followed by the Dai, and then by the other ethnic groups. Although ethnic images depict all non-Han groups in Xishuangbanna as "innocent", "Orientalized", and "feminized" people (Komlosy 2009; Schein 1997; Evans 2000), Dai ethnicity enjoys a better reputation as traditionally most developed group among those in Xishuangbanna. Blum (2001) calls the Dai "the fetishized ethnic other" as this group is presented not only as "abstracted from their actual social life and detached from their individual characteristics, reduced to picturesque and simplified versions of their full human character" (Blum 2001, p. 104) in images that depict Dai as irrational, sexually liberal, and mysterious, but also as civilized and culturally developed. Hani or Jinuo, by contrast, are still today depicted as "natural", "primitive", and "backwards" (Hsieh 1995; Sturgeon 2012). The dominant role of the Han can be seen through their historically strong

[154] Some authors have argued that the Dai in Xishuangbanna have had historically close contacts to the other Dai states in what is today Northern Thailand and Laos, but that as "the members of this 'tacit alliance' were absorbed into various independent modern nation-states" (Hsieh 1995, p. 324) ethnic cross-border identity has been weakened. Despite the still common cultural flows between for instance Thai music and Xishuangbanna's consumers, but also in terms of migration of monks and workers between both countries (Davis 2003), ethnic identity is merely an additional category to national identity. In contrast to Hsieh's (1995, p. 325) point that "the Dai have become politically and ethnically passive", I argue here that the ethnic groups of Xishuangbanna can well distinguish between an ethnic and a citizenship belonging and that inactivity in forms of a lack of independency movements does not necessarily mean inactivity in ethnic cultural affairs.

presence in government, military, and trade. The Dai, at the same time, have been represented in government and enjoy at least formally an outstanding position.[155]

In Xishuangbanna ethnicity also often comes with financial differences and segregated living, a fact that continues a century-old inequality of resource access based on ethnically separated locations of settlement. Although Xishuangbanna's cities are ethnically mixed and – different to cities in some of China's other official ethnic minority areas – there are no specific Dai or other ethnically defined quarters in Jinghong, in rural areas ethnic groups live largely separated. The Dai live especially in the fruitful valleys, whereas other ethnic groups such as Hani or Jinuo have over the last centuries been expelled to the hills (Cai 1997). Those Han who have migrated into Xishuangbanna's rural areas through the large state-orchestrated migrations in the 50s and 60s, settled in so called "farms" (农场) near to state-owned plantations. Walls and rows of brick houses easily distinguish them from the houses of other ethnic groups (Hansen 2005, p. 84). Although the ethnic communities often had contacts, the local separation is still largely intact, there is only few migration between rural areas in Xishuangbanna, and there are only few inter-ethnic marriages (Cai 1997).

The separation in locality also resulted in financial inequality between the ethnic groups. Many Dai become in the last year wealthy by running rubber and banana plantations in the valleys and can today expose their new wealth in villas, motorbikes, and cars. Han workers at the state-owned rubber plantations, by contrast, have benefitted much less from the increase in rubber demand. As their plantations have been producing rubber for higher prices due to inefficiency and costs for social benefits, in fact many Han workers have been laid off and forced to migrate to cities for off-farm work (Xu 2006). The climate in the hillside areas, finally, does not allow to plant rubber trees, so that Hani, Ake, and Jinuo who settled there were similarly excluded from the benefits of rubber and banana agriculture. In effect, non-Dai ethnic minorities seem to have

[155] After the founding of the People's Republic the Chinese government employed different ways to deal with old ethnic elites that posed potential threats to the new rulers. In some cases members of ethnic elites had to withdraw from any public roles and especially during the Cultural Revolution minority cadres lost their positions, if not their lives. In other cases, however, local ethnic elites were incorporated into the new government or adjacent organizations (Rossabi 2004). It has been argued that in Xishuangbanna the de-grading of local elites was a slower process than elsewhere and that the local Han government incorporated minority leaders more than governments in other regions did (Yang 2008). Since the mid-1950s "the policy of cooperation with traditional Tai and religious elites was turned into a policy of struggle in which Tai and other minority elites where encouraged to fight against the local headmen and traditional authorities" (Hansen 2004, p. 56). However, even at that time incorporation of former ethnic elites was still used as a measure to deal with former power holders. The former king of the Dai, for instance has been secured a new position as a researcher at university, was allowed to publish, and even to receive the "koutao" by ethnic Dai in Thailand (Hsieh 1995, p. 304).

considerably less average income than the Dai.[156] The Dai's economic success in combination with positively attributed minority culture created the image of the Dai as a successful people who are able to combine traditional culture with modern Chinese life.

The differences in access to natural resources and land have resulted in conflicts, but these have been much smaller than in other regions in China. Not only tries the government to keep the image of Xishuangbanna as a peaceful land free of ethnic conflicts (Komlosy 2009), but also interviews partners throughout Xishuangbanna said that these conflicts are only small-scale and are not comparable with conflicts in Xinjiang and Tibet. Although the ethnic component of demonstrations by laid-off plantation farmers still awaits in-depth research one can surely say that ethnic conflicts are not as present as in other regions of China. Hansen (2005, p. 61), argues that this is related also to the history of relatively peaceful immigration.

Especially Dai culture has enjoyed an outstanding position in public attention, and is currently strongly revived. With its history of writing, the strong Buddhist organizations, and the support by the court Dai cultural items as diverse as script, religion, and stage performance have flourished under the Dai kingdom (Borchert 2008; Davis 2005). Even after Xishuangbanna "was fully incorporated into the geobody of China [and] the Dai-lue (monks and laity) became increasingly subject to both the discourses and the disciplinary technologies of the CCP state" (Borchert 2008, p. 117) Dai culture continued to be present in both people's daily life and the Prefecture's official representation. Traditional Dai song culture, for instance, has survived the Cultural Revolution "backstage" (Davis 2005), and the Buddhist religious culture has revived to a "renaissance" (McCarthy 2009, p. 75), with new temples being built all over Xishuangbanna's Dai communities and a constant raise in the number of monks in monasteries since the 1980s (McCarthy 2009, p. 76).

The revival of ethnic minority culture as practice and as marketization, however, is closely connected to state activities. On the example of official's sponsorship for the Dai New Year, the Dragon Boat festival, some music and performance troupes, or the "Ethnic Tourist Villages" scholars have shown that the Chinese state, or at least individual officials, use specific images of minority cultures as instruments for regional marketization and for

[156] Official statistics lack information about the ethnic share of wealth. However, as any tour through Xishuangbanna's valley villages of Dai and through the hillside areas of the Jinuo, Yao, or Hani illustrates the exposed wealth differs largely between these two geographical and thus ethnically separated areas. Driving through the valleys one sees modern bungalows with cars in front, owned by former farmers who have rented out their soil to companies. In between the fields there are small shags without sanitation for migrant workers who work the plantations, but participate much less in the profit. In the hills, finally wooden stilt houses dominate with, at most, a motor bike at the door, whose inhabitants work the family's tea, sugar cane, or rice fields.

showing the state's benevolence towards ethnic groups. By selecting a "staged authenticity" in minority shows, tourist villages, and brochures the state engages in creating images of ethnic groups that presents a peaceful, and yet exotic world of ethnic distinctiveness to officials, tourists, and local population alike (Davis 2001). McCarthy (2009, p. 72) summarizes this instrumental approach with the following words:

> "[Dai culture] is an instrument or tool that can be deployed in the service of various ends. Dai cultural resurgence has been a boon for the tourist industry in Xishuangbanna; tradition and revenues are tightly intertwined. The ostensibly friendly historical relationship between the Chinese empire and the Tai kingdoms is played up to attract foreign investment. Cultural and religious ceremonies also serve as conduits through which the party-state asserts its authority and legitimacy. The state makes a great show of its support for Dai cultural distinctiveness, but it expects Dai compliance in return."

The images, the level of tolerance, and the state-orchestrated support, however, also differ between the groups. Culture perceived as specific Dai, including Theravada Buddhist traditions such as temple education for young boys (see below), has been tolerated and even welcomed by the state which has "repudiated the anti-religion, anti-tradition bent of Maoist socialism" (McCarthy 2009, p. 71). Religions of other groups, however, have been still called "superstition" and their religious festivals do not receive support similar to that of the Dai. During both the national Chinese New Year and the Dai New Year, for instance, all government offices are closed, but not during the Hani New Year. Additionally, ideologies of "development stages" of the diverse minority cultures in Xishuangbanna are still uttered by officials (Hansen 1999) and are prevalent in public displays of ethnic groups. In the "Rain Forest Valley Park" near Jinghong, for instance, actors display the officially unrecognized group of the "Kemu" as stone-age people who utter monkey-like sounds. Although an extreme this example indicates that ethnic prejudices today are not only used for marketing the exotic, but are still also present in discourse among common people and officials.

Education in Xishuangbanna

Xishuangbanna's landscape of educational facilities reaches from kindergarten to college level, but due to school mergers, the growth of pre-school education, and the overall educational expansion it is constantly changing. In 2012 there were 363 educational facilities in Xishuangbanna (including private kindergartens, but not including facilities of other private education) with 180 thousand students and nearly 13 thousand teachers (see Table 9). Ethnic minority students visit the regular schools, but additionally since 1982 there are also two primary and four secondary "ethnic schools" which have then replaced the "ethnic classes" at regular schools (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education

2010b). Due to school mergers (see chapter 3) Xishuangbanna's number of primary schools including so called teaching points (see chapter 3) has been reduced to a fifth from 1330 schools and school points in the year 1991 to 229 in 2012, while at the same time student numbers have increased by 4.66 percent (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 50). With an average of 388 students per primary school in 2012 Xishuangbanna has been almost exactly on that year's national average of 386 students (own calculation, based on Editorial Board of China Educational Statistics Yearbook 2013 and Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2013). At the same time, however, not only the numbers of students and teaching staff have raised[157], but especially the "spring of kindergartens" in China's rural areas (see chapter 3) has increased the number of public and private kindergartens in Xishuangbanna. In 2012, for instance, Xishuangbanna's Educational authorities started erecting 39 new public kindergartens, using nearly 3 billion RMB of the National Pre-school Education Development Program (Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2013).

	2005		**2012**			
	Institutes	**Students**	**Institutes**	**Students**	**Schooling rates**	**Teaching staff**
Technical three-year college*	1	1,763	1	2,923		173
Regular senior high school	68	55,831	15	11,817	58.3 %	794
Vocational senior high school			4	8,440		216
Junior high school			37	40,067	80.5 %	2,462
Vocational junior high school			1	614		36
Central primary school	732	94,342	157	88,813	99.9 %	4,880
Teaching point primary school			72			
Kindergarten	23	5,114	51	27,082	77.8 %	890
Total	804	153,697	363	180,407		9,566

Table 9: Educational Institutions in Xishuangbanna in 2012. Source: Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2013; Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b. Note *: In addition to higher education at Xishuangbanna's Technical College there are also other institutions of adult education, such as teacher training schools and party schools, which are not indicated in this table.

Educational attainments have constantly risen over the last years in Xishuangbanna. From 2005 to 2012 the numbers of students in tertiary education at Xishuangbanna Technical College alone have nearly doubled, and the numbers of students in secondary and primary education have also increased (Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2013; Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b). Official schooling rates in primary education have reached to almost 100 percent. According to a summary of prefecture-level census data from 2000 and 2010 the number of citizens with university diploma tripled in these ten years and the rate of illiterates decreased by 1 percent (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Statistics 2011).

[157] The number of full-time teaching staff has, for instance, increased from 8,999 in 2005 to 9,566 in 2012 (Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2013; Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b).

However, especially ethnic minority students seem to encounter difficulties in educational attainments. In comparison of the ethnic composition of students in the different educational levels (see Table 10) the share of non-Han students decreases with years of schooling (from 74 percent of students in primary schools in 2005 to 59 percent senior high graduates in 2011), which indicates high drop-out rates especially of non-Han students in primary or secondary schooling. Similarly, access to tertiary education seems to be difficult for ethnic minorities. In 2005, for instance (the latest available statistics on this matter), merely 494 of the 1,763 tertiary students (28 percent) have ethnic minority status (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 208).

	Primary students in 2005		**Senior High graduate students in 2011**	
Ethnicity	no. of students	percentage	no. of students	percentage
Dai	25,643	27 %	517	16 %
Hani	19,802	21 %	766	24 %
Yi	9,192	10 %	334	10 %
Lahu	5,543	6 %	106	3 %
Jinuo	2,078	2 %	83	3 %
Bulang	4,157	4 %	52	2 %
Yao	2,819	3 %	36	1 %
total all non-Han	69,234	74 %	1,894	59 %
all others (mostly Han)	25,108	26 %	1,290	41 %
Total	94,342	100%	3,184	100 %

Table 10: Ethnicity of primary school students in 2005 and Senior High Graduate Students in 2011. Source: Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 208; Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2012, p. 493.

In sum, in many of its educational developments Xishuangbanna resembles similar developments all over China, such as the expansion of schooling and kindergarten education, but in low educational attainments of ethnic minorities is differs from Han areas in China. Although especially teachers have argued in interviews that the lower attainments of minority students are based on the students' "laziness" and an "unwillingness to learn", scholars have argued that these lower attainments are at least partly due to language barriers in education. In the next sub-chapters I will present these arguments in detail and will discuss the instruments and tuition models of bilingual education that have been scheduled as a tool to lower these barriers.

5.1.2 Hierarchies in diversity: Minority languages in Xishuangbanna

The ethnic diversity of Xishuangbanna is also reflected in the linguistic diversity among the population. In the following paragraphs I will present this linguistic diversity in the categories that Ellis (1994) describes as "societal factors" of language acquisition: proficiency, usage, and attitudes. However, as Dai is the only minority language used in Xishuangbanna's schools I will here focus on Dai, and its relation to the other languages present in Xishuangbanna.

Language diversity in Xishuangbanna

The prefecture of Xishuangbanna can be counted as one of the linguistically most diverse areas in China (Bradley 2007a). Xishuangbanna's geographical characteristics where mountains used to limit mobility, a history of political segregation into diverse kingdoms, and finally an ethnic segregation between the Dai in the major valleys and the Hani, the Jinuo, and the other language communities in the mountain regions all preserved languages amidst pressures for language unification that elsewhere in China resulted in language shifts and the extinction of languages (see examples in chapter 4). This language diversity makes Xishuangbanna not only a major hub for research on languages and their usage, but also an area for language intervention and language policies.

Besides the Chinese language which is spoken in Xishuangbanna in a local dialect there are many other languages spoken in Xishuangbanna, of which the Dai[158], Hani[159], Bulang[160], and Jinuo[161] are the most prominent ones (Bradley 2007a) (see also maps in Australian Academy of the Humanities, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1987 and in Crissman 2012).[162] These languages are very diverse in terms of language genetics,

[158] Literature in English lists the Xishuangbanna Dai under a plethora of different terms: Lu, Lue, Lüe, Dai Le, Tai Lue, Tai Lu, Tai Ly, Tay Lü, Tailwe, Tai Lue, Thai Lu, Thai Lue, Xishuangbanna Dai, Sipsongpanna Dai, Suipaiyi, Shui-Pai-I (Klose 2001, p. 73). Following Bradley (2007a, p. 179) who notes that the "tendency in the literature on Thai [i.e. Tai] languages to identify languages by place names or official exonyms rather than the autonyms" causes problems for classification of Tai languages I will refer to this language here with the Chinese autonym that my interview partners used: "Dai". I will add other geographical markers when I speak of the varieties in other regions. With "Tai" I will refer to the above mentioned larger language family and I will use the term "Thai" to denote to the national language of Thailand.

[159] The Hani language is spoken by approximately 1.3 million people in China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam (Dalby 2004, p. 241). This language has many names: The official Chinese term is Hani (哈尼), the languages' speakers call themselves in Chinese either Hani or Aini (僾尼), and in when authors write about this ethnic group outside of China "Akha" (阿卡) seems to be the most widely used term. Some authors (Hansen 1999) use the term Akha also to refer to the ethnic group in China. However, in this text I prefer Hani, since this is not only the official Chinese term but it is also the term mostly used by my interview partners. Further synonyms for the Hani language used by literature in English are Aini, A-k'a, Aka, Angka, Ikaw, Ekaw, Jani, Kaw, Khako, Kha Ko, Khao Ka Ko, Ko, Ssaqniq, Tawkaw, Yani, Zani, Za-nyi (Klose 2001, p. 110). For further linguistic description see Dalby (2004).

[160] Bulang language is also known as Blang, Bulan, Bulang Wa, Plang, Pula, Pulang, Puman, Hkawa, K'ala, K'wa, Khon Doi, Kontoi, Hsen Chun, Sen Chun, Wengung, Kien Ka Lawa (Klose 2001, p. 159). For linguistic description see entry "Palaung" in Campbell (1991, pp. 1076–1077).

[161] Synonyms in English literature for Jinuo language are Jino, Jinuoyu, and Youle (Klose 2001, p. 256). The language is spoken by around 10,000 people in Yunnan (Bradley 2007a, p. 173). A brief look through some of the larger compendia on the world's languages reveals that the Jinuo language (基诺) is much less discussed than Dai or Hani which might be related to the comparatively late recognition of Jinuo as official ethnic group in 1979.

[162] Linguists endangered languages such as Lewis (2009) list further languages such as Lahu or "Kemuhua" (i.e. the language of the Kemu, a group that is in Chinese official statistics not officially recognized as an "ethnic group", but merely as a "people" (Kemuren), and thus as a branch of another ethnic group (Dai, Sheng 2012)). These languages, however, play hardly any role in public language recognition, education, or official public usage.

speaker numbers, and script development. In the system of linguistic genetics many language families are present in Xishuangbanna. Dai language, for example, belongs to the Tai-Kadai branch of the Austro-Thai family, Bulang belongs to the Mon-Khmer family, Chinese to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family, and Hani as well as Jinuo to its Tibeto-Burmese branch (Bradley 2007a). In phonetics the languages differ also strongly. Both Dai and Chinese are tonal languages (Chinese has four tones and Dai six), but Hani, Bulang, and Jinuo, for instance, are non-tonal languages. Although speaker numbers can only be estimated, it is clear that there are speaker groups of hundreds of thousand speakers on the one side and speaker groups as small as only the population of a few villages.[163] In terms of scripts, Xishuangbanna's languages also differ. Chinese and Dai both have a long history of script development including script reforms but they differ with regard to the structure of their writing systems.[164] The Hani script that was only created in the 1950, based on the Latin alphabet. The Chinese writings system is based on the meaning of words, but the writing systems of Dai and Hani are based on sounds.[165] For languages such as Jinuo there exists no script in popular use at all (Bradley 2007a, p. 173; Campbell 1991). In terms of language endangerment, finally, Xishuangbanna's languages also differ. Language transmission in Bulang and Jinuo is unsecure, especially since these languages are completely excluded from formal education, but Dai and Hani language are comparatively well developed, have larger numbers of speaker communities, and are transmitted within families, although they are threatened by limits to usability in some domains (Moseley 2010).

The Dai language

Dai language is a tonal language with mostly monosyllabic words that have four parts: initial, vowel, final consonant, and tone. It derived from a proto-Tai, but borrowed much from Pali language and from Chinese language.[166] Dai belongs to the Tai-Kadai

[163] The Pin 品, a group of people who live in only one village in Mengzhe, are probably the smallest native language group in Xishuangbanna. Unrecognized by any state authority, the people themselves and their surrounding neighbors claim that their language is nowhere else spoken. Although by no ways being able to verify this claim, I list this example here in order to show how the language diversity inflicts not only linguist, but is a defining characteristic also when the inhabitant of this region speak about their languages.

[164] Although the terms "script" and "writing system" are often used interchangeably, linguists distinguish both: A writing system is a larger entity, such as the alphabetic system or the logographic system, under which the scripts of the diverse languages fall (Coulmas 1996).

[165] In linguistic terminology (Comrie 2005) the principles of these three writing systems are as follows: Chinese uses a logographic writing system that takes morphemes as the basic unit of representation. Dai uses an alphasyllabic writing system with consonants as basic units on which diacritics for vowel representation are added. Hani, finally, is transcribed through the Roman alphabet with phonemes as its basic units of representation.

[166] For further linguistic description of the Tai languages see Strecker (2009).

language family and is thus related to a variety of languages spoken in Thailand, Vietnam, China, Laos, Myanmar, and India. Although close to Thai, Zhuang and other languages, it is mostly unintelligible with these (Strecker 2009, p. 654). Dai language is spoken by approximately 6.5 million people in China, Myanmar, and Northern Thailand.[167] In China there are four official Dai varieties:[168] the Xishuangbanna Dai (西双版纳傣, spoken exclusively in Xishuangbanna), the Dehong Dai (德宏傣 of Dehong prefecture in Yunnan's Southwest), the Hongjin Dai (红金傣, spoken at the Red River and the Jinsha River) and the Jinping Dai (Jinping Dai 金平傣 of Jinping County in Honghe Prefecture). Of Xishuangbanna's three dialects (the Menghai dialect, the Mengla dialect, and the Jinghong dialect) the Jinghong variety is the officially used standard for TV, radio, and language classes in higher education. In primary and middle school education, teachers for Dai language in Xishuangbanna are asked to use the Jinghong standard. However, some teachers who I interviewed also use the local Dai dialects (see below).

The Dai language in Xishuangbanna is represented by an alpha syllabic script[169] that derives from Khmer and is close to Lao and Thai writing (Dalby 2004, p. 605). The script is not only used to write Dai language, but also to transcribe Bulang language which lacks a distinct script of its own. The Dai script has been used over several hundred years for administrative work at the court in Jinghong, for writing and reciting Buddhist religious texts, and also for daily purposes among lay people in Xishuangbanna.[170] However, in the course of national script evaluation and reform in the 1950s a research team from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the National Affairs Committee of Yunnan Province deemed this script unsuitable for modern use, with its more than 60

[167] Dai is called Khun in Myanmar and Thai Lanna in Thailand (Dalby 2004, p. 346).

[168] These official categories relate to the location where the variety is spoken. Besides there are also the categories "Water Dai"(水傣) and "Dry Dai"(汉傣). However, the official locality-related terms are more common not only in academic literature and government documents, but also among my Dai-speaking interview partners in the schools and the villages. Nevertheless, researchers differ in the categorization of the Dai varieties. Zhou and Fang, for instance argue that the Dai varieties in China are in fact different languages since they use different scripts and are to a high percentage mutually unintelligible (Zhou, Fang 2004). Other linguists argue that the Dai varieties are close enough to be seen as one language. Dalby (2004, p. 346), for example, writes: "Under its many names, the majority language in these areas [Thai Lanna/ Khun/ Dai Lu] is recognizable one; it is written in the same traditional script; and it is the vehicle of the same Buddhist culture". The Chinese government holds the latter position and treats all Dai varieties as one language, with consequences for instance on textbook development. Although on provincial level textbooks for Xishuangbanna and Dehong Dai have been developed or translated separately, developers have to share a provincial budget for textbook development with merely the same amount of funds and personnel resources that are available for more unified languages, as one official in the textbook development offices of Yunnan Province complained (SC-15_2012-03-23).

[169] The Dai script in Xishuangbanna is called Dai Le or Dai Lue (傣仂文) and is not only used by speakers of Dai but also of Bulang language (Zhang 2009). Furthermore there are three other scripts to represent Dai language outside Xishuangbanna: the Dai Na (傣哪文) script used in Dehong, the Dai Beng (傣绷文) used in Ruili, and the Jinping Dai (金平傣文) used in Honghe (Zhou, Fang 2004).

[170] The oldest reference to Dai script dates back to the 12th century BC (Wang, Mi 1998, p. 933).

letters and many homophones. They created thus a new Dai script[171] with a reduced number of letters and a radically simplified writing that resulted in a change of 90 percent of the graphemes.[172] Through the ratification of the "Plan for the Amendment of Dai Written Language in Xishuangbanna" by the central government in 1955 this reformed script was mandated as the only Dai script allowed to be used for publishing and teaching, but after a relaxation of language policies in the 80s the "Plan of Using the Traditional Dai Written Language in Xishuangbanna" (Dalby 2009) from 1989 permitted again to use the traditional in schools and for newspapers. In my observation today both the "Old" and the "New Dai Script" are in use, but their domains differ: the old script is used at temples and for religious purposes and the new script is used in school education and in most of the publishing.[173] Since 2005 there is a system of computer fonts available for the new Dai script and since 2008 also for the old Dai script (Yin et al. 2011). However, compared to Chinese, these computer fonts were rather late developed which delayed the usage of Dai in multimedia communication (Liu 2011).

The reform from the old to the new Dai script can be seen as an example for failed language engineering programs in China with devastating consequences for the speaker community. Those who were literate in the old script became illiterate after the reforms when all publications shifted to New Dai. Learners of the new script, by contrast, where able to read the newly published works, but unable to read historical texts (Hansen 1999, p. 100). As Davis (2003, p. 191) puts it: "The new alphabet cuts a generation of [D]ais off from their centuries of written traditions." The reasons for this outcome have been interpreted differently. Zhou and Fang (2004) argue that the distance between government and speaker community prevented the government from grasping the communities' needs and wishes. Davis (2003), by contrast, doubts benevolent goals of language engineering altogether and argues that the reforms were politically motivated and that they aimed at driving Dai people away from both their religious traditions and from Dai speakers in neighboring countries. Whatever the motivations for the reform, for Dai tuition the reform created an additional burden. Learners can either invest time and effort to learn both the old and the new script or they can choose one script on the price that their reading and writing skills will be limited to either monastic writing in the case of

[171] The traditional version of Dai has been since then called "Old Dai Script" (老傣文) and the reformed one "New Dai Script" (新傣文).

[172] For a detailed linguistic description of the old and new Dai script see Zhou and Fang (2004). Compare also with Omniglott, http://www.omniglot.com/writing/tailue.htm and SEASite, Center for South East Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University http://www.seasite.niu.edu/tai/TaiLue/, last access for (2004) both Oct. 23, 2013.

[173] Zhang (2009) still writes in an article from 2009 that Xishuangbanna's media and education system uses mainly the old script but the author's data seems to have been outdated already at that time.

Old Dai or writing outside the monastery in the case of New Dai. The discussion in the next chapters will show that Dai tuition in schools goes the latter path: Dai education in Xishuangbanna's schools is exclusively conducted in New Dai and runs thus parallel to education in Old Dai at temples.

Language acquisition and proficiency

Despite the lack in accurate data on language skills of Xishuangbanna's population case studies indicates that Chinese proficiency and Dai proficiency among Xishuangbanna's population depends on speakers' place of residence, age, gender, and level of education.

Firstly, the place of residence correlates with the ability to speak Dai. Minority languages are more often spoken in rural areas, whereas Chinese proficiency is better developed in Xishuangbanna's urban areas.[174]

Secondly, the language competences differ between age groups. In Xue's (1999) study, for example, all elderly respondents spoke both Chinese and Dai, but many of the younger respondents spoke only Chinese. Concerning knowledge in written minority languages the differences are even greater. For example, the majority of Dai students in two of my case-study classes said that in their families the grandparents, but not their parents were able to read and write Dai (ST-12_2012-03-02; ST-11_2012-03-02). This gap in proficiency in Dai script is an outcome of the closure of monastic education during the Cultural Revolution. For skills in Chinese language the age factor is similarly relevant. Generally speaking, younger ethnic minority people speak better Chinese than the older generations. A principal said that teachers can easily communicate in Chinese with parents of the children in their class and grandparents under 60, but those above this age often lack Chinese skills (PR-11_2012-01-12). This can be explained by the differences in schooling opportunities, media exposure and migration patterns between the grandparent and the parent generation.

Thirdly, especially in writing skills in Dai language there is a gender gap in Dai knowledge among the older generations. Girls used to have fewer opportunities to learn Dai script since in principle only boys are eligible to achieve monastic education (Hansen 1999, p. 100). The recent decrease in monastic education in combination with gender-unspecific Dai education in schools (see below) is likely to narrow this gender gap.

[174] In the mentioned studies the category "urban" relates to the City of Jinghong, the County seats, and also the Township seats. The term "rural", by contrast, denotes to villages and townships. In the study by Zhao and Zhao (2010b; 2010a), for example only half of the surveyed Dai people in townships were able to speak Dai, whereas in the villages nearly everybody has fluent Dai skills.

Fourthly, the length of formal education relates positively to Chinese language skills, since formal school education emphasizes and trains Chinese. Oral and written proficiency in minority languages, however, is not that clearly related to the level of education, but rather depends on individual factors such as the question if the family used the respective language at home.

Additionally, there are large differences between the share of people who are able to speak minority languages and those who can read and write the Dai script. Among the Dai population observed by Zhao and Zhao (2010a) only a small percentage of the 15-30 year olds knew how to read and write Dai script; and even the skills of these were "medium" at the most. Additionally, the survey shows that competences to write Dai differ between localities. Firstly, Dai skills are generally a little higher among village population than among township population. Secondly, there are differences between the villages. In the survey by Zhao and Zhao (2010b; 2010a) more than 40 percent of the young population in some villages claimed to be fluent in Dai writing, whereas in other villages no-one was able to write Dai. Analysis of these cases shows that in those villages with high prevalence of knowledge in written Dai schools conducted at least at some point tuition in Dai. This indicates that not only the shape of a language or individual family decisions matter for language knowledge, but to a large degree also institutional settings of language learning at schools.

Non-Chinese children in Xishuangbanna acquire Chinese on the one side and minority languages on the other through very different channels. Chinese can be learnt through many channels: family, TV, peers, to name just a few. Formal education in Chinese language is successful in enhancing minority student's Chinese proficiency, which can be observed at schools easily. Kindergarten teachers told me that many ethnic non-Han children lack even basic Chinese skills at pre-school age, but after a few months the skills between Han and non-Han students equalize. A principal at one middle school said that after a few years one cannot even distinguish who is Han and who is minority just from listening when children speak Putonghua (PR-11_2012-01-12). Although there is a need for detailed long-time language surveys, and although official statistics in educational yearbooks and in school evaluations do not list exam results and student attainments by ethnicity,[175] the regular student exam grades that I collected during field visits and that I have analyzed in depth (see chapter 6) indicate that language skills equalize over the years. Where in younger classes in each class there are some non-Han

[175] One can speculate that the limited availability of data in Chinese official statistics on educational success by ethnicity is due to the political sensitivity of data that would show ethnic inequality.

students who reach only very low scores, their number reduces in higher grades, and finally there is hardly any difference between students of different ethnicity in "Chinese" (语文) exams. In contrast to findings from other regions in China, minority status and non-Chinese mother-tongues not necessarily lead to lower exam grades in Xishuangbanna.[176]

Learning of minority languages, by contrast, is much more limited and depends to higher degrees on the parents' will to speak minority languages at home or to teach the scripts to their children. Some speakers of minority languages choose to speak only Chinese to their children since they deem Chinese as more important for their children's future careers. For children of parents who do not speak any of the region's minority languages the chances to learn these languages informally through peers are extremely few. None of my Han student interview partners learnt Dai or Hani language beyond a few words without tuition at a formal course, even if their friends at school spoke these languages. This is of course not to say that it is impossible to learn these languages as a second language, but it rather indicates the importance of formal educational settings and societal support for learning languages. In formal education tuition in oral and written minority language proficiency is limited to very specific places. Only a small percentage of Xishuangbanna's population receives this tuition, as will be shown later. All three factors, the limited availability of formal tuition of minority languages, the deliberate decision by mother-tongue speakers against teaching minority languages and scripts to their children, and finally the lack in willingness to learn minority languages by non-mother-tongue speakers, may in future result in stagnation if not decrease in the numbers of speakers of minority languages in Xishuangbanna.

Language usage

The usability of a language domains, the "characteristic settings" in which a language is exclusively or predominantly used (Sebba 2011, p. 451), is an indicator of the degree of language endangerment, but it also indicates the motivations of speakers to use, learn, and teach a language. Research showed large differences of minority language usage between domains in China (Zhou 2003; Chen 2010; Teng, Wang 2011). In the following I will present findings on the usage of Xishuangbanna's languages, and especially the Dai language, in five broad fields of domains: within the family at home; for

[176] One explanation might be Xishuangbanna's ethnic minority population suffers much less from poverty than those in other regions of China, where poverty negatively effects educational attainments (Murphy 2007; Hannum, Adams 2009).

religious purposes; in literature and media; in public and for government and administration; for employment and migration.

At home and in communication between family members the choice of languages depends much on individual speakers' beliefs, abilities, and preferences. Although there is no large-scale survey on language choice among ethnic minorities in Xishuangbanna, existing small-n case studies (Wang 2001; Luo 2011, Zhao, Zhao 2010b, 2010a) suggest that Dai, Hani and the other languages are more often used in private than in public domains and more often to talk to family members than to strangers. In more detailed analysis, however, they also show that choice of language correlates with location of residence, age, and educational level. Generally, rural families and elderly people choose more often minority languages than Chinese. Children, however, speak often minority languages when they are young and shift gradually to Chinese until some hardly ever choose Dai to speak with friends (Zhang 2008).

In literature and media, minority languages are used in some classical media. Dai script was and still is most prominently used in the Buddhist palm leaf sutras[177], but minority languages were also popular in traditional oral literature, such as the song epics of the Dai, the so called "Zhangha" or "Zanha", performed by trained singers at festivals and ceremonies (Davis 2005). Both the oral and the written literature, although not read and understood by all, have a place in the collective memory of the communities, as most members of the communities know about their existence and partly about their content.

In modern media, however, the Chinese language is overwhelmingly dominant. The only existing books written in Dai script are textbooks and very few selections of folk stories, but apart from that bookstores in Jinghong and the county cities only present Chinese language literature. With the Dai edition of the Xishuangbanna Daily there is a daily newspaper written in non-Chinese script, but the number of readers of this paper is comparatively small.[178] More important in terms of audience are TV programs

[177] These are Buddhist texts on religious, on moral, and legal issues, and astronomy, nature, and so forth (Wang, Mi 1998, pp. 934–935). Written either on paper or on Palm leaf trees from the Asian Palmyra Palm (Borassus flabellifer), the so called "Palm-leaf classics" (贝叶经, see Gan, Wan 2009) build up a religious source and a historical point of reference in a tropical region with little archaeological remains. Although the bulk of these texts are stored away in museums, archives, and temples the cultural practices related to these texts still remain in ceremonies where priests and monks employ old palm leaf texts in their rituals. During my stay at an ethnic Bulang village in Menghai County I was invited to a healing ceremony, which included the writing of blessings from old palm leaf books onto Banana tree leaves.

[178] Its Dai language edition is the largest minority language paper in Yunnan and the only non-Chinese newspaper in Xishuangbanna, featuring since 1957 mainly translations of the Chinese edition (Liu 2011). However, with circulation numbers of 8,300 in 2009 (Zeng 2010) the paper reaches only few readers compared to the overall number of ethnic Dai in the region. The circulation numbers suffered from switches from the New Dai to the Old Dai and to the New Dai again (Zhou, Fang 2004), and from the limited distribution to villages (Zeng 2010). Creative solutions such as the establishment of "newspaper villages",

broadcasted on an hourly base in minority languages,[179] since nearly every household in Xishuangbanna owns a TV set.[180] However, as the overwhelmingly majority of programs, such as soap operas or documentaries, are in Chinese, viewers watch mostly Chinese language TV.[181] The radio program seems to be more vivid, and, as an anchor of the Hani program described, the radio station conducts several activities such as calling in for chats with the anchor, language trainings, and cultural activities such as exhibitions and celebrating local festivals (SO-06_2012-02-20). However, both TV and radio programs in minority languages have their largest audience among the elderly and it seems difficult to reach younger generations. In internet and mobile phone communication, however, minority languages are nearly absent. To my knowledge there is no Dai script input for SMS on mobile phones, and on the internet there are hardly any pages in Dai or Hani script, despite the existing computer fonts.[182] Taken together, minority languages play a specific role in consumption of media of classical and religious content, and in governmental broadcasting that combines language work with information and propaganda. In all new media, with the exception of some music in minority languages,[183] however, Chinese language dominates.

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where villagers order newspapers collectively, could not solve the program of outdated news at the time of delivery (Zeng 2010). The possibilities that the internet offers for instance to change between Old and New Dai, or the interaction with the readers through the Web 2.0 might offer new chances, as Yin et al. (2011) hope, but the villagers' lack of internet access on the one side and their lack of interest towards this paper's official news on the other side will continue to limit the circulation of the paper among Xishuangbanna's Dai speaking village population.

[179] Since 1955 one local TV station and one radio program reserve a few hours per week for programs for Dai and Hani language broadcasting (Daizuwang 2010), but not in the Prefectures' other minority languages (Parts of the Dai language program are sometimes also uploaded to websites, see e.g. http://www.zueiai.net/radio/yn/12.html). The programs feature mostly news in Dai and Hani language, read by a single anchor in a monotonous voice. Although some interview partners remembered to have seen movies or cartoons dubbed into minority languages, these seem to have been only short-lived experiments.

[180] In 2008 Xishuangbanna accomplished the goal that villagers in every village with more than 20 households are able to receive TV (Xishuangbanna Governmental Affairs Online 2009). The high attention of politicians to those very few people who cannot receive TV, an issue labeled "TV watching difficulties" (看电视难问题) (Xishuangbanna Bureau for Broadcasting and TV 2009) shows the importance that the government attaches to this medium of information and propaganda.

[181] Villages that are close to the national borders receive also TV and radio from the neighboring countries in Thai, Lao, and the languages of Myanmar. However, according to my observations the villagers watch these programs rather seldom. When I asked for the reasons for not watching foreign programs two of my interviewees said that the programs were not as interesting as the Chinese ones (OT-03_OT-04_2012-02-13).

[182] QQ, Weibo, Weixin, and other platforms that Chinese frequently use are all in Chinese and even those forums that deal specifically with Dai issues (e.g. the "Daizuwang", see http://daizuwang.com, last access 2013-09-17) use Chinese language for discussion. The only exceptions seem to be learning tools for Dai language, such as "Learn Dai script with me" (http://jh.xsbnedu.cn/bnjyjmcjy/Default.html, last access 2013-09-17), which was created by the local office for minority language work.

[183] My interview partners of non-Han ethnicity referred many times to songs and concerts in Dai, Hani, or Yi languages that they admired. The local DVD shops offered a selection of records in these languages. Although there was also some rock music in minority languages available most of this music was

In the public domain of administration Chinese language clearly dominates. Although minority languages are still much used at markets or within villages (e.g. village announcements by the village heads), the status of Dai language as lingua franca has been taken since long by the Chinese language (Cai 1997). Similarly, although Dai script can be found at street signs and shop signs, this high visibility of Dai script has only little effects of the actual use of Dai, partly because some of these signs are misspelled.[184] More importantly, however, is the fact that Dai and the other minority languages can hardly be used when citizens want to contact public administration. Although officials are encouraged to use minority languages in contact with citizens,[185] all documents are written only in Chinese, with a few exception, such as local village chronicles or public signage in museums.[186]

In the labor market minority languages are increasingly replaced by the requirement of Chinese proficiency. Although in some professions minority language skills are an asset, such as for cadre promotion,[187] and although there seems to be less open discrimination towards non-Chinese speaking job-applicants than in other regions of China[188] the requirement to prove Chinese proficiency in many high-qualification jobs

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conducted in what is branded all over China as minority music: happy rural non-Han population dressed in colorful costumes sing easy tunes about longing for love and nature.

[184] The prefectural and county governments of Xishuangbanna demand that all public institutions, but also shops and road signs feature both Chinese and Dai script (see e.g. Mengla County People's Government 8/5/2007; for example of street signs see also image in appendix). What gives the visitor the feeling of diversity is, however, hardly an indicator that minority scripts are really used in public or that they are treated equally with Chinese script. Not only are the Dai fonts often smaller than the Chinese characters, but often the translations are also wrong. A Dai scholar explained to me that while the Dai writings on the street signs are generally correct, since they were translated by governmental bureaus, the Dai script restaurants and shop signs are often misspelled because restaurant and shop owners, not knowing the rules of Dai script, often transcribe their shop names from Chinese into random Dai sounds instead of translating meanings correctly (SC-15_2012-03-23). Although internet users have offered to help with translations free of charge (see e.g. Baidu: http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/508675077.html, last access 2013-09-17) many of Xishuangbanna's Dai signs in public are still useless for Dai readers who would try to figure out what a shop or restaurant offers.

[185] Officially the policy that party cadres should learn minority languages aims at a better mutual understanding. On the example of a "mass incident" in Xishuangbanna, where local farmers demonstrated against corrupt cadres and expansion of state plantations in 2008, a county secretary in Xishuangbanna argues that a lack of mutual language understanding contributed to this incident (Wu 2011).

[186] The Xishuangbanna Ethnic Museum displays large texts also in Dai script, but the detailed tags are only in Chinese. Another example is the Xishuangbanna Tropical Garden where guides dressed in uniforms that resemble Dai costumes not only tour the visitors through the garden, but the program includes also learning the Dai words for "Hello, boy" and "Hello, girl". Apart from this pseudo-usage of Dai, all other work and public signage in the garden is, again, only in Chinese script.

[187] Although not a target of cadre evaluation per se, the ability to communicate with local population, as has been argued for example by Wu (2011), is central to obtain social stability and the avoidance of public protests, which in turn is one of the "hard targets" in cadre evaluation and promotion (Heberer, Trappel 2013).

[188] Jacobs (2013), for instance, reports in the New York Times a case from Kashgar where jobs were offered only to ethnic Han or to speakers of Chinese as first language. Job discrimination is a strong factor in ethnic unrest in Xinjiang and is also an issue for international investors. When Volkswagen planned to open

constitutes an institutionalized preferential treatment of Chinese language that begins with school exams (these will be discussed in detail below) and ends with exams for job entry. Not only do posts in government offices and posts for teachers require proficiency in Chinese[189] and application tests are only written in Chinese, but also job advertisement in private companies increasingly demand Chinese skills. Not least through the change of migration destinations from Thailand in the 90s and early 2000s to inner Chinese destinations of today[190] minority languages lost in the domain of the labor market clearly.

The last domain that shall be discussed here, the religious domain, is, by contrast, still largely dominated by minority languages, and in the case of Dai also by minority language scripts. Especially in Theravada Buddhism, Xishuangbanna's most prominent religion with most believers among the Dai and Bulang, Dai script plays a considerable role. Its main texts (sutras, epics etc.) are written in the classical Dai script (Wang, Mi 1998, p. 935), and reading and reciting these texts is a major element in the daily schedule of the monks (Wang, Mi 1998, p. 938). Furthermore, Dai script is used also in religious practices conducted outside the temples such as blessing ceremonies for new houses, healing ceremonies for the sick, and rituals performed at the case of births or deaths. Knowledgeable old people keep the books at home in order to copy the scripts once they are needed. Bridges, pavilions, and road crossings are often blessed with wood carvings in Dai script.

Language attitudes

Language attitudes - the "disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably" to one's own language or the language of others (Baker, Prys Jones 1998, p. 174) - determine the motivation to learn languages and the choice of languages, they shape the long-term outcomes of language programs in the educational sector and ultimately they also impact language status, language restoration, and language death. According to Edwards (2002) language attitudes can be distinguished into three components: affective

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a factory in Xinjiang, for example, there were demands by exile Uighur organizations and foreign parliamentarians towards Volkswagen to establish a quota system to guarantee hiring of ethnic Uyghurs and Kazakhs (Lee 2012).

[189] National regulations define the minimum language standards for teacher promotion, but local regulations can further define more demanding requirements. Different requirements are sometimes defined according to teachers' age and the subjects taught, but in general the requirements increasingly demand Chinese proficiency (Liu 2010, p. 27).

[190] At a village inhabited mostly by ethnic Bulang I was told that Bulang or Dai language skills were beneficial when in the 90s young people of this and other villages went for work to Thailand. However, due to the economic rise of China's industry and the Asian Financial Crisis migration from Xishuangbanna's villages to the factories of mainland China became more profitable in the 2000s, and today internal migration superseded migration to South-East Asia even in border villages, so that minority languages are not beneficial for migration anymore.

components as the feelings towards the aesthetics of a language and towards its speakers; cognitive elements as the beliefs about the value of a language for specific purposes; and behavioral elements, for example to use a language in specific situations or the decisions one makes to learn a language or to urge one's children to learn it. In the following paragraphs I will summarize findings of the research literature on the language attitudes of Xishuangbanna's speaker population in all three components.

Xishuangbanna's minority language speakers express large affection to the languages of "their" ethnic group and wish these languages to be protected. In Zhang's (2008) study, nearly all surveyed Dai respondents say that Dai language has some or much use and that they support the use of Dai language because they have a "deep affection" to this language. Similar to what has been found in other parts of China concerning minorities' affection toward ethnic languages (see e.g. Ma 2011b; Mueggler 2001), in their opinion mother-tongue language is a part of not only their own individual identity, but also of the identity of the ethnic group as a whole, in cross-border identity and cultural consumption. Davis' quote from an interview with a Chinese Dai monk who spoke about a song in Thai language exemplifies the appeal of Thai music to young Dai Chinese: "We like this song, because it is what our lives are really like. You never hear a song like this in Chinese" (Davis 2003, p. 197). In this respect, some Dai listeners' preferences of Dai or Thai over Chinese is based on both the language and the content of a music that they feel is more "localized" and fits better to their lives than Chinese music.

Affection towards Chinese language is very positive throughout Xishuangbanna's population, as it relates to images of cultural development. Many of my non-Han interview partners who considered their level of Chinese proficiency as low said that they lack Chinese proficiency because they "lack culture" (没有文化) which is, in their argumentation, due to their short time of having been in school. This perspective constructs a hierarchy of cultures and languages where Chinese culture and the language that represents this culture are seen as higher status. This perspective shows that the linguistic and cultural hegemony expressed through "civilizational projects" (Harrell 1995) is not only a perspective followed by the Han majority, but one that is taken over by minorities themselves.

The positive images of minority languages as providers of identity for ethnic groups on the one side and the perceived value of Chinese on the other side both find their expression in affection to learning languages. Similar to surveys conducted elsewhere in China where respondents in overwhelming majority stated their belief that learning minority languages and Chinese language are both good things (Teng 2002; Ma

2011b), Dai villagers in my non-representative interviews said that they think learning Dai is a benefit for their children (e.g. FA-05_2012-03-03; FA-06_2012-03-03). Interestingly, however, are the ethnic differences in the evaluation of the question of who should learn the respective languages. Minority languages are generally seen as belonging to non-Han groups. Ethnic Han, but also the minority people themselves consequently often wished that ethnic minority people become bilingual, but it was hardly ever expressed that Han should become bilingual as well.

In cognitive language attitudes people in Xishuangbanna are aware of the limited usability of minority languages in many domains. Some speakers of minority languages in Xishuangbanna (similar to other minority groups in China, see Teng, Wang 2011) perceive minority languages generally as useful within their own communities and to understand the history of the religion of an ethnic group,[191] but they are also very aware of the limits of usage of minority languages outside the family or village domain. Although in the 90s and early 2000s Dai language was helpful to find jobs in Thailand, this advantage diminished after Dai migrants saw the inner Chinese labor market as more profitable than the Thai labor market. With the shift from Dai to Chinese as Lingua Franca at the beginning of the People's Republic (Cai 1997) there are nowadays little incentives for Han to learn Dai anymore. For ethnic Han the aversion against obligations for their children to learn minority languages are even greater. In interviews Han parents expressed their anger that their children are obliged to learn Dai at school. Under the perspective that minority languages are a thing of ethnic minorities but nothing worth achieving for Han, tuition in minority languages and scripts for Han children means for many Han parents a waste of time – time, that would be better invested into learning Chinese.

Chinese language, by contrast, is perceived by probably all citizens of Xishuangbanna as the language of the official world, as requirement to gain jobs, and as the language of schooling and examination. Several ethnic minority parents who I interviewed and especially those who are teachers themselves spoke Chinese at home in order to help their children get acquainted to Chinese at an early stage. Some argued against teaching minority scripts to children by pointed to the already very high burden to study Chinese and English (e.g. FA-07_2012-03-04). Two young Hani language speakers formulated their aversion against learning the Hani script: "The ability to speak is enough.

[191] The colorfully illustrated descriptions of village histories written in Dai script on the walls of several Dai temples throughout Xishuangbanna are an example for the usage of Dai script in village memory. Young monks in a temple explained why they found these paintings and the writings important for their own identity: "Each of these paintings is a book. It shows where we came from and what our ancestors did. These paintings give all this from one generation to the next one" (MO-01_MO-02_2012-01-30).

Learning the script has no use. What could we do if we would learn this script?" (OT-03_OT-04_2012-02-13).

In their behavioral attitudes, finally, Xishuangbanna's speakers evaluate activities to promote and develop Xishuangbanna's minority languages differently. On the one side scholars have said that minority groups in Xishuangbanna actively promote their own languages and argue that this support derives from a wish for an alternative sub-culture in the shadow of the mainstream Chinese culture. Davis (2003), for example, writes about some cases where young Dai monks created Dai fonts for computer use and installed a print shop for leaflets and books in Dai language. Organizing and visiting concerts for music in minority languages are other options to "vote" for a stronger presence of minority languages in the public sphere. Creating internet pages concerning Dai or Hani language to discuss strategies to develop and protect mother-tongue languages[192] is another example for such language promotion activities from bottom-up. Furthermore, several ethnically defined organizations such as the Hani or the Dai research organizations also offer platforms for self-organized activities for language promotion.[193] Through financial ties, personnel overlaps between staff of the ethnic bureaucracy and the research organizations, and direct supervision and accountability these organizations are closely connected to the state, but voluntary engagement in these organizations can be interpreted also as an expression of individuals' wishes to promote Hani or Dai language. According to a leading member of the Hani Research Organization villagers often invite the organization's language teachers to their villages in order to conduct Hani script trainings (SO-06_2012-02-20). Although these classes did not evolve into larger movements and tuition was often merely short-timed these activities constitute examples where ethnic minority speakers became active to support their mother-tongue languages.

On the other side, speakers' activities to promote ethnic minority languages protection in Xishuangbanna apparently never went never beyond legal means. To my best knowledge there have never been demonstrations specifically on ethnic minority culture and languages in Xishuangbanna. Education in minority languages is only a minor issue in parents' demands to politics and schools, if it is an issue at all. All my interview partners reacted with incomprehension when I asked if they ever uttered demand for more minority languages towards state authorities. Teachers and principals similarly stated that parents do not approach them with demands for more minority language education in schools. Finally, and probably the most decisive factor for transmission of

[192] See for example http://tieba.baidu.com/p/1308660862, last access 2013-09-17.
[193] See: http://www.chinahani.com/newshow.asp?id=525, last access 2013-09-17.

minority languages in Xishuangbanna, parents and students here do not base their choice of schools on the languages taught there (see case study analysis in chapter 6).

Differently to what Yi (2008) describes in her study on school choice for Tibetan and Hui parents as a dilemma when they have to choose between Hui/Tibetan schools and Chinese schools, ethnicity poses hardly a dilemma for parents in Xishuangbanna. After intensive school mergers there are only very few schools with ethnically homogenous student populations left and these schools are generally village schools of lower educational quality. Those parents who send their children to local village schools do so because this is more convenient and not because they expect a more localized or specifically Dai or Hani curriculum. The choice to carry the burden to send children to schools far away for example in the county or prefecture seats was motivated mainly because of better educational chances. This shows that although minority people might wish for a protection of minority languages, not everybody is willing to see this in schools happing where it might influence the chances of one owns children for education, graduation, and at the job market.

Summarizing language attitudes and language usage among Xishuangbanna's speaker groups we can draw several conclusions. Firstly, there are strong differences between the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of language attitudes. Although ethnic minority respondents in my interviews and in those of other scholars often mentioned the value of minority languages for their own identity and that of their groups, only few could recollect any actions they undertook to secure that this language will be preserved.

Secondly, there are large differences in the attitudes towards the individual languages. Influenced by societal prejudices towards ethnic groups and by the status of the language in different domains Han, but also members of the ethnic minorities themselves, construct what Edwards (2002, p. 100) calls a "pyramid" of languages. The national standard Chinese and the slightly less prestigious Xishuangbanna dialect as not only as the carrier of national culture, but also as a prerequisite for social mobility and income improvements are on top of this pyramid, whereas minority languages are seen on a much lower position due to their limited use in various domains. Within the diverse minority languages there are further sub-differentiations that place Dai in top position, followed by the other minority languages. This relates to Dai's historical role as language of administration in pre-Republican times, to the belief that languages with a script are more valuable than those without, to the public promotion of Dai by the state, and, finally, to the socio-economic status of the respective ethnic group. This hierarchy is directly

reflected in knowledge about the language. Although not all my Dai interview partners, for example, knew how to read and write the Dai script, but nearly everybody knew of the existence of this script. Interviewed Hani speakers, by contrast, only seldom knew that there exists a script to express their mother-tongue.

The state contributes to constructing the "hierarchy" of languages according to perceived levels of development and "backwardness". Especially languages with a script are in this hierarchy seen as more developed than languages without scripts. Hansen (1999) analyzed in detail how teachers formulate this perspective when they lecture about the backwardness of minority groups that lack scripts and when they perceive civilization as script-based. This shows that language attitudes are not merely individual beliefs or aesthetic feelings, but are embedded in a variety of other factors, such as size and status of the language groups or political support by the state. Support by the state for Dai language, for instance, has resulted in a larger public visibility of this language compared to the other languages.

These configurations of language usage outside schools shape the success of bilingual language education programs. On the one side, bilingual education in Xishuangbanna can build up on the positive affective attitudes towards multilingual education and language preservation, especially concerning Dai language. On the other side, bilingual education in Xishuangbanna has to struggle with the limits of language usage to very specific domains, with a lack of in minority language media, and with the image of Chinese as the generally more useful and more modern language. These limits pose severe challenges to bilingual education programs at schools in Xishuangbanna. In the following sub-chapter I will analyze how formal minority language education reacts to these challenges.

5.2 Minority language school education in Xishuangbanna

Formal education[194] in minority languages in Xishuangbanna has a long tradition in monastic education, in adult education, and in school education. In this thesis I will focus on the third option, the school education, but before that a few words are in order on the other two modes of education.

Theravada Buddhist monastic education in Dai language has been a major source of learning in Xishuangbanna, similar to many other South East Asian Countries. Mostly ethnic Dai parents, but also ethnic Bulang parents send their male children from the age

[194] Baker (2006) distinguishes two types of language learning: informal language acquisition on the one side for example at home or through peers, and formal language education on the other side through instruction for instance in schools. Since informal language education has been mentioned already in the explanaitions on language use at home, I will focus here on the formal educational domain.

of seven to ten for several years to live at a local monastery, to become monks[195], and to receive an education that covers religious issues and also topics such as astronomy or medicine, and to lean Old Dai script to read sutras and other religious texts (Wang, Mi 1998). This type of education, it has been argued, not only reproduces Dai and Bulang culture, but the educational practices are also a part of Dai and Bulang culture itself (Luo 2011). Despite the current decrease in the number of young monks,[196] despite the limitation to old Dai, and despite the exclusion of girls and women,[197] this mode of Dai language education has been an alternative to (Chinese-based) school education[198] and it contributed to preserving and transmitting Dai script to next generations.

A second option to gain formal education especially in Dai script has been adult education, most prominently the so called "literacy classes"[199]. These classes, which have been installed all over China to reach locally determined quotas of literacy in Chinese, have been held in Xishuangbanna also on Dai script, and in experiments also on Hani script.[200] However, despite the officially announced success of literacy classes in both

[195] Xishuangbanna Theravada Buddhist clerics are distinguished in a locally diverse system. Translating the categories provided by Wang and Mi (1998, p. 932) clerics ranks are "Small Monks" (小和尚, young monks of child age who just come into the temples), "Big Monks" (大和尚, elderly monks with responsibility to care for the younger ones) and finally the "Buddhist Grandfathers" (佛爷, leaders in the temples). Ranks are obtained by duration at temples and by exams. In general "Small monks" study in classes, whereas clerics of the rank "Big Monks" and "Grand Buddha" study by themselves. Since clerics of both latter ranks regularly teach the younger monks, I refer to them as "senior monks" in contrast to young student monks who I refer to as "junior monks".

[196] The number of boy monks decreased in the last years steadily. After temple education reached a peak in 1991 when 6092 monk students were registered inside and outside schools, the numbers decreased year by year and in 2005 (the lasts available figure) merely 3185 boy monks were at temples. This decrease could be interpreted by a general decreasing interest in religion, but the recent rise of newly build temples and religious activities in Dai and Bulang villages contradict this hypothesis. A better explanation seems to be the double burden by schooling and temple education that Luo (2011) describes in detail. Student monks regularly encounter conflicts between using their time to do the regular homework and exam preparation on the one side and studying Dai script and religious texts on the other side. In light of this conflict lower numbers of monk students can also indicate that Dai parents more and more seek to avoid this double burden for their children.

[197] The general rule is that only boys are eligible to become novices in Dai and Bulang temples (Hansen 1999), but senior monks may also admit girls to the classes. Several of my female interview partners mentioned that they joined their male friends to Dai temple classes in young ages. Other women who today are able to read and write Dai said that they learned Dai script from their fathers. This mode of family-based tuition was and still is a mode of securing cultural transmission in families without male offspring.

[198] Temple education constituted an educational option even before the first public schools were introduced to the region (Wang, Mi 1998). In the years after the "liberation" of Xishuangbanna in 1953 temple education existed parallel to the regular education. During the Cultural Revolution monks often had to resign from religious life and many had to flee the country (Hansen 1999), but villagers mentioned also that even at that time some monks continued to teach Dai script, although in a less formal and less publically visible way.

[199] The official term is 扫盲班 which can be literally translated as "classes for eradicating illiteracy".

[200] In Xishuangbanna Hani script was only used once in 1995 in the literacy classes programs for roughly 4 percent of the learners enrolled in that year (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 191). The fate of Hani script in literacy programs is similar to that of the other scripts that were created in the 50s

raising the numbers of literates in Xishuangbanna the share of Dai in these classes has been steadily reduced in the last decades,[201] and since 1999 they do not include minority scripts anymore. Instead, the government has stipulated that also those adults who are literate in Dai script need to attend Chinese literacy classes (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b; Wang 2001).

In addition to these "literacy classes", but not exclusively targeting Chinese-illiterate population, both Xishuangbanna's minority language associations and individual speakers organized minority script classes. The Xishuangbanna Hani research organization, for instance, occasionally runs Hani script tuition classes on invitation by local speaker communities who offer for example board and lodging for the instructors. In these cases staff from the government-funded broadcasting department, the Hani research organization (a state-controlled civil society organization funded through member contributions), and local members of the speaker community worked together in order to promote Hani script (SO-06_2012-02-20). Dai teachers mentioned in interviews privately organized classes that they have conducted on villagers' requests, but they also said that these classes terminated after a few months due to a lack of students. Although at this point I am unable to evaluate the spread of such individual and private classes, these examples indicate an interest of the population in minority languages that, nevertheless, only seldom translates into demand for classes.

In this chapter, however, I discuss the third field of education in minority languages in Xishuangbanna, the school education. This field differs from the two former mentioned fields by the forced character of education for children at schools, by the large scope of school education that reaches every child in a given locality, and by the

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and that were hardly any more used in the new century (Teng, Wang 2011). Due to the limited usability of the new scripts in society, but also due to its "experimental status" (see above) even in Honghe Prefecture, an officially designated "Hani Autonomous Prefecture" Hani script was reduced greatly for literacy classes since the beginning of the new century (Ma 2011b).

[201] Governmental statistics claim that these classes have been a great success, since more than one hundred thousand people learned basic skills in reading and writing, and the official illiteracy rate has been reduced from 32.53 percent in 1982 to 0.64 percent in 2005 (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 191), but sometimes former students of these classes disagree with this claim by arguing that the classes have not made them literate in the scripts. In my interviews, many elderly people described themselves still as "illiterate" despite class visits. They argued that their own school visit was too short and too long ago and that literacy classes were too superficial, so that now they are unable to read and write sufficiently. Due to limited practice in writing and reading after the programs finished the rate of those who underwent illiteracy-eradication programs, but who afterwards again fell into illiteracy is high among Xishuangbanna's rural minority population (Wang 2001). However, as the official statistics excluded these people from their numbers of illiterates, there is a gap between the official story of nearly complete eradication of illiteracy in Xishuangbanna and the actually limited success of these programs. Definitions of illiteracy vary even between the regular census surveys of different years (Huang 2009). The educational yearbooks count everyone who went through at least four years of formal schooling or who knows more than 500 Chinese characters as literate (Wang 2001, p. 237).

overarching presence of the state in the organization and design of content and tuition. Policies have tremendous effects on the outcomes of education in minority languages in Xishuangbanna, as they define the goals and the means of tuition.

In order to lay the ground for the discussion on the policy implementation at my case study schools I will in this section outline the policy instruments for ethnic minority language education that reach schools. For this endeavor I will firstly provide a brief overview on the main actors in government agencies and social organizations, before in the second part I will discuss in depth the policy instruments that these agencies employ to promote minority language education at schools in Xishuangbanna.

5.2.1 Governmental and social organizations as policy makers

In chapter 4 it has been outlined that governmental agencies, and to lesser degrees also social organizations, are major formulators and makers of ethnic minority language policies in China and that structures of ethnic policy making, such as the administrative divisions and the ethnic autonomy approach to policy making, also apply to ethnic minority language education policies. In this section I will provide a dense overview on the specific agencies in Xishuangbanna, followed by a short presentation of selected social organizations that are active in the field of ethnic minority language education here. In the final paragraphs of this section I will discuss differences of interests within these agencies and organizations in order to understand the policies and instruments that these agencies and organizations create. As I focus in this chapter specifically on policy instruments I will not discuss the process of policy formulation and the influence of parents and other social actors on this process.[202]

Government agencies

As has been elaborated in chapter 4 the nationalities administration and the educational administration are the main executive agencies for minority language education in China. Both have offices from the national level to the city/county level in Xishuangbanna (see Table 11).[203]

[202] Concerning parents shaping language policies through school choice and other actions see the remarks on behavioral language attitudes by ethnic minority speakers in Xishuangbanna above.

[203] According to my interview partners, minority language education has never been organized by the townships (OF-01_2011-12-05; OF-01_2011-12-21; OF-08_OF-09_2012-02-07).

	Education	Ethnic Affairs
National level: China	Ministry of Education (MOE, formerly State Education Commission): 'Department of Minority Education' 教育部: 民族教育司[204]	State Ethnic Affairs Commission: Department for Education and Research: Office for Ethnic Languages and State Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature 国家民族事务委员会 (国家民委委)：教育科技司：民族语语文处 and 少 数民族语文指导工作委员会办公室 (国家民语委) [205]
Provincial level: Yunnan	Yunnan Bureau of Education: Office of Ethnic Education 云南省教育厅：民族教育处[206]	Yunnan Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission: Department of Education and Science and Yunnan Provincial Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature 云南省民族事务委员会 (省民委):教育科技处[207]; 云南省少数民族语文指导工作委员会办公公室 (省民语委)[208]
Prefecture level: Xishuang-banna	Xishuangbanna Prefecture Bureau of Education: Division of Ethnic Education: Bureau of Translation and Editing of Chinese-Ethnic Teaching Materials 西双版纳傣族自治州教育局：民族教育科, 民汉教材编译办公室[209]	Xishuangbanna Prefecture Bureau of Ethnic Affairs: Ethnic Division 西双版纳傣族自治州民族宗宗教事务局:民族科[210]
City or County level: Jinghong, Mengla, Menghai	Menghai County Bureau of Education: Office of Teaching and Science 勐海县教育局：教科室[211,] Mengla County Bureau of Education: Office of Teaching and Research 勐腊县教育局 ：教研室室[212] Jinghong City Bureau of Education: Office of Teaching and Research 景洪市教育局：教研室[213]	Menghai County Bureau of Ethnic Affairs 勐海县民族宗教事务局[214] Mengla County Bureau of Ethnic Affairs 勐腊县民族宗教事务局[215] Jinghong City Bureau of Ethnic Affairs 景洪市民族宗教事务局 [216]

Table 11: Government departments on education in minority languages from national to County level.

Although the Ministry of Education at the National level is on top position in the "kuai" relation of the educational line it does not organize programs for minority language education directly, so that the Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Education is the highest authority that organizes programs for minority language education that also cover Xishuangbanna. The Yunnan Bureau of Education established an Office of Ethnic Education that is increasingly engaged with publishing minority language textbooks,

[204] http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/A09/index.html, all last access July 1st, 2014.

[205] http://jykjs.seac.gov.cn/

[206] http://www.ynjy.cn/chn201004071054442/

[207] http://www.ynethnic.gov.cn/Item/24.aspx

[208] http://www.ynethnic.gov.cn/Item/7.aspx

[209] http://www.xsbnedu.cn/CotePage/JyjJG.aspx

[210] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model60/newsview.aspx?id=1489330

[211] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model38/newslist.aspx?classid=109920

[212] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model1/newsview.aspx?id=1421220

[213] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model3/newsview.aspx?id=1353717

[214] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model12/default.aspx?departmentid=9121

[215] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model12/default.aspx?departmentid=9204

[216] http://xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model1/default.aspx?departmentid=9003

running model programs at schools, and organizing in-service training for minority language teachers (OF-13_2012-03-23).[217]

The Prefecture Bureau of Education is arguably the most relevant governmental departments for minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Since 2008 it has a specific department for bilingual education, the so called Bureau of Translation and Editing of Chinese-Ethnic Teaching Materials. Staffed with three officers and an irregular budget that ranged in the last years between 300,000 and one million RMB this department has three tasks: translating and editing textbooks, organizing teacher trainings, and conducting research programs (OF-01_2011-12-05).

On county level minority language education has a less prominent position within the educational administration. The county-level city Jinghong has one officer specifically for minority language education, but at the County Bureaus of Education in Menghai and Mengla minority language education is administered by officers of other departments, for example by the research department (OF-07_2012-01-11; OF-08_OF-09_2012-02-07). In the 90s and early 2000s under the auspices of the then-vice head of the County Bureau of Education the Menghai Bureau of Education was very active in hiring teachers and publishing textbooks for minority language education. In 2008, however, the Prefecture Bureau of Education established the mentioned department and the county programs were severely decreased in scope.

As has been said in chapter 4 the share of responsibilities between government departments is in theory determined by top-down hierarchies, but inter-departmental bargaining also plays a role. In Yunnan, for example, the Department of Education and Science and the Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature under the Yunnan Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission used to run a program for language education in minority languages. In 2000, however, the Ministry of Education took over this program. A responsible officer (OF-12_2012-03-23) explained this shift in the following words: “Our department should not be responsible for guiding activities. We are not the Bureau of Education. We just wanted to test the outcomes of bilingual education in nationalities regions.” After the experiments showed promising results the Bureau of Education took over. In this example the Committee used the unclear delineation of responsibilities to run experiments in order to set the agenda for bilingual

[217] A review of Yunnan's Educational Yearbooks from 1986 until 2012 illustrates this. The yearbooks recollect the major activities of the Bureau for each year. Before 2005 the yearbooks do not specify activities on education in minority languages, from 2006 to 2010 the yearbooks merely shortly report on textbook approvals, but from 2010 onwards they report in special chapters on minority languages including remarks on conferences, program funding, teacher trainings, and research activities.

education. By proving beneficial outcomes for overall educational success, a factor that is very important for the Bureau of Education, the Committee was able to bring forward its own agenda, namely the promotion, transmission, and tuition of minority languages. After 2000 the Committee changed its role from the provider of bilingual programs to advisory services for the Bureau of Education. Although funding responsibility shifted to the Bureau of Education today the Ethnic Affairs Administration still has large influences on the program, for example when the Bureau of Education relies on their expertise in choosing schools for program implementation.

Social organizations

Several social organizations (e.g. Project Hope[218] or METRU [219]) have been active in providing general educational services at state-run schools in Xishuangbanna, such as providing textbooks or erecting school buildings. Organizations also engaged in funding and organizing projects to change curriculum and teaching methods, which sometimes includes minority language projects. The US-based NGO SIL runs a project for Dai language education at five schools in Xishuangbanna since 2005.[220] This project installed a completely new curriculum of Dai teaching at these schools (an all-Dai head-start in pre-school), new teaching methods (student-based project work), and the development of new teaching materials by the teachers. Similarly, the Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge (CBIK) [221] introduced new methods and contents to one Hani village school when it sent textbooks on Hani culture to that school and trained some of the school's teachers in methods that encourage students to explore their own village. Other projects merely aimed at installing one specific subject at a school. The "School-based Curriculum Development Project" run by scholars from Beijing's Minzu University[222] supported the teachers of one middle school in Jinghong to write and print a school-based textbook on Xishuangbanna's geography and culture that became the basis of a two-hour class on local culture for students of that school. Finally, there are companies and individuals who donated money to erect school buildings or to purchase books for school libraries, but none of this aimed at specifically providing education in

[218] See http://www.ynprojecthope.org, last access 17 Dec, 2013.

[219] See http://www.bnjhjx.cn/Content.aspx?xk=26, last access 17 Dec, 2013.

[220] See http://www.eastasiagroup.net/, last access 17 Dec, 2013 and Yunnan Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission (no date).

[221] See http://www.cbik.org/, last access 17 Dec, 2013.

[222] See Editorial Board of "Yunnan Province Jinghong City Menghan Township Middle School School-Based Textbook" (2009).

minority languages.[223] Of these projects only the NGO SIL focuses on education in minority languages in schools, whereas the other mentioned projects often recognize the language-related difficulties of minority students, but answered this with providing additional tools to learn Chinese faster.

Although diverse in content these projects also share several similarities. Some goals of these social organizations overlap, such as raising students' attainments in all subjects or raising knowledge of local culture. Furthermore, all mentioned educational social organizations focus on specific schools rather than providing educational materials for all schools via the Educational Bureaus. Instead of long-time and wide-spread engagements they choose to set examples and conduct experiments in close cooperation with state agencies. None of the projects described here runs projects with private schools or with private kindergartens.

On the other side, the work of social organizations differs between work inside and outside the educational administration system. "Ethnic research organizations" don't conduct projects on minority education within schools, but instead outside the school realm. The Hani Research Organization, for example, regularly conducts trainings in Hani script. However, these activities are not directed towards school children, but to the whole population. Beyond letting the Hani Research Organization use the school building for their evening classes, there have been no attempts to transform these classes into a regular subject for students (SO-06_2012-02-20). The mentioned division between the "ethnic line" and the "educational line" in both government agencies and social organizations seems to constitute a certain barrier for cooperation between organizations working in either of these fields.

There is another type of organizations that provide education in minority languages in Xishuangbanna: religious organizations. Dai Buddhist organizations, temples, and the Theravada Institute for Dai Studies all conduct education in Dai language. However, religious organizations are required to keep a distance to school education. Due to a strict ban of religious education at regular schools monks who are knowledgeable in Dai script are not allowed to teach at regular schools and the Buddhist organizations similarly cannot run Dai educational programs there. Although policy slogans such as "Let Chinese education enter the temple, let Dai language education enter the classroom" suggest the sharing of policy implementation between temples and schools at equal terms, this relation is in reality very unequal. Senior monks are requested to guarantee

[223] This approach to focus on school infrastructure, but not on ethnically specific content has been also observed in other cases in China where ethnic minority entrepreneurs have donated for educational purposes for the local communities (see example reported by Heberer (2007, p. 158)).

that novices at the age of compulsory schooling visit schools. Long school days and, in the case of centralized boarding schools, the requirements to stay at school overnight reduce the time of tuition at temples (Luo 2011).

Policy goals

Officers at the relevant agencies[224] describe themselves as executives of higher level policies and their work as depending of requirements from upper levels. One officer put this simple: "When upper levels require us to do so, we in lower levels do it" (OF-07_2012-01-11). Another official said:

> "The question if Mengla and Menghai conduct bilingual education depends on how much importance the Bureaus of Education attaches to it. If they take it seriously we can run bilingual education, but if they don't we have to slow down" (OF-01_2011-12-21).

In contrast, they describe their work also as responsible towards the people and they say that their own work should benefit the population. One officer said "If you want to serve the people it is good to understand their language" (OF-07_2012-01-11). Another officer said that conducting bilingual education needs to be in line with the "masses": "If the masses request bilingual education we can conduct it, but if they don't need it we can postpone it" (OF-01_2011-12-21).

In their descriptions of policy goals officials at the government agencies differ according to their position in the educational or ethnic administration. Those officers in the Bureaus for Education who are concerned with the overall educational situation in the region see bilingual education as a tool to learn Chinese. In an official publication the Research Department of the Educational Bureau of Xishuangbanna described the goal of bilingual education as "increasing the efficiency of ethnic minority students' learning Chinese and other subjects" (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 216). Those officers, however, who work specifically in the field of minority language education, argue differently. One officer at the office for bilingual textbook translation at the prefecture level said that minority language education has three goals: firstly, "to train the learning interests of ethnic children," second "to rise the quality of their education, including Chinese learning and civilizational qualities", and thirdly "to propagate ethnic culture." (OF-01_2011-12-05). Similarly, an officer at a county Bureau for Education responsible for

[224] In addition to their professional position officers' interests are without question also defined by individual beliefs and identities. One officer at a County Bureau of Education, for instance, referred to his personal interests with the words: "I am Dai; I want to pass the spirit of this culture to the future" (OF-08_OF-09_2012-02-07). However, as in this part of this text I am interested rather in the actions of the agencies as corporate actors, I will not discuss personal identities and interests of individual actors here, but will refer to chapter 6 where I will discuss these issues in detail on the example of identities and beliefs of implementers at school level.

bilingual education described the goals of bilingual education as specifically cultural-related: “We need to protect the culture of the ethnic group. We need to emphasize that there is a crisis” (OF-08_OF-09_2012-02-07). Another official responsible for bilingual education connected bilingual education with the spread of cultural traditions when she said:

> “We not only teach the script, but also the culture. [Apart from language education] there is another thing: We ethnic people have many traditions, and we also have many music instruments. If we gain the financial means we want to pass these traditions through the teachers to the students” (OF-07_2012-01-11).

These multiple interests connected with bilingual education can also be found in the argumentation of social organizations. In a project description the NGO SIL refers to the goals of Dai-Chinese bilingual education in Xishuangbanna as “an important tool that students can use in their transition to the educational system in the national language”, but on the other side the organization also refers to the threats for Dai culture provided by social development. They describe their Dai bilingual project in Xishuangbanna as “to let students successfully adapt to the Chinese language educational system without sacrificing their Dai ethnic identity” (SIL - East Asia Group 2010, p. 1).

In sum, policy goals described here are multiple and both governments and social organizations combine several arguments into legitimizing policy interventions at schools. In their arguments governmental and social organizations do not differ much, but there are differences in argumentation between the individual bureaus in the agencies. Officers in the Bureaus of Education who work in basic education or education research are generally more concerned with success in Chinese education, whereas officers in the bureaus for bilingual education and at the Ethnic Affairs Commissions argue more with the need for protection of cultural and linguistic diversity.

5.2.2 Policy instruments and tuition

In the following paragraphs I will provide an overview of the main instruments that the province, prefecture, and county governments choose to promote the tuition of minority languages at schools in Xishuangbanna. Applying the distinction outlined in the theory chapter of four types of instruments to the analysis of minority language education policies, I will present in short overviews the following items: regulations (authoritative type of instruments); funding (financial type); experimental model development, textbook publishing, school model programs, staff development, and student assignment (organizational type); and research and evaluation (information-based type). In a conclusion I will summarize the outcomes of these instruments for

individual types of minority language education models in Xishuangbanna. The question of how schools use and alter these tools will be discussed in a later chapter.

Regulations

Regulations on education in minority languages are authoritative instruments that prescribe the usage of languages or that guarantee the right to use languages, but they are also instruments to organize responsibilities for organizational tools, such as provision of education materials. In addition to the national laws and regulations discussed in chapter 4 the province, prefecture, and city/county level have also promulgated regulations (see Table 12). Due to the line hierarchy regulations are in most areas congruent with those at the next higher level. However, at the same time, local regulations are also a chance for local governments and for individual officers to set own agendas. The "Opinion on the Further Strengthening of Bilingual Education Work in Primary and Middle Schools in Areas Inhabited by Ethnic Minorities" by the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education, for example, was drafted by a team composed of the officers for bilingual education and bilingual teachers, which might explain its richness in details.

Administrative level	**Promulgated by**	**Year (latest revision)**	**Title in English**	**Title in Chinese**
Yunnan Province	Yunnan People's Congress	2013	Yunnan Province Regulations on Work on Ethnic Minority Script[225]	云南省少数民族语言文字工作条例
	Yunnan People's Congress	2013	Yunnan Province Regulation on the Promotion of Ethnic Minority Education[226]	云南省少数民族教育促进条例
	Yunnan Bureau of Education	2010	Yunnan Province Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020[227]	云南省中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要, 2010-2020
Xishuangbanna Prefecture	Xishuangbanna People's Congress	1993 (under revision)	Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture Regulation on Ethnic Education[228]	西双版纳傣族自制州民族教育条例
	Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education	2009	Opinion on the Further Strengthening of Bilingual Education Work in Primary and Middle Schools in Areas Inhabited by Ethnic Minorities[229]	关于进一步加强少数民族聚居区中小学双语教育工作的意见
	Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education	2010	Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020[230]	西双版纳傣族自治州中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要, 2010-2020
Jinghong City, Menghai County, Mengla County (selection)	Mengla Bureau of Education	2009	Mengla County Development Plan on Bilingual Education, 2009-2015[231]	勐腊县双语教学工作发展规划, 2009-2015

[225] See Yunnan Province People's Congress 5/1/2013
[226] See Yunnan Province People's Congress 10/1/2013
[227] See Yunnan Educational Bureau 2010
[228] See Xishuangbanna Prefecture People's Congress 3/21/1993
[229] See Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2009
[230] See Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2011
[231] See Mengla Bureau of Education 2009

Table 12: Recent legislation to promote education in minority languages at schools in Yunnan and Xishuangbanna (compare also with Table 5 on national laws and policy documents in chapter 4; for annotated table see appendix). Note: Included are documents that are titled as laws, plans, opinions, and regulations. So called "administrative measures" (办法; 管理办法) will be documented under the respective paragraphs on individual instruments, such as textbook approval or teacher employment.

The regulations on minority language education deliver justifications that minority language education is necessary as a tool for the protection of cultural rights and as a tool to raise educational achievements of minority students. All regulations state that minority language education should be developed, but at the same time they also state that Chinese language education should be spread. None of the plans and regulations elaborates on the possible contradictions between both demands.

The regulations also provide lists of measures that governments are supposed to take in order to support minority language education. Besides the general call to adjust the curriculum to local needs, all regulations mention publishing bilingual textbooks, organizing teacher trainings, and conducting research on bilingual education. Regulations at province, prefecture, and county level additionally call to construct a teacher evaluation system that establishes financial benefits for bilingual teachers and they call to establish model schools. The proposals by the Xishuangbanna Prefecture Bureau of Education and the Mengla County Bureau of Education (see for all sources footnotes to Table 12) define models for minority language education in specific grades and even determine the number of schools that are scheduled to implement these models. These proposals favor Dai language education strongly over education in Xishuangbanna's other minority languages when they propose intensive Dai studies during diverse school grades, but schedule the other languages merely as auxiliary tool in the regular classes. Finally, the Yunnan Province Regulation on Minority Education and the corresponding Xishuangbanna regulation both demand that Educational Bureaus establish fixed budgets for bilingual education out of the Compulsory Education Budget.

In contrast to all major subjects taught at China's schools Xishuangbanna's minority language education lacks curriculum plans that would specify educational goals, timing, and exit criteria.[232] Individual language programs, similar to other such projects in China,[233] developed school-based guidelines for teaching hours, scheduling, and methods (see for instance the "Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental program" discussed below), but none of Xishuangbanna's government agencies promulgated such guidelines so far.

[232] A few local governments in China established such regulations also for minority language education, see for instance Xinjiang's "Trial Scheme for Curriculum Settings of Bilingual Education during Compulsory Education Stage" as discussed in Fang (2010, pp. 168–173).

[233] See for instance the projects described in Cobbey (2007) and in Zhou (2012c).

The regulations are limited in their effects on policies. Most of these regulations contain only extremely vague statements and choose terms such as “strengthen” or “deepen” without offering details on instruments or outcome measurements. Mostly they refrain from attributing measures to distinguished agencies and instead we find constructions such as “teacher trainings should be installed” or “textbooks are to be printed”. The value of legislation on minority language education in Xishuangbanna is rather as a provider of “vocabulary” for application and guidance for lower-level administration.

In sum, there is still a large lack in regulations concerning the curriculum, teacher benefits, and evaluations in Yunnan and Xishuangbanna. Although especially the more recent regulations of the last few years from province down to county government established already the official vocabulary and the justifications for minority language education officers in the Bureaus still wait for the second step of detailed instrument regulations. This lack has severe consequences for policies. On the one hand, it creates barriers for the stability of minority language education when teaching plans, teacher employment, and textbook production all depend on the unstable support by local governments and individual cadres. As responsible officers in the Bureaus of Education told me this lack of stability prevents them from enlarging language education programs, since they cannot guarantee funding even for the next year (OF-01_2011-12-05; OF-01_2013-05-03; OF-07_2012-01-11). For schools the lack of regulations similarly means that neither school principals nor teachers can expect stability of minority language programs.

Funding

Although there is a lack in accurate statistics on the funding of minority language education[234] funds for bilingual education in Xishuangbanna seem to stem in majority from diverse governmental and non-governmental agencies, but not from private sources. According to officers at the educational bureaus, Yunnan’s annual budget for bilingual education amounts currently to 20 Million RMB (10 Million provided by the Central Government and 10 Million by the Yunnan Provincial Government), of which an

[234] Many scholars (e.g. Zhang 2011b) lament that the funds for bilingual education throughout China are insufficient, although nobody knows the actual sum of funds on national level. This lack in data is partly due to the diversity of government levels that contribute to these funds, so that studies can provide only local insight. Moreover, and this counts even for local studies, the existing data is far from being accurate. Case study literature on bilingual education in China regularly remains silent when it comes to actual figures of funds. My interview partners, similarly, were extremely reluctant to provide detailed data. Although some respondents referred to allocated sums none of them was able or willing to provide detailed accounts of expenses, which might be due to their perception that figures concerning ethnic minorities are too sensitive for publication. In any case, this lack of accurate and detailed data prevents comparisons between regions and over time.

unspecified amount supports projects in Xishuangbanna (OF-13_2012-03-23).[235] The Xishuangbanna government allocated independently from these funds 300,000 RMB in 2010 and 500,000 to 600,000 RMB in 2011 for bilingual education purposes; and the city of Jinghong similarly allocated additional funds for teacher trainings (OF-01_2011-12). The county governments, by contrast, do not allocate specific bilingual education funds. One officer in a county Bureau argued that there was no need for county budgets since the prefecture already conducts bilingual education work: "If they organize this, we don't need to. We are united" (OF-07_2012-01-11).

Furthermore, there are contributions by social organizations and individuals. The international language NGO SIL provided funds to organize projects in two regions in Yunnan, one of them Xishuangbanna. The newly started "Zero Barrier" project (see below) will be equipped with one million RMB yearly. Companies from other regions in China as well as local individuals contributed donations for school infrastructure, such as materials for a museum room and a small library with approximately 200 volumes of books on Dai culture and language at a primary school in Mengzhe Township. To my knowledge there are no donations by government departments of other provinces specifically for bilingual education in Yunnan or Xishuangbanna.[236] Finally, schools can also use revenues from fee collection in attached kindergartens and from using school-owned land.[237]

These funds are used for four kinds of activities: teacher trainings (at province, prefecture, and city/county level); editing, printing, approving, and delivering textbooks (province and prefecture level); provision of school infrastructure, for example computers, cameras, and TV sets; and finally activities for research and information on bilingual education, such as inspection tours or conferences. The funds are not used for teacher salaries, since minority language teachers are paid regular salaries through the counties' departments of human resources. An additional financial benefit for bilingual teachers to

[235] Until the year 2000 the Yunnan Provincial Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature of the Ethnic Affairs Committee contributed also own funds to run language projects at schools, but later funding responsibility was transferred to the Bureau of Education.

[236] Interprovincial donations especially for bilingual education have been reported from other localities. The Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, for example, donated in 2011 2.5 million RMB to install bilingual teacher competitions in Kashgar, Xinjiang (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission 2012).

[237] Principals' willingness to use these school-generated funds to support minority language activities varies extremely. In Cobbey's (2007) survey some principals indicated a commitment to use own funds for minority language project, but those principals who I interviewed have been much more critical towards this issue (see discussion below).

reward their higher workloads was paid only until the late 80s, but was meanwhile abolished.[238]

The data on funding leads to two conclusions. Firstly, the claim that insufficient funds hinder the development of bilingual education can be only substantiated by analyzing the actual needs of schools, teachers, and students. The accumulated statistics are too broad to allow distinguishing individual funding lacks, and there is a lack of data on the current usage of funds at school level. Secondly, and this seems to be the most pressing issue for my respondents in the bilingual education offices, the amount of funds changes from year to year. None of the fixed budgets for education analyzed here contained long-term commitments to bilingual education work, but instead both the budget and the number of staff in the respective offices are negotiated each year anew. One of the main demands in the "Yunnan Province Regulation on the Promotion of Ethnic Minority Education" from 2013 is hence that funding for bilingual textbooks both on the nationally unified and the local curriculum should derive from the budget for compulsory education rather than from instable project funds. It remains to be seen if decision makers on budgets will listen to that demand.

School programs

Minority language education in Xishuangbanna is - similarly to the mentioned trends in China (see chapter 4) - conducted mostly in pre-school and elementary school level, but hardly ever at secondary and tertiary education level (see Table 13). Official statistics claim that in 2005 minority language education was conducted at 264 elementary schools in Xishuangbanna either orally or literacy-based (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b). At kindergarten level, the mushrooming of kindergartens (see chapter 3) did not lead to a similar increase in minority language education. Until 2013 there was only one kindergarten (the Jiguan kindergarten) in Xishuangbanna Prefecture that experimented officially with Dai language education, and for late 2013 the Minzu Kindergarten was scheduled to participate as well. Both kindergartens are public kindergartens, whereas none of the private kindergartens in Xishuangbanna offered any tuition in minority languages.[239] Middle schools similarly seldom offer education in minority language education. In 2012 there were only two such middle schools in the

[238] This refusal to pay additional rewards is in contrast to practices in other Chinese regions, for instance Xinjiang, where the government pays an additional benefit of 400 to 600 RMB per month and a "settlement allowance" of 3,000 RMB directly to each bilingual teacher (Ma 2009, p. 213).

[239] Public kindergartens are here defined as not-for-profit institutions that are organized and funded at least partially by the state and that are only allowed to levy study fees based on regulations. Private kindergartens, by contrast, are for-profit institutions that are privately owned and that can determine study fees by themselves.

prefecture, both in Menghai County, as remains of a program from 2008 of Dai education at eight schools.[240] At college level, finally, education is conducted generally only in Chinese. There are, however, a few options for Dai studies in Xishuangbanna. At Xishuangbanna's only college, the Xishuangbanna Vocational Technical College, Dai language was taught in 2013 for one single class of pre-school teacher students, whereas previous Dai-Chinese programs (a three-year program between 1986 and 1999 and a five-year program between 2003 and 2009) have been terminated. Additionally, there are opportunities to learn Dai outside Xishuangbanna at the Yunnan Nationalities University with intensive classes on Dai linguistics, Dai literature, and Dai-Chinese translation[241] and at the Xishuangbanna Buddhist College, where approximately 30 students learn the Old Dai script in addition to subjects such as Chinese or English (MO-04_2012-02-27). However, all these programs at higher education levels reach only small numbers of students (a few small classes at the Buddhist College and 20 to 40 students at the Vocational College).

	No. of schools in 2005	**No. of schools in 2013**
Kindergartens	0	2
Elementary schools (incl. pre-school classes)	264	141 (in 2010)
Middle schools	10	2
Colleges	2	2

Table 13: Kindergartens, schools, and colleges with minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Sources for data 2005: Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (2010b); for 2010: Liu, Yang (2010); for 2013: interviews with Prefecture and County Bureaus of Education.

In sum, minority language education is mostly conducted at earlier educational levels. Although the numbers of schools with bilingual tuition generally declined, this decline was more severe at middle school level and at higher education level than in elementary schooling. When one takes the overall decline in the number of primary schools in Xishuangbanna caused by school mergers into account, the situation of minority language education at Xishuangbanna can be seen as stable.

The development of the numbers of classes with Dai language education shows a similar picture. Minority language education is most extensively conducted in very young grades, such as pre-school, first grade or second grade. All schools that take part in county, prefecture, or province programs for Dai language education start with Dai

[240] Bilingual education increased in Menghai greatly in 2008 when minority language teaching was expanded from primary to middle school level through hiring eight additional middle school teachers especially for Dai classes. According to several informants in the region (OF-01_2013-05-03, OF-07_2012-01-11, TE-29_2013-05-07) this increase in Menghai was initiated and orchestrated by the then-vice-director of the County Educational Bureau, but once he left the local bureau and was transferred to a position at the prefecture Educational Bureau in 2008 bilingual activities in Menghai slowed down and one year later only two of the originally eight middle schools continued this program.

241 See program description in Yunnan Nationalities University, Institute of Ethnic Cultures (2010).

language education at very early grades, whereas in higher grades they generally schedule minority language education to only one or two school hours per week. At kindergarten level minority language education has expanded, but is currently not reaching significant levels.[242]

In addition to the finding that bilingual education in Xishuangbanna is mostly conducted in early educational levels two other findings are important for understanding the situation of bilingual education at schools in Xishuangbanna. Firstly, the above mentioned programs are only offered for Dai language education, whereas for Hani and other languages spoken in Xishuangbanna there are no formal courses in school education and higher education, but merely a few evening classes organized by the Hani research association. This indicates not only the prioritization of languages in education in Xishuangbanna with Chinese at the top, followed by Dai, and only then the other minority languages, but it is also a result of the area-based approach of offering education only in those minority languages that obtained official status in "their" autonomous regions.

Secondly, similar to other localities in China minority language education in Xishuangbanna is conducted at schools of generally lower educational infrastructure, in areas of large ethnic minority population, and in rural areas,[243] whereas elite schools, urban schools, and private schools hardly ever take part in any program for minority language education, with the exception of the two mentioned high-level kindergartens.[244]

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[242] The differences in the minority language teaching situation between kindergarten and pre-schools stem from differences in authority of Educational Bureaus over both. Educational Bureaus are the direct supervisors of schools and have the means to run programs for minority language education there (see chapter 4). Kindergartens in China, by contrast, are often private and much less subject to regulation by the Educational Bureaus. Kindergartens are not requested to implement bilingual curricula and they hardly ever participate in provincial or county bilingual programs. However, since pre-school classes are more and more substituted by kindergarten education, the Educational Bureaus of Xishuangbanna seek to expand bilingual education programs also to kindergartens. The governmental request towards the two mentioned kindergartens to implement bilingual programs can be seen as a step to include more kindergartens into the programs and to spread bilingual tuition to these institutions.

[243] Neither the urban center of the prefecture capital Jinghong (市区) nor the urban centers of the counties (县城) have any schools that teach bilingually (in the administrative area of Jinghong City bilingual schools are found in the rural township districts of Gasa, Menglong, Menghan, and Mengyang), but all bilingual schools are "rural schools", as defined by administrative location. The term "rural schools" will be used here in accordance with official Chinese educational statistics that defines all schools located in a township (县镇) as rural schools (乡镇学校) as opposed to city schools (城市学校) (Wen 2011). This differentiation is based on administration and denotes to the different supervision and financing of rural and urban schools. Township schools are supervised by township government and city schools by the county or city government. From this term one can thus neither directly conclude an agricultural environment nor an agricultural employment of the parents

[244] The provincial bureau of education ranks Kindergartens in China into nine categories, based on regulations such as the "Regulation on the Evaluation Levels of Kindergartens in Yunnan Province" (云南省幼儿园等级评估方案). The Zhou Jiguan Kindergarten has been ranked in 2010 in the best possible category (一级一等园) and the Minzu Kindergarten in the second best category (一级二等园) (Jinghong City Educational Bureau 2011). The difference between the prevalence of minority language education programs at schools with comparatively low educational infrastructure and high-end kindergartens can be

Interestingly, none of the designated "nationalities schools" provide bilingual education, which can be explained by the functions of this specific type of schools: Located in the prefecture or county seats these schools offer a chance for educational careers for students of ethnic minority status and serve as a gateway to a "modern" and "hanified" environment. According to the principal of one of these schools there is "no need" for minority middle schools to conduct tuition in minority languages anymore, as the students here have high proficiency in Chinese (PR-11_2012-01-12).

The limitation of minority language education to rural schools in combination with general lower quality of infrastructure has several consequences for these programs. Firstly, program implementation suffers when school buildings, teaching materials, or teacher trainings are of inferior quality. Secondly, the programs also suffer from rural small schools' bad reputations. The image of underdevelopment of the schools contributes to the opinion that bilingual programs are only suitable for those locations that are anyways off the track of modernization. Generally speaking, minority language education is treated as a type of education that is suitable only for "backward" ethnic homogeneous communities, but not for modern and multi-ethnic city schools.

Diverse government agencies and a few social organizations conducted "model experiments" for bilingual education in Xishuangbanna. According to interview partners at schools and in the Bureaus of Education, education in minority languages was in the initial years after its re-introduction in the 80s a very non-standardized issue. Schools conducted their own projects, and some county governments edited textbooks, but the provincial and prefecture government had little to offer for bilingual schools. Over the last ten years, however, models from province to county have flourished (see Table 14). Four specific Dai-Chinese bilingual projects have been conducted. Additionally, several projects on education in local knowledge and ethnic culture have been conducted that do not directly aim at teaching language skills, but that in their so called "local curriculum courses" focus on history, geography, and culture, and languages of the ethnic groups of Xishuangbanna. Several of these projects have been organized by non-governmental organizations, e.g. by the US-based language NGO "SIL" or the Kunming-based "Center for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge".

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explained by the different approaches of the Educational Bureaus. All rural schools in Xishuangbanna are under supervision of the Educational Bureaus and have to implement minority language programs when the Bureau selects them as pilot schools. Rural kindergartens, by contrast, that are often private, hesitate to implement minority language programs when these do not attract new students. If the Bureaus of Education want to run minority language programs at kindergartens they thus have to rely on the urban ones, and these are generally of better infrastructural quality than their rural and private counterparts.

Name of program	Agency	Schools in XSBN	Duration	Content
"Yunnan Provincial Bilingual Experimentation Schools Program" 双语教学试点项目	-1980s - 2000: YN Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature -Since 2000: YN BoE: Office of Ethnic Education	ML: 1 MH: 1	1980s - today	bilingual education in 18 languages (in XSBN: Dai-Chinese)
Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program 傣汉双语教学实验项目[245]	-JH BoE -YN BoE: Research Department -XSBN BoE -SIL	JH: 5	2005-10	Dai-Chinese bilingual education
Zero Barrier Bilingual Education 零障碍双语[246]	-YN Edu. Association: Minority Edu. Committee -YN Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature -SIL[247]	XSBN: 7 schools and 1 kindergarten	2010-20	Bilingual education (in XSBN: Dai-Chinese)
"Menghai primary school and middle school Dai tuition"	MH BoE	MH: 8	2008-09	Dai language education
"School-based Curriculum Development Project"	-Beijing Minzu University -XSBN BoE -JH BoE	JH: 1	2006-08	Local culture, and language knowledge
Community-based Education for Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity: Coming home to our village 传统知识和生物多样性社区教育:回到我们的村寨[248]	-JH BoE -Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge[249]	JH: 1	2003-06	Local culture, and language knowledge

Table 14: Table: Programs for bilingual education and local culture at model schools in Xishuangbanna 2003 to 2013 (selection). Note: Program names without quotation marks are my translations of the official names; those in quotation marks are descriptions of programs without official names. This table shows only programs that target individual schools directly. General textbook provision and teacher trainings as well as language tuition programs that are not bound to schools are excluded (such as Hani script courses by the Hani Research Organization). YN = Yunnan; XSBN = Xishuangbanna; JH = Jinghong; MH = Menghai; ML = Mengla; BoE = Bureau of Education.

The Yunnan Provincial Bilingual Experimentation Schools Program as the largest program in Yunnan selects 36 schools in Yunnan Province, two on each language. Being selected to take part in this experimental program, however, means for these schools a larger input of investments. The program offers up to 300,000 RMB to each model school for classroom infrastructure or teaching equipment such as video cameras or computers. In Xishuangbanna one school has been chosen in Menghai and one in Mengla.

The Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program, a cooperation of the NGO SIL and the Educational Bureaus of Yunnan, Xishuangbanna, and Jinghong, by contrast, does not provide lump sums to schools, but sends instead foreign and Chinese

[245] See SIL - East Asia Group (2010).

[246] See Yunnan Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission (no date).

[247] This project is still in its initial phase. The listed three organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding and media reported on the new project. The Minority Education Committee of the Yunnan Education Association is attached to the Yunnan Bureau of Education, see Yunnan Provincial Education Association Minority Education Committee (2009).

[248] See Center for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge: http://www.brooks.ngo.cn/xtjc/xxzx/xx200612-jg10.php, last access June 21, 2014.

[249] See Center for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge: http://www.cbik.org/, last access June 21, 2014

experts to schools in order to support language curriculum development based on participatory approaches. This project includes an all-Dai head start tuition in pre-school and first grade and a slow shift to Chinese in higher grades. After the Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program together with SIL's projects in other parts of Yunnan (Cobbey 2007) were evaluated as successfully in raising both student's skills and teacher's methods the experiences were transferred to a larger project called "Zero Barrier", which intends to lower the difficulties in educational access for non-Chinese speaking children. The Zero Barrier project will be of much larger scope and contains investments of 1 Million RMB per year. Although the project officially started in 2010 the number of schools was still unclear in 2013, but in Xishuangbanna at least two more schools and a kindergarten will join.

Projects in Menghai and Mengla were very short-lived, as they were initiated and tightly connected with the careers of individual leading cadres in the County government or the County Educational Bureaus. The Mengla Bureau of Education drafted in 2009 the Mengla County Development Plan on Bilingual Education (see above) with a scheduled introduction of bilingual education to several schools. However, this plan was never put into reality, at least not in terms of model schools. Although some schools in the County conduct Dai language education, only one gained the status of a model school, namely as a model school of the Province bilingual program. In Menghai the Bureau of Education similarly proposed a large project in 2009 that would introduce Dai language to eight schools. This model project was implemented for a short time and eight new Dai teachers were hired. One year later, however, this project stopped abruptly after the responsible director in Menghai's Bureau of Education was transferred to the prefecture Bureau of Education, and the new director did not support this program anymore and degraded responsibility for bilingual education from the Bureau director to the Research Department (OF-07_2012-01-11). According to teachers in Menghai not only have there been no new teachers hired, but the "atmosphere" changed, teachers felt less supported and schools have been less pressured to continue Dai language education (TE-29_2013-05-07).

Finally, two projects conducted development of curricula and textbooks for local knowledge. The "School-based Curriculum Development Project" was supported by Beijing's Minzu University and produced a voluminous school-based textbook on Xishuangbanna's culture and geography. Similarly, the Community-based Education for Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity project produced a textbook on Hani culture. Both projects contained large participation by the teachers, but the effects were rather limited.

The textbook developed by the “School-based Curriculum Development Project” is still used in local culture classes, but to my observation it did not succeed in influencing other classes. The Hani culture textbook is not used for tuition anymore.

The instruments of experimental pilots for minority language education in Xishuangbanna have brought additional resources to schools in terms of teaching material, teacher trainings, and in the case of the Menghai project also new teacher positions. Experimental projects have bundled these resources to schools, schools have experimented in different models of teaching, and some schools gained the chance to participate in project development. For the cause of bilingual education this has created “lighthouses” that show what can be reached through bilingual education, which might induce more such education at other schools or in other localities. The expansion of the “Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program” from county to province proves that expansion is possible and that locally gained experiences can be made useful for other localities and schools.

On the other side, the experimental mode also created flaws in sustainability. Firstly, since merely 20 out of 363 bilingual schools have been reached by experiments (Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2012), the share of other schools that conduct tuition without these programs is very large, and a more equal distribution of resources might benefit education more than for instance providing selected schools with multimedia labs, whereas others even lack books. Secondly, experiments depend much on outcome evaluation, but since standardized tests can only marginally reflect individual learning factors and attainments the effects of bilingual learning on learning progress in Chinese are only indirectly measurable. Policy learning depends thus to large degrees on leaders in governmental agencies and not necessarily on the quality of experiments. Thirdly, the limited time of many of Xishuangbanna’s bilingual experimental programs creates insecurity for both teachers and learners, which is especially in language learning risky, since educational success also in other subjects depends on constant language learning progress. Finally, the fate of Xishuangbanna’s diverse model projects shows that government agencies have a major role in determining the implementation of model projects, but that there is lack of participation of the local population in determining the start or the continuation of experiments. As generally the government selects even schools for program run by social organizations and support by parents, students, or school staff is not a precondition for this selection (SO-02_2011-10-21) sustainability and success of implementation might be endangered by diverging interests of government, target population, and implementers.

Textbooks

Government agencies and other organizations resort to textbook distribution and, in the former case, to textbook approval as instruments to provide resources for minority language education in Xishuangbanna. As has been specified in chapter 4 the Bureaus of Education and sometimes also the Ethnic Committees edit textbooks themselves or buy and distribute textbooks by one of the large national or provincial publishing houses.

So far, these activities have resulted in a variety of textbooks for school education in minority languages in Xishuangbanna, mostly in Dai (see Table 15). Firstly, the Yunnan Bureau of Education has ordered and funded the translation of the regular Chinese language textbooks into Dai, Hani, and other languages.[250] So far, the Dai editions of the textbooks for the Chinese "Language and Literature" school subject from pre-school to 6th grade (see all references in Table 15) have been published with 5000 copies each.[251] Secondly, the prefecture and county Bureaus of Education have also printed local textbooks to be used specifically at schools.[252] Due to a lack in new editions Dai language teachers had for decades no choice but to use old Dai textbooks from the 50s that were printed in black and white, had no pictures, and lacked instructions and exercises. In 2002 the Educational Bureau of Menghai produced a new colorful series of books (5000 copies) that introduced the Dai syllables and graphemes, but lacked texts and exercises. From 2008 onward the Xishuangbanna Prefecture Bureau of Translation and Editing of Chinese-Ethnic Teaching Materials took over and produced textbooks for primary schools that feature introductions into Dai writing, exercises, and short texts in two volumes with 10,000 copies each. Thirdly, social organizations and universities, in cooperation with schools, also produced "school-based textbooks" such as "Coming home to our village" or "Multicultural home village". Although these textbooks include language knowledge into lessons on local culture, they do not specifically teach communicative skills in these languages, and they are written in Chinese.[253] The Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education

[250] Both the Yunnan Ministry of Education and the Yunnan Ethnic Affairs Commission present each year rising numbers of minority-language textbooks that they edited, evaluated, and printed (see e.g. Editorial Board of Yunnan Yearbook 2012). Until 2012 more than 300 bilingual editions of textbooks have been produced in Yunnan (Yunnan Ethnic Languages Commission 2012).

[251] Similar to other minority regions in China (Zhang, Zhu 2012) also in Xishuangbanna the "Language and Literature" textbooks were translated initially because support through minority script was deemed most necessary in "Language and Literature", a subject that demands even from Chinese speaking students a large effort to acquire new vocabulary. Translations of the textbooks of Math or other subjects have thus been postponed.

[252] In addition there are of course also Dai language learning materials for adults available, such as the Dai language learning books by the Beijing Minzu University and the Yunnan Nationalities University (the former Yunnan Nationalities Institute), but this material is mostly used only at higher education.

[253] Xishuangbanna seems to be no exception from the overall situation in China. Three quarters of the 2000 local textbooks that scholars of Beijing's Minzu University collected from all over China were

composed some basic lessons in Dai language and published these free of charge on their web-page. They also published a DVD with children songs in Dai and a set of five beautifully illustrated children story books based on folk-tales (Yu, Zhang 2011).

written in Chinese and that share was even higher among the textbooks from Yunnan (Teng et al. 2011). An explanation for this might be that the school-based authors lack the writing skills in minority languages or deem it unsuitable for their school, especially when not all children understand the local non-Chinese language. Another explanation might be that the organizers of the school-based textbook editing projects, often national social organizations, focus on transmitting cultural knowledge, but not on language learning.

Title	Editing agency	Date	Content	Locality	Target audience
Designated school textbooks in minority languages					
"Language and Literature" – Chinese Xishuangbanna Dai contrastive edition 语文，数学 – 汉文文西双版纳傣文对照[254]	YN BoE	From 1950s onward	-Chinese and Dai -Regular Chinese and math book translated	XSBN	Pre-school to sixth grade
"Xishuangbanna Dai language"	?	1950s	-Dai -graphemes and texts	XSBN	Primary school to adult education
"Xishuangbanna Dai textbook" 西双版纳傣文教材[255]	MH BoE	2002	-Dai -graphemes	XSBN, mainly MH	Pre-school and primary school
"Xishuangbanna Dai primary school textbook" 西双版纳傣文小学教材[256]	XSBN BoE	From 2008 onward	-Dai -graphemes and texts	XSBN	Pre-school to junior middle school
"Dai textbook"	JH BoE; SIL	2005	-Dai -graphemes and text	JH	Pre-school and primary school
Examples of other minority language textbooks for possible use in classrooms					
"Concise reader of internationally used Hani/ Aka script" 民间国际通用哈尼/阿卡文简明读本[257]	XSBN Hani Research Organi-zation	?	-Hani -phonology, graphemes, texts	XSBN and other Hani speaking regions	Adult education and partly schools
"Basic tutorial for Xishuangbanna Dai" 西双版纳傣语基础教程	Beijing Minzu University	2012	-Dai -phonology, graphemes, texts	YN	Adult education
"Learn Dai with me" 跟我学傣文[258]	XSBN BoE	2012	-Dai -graphemes	XSBN	Children to adults
"Apollo butterfly Dai language paradise series" 赞巴蝶傣语乐园丛书[259]	XSBN BoE	2011	-Dai and Chinese -texts	XSBN	Kindergarten to primary school children
Examples of designated school textbooks on local culture that include chapters on language knowledge					
"Multicultural home village" 多元文化乡土[260]	Menghan Township Middle school; Minzu University Beijing	2009	-Chinese -local culture	JH, 1 middle school	Middle school
"Coming home to our village" 回到我们的村寨[261]	JH BoE; Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge; local schools	2003	-Chinese -local culture	JH, 1 middle school	Primary school

Table 15: School textbooks in minority languages used in Xishuangbanna. Note: "Editing agency" means here the main agency that funded and organized the editing and publishing of the respective textbook. "Locality" refers to the place where the book is mainly used. YN = Yunnan; XSBN = Xishuangbanna; JH = Jinghong; MH = Menghai; ML = Mengla; Boe = Bureau of Education.

Today Dai language textbooks are in relative abundance available to schools. After text book fees were abolished these textbooks are now available for most schools that intend to run Dai language classes. The existence and the trends of textbook production

[254] See Yunnan Bureau of Education (2001).
[255] See Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (2002).
[256] See Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (2010a).
[257] See Xishuangbanna Hani Research Organization (no date).
[258] See Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education: http://jh.xsbnedu.cn/bnjyjmcjy/Default.html, last access 2013-09-17.
[259] See Yu, Zhang (2011)
[260] See Editorial Board of "Yunnan Province Jinghong City Menghan Township Middle School School-Based Textbook" (2009).
[261] See Ling et al. (2004).

indicate a rising attention to education in minority languages in Xishuangbanna, at least to Dai language education. The fact that after several decades of absence four editions of specific local Dai language textbooks were produced since 2000 means that local governments in Xishuangbanna have begun to invest into this type of education. The numbers of printed copies rose from 5,000 in the edition of 2002 to 10,000 in the edition of 2008. Also the quality of these textbooks improved compared to the textbooks from the 1950s. Compared to low paper quality of Yunnan's minority language textbooks that Tao and Yue (2002b) still observed at turn of the 21st century the new textbooks in Xishuangbanna are of much better quality. In interviews Dai teachers complained about some pictures in the books,[262] but overall the teachers were pleased with the new Dai textbooks. In terms of layout and writing the books have been modernized and include now exercises.

However, there are also severe lacks of textbooks. For those languages without an officially recognized script, such as Jinuo, there are no school textbooks available. Even for Hani language that has an officially recognized and established script, schools in Xishuangbanna don't possess books. The standard provincial textbooks have been translated into Hani, Lahu, and Yi to name just three speaker groups in Xishuangbanna, but these books seem to have been exclusively delivered to schools in other localities in Yunnan, but not to Xishuangbanna. Together with the overwhelmingly preference of Dai language in experimental school model programs this shows that the provision of textbooks in minority languages and thus the possibility to teach these languages depend on the status of the ethnic group in a given administrative unit. Xishuangbanna's government prefers Dai over the other minority languages not only in official public usage, but also in the editing, funding, and delivery of textbooks. This, however, is not a specific blunder of the Xishuangbanna government, but rather an outcome of the general approach to grant autonomy rights and to conduct measures for cultural protection merely for groups in "their" officially designated areas, instead of entitling individuals to be provided with textbooks in his or her mother tongue language irrespective of place of residence. Furthermore, there is also a lack in accompanying books. Educational Bureaus as well as the market failed to provide those additional teacher guidance books that exist for math and Chinese in abundance. Furthermore, due to the general lack of media in Xishuangbanna's minority languages (see above) teachers find it difficult to add content

[262] Teachers complained especially that pictures were not "localized". A lesson on ploughs, for example, has images of ploughs that are used by Han in central China, but not ploughs that the Dai use. The editors of these textbooks in the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education said that they tried to find images of local plants, tools, and animals, but due to financial constraints they were unable to take such photos by themselves and had to rely on downloads from the internet.

to their classes beyond the regular textbooks. In later chapters I will discuss in detail how teachers work with this situation, how they adjust their tuition to the provided textbooks, and how they depart from prescribed content.

Teachers

Employment and staff trainings are further fields where Bureaus of Education can influence the conditions of minority language education in schools. Provincial, prefecture, and City/County Bureaus of Education engage here in organizing pre-service professional education through bilingual college and university majors, in hiring bilingual teachers, and in conducting in-service trainings for bilingual teachers.

A few college and university programs conducted pre-service teacher trainings for Dai language education (see Table 16). Since the early 80s teacher students at the Xishuangbanna Vocational Technical College[263] have been obliged to take Dai language seminars, but when in 1986 the college offered a special Dai-Chinese bilingual degree only students in this program where obliged to take Dai classes. By covering Dai and Chinese linguistics, didactics, and educational science this degree entitled graduates to teach at public schools. However, when school positions gradually required more Bachelor degrees for teachers, the College, unable to provide Bachelor degrees, terminated their teacher major program in 2009. In 2011 the College started a new program to educate future pre-school or kindergarten teachers with one regular Chinese language class and one “Dai-Chinese bilingual class”. Despite its name, however, the latter class schedules only one or two Dai language seminars for the last study years, whereas all other subjects are taught in Chinese. For 2017 the College is scheduled to expand its scope with a new campus and to gain the status of a university. The Institute of Dai Language considers offering a Dai-Chinese BA by then, but the final decision has not been made yet.[264] Additionally the Yunnan Nationalities University offers a degree program on minority languages with a Dai branch including linguistics and didactics as elective courses. However, according to one instructor at the faculty (SC-15_2012-03-23) graduates of this program seem to find teaching positions unattractive, especially those positions at rural primary schools, and tend to take instead jobs in government or academia. Teacher universities at the provincial level, finally, don’t include minority languages into their courses.

[263] I translated the name of Xishuangbanna’s only college (职业技术学院) as "Vocational Technical College" since its website and brochures don't provide an official English translation.

[264] All of the above mentioned data on the different programs derive from interviews with Dai language instructors at the Xishuangbanna Vocational Technical College and the Yunnan Nationalities University.

Educational Institution	Student entrance	Subject	Content
Yunnan Nationalities University (云南民族大学)	At least since 2010, probably earlier	China's Minority languages, Xishuangbanna Dai branch[265] 中国少数民族语言文学专业（西双版纳傣族语言文学方向）	Dai and Chinese linguistics plus didactics as elective
Xishuangbanna Vocational and Technical College (西双版纳职业技术学院)	Before 1986 (?)	Regular teacher education	1 or 2 Dai seminars for each class
	1986 (?) to 1999	Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Three-year Secondary Vocational Education 傣汉双语教育，中专	Several seminars on Dai linguistics and didactics
	2003 and 2004	Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education five-year Secondary Vocational Education 傣汉双语教育，大专	8 seminars on Dai linguistics and didactics per semester
	2009 and 2010	Dai-Chinese secretarial Three-year Secondary Vocational Education 傣汉双语文秘，中专	1-3 seminars Dai language per semester
	Since 2011	Regular pre-school teacher education	1-2 Dai seminars for 1 Dai-Chinese bilingual class in last year

Table 16: Dai language education majors in Xishuangbanna's institutes of higher education. Source: Interviews with lecturers at Xishuangbanna Technical College and Yunnan Nationalities University (SC-13_2012-03-20; SC-15_2012-03-23).

Minority language teacher education suffers from a scarcity of available study majors, but also from low enrollment rates to existing programs. The scarcity of minority language teacher education programs is due to differences in interests between the provincial Educational Bureaus that seems to be only marginally interested in the issue of teacher pre-service education in minority languages, and the Ethnic Affairs Committees that are interested in minority language teacher education but have no say in teacher education at the Normal Universities, but only at the Nationality Universities. After the upgrading of teacher education to universities and the centralization of teacher education away from local colleges to provincial level universities local Bureaus of Education have no influence on designing the curricula for teacher education anymore. The provincial Bureaus, by contrast, are more interested in educating province-wide deployable teachers than in educating teachers for small, locally defined, and unstable numbers of schools. Furthermore, the existing programs suffer from comparatively low enrollment rates due to a lack of attractive employment opportunities. According to one instructor, the Xishuangbanna Vocational Technical College's Dai-Chinese bilingual study programs of 2003 and 2004 and the Dai-Chinese pre-school program all were scheduled for 40 to 50 students per year, but there were only 20 to 30 applicants per year.[266] After the job-assignment system of previous decades ended that guaranteed each graduate a life-long teaching position at schools, graduates of seldom-required degrees such as Dai-Chinese can no longer be sure to find jobs at schools. Additionally, especially jobs at village

[265] See Yunnan Nationalities University, Institute of Ethnic Cultures (2010).

[266] According to one lecturer at the Xishuangbanna Vocational Technical College the Institute for Dai language requires a minimum of ten students per year (SC-13_2012-03-20).

schools are perceived as unattractive, despite the special benefits such as university fee exemptions (see chapter 4). Especially for children from Dai families, who on average have higher income than other local populations in Xishuangbanna (see above), become a teacher seem to be less promising than managing the family's land.

In bilingual teacher hiring policies governmental agencies similarly do not contribute to increase the pool of available bilingual teachers. Only a small number of graduates from bilingual education programs transferred to bilingual teaching positions. Of the Dai-Chinese vocational classes that started in 2003 and 2004, for example, only two out of approximately 40 students per year were in 2012 employed as teachers either at kindergartens or primary schools, according to one College Instructor (SC-13_2012-03-20). All others either found Dai-related jobs at newspaper agencies or broadcasting stations or found jobs not related to Dai language or teaching at all. Even many of those graduates from this and from earlier Dai language teacher education programs who worked as teachers afterward did not teach Dai at the time of my interviews, but taught other subjects in Chinese.

Both the termination of the Dai teacher education at Xishuangbanna's College and the unattractiveness of employment at rural schools for graduates of the Dai language programs at Yunnan's Nationalities University result in a scarcity of educational programs for minority language teacher education. With respect to the limited demand for minority language education at schools the Bureaus of Education are still able to find sufficient numbers of Dai teachers, but unless new teacher education programs will be started this sufficiency in Dai teachers is threatened. Educational Bureaus that singly aim at offering Dai language teacher education programs without having the means to increase the conditions for finding jobs or making bilingual teaching jobs more attractive face the risk of not producing the intended numbers of graduates.

In-service teacher trainings for bilingual teachers as the third instrument to support education in minority languages have been much more employed than pre-service teacher trainings. After the in-service training of teachers has been standardized and intensified (see chapter 3) bilingual in-service teacher training also increased over the last years.[267] Although all levels from Yunnan Province to county governments run own programs for general teacher trainings, only the Bureaus of Yunnan Province,

[267] Training plans differ between professional groups (e.g. different classes for teachers and principals) and schedule the sequence of eligibility to trainings. Generally speaking, the order is the following: first come principals, followed by "backbone teachers" or "key teachers" (骨干教师), followed by class head teachers, and finally the subject teachers. This means that the eligibility to trainings rises with the level of management obligations. It means, however, also that those teachers who are already in relatively outstanding positions receive more trainings, whereas teachers at lower positions have less opportunities to improve through trainings.

Xishuangbanna Prefecture, and Jinghong City offer specific bilingual teacher trainings.[268] According to the respective officers (OF-01_2011-12-05; OF-13_2012-03-23) the Yunnan Bureau of Education organizes trainings in bilingual education for approximately 350 teachers per year, and both the Xishuangbanna and the Jinghong Bureaus of Education for approximately 50 teachers each. Menghai used to offer trainings for bilingual teachers as well, but these activities terminated when the Xishuangbanna Bureau became more active in bilingual teacher trainings in 2008. The Bureau of Education initiated new teacher trainings especially after each time it ordered schools to change from teaching New Dai script to Old Dai script or the other way round (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b).

The various minority language trainings offer quite similar curricula. All trainings for bilingual teachers are grouped by languages and last for approximately five days during school holidays. The provincial level bilingual education trainings start with general seminars on education theory, before the participants split into different language groups. The prefecture and county trainings officially aim at all of Xishuangbanna's minority languages, but in reality there is only training on Dai language available.[269]

Different to other localities in China where bilingual teacher trainings aim at improving teachers' Chinese knowledge [270] the bilingual teacher trainings in Xishuangbanna and Yunnan aim at improvements in the instruction of minority languages. Hence they contain elements such as bilingual education theory, linguistics of Dai or the other languages, as well as didactics how to teach these languages. Once new minority language textbooks come out the teacher trainings focus on how to teach these books. However, participants of Dai language teacher trainings told me also that the content of seminars is flexible to the teachers' suggestions. The Xishuangbanna trainings in 2010 and 2011, for example, included seminars on Dai computer font input software and Thai language linguistics, both on the participants' demands (TE-29_20-05-07). Since according to interviewed teachers teacher trainings which are not related to minority languages are less flexible, the Educational Bureaus seem to use teacher training seminars as a tool to

[268] Seminars on minority language education are also conducted for other professionals than teachers. In 2013 the bureau of Education and the bureaus for Ethnic Affairs in Yunnan and in Xishuangbanna conducted a six-day joint seminar for their officers and for broadcasting and newspaper professionals on Dai-Chinese bilingual education (Yunnan Bureau of Education 2013).

[269] Of all teacher trainings for minority languages at prefecture, city, or county level there was only one training session on Hani language, and all others were exclusively on Dai language. Similarly, Xishuangbanna sends often Dai language teachers to the Yunnan bilingual teacher trainings, but only seldom Hani or Jinuo teachers.

[270] All seminars that the Bureau of Education of Urumchi in Xinjiang offers under the title "bilingual teacher trainings", for example, aim at improving non-Han teacher's Chinese language skills. None of them aims at improving tuition of Uighur, Kazakh or Xinjiang's other non-Chinese languages (Wang, Chen 2012).

disseminate the latest regulations and textbooks, but beyond that the responsible offices give participants and instructors also discretion to decide on seminar content.

Other forms of training for teachers that the Bureaus of Education organize are so called teacher competitions and school-based research. School based-research means here small-scale research conducted by teachers on research topics created by the Bureau of Education. According to my interview partners at the Bureaus of Education in Xishuangbanna some of these topics also include issues of language-related educational barriers for minority students. However, as research topics seem to be generally generated broad enough to be conducted at many schools there are no research topics specifically on minority language education. Teacher competitions, by contrast, often specifically aim at one subject. In these competitions teachers of different schools meet at one school in order to conduct model lessons with students of that school. The rewards affect promotions, similar to the training credit points. Nevertheless, several interviewed participants said that the opportunity to meet other Dai-language teachers is a more essential outcome of these competitions than the credentials. According to informants at the Bureaus of Education both the County/City Bureaus and the Prefecture Bureau conduct and fund such competitions yearly.

Nevertheless, there are shortages of teacher trainings in minority languages. Firstly, teacher trainings are almost only offered for Dai language, whereas there is hardly any such training for Xishuangbanna's other minority languages, although a training in bilingual didactics can also benefit education in languages without scripts, for instance by training awareness for students' linguistic barriers or by training methods to use bilingual education orally. Secondly, not all of these educational programs enable teachers to teach Dai languages successfully. Both the Dai language programs at the Yunnan Nationalities University and Xishuangbanna's College focus on Dai linguistics, but didactics how to teach minority languages are hardly included in the curriculum (Yunnan Nationalities University, Institute of Ethnic Cultures 2010). It is highly questionable if pre-service and in-service teacher trainings of extremely limited scope enable teachers to teach minority languages sufficiently. Furthermore, despite the relatively high number of bilingually trained teachers the number of teachers who are actually employed and active in minority language teaching is much lower. Statistics claim that in 2005 there were 596 teachers available for teaching minority languages in Xishuangbanna[271], but merely 22

[271] The term used in statistics is "teachers qualified to teach bilingually" (能胜任双语教学的教师).

teachers were active in teaching Dai language in Jinghong and 65 in Menghai[272] (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b), which means that around 500 bilingually trained teachers merely teach Chinese language classes.

Research and evolutional instruments

Research and evaluations are the last type of instruments that shall be discussed here. They have been also used in Xishuangbanna's minority language education, but not as intensive as in other subjects. The regular school evaluations by the Xishuangbanna Educational Bureaus that compare schools regularly exclude minority language education as they for comparative reasons focus on those subjects that are taught at all schools. Furthermore, even in those cases where inspection teams aim at visiting classes of all subjects that are taught at a given school they often leave out classes in minority languages because inspectors who themselves do not speak the respective language feel uneasy to evaluate instruction in this subject.

In contrast, some inspections specifically aim at evaluating minority language school subjects. In interviews the officers for minority language education within the Bureaus of Education described "researching bilingual education" and "understanding the school situation" as part of their mission. Language barriers are less a problem for classroom evaluation here since the share of minority language speakers is higher in the offices responsible for minority languages in the Bureaus of Education than in other departments. However, detailed inspections of program implementation are irregular and depend on the individual officers in the Bureau. In some cases officers who were responsible for minority language education did not even know the number of schools that actually conduct bilingual education in their jurisdiction. Other officers, by contrast, keep close contacts to schools through individual visits. These visits, however, do not contain standardized evaluations, but are rather meetings, project planning, or discussions with teachers, as one officer explained (OF-12_2012-03-23). Officers in the Bureau of Education stated that individual contacts to teachers and principals, for example at the occasion of yearly teacher trainings or teacher competitions, are more important tools than school evaluations for the improvement of minority language education.

Finally, external evaluations are another way of gaining information about policy implementation. Several research projects of various scale have been conducted on the

[272] The statistics lack in information about Mengla, but with respect to the low number of bilingual schools the County's number of active bilingual teacher can be expected to be even lower than that of Jinghong.

educational situation in Xishuangbanna with the support of local Bureaus of Education, some of them also on the situation of minority language education (see e.g. Hansen 1999; Zhao, Zhao 2010a; Luo 2011). The Minzu University in Beijing, for example, conducted a project on school-based textbooks in Xishuangbanna (see Editorial Board of "Yunnan Province Jinghong City Menghan Township Middle School School-Based Textbook" 2009. Although their impact on program design cannot be evaluated at this point, their direct feedback to schools seems to be very limited. Several school leaders said in my interviews that their schools have been visited by external scholars, but they also said that they hardly ever received feedback after these visits.

In addition to evaluation instruments governments use informational tools also to propagate their perspectives on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. The journal "Xishuangbanna Education", the (educational) yearbooks, and on-line information on government agencies' web-pages are examples for tools to disseminate both information and official interpretations of minority language education projects in Xishuangbanna. Similarly, information tools also support agencies in inter-agency bargaining. Conferences on minority language education, for instance, supported the Yunnan Ethnic Affairs Commission to make an argument for their cause during bargaining with the Province Bureau of Education. Similarly, one can interpret proposals that individual delegates propose in the Consultative Conference or the People's Congress as agenda setting, such as the one by Xishuangbanna's delegate to the National Consultative Conference, Yi Paxin, who demands more minority language education (National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference 2/9/2010). Although such proposals have no binding character to governmental agencies they remind other decision makers in the government of this issue. Additionally, local and provincial government agencies also conduct activities that are directed more to the non-academic and non-governmental public. Ceremonies and festivals such as the publically staged launch of a book about a local school in a Hani village in 2012 by the Hani Research Association, where politicians held speeches on the value of minority language education (Yang 2011), are means through which the Bureaus of Education conveys a generally positive image of minority languages.[273]

[273] Minority language education is often presented as contributing to raise student's educational attainments, to keep control over students, and to generally "civilize" them. Many of Xishuangbanna's official brochures, of the yearbooks on education in Xishuangbanna, and of the textbooks present happy students in clothing of different ethnic groups harmoniously together in a clean environment. All Dai textbooks produced by the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (e.g. Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b), for instance, show students in minority dresses who play or walk at green grass in front of their schools.

In sum, although the Bureaus of Education engage in disseminating information and propaganda about minority language education in Xishuangbanna, this type of education is only to minor degrees included in the evaluation system. Blachford (2004) concluded in her analysis of minority language policies in Xinjiang that there is a general lack of evaluation of policy implementation in the realm of language policies there. This counts also for minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Regular school evaluations exclude minority language education by default, which indicates a low political importance of these evaluations for policy makers. For school leaders and language instructors this has two consequences: firstly, they know that minority language education does not directly affect the official school ratings, and that their decisions in this subject arguably are less important for their own careers. Secondly, school leaders and instructors who want to get feedback on how to improve minority language education can rely only sporadically on contacts to the Bureau of Education, which might cause some school leaders and teachers to gain support from other sources, e.g. from peers at other school. Both issues will be discussed in depth in chapter 6.

Tuition models, languages, and students

With the above mentioned instruments minority language education in Xishuangbanna has been conducted in at least three models. The "pre-school mother-tongue language education" (all model titles derive from interviews with officials in the Bureaus of Education, e.g. OF-01_2011-12-05) contains a head-start education in minority languages and aims especially at children with insufficient Chinese language skills. Dai is the language of instruction for grades pre-school one and two and grade one of primary school, but from grade two onwards the language of instruction switches slowly to Chinese. The "minority language as support tool" similarly uses minority languages to support students whose level of Chinese is insufficient to follow Chinese-only classes, but here the teacher merely occasionally uses minority languages in addition to Chinese, for instance to translate new Chinese terms into students' mother tongues. "Heritage language education", finally, teaches skills and knowledge in Xishuangbanna's minority languages to students as a tool to transmit cultural knowledge to future generations and to secure the survival of minority languages amid an increasingly Chinese language environment. This type contains classes on minority languages and scripts for students of older ages, typically in fourth and fifth grade. It follows rather the pattern of continuous parallel tuition, contains Dai language education for merely very few hours per week, and normally does not affect the language of instruction in the core subjects, which are further conducted in Chinese. In some schools students are segregated into bilingual

classes for ethnic Dai students and Chinese-only language classes for students of all other ethnic groups.[274]

These models are based on combinations of different "ideological frameworks" of bilingual education (see chapter 2). Some models aim at one-way monoglossic language usage where minority language speakers become fluent in Chinese language and Chinese language speakers don't have to learn minority languages, but others schedule also Han students to learn Dai. Although tuition models such as the "Pre-school mother-tongue language education" under the "Dai Chinese bilingual experimental program" train Dai language skills among students also excessively and students leave these classes with skills in Dai language, bilingual education is seen either as a tool to learn Chinese or as a subject of additional knowledge, but the overarching goal is not to shift education towards Dai. The linguistic orientations of the conducted models, finally, are similarly diverse. In the transitional models of "pre-school bilingual education" and the "minority language as a support tool" students' home languages are used as tools, but the main perception of students' language skills is that of a problematic lack of Chinese skills. In the "heritage model", by contrast, knowledge in minority languages is defined as goal and the linguistic knowledge that students have already from home education is seen as an asset. The cultural ecology that these models aim at, finally, is similarly diversified. On the one side minorities are expected to assimilate into what is considered the mainstream culture. On the other side there are attempts to create what García calls a "transcultural ecology", that is a society that sees a value in multicultural environments, for instance when textbooks describe the ethnic diversity of Xishuangbanna as an asset for the whole

[274] Segregating students according to ethnicity and mother tongue languages has been practiced in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and other regions for decades, and included not only the establishment of "ethnic schools", but also ethnic classes in inland China for ethnic minorities (Tsung 2009; Jiang 2002; Postiglione 2007). Teng and Wang (2009, p. 261) define ethnic schools as "educational institutions in multi-ethnic countries that are erected in ethnic minority regions or that serve mainly ethnic minorities. They teach the culture of the mainstream society as well as that of the ethnic minority society in goal-driven, planed, and organized ways in order to achieve training of talents that a society needs." Joint schools, by contrast are defined as "educational and social institutions that are installed in ethnically mixed areas according to ethnic composition and the situation of use of languages and writing systems. These schools conduct tuition in minority languages and in Chinese language in different classes but in one united school" (Teng, Wang 2009, p. 269). Recently, ethnically segregated schools have been merged into joint schools under the goal of strengthening "ethnic unity" and improving minority students' educational attainments (Mujiapaer, Yimiti 2006). In 1999 then-president Jiang Zemin said famously that minorities and Han Chinese educationally "cannot be separated" (离不开, cited in Teng, Wang 2009, p. 272). In Xishuangbanna, school mergers have added to the high level of heterogeneity of students. Roughly half of the schools that I observed during my research had non-Dai students in Dai language classes. A small number of these children voluntarily opted to visit the Dai language class instead of regular only-Han-Chinese class, but the majority of non-Dai speaking students were involuntary visitors to classes that teach a language foreign to them (see discussion of parents' opinions on these arrangements below).

population (e.g. Editorial Board of "Yunnan Province Jinghong City Menghan Township Middle School School-Based Textbook" 2009).

However, despite these differences in models the above outlined findings indicate three trends in minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Firstly, there is a major hierarchy in serving the different languages. Chinese as the language of teacher education, textbooks, classroom tuition, and evaluation is positioned at the top of this hierarchy. Among the minority languages that are taught at schools Dai language clearly is the leading minority language, in many cases the only one at schools, colleges, and kindergartens. Hani language education has been merely conducted outside schools, and teacher trainings in that language have been similarly few. In Bulang language there have been some few experiments conducted, but overall this bilingual education has not been propagated since several years. All other mother-tongue languages that are spoken by Xishuangbanna's population have been completely ignored by minority language education, which not only reflects the low standing of these languages in current language engineering projects, but also reflects the approach that minority language education is merely in those autonomous regions propagated and promoted where the respective ethnic group is in majority or where it holds the officially designated autonomy status.

Secondly, although the number of students who received bilingual education in Dai language experienced ups and downs from the 1980s until today almost every year between 5 and 10 percent of all students in Xishuangbanna sat in Dai language classes and between 10 and 20 percent of all students went at some point of their formal educational career for at least one year through Dai language tuition (see Table 17). According to one official there are non-published plans that schedule even an increase of the number of students (OF-01_2011-12-05). Although there has been a slightly negative overall trend over the last 30 years, recent extension of experimental programs (e.g. the "Dai bilingual experimental program" that was expended in 2010 from five to ten schools) and the above mentioned plans might indicate that minority language education in Xishuangbanna will not be terminated in the near future, but will rather continue to stay on a low level.

	1984	1993	2005	2010	2012	2015
Number of students	8,744	8,810	5,381	8,184	5000 (estimation)	8,000 (target)
Percentage of students	10.88 %	9.27 %	5.66 %	9.27 %	5.63 % (estimation)	-

Table 17: Students who received Dai language education at schools in Xishuangbanna. Source: Number of students: Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (2010b, pp. 214–217). Data for 2012: Estimation by informant in the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (OF-01_2011-12-05). Data for 2015: Unpublished plan, data by informant in the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education. Value for Percentages: own calculation based on overall student numbers provided in Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education (2010b, pp. 214–217), for caveats concerning quality of official statistics refer to remarks in introductory chapter of this thesis.

Thirdly, minority language education in Xishuangbanna is conducted mostly at rural schools with high shares of ethnic Dai students. Although there is a lack in specific statistics on the issue of who sits in minority language classes in Xishuangbanna, one can deduce information firstly from overall data on the schools that offer minority language classes and secondly from studies made in other regions in China. Although aggregated data on ethnicity cannot reflect every individual student[275] findings indicate that students in minority language classes are in majority of non-Han ethnicity and that their parents' have lower educational attainment levels.[276] As in Xishuangbanna's primary schools, similar to other regions in China (see Wu, Zhang 2010; Hannum et al. 2009), the gender gap has reduced over the last years (Editorial Committee of Xishuangbanna Yearbook 2013) bilingual classes in elementary schools in Xishuangbanna can be expected to be visited to similar degrees by boys and girls. In the financial status of the families not only children of families below the prefectural average income receive minority language education as in many other regions in China (compare with chapter 4), but also children of comparatively wealthy Dai families (see detailed analysis of family background at case study schools in the next chapter).

5.3 Summary of chapter

In this chapter I have outlined an overview on the geographical, social, and linguistic characteristics of the multiethnic and multilingual case study region at the Southwestern tip of China and I have presented in detail its current situation of ethnic minority language education. With this I have indicated that many of the regions' characteristics in terms of language policy are reflected in its education in minority

[275] Accuracy of aggregated data on student characteristics is limited by several issues. Socio-economic characteristics vary extremely within ethnic groups and should be seen in combination with other factors, such as income, locality, or gender (Gustafsson, Sai 2009a, 2009b).

[276] Both the non-Han population of Xishuangbanna and the rural Han-migrant workers at Xishuangbanna's farms have on average lower levels of formal education. Furthermore, parents with higher educational levels and especially teachers try to send their children not to the local schools, but make sure that their children attend better and bigger schools in the county seats (see also Bulag 2010, p. 275). Since bilingual education is hardly ever conducted at the latter ones, educational elite children are less likely to be instructed bilingually.

languages at schools. Firstly, the preference of Chinese language over minority languages in most public domains in Xishuangbanna is reflected in the overwhelmingly stronger position of Chinese in all school subjects here. Secondly, at the same time, the emphasis of the regional government as representatives of a multiethnic region has resulted in programs for Dai language education at schools that comprise diverse instruments such textbook editing, experimental school projects, or teacher trainings. Thirdly, the fact that this support for Dai language is stronger than that for the region's other ethnic minority languages reflects also the historically stronger position of ethnic Dai in the official Dai Autonomous Prefecture.

With this reflection of the social, political, and linguistic situation of Xishuangbanna in its minority language education the programs and the tuition of minority languages in this region are quite unique. However, at the same time, Xishuangbanna's ethnic minority language education features also many of the phenomena that have been discussed in chapter 4 as general trends of minority language education in China. The focus of minority language education on early years of schooling the models that schedule a shift from tuition in minority languages to Chinese tuition within primary schooling, the general decrease of bilingual education especially in secondary education, and the "experimental mode" of bilingual education have been reported from all over China, and Xishuangbanna seems to be no exception.

What is interesting here, however, is the intensive variety of bilingual education within the Prefecture. Not only are there differences between the Counties and between the programs for specific languages, but even within one county and within student populations of one heritage language analysis has shown differences for instance in tuition models, textbook availability, funding, and the numbers of teachers active in minority language teaching. In the next chapter I will reflect further on this variety, when I will discuss how school staff in Xishuangbanna makes decisions under various institutional settings for minority language education.

6 Case study: implementation decisions at schools in Xishuangbanna

Minority language education at school can only be implemented within the specific educational and institutional settings of a given school. As has been discussed in chapter 2 factors such as the student population or the linguistic environment are the basis for minority language education, but the institutional settings of school management further widen or limit the space for such education. In this chapter I will investigate into how institutional settings unfold effects on various elements of tuition, which might even trigger a complete stop of minority language tuition altogether. I will here define the institutional settings that surround minority language education as independent variable and school personnel's behavior concerning minority language curriculum as dependent variable.

In the first part of this chapter I will provide an overview of the institutional spaces for school-based decision making on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. After presenting institutional spaces and limits I will analyze which areas of decision making are affected by these institutions, before in the last paragraphs of this part I will create a broad typology of institutional settings for minority language education at schools, divided into three categories. In order to elaborate these categories I will analyze here a larger number of schools that I have visited in Xishuangbanna.[277]

These broad categories will be represented by three case study schools in the second part of this chapter, where I will introduce firstly to the schools' general characteristics in terms of location, educational attainments of students, languages used, administrative status, and staff situation, before I will secondly specifically elaborate on the contrasting institutional spaces for minority language education at each school.

In the third part of this chapter I will analyze and compare the decisions of school personnel at these three case study schools. This part will be based on interviews with personnel at the three schools and on observations that I made at the schools. Additionally and for contrastive purposes, I will here also refer to observations and interviews from a few other visited schools in Xishuangbanna. In this part I will focus on the behavior of principals and teachers in the implementation process and on the effects that their decisions have on minority language policy implementation. Three processes in

[277] I will refer to the visited educational facilities with numbers from 1 to 33, as shown in the appendix. Additionally, however, I will refer to the three case study schools that will be intensively discussed later with three pseudonyms that I have created with reference to Xishuangbanna's practices of naming places as Mengyi, Menger, and Mengsan (see remarks on these pseudonyms in introductory chapter).

decision making will be especially outlined: interpreting spaces, making use of spaces, and making decisions. In a summary I will conclude this chapter with a pointed discussion on the effects of institutional settings on decision making strategies at the three types of settings at the observed schools.

6.1 Institutional spaces for school-based decisions in Xishuangbanna

The above described diversity of models and outcomes in Xishuangbanna's minority language tuition is closely related to school-based decisions making on curriculum. In the following paragraphs I will thus firstly outline the specific institutionally provided spaces and limits for school-based decision making on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Secondly, I will provide an overview on decision making areas and decisions that have been mentioned by my interview partners during fieldwork visits at numerous schools in Xishuangbanna. Based on this I will thirdly develop a typology of three different types of schools defined by institutional settings for school-based decision making on minority languages. These three types will form the basis for the selection of three case study schools in the next sub-chapter, where I will discuss the effects of institutional settings on processes and perceptions of school-based decision making.

6.1.1 Institutional spaces and limits

The policy instruments and institutional settings described above provide a specific space for school-based decision making on issues of minority language education. In chapter 3 three types of institutional settings have been elaborated that shape the space and the limits for curriculum decision making at Chinese schools: firstly, societal norms on teachers' roles; secondly, the modes of resource allocation and program participation; and thirdly, organizational structures of school, personnel, and curriculum management. Institutional settings in all three types resemble those on curriculum decision making on other school subjects at Chinese schools, but there are also specific differences.

Norms of teacher behavior between state and local community

As I have outlined in chapter 3 the multiple roles of teachers in China between autonomous moral leaders and representatives of the state widen the space for discretionary decision making of school personnel, but at the same time they also limit it. On the one hand teachers, and especially those in ethnic minority areas, are defined by their position as state representatives, as for instance the accounts of Han teachers show, who have been sent to build up a school in Nannuoshan, a Hani village in Xishuangbanna in the early years of the People's Republic. In expressions such as "the villagers cultural level was very low" and "we had difficulties of bringing local students to school" (Zhou

2011a, pp. 117–118) indicate the perceived teacher responsibility to bring knowledge to the villages. As this knowledge is expressed in the nationally unified curriculum there seems to be no space for local diversity as departure from that knowledge.

Additionally, villagers view teachers, especially transferred Han teachers, as representatives of a state that is far away. One teacher describes in these memories the first days when she as a Han teacher was transferred to the newly opened school:

> "The first cohort of students in 1955 was a little bit older. […] Some of these older students said to me: 'On our way to school the village head told us, when the Han teachers beat us, we can beat them back'" (Zhang 2011a, p. 146).

In her text the teacher goes on to describe how much effort it did cost her to establish trust between the teachers and the students. One of her colleagues of that time remembers how they used games such as basketball to attract students and how they invited the villagers' elderly to take part in class to reduce the tensions (Zhou 2011a, p. 120). These examples illustrate the special role that teachers have as representatives of the state not only in the eyes of their employers, but also in the eyes of the village population.

This role of representatives of the state, however, is not always connected with representatives of the CCP. As teachers described their own roles at schools they often referred to ethnic belonging, their professional status as educated teacher, and their position in the school system, but hardly ever as party member. Nevertheless, and although "ideological work" is rather in the realm of the schools' CCP branch secretaries and tuition decisions are separated from this role, especially at small schools where the principals often also have the position of CCP branch secretaries principals might not distinguish between school administrator and party ideology, so that in this case they are representatives of both state and party.

In contrast, teachers of the same ethnicity as the villagers, and arguably particularly those teachers who teach minority languages, also fulfill a role of representatives of ethnic and linguistic groups in the predominantly ethnically Han school system and the role of preservers of minority culture and languages in a linguistically Chinese school environment. Within these roles teachers are expected to make discretionary decisions based on their own beliefs and that of their community. In a plan for future development of bilingual education at one school teachers and principals of that school define teachers as central to represent minority culture:

> "The basis to establish a school with special characteristics is […] to educate and train teachers in order to develop their ethnic consciousness, to raise their cultural awareness, and to make them grasp the use of ethnic culture."[278]

The local community sometimes also sees ethnic minority teachers as community representatives. Students and their families generally know the ethnicity of the local teachers, and they know if these teachers grew up within the community or moved in from outside. Especially to those with local roots, interviewed parents referred to as "one of us", either in the sense that these teachers have succeeded in a career and are thus role models for the community or in that they represent the community at school. Several Dai teachers, for instance those at the schools no. 17, no. 4, and no. 11 told me, that members of the local community have approached them to receive either support in translations of text in Dai script to Chinese or to conduct extra-curricular private classes in Dai language for adults. Although all of these classes have terminated after a short time, they nevertheless exemplify that the local community at many schools has established norms that define ethnic minority teachers as representatives not only of the village community, but also of the language group. Minority language teachers, who in large majority are members of the local ethnic groups, are thus entangled with two competing roles, one demanding loyalty to employers, and the other demanding loyalty to the local communities.

The behavior of parents and students who speak non-Chinese languages at home towards teachers indicates this double position of teachers. On the one side, students have described their contacts to teachers as especially close when teachers speak their own mother tongue. Yao language speaking students in school no. 7, for instance, said that when they were little and when their Chinese was not that well developed they went especially to Yao teachers to solve problems with schooling, as they felt these teachers would better understand them (TE-10_ST-04_2012-01-06). Similarly, teachers often described that those teachers who speak the language of the children and their parents have closer contacts to both. In this respect, ethnic status and language skills are perceived as a tool for special connection between students and teachers.

On the other side, however, parents and students hardly ever raise specific demands concerning minority language education towards teachers. All of the mentioned examples where parents approached Dai teachers to gain Dai language education targeted adult tuition outside regular school classes. Concerning Dai education in schools, by contrast, teachers at all visited schools said that parents hardly ever raise any demands on Dai

[278] Source: Document "Establish the special characteristics of ethnic cultural education. Build up an outstanding bilingual school" (September 15, 2011).

education. In parent meetings, for instance, parents do ask teachers for advice on how to raise students' educational attainments in general schooling, or they request teachers to more harshly discipline the children (TE-22_2012-03-05), but none of the interviewed teachers said that parents have similar demands on Dai language education. The finding presented in chapter 5 that ethnic minority parents in Xishuangbanna generally are in favor of minority language education, but their affective language attitudes only seldom translate into behavioral language attitudes such as raising political demands or choosing schools based on languages can also be attributed to the relation between school staff and parental demands. Parents generally know that Dai language only plays a limited role in schooling, that their children are requested to pass exams in Chinese, and that the job market requires competition in Chinese language. Referring to Hani language in school one mother said: "This is an ethnic minority area. It's better if they speak Chinese in school." She explained that the schools are the only chance for village children to learn Chinese (FA-01_ST-07_2012-02-13). However, despite these sometimes critical voices towards Dai or Hani language in school, none of the interviewed parents recalled cases where they actively went to the school staff to ask for less tuition in minority languages. Even Han parents who complained to me about Dai language courses (FA-09_2012-01-01) have not carried their complaints to schools. The perception of school staff as experts and as officials, whose authority over educational matters cannot be questioned, seems to have prevented such actions.

In effect, the double role of ethnic minority language teachers between state representatives and members of the local community builds up norms for behavior of these special street-level bureaucrats at school level. At the same time, however, the lack of parents' and students' specific requests towards minority language education leaves also space to modify this role.

Modes of resource allocation and program participation

After the abolishment of study fees taking part in specific minority language education programs is a major source for schools to gain resources in terms of tuition materials or teacher trainings. In order to gain trainings for minority language teachers and to gain the regular prefecture-wide textbooks for usage in class it suffices for schools to be registered on lists at the county or prefecture Bureau of Education. However, trainings by the arguably more prestigious "Dai-Chinese Experimental Program", which involve extensive trainings, development of new materials together with foreign experts, and generally an increase in media attention (see program descriptions in chapter 5), requires to be selected by provincial and local Bureaus of Education. For the "Yunnan

Provincial Bilingual Experimentation Schools Program", which brings about 30,000 RMB to pilot schools to be spent on their discretion, being selected as pilot school depends on introduction by local Bureaus of Education or the Yunnan Provincial Committee of Guidance Work for Minority Languages and Literature. Taken together, the pilot-based approach of minority language education experiments triggers dependency of schools on Bureaus of Education and external actors, for instance social organizations, and thus limits the space for discretionary decision making at schools.

However, there are major differences in how the programs connect resource allocation with instructional decision making. The "Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program", for instance, interferes considerably with schools' decision making on instruction, as it demands schools to implement specific methods, timetables, and teaching materials. On the other side, teachers in this program have been involved in writing textbooks and in deciding about the use of materials and the selection of content for each lesson. The "Yunnan Provincial Bilingual Experimentation Schools", by contrast, does not involve any teacher participation with program development, and it also does not interfere with methods or content, as it merely provides school equipment according to the schools' demands. The prefecture-based program for minority language education, finally, provides textbooks and limited teacher trainings, but in light of the lack of mandatory teacher handbooks or standardized evaluations this program similarly merely provides support, but leaves considerable space for school-based decisions on how to make use of this support.

Management of school, personnel, and curriculum

Both internal and external organizational structures of school, personnel, and curriculum management open up and at the same time limit the spaces for school-based decision making on minority languages in Xishuangbanna's schools. In terms of internal management schools have much discretion to organize staff groups and to assign responsibilities between these groups. The diversity of organizational structures between schools indicates this discretion.

The space defined by the scope of evaluations of personnel is split between large discretion in internal evaluations and small discretion in external evaluations. Internally, schools can organize the scope, the frequency, and the criteria for assessment procedures. As has been elaborated in chapter 3, localities and schools in China vary in the criteria and the mechanisms used for evaluations. Concerning minority language education particularly self-evaluation and peer-evaluation as the most localized modes of evaluation systems depend on teachers' own beliefs and preferences. Self-evaluation in minority

language education cannot rely as much as in other subjects on calibrating one's own planned and delivered curriculum according to teacher handbooks, textbooks, and other curriculum prescriptions, due to Xishuangbanna's lack of such handbooks for minority language tuition. Peer-evaluations face similar issues when teachers are required to analyze their colleagues' lessons without clear guidelines. On the one side, this may provide difficulties for both types of assessments, but on the other side it considerably widens the space for school-based decision making when teachers develop their own assessment criteria and modes.

External evaluations, by contrast, limit the space of school-based decisions on minority language education in Xishuangbanna considerably. Since external evaluators often lack Dai language skills they often do not even visit Dai language classes, as several teachers told me. More importantly for teachers is the finding that school evaluations and personnel evaluations also only rarely cover minority languages. In Xishuangbanna neither the large-scale tables of individual and irregular "Educational Quality Examinations", nor the prefecture-wide or county-wide tables of the grades of graduate students (e.g. the "Primary Student Graduation Examination") include items of minority language education (see next sub-chapter).

However, as has been outlined above in detail, even the Bureau of Translation and Editing of Chinese-Ethnic Teaching Materials as Xishuangbanna's best staffed office for minority language education is limited in its grip over schools. Firstly, this office, similar to its smaller counterparts at county level, is separated from the Office for Basic Education and the Bureau for Human Resources, which hold schools and school staff responsible. It has thus no authority or resources to reward successful schools or to sanction non-cooperating schools. Secondly, officers in this Bureau lack the overview on minority language education at individual schools since their resources are mainly to be spent on producing textbooks, not on research on individual schools. Both caveats open up spaces for school-based decisions, for instance on decisions concerning the use of resources provided by the Bureau or the actual implementation of curriculum.

On the one side this blindness of external evaluations towards minority language education limits schools' discretionary spaces. In times when ideas of reformed school management encourage schools to make local and school-based decisions only under simultaneously increased accountability, minority language education faces the risk that unobservable decisions might be seen as irregular or even counterproductive. Schools might thus be pressured to keep the profile of minority language education subjects low and to invest less time and energy here.

On the other side, however, this lack of evaluation mechanisms also creates spaces for school-based decisions. Once teachers know that their decisions will not be evaluated and that they are free to follow their own criteria of good tuition (see discussion of teachers' preferences in the next chapter), schools have gained a large piece of autonomy in making decisions on their own affairs. Especially when the necessities of actual teaching demand tuition in minority languages, for instance when children do not understand tuition in Chinese, the external evaluations focus on outcomes rather than on tuition increases this space further.

Flexible spaces

In sum, institutional settings of the three areas have large effects on the space for school-based decision making. Some settings limit the space for school-based decision making, such as requirements towards teachers to represent the state, resource dependency on programs, and evaluation criteria that demand performance in assessment-relevant subjects. Other settings, however, widen the space for school-based decision making on these subjects, such as low interference of program designs with instruction decisions or the absence of evaluation criteria for minority language education.

Taken together, these institutional settings are united by a degree of flexibility that is larger than that in other school subjects in China. In chapter 3 I have specified that the space for school-based discretionary decision making in China is one of temporary delegation of decisions to schools rather than of fixed autonomy, and that this space is shaped by vague and unclear institutional boundaries. Compared to the nationally unified subjects this is especially true for minority language education. Institutional settings for minority language education in Xishuangbanna are characterized by a continuous swinging between enabling and limiting discretion. This mode creates flexibility, but it also demands interpretation by school personal in arguably more decisions than in other subjects. In the next paragraphs I will introduce some examples of decisions made on minority language education at schools in Xishuangbanna.

6.1.2 Areas of decision making

Based on King and Guerra's (2005) definition of the "locus" of decision making on educational matters (see chapter 3), curriculum decisions on minority language education in Xishuangbanna's schools can be distinguished into those made by government and those made by schools. Table 18 shows a non-exhaustive list of decisions in the areas resource allocation, personnel management, and instructional matters. This table is not

meant as a comprehensive catalogue of decisions, but as a selection of issues that either I have observed during school visits or that interview partners mentioned.

Decision area	Decisions	Locus
Resource allocation		
application	applying for resources	a, b
	approaching external donors	a, b
allocation	selecting pilot schools	a
	allocating funds to school	a, b
budget	spending resources	a, b
Personnel management		
assignment	assigning staff	a, b
evaluation	evaluating staff internally	b
	evaluating staff externally	a
employment	hiring teachers and principals	a
rewards	defining salaries and rewards	a, b
	announcing results of teaching competitions at schools	b
training	organizing teacher competitions	a
	sending teachers to competitions and trainings	a, b
	undertaking research projects	a, b
Instructional matters		
course content	defining class content	a, b
exams	defining class requirements	b
	assigning and evaluating exams	a, b
	defining student rewards	b
students	assigning classrooms	b
	assigning students to classes	b
	grouping students in classrooms and dormitories	b
	assigning students to live at home or to board at school	b
instruction time	timetabling	b
language	choosing language in class	a, b
	choosing language at the school ground	a, b
	choosing language for signage and announcements at school	a, b
methods	preparing lessons	a, b
	assigning and evaluating homework	a, b
support activities	decorating school buildings and classrooms	b
	organizing student excursions to study local culture	b
	inviting externals to lecture at school	b
teaching materials	writing textbooks	a, b
	publishing textbooks	a
	using textbooks	b
	handing out textbooks	b
	publishing teacher handbooks	a, b
	using teacher handbooks	b

Table 18: Table: Locus of selected key decisions on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Note: "Locus" refers to: a: government (central and local, represented e.g. by Bureau of Education) or b: school (principals, administrative school staff, teachers).

Resource management

The area of decisions on resource allocation, application, and spending is much dominated by government responsibilities. According to interviewed principals, schools that have been chosen as pilot schools for program implementations schools are generally required to participate and can hardly reject cooperation (PR-12_2012-01-17; PR-16_2012-03-01; PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10). On the other side, however, some of my case study schools have also been active in applying for resources to spend on minority language education. Principals at the central school no. 9, together with the principal of

the branch school Menger, for instance, received grants of about 30,000 RMB to purchase educational equipment after application with the Yunnan Bureau of Education.

Personnel management

Personnel management is similarly dominated by government activities. None of the schools that I have visited hired teachers specifically for minority language on a school-based system. All so-called "substitute teachers" were employed for subjects such as math, Chinese, or English, but not for minority language education. In terms of teacher evaluation, teacher trainings, and assignment to classes, however, school staff is able to make considerable decisions on a school-based level. Assigning teachers to classes is a school-internal decision, made by staff assembly and administrative staff within the schools, and teachers can informally raise wishes.

The question if minority language education is included in teacher evaluations similarly depends on both the schools' internal administration and on external arrangements. External evaluation is much in the hands of the Bureaus of Education, for instance the decision if minority language education will be included into the evaluation process, but internal evaluations are within the discretion of the school. One school leader, for example, explained that he has the authority to decide if at his school there will be special minority language teacher groups installed for supervision (PR-17_TE-14_TE-28_2013-05-06). However, the majority of the observed schools with minority language education decided to not establish specific internal evaluation mechanisms for minority language tuition.

Decisions if teachers will receive training in minority languages depend on both government and schools. Although the decisions on the overall number of training vacancies for schools is made by the Bureau of Education, and although principals told me that they have to follow lists provided by the Bureaus, the specific decision of who goes to these trainings relies on the school staff. Among the three Dai language teachers at Menger, for instance, only two have been to minority language trainings, whereas the school leaders decided to not send the third soon-to-be-retired teacher. At school no. 5 teachers did not fulfill the vacant training positions, as the school lacks staff to compensate for teachers on training. As one teacher told me (TE-02_2013-05-17) the decision to not go was there jointly made by the teachers and the school leaders.

Responsibility to decide on handing out rewards for well-performing staff is split between the Bureaus of Human Resources, the Bureaus of Education, and the schools. The government agencies define the additional benefits for teachers in so called "remote areas", whereas schools can determine the share of school-based performance-related

rewards. At Menger, for instance, school leaders decided to acknowledge teachers' performance in Dai language teaching competitions as a factor to determine teacher benefits. They also announce the results of these competitions among their staff. According to one principal at this school (PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10) school leaders have the discretion to decide not only on what will be rewarded, but also on the amounts of rewards.

Instructional matters

Decisions on instructional matters are much more made by schools than the previous discussed decisions of resource allocation and personnel management. Decisions on course content and methods are partly prescribed by textbooks, but the usage of textbooks in class differs between schools. One school, for instance, decided to not hand out Dai textbooks for students to take home, since school staff feared students might lose the books, but instead to collect books after each class (no. 4), whereas the large majority of schools gave these books to students without request to return the books even after students graduated.

Furthermore, teachers also constantly make decisions on what to teach and how to adjust teaching to their class. Dai language teachers at all observed schools decided on the amount of homework they prescribe and the methods they choose. One teacher said that in her Dai class it is mostly herself who decides on the content and methods of tuition. She said that she finds singing Dai songs a much more valuable source for tuition than the elsewhere more trained reading, writing, and copying of Dai characters, and that she consequentially uses approximately 50 percent of class time for songs (TE-29_2013-05-07). Another teacher, who also found teaching songs in the diverse languages of Xishuangbanna to be of much use for students, by contrast, hesitated to base her tuition on these songs, since she feared that other teachers at school might find this inappropriate (TE-02_2013-05-17). Despite the differences in outcome, decisions on methods were in both cases made within the school and by the individual teacher, but not by the Bureaus of Education.

Exams and rewards for students are partly affected by decisions by the Bureau of Education and partly by decisions of school personnel. The decision to conduct Dai exams at pre-school level in Mengla County was made within the government, but both the decisions to include Dai language in students' report cards and the decision to count Dai language class results for calculating student rewards were made at school level. At Menger, for instance, student report cards by default list Dai language grades, whereas in school no. 22 the Dai teacher has to ask the students' class teachers individually to have

the grades of her Dai courses listed on students' report cards (TE-29_2013-05-07). Similarly, as one principal at Menger explained, her school used its discretion to reward the approximately 15 percent best-performing students in all subjects, including Dai, with a financial reward of 10 RMB per semester, whereas other schools, and especially those with less regular minority language education, do not include minority languages to these performance-related rewards.

Decisions on grouping students into classes, courses, and dormitories are much left to the schools' discretion. As will be discussed in the next chapter in detail schools differ in arrangement of students to linguistically heterogeneous and homogenous classes. They have the authority to decide on this issue. Similarly, in the matter of assigning students to dormitories schools use different practices. In Menger, for instance, students can choose their dormitory partners, but in other schools teachers will assign who will reside with whom in one room, which might have effects on ethnic consciousness and language learning of students. In terms of assigning classes to specific classrooms schools also enjoy discretion. In several schools that I have visited Dai language is conducted in the newest and best equipped buildings (e.g. school no. 17 and Mengyi), whereas other schools do not distinguish class room quality by minority language education (e.g. school no. 4).

Schools also largely decide on organizing additional support activities for students, such as excursions to local sights or invitations to local handcraft experts. Although not directly related to minority language education, these activities can potentially also be used to support minority language education, for instance by inviting scholars to lecture on Dai language. School no. 17, for instance, has installed a small museum room for traditional Dai farming and handcraft. According to the teachers especially minority language classes use this room also as additional classroom, where students learn minority languages in a classroom environment that teachers perceive as showing local culture.

Finally, decisions on the rules of language use on the school ground are made both by government and by schools. On the one side schools are required to promote the national language Chinese and to make this language the official language at the school ground, for instance in public announcements. On the other side, schools are free to add minority languages to public announcements and to establish additional regulations concerning languages used in the contacts between staff and students. Even in the choice of languages within class teachers enjoy certain discretion. Teachers at one school (Menger) said that they decide themselves on the amount of Dai language they use in

class and that neither school leaders nor administrators from the Bureau of Education inspect this share. Similarly, Dai teachers can decide which of the several Dai varieties they use in class. Several teachers told me that in theory they intend to educate students in the standard Jinghong Dai variety, but in practice their teaching focuses on the local variety of Dai, in order to build up on students' previous knowledge (TE-29_2013-05-07; TE-25_2013-05-01).

Diversity in decision making locus

In sum, this differentiation of decision making between school-based and government-based decisions indicates three findings. Firstly, school-based decisions are found mostly in the area of instructional matters. However, schools also have a say in personnel management and resource management, and government also interferes with instructional matters. This mix of responsibilities between areas reflects the situation in regular curriculum management that has been described in chapter 3.

Secondly, many decisions are made under unclear or shared responsibilities.[279] Decision making under frameworks of consultation has been reported for general curriculum management as well, but in the case of minority language education the unregulated mode of decision making seems to be more prevalent. The lack of regulations, the lack of superiors' knowledge, and the low role of minority language education in evaluations are institutional settings that provide more spaces for school-based decisions on minority language education than for other subjects.

Thirdly, schools vary in the locus of decision making and in the outcomes of decisions. Differences can not only be found in the materialization of tuition decisions, but also in the locus of decisions, for instance when at some schools decisions about curriculum content are made by the teachers, but at others tuition follows the instructions provided by projects developed under the Bureaus of Education.

6.1.3 Three types of school settings

The diversity of institutional settings discussed above allows for a large variety concerning the locus, the mode, and the area of decision making on minority language education at schools in Xishuangbanna. Arranged by the level of involvedness with programs for minority language education I propose to distinguish between three types of schools: "showpiece schools", "resource supported schools", and "left-alone schools" (see "Table of visited educational facilities" in appendix). In light of the flexibility of

[279] Although a statistical comparison of the decision would suffer from bias through the selection and definition of decisions, since these were irregularly mentioned in interviews, the analysis of decisions provided above nevertheless indicates this finding.

institutional settings I view these types as continua on a multidimensional span of combined institutional settings,[280] rather than clearly defined points.

Showpiece schools

The first type of schools is defined by strong involvement of schools with minority language education under far-reaching decision making by school-external actors. Minority language education at schools of this type is strongly connected to programs, as these allocate large resources to schools and define modes and content of tuition. There are externally defined structures for regular contacts between the schools and the minority language officers at the Bureaus of Education. Evaluation mechanisms support the schools' efforts in minority language education. The schools have established internal organizational structures such as committees that strengthen the voice of minority language teachers in school matters. The Bureaus of Education expect teachers here not only to represent the state, but also to function as presenters and preservers of local culture and with this combined role to stand in for the state's promise to respect local culture in the educational realm.

With this type of schools decision making is predominately located with the Bureau of Education, with donor organizations, or with school-external experts who design the programs. Decisions on funding allocation can be expected to be made outside schools, but there might also be considerable space for school-based decision making on instructional matters if school staff is involved in designing programs as school-based experts.

Examples of schools of this type can be found in Xishuangbanna especially among those schools that participate in the "Dai-Chinese Experimental Program". These schools, as has been said above, received considerable additional resources in terms of material, teacher trainings, and funds. In exchange, minority language education at these schools is more supervised than at all other schools in Xishuangbanna. Pilot schools such as Mengyi and school no. 6 have often received delegations from the Bureaus of Education, from social organizations, and from scholars. Additionally, their tuition model received much attention by print and online media, and local population seems to be well informed about these schools' minority language education. In light of this public attention and the role that the Bureaus of Education assign to these schools, I will refer to this type of schools with the metaphorical term "showpiece schools".

[280] This idea echoes Hornberger's (2007) model of the continua of bilingualism, according to which language use in education is shaped by multi-dimensional factors of language practices and ideology in society, schools, and politics.

Resource supported schools

The second type of schools is also involved in programs, but these programs merely provide support in resource allocation and refrain from extensive institutionalized interference with instruction. External structures of minority language curriculum have been established, such as the Xishuangbanna Prefecture Office for Translation and Editing of Chinese-Ethnic Teaching Materials, to provide support for schools by textbook provision and by organizing teacher trainings. However, institutionalized formal contacts between the Bureaus of Education and the schools on the matter of minority language education are comparably few. The regular external evaluation mechanisms overwhelmingly ignore minority language education; and there have been no specific assessment measures installed that could evaluate, reward, or sanction minority language education teaching activities.

Decisions under this type of school settings are much more located at school level than decisions under the first type. On the one side schools are expected to deliver some kind of minority language education, but on the other side many decisions are left to their discretion due to the lack of supervision, guidance, and standards in teaching procedures.

During my visits to diverse schools in Xishuangbanna I found the large majority of schools that currently conduct Dai language education with the support of county, prefecture, or province programs to be in this type. Schools such as no. 17 and Menger run tremendous Dai language education, but they lack, for instance, in institutionalized measures to include teachers' performance in Dai language classes into the promotion-determining teacher assessments. Since these schools receive considerable, although at times unstable, support for minority language education, but this support does not include much steering on the content or methods of tuition, I call schools under this setting "resource supported schools" with the emphasis on the absence of control and management beyond material resources.

Left-alone schools

The third type of schools consists of those schools that lack institutionalized support for minority language education completely, but that, nevertheless, are in some way or another involved with minority language tuition. Programs for minority language education have either never reached these schools or they have been run here in earlier times, but have terminated in the meantime. There is a lack of external management support for minority language education at these schools. Teachers, for instance, are not invited to minority language trainings, and there are no books provided in minority

languages for teachers and students. The Bureau of Education defines the teachers' role here as representatives of state and national knowledge, whereas local language knowledge transmission is not supported by any kind of assessment measures.

Surprisingly, within these non-supportive institutional settings for minority language education there is quite some space for school-based decision making on tuition in these languages. Despite that these schools are strongly bound to follow the standardized national curriculum, and assessment measures evaluate their success, the lack of assessment and requirements specifically on minority language education also opens up spaces for school-based decisions. Firstly, as these schools are merely subject to outcome evaluations, such as students' grades in Chinese language, there is still some room to make decisions on how to reach these goals. Secondly, as there are no requirements to fulfill specific goals of minority language education schools can decide themselves on how much they let the local languages influence their teaching.

I found that several schools in Xishuangbanna belong to this type of schools. Firstly, there are schools such as no. 8 and no. 19 that have been pilot schools but after experts from social organizations or universities have left, the schools have been left with the discretion to continue, to marginalize, or to terminate the tuition started by these projects.[281] Secondly, there are those schools where minority language education has been conducted under the auspices of the Bureau of Education for a certain period of time, but later the Bureau has withdrawn resources or the local school leaders have decided to fade out minority language education. School no. 4, for instance, that used to have an extensive Dai language education, does not list Dai language education anymore in the students' timetables, and teachers merely occasionally use Dai in their regular teaching. Thirdly, there are also those schools where teachers use minority languages for communicative purposes in class, even though the schools have no official minority language education. Teachers at many schools in Xishuangbanna told me that they sporadically use minority languages when students' Chinese skills are insufficient to conduct tuition all in Chinese. In all three cases schools have considerable discretion to make language-related decisions beyond the official minority language education programs. As school staff is here not only left with the remains of previous programs, but also with the decisions of how to best conduct tuition under the lack of institutionalized

[281] The project on "Community-based Education for Traditional Knowledge" at school no. 8, for instance, has been terminated within a few years after the project was introduced to the school. School no. 19, by contrast, continues to teach the curriculum of the "School-based Curriculum Development Project" weekly. According to teachers at both schools the decision to continue or to terminate teaching project content has been made within the school (TE-26_TE-27_2013-05-01; TE-02_2013-05-17).

support for minority languages I call schools under this type of institutional settings "left-alone schools".

Differences within types

These three types of institutional settings indicate that specific institutional settings shape the modes of decisions on minority language education differently. Institutional settings at the "showpiece schools" can provide larger resources, but limit schools' discretion on instructional decisions. Schools are required to implement minority language education, and due to the outstanding position of schools under this setting an exit from minority language education based on schools' wishes is very unlikely. Settings at the "resource supported schools" similarly provide resources, but leave instructional decisions in larger degree to the schools. Schools are likely to continue with minority language education once they have been selected by higher echelons, but the modes of implementation of this tuition depend on school-based decisions. Settings at the "left-alone schools", finally, can provide teachers and principals with discretion to make decisions in far-reaching areas, including the complete stop of minority language education.

However, at the same time, these types also must be seen as rather idealized types of institutional settings and decision making processes that cover the differences between schools within one type. In the realm of institutional settings, schools within one type can vary in the way a program is "taken up" at schools. The five "showpiece schools" of the "Dai-Chinese Experimental Program", for instance, differ in their enthusiasm for the program and developed thus different reactions and support mechanisms, from hosting conferences and writing proposals on the one extreme, to rather hesitative or superficial implementation on the other extreme. Schools within one type also differ in the management structures that they installed for minority language teachers. Although in terms of program support schools no. 22 and no. 17, for example, can be grouped into the "resource supported schools" type, but school no. 22 assigns the school's only Dai teacher into the Chinese language teacher group, whereas school no. 17 leaves this decision to the teachers. Finally, the roles of teachers also differ within the schools of one type, based on the local community's beliefs, and the modes of how the teachers respond to these beliefs. Decisions made on such diverse bases can be expected to differ as well, from continuing minority language education unofficially on the one side, to shifting all tuition to Chinese on the other.

In sum, the types of institutional settings at schools provide a broad categorization of spaces for school-based decisions. I argue that institutional settings for school-based

decision making on minority language education in Xishuangbanna are larger than those for other subjects, and that the flexibility and the diversity of institutional settings can explain differences in implementation between schools. However, a more detailed categorization must be complemented with in-depth analysis of institutions and decisions at individual schools. This analysis must include firstly the specific requirements, goals, and problems of the individual schools, and secondly an analysis of the decision making process, the intentions of those who make decisions at schools, and their perspectives on institutionally provided spaces for decisions.

6.2 Minority language education at three case study schools

In the last subchapter I have developed three different school types, distinguished by the space for school-based decision making on minority language education. In this subchapter I will introduce three case study schools as examples for these three types. As I have elaborated in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the case selection follows what Gerring (2007) has termed the "diverse case" selection strategy, namely to choose cases in maximum variety in order to represent full range of variation of variables. These three cases hence do not aim at establishing representativeness within a population of schools, but rather they aim at establishing validity through causal relationships within the case. The goal of this selection is to build up exploratory hypotheses and to provide results within the parameter of different institutional settings for ethnic minority language education. I selected thus case study schools on the criteria of similarity in the respective languages taught (Dai or Bulang language in addition to Chinese), and difference in the institutional settings that accomplish the tuition (one school per institutional type).

In order to understand the background of the three case study schools (which I will refer to as Mengyi, Menger, and Mengsan[282]) I will in the remainder of this sub-chapter firstly introduce to the overall educational, administrative, and linguistic situation at the three case study schools, before I will secondly describe specific items of minority language tuition here. In the last part of this sub-chapter I will investigate into specific institutional settings for minority language education at the three schools. Similarities and differences between the three schools will be in the center of this presentation.

[282] Concerning the usage and development of these three pseudonyms, see remarks in the introductory chapter.

6.2.1 Education, administration, and languages at case study schools

The three schools presented here all share specific characteristics such as a high percentage of non-Han students, but they differ largely in other characteristics, such as school size and administration. In the following paragraphs I will present these characteristics in four areas: first, school location and catchment area population; second, school infrastructure, administration, and personnel; third, schedules, students, and educational attainments; and fourth, ethnic groups and languages.

School location and catchment areas population

The three case study schools are located in three different counties or county-level cities (Mengyi: Jinghong City, Menger: Mengla County, Mengsan: Menghai County), but they are all located in rural areas, are referred to as rural schools (乡镇学校), and sit on grounds belonging to village committees (村委会). However, there are major differences in location of the schools and the local villages with effects on accessibility. Mengyi and Menger are located in valleys (called "bazi") of agriculturally rich areas with developed road networks, whereas Mengsan is located in a rather small and secluded mountain village, reachable merely on a sand road. Mengyi and Menger are comparatively near to the political and economic centers of Xishuangbanna (Mengyi is 30 minutes and Menger one hour away from Jinghong's city center by bus), but Mengsan fulfills criteria that interview partners had in mind when they spoke about "remote villages": after a 4 hours bus ride from Jinghong center one needs a foot walk of two hours to reach the village, it has no through traffic, and, additionally, it is the closest of the three schools to international boarders (the boarder to Myanmar is reachable in approximately 30 minutes by car).

In all three cases the location of the schools and the building style distinguish the schools from the surrounding dwellings. The schools are located in exposed positions at the main overland streets amidst rice paddies (Mengyi, Menger) or at the village street (Mengsan). The architecture clearly identifies the buildings as schools, and thus as part of a national network of similar looking school buildings; and it distinguishes them from the architectural style of the students' homes. The school buildings, including teachers' residential buildings and student dorms, sit amidst gated school ground and consist of two-floor buildings made of concrete with no reference to local architectural styles (see example images from schools in Xishuangbanna in appendix). The villagers, by contrast, reside in majority either in traditional wooden houses or newly build bungalows which both in majority stand on stilts and feature distinctive regional elements, such as roof

ornaments in local style. Long ago are the days when, as one interviewee described, school buildings where made of wood or bamboo donated by villagers. Together with symbols such as the national flag, the school name, and other information written on the gates, the school buildings thus indicate already from the outside a special sphere of nationally unified structures that represent the state as distinct from the villages.

Nearly all families of the schools' student population are registered under a rural Hukou household registration, work their own fields, or, in the case of rich households, manage employed farm laborers. Both Mengyi and Menger are, although in few numbers, also visited by children of non-local and migrant farm laborers from other parts of Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, or China. This means that the students within one school come from very diverse families in economic terms. On the one extreme there are rich families who rented their land to plantation companies, live well from these rents, and moved into new bungalows, and on the other extreme there are families who live in one-room shacks within the plantations and harvest rubber or Banana trees with a monthly income below the local average.

The level of formal educational background of the students' families is on average lower than that of urban students,[283] which in the eyes of many interviewed teachers has negative effects on the students' motivations to learn and on parents' motivation to support their offspring in learning. Teachers (including Dai teachers) employ stereotypes to describe Dai children and especially those Dai children with wealthy family background as lazy, as putting no efforts in homework, as often skipping class, and as often dropping out from school in young ages.

School infrastructure, administration, and personnel

The educational infrastructure differs much between the schools, but all three schools are less well equipped than the respective central schools or the schools in Xishuangbanna's urban areas, not to mention comparison with schools in China's big cities (see chapter 3). The school buildings of Mengyi and Mengsan have both been build several years ago, the buildings are in a grey and uninspiring style, chairs and tables are rather old, and the school ground, at most, offers one basket ball field for physical education. However, Mengyi has a special building that is painted in white and that has been newly equipped with furniture, which is reserved for Dai language education.

[283] Although I possess no survey data specifically on the family educational background for the three case study schools, in interviews teachers and family members of selected students said that the current children's grandparent generation often did not visit schools at all, and parents generally only for a few years. In hardly any of the households there were any books or other literature. Reading was not a common leisure time activity in the families, but instead TV sets were present in each visited household.

Mengyi offers a small teachers' room. In Mengsan there are teachers' rooms, but these are extremely small and teachers prefer rather to go home during breaks. As, according to the teachers, there are already plans to move Mengsan's students and teachers to the nearest central school and to reuse the school-building for other purposes there are no investments into improving Mengsan's current school building. Menger's infrastructure, by utilizing provincial funds for school building safety, improved in the last years from grey concrete buildings with rotten furniture to brand new white multi-story school buildings. The teachers' rooms are larger than in the other two schools and the principal has an office with room for a secretary. A student dormitory building was opened in 2011. However, when compared to Menger's central school's library, science lab, and piano room[284] we find extreme differences between both schools. The reason for this difference is simple: The central school runs a kindergarten and can transfer the fees from this business to the school in order to fund school infrastructure or to hire additional teachers for extracurricular activities. All three case study schools lack this opportunity as most of the parents in their catchment area are farmers who refrain from sending their children to a kindergarten.

The three schools are examples of different stages in the national school merger program. Mengyi and Mengsan have been established decades ago as village schools, and remained at their locality, but now there are plans to merge these schools with other schools. Mengyi took already students of other schools, but currently, as school staff told me, the school is exempted from the merger program, which, as will be discussed below, might be related to the school's Dai language tuition. Mengsan, as the smallest, is scheduled to be merged with the closest central school in the near future, as teachers said, and selected cohorts of the village children already visit classes there. Menger, in contrast, can be seen as the product of school mergers. Although the school existed already before, the school took up altogether 8 teaching point schools between 2007 and 2008 from the surrounding villages, has been renamed, and has been transferred to a new school campus.[285]

In terms of school administration all three schools are branch (or satellite) schools which are attached to and administered by central schools. However, the schools differ much in the exact specification of this share of administration. Both Mengyi and Menger have a school-based "Branch School Manager" in the rank of a vice-principal who

[284] School-internal statistics from 2011 provide more details on educational material available at the central school, such as 50 electronic piano keyboards, 15 pairs of Badminton rackets, 10 pairs of Ping Pong rackets, 400 books in the library, an orchestra of 89 drums, and 50 chess boards. The attached school Menger does not possess any comparable tools.

[285] Between 2005 and 2013 24 schools merged to three in Menger's township.

organizes educational and administrative matters at the branch school, whereas political representation of the school is formally in the hands of the principal at the central school. Additionally, both schools have administrative posts that are filled by teachers who, in return, have their teaching obligations reduced. “Teaching and Research Groups” and “Subject Groups” engage in planning and organizing of curriculum, but according to my interview partners at the schools, teachers discuss school matters more often in informal meetings than in formal meetings by these groups. At Mengsan, by contrast, there is no position of vice principal or “Branch School Manager”, and instead one of the teachers serves as “contact person” to the central school. As leaders from the central school, however, only seldom visit Mengsan, and the other teachers see this contact person as their leader, he has much discretion in organizing teaching matters. Due to the small size of the school’s teacher body there have been no formal committees or groups for administrative or teaching matters installed at Mengsan. Instead, teachers regularly discuss tuition decisions in informal talks during breaks or after class.[286]

Similarly, the schools differ also much in the number of teachers, in teachers’ educational background, and in teachers’ professional level. Altogether 24 teachers work at Mengyi, 27 at Menger, and merely 3 at Mengsan, which is a teacher-student ratio of 1:16 at Mengyi and 1:19 at Mengsan (see Table 19). Some of these teachers obtained bachelor degrees, whereas others have only a low formal education, especially those who have been privately hired by the village committees and have been transferred into the regular teacher pool when China’s formerly village teachers increasingly become paid by government (see details in chapter 3). Similarly, the school staff varies in age and teaching experience from teachers who only recently came to the school to teachers who worked for decades at this particular school and are soon to retire.

	Mengyi	**Menger**	**Mengsan**
Teachers	24	27	3
Students	389	443	56
Teacher-Student ratio	1:16	1:16	1:19

Table 19: Number of teachers and students at case study schools. Note: Data refers to different years: Mengyi: 2009, Menger 2012, Mengsan: 2011. Source: Own calculation, based on interviews.

Worth mentioning is also that teachers’ own children overwhelmingly often have a high educational status. Several teachers had their own children send to the best secondary schools in the county and even during primary schooling some teachers sent their children to the central school instead of the schools where they teach themselves. It

[286] All teachers at Mengsan live in very close distance to each other, often cook together, and have many opportunities to chat.

seems that they especially valued formal education which is not only understandable through their own professional background, but also by the lack of other income opportunities for children of non-local teacher families with little access to farm land.

As most of the teachers at all three schools have a history of being transferred between schools in Xishuangbanna,[287] they have detailed opinions on the quality of their current workplace, based on their perceptions of desired work places. Although all interviewed teachers are paid equally[288] and in time[289], they are disadvantaged to their colleagues at urban schools. Firstly, in contrast to teachers at urban schools who might be able to earn extra income by offering additional private tuition (despite its legal prohibition) none of the teachers at the three case study schools can offer such teaching since there simply is no demand for private tuition in the villages. Secondly, although housing was provided by the schools for those teachers who came from outside teachers at complained much about their housing situation on school ground. In Mengsan the two teachers who were not born in the village live in brick barracks that have been erected several decades ago and that both teachers describe as "dangerous buildings" (危房), a term used in policy documents to describe school buildings that are in risk of endangering the life of teachers and students by collapsing. Menger's teachers live in barracks of somewhat similar appearance, only this time they have erected these buildings by themselves, since even in the new school building no teacher housing was provided for.

Schedules, students, and educational attainments

Both the daily schedule and the taught subjects differ between the three schools. Curriculum at all three case study schools covers the core subjects math and Chinese as well as the non-core national subjects "ideology and morality" and physical education. Tuition of other subjects, by contrast, varies between the schools and some subjects of the national curriculum are not taught at all. None of the schools teaches English or Information Technology due to a lack of educated teachers in the former case and a lack of teaching materials in the latter case. Mengyi and Menger regularly teach Nature, Social Science, Music, and Art. Teachers specialized in some of these subjects take turns in

[287] The large majority of my interview partners at all three schools migrated during their college education and for finding jobs. A typical biography of teachers at Mengyi and Menger is the following: Being born in towns or villages in Xishuangbanna or other localities in Yunnan, they visited local schools and studied an education major at colleges. After graduation they took a position as teacher and have been transferred to rural schools. After several transfers due to school mergers or due to climbing the career ladder they have been transferred to their current post.

[288] Teachers at Mengsan received an additional "remote school" compensation of 50 RMB per month, which they, however, perceived as low and unsuitable to compensate for their hardships.

[289] The problem of so the called "delayed teacher payment", that was a common complaint among teachers since the 1980s, has been solved at Xishuangbanna's schools.

teaching these subjects to students in special courses. At Mengsan, by contrast, these latter subjects are taught merely irregular and by non-specialized class teachers. Although the weekly schedule also provides for these subjects, math and Chinese receive much more time than scheduled, which is due to the teachers' preferences towards subjects that they find more useful for their students (see discussion below). Although all three schools conduct tuition in the morning and in the afternoon, differences in boarding facilities trigger differences in schedules. Only Menger has facilities for school lunch and for boarding, which shortens school breaks and allows adding specific "self-learning" classes in the evenings for doing homework under the supervision of teachers. In Mengsan, as there is generally only one teacher per class who teaches all subjects, students and teachers both become more easily tired, and teachers more often decide to end class earlier.

The schools' student population differs much in size. Menger is the largest school with 443 students, Mengyi is in a middle position with 389 students, and Mengsan is the smallest school with 56 students in three classes. They all have no apparent gender gaps,[290] they feature enrollment rates of 100 percent in the case of Mengyi and Menger and 99.38 percent in Mengsan,[291] and there is hardly any official dropout of students.[292] Compared to the central schools these schools are small: The central school that Mengsan is attached to, for instance has a student population of around 500, which is more than 9 times of that of Mengsan. Similarly, Mengyi's number of students is only half of that of the central school. Mengyi and Menger feature the complete set of grades of pre-school and primary education with one year of pre-school education and six years of primary education. Mengsan, by contrast, conducts only tuition for classes in three grades, with every second year one first grade starting. Students of enrollment ages between

[290] As the schools' statistical data sheets that principals gave me during the interviews regularly do not differentiate student population according to gender, I am unable to determine specific gender ratios. The school data claims that in each of the school districts there are enrollment rates of 100 percent during primary schooling, which thus counts for both genders. My interview partners told me that student drop-out, which often is related to gender, is merely a phenomenon of secondary schooling, but not of the case study's primary schooling.

[291] The delayed schooling of school-age students in Mengsan who had to wait to start schooling until next year contributes to this lower number, which is one reason for planning to merge Mengsan with the central school in order to allow schooling for all children.

[292] The official rate of students who graduate from primary schools compared to the enrollment rate (巩固率) is nearly 100 percent at all three townships. Although both the enrollment rate and the drop-out rate have been found to lack accuracy especially during secondary schooling (see remarks in the introductory chapter), not only teachers and principals at the three schools but also villagers in the catchment areas said that since enrollment is mandatory and families of drop-out students are punished these figures are likely to be accurate for locally registered children, although this cannot be guaranteed for children of migrant workers and farm helpers with non-local registration. According to school administrators the schools set no barriers for school visits by these children.

these grades either wait to be enrolled with classes in the next year or they visit the central school. The latter option, however, is difficult due to the long school way to the central school. Similarly, the schools differ in the student-per-class and the student-per-teacher ratio. With an average class size of 19 Mengsan's classes are also the smallest, because there aren't that many children in the village. Class sizes at Mengyi and Menger are much larger with 34 and 39, respectively. These numbers are around the national average,[293] but in comparison to the central schools they are still small.[294]

Only one of the schools has facilities for students to board at school. Approximately 50 percent of Menger's students board at school. The school-internal regulation is that students whose home is within a distance of three kilometers from school should live at home, whereas the others shall board at the schools from Monday to Friday for fees.[295] Over the weekends all students should stay at home, but occasionally the school administrators allow students from difficult family backgrounds to stay at school. The school (in contrast to its central school) has no special staff for boarding students,[296] and teachers have to care for students after class and during night shifts. Generally, teachers and school administration are thus interested in sending students home for weekends, and especially if students got ill they send students home in order to avoid any risk related to giving medicine to students. Students, by contrast, not necessarily prefer living at home over school dorms. In interviews some boarding students at Menger preferred to live at the school, claiming that it is "more fun", whereas others said that they missed home (ST-12_2012-03-02).

[293] For 2010 statistics reported an average class size in China of 38 students per class (own calculation, based on data from the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education 2012)). Note: These statistics are approximations and include to a small degree over-reported student numbers due to administrators' tendency to keep those students who have already left school in statistics (see introductory chapter). Furthermore, as an effect of the rural school merger program that explicitly aims at reducing costly small-sized classes in villages, the national class sizes can be expected to have grown in the meantime to some degree. Finally, they only reflect accumulated average class of schools, but between the classes of one school there can be large differences. In Menger, for example, I counted up to 56 students in one class, whereas pre-school classes have been much smaller in all observed schools.

[294] As has been elaborated in chapter 3 parents seem to prefer central schools over satellite schools. Especially those students whose families reside in border regions between catchment areas are allowed to choose schools, although students are generally asked to visit the schools in their catchment areas. The principal of Menger's central school said that his school often takes students from border areas, but that his school has difficulties to enlarge the school due to its location within the township center. (PR-12_2012-01-17) As a result, this school had a student-per-class ratio over the last years of an average of 49.

[295] According to one principal the fees for one year of boarding accumulate to 1640 RMB (PR-12_2012-01-17). For wealthy land owners this is no problem, but especially for farm helpers paying this sum at once can be difficult, which is why the school also offers to pay the fees on a monthly base.

[296] Such staff is called "life teachers" (生活老师). They take care for students' needs and security, but they do not have to possess formal teacher education.

Analysis of selected data[297] of the student results in the so called "Education Quality Evaluations" by the County Bureaus of Education and the "Primary Student Graduation Examinations" by the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education[298] indicate that students at the three schools often, but not always, score lower than their peers at the central schools and at urban schools (see all Table 20). At Mengyi, for example, class examination conducted in grade 5 in 2008 show that Mengyi's students scored lower than students at the central school and lower than the township average. Grade 1 students in the year 2011 at the same school, by contrast, scored higher than both students at the central school and on township average. Students at Menger have been said to score regularly lower than students at the center school. School leaders at the central school said that they worry much about Menger's scores (PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10). The 2010 Primary Student Graduation Examination scores document this, when Menger's graduate students scored merely 87 percent of the students at the central school, 83 percent of those in township average, and nearly one third lower than their peers in urban schools.

Examination			**Mengyi**			**Menger**			**Xishuangbanna**		
Name	**Subject**	**Grade**	Mengyi	Central school	Township	Menger	Central school	Township	Prefecture	Urban schools	Rural schools
2008 EQE	Chin.	5	58	70	63						
2011 EQE	Math	5	45	66	60						
	Chin.	1	88	84	84						
	Math	1	75	68	66						
	Chin.	1 (Dai)	83								
	Chin.	1 (Han)	93								
	Math	1 (Dai)	75								
	Math	1 (Han)	76								
2010 PSGE	Chin.+ Math	6				101	116	121	124	145	121
	Chin.	6				58	63	63	63		
	Math	6				43	53	58	61		
2012 EQE	Chin.	3				67					
	Math	3				68					

Table 20: Selected evaluation results at case study schools compared to central schools. Note: Table indicates average student scores (平均分). Maximum achievable scores: 100 per subject. EQE: Educational Quality Examination; PSG: Primary Student Graduation Examination. Source: Own calculation after school-internal documents and unpublished data of Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education.

Within the student population of all three schools there is a share of monk students.[299] Among the three schools Mengsan's student population has the highest share of monk students with approximately 10 percent of the whole student population

[297] Note: The data that I obtained during fieldwork research differs much between schools. At this point I am merely able to present selected data on examination results on classes in non-matching grades and years. Comparability between the individual data sets can thus not be achieved.

[298] Due to the differences in exam sheets the "County Education Quality Evaluations" data only allow comparing between schools within one county, whereas the "Primary Student Graduation Examinations" as prefecture-wide standardized test sheets allow comparing schools in different counties.

[299] The term "student monks" refers to boys who live in Buddhist temples, but who are educated at both the regular schools and in classes within the temples, see chapter 5.

or 20 percent of the male student population, next to Mengyi with some 5 percent (10 percent among the boys) and Menger with not more than 1 to 2 percent. According to their class teachers, monk students at all three schools do not score noticeably lower in tests, despite their double workload in school and temple.[300] Although highly visible as a group through their orange robes and shaved hair, monk students seem to be integrated in school life at all three case study schools. They join regular tuition and after-class games, including sports. None of the schools installed special classes for monk students; and integration seems to be a goal of the school leaders. When I asked non-monk students about making friends with monk students some students made jokes about the monk students' praying and eating habits, but others said that there is no difference to making friends with other students.

Ethnicity and languages

In terms of official ethnic registration the student populations at the three schools are predominately non-Han, but the teachers are in majority Han. The high share of non-Han population in the location of all three schools is reflected in the officially registered ethnicity of student population at the schools as well, although the specific ethnic composition differs between the schools. Mengyi's and Menger's students are predominantly registered as Dai, followed by Hani, whereas Mengsan's students are all registered as Bulang (see Table 21). School mergers and migration have reduced the share of Dai students at both Mengyi and Menger. Mengyi, for instance, took the first Han students when the neighboring Han settlement school was merged into Mengyi in 2006. The currently ethnically homogeneous Bulang classes of Mengsan will become more heterogeneous once the school merges with the central school and students visit the central school together with Han, Hani, and Dai children of the surrounding villages.

The ethnic share of the school personnel, however, differs much from that of the students. Mengyi's and Mengsan's teachers are in majority Han, whereas Menger's teachers in majority are Hani (see Table 21). Menger has been above the Prefectures average of 67 percent non-Han teachers in 2005 (Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education 2010b, p. 221), whereas Mengyi and Mengsan have been below this average. Although all

[300] This observation differs from that of Luo (2011) who observed that monk students workloads resulted in anxiety and fatigue with negative effects on their school marks. The gap between my observation and Luo's might result from a change in learning schedule of the monk students. Luo's analysis that state and religious education to compete with each other can be complemented by the finding that state education seems to have won this competition. In all three schools, similar to other schools that I have visited, teachers told me that the number of student monks has reduced over the last years, that temples reduced workloads for religious studies, and that today monk students' educational achievements are not a problem anymore.

three branch schools' leaders are registered as non-Han, all three central schools are headed by Han principals.

	Mengyi	**Menger**	**Mengsan**
Central school's principal	Han: 1	Han: 1	Han: 1
Branch school's principal	Dai 1	Hani 1	Bulang: 1 (position: teacher)
Teachers	Han: 10 (42%) Dai: 9 (37%) Yi & Jinuo 5 (21%) overall: 24 overall non-Han: 14 (58%)	Hani: 18 (67%) Dai: 5 (18%) Han: 4 (15%) overall: 27 overall non-Han: 23 (85%)	Han: 2 (67 %) Bulang: 1 (33%, is also "Contact Person") overall: 3 overall non-Han: 1 (33%)
Students	Dai: 241 (62%) Hani: 86 (22%) Han: 62 (16%) overall: 389 overall non-Han: 327 (84%)	Dai: 244 (55%) Hani: 186 (42%) Miao: 9 (2%) Han: 4 (1%) overall: 443 overall non-Han: 439 (99%)	Bulang: 56 (100%) overall: 56 overall non-Han: 56 (100%)

Table 21: Ethnic registration of school population at case study schools. Note: Principal at branch school refers also to "Branch School Manager" or "Contact Person". No. of students in Menger is approximation. Year of data: Mengyi: 2009; Menger: 2012; Mengsan: 2011.. Source: Own calculation after school documents and interviews.

Ethnic registration has at all three schools a strong function as ethnic marker for students. All students who I spoke with knew which ethnic group they, their parents, their classmates, and their teachers belong to. Being Dai or Hani was clearly an issue for students in defining if other students belong to one group or not. Students in Menger, for example, separated their dorms according to ethnicity and seem to play during class breaks more often with students from the same ethnic group than with students of other ethnicity.

However, this official ethnic registration indicates only parts of the picture. Firstly, as I have discussed in chapter 4, the ethnic registration is firstly merely an umbrella term that subsumes different ethnic groups. Within Menger's Hani registered students, for example, there are several students that others refer to with the unofficial term Ake and who differ from the other students in family background (lower family income than the average Dai and Hani families), looks (often wearing dirty or shabby clothes), language (other than Chinese, Hani, or Dai), and behavior (language barriers limit communication with many class mates). Referring to these indicators their classmates saw these children as a distinct group, and referred to them as being "strange", "poor", or simply "different". Secondly, the official registration neither necessarily reflects the identity of groups, nor does it indicate preferences of individuals. When I asked students about their best friends they pointed to other children from their home village, regardless of the ethnic registration of that group. Also, the choice of students' clothes did not depend ethnicity, but rather on financial background.

Within this complex net of strong ethnic belonging on the one side and individuality beyond ethnic markers on the other side, institutional settings at the schools play a major role in determining the role of ethnicity in defining identity. Generally, and similar to all other schools that I have visited in Xishuangbanna, all three schools emphasize ethnic registration status of each student and make these statuses public, for instance by student lists in the classrooms. However, there are also differences in how schools treat ethnic registration of their students. Foremost, the case study schools presented here differ in the question if students study in ethnically separated or in mixed classes. Mengyi, for instance, segregates students according to ethnicity. Although the distinction between students into classes is officially conducted according to language ability and the languages to be learned, in reality students of Dai ethnicity are scheduled[301] to visit Dai classes and students of all other ethnic groups visit the Chinese classes. Among students and teachers these classes are known as "Dai classes" and "Han classes". When I asked one Han student who sat in the Dai class he furiously told me that he should not sit there because he is Han. In this respect ethnically divided classes contributed to increasing the importance of ethnic registration for identity formation. School leaders at Menger, by contrast, decided to not segregate students by ethnicity into different classes, but instead carefully try to achieve ethnic mixture. For appointing students to classes Menger established the rule that a maximum group of eight students from one village (and thus often from one ethnic group) can attend together one class, whereas they are separated into two classes once the group is larger. With classes of up to 56 students, students from one village form thus only small groups within the classes.

Additionally, individual teachers' references to ethnicity also affect the construction of ethnic identity in the schools. Teachers at both Mengyi and Menger (similar to other schools that I have visited in Xishuangbanna) often used terms such as "you Dai students" or "you Hani students" in class when addressing groups of students, for instance when they asked if students understood what they said. In the case of the above mentioned Ake students at Menger, teachers also contributed to installing a negative image of this group. When I asked the students who had difficulties in understanding me the teacher said in front of the class that "those Ake students" would lack in Chinese. Later students explained me that this teacher, similar to other teachers, often yells at these students, which is, in their words, because Ake students in general are

[301] The school claims to ask the parents for their consent to send children to either of the classes, but several Dai parents told me that they have not been asked and thus had no option about their children's language tuition at Mengyi (e.g. FA-08_2012-03-09).

"misbehaving". Through this, the teacher's perspective became the students' perspective in creating a negative image of an ethnically defined group of students.

Generally, ethnic registration can serve as an indicator for the case study students' heritage language. Most students at Mengyi and Menger speak Dai or Hani as their heritage language, and students at Mengsan speak Bulang. However, a large share of the students at the three case study schools also speaks Chinese or other non-Chinese languages at home, often split between generations.[302] According to several villagers in the village of Mengsan, for instance, the village population speaks in addition to Bulang also Dai and Hani as the languages of their neighboring villages. Similarly, many students said that since that their parents have different heritage languages they speak at home both or even more languages. Taken together, this indicates that language diversity and bilingualism (and sometimes even trilingualism) is common among the student population of the case study schools.

In majority non-Han children at all three schools get acquainted at young age to minority languages, whereas script knowledge seems to be learned only by those students who undergo minority language education at schools. Although several interviewed Dai and Bulang students said that their grandparents can read and write Dai only very few said that their grandparents taught them Dai script. Similarly, none of the Hani students who I spoke with at Menger or at Mengyi even knew of the existence of a Hani script. Furthermore, despite a few shop signs in Dai script there is hardly anything to read in minority script. The local bookshops do not offer a single book in minority scripts. Comic books, favorites of students at all visited schools, are also only available in Chinese script.

Not only the Han students, but also the ethnic minority students get acquainted in large majority to Chinese at young age, either through contact to Han students or through exposure to Chinese language media. The language learning process that children in the communities of the three case studies undergo outside schools is one-directional: speakers of minority language learn Chinese, but not the other way round. Each visited household of locally registered families with school-aged children in the case schools' villages had a TV set, and some even a computer (the latter ones not in Mengsan, though). Migrant worker families, by contrast, own less often TV sets and computers, but often radios. In any case, language exposure either to conversation of Chinese speakers, TV,

[302] Non-Han students said in non-representative surveys at the case study schools that they use both Chinese and minority languages to speak with their parents, but only minority languages to speak with their grandparents. Xishuangbanna's linguistic divide between generations, can thus be found with the families at the three case study schools as well.

radio, or computer usage results in high prevalence of basis Chinese skills among some of the students at the case study schools, and teachers who remembered difficulties that they encountered in earlier years of basic communication with the students said that this problem is much lower today.

However, ethnic minority students' Chinese skills at the case study schools not only lack behind those of their Han peers, but some of the non-Han students suffer especially. According to teachers at Mengyi and Menger there are only few students who do not understand Chinese at all at the time of school entrance, whereas teachers in Mengsan said that the majority of students does not understand Chinese. To large parts this can be attributed to linguistic heterogeneity at Mengyi and Menger and to linguistic homogeneity at Mengsan, but partly also to differences in the frequency of travelling to Jinghong or the near towns, as students in Mengyi and Menger on average have more opportunity to visit these places and hear Chinese language. In effect, students of "remote" places, have difficulties not only in the first grades,[303] but also when it comes to advanced knowledge. Mengyi's ethnic Dai grade 1 classes, for instance, scored in the 2010 Educational Quality Examinations ten points less than the students in the Han class, although they scored similar in math (see above Table 20). Similarly, within the Han classes ethnic Dai students attained also the three lowest scores in Chinese (14, 18, and 27 points out of 100 possible points). In Menger, where students sit in ethnically mixed classes, one cannot compare student results by ethnicity based on classes, but teachers assured me that in their experience a similar finding can be drawn here: ethnic Han students gain higher scores in Chinese language than Dai, Hani, Ake, and Yao students, which shows that Chinese language education provides particular difficulties for ethnic minority students.

Teaching Chinese proved to be difficult in all three schools since the teaching schedule was not adjusted to teaching and learning Chinese as a second language. In Mengsan, where none of the students spoke Chinese as heritage language these difficulties were especially obvious. School books and thus the book-oriented teaching schedule followed at this school reserve only the first few weeks of grade 1 for learning Pinyin. Texts of the complete first year are only written in Pinyin. They do not schedule learning sound, pronunciation, and the complete language system at all. The teachers at

[303] Especially students of recently merged schools more often lack in Chinese skills. The so called "Ake" students that I have referred to above, for instance, were not able to communicate in Chinese when I visited Menger's pre-school and even first grade classes. Teachers found it extremely difficult to teach as they themselves did not speak the students' language and lacked the time and skills to teach Chinese for beginners.

Mengsan tried their best to explain the sounds of Chinese, but for the students' learning the sound system of a language that they barely spoke provided difficulties. In result, after the first semester Pinyin and pronunciation as well as basic skills in expression, reading, and writing were still largely problematic, and even after one year the Pinyin rules had to be repeated again and again, which slowed down the learning of vocabulary and texts that the textbooks scheduled for the first years.

Within this mixed linguistic background the use of languages at the school ground also differs much. Firstly, ethnic minority students in younger grades more often choose minority languages than Chinese when they speak to other students of the same ethnic group, but for contacts with Han students they use Chinese as the common language. In communication with teachers, however, this distinction is less clear. Teachers address Dai students at Mengyi and Menger during class mostly in Chinese, whereas after class they also use Dai language. Sometimes, however, teachers also use minority languages to address students in class, especially during the bilingual classes or when they feel that students might not understand Chinese. Secondly, schools differ in their written language environment at the school ground. All signboards at Menger and Mengsan are merely written in Chinese, whereas at Mengyi some selected boards such as classroom numbers and offices are also indicated with Dai script.

6.2.2 Minority language tuition at case study schools

The three schools all use minority language education at some point in their curriculum. Mengyi and Menger have Dai language education included in the regular schedule with two hours per class in selected grades (this is called "non-program" Dai language courses here, 非项目傣文课), but since 2005 Mengyi has been additionally chosen as a pilot school in the "Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program" and in the successor program, the "Zero Barrier Bilingual Education Project" (see program description in chapter 5). With the support of diverse project partners the school conducts bilingual education from pre-school on with a completely different set of methods than the so called "regular" Dai language education in Xishuangbanna. Menger, by contrast, is one of the two schools of the "Yunnan Provincial Bilingual Experimentation Schools Program" in Xishuangbanna. Although this program did not change methods of Dai tuition, the school's Dai language education expanded under the support from grade four and five to pre-school classes. Mengsan, finally, is not involved in any minority language education program anymore. After a Bulang-Chinese program for bilingual education that uses Dai script was terminated around the turn of the century, Mengsan has not been selected as pilot or project school for any bilingual education program

anymore. Nevertheless, as one of the teachers here uses Bulang language as an additional tool for class communication in the first grade, minority languages continue to play a role in this school, although a limited and a rather unofficial one. In the following paragraphs I will provide an overview on the tuition of minority languages at schools, before I will distinguish the institutional settings for management and decision making on minority language education at the schools in the next sub-chapter.

Classes and school hours

Classes and school hours of minority language education differ much between the three schools (see Table 22). Mengyi has extensive minority language education. The school has two streams of classes: a Dai language stream and a Chinese language stream. Whereas students in the Chinese stream have to wait for Dai language education until grade 3 or 4, the Dai stream students of so called "project classes" begin their school education in junior pre-school purely in Dai, add Chinese from senior pre-school, and switch in grade 1 completely to Chinese with the exception of merely two Dai hours per week until grade 6. Menger's' Dai language education follows a different path: here all students receive Dai language education, independent from their ethnicity. Pre-school students sit in Dai courses of flexible time, and in grade 4 and grade 5 they attend Dai classes of two hours per week. Mengsan, as the third school, differs much from the two other schools. After the official Bulang/Dai-Chinese bilingual program has been terminated, there is no official minority language education conducted at this school anymore and officially all tuition is conducted in Chinese.

	Mengyi	**Menger**	**Mengsan**
Grades with Dai language tuition and no. of classes	junior pre-school : 1 senior pre-school: 1 grade 1: 1 grade 2: 1 grade 3: 1 grade 4: 1 grade 5: 1 grade 6:1	junior pre-school: 1 senior pre-school: 1 grade 4: 2 grade 5: 2	0
No. of classes overall and no. of minority language classes	13: 8	14: 6	3: 0
Weekly school hours taught per class	junior pre-school: Dai only senior pre-school: Dai and Chinese, flexible grade 1 to 6: 2	pre-school: flexible grade 4 and 5: 2	0

Table 22: Classes and school hours of minority language education at case study schools. Source: Own calculation after interviews.

However, in addition to the official language education indicated above teachers in Xishuangbanna also sometimes use minority languages as language of instruction and as tool in their classes. Teachers at Mengyi and Menger use Dai language as language of

instruction in pre-school classes, whereas, according to my interview partners at these two schools, this was not necessary from grade 1 onwards. Once students enter this class, they said, tuition can be completely conducted in Chinese. At Mengsan, a school that does not have official minority language education scheduled, teachers in majority also start with Chinese. One of the three teachers, however, said that in the first months of the grade 1 he often uses Bulang language as additional language of instruction in class, which means that at least one third of the students at Mengsan experience Bulang language at school, although they do not learn to write Dai script.

In both Mengyi and Menger the weekly timetable reflects the low importance of Dai language tuition in the schools' curriculum compared to the core subjects such as math and Chinese. In both schools Dai courses, similar to courses of the subjects Labor and Art, are scheduled on the afternoon. Only at pre-school level Dai language education is also conducted in the morning, due to the flexibility that pre-school teachers, who are also the class teachers, have in determining the schedule of their own classes. The morning classes at both schools have been reserved for math and Chinese. Mengyi's Dai lessons are mostly scheduled for the 4th, 5th, and in majority for the 6th school hour of the 6 hour-days (see Table 23). According to my observations students at all three schools are more tired in the afternoon school hours than in the morning classes, which means that scheduling Dai language education to the afternoon has negative effects on learning abilities, motivations, and outcomes.

Grade	Junior Pre-school	Senior Pre-school	1	2	3	4	5	6
Position in timetable	flexible	flexible	Thu: 4 Fri: 6	Mo: 6 Thu: 6	Thu: 6 Fri: 6	Tue: 5 Wed: 4	Mo: 4 Tue: 6	Thu: 4 Fri: 5

Table 23: Timetable of Dai language classes at Mengyi in school year 2011-12, second semester. Source: Own calculation based on school-internal documents.

Students, parents, and teachers

The three schools differ strongly in the number of students and teachers who are involved in the tuition of minority languages (see Table 24).

	Mengyi	**Menger**	**Mengsan**
Estimated percentage of students who ever underwent Dai language education at school	100 %	100 %	0, but flexible informal minority language education
Estimated percentage of students who underwent Dai language education at school in 2012	61 %	100 %	
Teachers overall	24	27	3
Teachers trained in minority languages education total	5	2	1
Teachers who received minority language education pre-service trainings	at least 1	1	1
Teachers who received minority language education in-service trainings	5	2	0
Teachers currently officially teaching minority languages (and in percentage of all teachers at school)	4 (17 %)	3 (11%)	0 (0%)

Table 24: Students and teachers in minority language education. Note: No. of teachers trained in minority languages refers to pre-service and to in-service trained teachers. Percentage of students who ever or in school year 2011-12 underwent Dai language education is estimation, based on no. of classes with Dai language education. Source: Own calculation after school-internal documents and interviews.

All students at Mengyi and Menger undergo Dai language courses at some point of their primary school career, irrespective of their ethnicity or language background,[304] but students who went through schooling in the year 2012 at Mengsan never received official school education in Bulang language or Dai script, and they only occasionally use Bulang language at school (see Table 24). However, Mengyi and Menger differ in the role that ethnicity plays in the amount of Dai language tuition that students receive at each school. Mengyi, as has been elaborated above, distinguishes students rather rigidly into those who visit Dai language classes from pre-school level on and those who visit Chinese language classes from pre-school and receive merely a short tuition of Dai language in the fourth and fifth grade. At Menger, by contrast, all students receive Dai language education in pre-school, grade 4, and grade 5.

The preference for Dai over Bulang, Hani or other languages, however, means also that some students, who presumably could benefit from mother-tongue education, are only served by unofficial language usage in class, but not by official language programs. Students in Mengsan, who have, according to their teachers, a lower Chinese language background than other students in the region, receive merely a few explanations by their teachers in Bulang language over the first few months. Especially after the school will have merged with the nearest central school and when younger students will visit classes with non-Bulang speakers, it will be much more difficult for them to receive such additional support. Menger's Hani or Ake speaking students who have difficulties with

[304] According to a projection of classes that contain courses of Dai language, but not considering students who come later than grade 5 or who leave earlier than grade 4, all students at both schools receive Dai language education.

understanding Chinese are similarly not served by formal bilingual mother tongue language education. For them learning Dai language in additional classes could potentially help in communication with Dai students, but as the Dai classes focus on script rather than on oral communication, Dai language classes construct an additional burden to students who already struggle with learning Chinese.

Students' and parents' opinions on the segregated tuition at Mengyi and the ethnically mixed education at Menger reflect the perceived pyramid of language hierarchy in Xishuangbanna. Some non-Dais criticized the forced Dai language education at Menger as detrimental for learning Chinese, and non-Dai students said that they don't like the class because they don't see a use in it. One student answered the question of what he thinks about his Dai studies with the simple sentence: "I am not a Dai" (ST-12_2012-03-02). One Han mother who migrated from Sichuan to Xishuangbanna argued that although learning the local Dai language might be good for understanding the region's language she is worried about her son's progress in the other subjects (FA-09_2012-01-01). Ethnic Dai parents at both schools, by contrast, approved that their children learn Dai language at school. They said that their children should inherit their ancestors' language and learn about Dai traditions. However, other Dai parents saw the ethnic separation at Mengyi more critical. One Dai father, for instance, assumed that the ethnic separation is more a measure to separate well-performing Han students from presumably less studious Dai students (FA-08_2012-03-09). Parents of children at Mengsan, where students do not receive any official minority language, expressed diversified opinions. Among my interviews partners some argued that they wished their children had the chance to learn minority languages at schools to preserve ethnic heritage, but others argued that the school should merely prepare their children in the national curriculum.

In sum, the hierarchical ordering of languages seems to be often welcomed by Dai, but criticized by speakers of other languages. However, none of the parents and students who expressed their dissatisfaction with the current language schooling was able to recollect any action that they have done to change this situation. Generally, even the dissatisfied parents and students have the idea that whatever the school arranges must be followed and cannot be changed from the parents' side. Especially the decision of who receives Dai language education is seen as made "high above". The expression "listen to teachers' arrangement" was common in statements of parents in Xishuangbanna (e.g. FA-08_2012-03-09; FA-04_2012-02-26).

Dai script teachers at all observed case study schools have acquired Dai or Bulang as mother tongue, and have additionally learned Dai script at home, at temples, or at schools and colleges. The majority of these teachers have been also educated in Dai language pedagogies, either through pre-service teacher education or through in-service teacher trainings in bilingual education. At all three schools at least one teacher underwent Dai education during his or her college studies at the Xishuangbanna Vocational Technical College. In addition, two of Menger's teachers have also attended teacher trainings at the Yunnan Province Bilingual Teacher Training Program and went to trainings organized by the Prefecture and County Bureaus of Education, but one teacher never underwent a specific training in Dai language pedagogies.[305] Mengyi's teachers received bilingual training through the "Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program".[306] However, the number of teachers who currently teach minority languages differs from that of bilingually trained personnel at all three schools. Mengsan's one teacher with a degree in Dai-Chinese education is currently not involved in official bilingual teaching, although he uses minority languages unofficially in his classes to communicate with students. In Menger, the situation is the opposite: more teachers engage in official Dai language tuition here than there are teachers who underwent teacher trainings. At Mengyi, finally, less teachers are currently teaching Dai language than there have been trained, since one teacher, who has been trained by the "Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program" is permanently ill.

The staff situation at these schools prevents further expansion of Dai tuition. None of the schools gained additional teacher posts in the staff appointment scheme specifically for minority language education. Since they similarly cannot hire additional private teachers (see chapter 3), Mengyi and Menger had to fulfill Dai teaching requirements with already available teachers at the schools. Although Mengyi is one of Xishuangbanna's schools with the highest share of Dai-Chinese bilingually trained teachers there is still a lack of such teachers, for instance to cover for teachers on leave. Menger's available Dai teacher force suffices currently merely for tuition in selected classes, since all Dai teachers have to fulfill teaching requirements in other subjects and have class teacher responsibilities as well. Even if, however, all available Dai teachers at this school would be scheduled to teach only Dai language courses, their combined class hours workload would be insufficient to expand Dai tuition to all classes from pre-school

[305] This teacher regrets that school leaders never sent him to teacher trainings. Since his two younger Dai colleagues both have been sent to such trainings, he assumes that the school is only willing to "invest" into younger teachers, but not into him who was going to retire soon.

[306] For a description of these trainings refer to chapter 5.

to grade six. At Mengsan, finally, the available bilingually trained teaching force would allow installing minority language courses, but currently this potential is not used.

Curriculum

The intended curriculum of Mengyi and Menger, as formulated and justified in schools documents, combines language goals with goals of learning about ethnic cultures and of becoming a "civilized" citizen. The yearly plan for bilingual education at Menger lists language goals such as "to be able to communicate in Dai", "to learn the 42 letters of the Dai script", or "to master 1500 Dai words", but it also proposes that tuition should cultivate students' qualities, such as "to enjoy reading", to "love books", and "to avoid uncivilized speech".[307] In a proposal for minority language education at Mengyi the school staff and administrators at the Jinghong Bureau of Education write that the overall goal of Dai-Chinese bilingual education is not only to educate "experts in both minority languages and Chinese", but also to "rise the quality of the teaching force", to "strengthen the ethnic cultural knowledge among teachers", to "develop moral work at school", to "propagate the beauty of ethnic culture" and to "strengthen ethnic confidence."[308] By this combination of language goals with educational goals and cultural goals in the intended curriculum reflects the different policy goals of educational and ethnic policies in China.

In detail, however, the frameworks of the intended curriculum for class education differ much between the schools. The pre-school "project" classes of Mengyi follow an additive-maintenance model that aims at bilingualism. This model intends to build up a multi-glossic language environment as a tool for Dai students and a monoglossic one for the separated Han students (see chapter 2 on linguistic and social goals in bilingual education models). The "school-based" Dai classes at Menger in grade 4 and 5, by contrast, follow at least in theory a recursive-developmental framework. The linguistic goal is hetero-glossic bilingualism where both Dai and non-Dai students speak Dai in addition to Chinese. Minority language education is a means to fulfill the right of the minority to preserve their own language and to transmit language knowledge to the next generation. Bilingual education at Mengsan, finally, that uses Bulang language as a tool to support tuition in Chinese language, follows the subtractive-transitional framework. The focus is on the students' lack in Chinese language skills, and the linguistic goal of this

[307] Source: Internal document of school Menger: "2012-2013 学年善学期双语教学工作计划 [Plan for bilingual education in 2012-2013, first semester]." Received during interview PR-16_2012-03-01.

[308] Source: Internal document of Jinghong City Bureau of Education concerning minority language education at Mengyi (2011-12-15): "景洪市 XX 小学创建傣汉双语教学示范点实施方案 [Proposal for implementation of Dai-Chinese bilingual education at XX Elementary School in Jinghong City]". Received during interview TE-32_2013-05-20.

tuition is monolingualism. The direction is thus clearly one way: Minority students (in the case of Mengsan Bulang students, in the case of Menger Hani or Miao students) are supposed to learn Chinese, and using minority language is thus only a tool on the way.

However, the picture features also much diversity. Firstly, the content of the enacted curriculum differs much between the schools. Dai tuition at the pre-school classes at both Mengyi and Menger and the "project classes" in Mengyi of grade 1 and 2 focuses much on script acquisition, but also contains communicative approaches. Tuition at the pre-school classes in Menger includes songs, and in Mengyi Dai language is used to produce stories. Especially Mengyi's Dai pre-school classes combine language learning with non-language-related content, such as studying local culture, nature, and ethnic customs. The so called "regular" classes of prefecture-wide Dai education models conducted in Menger's grades 4 and 5 and Mengyi's grades 3 to 6 focus on language knowledge, but not on communicative skills, and on written language, but not on oral language. In all observed classes under this model observed tuition was limited to teaching Dai graphemes, words, and sentences. Dai is here merely a content of tuition, but neither Dai language classes nor core subjects use Dai as language of instruction. Unlike at the two other schools, tuition conducted in Bulang language at Mengsan is limited to the oral domain and to a few sentences used in the class. It does not contain lessons specifically on minority language knowledge or for the improvement of already existing Bulang oral skills.

Secondly, there are also differences in the methods. Teachers in Mengyi's "project classes" use a more varied set of productive methods. Each week the class discovers a new topic based on the program's Dai textbook, and this topic will be the basis for story-composition, drawing, and class discussion. "Non-project" Dai courses in Mengyi and Menger use the "Xishuangbanna Dai primary school textbook". The methods are book-oriented and center on rote learning, such as copying graphemes or repeating single words in class. Students have to do very little homework in Dai language, mostly only coping letters and words. In the tuition model of Mengsan, by contrast, teachers use minority languages merely as a tool in regular classes of other subjects. The Bulang teacher at Mengsan, similar to other teachers at village schools with students of low Chinese proficiency, uses minority languages merely as an oral tool to explain other school subjects' content, but he does not engage specific methods for language tuition.

In terms of the assessed curriculum all official minority language courses at the schools contain written tests on knowledge in Dai language, but there are differences in the modes and content of assessing students. Only in the Dai pre-school class at Menger

teachers use standardized county-wide test sheets on script recognition and writing provided by the County Bureau of Education, whereas in all other classes teachers use self-composed test sheets. In Mengyi students of pre-school classes and higher grades are also assessed in Dai language skills, but here assessment is completely based on school-internal and class-internal evaluation sheets. Mengsan's students, finally, are only tested in Chinese language, whereas neither Dai script nor Bulang language is used for test sheets or is assessed by examinations.

Although the learned curriculum in minority languages is difficult to assess in light of a lack of standardized assessment, through classroom observation and exemplary interviews with students and teachers I was able to collect some insights into the outcome of the observed language classes. Dai language pre-school classes at Mengyi enabled students after a few months to write not only graphemes and words in Dai language, but also to compose complete stories in Dai. Grade 5 students at Menger, by contrast, were even after 18 months of Dai instruction unable to write basic words such as their own name in Dai. Tuition stood still with repeating graphemes, and students did not sufficiently learn to combine these into words, let alone to write texts. Similarly, there were large differences in students' oral competencies in these two classes. Tuition at Mengyi's project pre-school classes enabled students to narrate stories and to comment on the stories of their classmates. Menger's Dai speakers in grade 5, by contrast, did not seem to have improved Dai oral skills and non-Dai speakers in this class did not gain oral or written language skills that could be used for communication. At Mengsan, finally, students seem to have not improved their minority language skills, as the curriculum did not include explanations or exercises on minority languages.

The schools also differ in what students learn beyond minority language skills. Firstly, concerning knowledge on specific "ethnic" culture students in Mengyi's pre-school project classes gained knowledge about Dai culture such as architecture, traditional tools, or festivals, but Menger's grade five students, by contrast, were unable to recollect any other class content than the language-related one. Secondly, the schools differ in the effects of the minority language education on Chinese language learning. Several indicators suggest positive effects of Mengyi's "project classes" on Chinese language education, for instance teachers' statements that tuition conducted in Dai language has supported their students' Chinese learning, (PR-04_2011-12-31; TE-32_2013-05-20; TE-04_2012-01-04) and the project classes' better attainments in Chinese grades: students at the bilingual classes (overwhelmingly ethnic Dai, who at other schools regularly score lower than Han, see above), scored in the project classes similar to the predominantly

Han classes (see Table 25). At the other two schools effects of minority language education on Chinese attainments where not measurable due to a lack of test groups for comparison.

	Bilingual classes (ethnic Dai students only)	**Chinese language classes (diverse students)**
1	75	76
2	82	84
3	only one class: 69	
4	only one class: 77	
5	77	74
6	70	74
average	75	76

Table 25: Average grades of Dai-Chinese classes versus Chinese-only classes in "Chinese language and literature (语文) at Mengyi in 2010/2011. Source: County-wide student evaluation by County Bureau of Education.

The curriculum at the three observed case study schools differs in its implementation from the intended curriculum in the case of Mengyi and Menger, but it fulfills the intentions in the case of Mengsan. The additive-maintenance model of the intended curriculum of the bilingual pre-school "project classes" of Mengyi succeeds in following the bilingual model in the first two years of pre-school, but once students enter the first grade minority language tuition is reduced to merely two school hours per week. In effect, this program helps students to overcome language barriers at the first place, and it supports the transmission of script knowledge in students' heritage languages, but in the long run the succeeding reduction causes a standstill of language usage at school. Curriculum implementation similarly corrupts the recursive-developmental framework of the intended curriculum of Dai classes at Menger in grade 4 and 5, as this Dai language education fails to enable students to actively use the language and script and hence does not contribute much to revitalization of heritage languages. The limited usage of Dai script to merely special courses prevents Dai language from becoming a resource for the students. Since non-Dai students in class stay monolingual, the classes also fail to create a hetero-glossic linguistic environment. Minority language education at Mengsan with unofficial usage of minority languages in class is the only case where the enacted curriculum fulfills the intended curriculum. The subtractive-transitional framework, that sees minority languages as a problem and aims at language shift of students, is fulfilled by the enacted, the tested, and the learned curriculum. Minority speakers learn Chinese and they also learn that their heritage languages are not suitable for schooling. Learning is thus one-directional and bilingualism in class changes after a few months to monolingualism.

In sum, the different modes of minority language curriculum conducted at the schools presented here can be seen as different stages in the shift from the "traditional"

to the “reformed” curriculum that reform policies in China aim at since the beginning of the new century. Education at Mengsan follows the most centralized curriculum. Chinese, math, and other standard subjects are the only courses offered, whereas local curriculum subjects are currently not taught here. Minority languages are excluded from the intended and learned curriculum content, and are merely used as a tool when Chinese language tuition reaches communicative barriers. The model of Dai language education practiced in the higher grades of Mengyi and through all Dai courses in Menger is a first step form leaving the centralized curriculum in selected courses. Curriculum in this language is localized and intended to connect to students’ linguistic background. However, this curriculum is restricted to specific courses of comparatively few school hours per week, whereas the regular courses remain unaffected and monolingual. Furthermore, the still prevalent teacher-centered methods and book-oriented content also remain far from the agenda of the curriculum reform policies. The project pre-school classes at Mengyi, finally, are nearest to the curriculum reform agenda. Content of classes is localized and teachers have the opportunity to adjust content to local environment and to use student-centered, production-oriented, and project-based methods.

6.2.3 Accountability to state control and spaces for school-based decisions

Minority language tuition at the three schools is embedded in institutional settings which both support and limit the use of minority languages in class. These institutional settings not only determine which languages can be used in class and to what degree, but they also affect the space that school staff has for making decisions on these issues. In the next paragraphs I will first consider a selection of different institutional settings with relation to program participation, evaluation mechanisms, and the norms of teacher behavior, before in the second part I will address the effects of these settings on school-based decision making at the three case study schools.

Program dependency

All three schools are currently or have formerly been pilot schools in minority language education programs by the Bureaus of Education. In addition to the general modes of how schools are embedded in the system of state provision of educational services (see chapter 3) these programs use schools again as implementers of state policies and define schools as part of state hierarchy. Governments choose schools to implement programs. According to several interview partners, schools have hardly any choice to reject these programs, but instead they are required to find ways and resources to add school hours, to assign teachers, and to organize tuition.

On the other side, however, the above mentioned programs also open up spaces for school-based decisions. Firstly, the specific instruments of programs in minority language education provide schools with additional resources. In the realm of organizational tools, programs have provided Mengyi and Menger with teacher trainings, textbooks, and other educational tools. As far as authoritative tools are concerned, Mengyi and Menger have been both approached by government offices to conduct minority language education, but in the case of Mengyi this has been more regularized, for instance, when the Jinghong Bureau of Education edited a plan to conduct minority language education specifically at this school.[309] In terms of financial tools, Mengyi received educational supply through programs, Menger received direct financial funds to spend on educational supply on own' discretion, and Mengsan did not receive any funds or tools specifically for minority language education at all. In terms of informational tools, finally, program participation brought especially for Mengyi additional benefits in knowledge about educational methods when teachers and external experts designed methods, wrote textbooks, and generally discussed the benefits and approaches of minority language education. Furthermore, Mengyi's visibility in printed and online media improved through the program,[310] which together with comparatively frequent visits by external experts can also reflect back on "school identity", when school staff, superiors in educational bureaucracy, parents, and students see the school represented by minority language education programs. At Menger, informational tools in the shape of teacher trainings have been used merely to inform teachers about methods, but did not schedule method development with teachers. Mengsan, again, lacks in such tools, and the school is not represented in the internet.

Additionally, participation in programs for minority language education also affects the schools' prospects in the school merger program. Although Mengyi is a rather small school, it was so far exempted from school mergers, similar to the other pilot schools of the "Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program". Menger's school merger, by contrast, has triggered expansion of Dai language education, as it increased the number of available Di language teachers. The plans to merge Mengsan presumably

[309] Internal document of Jinghong City Bureau of Education concerning minority language education at Mengyi (2011-12-15): "景洪市 XX 小学创建傣汉双语教学示范点实施方案 [Proposal for implementation of Dai-Chinese bilingual education at XX Elementary School in Jinghong City]". Document received during interview TE-32_2013-05-20.

[310] As of March 2014, the internet provided only information about Mengyi and Menger, including photos of the school and classes. Whereas for Menger online reports relate merely to the newly opened school buildings, information on Mengyi focuses on the schools' Dai language program. Additionally, publically available printed and online project reports by the organization SIL present also minority language education at Mengyi (SIL - East Asia Group 2010).

have contributed to terminate this otherwise successful program here. Although my interview partners at the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education were reluctant to comment on the effects of minority language programs on the sensitive issue of school mergers[311] they repeatedly emphasized that minority language education programs need linguistically homogenous student populations of small, non-merged village schools. In the rather inapprehensible process of the Bureau of Education's selecting merger candidates minority language programs might thus well be a factor that contributes to exempting pilot schools from school mergers.

Evaluations as management tool

Similarly to other schools in China (see chapter 3) the three case study schools as part of government bureaucracy in China are subject to regular evaluations. Officers from the Office of Compulsory Education and from the Office of Educational Research in the Bureaus of Education regularly visit all three case study schools for classroom observation and for controlling teachers' class preparation and student supervision. Additionally, all three schools have also been approached by the irregular evaluations of student exams in specific classes. Similarly, the prefecture-wide and county/city-wide comparative tables based on graduation exams of sixth-graders graduation exams list the yearly results of two of the schools (Mengyi and Menger; Mengsan has no students in sixth grade). Finally, in all three schools, as teachers and administrators assured me, teaching is also peer-evaluated by regular mutual teacher classroom visits. All these different evaluations establish accountability of staff at the three schools, and they embed the schools in the state hierarchies. As school staff is regularly evaluated, their leeway for decision making in regular subjects is rather small and confined to those decisions that benefit evaluation results.

For minority language education, by contrast, evaluations provide a much larger space for school-based decision making. External school evaluations in Xishuangbanna generally do not list criteria on minority language education in the catalogue of assessed items. Neither the "Educational Quality Examinations" nor the "Primary Student Graduation Examinations" contain information about student results in minority language classes. Accordingly, school rankings based on these exam tables cannot reflect success in Dai language education at the three case study schools. For teachers, however, the lack of

[311] As has been discussed in chapter 3, school mergers in China are a highly controversial issue when they mean that village students have to board at school due. Due to the wide criticisms towards this program officers for minority language education in the Bureaus of Xishuangbanna and the Counties hesitated to comment on this issue.

institutionalized quantitative assessment of their work means that at all schools Dai language teaching is disadvantaged compared to other subjects and that they may focus on those subjects where they gain benefits in assessments. The only exemptions are here the pre-school classes of Menger that have been subject to Mengla County-wide examinations in Dai language in 2011 and subsequent years. Interestingly, in these years Dai language has been the only subject in which pre-school students at Menger had to sit in county-wide exams, which arguably provides Dai language education with a specific weight here compared to minority language education at other schools.

However, qualitative assessments of teaching processes beyond the student examinations have been more outstanding at Mengyi. This school has regular and frequent contacts to the minority language officers in the City Bureau of Education with mutual support in writing proposals and it also often hosts Chinese and even foreign visitors to conduct research and teacher trainings on minority language education. Institutional settings provide for Mengyi's Dai language teachers hence more chances for feedback than for teachers at Menger and Mengsan. Menger has hosted once the Dai language teacher competition, but the school has never hosted minority language education experts from province, prefecture, or county on the issue of Dai language education (TE-22_2012-03-05). According to the then-teacher, Mengsan's former Dai/Bulang-Chinese bilingual program has been evaluated as successful in raising students' skills in both Chinese and minority languages, but this evaluation seems to not have benefitted the minority language education conducted here, as the program was terminated soon after, speculatively due to the small size of the school's language program and the school's merger prospects (TE-12_2012-01-27).[312] Since then, the school has not been approached ever again by official evaluators on the issue of minority language education or on the problems of ethnic minority students' acquisition of Chinese language.

Similarly, internal Dai teacher evaluation mechanisms are more elaborated at Mengyi than at Menger. Mengyi, for instance, demands that teachers visit each other's classes once a week, and this includes also visits to Dai language classes. Since there are several Dai language teachers especially in pre-school classes, they can even visit colleagues who teach the same grade. Menger, by contrast, does not schedule teachers' peer-evaluation, and in the above mentioned plan for bilingual tuition the school writes merely that Dai teachers should mutually visit each others' classes in unspecified

[312] Although during fieldwork I was not able to clarify the exact reasons for terminating the official minority language education at Mengsan, at this point it suffices to show that the decision was made outside the school and positive evaluations of the teaching success did not stop termination of the program.

frequency and content, but during my one-week fieldwork I never saw teachers visiting each other's Dai classes. At Mengsan, finally, neither colleagues nor visiting leaders of the central school provide feedback on minority language education.

Evaluation mechanisms at all three schools paint a complex and even confusing picture for the students. On the one side, students both at Mengyi and Menger receive their assessment results in Dai language similar to that in other subjects on their report cards (see picture in appendix), which also effects students' rewards (Menger hands out 10 RMB per semester to high-achieving students; Mengyi hands out classroom supply such as pens and notebooks). However, once students enter the last step of their elementary school education, only results in Chinese and math count for the Primary Student Graduation Examinations, which determine students' chances to visit prestigious secondary schools. Furthermore, the lack of Dai language education at all secondary schools that graduates from the three schools regularly transfer to also lowers the importance of Dai language education for students.

Norms of teachers' roles

Generally, institutional settings define minority language teachers at the three schools by their professional positions as members of the state bureaucracy. They have been trained at state-run colleges, their job positions are provided by government agencies, and both salary and promotion depend on standardized evaluations. Taken together, these institutional settings demand that all three case study schools' educational and administrative staff, similar to other schools in China, represent the state and consider state ideology in curriculum decisions.

However, in addition to this, institutional settings at least partly also define that teachers and administrators are experts on street-level. The program design of Mengyi's Dai language education values teachers' expertise when it asks for their advice and support in writing textbooks, choosing content, and discussing methods. In the case of Menger different institutional settings have been provided to use teachers' expertise in Dai language tuition. Teachers at this school are regularly asked to participate in teaching competitions and teacher trainings, and there is the possibility to conduct small school-based research. Teachers can publish results online or in Xishuangbanna's educational journal edited by the Prefectural Bureau of Education. However, these opportunities to use teacher-generated expertise are also limited to few occasions: teacher competitions are scheduled only once a year; teacher trainings are often one-directional meetings to inform teachers rather than to gather their experiences; and school-based research projects designed by the Bureau of Education either never reach Menger or do not cover

minority languages (TE-22_2012-03-05). At Mengsan, however, the institutional settings are even more detrimental for valuating teachers' expertise. After the program for Bulang-Chinese language has been terminated the one teacher with a formal Dai-Chinese bilingual education has never been again invited to teacher trainings in bilingual education, and the superiors at the central school also have not forwarded research projects to this branch school (TE-12_2012-01-27).

Party membership, by contrast, has been seen by my interview partners as distinct from their roles as professionals at schools. Teachers only seldom mentioned in interviews their party membership or meetings of the school's teacher union. In fact, even for school principals, since party membership is not anymore required for principals' promotion, their role as professional representative of the state seemed to have been more important for accountability in school administration than their potential role as party members.

Finally, institutionalized norms also attribute the roles of representatives of ethnic groups and preservers of ethnic cultures or languages to the teachers at the three schools, although, again, in much varied degrees. At all three schools administrators, students, and parents know the ethnic status of the teachers.[313] The teachers are members of the local community and reside in the villages.[314] Generally, villagers wish that teachers preserve the local knowledge, including languages.[315] Mengyi amplifies teachers' role as ethnic representatives. School leaders here regularly select specifically ethnic Dai as class teachers in the bilingual pre-school classes and commission these teachers to inform the parents about the Dai language program. According to several interviewed teachers, Mengyi's teachers of higher classes, the teachers at Menger, and those at Mengsan, by contrast, are not required to visit parents on behalf of the schools specifically for Dai language issues.

Differences in the spaces for school-based decision making

The above discussed institutional settings provide a series of similar limits and spaces for school-based decision making on minority language education at the three

[313] Students, parents, and colleagues know teachers' ethnicity partly because the school made ethnic statuses public, partly because teachers introduced themselves as members of one group, and partly because names, language abilities, or physical appearance provide indicators for ethnicity.

[314] This distinguishes minority language teachers from those teachers, mostly ethnic Han, who migrated into the area and who reside at school ground due to a lack of privately-owned housing.

[315] Although none of the family members who I interviewed ever actively approached the teachers on this matter, many of them said that they wished that teachers at the school fulfill this role of language workers. However, as these findings are merely preliminary and non-representative, more research is necessary on villagers' perceptions on the role of teachers of minority language education in Xishuangbanna.

schools. None of the schools presented here is able to specifically hire minority language teachers, resources for such tuition at all schools depend largely on programs, and programs are generally started outside schools. Similarly, spaces for discretionary decision making overlap, as institutional spaces allow at all three schools also for school-based decision making, especially in instructional matters, for instance on the choice of language in the first months of schooling, in the use of textbooks, and in assigning students to classes.

However, the institutional settings also largely differ between the three schools; and in this each school resembles one of the types of institutional support for minority language education presented in chapter 6.1.

Mengyi belongs clearly to the category of the "showpiece schools". It is a pilot school in Xishuangbanna's most prestigious program for minority language education, its internal evaluation mechanisms emphasize the value of Dai language education, and its teachers are defined as experts in Dai language. These institutional settings open up spaces for school-based decision making in the realm of instructional matters when teachers have been involved in designing the programs, but the larger parts of decision making rest with the Bureaus of Education from city to province level, for instance on program participation, media attention, and resource allocation.

Menger can be seen as a school of the "resource supported schools" type. The school has run minority language education for a relatively long period and government agencies sporadically supported the school with textbooks, teacher trainings, and other educational equipment. However, Dai language education never was as much popularized here as it was at Mengyi. Its institutional settings, such as the absence of both external and internal evaluations, create considerable space for school-based decision making on minority language education. Different from other schools of this type, however, pre-school classes in Menger have been subject to Xishuangbanna's only standardized county-wide student examinations in Dai language education in the years 2011 and 2012, which limits the space for school-based decision making here.

Mengsan, as the case study school with the lowest profile in minority language education, belongs to the category "left-alone schools" in terms of minority language education. Although the school has with a bilingually trained staff of one third and with a history of successful bilingual education rather beneficial preconditions to run minority language education, the school hardly conducts any minority language education, except occasionally using Bulang language for communication in class. Institutional settings provide a varied picture for this school. On the one side, there are no specific incentives

for teachers to conduct minority language education, and in light of a lack of programs, textbooks, or official top-down requirements it would be a difficult task for the school to run extensive minority language education in times when even the core subjects are underserved at the school. On the other side, however, staff at this school is much less subject to external and internal evaluation than that of the other two schools. Since the main requirements for teachers are merely to raise students' grades especially in math and Chinese, no matter how these goals are reached, spaces for school-based decisions at Mengsan are rather wide.

In sum, the discussion in the subchapters above have indicated that the three case study schools not only differ much in their implementation of minority language education, but also in the space provided for school-based decision making on this subject. In the next sub-chapter I will discuss how principals and teachers at these three schools make decisions under these various institutional settings.

6.3 Decision making processes on minority language education at case study schools

With the different institutional settings these three case study schools can serve as examples to investigate into the effects of perceptions of institutional spaces on decision making at school-level, especially under vague policy goals. On the following pages I will, in a deductive approach, describe how principals and teachers at the three case-study schools (and for comparative reasons also at selected other schools in Xishuangbanna) make decisions under different institutional settings. Guided by the interview partners' statements I will structure this detailed picture of perspectives and decisions into three areas: ways of how teachers and principals articulate and consider their own interests, their interpretations of minority language policies and institutions, and strategies that they choose to make decisions at school-level on the implementation of curriculum.

6.3.1 Considering own interests and street-level bureaucratic positions in state agencies

The approach to analyze decision making through decisions by street-level bureaucrats views street-level bureaucrats as caught in dilemmas between their position as bureaucrat in state agencies and service providers to clients. According to the framework these multiple roles determine also the interests that policy implementers connect with specific policies. Before I will analyze my interview partners' interpretation of policies and decision making, I will thus in the next paragraphs investigate into how

teachers and principals define their own role in relation to school institutions and how they describe their own interests in the realm of minority language education.

Considering roles of street-level bureaucrats

Notwithstanding individual identities,[316] institutions define teachers and principals at the observed schools as bureaucrats in government-run social units. Teachers know about their responsibility to educate their students in nationally unified knowledge, including Chinese language. Under this environment principals and teachers define themselves as supporters for the children. Many principals and teachers at rural schools complained about the hard environment, the long distance to city life, and the comparatively large workloads. Interviewed teachers said that they wished more for reduction of workload than for increase in salary. For them the additional 20 RMB that teachers at "remote" schools receive monthly on their pay check are in no way a compensation for the additional work. One teacher at school no. 5 listed the difficulties of rural teachers at small schools with the following words when she described why teachers want to leave the school:

> "The reason for this, one has to say, is the treatment here. We have to teach more school hours than in Jinghong and at the central school. Our school does not have a guard, so teachers must also work as guards. We don't have nurses, so once students get sick the teachers must care for them. We have no custodian for the dormitories, so teachers must do that as well. All in addition to teaching the lessons and correcting homework exercises." (TE-02_2013-05-17)

However, at the same time they compare their own suffering with the support they can deliver for students. One teacher at Mengsan put it in these words: "If we would not come to this place, no one would" (TE-12_2012-01-27). In addition, rural teachers have the opinion that their role is even more important in shaping students' knowledge than that of their urban colleagues, since villagers have less ability to support their children. One teacher expressed this with a comparison:

> "Children in cities are supported by the teachers in the classroom. When they come home the parents additionally supervise their homework and push them. One can say that city children's

[316] Analysis under categories such as gender, age, ethnicity, history of migration, family background, educational level, language skills, socio-economic status, and professional status, to name just a few, would certainly produce the insight that my interview partners differ much in their individual identity and that this identity goes beyond the officially ascribed attributes. In terms of ethnicity, for instance, one teacher at school no. 14 called himself a "fake minority person" and explained that although he is registered as Jinuo, he does not speak Jinuo and knows nothing about Jinuo culture. Other teachers, who proudly said to be Dai, claimed that this is related to birth and education by parents in traditional Dai customs. Some respondents experienced ethnicity as responsibility, but also as a dilemma, for instance in choosing home language. One teacher said that she find it sad that the Hani language in their village slowly dies, but "since it is definitely better for my child's studies" she uses only Chinese at home (TE-02_2013-05-17). These few examples indicate that ethnic identity, similar to other markers of identity, is more complex than official registration would suggest.

grades are only that good because teachers and parents both take care of them, but for our village children all depends on the teachers. Students learn only as much as the teacher teaches in the classroom here. When they come home parents don't care for that." (TE-32_2013-05-20)

Minority language teachers' identity is defined by their profession in a specific way. Firstly, many teachers connect their professional focus on Dai with their own identity. In the interviews they often used terms such as "we Dai" and "our Dai language" when they described their own role in class. Secondly, minority teachers also often define their professional education as an asset for their own identity that makes them special and valuable for schools. Although only very few of my interview partners have been specifically hired because he or she speaks minority languages, the ability to teach bilingually has been a factor for transfer and promotion for many. One teacher who was sent to Mengsan to teach a Bulang-Chinese experimental class claimed that "[t]he leaders wanted me to transfer to this place, they needed someone like me" (TE-12_201-01-27).

These roles are much determined by state-governed institutions, beginning at college. On the one side, pre-school education major students at Xishuangbanna College are separated at College according to the official ethnic registration into Chinese language Han classes (visited mostly by Han) and Dai-Chinese bilingual classes (visited only by Dai). In this selection college students are pushed towards combining ethnic registration and professional identity. One teacher spelled this out: "See, we are ethnic Dai, so the College just has placed us into the bilingual classes" (TE-22_2012-03-05). Accordingly, students of Dai-Chinese pre-school teacher major at the Xishuangbanna Technical College described their motivations to study this subject as a mixture of advice by parents to generally study pre-school education and the assignment by the College to this major according to their ethnicity. When I asked them about their wishes for the ideal pre-school or kindergarten job they stated issues such as "good salary", "friendly environment", or "that the little devils will not be too naughty" (TS-02_2011-12-19). Despite their major as bilingual teachers the question if that kindergarten will offer minority language education was irrelevant for all interviewed students in this class.

On the other side, however, teachers who have graduated in bilingual education told me that they wished to be transferred to schools that offer bilingual classes. According to the Dai teacher at school no. 22 more than 30 graduates of the bilingual classes at Xishuangbanna's college applied for the eight job positions that were offered in Menghai in 2008. Without going into the details of each individual teacher's ethnic and professional identities, this nevertheless indicates that minority language teachers who stay in this profession develop certain affection to this role.

Finally, group building processes of minority language teachers depend to large degrees on government activities. Minority language teachers in Xishuangbanna regularly meet, although in different constellations, at officially organized teacher trainings at county/city, prefecture, or province level, but there is no self-organized minority language teacher group in the region. Although some Dai language teachers have sporadic contacts to colleagues at other schools to share experiences in Dai tuition regular contacts focus in majority on Dai language colleagues within one school. Most Dai language teachers who I interviewed said that they don't feel the need to intensify contacts to Dai language teachers outside their schools. In effect government-organized events are one of the few channels where teachers could develop a professional group identity as minority language teachers.

Party membership, by contrast, is much less considered by school staff as a factor in determining their interests in minority language education than their professional roles. Although some interviewed teachers and administrators have been party members, in interviews they did not connect party membership with their position at schools concerning minority language education. Similarly, they perceive the ideological seminars at school not as part of their daily tuition, and especially not of decisions in minority language education, but as a necessity of school work beyond teaching content and methods. Especially concerning decisions on minority language education it is rather principals and teachers who make decisions, than Party secretaries. One school principal explained that the schools' teacher CCP organization and the school's branch party secretary neither interfere with daily tuition decisions nor with questions of installing minority language education programs at school (PR-10_2012-01-06).

Despite these similarities between school staff's roles at the three case studies there are also differences. Firstly, the share of minority language tuition compared to other teaching obligations differs between teachers at the schools discussed here. At those schools that I have introduced as "showpiece schools" Dai language programs define teachers' workloads and position much, as instructors teach in separated and generally better equipped classrooms, and regularly attend teacher trainings. At the "resource supported schools" minority language tuition determines Dai teachers' professional positions only to lesser degrees, as teachers here devote a larger share of their workload to teaching other subjects and as there are no specific institutionalized Dai teacher groups here. At the "left-alone schools", finally, teachers' professional identity is hardly any more defined by their ability to teach minority languages, but rather by their professional roles as teachers of the core subjects.

Secondly, there are also differences between the teachers at the three school types in terms of how externals and the local village society see them. At Mengyi as one of the "showpiece schools" both the principal and the Dai teachers have been regularly approached by external researchers to discuss minority language education. In these schools and similarly in the "resource supported schools" the local villagers also seem to view teachers through their Dai language profession. One teacher at school no. 17 said that villagers regularly approach him for transcription of Dai words for greeting cards, ceremonies, or house blessings, and that they see him as an expert of local cultural knowledge. For teachers at the "left-alone schools" this image seems to have faded slowly after the school's official minority language education has terminated. One teacher at school no. 4, who used to teach Dai language at school until recently, said that in earlier times he was approached by villagers to open up a class to teach Dai script, but that after the school stopped the official program villagers seemed to have lost interest, and he as Dai language expert is less demanded (TE-30_2013-05-19). The village Mengsan, to name a final example, uses Dai script extensively in religious ceremonies, but the villages' only Dai script teacher at school is not approached by villagers for his expertise. The teacher's role as instructor of "national" or "external" knowledge at school seems to prevent villagers to use his knowledge for "local" or "internal" ceremonies.

Teachers take over these institutionally defined identities differently. Some teachers said in the interviews that they are glad to be teachers of minority languages as they can hence contribute to preserving ethnic culture. Others said that they experience ethnic tuition as a burden, for instance, when they are required to teach minority languages although they feel not trained well enough in minority language education pedagogies. In any case, the profession of minority language teachers adds the role of mediators between schools and villagers to the professional identity of these teachers. This, in turn, distinguishes them from ethnic Han, from non-local school staff, and especially from teachers who teach core subjects.

Considering interests

The diverse interests that teachers and principals related in interviews to their own work in general and with minority language education specifically can be grouped into three kinds: material interests, professional interests, and ethnic-cultural interests.

In terms of material interests, minority language teachers, similar to other teachers and principals, strive for increased income, work security, and comfortable living. Interviewed teachers wished for higher salary and bemoaned that teachers at rural schools have little chance to add additional income through offering private tutoring

classes. In light of increased chances for additional income and better educational opportunities for their own children[317] teachers preferred city life over village life, and some wished to be transferred to urban schools. Job security, however, is more important than salary for many teachers and principals. One teacher said, for instance, that her college cohort has been lucky to be the last cohort that was after graduation directly assigned to teaching positions, whereas the others were required to find jobs by themselves. Although she was first assigned to remote schools where in her view life and working for teachers was extremely difficult she nevertheless valued this security highly (TE-22_2012-03-05). When I asked teachers if they consider changing their profession, many similarly argued that although their current position at schools are tough they nevertheless don't want to miss the benefits and security of a stable job, health insurances, pensions, and in some cases also housing.

Although minority language education contributes not more to satisfy these interests than teaching other subjects, and in fact teaching minority language education provides less opportunities for promotion, minority language teachers uttered only little discontent with their material status. In financial terms, only few teachers mentioned their exclusion from the yearly bonus pays as unfair. Teachers sometimes particularly disconnected teaching minority languages from financial interests. One teacher, for instance, mentioned that he did not expect financial compensations when he taught minority languages in evening classes to villagers (TE-25_2013-05-01, at school no. 4). Another teacher explained that she rather wants to have Dai language excluded from the painstaking unified exams than gaining the regular 200 RMB as bonus for teachers whose students perform well in these exams (TE-32_2013-05-20). In terms of promotion to city schools minority language education is similarly less useful, but even here the interviewed teachers seemed to be satisfied with the current situation, including their housing. The finding that they expressed higher material satisfaction than other teachers can on the one side be explained by bias in selection of interview partners, as I approached merely those minority language teachers who are active in teaching, whereas I was unable to approach teachers who left the service earlier. More importantly in terms of comparison, however, seems to be that minority language teachers on average seem to be more

[317] One teacher at Mengsan described the better educational opportunities in cities for his own child. When I asked if he was unhappy with his daughter studying and living at a secondary school far from his own home he answered: "No, I don't think so. When your own child can go down there [down from the mountain villages to the valley cities] you are very happy, because schools down there have many teachers who take care. The children get in touch with many people and they receive a lot." Additionally, he argues that city life offers more culture and more job opportunities in comparison to the villages: "Here [at the village] it's all labor, it is very hard. It's better to learn some culture in the cities and find something to do there" (TE-12_2012-01-27).

locally settled than other teachers. Most interviewed teachers who ever taught minority languages at school live off-campus in family-owned houses, have partners who bring additional income to the family, and seem to be pleased with not being transferred to other schools.

Professional interests, finally, have been mentioned by teachers in the interviews far more often. Generally all teachers and principals described themselves as concerned about their students. They developed a high interest in students' future and strive to offer qualitative tuition to their students. When I asked one teacher at Mengsan about his opinion about the scheduled school merger, which means for him a long daily way from his house to the new school or alternatively renting an additional flat, he said that he welcomes the school merger as "once we are there, seen from teaching and from management, the children will learn more" (TE-12_2012-01-27). One teacher at Mengyi explained that in her view minority language teachers merely think about doing their job, but not about promotion:

> "Dai language teachers […] don't think about being transferred to cities. Normally they just teach their lessons with a very peaceful and quiet heart. Anyway, it's all for the children, so they don't consider these things." (TE-32_2013-05-20).

In addition to material and professional interests, minority language teachers at different schools described a third interest that they connect with their profession: the protection and transmission of minority culture to the next generation. Most interviewed ethnic minority teachers felt that their respective ethnic culture, understood for instance as customs, art, or the use of traditional agricultural tools, is endangered. In connection with their own tuition many teachers develop an interest in protecting this culture, and even the young pre-school students at the bilingual class in college had these ideas when they said statements such as:

> "I believe that it is important to learn something about minority cultures. China is a country with many ethnic groups […], and each leaves their own traditions, customs, and art as a heritage. I believe that letting [the students] receive and use this culture from small age has many benefits for the development of ethnic groups" (TS-02_2011-12-19).

One teacher generalized this perspective when she argued that all parents and students support minority language education "because it is their own ethnic language culture. If you don't study it, it will disappear" (TE-14_2012-01-30). Regardless if parents and students really think so, this exemplifies how Dai language teachers in Xishuangbanna connect language learning with cultural protection. One teacher at Menger connects this with the goal of educating students in Dai etiquette, traditions, and customs that she believes are essential for being Dai:

> "I think that Dai-language education in preschool should not be for tests. Even less should it be for scoring in the league table. It should be for learning the basics of our Dai ethnicity – for example, customs of daily life." (TE-22_2012-03-05)

Teachers also experience linguistic changes as a threat to ethnicity. Some teachers transferred this interest in minority culture protection into their own teaching career. One ethnic Hani teacher, for instance, said that "they all say that our Hani ethnic group will in the short future change into Han. Now many even can't speak our Hani language" (TE-02_2013-05-17). She exemplifies this by referring to her own personal change in language use and that she regrets this change:

> "No need to point to the children, but even I can't speak many terms in Hani language. See, from primary school to middle school, and to graduation I was not in this village, how could I get in touch with Hani language, when all was in Chinese?"

A Dai teacher, when I asked her for reasons why she applied from a former position as regular teacher at a primary school to become Dai teacher at school no. 22 under the 2008 Menghai Dai teacher hiring program, summarized this in a remark of how the wished to secure Dai knowledge for students:

> "I want our Dai script to continue to be passed on […]. I want [the students] to bring their own ethnic language home, and later they are Dai, and the newspapers will have Dai script, and in the documents there will also be Dai, so they can see, and then they will have learned a little knowledge about Dai script and bring that to their home, that will be fine" (TE-29_2013-05-07).

Experiencing differences

In sum, minority language teachers in Xishuangbanna uttered in the interviews much more dissatisfaction with their professional situation than with their material situation. Furthermore, they framed their own interests not in gaining material benefits, but in serving both the students and the culture of their ethnic group. Interestingly, however, many of these interests and perceptions of work overlap between teachers, principals, and sometimes even officials in the administration. The opinion that minority language teachers have an especially difficult profession due to the dilemma of the double goals of enabling students to speak Chinese and of protecting minority languages at the same time, for instance, is shared by principals, officials, and teachers. One official in the Yunnan Province ethnic administration, for example, said about this burden:

> "These teachers do an exhausting job, because they must promote Chinese language and script and at the same time they must protect ethnic cultures. Their work has much value, but they must invest lots of energy" (OF-12_2012-03-23).

Nevertheless, there are also differences between the interests of my interview partners. On the one side, these differences relate to identities, and especially ethnic

identities. Generally, teachers said more often that they gained support for Dai languages from principals when these principals were also ethnic Dai. In an interview that I conducted with one Dai principal and two Dai teachers at school no. 17, all participants agreed on the necessity of Dai language education. The principal specifically commented on Dai language education at his school: “Most important is that we can pass on our Dai culture” (PR-17_TE-14_TE-28_2013-05-06). In this regard, ethnicity is in Xishuangbanna a factor that lowers those clashes of interests between street-level workers in the classroom and their immediate superiors that Lipsky has seen as typical for the street-level bureaucrat working environment (see chapter 2). The case of ethnic language education thus on the one side adds a layer of complexity in determining interests in tuition decisions, but on the other side it also opens up channels for mutual understanding, congruency across professional boundaries between teachers, principals, and at times administrative officials.

However, at the same time, ethnicity of respondents is not the major indicator for perspectives on minority language education and even less so for decisions related to tuition in these languages. Interestingly, nearly all interview partners at schools with minority language education agreed that firstly the protection of minority cultures is a necessary policy goal and that secondly mother tongue language education can benefit students in early grades who lack in sufficient Chinese skills. This opinion was shared by respondents of all ethnic groups, including Han teachers and principals. Many of these respondents related the issue of minority language education with “ethnic unity”. An ethnic Hani principal at Menger, a school with Dai language education, framed this perspective in the following words: “This is about ethnic unity. You add one more language, you gain one more skill. This is also true for languages. They mutually complement each other” (PR-16_2012-03-01).

In light of these congruent interests beyond ethnic separation other factors can be expected to cause the differences in decision making on minority language education. In the next paragraphs I will discuss the role of institutional settings, especially in how teachers and principals at the different schools perceive these institutions as support or as discouragement for decisions in favor of minority language education.

6.3.2 Interpreting policies and spaces

Teachers’ and principals’ decision making depends on their perspectives on their schools’ tuition problems, their interpretation of how policies can contribute to improving tuition, and their perception of the spaces that institutions provide for their own discretionary decision making. In the next paragraphs I will thus present the perspectives

of my interview partners on these three fields, before I will summarize these perspectives through the lens of dilemmas that principals and teachers experience through unfitting policies and institutions.

Interpreting problems and policies

Teachers and principals specified in the interviews their interpretations of policy goals, the current means of implementation, and the outcomes of minority language education. Teachers and principals interpreted policies on the one side as directed towards supporting students in their Chinese learning. They described tuition in mother tongue language as a solution to the problem of students' lacks in Chinese skills. The principal at Mengyi, for instance, said that since students in pre-school classes lack Chinese the school must start with minority language education and can only slowly change it afterwards (PR-04_2011-12-31). Another teacher similarly said: "After one semester they slowly speak Chinese, then its better" (TE-04_2012-01-04 at no. 6). Menger's principal has formulated the goals of the Dai language education at his school most strongly in this direction:

> "Bilingual education is to support Dai students to better master Chinese. The Dai have a script, a written record, this is important. First learn through Dai, after that advance to understand and experience the national language, Chinese. This supports learning." (PR-16_2012-03-01)

Teachers and principals also interpreted the policy goals as a tool to attract students to school. Minority languages are for these teachers one tool to support their students in learning, for attracting students to school, and to enable communication between teachers and students. Some teachers pointed to the benefits that minority language education can bring to communication between teachers and students. One teacher said that unofficial use of minority languages as auxiliary tool in Chinese language classes supports the students: "When the children don't know the meaning of a word, one should use our Hani language to translate" (TE-02_2013-05-17). Another Dai language teacher at a secondary school argued that minority language education can support students when tuition in the core subjects proves to be fruitless:

> "Dai students come to […] schools anyway, but some of them […] cannot learn. They just play from morning till evening. Although these students are at school, they just don't internalise other subjects, Chinese and maths. They know nothing. So, I think when they don't learn this, we can bring their own ethnic language here." (TE-29_2013-05-07)

With this interpretation of policy goals principals and teachers argue similar to governmental documents and policy statements, but additionally some principals and teachers also see minority language as a tool to reform education. One teacher, for

instance, said that minority language programs also bring back those students to school that otherwise might skip schooling earlier (TE-29_2013-05-07). Finally, one principal also saw a connection to reform trends in the general overall system when he explained the reasons of conducting minority language education at his school:

> "Nowadays it's all about innovation, teaching innovation. We should not forget: It's all for the students' good. Honestly, if teachers don't reform their didactics and continue to use their old didactics we can't elevate teaching quality and we can't elevate student quality." (PR-16_2012-03-01)

In their interpretation of the usefulness of the current policy implementation, however, teachers and principals expressed much criticism. In this my interview partners differed between the three school types. At the "showpiece schools" principals and teachers were overwhelmingly satisfied with the provision of teachers, class hours, training opportunities and textbooks. Since teachers at these schools have participated in editing the textbooks and determining the methods for the project classes they developed a feeling of ownership over the project classes. At the "resource supported schools", by contrast, particularly teachers have been less satisfied with the implementation of policy tools. They bemoaned that there are too few class hours to effectively teach Dai language, that the textbooks lack in accuracy in describing Dai culture, and that the schools lack teacher resources. They experienced a lack of support from above and at the same time large burdens of teaching responsibilities in Dai education and in the core subjects. Teachers at the "left-alone schools", finally, have been most critical towards minority language education. They experienced the lack of resources in terms of teachers and the lack of minority language class hours as detrimental for students' learning progress. Teachers at these schools said that the resources that they could provide as Dai teachers remain unused. One Dai teacher at school no. 4, for instance, argued that one would need at least three school hours per week to effectively teach Dai, but she was merely allowed to teach one hour per week in her class (TE-25_2013-05-01). She said that Dai language education suffers mostly from the high workloads of teachers for other subjects:

> "I think in order to conduct long-term Dai education, you need special full-time teachers. I am also a bilingual teacher, I should teach only the Dai-Chinese bilingual courses. It would be fine if I would only teach Dai […]. But now I have to teach everything. […] I am tired." (TE-25_2013-05-01)

Principals and teachers at the three types of schools also differ in their evaluation of the outcomes of this curriculum. Both teachers and principals at "showpiece schools" that conduct minority language education under the "Dai-Chinese bilingual experimental program" agreed that the program has not only improved students' overall study results,

but that it also improved students' general study behavior. One teacher at school no. 6, for instance, said that students in bilingual classes learn how to translate their thoughts form Dai to Chinese, that they can write more "standardized" Chinese articles, that they can more actively participate in class, and that they have a closer relation to the teachers (TE-04_2012-01-04). Teachers at the merely "resource supported schools" and the "left-alone schools", by contrast, have been much more critical towards the outcome. One teacher at Menger, for example, said that although students learn some Dai in pre-school, this achievement is unsustainable due to later interruptions of learning (TE-22_2012-03-05). Another teacher, whose students attend merely one hour of Dai language per week, said that under this marginalized tuition learning cannot produce more outcome than a few graphemes which does not help students at all (TE-25_2013-05-01).

These examples indicate that school staff's perceptions of outcomes sometimes vary between the professional statuses of the respondents. Principals pointed in interviews rather to the value of minority language education programs in order to manage schooling in ethnic minority areas, whereas teachers more often referred to the value of minority language education for their communication with students. And there is another distinction: Teachers, who exclusively teach minority languages at schools more often referred to minority language education as a tool to protect minority cultures, whereas teachers who also teach other subjects at the schools tended more to emphasize the value of mother tongue instruction for learning pace in other subjects.

More striking, however, are the differences in evaluation between the types of minority language education. Principals and teachers at the "showpiece schools" in mutual accordance based their evaluation of the minority language program on their understanding of the programs as tools to lower students' barriers to regular Chinese education. Both professional groups at these schools were satisfied with the outcome and had no suggestions on how to improve. Teachers at the "left alone" schools, who similarly perceived minority language education as a tool to achieve these goals said that using minority languages as an auxiliary tool to translate course content for students enables them to teach faster, reach more students, and establish a better contact to their pupils (TE-12_2012-01-27). One teacher at school no. 5, who used to teach bilingually in Hani and Chinese, even mentioned that Hani language tuition has helped foreign students from Myanmar to follow instructions in her class (TE-02_2013-05-17). Teachers at the "resource supported schools", by contrast, saw ethnic cultural conservation as an important outcome of their courses. One teacher at Menger, for instance, said that her class has some success in teaching students basic "ethnic" social behavior, for instance

how to greet elderly people (TE-22_2012-03-05). Another teacher at school no. 22 said that her tuition awakens students' interest in their own ethnic culture and that it attracts students to school who otherwise might have skipped schooling already (TE-29_2013-05-07). Dai teachers at this type of school recommended expanding minority language education, to make tuition more sustainability, and to add more ethnic traditions to the curriculum. In this regard, teachers' and principals' opinions on the outcome of minority language education seem to depend more on the type of institutionally defined minority language education that the schools follow, than simply the teachers' ethnicity.

Interpreting institutions of support and accountability

Principals and teachers find that their own role in the implementation process is much determined by institutions. Evaluation measures, the support by leaders, and the institutionalized trainings have been mentioned to have important effects on minority language education, but the opinions of parents have been described as less important for their own policy implementation decisions.

Teachers perceive school management structures as one of the most important institutional settings for minority language education decisions. Many interview partners described support by school leaders to be of utmost importance for their courses. In cases where this support lacked they saw this as a reason for negative outcomes of minority language education or as a reason for the complete stop of these courses. Teachers furthermore described institutional settings of teacher evaluations as important for the fate of a language program. One teacher at Mengsan as one of the "left-alone schools" said that the Bulang-Chinese bilingual pilot project at his school was terminated because his superiors "came very seldom up here" (TE-12_2912-01-27), so they could not see the success of the pilot. Similarly, another teacher explained how Dai language education depends on support by leaders in the Bureau of Education when she described how "the spirit" changed when one leader of the Menghai Bureau of Education was transferred to another post in 2008:

> "He was the vice head of the Bureau of Education. He particularly conducted investigation work of the Dai language research group. […] There was a special atmosphere. After he left, well, we all lost the mood." (TE-29_2013-05-07)

On the other side, teachers also say that for Dai language education institutional settings are more relaxed. Several teachers, and particularly those who work under the "Dai-Chinese experimental program" said that they don't have to write the notorious "after class thoughts" in Dai language, which are a constant issue of time struggles for them in courses of other subjects. One teacher from Mengyi explained that, firstly, "there

are no requirement from above" to write these reports and, secondly, due to the large workloads of Dai teachers, they lack the time to write these reports (TE-32_2013-05-20). However, even at other schools where teachers feel required to write such reports, they say that hardly anybody reads these reports. The Dai language teacher at school no. 22 said that she regularly writes the reports to reflect her own tuition, but since she writes in Dai script, evaluation teams merely superficially flip through her pages as they in most cases are unable to read Dai (TE-29_2013-05-07). Furthermore, teachers said that currently evaluations cover minority language courses to lesser degrees than the courses in regular subject. One teacher at school no. 4 explained that due to the absence of repercussions evaluations on Dai language education have lesser effects on her own teaching behavior than those in Chinese courses:

> "When they come to observe teaching, you can say the leaders come down to check the level of our Dai teaching. They say that they wanted to establish Dai education, and they want to see how the students achieve that. In Chinese courses they come to evaluate the teachers. This evaluation is closely connected with our pay, so there is some pressure, […] but in Dai course there is no pressure. Whether they come to listen or not makes no difference to us." (TE-25_2013-05-01)

Teachers described evaluations by peers as more important for their own teaching than evaluations by officials and superiors. One teacher at Mengyi, for instance, said that she works closely together with her three Dai language colleagues to prepare classes and that she highly appreciates their comments. The only Bulang teacher at Mengsan, by contrast, regrets that he cannot share minority language teaching experiences with his colleagues, since none of them speaks Bulang (TE-12_2012-01-27). Another teacher at school no. 22, who is the only Dai language teacher there, similarly said that the teachers at her school can't support her in Dai teaching, and that trainings and teacher competitions are important to receive feedback from other Dai teachers (TE-29_2013-05-07).

Additionally, teachers described evaluations by parents and students as less important than those by peers and superiors. Although many teachers and principals said that the main goal of minority language education is to serve the students, they all agreed that neither parents, nor students raise many demands towards them with respect to minority language education. Several teachers have said that during parent meetings, for instance, parents merely raise questions how to best discipline their children or how to make them study harder, but never on minority language education. This means that principals and teachers feel little accountability towards parents concerning minority language education, but on the other side they also don't perceive parents specifically as

allies for promoting minority language education. One teacher at Mengsan, for instance, once tried to invite parents skilled in traditional handcrafts to class to teach "traditional Bulang knowledge" to his students, but after these invited parents said that they had no time for this, he terminated this project (TE-12_2012-01-27).

However, principals and teachers also describe existing institutional accountability settings as flexible. Teachers pointed on the one side to the perceived importance of evaluations for promotions, but on the other side many teachers also did not know about the exact modes of selecting teachers for promotion and for transfer to other schools. One teacher at Mengsan experienced these modes as flexible when he negotiated with superiors about his own transfer. Through bargaining he successfully made a deal with his superiors that after being transferred as an interim teacher to an unpleasant school he will be transferred back to his former school after one semester (TE-12_2012-01-27). A principal of another school refers to this flexibility as "soft rules" when she speaks about the question what happens to underperforming principals:

> "[Evaluations] have effects, but there are no hard rules that you as principal will automatically be exchanged. He only tells you that your management is not good and that he gives you time to change. But if you don't change in the time he estimated, he will consider exchanging you. […] He does not use documents, and does not use indicators, but there are soft things. When the leaders know that [a principal] can't do it, they will of course exchange him." (PR-12-PR-18_2013-05-10)

In sum, although principals and teachers have different insights into the institutional environments of minority language education, they are consistent in the evaluation that institutions matter for minority language education. At the same time, however, they also believe that institutions are subject to interpretation and adjustment at the street-level.

Interpreting institutional spaces for decision making

In my respondents' eyes institutional settings provide spaces for discretionary decision making by both school leaders and the teachers. School leaders, my interview partners argued, have the autonomy to decide if schools run minority language education at all, to make decisions which parts of the student body shall receive this type of education, and which teachers will be assigned to these courses. This space for discretionary decision making has not only effects on minority language teaching, but also on the teachers' careers. One teacher, for instance, analyzed that school leaders have the power to determine teachers' careers and income through appointing teachers to classes. In her view, class assignment is for teachers a highly important issue in those schools that separate students into classes of "good performing students" and "bad performing

students", since teachers' income depends on student performance indicators. As she further argues that class assignment is based on teachers' relations (关系) to leaders within the school, she perceives the decision making authority of school leaders as higher than that of teachers (TE-24_2013-04-29). Other interview partners, however, also described the space for discretionary decision making by teachers as large. Especially the lack of evaluation mechanisms has been described by some teachers as relaxing and allowing them to focus on what they think is important in teaching. Several teachers mentioned in the interviews that they are free to choose not only the methods of class and the amount of homework that they assign to students, but also the content of their classes. Respondents used terms such as "upper levels did not issue any requirements on this" (TE-32_2013-05-20) and "you need space for this" (TE-25_2013-05-01) to describe the institutional settings that lead to this discretion.

Teachers perceive the relation between both often as blurred and as a subject to negotiations. Although schools receive in a top-down process from the Bureau of Education so called "research topics", i.e. the permission to conduct research on a specific pre-defined topic, principals at the schools also said that after they have received these topics they can adjust them to the local environment. Similarly, the principal of Menger explained that although the provision of funds for Dai language education at his school depends on decisions by the Yunnan Bureau of Education the school has the autonomy to write proposals and to choose which educational tools they apply for (PR-16_2012-03-01). Similarly, teachers said that some requirements of their work must be fulfilled, but there is always room for shifting and negotiating. One teacher, for instance, explained that in her view the Bureau of Education regularly establishes the requirement that one or two Dai teachers per school attend trainings, but the question of who actually goes can be negotiated with school leaders (TE-25_2013-05-01).

At the same time, however, my interview partners also perceived many limits to their authority to make discretionary decisions. Firstly, they saw settings of school environment as limits to their own actions. The ethno-linguistic background of non-Dai students, for instance, has been described as a major barrier to Dai tuition. A principal at Menger explained that in his opinion teachers could no longer use Hani or other smaller minority languages as unofficial tool in class after Menger had merged with other schools and the school's student population became more linguistically homogeneous. Although he presented this homogeneity as positive for learning Chinese, he nevertheless also perceived these environmental factors as a limit to teachers' choices. One teacher at school no. 4 said:

> "If [the Han] can't speak Dai, how could we teach them by force? We can't force them. If they want to learn, they all can, but if they don't want to learn, we can't force them." (TE-25_2013-05-01)

Secondly, teachers and principals also think that institutional settings of school management limit their space for discretionary decision making. Two principals at school no. 9, a central school, explained in an interview that even the central schools are not allowed to hire teachers by themselves, to approach potential donors for educational material in minority languages directly, or to use funds without accountability (PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10). The discretionary power of branch schools, as the principal of Menger explains, is further limited through their shared responsibility with the central schools:

> "We mainly depend on the central school. For instance, we conduct our education research activities together with them. When they allow us to conduct activities, we send our teachers there to work together with the central school teachers. It's anyway one family." (PR-16_2012-03-01)

Thirdly, teachers, and especially those at the "resource supported schools", described institutional settings as barriers to teacher-centered decision making. One teacher at Menger, for instance, described in interviews how she depends on the provision of textbooks. She recalled that when at the beginning of one semester the new textbooks did not arrive in time, she "had no choice than to continuously repeat the old lessons" (TE-22_2012-03-05). She also felt that exam orientation and the lack of time both pressured her to closely stick to the textbooks. As she is required by county-wide end-of-term tests to "finish" with her pre-school students one textbook per semester, she explained, she has hardly any additional time to spend on her own discretion in class. Teachers at the "left-alone schools", who do not participate in any official minority language education program anymore, perceived these limits as even stronger. In the opinion of a teacher at Mengsan, for instance, time pressure did not allow adding any Bulang language courses to the curriculum, and he had to use even the last school hours of the afternoon to continue teaching Chinese and math (TE-12_2012-01-27). Another teacher at a school without official minority language program, school no. 5, explained that in her perspective teachers' decision making on minority language education is prevented by a combination of both test-focusing on Chinese and the ideology of the value of the Chinese language:

> "If I would use class time to present a course [in minority languages] to my students, the principal would probably not agree, because nowadays it's all about Chinese and math. Everybody wants to raise the results in Chinese and math. But since this [minority language education] has no use for Chinese and math, the principal would probably not agree." (TE-02_2013-05-17)

However, the perception of the scope of this space and its limits differs between the schools observed here. Teachers at the "showpiece schools" said that they had much

influence on choosing the content of the textbooks when they participated in writing textbooks, but after that tuition has been somewhat determined by these books. Although one teacher at Mengyi said “we teach according to our students’ needs, and not necessarily according to the program”, she also said that the textbooks predefine each week’s topic and that teachers stick to this topic (TE-32_2013-05-20). Teachers at the “resource supported schools”, by contrast, saw spaces for discretionary decision making rather in terms of methods, than in terms of content. At Menger, for instance, the pre-school teacher has to teach all Dai graphemes in one year, but she can decide on the methods of how to teach these. Teachers at the “left-alone schools”, finally, argued that due to the absence of accountability concerning minority language education they have large discretionary spaces in both content and methods. One teacher at school no. 4, for instance, said that she is free to choose the methods of teaching, as student results are the only measurement in educational evaluations, that she can decide which Dai variety she uses in class since her school’s principal anyway does not understand Dai, and that she is free to pass textbooks to students or to withhold them (TE-25_2013-05-01). At Mengsan, where official minority language education was terminated, the one Bulang teacher explained that he is nevertheless free to use minority languages unofficially as auxiliary tool, and besides this he can also use the last afternoon school hour of each day to his own discretion to discuss class matters with the students, to play games, to conduct physical education, or to lecture about local ethnic culture (TE-12_2912-01-27).

Interpreting dilemmas

Teachers and principals, in their roles as street-level bureaucrats, experienced several dilemmas. In the interviews three dilemmas have been extensively mentioned: the dilemma of multiple roles between bureaucrat and street-level worker, the dilemma of diverging pressures from superiors and externals, and the dilemma of a misfit between policy goals and institutional settings.

Many interview partners, especially teachers, expressed the dilemma of multiple roles between official in the state bureaucracy, carriers of professional standards, and ambassador of minority language protection. On the one side many ethnic Dai teachers, but also ethnic Hani or Bulang teachers, feel that they should “do more” for the transmission of local ethnic cultures and languages to the next generation, but on the other side they also have a strong feeling of responsibility towards their students in terms of preparing them for life in a language world that is dominated by Chinese. One Hani teacher expressed this dilemma with the following words:

> "I think that [the students] will not be able to speak our own language anymore in the near future, because our students all will communicate with ethnic Han. So I am also thinking: Do we need [Hani language education]? I see this as a problem." (TE-02_2013-05-17)

The second dilemma of teachers as street-level bureaucrats relates to divergences in the pressures from superiors within school and external advisors. Teachers experience this dilemma especially in contact with the principals at their schools. As almost all of my interview partners said that minority language education depends much on the support by school leaders teachers consider this support also to be important for their own work. Especially teachers at the "left-alone schools" experienced this as dilemma. The Bulang teacher at Mengsan, for instance, said that his superiors' wish to terminate the official minority language program has disadvantaged his school (TE-12_2012-01-27). Similarly, a Dai teacher at school no. 4 argued that when the principals at her school decided to put less emphasis on minority language education she had to reduce the amount of her teaching to merely one class hour per week and class, although she wishes for more minority language education (TE-25_2013-05-01). Finally, a Hani teacher at school no. 5 said that that although school external experts suggested at a teaching training to not use a single Hani word in class she thinks that the method of unofficially using Hani language here and there supports her students. All these teachers perceive this not only as a lack of support, but also as top-down demands against minority language education and as measures against their own potential and wishes.

Principals perceived this dilemma similarly, but in their case they suffer from diverging requirements from superiors at the Bureaus of Education. On the one side, they are subject to regular evaluation based on the quotas of students' grades, but on the other side they are also expected to implement pilot projects, even when these do not contribute to raising these results. Two principals at school no. 9 argued that even when there are no regulations on the success of pilot programs principals are subject to constant evaluation on their management capacities with the threat of being degraded (PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10). Other principals similarly said that even when schools did not apply to conduct pilot programs they have to find ways and resources to implement pilots once they have been choosen as project schools (PR-16_2012-03-01).

The third dilemma denotes to the misfit between policy goals that favor minority language protection and institutional settings that favor Chinese language education. The perception of this misfit as a dilemma is shared between principals and teachers alike. The principal at Menger, for instance, explained that the two year-interruption of Dai language at the school between 2007 and 2009 was a result of unsuitable school resources:

> "This interruption was not because they stipulated it, but it came from our own school. After we finished our responsibilities in the national curriculum we saw that the remaining class hours were not that much. Back then, there were only five courses per day and most of this was occupied by Chinese and math, and when the other subjects were included, we had to reduce Dai education." (PR-16_2012-03-01)

Similarly, many teachers argued that institutions such as evaluation mechanisms favor Chinese language education despite the policy goal to equalize minority language education. One teacher at Menger, for instance, found that the exam-based focus of the complete schooling pushes teachers to invest more resources in terms of time and energy into test-relevant subjects, such as Chinese or math (TE-22_2012-03-05). On the other side, however, teachers also suffer from institutional settings that demand a different minority language education than teachers wish for. The same teacher at Menger also said that she disagrees with the current test system for pre-school Dai language education that pushes teachers to teaching for tests. In her opinion Dai tuition should not be for test preparation, but rather for learning about culture. She experienced the demands from policies that prescribe minority language teaching on the one side and institutional settings that demand to focus on Chinese language education on the other side as a double burden in her daily tuition activities. This burden, she argue, is heavier than that for other teachers, and the remuneration for this burden is unfairly shared between teachers.

However, my respondents' perceptions on how institutions present dilemmas for their own educational work differ between the different minority language education school types. Teachers at the "showpiece schools" said that they are satisfied with the current institutional settings of management and accountability at their schools. One teacher at Mengyi said that she is pleased with the lack of unified and centralized exams (TE-32_2013-05-20). Teachers at these schools emphasized in the interviews that their teaching, including the use of textbooks and the choice of methods, is in accordance with superiors. One interviewed teacher at Menger, by contrast, found that the current institutional settings are much too demanding and that the space for her own discretion is too small. In her opinion, teaching minority languages should not be for tests, but for the students' "real learning" in terms of language improvements and in terms of learning about ethnic culture and etiquette (TE-22_2012-03-05). She demanded in interviews less pre-structured tuition. One of her colleagues at school no. 22 said that even the top-down demand that all students should learn minority languages should be loosened, and instead it should be enough to teach merely those students who are interested in the class (TE-29_2013-05-07). Teachers at the "left-alone schools", finally, argued much

differently. They not only wished that superiors support minority language more at their schools, but they also said that institutional settings such as evaluations, regulations, and supervision should be designed to benefit minority language education more. A Dai teacher at school no. 4, who merely sporadically teaches Dai one hour per week, similarly wished for more supervision by principals or externals when this benefits minority language education (TE-25_2013-05-01).

In sum, teachers and principals see institutions as major determinants for the space for school-based decision making on minority language education, but their opinions on the value of these institutions differ much between the school types. Interestingly, recommendations by teachers and principals in some cases diametrically opposed the current situation at their schools. The principal at Mengyi, for instance, emphasized that parents should have the final say in the decision if their children will attend minority language classes or Chinese language classes (PR-04_2011-12-31), but in reality the school at least in some cases pre-decides this question, as they sort students by their ethnicity into classes. One teacher at Menger saw the value of her own tuition as a tool to learn about ethnic culture and etiquette (TE-22_2012-03-05), but in reality institutions forced her to limit her class to teaching language. At Mengsan, finally, the Bulang teacher perceived a lack of institutionalized evaluations as the reason for the termination of a successful project (TE-12_2012-01-27), but at the same time strong existing institutional settings of evaluation and of test-orientation in Chinese and math also prevent him from using the last afternoon school hours to teach a school-based curriculum in Bulang language.

Although some institutional settings were for my interviewees incomprehensible, such as details of teacher promotion, my respondents did not refer to this as a lack of their own insight, but rather as a matter of vague rules that create room for negotiation.

6.3.3 Making and justifying decisions

As not only the requirements of teaching demand street-level bureaucrats to adjust policies to the schooling situation, but also the institutional settings of minority language education provide space for school-based decision making, principals and teachers at the case study schools constantly make decisions on the implementation of minority language curriculum. At the same time, however, their decisions are informed and guided by strategies that they developed to reach own preferences such as satisfying students' needs, reducing workloads, or material interests. In the next paragraphs I will introduce a selection of the major strategies and decisions that teachers and principals follow at the observed case study schools, before in the last part of this subchapter I will

provide an analysis of how they described, justified, and legitimized these decisions in my interviews and in communication with superiors and parents.

Developing strategies

In light of the conflicts between the goals and interests of school staff on the one side and policy requirements, limits of resources, and institutionalized requirements on the behavior of school staff as street-level bureaucrats on the other, teachers and principals choose different strategies to deal with these conflicts and to model outputs in a way that benefits their understanding of the goals of minority language education.

Firstly, both teachers and principals communicate their own preferences towards higher levels, peers, and externals. Among these, communication with superiors seems to be the most relevant strategy for many teachers. One teacher at a "left-alone school", for instance, remembered that she told her superiors once that her double teaching burden of Dai and Chinese was too much and that she asked her superiors to reduce either of them (TE-25_2013-05-01).

On the other side, teachers also approached school leaders to gain more support or more class hours assigned for Dai language education. One teacher at a "left-alone school", for instance, described how she approached the leaders of her school when students registered for a Dai interest course. At another time she approached her schools' principal to request permission to attend bilingual language education trainings even during the semester:

> "Last year the trainings were during the summer and winter holidays, and so they did not affect class. But for the last one in this year, we had already started with the semester, and the school leaders did not want to let me go. So I told them that I really want to take part in it, because the program for this training offered much that I had not studied so far." (TE-24_2013-04-29)

At the same time, however, teachers also experienced the limits of this strategy when principals denied support or were unable to help the teachers. Many teachers came to the conclusion that approaching superiors can be a minor strategy at most. The above mentioned teacher was unsuccessful in her approach, as her request to offer Dai language as an interest course was answered by the order to offer computer classes instead. At another time she felt the limits of her approach to confront leaders with suggestions during a meeting where she expressed her evaluation of bilingual programs:

> "Our bilingual education is only always done in experiments, experiments, experiments, experiments. It's very painful that there are only experiments. The teaching methods have produced very clear results. We can use this method to teach, and we always have done so. So one time at a meeting when many leaders were present I mentioned in one sentence that our Xishuangbanna only conducts experiments. This sentence was not good. The leaders were not

> happy, they were really not happy. […] They probably thought: 'How can this teacher behave like this?' Actually they did not really say something, but maybe they thought that it's not good to say this. I am not sure about their work. But anyway the leaders were very unhappy, so I stopped in the middle of the sentence […] and we did not talk about this again." (TE-24_2013-04-29)

In addition, teachers and principals employ communication with peers as a strategy, but only as a minor one. Although many teachers stated that they think that advice from peers is important to improve their own teaching methods most teachers located this peer-learning merely in the yearly teacher trainings. One teacher, for instance, described her reaction when she was asked to lecture Dai language teaching methods to other Dai teachers: "I said 'I want, I want, I want to do this'" (TE-24_2013-04-29). With this emphasis she expressed how much she thinks these trainings are a valuable source for learning from each other. At the same time, however, only few teachers seem to use existing means to communicate with other teachers about their experiences. A specific chat group for Dai language in "QQ", one of China's largest internet forums, for instance, has been hardly ever used by my interviewees. Direct feedback from colleagues at their schools seems to be more important than the communication with teachers from other schools via chat groups. One teacher at Mengyi explained:

> "There is a QQ chat group especially for this type of teachers. But I don't have the time to communicate much with other teachers there. I checked many times, but normally only the officers form the Bureau of Education post there. […] You can use this group to greet other teachers. You can ask which class one teaches, how the students learn, or how the students' skills are. But concerning methods we don't communicate there much." (TE-32_2013-05-20)

Even for teachers who work as the only Dai teachers at their school the chat group seems to be of little value. One teacher at school no. 22, for instance, said:

> "We chat about how we can conduct tuition in our Dai language. But actually everybody only writes a little about their own feelings and how it is at their schools. Apart from that we don't discuss too much. Sometimes I want to discuss how to teach well, but they have their own problems; and we have ours. Since the students are different, so the teaching methods are surely also different." (TE-29_2013-05-07)

Similarly, school staff uses communication with parents or other externals only to small degrees as a strategy to reach their goals. Although principals claimed in interviews that parents will be involved in the decision making of bilingual tuition, in reality there seems to be little communication between schools and parents on this matter. In parent meetings, for instance, teachers rather speak about the general learning habits of the students and urge the parents to intensify their supervision of homework, whereas the basic goals and arrangements of minority language education are not discussed at these

meetings. One principal said that the actual process is more about informing parents on decisions than about participation:

> "There are a few things on which we can seek the parents' opinions. We first organize [the assignment of students] and after that we speak to the parents and tell them that our class is a bilingual class. If some parents don't want their children to be in this class, they can raise their opinions and we can help them to adjust, for instance if one student wants to come into that class. See, we have to control the numbers of students in the classes. If the parents' requests are really strong and if there are only a few parents [complaining] we can organize that. […], but if there are too many, we have to do ideological work with them again." (PR.17_TE-14_TE-28_2013-05-06)

In this respect, neither principals nor teachers perceive communication with peers or organizing interest groups as successful means to reach their own interests. Only very few of the interviewed principals approached other principals outside their own township on the issue of minority language education, and none of the teachers engaged in establishing profession-based organizations for Dai language teachers. Similarly, school staff did not organize parents as pressure group towards officials to demand Dai language education.

More often – and with more success – do principals and teachers engage in a second type of strategies which can be described as "shifting implementation". These strategies also include selecting the goals of policies and division of resources. Principals, for instance, select from the diverse top-down policies those that have the most congruency with their own goals. The principal at school no. 11 defined Dai language education as less useful than IT classes at his school and ordered to stop teaching Dai language interest classes. The principal at school no. 17, by contrast, followed his own understanding of Dai language education as a means to educate students in local culture when he, together with his teachers, decided to establish a small "cultural exhibition room" with local agricultural tools and clothes of the Dai, thereby following a strategy to connect language education with learning about local ethnic traditions. As many teachers perceived a large space for their own decision making in the classroom in terms of content and methods some teachers choose the strategy to adjust the class content in relation to their own understanding of what minority language education should be about. One teacher at school no. 22, for instance, adds regularly lectures about "local knowledge", such as the origins of local place names, to her tuition. Another teacher, at Menger, adds lectures about etiquette of Dai people to her language teaching. With these and many other examples teachers engage in defining the content of their classes, and they fill in spaces left by institutions and vague policy goals.

Similarly, by selecting requirements towards the students teachers also shift the implementation of curriculum. Some teachers, for instance, require only Dai students to

pay attention to Dai language education, whereas other teachers tell their students that all students in class, irrespective of ethnicity, must pay attention to the class. With this distinction teachers establish contrasting definitions of the value of minority language education. In the former cases they establish the idea that minority languages are only of value for minority students and that the goal of their class is bilingualism for Dai students, but monolingualism for Han students. In the latter cases teachers establish goals of biglossia for all students.

Additionally, however, teachers and principals also use "shifting implementation" to follow own material interests, to reduce own workloads, or to simply allow tuition under scarce resources. One teacher at school no. 17 said that the school staff at her school, despite the school's Dai language education program, still focuses on teaching Chinese: "If [the students] don't learn Chinese Pinyin well, later teaching will be difficult. That's why we put our main energy on Pinyin" (TE-14_2012-01-30). Teachers follow sometimes similar strategies when they schedule their own investment in terms of time and energy for student supervision and class preparation. One Dai teacher at Menger explained:

> "Last year our [preschool] class was ranked first [in the county]. This year we did not achieve that much, because I invested more time in the sixth grade. The sixth graders will graduate. This is very important for them, so I spent more time guiding them." (TE-22_2012-03-05)

There are also differences between principals and teachers in the strategies they use. According to their responsibilities in daily work, school leaders engage more in strategies that focus on the organization of schooling, whereas teachers focus more on strategies to affect implementation within their own classroom. However, in sum, both teachers and principals use strategies within organizing schools or classroom tuition to adjust policies much more than strategies to affect policy making outside the school, since they experience the space for school-internal adjustments as larger than their chances to affect policy formulation. In their role as street-level bureaucrats both teachers and principals avoid the risks of direct confrontations with superiors or with policy formulators, but instead they rather refer to the means that their position as implementers allows them to take.

Nevertheless, there are also striking differences in the choice of strategies between the school types. Teachers and principals at the "showpiece schools" engage largely strategies of cooperation with externals. Mengyi, for example, cooperated with the NGO SIL and the Bureaus of Education not only by organizing the pilot at their school, but also by supporting teacher meetings and by receiving delegations of scholars. School

leaders and teachers at Menger, as an example of the merely "resource supported schools", follow a strategy to use the provided resources for minority language education, but to prevent minority language education to affect much of the regular tuition. Teachers at this school invest more time into teaching Chinese than into teaching Dai language. Menger also applied for computers and TV sets for their multimedia room with the Dai language program, but since there is a lack of media in Dai language, one can assume that this equipment will be used mainly for tuition in other subjects. Teachers and principals at the "left-alone schools", finally, seem to concentrate their strategies on adjusting curriculum, rather than on approaching externals or superiors. After some teachers at these schools have tried to approach their school leaders to gain more time or other support for minority language education none of the teachers here viewed this strategy as useful for the next future. Instead, some of these teachers try to support minority language education within the school hours of their regular curriculum. Several teachers at these schools said that they use the last class hour of the afternoon or the weekly "class meetings" to lecture on local ethnic culture and languages.

Implementing tuition

Under these strategies of adjusting curriculum implementation principals and teachers constantly make multiple decisions on the delivered and tested curriculum. According to the overview presented in previous chapters I will describe decision making processes in three areas: decisions on resources, on personnel management, and on instructional matters.

Some of the observed schools are allowed to make decisions on smaller amounts of resources. Principals at the central school no. 9 said that they provide sums of up to 500 RMB directly for Dai teachers of Menger if the teachers need funds to conduct special activities (PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10). One teacher at Mengyi described this non-bureaucratic funds provision as a support for the teachers:

> "If the principal would not order the schools' financial department to equip us with materials we surely would not have these. If we would need to wait for the Bureau of Education, well … . But the school says directly: 'I buy it next week for you.' If the school would not internally manage this, we could not realize it. It depends on the support by the principal." (TE-32_2013-05-20)

However, decisions on larger resources are still made outside the schools. Both Mengyi and Menger have been chosen as pilot base schools by the Bureaus of Education. Although Menger also applied for additional funds these have been transferred only after the Bureaus of Education have approved the request, and principals at Mengsan, similar to staff at other "left-alone schools", did not even try to apply for funds to keep minority

language projects going. In sum, the application and provision of resources rests much in the hands of school-external actors, whereas the usage of smaller amounts has been given to the discretion of the schools.

Concerning personnel management, school staff at the case studies engages much more in discretionary decisions than on the issue of financial resources. On the one side, teacher positions at all observed schools depend on the assignment of the Bureaus of Education and the Bureaus of Human Resources. On the other side, staff at all observed schools has also a say in questions of who teaches what, where, and when. According to one teacher at school no. 5, the central school decides on teachers' transfer from branch schools to central schools, but teachers can also apply for transfer. Similarly, the assignment of teachers to classes and subjects depends on school-internal bargaining processes. A teacher at Mengyi said that the school tries to adjust teacher assignments according to the teachers' wishes. Some schools also base their decisions on teacher assignment on teachers' ethnicity. The principal at Menger, for instance, said:

> "We assigned [the Dai bilingual teachers] according to their work loads, to the quality of their work, and to their capabilities […]. [We] also consider ethnic share in the decisions." (PR-16_2012-03-01)

Comparing the three school types especially those schools with larger teacher resources can reflect teachers' wishes for assignment to specific classes. At Mengyi, for instance, some Dai teachers voluntarily have chosen to take over Dai-Chinese bilingual classes, whereas other Dai teachers kept teaching the regular Chinese classes. Since Mengsan's teachers, by contrast, generally take over first-grade classes in all subjects and "move" with the students of these classes to grade six, the lack of Dai or Bulang speaking teachers did not allow for specializing in a minority subject. Similarly, at school no. 22, where there is only one Dai teacher, this teacher has to teach all Dai classes, and there is no room for her to teach also other subjects.

Decisions on instructional matters, by contrast, are the realm where personnel at the observed schools are most active in decision making. Teachers and principals make here not only discretionary decisions on the methods of teaching, but also on the content and the organization of tuition.

In the realm of organizing the teaching, schools unfold much activity in assignment of students to classes, of school hours, and of languages to use inside and outside class. The largest differences between schools can be found in assignment of students to classes. Mengyi, for instance, decided that generally Dai students are to attend the Dai-Chinese bilingual classes, whereas the Han students are to visit the Chinese language classes. Some "resource supported schools" followed that example by segregating

students in the pre-school and first grade, but some schools of this type as well of as schools of the "left-alone schools" decided that all students visit minority language classes together, irrespective of their ethnicity. The principal at Menger, for example, has decided that all students at his school undergo Dai language education.

Teachers at all observed schools choose methods of tuition in minority languages according to their own preferences, but under balancing own preferences with pre-defined methods. However, the process of decision making seems to depend on the status of management of minority language education at the school. A teacher at school no. 22 described that she makes decisions on the methods of the class all by herself. Similarly, one of the teachers at Mengsan countered the decision at higher levels to terminate official minority language education by using minority language unofficially as a tool for communication in class. Even teachers at the "showpiece schools" negotiate between pre-defined methods and own adjustments. One teacher at Mengyi described the process of decision making on methods with the following words:

> "The teaching methods are all unified. There is a model, and we teach according to that model. However, in reality we teach according to our students' results, and not necessarily according to the assignments of our project. […] The teacher surely develops the methods. For example, when we develop stories in class, the project told us to use the teaching materials at hand, so we can use the materials in a, let's say, lively way. When we teachers don't want to teach this, we can develop other stories." (TE-31_2013-05-20)

Similarly, teachers engage in decision making on the content of class. As has been mentioned above, teachers at all schools follow the strategy to adjust the content of class to their own preferences and their understandings of good tuition in minority languages. A teacher at Mengyi who teaches under the "Dai-Chinese experimental project" model makes content-related decisions when she chooses the content of the writing exercises. The Dai teacher at the "resource supported school" Menger, by contrast, teaches the Dai graphemes one by one until the end of the semester, thereby following the structure of the book. The Bulang teacher at Mengsan, finally, uses the "third class hours" in the afternoon merely to teach some issues of local culture and a few Bulang sayings, but in general he refrains to invest much time on this. He defined thus that Bulang language can be used as an additional tool in class to support the students learning, but not as a subject in its own right.

In sum, teachers at all observed schools engage constantly in decision making, especially concerning content and methods of their classes. At the "showpiece schools", represented here by Mengyi, decision making by school staff focuses especially on the content and the organization of Dai tuition, whereas at the "resource supported schools",

e.g. at Menger, the content of tuition seems to be more defined by the textbooks, and teachers' decision making focuses on the methods of tuition. At the "left-alone schools", on the example of Mengsan, decision making is more differentiated between school leaders on the one side who in some cases ordered the termination of minority language education (e.g. at school no. 11), and teachers on the other side, who continue to use minority languages as an informal tool for communication in class (e.g. at Mengsan, school no. 11, and no. 5).

Justifying decisions

School staff described the decision making process on implementing curriculum as both a school-external and a school-internal process. On the one side interview partners at the schools described that the decision making happens inside the school. The phrase "the school decides on this" was used in a number of interviews. One teacher at Mengyi, for instance, used the phrase "neither the principal nor the vice principal interfere with that" (TE-32_2013-05-20) when she described her own decision making on Dai language education. Principals also mentioned their own actions, but framed these more often as cooperation with superiors. The principal of Mengyi, for instance, used the term "we reported our needs to the central school" (PR-04_2011-12-31) when he explained how he tried to raise the number of Dai teachers at his school.

On the other side, however, interview partners at schools described decision making processes as located outside the schools. The respondents described hierarchies with references to superiors "above". One teacher described how teachers adjust their tuition towards higher levels: "Anyway, we teach according to the assignment of upper levels" (TE-32_2013-05-20). A principal similarly described how he experienced the assignment of research topics to school: "Research topics come from above" (PR-16_2012-03-01). Interestingly, respondents at each "level" pointed to a next higher level of decision makers. Teachers pointed to principals with phrases such as: "That depends on the principal," (TE-12_2012-01-27); and principals pointed to the Bureaus of Education with words such as: "We need to apply for teachers with the Bureau of Education and they apply with the Bureau of Human Resources" (PR-04_2011-12-31).

In any case, both teachers and principals have been reluctant to frame decision making as steered by their own actions, and rather framed the process as a necessary adjustment. Several teachers used the term "flexible" to describe their implementation of curriculum. One teacher at Mengyi, for instance, said: "In reality we can use the textbook flexibly. It's not that the teachers necessarily take them as a frame to conduct their tuition" (TE-32_2013-05-20). More specific, teachers and principals referred to

implementation as adjustment of curriculum to local conditions or to the needs of students. With this emphasis interview partners aimed at justifying their decisions. One teacher at school no. 22, for instance, said:

> "Some of the textbook content does not fit to our location, so I leave it and add instead my own content. I tell them things by myself. Teaching only according to the textbooks would be teaching dead things. The textbooks are all written by elderly people and these textbooks surely don't follow our modern thoughts […]. Some vocabulary is very deep and I myself can't understand it, because I don't have the resources to research it […]. Especially our old Dai needs some reflection. Sometimes I don't teach according to that. If you would teach in this dead way, they would not understand, so you need to use some daily language or the language that they often use." (TE-29_2013-05-07)

As a second strategy, interview partners aimed at justifying their decisions by pointing to the scientific basis of the decisions. One teacher at Mengyi explained that the decisions of assigning class hours to minority language education are not made on basis of the knowledge of the teachers alone, but in cooperation with the organization that established the "Dai-Chinese bilingual experimental program":

> "No, no, it's not the school that decides this alone. It's according to the project group and their many years of experiences and research on how to conduct education in ethnic minority languages in the whole nation, in the whole world." (TE-32-2013-05-20)

Additionally, both teachers and principals legitimize their own decisions in interviews by framing the decisions as being in accordance to regulations, programs or even textbooks. Especially principals emphasize that the schools teach according to the regulations: "We teach everything according to the standards" said one principal at school no. 9 (PR-12_PR-18_2013-05-10). Similarly, the principal of Mengyi modifies his opinion that teachers have the space to make decisions on their own discretion by pointing to the role of the textbooks: "The teachers […] can lecture a bit according to the local conditions, but mainly they teach according to the textbooks" (PR-04_2011-12-31). Particularly teachers and principals at the "showpiece schools" emphasized in interviews that they conduct classes congruent to the programs. At other schools, where teachers cannot point to programs, they emphasized that they still teach according to regulations. One teacher at school no. 22, for example, said:

> "When I normally prepare class, I prepare it according to the textbooks, because I have to follow the long-term teaching plan. It would not be ok to just write what I normally teach, since each subject will be evaluated according to the rules. So I still prepare what the long-term plan wants me to prepare, and after it I can add some additional things." (TE-29_2013-05-07)

Teachers and principals use these strategies of legitimizing decisions not only in the interviews, but also in communication with superiors and parents, although to

different degrees. Teachers and principals particularly at the “left-alone schools” present their own work as being in accordance with the regulations and policy goals, even if these are extremely vague. The principal at school no. 4 reported to the Bureau of Education that they still conduct lively Dai language education, although in reality Dai language education has already nearly terminated. In his impression the minority language office of the Bureau wants to hear this positive feedback. At the same time, however, teachers who used minority language education as unofficial tool for communication in class denied their way of conducting tuition when superiors where present. One teacher at school no. 7, who according to his students regularly uses Yao language in class, said at such an occasion that since teachers should promote Chinese he only uses Chinese in class (TE-09_2012-01-06). In communication with parents, school staffs similarly downplay their own scope for decision making by pointing to orders from higher levels. Since neither principals nor teachers perceive students or parents as actor group that can support them in affecting policy formulation or as a group that questions decisions by school staff (see above), they communicate the need to make decisions at school level in much lower degrees than towards peers.

In sum, the strategies by school staff to justify decisions overlap between principals and teachers in many cases. Downsizing the own role as decision makers in interviews and in communication with superiors and parents is a common strategy of both groups, but also pointing to the benefits of presumably outside-made decisions in favor of minority language tuition. At the same time, however, there are also differences between the school types. Teachers at the “showpiece schools” pointed more often to the project basis of their tuition, which pre-structures educational arrangements. Teachers at the “resource supported schools”, by contrast, referred in the interviews more to the benefits that their own decisions and behavior have for the students’ educational achievements. Teachers at the “left-alone schools”, finally, pointed often to the need to use minority language in their tuition, regardless of superiors’ wishes.

6.4 Summary of chapter

In this chapter I have investigated into the question of how institutional spaces affect the decision making by school staff on minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Through detailed presentation of implementers’ views and the decision making processes at three case study schools in addition to other schools that I have visited in Xishuangbanna, I have analyzed the effects on interpretation of different institutional settings on the decision making of teachers and principals. This analysis produced insights into three issues: implementers’ interests in minority language

education, school staff's perspectives on the scope for school-based decision making, and the effects of differences in institutional settings on these perspectives.

Firstly, nearly all interview partners agreed to the necessity of minority language education in Xishuangbanna, but they reflected different interests and policy understandings. Although some interview partners said that minority language education fits merely to rural schools with large ethnic minority student populations, members of diverse ethnic groups, including Han, largely accepted minority language education, and uttered support for teaching even those languages that are currently not taught at school. Especially teachers at schools with students who have difficulties in following Chinese language classes emphasized the contributions of minority language education to learning Chinese. Those teachers who were engaged with official minority language education in early education found programs helpful for students' learning development, and several teachers who did not participate in such programs used minority languages as an unofficial tool in schooling. At the same time, both teachers and principals connected minority language education also with goals of cultural protection. These respondents perceived language education policies as a right of ethnic groups; and they presented the value of minority language tuition as knowledge transfer to next generations.

Secondly, teachers and principals engaged constantly in decision making that effected minority language education. Although less in budget issues, but more in personnel management and to the largest degrees in issues of instructional matters decisions by staff of the observed schools affected the content of tuition, its methods, student assignment, and teacher assignment. At the same time, however, school staff understated their own role in decision making in the interviews. Teachers pointed to decisions made by school leaders, and principals pointed to decisions made by the Bureaus of Education. Additionally, they framed those decisions that have been obviously made at school-levels as being in line with regulations, superiors' wishes, or instructional guidance of textbooks. With this my interview partners employed a set of strategies to justify own decisions as legitimate adjustments to students' needs. School principals and teachers avoid the risks of emphasizing own decision making also when they communicate with parents, students, and officials from the Bureaus of Education. Only few teachers mentioned open opposition to leaders or policy guidelines, but these cases have been merely mentioned to describe how they experienced this strategy as unsuccessful. None of the implementers at the observed schools perceived parents or peers as potential allies to shape policy formulation, and instead they confined their

actions to decision making as adjusting curriculum implementation in the realm of the schools.

Thirdly, this decision making behavior is determined by the institutions that surround minority language education at schools. Institutions have affected the perception of spaces and limits to own decision making at the observed schools and thus prevented principals and teachers in many cases from supporting minority language education. Institutional settings of the expected roles of teachers as representatives of the state and transmitter of unified national knowledge, for instance, established Chinese language as a constant competition for minority language education. Teachers found hence Chinese education as extremely important for students' future. The test-focus of schooling in China, especially in graduate classes, similarly has urged schools to limit the amount of school hours for minority languages in favor of providing time for Chinese and math. Institutions of teacher and school evaluation, to name a final example, constantly push teachers and principals to reconsider their engagement with those educational models that don't pay off in evaluations and to invest more time and energy in Chinese and math courses than in minority language courses.

A comparison of the three case study schools that represent three types of institutional settings for minority language education in Xishuangbanna exemplified in this chapter the role of institutions. Without further consideration of differences in individual teachers' motivations analysis of these three cases shows that institutions can and do shape the space how school staff's interests translate into decisions. In this respect, the three case study schools can be seen as representatives of the three broadly defined types of institutional settings for minority language education at schools in Xishuangbanna.

Institutions at those schools that I have called "showpiece schools" (with the example of Mengyi) have been favorable for decisions towards minority language education. Schedules of extensive early minority language education in combination with student-centered methods guaranteed that minority language education produces positive effects also on Chinese learning. Additionally, institutionalized benefits for teachers beyond the regular evaluation procedures (e.g. representation in schools, teacher trainings, and reputation through program participation) provided the security that school staff needed to make decisions for support of minority language at schools. Principals and teachers at this type of school invested more time on minority language education than at the other schools, they renovated school buildings for Dai classes, and they rigorously assigned students to Dai classes.

At those schools that are merely “supported” by textbooks and a few other resources provided by Yunnan Provincial or Xishuangbanna Prefectural programs, but that have not received additional supervision of specific teaching models (represented here by Menger), institutions established a completely different picture. The rather sporadic support by these programs did not succeed in establishing long-term security for schools, and teachers still depended here on the regular evaluation mechanisms that are based on students’ grades in math and Chinese. Under these circumstances school staff decided here to run minority language education at the school, since it was demanded by upper levels, but at the same time to make sure that minority language education is hedged to a few hours per week. Teachers at these schools were rather unsatisfied with the outcomes, but at the same time they enjoyed the larger spaces to define the content of classes according to their own preferences.

Minority language education at schools of the third category, the so called “left-alone schools”, where minority language education has been conducted and supported formerly until teachers were left alone with their skills (here discussed on the example of Mengsan), suffered from detrimental institutional settings. The lack of support in terms of resources or staff positions, the lack of evaluation mechanisms on minority language education, and – above all – explicit orders to terminate minority language education triggered insecurity and anger among teachers, who either felt that students need education in mother tongue language or who were convinced that the resources that they as instructors can provide through their own skills for the protection of minority cultures are wasted. Although teachers at these schools followed the top-down demands to terminate official minority language education, they often also continued to use minority languages unofficially in classrooms. However, under this situation teachers experienced this as dilemma and as a detrimental situation for tuition.

The above summary has shown that institutions not only govern how teachers and principals reflect their own space for decision making, but that these perceptions also directly shape the decisions they make. In the next chapter I will analyze what this relation between institutions and implementers’ decisions means for the implementation process of minority language education policies in China.

7 Conclusion: Street-level bureaucrats in ethnic education policy implementation in China

With this study I have outlined and analyzed policy implementation processes at Chinese schools under a bottom-up analytical approach. In this last chapter I will summarize the findings of the case and discuss how to generalize the findings for our understanding of models of policy implementation processes. In the first section of this chapter I will reconsider the role of implementers in policy implementation processes at Chinese schools, and I will outline a model of policy implementation from a bottom-up approach that indicates how street-level bureaucrats shape the implementation process by interpreting policies, instruments, and institutional spaces. Additionally, I will provide an outlook on what this finding indicates for two of the most pressing issues in Chinese educational and ethnic policy making. On the one hand I will discuss the effects of school-based decision making on the quality of education, as this relation is a question not only approached by the Chinese government, but also by the international academic community. On the other hand I will discuss how school personnel's decision making specifically on ethnic minority language education affects the issue of representation of ethnically defined communities in the Chinese policy making process. As some place great hopes in the school-based decision making for both issues, I will discuss here the opportunities raised by school-based decision making on ethnic minority language education, but I will also outline how current institutional settings limit the potential of school-based decision making in China. In the final section of this chapter I will summarize this thesis in brief by indicating the main findings, the contributions to various academic fields, and the possible directions for further research.

7.1 Re-considering the role of implementers in the policy process

Building up on a framework that views decision making by implementers in institutionally defined spaces, this study has analyzed policy implementation from a bottom-up perspective as a process shaped by implementers. In this section I will firstly summarize the findings of this study concerning the role of street-level implementers in policy implementation in China, before I will secondly reconsider what these findings indicate for modeling policy implementation processes under the focus of street-level bureaucrats' decision-making. With these two parts this section will not only wrap up main findings of the study, but also outline contributions to the development of theories of policy implementation.

7.1.1 Street-level implementers in policy implementation in China

Seen from a bottom-up approach, implementation decisions by implementers are major factors that determine outputs and outcomes of policies. They can shape policies from amplification to nullification. Similar to other cases of educational policy implementation, that for instance Malen (2006)[318] has discussed, decisions by school personal as street-level bureaucrats have also large effects on the implementation in the case of implementation of minority language curriculum policy at Chinese schools. Assigning minority language education to less attractive weekly slots in the timetable, reducing Dai language education to one hour per week, or investing only little time into preparation of Dai language courses are all examples where school staff's decisions lowered the position of minority languages in schools compared to Chinese language education. However, decisions by street-level bureaucrats at schools have resulted mostly in mere dilution and appropriation, but much less in amplification and nullification of policies during implementation. This can be explained by three approaches of Chinese policy formulation and implementation, namely the approach of formulating vague guidelines, the experimentation approach, and the approach of policy making by "centralized decentralization".

Firstly, a specific mix of vague guidelines in Chinese policy formulation with evaluation of only partial criteria allows for interpretation and selection of policy goals through implementers, as scholars such as O'Brien and Li (1999), Göbel (2011), and Heberer and Trappel (2013) have found as a characteristic of policy implementation in China. The central government has encouraged local governments and schools to conduct minority language education by claiming diverse policy goals, such as securing minority language survival, fulfilling promises to ethnic groups, or creating a local "ethnic" environment under the shadow of promoting tourism. However, the official documents hardly ever specify how these goals are to be reached. The vague goal definitions in policy documents, the absence of evaluation criteria, and the lack of specified and stable instruments in minority language education programs requires implementers to select policy goals and to adjust policy instruments locally. On the other side, it also enables the government to terminate programs or to shift goals whenever new approaches appear. Implementers are thus likely to avoid investing much time and energy into implementing instable policies, and they rather use their resources for reaching stable policy goals that

[318] All concepts and literature references in this summary chapter have been introduced in the previous chapters, especially the introductory chapter, the framework chapter, the chapter on ethnic minority policy in China, and the chapter on institutional settings at Chinese schools. For discussions of these concepts and references please refer to these chapters.

are subject to intensive evaluation. Dilution, rather than amplification, is often the result of this type of implementation in China's ethnic minority language education policies.

Secondly, experimental modes of policy making trigger further discretion for local implementers. The cases analyzed in this thesis provide examples for the experimental approach, which Heilmann (2008) has described as a major mode in policy making and policy transformation in China. Since offices for minority language education within the Bureaus of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs Commissions have only small resources and low political power compared to the other offices in the Bureaus of Education, they are neither able to conduct large-scale programs that would cover all schools in a region, nor are they able to shift schooling completely. Instead, they rely on the experimental approach to offer support for conducting minority language education at schools. After the shift from the rigorous "monopolistic stage" of language engineering to today's "pluralistic stage" the experimental approach has thus developed into the standard mode of implementing minority language education in China. However, as the example of Xishuangbanna has shown, experiments follow a path that differs from the ideal sequenced model of experimenting, evaluation, and policy learning. The government has only evaluated a few experiments of those discussed in this study. There is a lack of resources for evaluation, a lack of evaluation criteria, and, arguably, also a lack of political will to investigate into the effects of minority language education at schools. The lack of consequences of experimenting has amplified the scope for implementers to appropriate or dilute policies according to their own preferences.

Thirdly, the current status of "centralized decentralization" in Chinese policy making as described by scholars such as Hawkins (2006) or Wong (2009) also allows for policy appropriation, but not for complete opposition. Institutional settings that allow local governments to run decentralized own programs, but that at the same time secure a certain hierarchical steering through the cadre evaluation system, the need to apply to co-funding upwards, and the transfer of earmarked funds downwards all shape the spaces for local decision making. Implementation modes at the local level of government translate into implementation modes at street-level. Schools, for instance, rely on funding by programs, but are free to make decisions on how to use these funds.

These three approaches of policy making in China contribute to implementation modes that result in appropriation or dilution. At the same time, however, these approaches also prevent implementers from completely nullifying or creating policies. Pursuing both latter modes within the implementation process would require either a completely autonomous bureaucracy that does not need to care about policies ordered

from above or it would require activities by implementers to affect policy formulation outside the bureaucratic arena. Neither is realistic for school-based implementers in China. Inside the bureaucratic arena teachers and principals are entangled in hierarchical structures that determine their salary, chances for transfer, housing, and social security. Neither open opposition nor ignorance of policies is an option. The top-down hierarchies prohibit starting policy formulation at schools. Outside the bureaucratic arena school staff is similarly limited in their actions. Due to the lack of school staff representation outside the state-controlled organizations, and for the case of minority language education especially important due to the lack of ethnically defined teacher organizations, school staff is unable to organize political will outside the bureaucratic arena. In light of these limits, school staff can engage in strategies such as division of resources, husbanding resources, or superficial adaptation. In Malen's (2006) model these strategies all result in dilution or appropriation. Against the current settings of policy making implementers at Chinese schools are very unlikely to pursue strategies that could lead to nullification or amplification of policies, such as appealing to higher legislation or coalition building with societal actors.

Can Chinese school staff thus be seen as the makers of policies, as Lipsky (1980) has viewed street-level bureaucrats? On the one side, Lipsky's observation that social policy implementation depends on the actions by those in closest contacts with the clients counts also for staff at Chinese schools. Teachers in China know best what their students need. Educational policies that aim to serve these needs can, arguably, only be implemented through using these resources. The principal-agent problem caused the Educational Bureaus' lack of overview on the situation in every classroom and the specific approaches of policy making in the Chinese political system, such as vague policy guidelines and the experimental modes of policy making, put implementers in a position where they can adjust policies through implementation decisions. On the other side, however, school-based implementers in China are also entangled in a net of hierarchies that limits this role. Their inability to join forces with parents or other social actors in organizing opposition outside the bureaucratic arena and their overwhelming role as bureaucrats who depend on the state in terms of social benefits, positioning, and their own education all reduce Chinese school staff's ability to oppose government policies.

In sum we can see that school-based implementers adjust or dilute policies in China, but that they only seldom nullify or create policies. Even without organized interest representation and without direct negotiations with superiors, school-based implementers are forceful actors in the making of Chinese policies. Not so much through

membership in party organization, but more through professional accountability towards state educational administration school staff is bound to make decisions according to their interpretations of state and party lines. This role as decision maker within hierarchical state organizations, however, is nowhere written down, it is not fixed, and it must be re-defined in practically every decision.

7.1.2 An extended model of the street-level policy implementation process

Through combination of the bottom-up approach of policy analysis with a view on institutions as structuring elements for human behavior my analysis of the cases in Xishuangbanna has contributed examples of how institutions affect the implementation process by steering implementation decisions by street-level bureaucrats. Institutions such as evaluation mechanisms, promotion schemes, or norms of professional behavior demand specific decisions, which in turn trigger curriculum outputs and policy outcomes. At the same time, however, institutions sometimes also refrain from demanding only one option and rather open up a space for a range of possible options. Taking up Hornberger's (2002; 2005) idea of implementational spaces for multilingual education, I view the space that institutions of school and curriculum management provide as an option for implementers to make choices. However, as the case of minority language education in Xishuangbanna has shown, these spaces are sometimes far from being clearly defined. Instead, they provide merely for what I call flexible boundaries of institutional spaces for decision making, namely a space for decision making that is only vaguely defined by formal guidelines, but rests on informal negotiations and implementers' interpretations.

It is this flexibility of the space for decision making that calls for a re-evaluation of the policy framework from an implementer-centered perspective. The policy implementation process that has been described in the heuristic policy cycle model as the stage of putting policies into practice is, as the bottom-up perspective on policy implementation has argued, much more affected by implementers' decisions than top-down models would assume. However, in combination with the institutional approach of defining actors' behavior, implementation can be understood as a process in which actors interact with institutions to make implementation decisions. Four actions by implementers complement the framework outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis (see Figure 5).

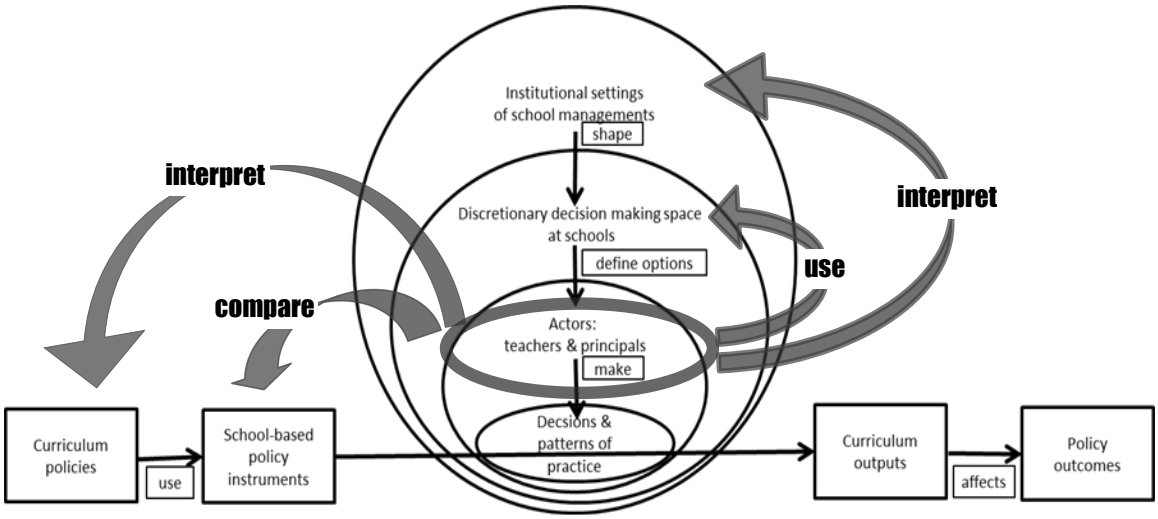

Figure 5: Analytical framework of school-based decision making in curriculum policy implementation including implementers' actors.

Firstly, implementers interpret policies in order to understand the meanings and goals of policies. Especially in cases where policy documents offer only vague goal definitions implementers must use their understandings of concepts that the policy documents mention and they must also include their knowledge of the policy environment. In the case analyzed here teachers and principals used their knowledge of ethnic policy goals presented by government and media such as preserving ethnic cultures, but they also used their knowledge of educational policy goals that demand promoting students to higher levels of education, to secure jobs for graduates, or more generally to educate students in ways the government views as suitable for citizens.

Secondly, implementers compare the policy instruments connected to specific policies with their own interests. The choice of instruments among the catalogue that policy researchers such as Howlett (2011) describe has thus direct influences of how implementers perceive the suitability of policies compared to their own interests. In the cases observed here teachers and principals analyzed how instruments such as funding of educational equipment or organization of teacher trainings can contribute to reach their own interests. Material interests or professional ones are only a few examples of implementers' interests, but also interests to preserve Dai language or Dai culture.

Thirdly, implementers interpret the institutional settings that relate to the implementation of a policy. These institutional settings must not necessarily be directly related to the policy, but they can also originate from the management structures that implementers are bound to. Implementers distinguish which institutional settings are binding for them, and they consider informal rules. In the case of minority language education in Xishuangbanna school staff considers, for instance, if the general teacher

evaluations also apply for minority language education (they mostly don't) or if requirements to represent the state also apply in minority language classes (they do).

Fourthly, implementers use the space for discretionary decision making provided through these institutions to make decisions and ultimately to adjust policies. In the cases observed here, teachers used the discretionary space to lower own workloads and to shift energy to other subjects, but they also used it to adjust curriculum towards their own understandings of what students need for school career, to their understanding of protection of ethnic cultures through tuition, or simply to make schooling enjoyable for students.

This perspective on interpreting and using institutions by implementers enriches the framework of bottom-up policy analysis. It not only indicates that implementers make decisions, but it also points to modes of how they do so. With relation to the research question that I have formulated in the outline of this thesis we can see that institutional settings shape the scope for policy implementation decision making. Since the effectiveness of these institutions, however, depends on how implementers interpret and make use of these spaces it is the interplay of actors and institutions that finally effects street-level decisions on implementation. The proposed framework is an approach to consider both.

Three caveats, however, are in order for this framework. Firstly, the above mentioned four actions are merely examples derived deductively from the case, and the specific context limits generalizations; secondly, this framework focuses on the relation between implementers and institutions, whereas interactions with superiors or clients are reflected only through their roles in the institutional setting; thirdly, the framework views implementers' actions as subdivided specific actions, although these in reality might often overlap with each other.

In sum, this framework provides a perspective that combines the bottom-up approach to view implementation through the eyes of the implementers with an institutionalist perspective on the effects of institutional settings on actors' behavior. However, the analysis has also shown that the institutional settings differ between policy fields. In the case discussed here, for instance, institutional settings differed largely between curriculum policy implementation for Chinese language education and those for minority language education. In this respect, policy implementation analysis must include the specific institutions in a given policy field, and it must analyze in depth how these institutions contribute to implementation decisions.

7.2 Raising educational quality by school-based decision making?

International organizations, the Chinese government, and scholars of educational systems have since long called to reform Chinese schooling away from unified curriculum class content that students are uninterested in and away from rote learning methods that prepare merely for exams. Although the goals and definitions of these reforms differ much between, for instance, educating a skillful work force for China's economy on the one end and educating citizens who, for instance, believe in the need for patriotism and the rule of the CCP on the other end, reform proponents agree that a localized curriculum, flexibly adjusted by school staff's discretionary decisions to the students' needs can be a path to improve schooling in China.

The case of minority language education in Xishuangbanna allows discussing this proposal due to two reasons. Firstly, curriculum policies in this school subject require more decentralized decision making than other school subjects do. Secondly, institutional settings in minority language education of less standardization and evaluation hypothetically provide spaces for discretionary decision making by school staff. In this section I will firstly summarize the attainments and problems of minority language education in Xishuangbanna, before in the second part I will discuss the possibilities and limits to raise the "quality of education" by school-based decision making in China against the specific institutional background of Chinese school management.

7.2.1 Attainments and problems of minority language education in Xishuangbanna

Governments from Yunnan Province to Xishuangbanna Prefecture to Jinghong City, Mengla County, and Menghai County all have conducted measures to support minority language education in Xishuangbanna. Three instruments have been especially used: textbook editing, personnel training, and establishment of designated experimental schools. Bureaus of Education at prefecture and province level have translated, edited, printed, and distributed several editions of specific Dai language course textbooks and Chinese-Dai bilingual translated textbooks of core subjects. They have trained teachers in bilingual tuition methods through short-term in-service trainings and partly also through long-term pre-service trainings. Furthermore, they have established programs to support experimental Dai tuition at schools throughout Xishuangbanna, which includes permission to change the curriculum of several school hours to Dai language, the funding of additional teaching equipment, and organizing events such as conferences or teaching competitions that enhance minority language education programs publicity and provide learning opportunities to teachers. According to official statistics roughly 140 primary

schools, which are 16 percent of the Prefecture's primary schools, conducted education in minority languages in Xishuangbanna in 2013 (see sources and discussion of these statistics in chapter 5). Even if the actual number is lower than these official numbers, it is safe to say that Dai language education is not only in a better position than education in Xishuangbanna's other minority languages, but it is also more developed than education in minority languages in many of China's other regions. Firstly, a comparatively high percentage of children sit in Dai language classes for at least one or two semesters during their school career Xishuangbanna. Secondly, minority language education, and especially Dai language education, became a major point of reference in both official publications and in the perception of the people to identify current educational issues in the region. Even those respondents who have not been in bilingual classes knew about the existence of bilingual education in Xishuangbanna, which reflected back to the Prefecture's image as a multicultural and multilingual locality.

However, minority language education in Xishuangbanna faces also problems that prevent effective policy implementation. Four issues seem especially relevant. Firstly, bilingual education policies in Xishuangbanna suffer from low hierarchical positions of responsible governmental agencies. Minority language offices in the Bureaus of Education in Yunnan Province and Xishuangbanna Prefecture have only limited power in designing overall education. They are separated from the Offices for Compulsory Education, they must limit their activities to offering additional tuition programs, and their work depends on the enthusiasm of the Bureaus' leaders. Secondly, bilingual education in Xishuangbanna suffers from a lack of legislation as a legal basis for its implementation. In contrast to Chinese language education, minority language education in Xishuangbanna lacks regulations that would standardize the content, methods, and goals of tuition. Thirdly, the models followed in minority language education in Xishuangbanna only seldom benefit students' communicative skills, since learning in minority languages is often reduced to a few hours per week and does not affect regular school subjects. Instead, it establishes a socio-linguistic perspective that learning minority languages does not help for communication, for school graduation, or for finding jobs. Due to these models learners and teachers invest more time and energy to learning Chinese than learning minority languages. Fourthly, the programs' preference of Dai over Xishuangbanna's other minority languages prevents teachers from using these other languages in class. The choice of languages for textbooks, for teacher trainings, or for experimental school programs is based on the policy approach to teach merely languages of ethnic groups with official "autonomous" status in a given locality. However, this

approach prevents creation and implementation of language policies that would lower language-related educational barriers for children of other mother tongues than Dai and Chinese.

Although due to the lack of quantitative and long-term study data it is difficult to assess which attainments students gain through minority language education, this study has shown that the effects of minority language education on both the students' skills in minority languages and their overall educational attainments in regular school subjects depend on the institutional settings of this tuition. Under similar parameters of student age (pre-school and first years of primary schooling) and languages taught (Dai language in addition to Chinese), models that use bilingual education extensively seem to not only enhance students' skills in oral and written Dai, but they also enhance students' attainments in the regular Chinese-based subjects, compared to students at the same schools who only went through Chinese language education. In other models that schedule Dai language learning as additional subject with a few hours per week this subject seems to produce only very slow learning progress in Dai script, and instead of supporting learning in other subjects it adds another burden to the student's timetable.

These problems reflect partly the overall reduction of minority languages at schools in China and partly the increasing linguistic heterogeneity in schools, but - in light of the differences of schooling even within one language and one administrative division - more important are the institutional settings of school-based decision making. My analysis has shown that many of the above mentioned problems relate to institutional settings of educational and curriculum management. The low position of minority language education administrators in the Bureaus of Education, for instance, relates to the Chinese school management system's focus on the national unified exams, where minority language education has no benefits. The lack of legislation and curriculum planning for minority language education can similarly be interpreted as preference for standardizing the regular curriculum of Chinese language learning over minority language tuition standardization. Finally, the models that schedule tuition shifts from minority language to Chinese language in early years are similarly an indicator of institutional settings that demand proficiency in Chinese and define minority languages only as a tool to reach this goal.

In order to rise the outcomes of minority language education in China, there are several options to reform current institutions. A non-exhaustive list of possible measures could incorporate some of the following measures: use minority language education in school exams, for instance through choice of test sheets in different languages in the

college entrance examinations; grant extra points for language skills in minority languages in exams; elevate the position of minority language education administrators in the Bureaus of Education; promulgate laws that define goals and standards for minority language education; develop curriculum plans, teacher guidelines, and evaluation mechanisms for minority language education; include minority language education results into the teacher evaluation and promotion system.

The importance of institutional settings for implementation of ethnic minority language education indicates that the findings presented here can be transferred to the situation of ethnic language policies in China in general. Dai language is more promoted in Xishuangbanna than some other local minority languages in other regions in China; and the specific linguistic, historical, and social conditions of Xishuangbanna limit comparability with for instance Xinjiang or Inner Mongolia. However, the finding that many of the institutional settings that shape the implementation process of ethnic minority language policies at schools are rooted not specifically in ethnic policy making, but derive from the institutions of school, curriculum, and personnel management, indicates that relations that triggered the processes observed in this case study are a fundamental issue of minority language education policy implementation not only in Xishuangbanna, but in China in general.

The finding that institutional settings have large effects on the outputs of minority language education and that shifting these institutions will effect minority language education questions the current narrative in much of the literature. Within China not only many government publications, but also scholarly contributions argue that the largest problems of minority language education in China today are a lack of textbooks, teachers, or funding together with a growing linguistic heterogeneity of local populations (Xiong 2004; Fang 2010; Qi 2003). My examples have refuted these theses or at least call for a more differentiated view. Xishuangbanna's schools have enough textbooks in Dai language, but what is needed are texts in Dai and Hani script for school-external use, e.g. novels, comic strips, or websites so that students can use their learned reading skills outside schools. Similarly, since the pre-service teacher training programs of the last years have produced a large pool of bilingually trained teachers in Xishuangbanna there is currently no lack in bilingual teachers, but there is a lack in mechanisms to specifically hire these teachers and make them teach bilingually not only in the designated Dai script courses, but also in math or history courses. Finally, the linguistic heterogeneity of school populations make it indeed difficult to conduct Dai language education at all schools in Xishuangbanna, but instead of raising illusionary calls for linguistic homogeneity of

minority populations the quest seems rather to design institutions that respect and work with this diversity.

Similarly, publications from outside China that merely argue that the Chinese government lacks the will to grant ethnic minorities the right to their own languages (Human Rights in China 2007) also underestimate the role of institutional settings, as they assume a monolithic government. This perspective ignores the diversified goals and means of layers of administration, as can be seen for instance in the struggle of the offices for bilingual education with superiors in the Xishuangbanna Bureau of Education to design institutions of controlling minority language education at schools. Instead, a perspective on the diverse goals, programs, and actors within the government levels in China, and within the schools is more adequate to understand the complexities of ethnic minority language policy making.

7.2.2 Disillusions of raising educational quality through school-based decision making

School-based decision making has been seen as a measure to improve the quality of educational outcomes at Chinese schools. Decentralization of decision making towards schools under a simultaneous increase of accountability measures has been one of the central proposals for reforms in Chinese school management. Not only the Chinese government (Ministry of Education 6/8/2001, 6/26/2012), but also international organizations such as the OECD (Wöbmann et al. 2007; Pont et al. 2008) or scholars interested in reforms in educational systems from an internationally comparative perspective such as Ferris (1992), Fullan (2007), or Law and Nieven (2010) have proposed decentralized management and especially school-based decision making as a tool to rise the quality of Chinese education. Despite the conceptual differences between these proposals (reaching from empowerment of citizens to marketization of the educational sectors) and despite the vagueness of the concept “quality education” in Chinese government publications (from moral and patriotic education to knowledge useful to the labor market), proponents from all three backgrounds have congruently argued that local levels can make more use of locally-generated expertise, resources, and motivations in order to make wiser decisions. Following that, reform proponents have in varied publications proposed to introduce a localized curriculum that is oriented towards students’ lives instead of abstract knowledge and that uses methods for individual learning paces instead of exam-orientation in order to raise the outcomes of schooling.

However, the outcomes of reforms conducted so far have been less than satsfying. Measures that could shift curriculum decision making towards school personnel have only

partially effected school education. Shifts in funding from townships to counties and from private fees to public funding have secured the educational continuity, but have not increased the discretion for school personnel. Local curriculum, that has been officially promoted and elevated to a legitimate element of the school curriculum, has been outweighed by the regular standardized curriculum. The shift of methods towards communicative approaches, to name a final example, has been implemented in a few "elite" schools and in special programs, but the general methods seem to be still based on rote learning and exam-fixation, as scholars such as Dello-Iacovo (2009), Wang (2011), or Adams and Sargent (2012) have shown. Scholars have argued that these limits to reforms have been largely due to institutional settings such as the promotion system for teachers, the overall importance of standardized exams, and the high competition to entrance for higher education.

Minority language education has the potential to lead the way towards increased school-based decision making, as institutional limits for reforms seem to be lower here than in other subjects. The specific role of minority language teachers as experts on this subject demands more decision making by school staff than in more standardized subjects. Similarly, the experimental modes of implementing minority language education enhance the space for trying new teaching methods on a school-wide scope. The lack of evaluation standards for this school subject, finally, allows school staff to make decisions without fearing detrimental consequences for their own careers. All these settings can make a case that minority language education is an advanced area for school-based decision making in China.

However, observations at the case study schools in this thesis show that even this wider space for school-based decision making not necessarily leads to decisions that are more oriented towards students' interests, towards communicative methods, and towards content that is of use beyond exams. On the one side, some school staff that I have interviewed made decisions that shifted Dai tuition to communicative approaches, they have developed methods to ask students about their interests, and they taught content not oriented towards exams, but towards what they thought students' would need most in their life outside the school. On the other side, I have also observed Dai tuition that followed rote-learning methods, that focused on learning knowledge about languages instead of enabling students to use this knowledge, and that resulted in student's being not interested in class content.

These large differences in tuition modes and outcomes depend on the institutional settings for decision making on minority languages at the individual schools.

Through detailed analysis of the decision making process on minority language education I have found that teachers and principals orient their decisions towards different considerations, depending on the institutional settings of support for minority language education at their schools. Through analysis of three contrasting points on a continuum of myriads of specific outcomes of institutional settings, I have analyzed in this thesis the effect of institutional settings on decision making.

At those schools that I have called "showpiece schools" institutional settings such as external evaluations and role definition of Dai teachers as experts in bilingual education benefit school staff's interests in supporting teaching of minority languages as cultural heritage, their interests in career progress, and their interests in promoting students' educational careers. In effect they made decisions that supported the transfer of knowledge between school subjects (e.g. through using methods cross-subjects), to use communicative language learning approaches (e.g. through combining script learning with exercises in story writing), and to orient teaching towards students' lives (e.g. by including local geography, architecture, or customs into class content).

School staff at the "resource supported schools", by contrast, similarly wished to conduct tuition that builds up on what they perceived as students' interests and needs, to choose methods that they perceived as being liked by student such as singing songs or telling stories, and to include content that they found close to students' lives, for instance local history. However, teachers felt also dilemmas when institutional settings (e.g. their assignments as Dai teachers) demanded efforts in teaching Dai and at the same time other institutional settings (e.g. teacher evaluations) demand to focus on other subjects. The decisions that they make under this dilemma, such as maintaining methods of rote-learning, investing more time on the core subjects, or limiting minority languages to specific subjects without use for instruction in other subjects are often detrimental for reform efforts in China's educational system.

Examples from schools that I have termed the "left-alone" type illustrate this dilemma even more. Here, institutional settings that favor the standardized subjects, that have terminated bilingual education at many schools, and that demand investing all energy into core subjects have caused school staff – especially the teachers – to make decisions against their perceptions of what would be needed for both students and the local community. Teachers who have experienced bilingual education as successful for students' attainments or who believe that minority language education is essential for the integration of non-Han students into school life had to stop this localized and diversified education when superiors decided to terminate projects. Due to their roles as

bureaucrats entangled in hierarchical control their decisions had to follow these orders. Using minority languages in their own Chinese classes by translating words every now and then can be seen as an outcome of this dilemma, but even these small-scale usages of minority language education cannot conceal that decision making under these settings cannot meet the goals that scholars have proposed under the issue of school-based decision making to raise the quality of educational outputs.

In sum, under current institutional settings the example of school-based decision making in minority language education is disillusioning for the prospects of reforming content and methods of school tuition in China. School-based decision making on minority language education at Chinese schools exemplifies that reforms in education require more institutional shifts than a sporadic support for a localized curriculum. Picking up the hypothesis by Ferris (1992) that teacher empowerment is a tool to raise the performance of schools one can add that this perspective must be complemented by shifts in overall institutional settings of personnel and curriculum management, whereas mere introduction of another minority language course at schools without institutional changes will not affect overall schooling processes and educational outcomes.

7.3 The chances of ethnic community participation in curriculum decisions

A second line of justification for ethnic minority language education argues that education in students' mother tongues is a right of linguistic groups. This approach views policies to support this education as a tool to enhance the voice of ethnic minorities in the political system. However, ethnic minority policies in China have been said since long to be ineffective in representing ethnic communities due to a lack of democratic control of policy making by citizens. In this dilemma school-based decision making has the potential to adjust policies to communities' preferences, to give language communities a voice in schools, and to democratize ethnic policy making in China. In this section I will reconsider the effects of the bottom-up policy implementation processes on representation of ethnically defined communities in policy making in China. In the first part I will summarize the findings of the analysis of this thesis' case study under the focus of minority language education as a tool for ethnic policy goals, before in the second part I will discuss the possibilities and limits to local community representation through decision making by school personnel as street-level bureaucrats.

7.3.1 Minority language education as a tool for ethnic policy goals

Ethnic minority language education policies in China not only reflect the structures and approaches of the country's overall ethnic policy making, such as policy-making based on official ethnic group recognition in so called autonomous areas, but they also reflect policy goals that scholars such as Harrell (1995), Zhou (2003), or McCarthy (2009) have found in other fields of ethnic cultural policies in China as well.

The goal of appeasing powerful ethnic groups through granting linguistic rights, for instance, is reflected in the establishment of ethnic minority language programs for those groups that have a larger population and/ or larger political power. The fact that in Xishuangbanna merely the Dai have educational school programs in their own language, whereas Jinuo or Lahu don't, indicates that similar principles informed the selection of languages for bilingual education in Xishuangbanna.

Similarly, minority language education also reflects the goals of the language engineering projects that aimed at shaping language usage and popularizing "reformed" scripts through education. The ups and downs of minority language education in Xishuangbanna during the last decades as well as the changes between traditional and reformed Dai script in schools mirror the changes of language engineering ideology from "pluralistic", to "monopolistic", and to "pluralistic" again.

Furthermore, minority language education also reflects the party-state's goal to demonstrate its benevolence by allowing for ethnic cultural diversity under united citizenship. The otherwise Han-dominated CCP uses minority language education to substantiate their claim to rule China's multiethnic population without ethnic discrimination. With education in minority languages over a few school hours the CCP has found a vehicle to fulfill their historical promise to cultural autonomy for China's ethnic minority groups without threatening the unified character of national education in "core subjects" and in citizenship education. Similar to branding Xishuangbanna as an exotic location with diverse and peaceful ethnic groups in shows and in publications minority language education policies in Xishuangbanna pursue the goal to demonstrate that the state cares for ethnic groups.

Finally, minority language education policies also follow the goals of the "civilizational project" by enabling ethnic minority groups to participate in the education system by lowering the language barriers for them, thus binding ethnic students into the "modern" and "civilized" world of the national school education.

However, the cases in this thesis have also shown that minority language policy implementation in Xishuangbanna has at most only partly reached these goals. The

approach to appease the strongest groups through organizing education in their languages has succeeded in avoiding public unrest on the issue of minority language education, which has been reported from other parts of China, e.g. on the issue of Tibetan or Cantonese language usage in schools (Wong 2010; Beckett, Postiglione 2012), but the goal to demonstrate the benevolence of the state towards ethnic groups cannot be reached when the policies prefer specific groups over others. Although until today the underrepresentation of Hani, Jinuo, and Xishuangbanna's other non-Dai minority languages in education has not resulted in public anger, it remains to be seen if these languages' speakers will continue to accept the Dai preference. Similarly, it remains to be seen how long the Han population will accept models of bilingual education that under school mergers and migration increasingly also affect their children.

Xishuangbanna's minority language education also failed to serve the goal of "language engineering", another target of China's ethnic policies, as it had only little effects to increase the usability of minority scripts outside of the class room. The shifts between traditional and reformed Dai script in schools have created additional barriers to using the language in written domains, and they have reduced the chances for mutual fructification between monastic and school education.

The goal of attracting students to state-organized schooling through minority language education, finally, has also been only partly successful. Minority language education has contributed to lowering the barriers for students' access to education only in those cases where schools use students' mother tongue languages as a language of instruction, whereas the mere adding of Dai script courses to the regular timetable in other schools has in the eyes of many Dai students not made schooling more interesting and in the eyes of non-Dai it instead increased educational burdens.

In the question if these goals are reached by decisions of school personnel makes a large difference. The choice to use minority languages or only Chinese in communication between teachers and students, for instance, affects not only the position of the language in public usage, but it also affects the right of ethnic minorities to use their own languages in public and in educational domains. The decision for or against using Dai script also in non-language courses has similar effects on popularizing scripts through schooling. Finally, the decision either to exclude local culture from curriculum or to present aspects of local minority cultures such as handcraft or architecture specifically to the students as a value (for example the museum room in one of the visited schools) has effects on the image that students receive about the hierarchies of "cultural development".

In sum, the examples presented here show that minority language education in Xishuangbanna is oriented towards the goals of China's national ethnic policies, but that it only partly reaches these goals. Xishuangbanna is an example of how nation-wide approaches to ethnic policies affect local policy making, and this orientation can be expected to be found in minority language education programs in other parts of the country as well. However, the analysis of individual decisions made at school level has also shown that the differences in implementation result in different outcomes in terms of language engineering, shaping the ideology of "civilizational hierarchies", and demonstrating the benevolent state.

7.3.2 Ineptitudes of ethnic representation through school-based decision making

The system of region-based autonomy for ethnic minority groups in China has since long been said to be ineffective in representing ethnically defined groups of citizens. Scholars have shown that China's autonomy laws are ineffective to protect human rights of ethnic groups, that hierarchical policy making outweighs local autonomous policy making, that the selection of "ethnic" local leaders cannot guarantee decisions in favor of a specific ethnic group, and that the lack of democratic institutions prevents citizens from controlling government (Heberer 1989, 2000; Dreyer 2000; Mackerras 2004; Lundberg 2009). Similarly, scholars have argued that the contrast between the Han-dominated CCP and its claim to be a ruler over a multi-ethnic country triggers a continuous conflict in Chinese ethnic policy making (Heberer 2013). In effect, policy making in autonomous regions not necessarily reflects preferences of the majority of a localities' population and not even the preferences of ethnically defined groups. Under-represented ethnic groups in China have protested in diverse forms for increased representation, which some scholars have identified as sources for vulnerability of the government, if not even as a threat to social "stability" in China (Dreyer 2000, 2005; Sautman 2005). Even if the assumptions of vulnerability are far-fetched, issues of human rights, conflict prevention, and the efficiency of policies all point to the need to reconsider the system of ethnic representation in Chinese policy making.

Academia has proposed several paths to reform policy making on ethnic issues, from strengthening local autonomy by introduction of federalism and organized representation of interests (Heberer 2000) to reducing ethnically defined representation in order to make room for cultural diversity under the leadership of an even more centralized government (Ma 2007). However, in light of the difficulties of implementing large systematic changes one might also look for possibilities to strengthen

representation of ethnic groups outside the political apparatus at the more decentralized area of implementation at street-level.

Decentralized decision making on minority language education at school level is an option to enhance representation of preferences of local population, generally, and that of ethnic groups, specifically. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, decisions by school-staff in China have tremendous effects on shaping, adjustment, and even "making" of policies. These effects can be used to enhance communities' say in policies, when the decisions by school-staff represent the preferences of local population.

This approach can make use of several advantages compared to shifting political representation in parliaments and governments. Firstly, ethnically aware school-based decision making does not need specific newly group-based representative bodies with all the difficulties to reach an appropriate or accepted balance between groups, which Kymlicka (1995) has described as a major difficulty for ethnic parliamentary representation. In an ideal mode of school-based decision making school staff would constantly include parents' and students' wishes into their decisions, without specific ethnic representation at schools. Secondly, such a model can circumvent the official ethnic group identification, which in the case of China has been found to be an inappropriate measure to reflect identities of groups or individuals due to its static and top-down character (Harrell 2001b; Stone-Banks 2004; Hoddie 2006a). Instead, school-based decision making could reflect local identities of language communities, of villages, and even of individuals, when citizens of a school community make decisions on the languages they find necessary for their own community. Thirdly, such small-scale community based decision making could be used to enable local communities to decide about educational and cultural issues without having these issues connected to demands for complete independence of ethnic groups. The government could withdraw from certain decisions in order to lower angers against perceived cultural colonialism.

However, the cases that I have discussed in this thesis do not indicate that a higher level of school-based decision making on the issue of minority language education compared to decisions on other subjects necessarily leads to decisions that reflect local communities' preferences. Surely, many teachers and principals that I have interviewed considered the students' well-being, educational careers, and even moral development when they made decisions. However, even where they did so, they still made decisions under their own interpretation of what is good for students, so that representation of students' preferences, or for that matter representation of parents' preferences, was merely shifted from government to school personnel, but not to local communities. In

some of the cases that I have analyzed in this thesis competing interests of school personnel were simply stronger than school staff's considerations of benefits for students. The decision, for instance, to abruptly terminate Dai or Hani language education at some schools has led to disturbed learning processes. The decision to assign Han students to Dai classes similarly seems to not have been in the interests of students, but rather derived from the interests to fulfill top-down program targets for Chinese education.

This lack of including communities', parents', or students' preferences in decisions is due to a lack of institutional settings that could channel these interests to schools. First of all, ethnic minority school staff not necessarily feels inclined to a specific ethnic group, simply because ethnic registration does not always coincide with individual identity, beliefs, and preferences. Especially for school staff in China institutionalized roles of teacher behavior as state representatives at street-level demand a certain distinction from local ethnic groups in favor of closeness to the state. Several institutional settings such as teacher evaluation mechanisms bind teachers to the state. This means, that school staff cannot be expected to serve as representatives of local communities at school level, unless the definition as bureaucrats is changed towards increased responsibility towards these communities. Secondly, there are only very few channels for transferring parents' preferences to school personnel, and these channels are only seldom used. Parent meetings are more used to inform parents than to gather parents' opinions. Home visits by teachers seem to be similarly limited to discuss the students' achievements, but they exclude discussions about the schools' basic decisions on curriculum. In effect, school staff only very seldom uses communication with parents as a strategy to make decisions. Interviewed teachers and principals argued that their decisions should be oriented towards the students' interests, but hardly any of the schools that I visited had mechanisms installed to reflect the students' and parents' opinions. Thirdly, there is a lack of organizational structures that represent parents or students in schools. Most rural schools lack student or parent committees and where such committees have been installed their mandate do not cover decisions on curriculum. Finally, since parents in rural areas have only few chances to choose schools they also lack in bargaining power over schools that urban parents might have by sending children to other schools.

In effect, this lack of institutional settings prohibits a guarantee that school-based decision making reflects local communities' preferences. Reform approaches must thus also focus on institutional changes. Parent councils, community-elected school superiors, school choice, and course choice for parents and students all could be scrutinized as

possible reform paths, but in the schools that I have visited there were so far hardly any signs that these more fundamental institutional shifts will be approached in the near future.

In sum, school-based decision making can only serve as a tool to improve ethnic representation in policy making in China when institutional settings provide for community-control over schools. Under the current system school-based decision making seems to be rather an approach to "let-off steam" from calls for ethnic autonomy by shifting small-scale decision making to schools without reforming institutional settings of the general system of school management. Since institutional settings in the educational system benefit Chinese language education, such as the exam-orientation, they also prevent that ethnic minority parents call for more education in minority language education. Small alibi courses can thus serve as a demonstration of local autonomy without challenging hierarchical control over most of schooling. The approach of "de-politicization", to use Ma's (2007) term, has proved successful to separate the issue of minority language education from local representation, but the price has been a backdrop in the potential of mother-tongue language education for students' learning in many of the case study schools. Transferring Lipsky's (1980, p. 7) view that it is easier to lay the dilemmas of social policies unto the shoulders of street-level bureaucrats than to reduce inequality in social policies in the first place to the case of minority language education in China, it seems that it is easier to grant discretion to school-level bureaucrats than to grant autonomy for local communities over education matters in their schools.

7.4 Summary of thesis, innovative contributions, and further research

In this **study** I have scrutinized the impacts of institutional settings of curriculum and school management on implementation of ethnic minority language education policies at school level in the Prefecture Xishuangbanna, one of China's linguistically most diverse regions with comparatively rich programs for bilingual education at schools.

By examining policy implementation processes on the example of ethnic language policies in China, I intended to bridge the theory-oriented **literatures** of policy implementation frameworks with the empirical literature on minority language education in China. The former set of literature has already shown in detail that policy implementation depends on the decisions by implementers at delivery agencies, the so called street-level bureaucrats, but it lacks in understanding of how institutional settings, especially those between discretion and accountability, affect the decision making by these actors. The latter set of literature has delivered detailed descriptions of the institutional settings, reforms, and challenges in China's systems of school and curriculum

management and it provided rich descriptions of policies, programs, and outcomes of minority language education, but similarly it lacks in understanding the processes that happen between policy formulation and outcomes of minority language education.

Considering these research gaps I have developed the following **research question** for this study: "How do institutional settings of school and curriculum management affect the implementation of minority language education policies at school level in Xishuangbanna?" For this question I have defined institutional settings of school and curriculum management as dependent variables, the implementation outputs of public policies for formal ethnic minority language education at schools in Xishuangbanna as the dependent variable, and the decision making by teaching and administrative personnel at schools as intervening variable. In the introduction to this thesis I have outlined two hypotheses. Firstly, decisions by school staff have large effects on the implementation of minority language policies at schools; secondly, under this discretion decisions by teachers and school leaders are oriented largely to their own interests and beliefs; and thirdly, the specific processes of decision making result in more diversity for minority language education than for other school subjects at schools in Xishuangbanna.

For this study I was able to build up on the **data** that I have collected during two periods of fieldwork stays in Xishuangbanna between 2011 and 2013. Interviews with more than 100 respondents, school visits and classroom observations at more than 30 schools, kindergartens, and colleges, and collection of official statistics, regulations, and schools internal evaluation data have established a rich stock of data. This data builds up on official descriptions of minority language education, on implementers', students', and parents' narratives, and on my own observations on the implementation and outcomes of this type of school education.

Based on an **analytical framework** of street-level policy implementation at schools that views implementers' decisions in the implementation process as shaped by institutional settings, I have conducted a three-step analysis of decision making processes on minority language education at the case study schools. Firstly, I have elaborated on the main policies and implementational structures of ethnic minority language policies in China and Xishuangbanna; secondly, I have distinguished three types institutional support for minority language education at schools; and thirdly I have scrutinized the processes of decision making at case study schools. In a deductive approach based on my interview partners' narratives I have scrutinized three issues of decision making by school personnel: considering roles and interests, interpreting policies and spaces, and making and justifying decisions.

The **findings** of this study show that implementing minority language education contains sub-processes where implementers interact with institutions in order to make decisions, which in turn determine the outcomes of minority language education.

Firstly, I have found that the actions of implementers have large effects on the outcome of policy implementation, but that institutional settings also limit implementers' decisions. Even in minority language education in Xishuangbanna, where the space for decision making is larger than in other school subjects, teachers and principals are caught by accountability measures, hierarchies, and pressures to fulfill standards of schooling. Additionally, their role as bureaucrats within the party-state prohibits actions outside the bureaucratic arena. Decisions by street-level implementers on these issues are thus more likely to trigger policy adjustment and dilution than policy nullification or creation. In this sense, school personnel should be seen rather as policy appropriators, than as policy makers at the delivery level.

Secondly, this study has also shown that school staff is constantly pressured to adjust policies under multiple dilemmas. In contrast to Lipsky's assumption that the dilemma of street-level bureaucrats is merely between clients and superiors, my study showed that dilemmas are far more complex. On the one side, clients, i.e. parents and students, have developed much less pressure towards teachers concerning the content and teaching modes of minority language education than scholars who studied street-level bureaucracy have observed in other cases. Instead, school personnel in China experiences dilemmas more within conflicting policy goals of ethnic and educational policies, and within the unfitting formal and informal institutional settings that on the one side demand discretionary decision making, but on the other side pressure school staff to make decisions according to their interpretations of what superior levels in school management demand. When staff of the case study schools observed here had to make decisions under these dilemmas they constantly compared spaces for decision making with their own multiple interests, reaching from material interests in promotions and higher salaries, to professional interests in taking care for students' educational careers, to interests in supporting a local ethnically defined culture.

Both findings indicate that the implementation process through decisions by street-level bureaucrats is more complex than a single dilemma, but that it involves processes of considering multiple interests and spaces for decision making. Based on the analysis of this case I have modified the analytical model of the theory chapter by introducing variables of implementers' interactions with institutional settings, policies, and interests. I have outlined four processes: firstly, implementers interpret policy

meanings and goals against their knowledge of broader policy goals of the party-state; secondly, they compare policy instruments with their own interests in order to find out if instruments benefit their own interests; thirdly, they interpret the institutional settings in order to grasp which of the often only informally codified institutions apply to the specific policy implementation situation; and fourthly, they finally make use of the discretionary spaces provided by these institutions by making decisions on organizing and implementing education at school and in the classroom. Although these four processes are merely a selection of possible processes, they nevertheless indicate that institutional settings effect policy implementation at street-level only through interaction of implementers with these institutions.

Building up on this finding I have in this thesis also outlined a **discussion** on the impacts of school-based decision making on two of the most discussed and arguably much pressing issues in Chinese educational and ethnic politics: the call to raise the quality of educational output through decentralization of curriculum and the call to reform the system of ethnic autonomous decision making. My analysis of decision making at schools in Xishuangbanna has shown that in both areas there are only few possibilities to trigger these changes by school-level decision making, since institutional settings not always enable school-based decision making to lead to improved educational outcome or improved representation of local citizens.

In the case of educational quality even the wider space for school-based decision making in minority language education has not triggered decisions that increase students' educational attainments, but in many cases this additional school subject has increased the students' burdens. Institutional settings allowed school-personnel to make decisions on policy implementation, but settings such as evaluation pressure in other subjects or the pressure to prepare students for exams diminished the potential of school-based decision making on minority language education. The differences in outcome between the schools under various modes of management of minority language education programs confirm the strong role of institutional settings of school and personnel management beyond the specific ethnic minority language education policies.

Similarly, school-based decision making on minority language education can only partly fulfill the hopes of overcoming the problems of ethnic representation through top-down group identification that is indifferent towards the preferences of individuals on the one side and the region-based autonomy system that prefers selected ethnic groups in a given locality over others on the other side by school-based ethnic decision making. Not only is the space for school-based decision making limited to the small area of language

education, but there is also a lack of institutionalized mechanisms that would support school-communities, parents, and students in articulating their preferences and that would guarantee policy implementation at schools according to these preferences.

In sum, although school-based decision making especially on ethnic minority language education is a promising way to improve educational quality and to make curriculum more responsive to preferences of local communities, the already existing spaces must be complemented by institutional settings that on the one side allow school personnel to consider students' preferences more than they can currently do, and that on the other side enable communities to control their schools.

These findings **challenge and expand previous literature** in at least two ways. Firstly, the findings presented here challenge narratives of the ethnically and linguistically homogenizing state, that through schooling intends to shift language use of China's ethnic minority children to Chinese, as previous literature that was based merely on analysis of policy outcomes at schools has assumed (see literature review). Through contrasting the programs for ethnic minority language education in Xishuangbanna with implementation processes at school level, my thesis has shown that policy outcomes on minority language education in China can be diverse and that minority language education policies in China, depending on institutional support, can not only benefit students' educational attainments, but can also enhance the status of ethnic minority languages. Secondly, however, my study also challenges the assumption of previous literature (mostly literature that was published in China) that presents ethnic minority language education in China as a success story. Through including the institutional background my study has shown that despite existing programs ethnic minority language education still suffers from a marginal status and an institutional misfit at Chinese schools. Finally, and arguably the strongest contribution of this thesis, my study expands previous literature that has separated policy formulation and outcomes at schools by an analysis of the implementation procedures at schools. Under the approach of analyzing street-level bureaucratic decisions at school level against the changing background of accountability systems my thesis has expanded the existing literature with description of interpretation processes in implementation.

These findings provide **contributions** to several academic fields. Firstly, they contribute to our understanding of policy implementation from a bottom-up policy analysis approach. They indicate that policy implementation research under the street-level bureaucracy framework is good advised to include an analysis of institutional settings at the specific case, as the motivations and dilemmas of street-level

implementers are closely connected with the institutional environment of their organizations. Secondly, these findings contribute to the literature on policy making in China by indicating that we need to understand policy making in China not only as a process steered by government officials, but as one that is similarly affected by the politics within the implementing organizations at service-delivery level. This finding can contribute to the literature on evaluation and discretion in policy implementation in China, which has previously focused on the role of government officials and cadres, by opening up perspectives on discretion and accountability at street-level. Thirdly, my findings also contribute to our understanding of how institutional settings affect implementation processes within schools. In addition to the often normatively oriented literature on decentralization in school management my findings provide an analytical example of how shifts towards school-based decision making not necessarily trigger increases in the outcome of education. Finally, my findings can contribute to sharpening the strength of analyzing ethnic policies and specifically ethnic minority language policies. The analysis of the process that happens between policy formulation and outcome contributes to extending the literature on governmental goals and individual programs by adding insights into implementation processes.

However, the findings also indicate directions for **further research**. Firstly, future research on minority language education at schools in China could focus on the actions of parents and students in policy formulation and implementation. As my research has focused on the role of school personnel, I have found that effects of both parents and students on the decisions of school personnel at the cases discussed here are rather low. In this respect it could be worthwhile studying the actions for instance of parents to register students at other schools, to approach officials, or to pursuit options for minority language education outside public schools, for instance in private schools, or monastic education. Secondly, there is still a need for quantitative measurement of the outcomes of minority language education on students' skills in the minority languages, on their skills in Chinese, and on their overall school attainments. So far the majority of literature on ethnic minority language education in China seems to rely on often superficial assessment of the outcomes and merely assumes beneficial contributions by minority language education without being able to prove this. Although I have focused with my study on the decision making process that lead to specific outputs rather than on the outcomes of specific tuition in students attainments, I have found in small-scale and non-representative observations of students' skills in Chinese and minority languages and

through analysis of student grades already large differences in attainments that indicate a need to invest with quantitative methods into this relation.

Notwithstanding this need for further research directions this study has shown that qualitative case studies can support our understanding of how implementers affect policy making and of how institutions shape implementers' decisions. Ethnic minority language education in China provides a suitable case for gaining insights into the processes, the dilemmas, and the chances of school-based decision making on policy implementation.

8 References and Appendix

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8.2 Appendix

8.2.1 Tables of interviews and visited educational facilities

Table of Visited educational facilities

No. and pseudonym of facility	Type of educational facility	Administrative division	Location	Minority languages officially taught	Pilot program	Type of minority language school
1 Mengyi	Branch primary school	Township	Jinghong	+	B	"Showpiece"
2 Menger	Branch primary school	Township	Mengla	+	A	"Resource supported"
3 Mengsan	Branch primary school	Township	Menghai	-		"Left-alone"
4	Branch primary school	Township	Jinghong	+		"Resource supported" to "Left-alone"
5	Branch primary school	Township	Jinghong	-	E	"Left-alone"
6	Branch primary school	Township	Jinghong	+	B	"Showpiece"
7	Branch primary school	Township	Jinghong	-		
8	Branch primary school	Township	Menghai	-		
9	Central primary school	Township	Mengla	-		
10	Central primary school	Township	Menghai	-		
11	Central primary school	Township	Jinghong	-		"Left-alone"
12	Central primary school	Township	Jinghong	-		
13	Central primary school	Township	Jinghong	-		
14	Central primary school	Township	Jinghong	-		
15	Central primary school	Township	Jinghong	-		
16	Central primary school	Township	Menghai	-		
17	Nine-year school	Township	Menghai	+	C	"Showpiece" to "Resource supported"
18	Secondary school	City	Jinghong	-		
19	Secondary school	Township	Jinghong	-	D	"Left-alone"
20	Secondary school	City	Jinghong	-		
21	Secondary school	City	Jinghong	-		
22	Secondary school	Township	Menghai	+	C	"Resource supported" to "Left-alone"
23	Public kindergarten	City	Jinghong	-		
24	Public kindergarten	Township	Jinghong	-		
25	Public kindergarten	Township	Jinghong	+		"Resource supported"
26	Public kindergarten	City	Jinghong	-		
28	Public kindergarten	Township	Jinghong	-		
29	Public kindergarten	Township	Jinghong	-		
27	Private kindergarten	Township	Jinghong	-		
30	College	City	Jinghong	+		
31	University	City	Beijing	+		
32	University	City	Kunming	-		
33	University	City	Kunming	+		

Table 26: Visited educational facilities. Note: Table indicates all schools, kindergartens, colleges and universities that I visited during fieldwork for this dissertation between 2011 and 2013. Indexed are the number and if applicable pseudonym that was used throughout the text to refer to case study schools (on the creation of pseudonyms Mengyi, Menger, and Mengsan for the three case study school see introductory chapter). "Administrative location" refers to the localities' administrative status, not to facilities' administrative status. "Pilot program" refers to minority language education or ethnic culture pilot programs: A: Yunnan Provincial Bilingual Experimentation Schools Program; B: Dai-Chinese Bilingual Education Experimental Program; C: Menghai primary school and middle school Dai tuition; D: School-based Curriculum Development Project; E: Community-based Education for Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity: Coming home to our village. "Type of minority language school" indicates support schools receive from minority language education programs, as elaborated in sub-chapter 6.1.

Table of interviewees

Altogether 108 interviews with the following interviewees:

Index	Interviewee's professional position or other interview-relevant characteristics	Interviewee's registered ethnicity
FA-01	Family member(s) of student(s)	Hani
FA-02	Family member(s) of student(s)	Hani
FA-03	Family member(s) of student(s)	Bulang
FA-04	Family member(s) of student(s)	Bulang
FA-05	Family member(s) of student(s)	Dai
FA-06	Family member(s) of student(s)	Dai
FA-07	Family member(s) of student(s)	Bulang
MO-01	Novice or junior monk	Dai
MO-02	Novice or junior monk	Dai
MO-03	Former monk	Dai
MO-04	Senior monk	Dai
OF-01	Official at Prefecture Bureau of Education	Dai
OF-02	Official at County/City Bureau of Education	Dai
OF-03	Official at Prefecture Bureau of Education	unknown
OF-04	Official at Township Government	Jinuo
OF-05	Official at County/City Bureau of Education	Han
OF-06	Official at Prefecture Bureau of Education	Han
OF-07	Official at County/City Bureau of Education	Dai
OF-08	Official at County/City Bureau of Education	Han
OF-09	Official at County/City Bureau of Education	Han
OF-10	Village Leader	Hani
OF-11	Official at Prefecture Bureau of Education	Dai
OF-12	Official at Province Ethnic Affairs Commission	Miao
OF-13	Official at Province Bureau of Education	unknown
OT-01	Former Foreign Teacher	Foreign Citizen
OT-02	Villager	Hani
OT-03	Villager	Hani
OT-04	Villager	Hani
OT-05	Villager	Hani
OT-06	Villager	Bulang
PR-01	Principal at college	unknown
PR-02	Principal at kindergarten	Han
PR-03	Principal at kindergarten	Han
PR-04	Principal at branch primary school	Dai
PR-05	Principal at branch primary school	Han
PR-06	Principal at branch primary school	Dai
PR-07	Vice-Principal at branch primary school	Han
PR-08	Principal at kindergarten	Han
PR-09	Vice-Principal at central primary school	Han
PR-10	Vice-Principal at central primary school	Han
PR-11	Principal at secondary school	Han
PR-12	Vice-Principal at central primary school	Han
PR-13	Principal at central primary school	Han
PR-14	Vice-Principal at central primary school	Bulang?
PR-15	Vice-Principal at central primary school	Bulang?

Index	Interviewee's professional position or other interview-relevant characteristics	Interviewee's registered ethnicity
PR-16	Principal at branch primary school	Hani
PR-17	Principal at nine-year school	Dai
PR-18	Vice-Principal at central primary school	unknown
SC-01	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-02	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-03	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-04	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-05	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-06	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-07	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-08	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-09	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-10	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-11	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-12	Scholar in the field of minority languages, education, or ethnicity	unknown
SC-13	Scholar, teaches minority languages	Dai
SC-15	Scholar, teaches minority languages	Dai
SO-01	Staff of social organization	Foreign Citizen
SO-02	Staff of social organization	Foreign Citizen
SO-03	Staff of social organization	Foreign Citizen
SO-04	Staff of social organization	Hani
SO-05	Staff of social organization	Hani
SO-06	Staff of social organization	Hani
SO-07	Staff of social organization	Hani
ST-01	University Student	Hani
ST-02	Adult Student	Hani
ST-03	Secondary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-04	Primary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-05	Secondary school student	Dai
ST-06	Adult Student	Hani
ST-07	Primary School Student	Hani
ST-08	Primary School Student	Hani
ST-09	Primary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-10	Primary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-11	Primary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-12	Primary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-13	Primary school students	Diverse interviewees
ST-14	Primary school student	Dai
TE-01	Teacher for other subjects at kindergarten	Han
TE-02	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Hani
TE-03	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	unknown
TE-04	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-05	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Jinuo
TE-06	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	unknown
TE-07	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	unknown
TE-08	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Jinuo
TE-09	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Yao
TE-10	Special post teacher for other subjects at primary school	Han
TE-11	Teacher for other subjects at kindergarten	Hani

Index	Interviewee's professional position or other interview-relevant characteristics	Interviewee's registered ethnicity
TE-12	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Bulang
TE-13	Former teacher for other subjects at primary school	Han
TE-14	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at nine-year school	Dai
TE-15	Former teacher for other subjects at primary school	Han
TE-16	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Bulang
TE-17	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	unknown
TE-18	Former teacher for other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-19	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	unknown
TE-20	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Han
TE-21	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	unknown
TE-22	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-23	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at kindergarten	Dai
TE-24	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-25	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-26	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-27	Teacher for other subjects at primary school	Dai ?
TE-28	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-29	Teacher only for minority languages at secondary school	Dai
TE-30	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TE-32	Teacher for minority languages and other subjects at primary school	Dai
TS-01	Teacher Student in pre-school education major	Hani
TS-02	Teacher Students: College students in pre-school education major, including bilingual education	all Dai

Table 27: Interviews. Note: The category "professional position" in this table has to simplify. Principals, for example, often also teach, and "teacher for minority languages" merely indicates that the teacher currently teaches or has taught minority languages, irrespective of other school subjects that he or she also teaches or has taught. Ethnicity is only indicated for selected interview partners, whereas for others, e.g. many scholars, interviewees' ethnicity has not been part of the interview (marked as "unknown"). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that "ethnicity" refers here merely to official registration, but, as the body of this text shows, there are many different perceptions of ethnicity and in fact oftentimes interview partners' descriptions of their own ethnic belonging differed from this official registration. Variables such as gender, age, and locality are not indexed in this table in order to protect my interviewees' privacy.

8.2.2 Maps of Xishuangbanna

Geographical position of Xishuangbanna in China and Yunnan

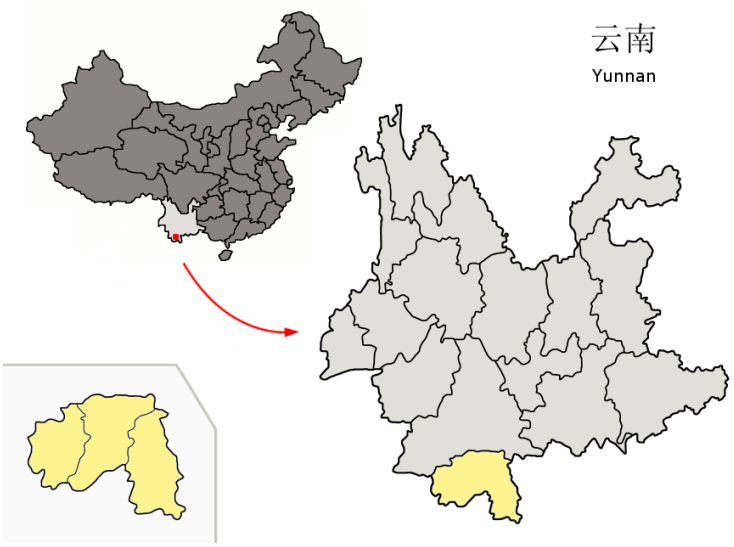

Figure 6: Geographical position of Xishuangbanna in China and Yunnan. Source: Wikipedia (September 27, 2007): Location of Xishuangbanna Prefecture within Yunnan province of China, online accessible at http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Location_of_Xishuangbanna_Prefecture_within_Yunnan_%28China%29.png, last access: Mai 26, 2014.

Administrative division of Xishuangbanna

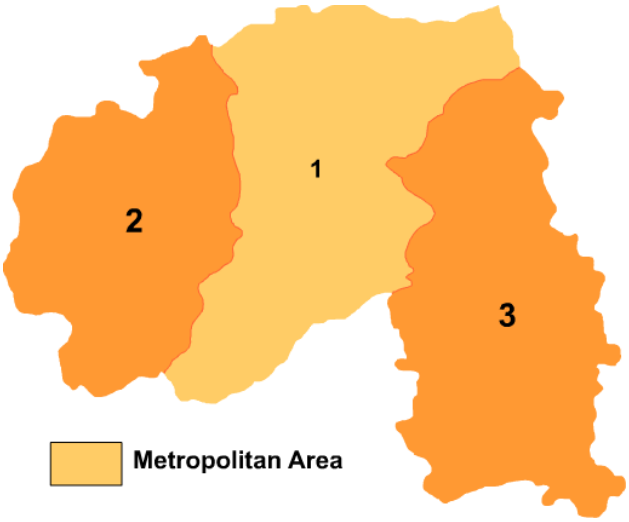

Figure 7: Administrative division of Xishuangbanna. 1: Jinghong City, 2: Menghai County, 3: Mengla County. Source: Wikipedia (April 11, 2010): Map of Xishuangbanna in Yunnan province, online accessible at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Xishuangbanna_mcp.png, last access: Mai 26, 2014.

8.2.3 Curriculum schedules and evaluation criteria for core subjects

Selected courses in primary and junior secondary schools in China

Subject **学科**	**Description for primary school**	**Description for junior secondary school**
Ideology and Morality/ Ideology and Politics 思想品德 / 思想政治	Students learn about social morality and general politics, with a focus on "five loves": love for the motherland, people, labour, science and socialism.	Students study the principles of socialist morality, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, conditions of the country, and the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. They are to develop a belief in socialism and the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.
Chinese 语文	Students learn 2,500 common Chinese characters, Mandarin Chinese and the pinyin (Chinese romanization) system, and the use of general dictionaries.	Students learn the basics of modern Chinese and a little bit of ancient Chinese, enlarge their vocabulary, become proficient in the use of dictionaries and references, improve language skills through listening, speaking, reading and writing, and develop observation and thinking abilities.
Math 数学	Students learn the arithmetic of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals; basic geometric forms; simple algebraic formulas; the abacus; logical and spatial thinking; and the application of mathematics to simple practical problems.	Students acquire basic knowledge and skills of algebra and plane geometry, study rudimentary statistics and spatial forms, and improve their computing, logical and spatial thinking, and problem solving abilities.
Social Studies 社会	Students acquire a basic understanding and knowledge of social phenomena and the history, geography, and society of China and the world, learn to observe and adapt to social life, and are educated in patriotism and the law.	
History 历史		Students study the history of China (including their local region) and the world, with a focus on the major events and key figures in modern and contemporary China.
Geography 地理		Students study the basic geography of the world and China (including their local region), learn to use maps and geographical charts, and understand the relationship between human activity and geographical environment as well as China's national policy on demographics, natural resources and the environment.
Nature 自然	Students study common natural objects and phenomena and understand how humans use, transform, protect and explore Nature. They learn to make scientific observations, apply science to practical use, and reject superstitions.	
Physics 物理		Through observation and experiments, students acquire basic knowledge of mechanics, thermal dynamics, electricity and optics and understand their essential applications. Emphasis is put on fostering scientific attitudes and developing the ability to observe, experiment, and solve simple practical problems.
Chemistry 化学		Through observation and experiments, students learn the basic concepts and theories of chemistry and become familiar with a few important common chemical elements and their compounds. Emphasis is put on fostering scientific attitudes and developing the ability to observe, experiment, and solve simple practical problems.
Biology 生物		Through observation and experiments, students learn the structure, physiology and classification of plants, bacteria, fungi, viruses, and animals, acquire basic knowledge of genetics, evolution, and ecology and basic understanding of the human body with relation to its form, structure,

Subject 学科	Description for primary school	Description for junior secondary school
		physiological functions, as well as hygiene and healthcare issues. Emphasis is put on fostering scientific attitudes and developing the ability to observe, experiment, and solve simple practical problems.
Physical Education 体育	Students acquire basic knowledge of physical education, hygiene, and healthcare, develop skills in physical education, cultivate habits of exercise and hygiene, and are trained in discipline, unity, and endurance.	Students improve their knowledge and skills of basic physical education, hygiene and healthcare, cultivate habits of regular exercise, and are trained in discipline, cooperation, competition, and endurance.
Music 音乐	Students learn Chinese musical masterpieces, gain some exposure to music of other countries, and acquire basic knowledge of musical theory and performance.	Students continue to study Chinese musical masterpieces and some music from other countries, learn basic musical theory and skills, and develop the ability to understand, perform and appreciate music.
Fine Art 美术	Students are exposed to excellent examples of fine art from China and other countries and acquire basic knowledge and skills of fine art.	Students continue to study excellent works of art of China and other countries, acquire basic knowledge and skills of fine art, and improve their ability to observe, appreciate and produce fine art.
Labour 劳动	Students acquire basic knowledge and skills of labour through self-serving labour, housework, community service and simple productive labour.	Students acquire knowledge and skills in service-oriented labour, industrial and agricultural production, and certain professions.
Foreign Language 外语		A school may offer foreign language (English, Russian, Japanese, etc.) at Level I or Level II. Level I includes two years in which students learn basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Level II comprises Level I plus one year (or two years in the 5+4 pattern) that prepares students for further study.

Table 28: Course description of selection of courses in primary and junior secondary schools in China, after Sun (2005, pp.17–18).

Selected evaluation criteria on efficient usage of funds at Chinese schools

Subject of criteria	Category of criteria	Examples of criteria
General educational funds usage efficiency evaluation criteria	Just usage of educational funds criteria	Structure of educational organizations; number of educational organizations
	Educational productivity evaluation criteria	No. of teachers; funding per student; no. of students, student-funding ratio; student enrollment rate; student graduation rate; student attrition rate
Individual school educational funds usage efficiency evaluation criteria	Economic criteria	School debts; coverage rate of school; space of school ground per student; space of school buildings per student; teaching materials per student; share of funds used for buying educational equipment among all public educational funds;
	Efficiency criteria	Usage of infrastructure; usage of teaching materials; share of administrative staff among all staff in school; teacher ratio; share of full-time regular teachers among all teachers; workload of teachers
	Effectiveness criteria	student enrollment rate; student graduation rate; student attrition rate; graduates employment rate; no. of publications per teacher; social evaluation of student qualities

Table 29: Selected evaluation criteria on efficient usage of educational funds at Chinese schools, after Tian (2011, p.94), citing Qi, Ye, and Ye (2009): 政府绩效审计 [Governmental Achievement Audit], Beijing: China Modern Economy Publishers.

Category of criteria (1)	Category of criteria (2)	Examples of criteria
General criteria	Funds available (efficiency)	Overall provision of funds
	Provision of funds (efficiency)	Share of funds provided by province, city, county or other sources
Specific criteria	Results of program implementation (effectiveness)	Reduction of dangerous school buildings; construction of new school buildings; coverage ratio of teacher trainings; usage of electronic teaching materials; …
	Results of program implementation (effectiveness)	Student enrollment rate; number of classes in schools; teacher-student ratio; teaching materials available; literacy rate; …

Table 30: Selection of evaluation criteria of efficiency of usage of educational program funds, after Tian (2011, p.93), citing Henan Bureau of Finance, 2004, no publisher, no location.

8.2.4 Legislative acts and policy documents on minority language education

Table of laws, regulations, and plans to promote education in minority languages at schools (extended)

Promul-gated by	Date (latest revision)	Title	Provisions
National People's Congress	2004	Constitution 宪法	- Guaranteed equality, autonomy, and support for ethnic groups (Art. 5; 112-121) - Right to use and develop own languages and scripts for ethnic groups (Art. 5, 121) - Set-up ethnic representation (Art. 59,65, and others)
National People's Congress	2006	Compulsory Education Law 义务教育法	- All children irrespective of ethnicity are entitled and obliged to receive formal education (Art. 4) - Regions required to establish schools or classes specifically for ethnic minorities (Art. 18) - State provides incentives for teachers with posts in minority areas and encourages graduates to take teaching posts there (Art. 31 and 33)
National People's Congress	2001	Regional National Autonomy Law 民族区域自治法	- Autonomous regions can decide on language of instruction and content of instruction (Art. 36) - Autonomous regions are obliged to fund the editing and publishing of textbooks in minority languages (Art. 37) - Schools with ethnic minority students are allowed to use minority languages for instruction and to use textbooks in minority scripts (Art. 37) - Chinese language education is to be introduced in primary school either from junior or senior classes, according to local circumstances (Art. 37)
State Council	2010	National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020 国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要(2010-2020年)	- Rise education in minority areas, expand boarding school system, develop minority schools (Art. 27) - Expand bilingual education. Extend Chinese language education, but respect and protect the right to use minority languages in education. Support bilingual teacher education, textbook publishing, and research on bilingual education (Art. 27)
State Council	2002	Decision on Deepening the Acceleration of Reforming the Development of Ethnic Education 国务院关于深化改革加快发展民族教育的决定	- Principles of education for ethnic minorities: modernization and development; separation religious and secular education; autonomy rights; cooperation center with minority areas (Art. 2: 1-4) - Proposed instruments: include targets on publishing of bilingual textbooks to local educational development plans and budgets; edit textbooks in minority languages that are of use for daily life of students; start with Chinese language tuition already in first grade; invest into research and publishing on bilingual education (Art. 3: 7)
YN Province	2013	Yunnan Province	- Governments of all administrative levels to support minority and

Promul-gated by	Date (latest revision)	Title	Provisions
People's Congress		Regulations on Work on Ethnic Minority Script 云南省少数民族语言文字工作条例	Chinese bilingual education at pre-school and primary school (Art. 11) - The Province Bureau of Education and the Province Ethnic Affairs Committee to draft plans for bilingual teacher education, teacher trainings and conduct teacher education (Art. 11) - Preferential enrollment of students with minority language abilities into teacher education at university (Art. 12) - The Provincial Bureau of Education and the Bureaus for Publishing and Broadcasting shall translate and publish teaching material in minority languages (Art. 15)
YN Province People's Congress	2013	Yunnan Province Regulation on the Promotion of Ethnic Minority Education 云南省少数民族教育促进条例	- Governments of counties, county-level cities, and districts to erect bilingual kindergartens in those towns and townships where Chinese is little spoken. Province, prefecture, and cities to subsidize these (Art. 7). - Province, prefecture, and city governments support installing, funding, and staffing of institutes of ethnic higher education (Art. 10) - Ethnic schools are to implement the national curriculum, to add minority unity education, and to integrate ethnic cultures into the curriculum (Art. 11) - Educational Bureaus of all levels intensify research and usage of bilingual education resources and set up a bilingual curriculum (Art. 12) - Additional benefits for teachers in minority and border regions: financial subsidies and accommodation, their own children receive benefits for entry-exams to senior middle school and vocational schools (Art. 13) - Governments of all administrative levels should install a system to education and train bilingual teachers; they should install bilingual teacher classes in nationality universities and in institutions of teacher education according to the needs of minority areas; graduates of these classes enjoy preferential employment possibilities an should be send to the local primary schools and kindergartens (Art. 15) - Governments encourage teachers to use the local minority languages; successful bilingual teachers should be rewarded and should enjoy preference in promotions, evaluations, and posting decisions (Art. 15) - Governmental and social units in minority regions can install quota for employments of bilingual graduates (Art. 17) - Funding for bilingual textbooks both on the nationally unified and local curriculum to derive from the budget for compulsory education (Art. 21)
YN Province Bureau of Education	2010	Yunnan Province Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020 云南省中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要（2010-2020 年)	- Strengthen bilingual education at school-level and pre-school level; spread Chinese language education, but respect also the right to receive education in minority languages; increase the education of minority language teachers; establish and fund training facilities for bilingual teachers at province, prefecture, and prefecture-level cities; publish bilingual teaching material that suits multi-ethnic schools; establish earmarked funds to support bilingual education (Art. 27)
XSBN Prefecture People's Congress	1993 (currently under revision)	Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture Regulation on Ethnic Education 西双版纳傣族自制州民族教育条例	- Schools that are visited mainly by students of an ethnic minority with a distinct script should conduct tuition in both the minority script and in Chinese; schools visited by students of an ethnic minority without a distinct script should use this minority language as auxiliary tool in tuition; middle schools can install elective Dai courses; the Prefecture Nationalities Teacher College [now the Xishuangbanna Vocational College] should install Dai-Chinese teacher education classes (Art. 29)
XSBN Prefecture Bureau of Education	2009	Opinion on the Further Strengthening of Bilingual Education Work in	- Need for bilingual education: protection of culture and strengthening of educational success (Art. 1: 2-3) - Models: Dai language in pre-school or first two grades of primary school as language of tuition, in grade three to four transition to Chinese, in grade five to six Dai as elective course; Hani, Bulang, Jinuo,

Promul-gated by	Date (latest revision)	Title	Provisions
		Primary and Middle Schools in Areas Inhabited by Ethnic Minorities 关于进一步加强少数民族聚居区中小学双语教育工作的意见	Lahu, Yao language as auxiliary tool for tuition and other languages (Art. 2: 2) - Instruments: establish research on bilingual education by two to five staff in the County and City Bureaus of Education as well as in schools; county and city governments install budget for bilingual education; schools with bilingual education models be equipped with at least one bilingually trained teacher; schools that conduct Dai Chinese bilingual tuition develop respective local curricula; improve propaganda on bilingual education among parents and village leaders; improve bilingual teacher trainings within the next three years, including intensive seminars and certificates; establish an evaluation and grading system for Dai-Chinese bilingual teachers; install exam system for Dai language classes (Art 2: 3-4)
XSBN Prefecture Bureau of Education	2010	Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020 西双版纳傣族自治州中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要(2010-2020年)	- Develop bilingual pre-school education; respect the right to receive education in minority languages; develop bilingual teaching force (Art. 14) - Establish a group of bilingual kindergartens; support establishing schools with ethnic characteristics (Art. 30) - Strengthen the development of Dai-Chinese bilingual teacher trainings; publish Dai-Chinese bilingual teaching materials; educate a group of Dai-Chinese experts and masters (Art. 35)
Mengla County Bureau of Education	2009	Mengla County Development Plan on Bilingual Education, 2009-2015 勐腊县双语教学工作发展规划(2009-2015)	- Install Dai-Chinese bilingual model schools: 10 schools with Dai-Chinese tuition at pre-school and fifth grade in 2009, 2 middle school with Dai-Chinese tuition at seventh grade in 2010; expand the model to all schools with Dai students in the County from 2010 to 2015 (Art. 4) - Install a research and guidance group at County Bureau of Education; propagate the benefits of bilingual education to parents and society; provide financial benefits for bilingual teachers; install an exam system for Dai language in class; establish regular budget for bilingual education within the Compulsory Education Budget; provide Dai teaching materials free of charge (Art. 5)

Table 31: Table of laws, regulations, and plans to promote education in minority languages at schools. YN= Yunnan, XSBN= Xishuangbanna.

8.2.5 Images from Xishuangbanna

Note: All images have been taken in Xishuangbanna between 2011 and 2013. Due to protection of the interviewees' identities these pictures are merely examples not necessarily from the case studies described in this thesis. Copyright for all images are with the author.

Residential buildings

Image 1: Wooden Dai stilt house.

Image 2: Newly build villas of villagers in valleys, mostly Dai. Note the roof shape resembling that of wooden stilt houses.

Dai script

Image 3: Street sign in Jinghong in Dai, Chinese, and English.

Student report cards

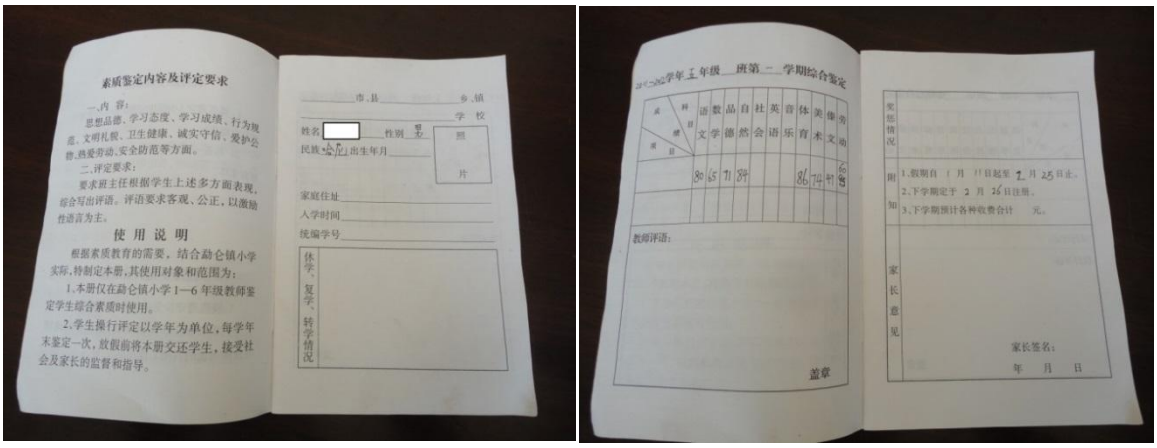

Image 4: Two pages of student report card indicating also Dai language tuition grades.

School buildings

Image 5: Schoolyard and newly renovated school building of one visited school.

Image 6: Schoolyard and non-renovated school buildings at one visited school. Hill-top position of school and flagpole distinguish the school as sphere of the nation-state.

Dai language education

Image 7: Dai language education at school.