

“CHINA’S POLICIES ON ITS BORDERLANDS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS”

Conference Call for Papers

Date: 11 – 12 March 2010

Location: University of Macau, Macao, China

Organizer: Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Macau

Much of the existing literature about China’s inner periphery (Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia) focuses on ethnic disputes and developmental issues. The outer periphery (Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao) is coloured by internationalization and local identities. The studies of outer periphery often focuses on the regions from a perspective of trilateral relations among China, US, Taiwan), among China, UK, and Hong Kong, and among China, Portugal, and Macao.

A major limitation of existing literature is their inadequate investigation into the opportunities and challenges from the peripheral territories to contemporary China’s relations with its neighbouring countries and beyond. The secessionist movement in Xinjiang, for example, potentially provides a common ground for China and its neighbouring countries in Central Asia to deepen their cooperation and build trust not only in the war against terrorism led by Muslim but also in natural resources exploitation and transnational transportation. The failure of China’s Tibet policies to acknowledge the cultural heritage and value system of Tibetan has provoked many Tibetans to pay their allegiance to the Tibet government-in-exile which is well-connected with the Western countries. Being sympathetic with the Tibet government-in-exile, some Western countries remain suspicious of Chinese government and criticize Chinese government’s attempt to eliminate Tibet’s cultural distinctiveness. The economic prosperity in the Northeastern regions, together with the hardship in North Korea, has attracted influx of illegal immigrants from North Korea. The responses of Chinese government to these illegal immigrants are shaped by China’s economic needs, North Korea’s attitude, and the advocacy of international NGOs.

The handover of the sovereignty of Hong Kong and Macao has also marked a change in the two city-states’ position in China’s foreign relations. The implication of retrocession of Hong Kong has extended beyond the framework of China-British relation. The edge of Hong Kong on financial industry and business service enables Hong Kong to perform the economic function of China in attracting foreign direct investment, harmonizing the practices of Chinese corporate governance with international standard, and enticing *haigui* (or returning Chinese professionals) back to China. Macao has a growing presence of American capital and interests after the liberalization of casino industry in 2002. The unfolding events of money laundering and arm trade activities of North Korea through the city, together with the bridging role of city in cross-strait relation, put Macao in the map of China’s international relations, China-US relation in particular.

The conference examines the interplay of two sets of related policies: China’s policies to its borderlands and its international relation. Given that local political elites at borderlands are insignificant under current political institutions, many foreign policies - including the policies to neighbouring countries – fail to reflect the local interests at peripheral territories. At the same time, the policymaking authority is fragmented and different functional bureaucracies are uncoordinated. Therefore the policymakers with an interest in borderlands, such as those in the policy areas of ethnic issues, poverty relief, water work and irrigation, HK and Macao affairs, Taiwan affairs, do not adequately consider the implications of their policies on China’s relation with its neighbouring countries and beyond.

The themes of discussion include, but are not restricted to:

- a) Overview of the making, dynamics and conflicts of the two policy domains – China’s policies towards its borderlands and foreign relations.
- b) The political institutions and policy process of the two policy domains.
- c) Xinjiang and Central Asia.
- d) Inner Mongolia and Mongolia.
- e) Tibet, India, and beyond.
- f) Northern China and Russia.
- g) Northeastern provinces and North East Asia.
- h) Southwestern provinces and South East Asia.
- i) Hong Kong, Macao and beyond.
- j) Taiwan and beyond.

The papers are expected to address, but not limit to the following questions:

1. What are China’s policies towards its borderlands like? The policies may be discussed from three perspectives:
 - a. Penetrating into the borderlands militarily and administratively (such as controlling the appointment of local leaders, discriminating indigenous elites in favour of the appointees from other regions, using coercion against secessionist movement, etc);
 - b. Increasing borderlands’ economic dependence on the centre (such as transferring fiscal revenue to borderlands, orienting local economies to serve the economic needs defined by the central government, provisions of business and investment opportunities to local business elites and professionals, encouraging private investment and mass migration from the heartland, etc);
 - c. Soliciting cultural subordination from the borderlands (such as designating a high proficiency in Chinese and Putonghua as pre-requisites for personal advancement, controlling the mass media to stamp out undesirable information defined by the state, stepping up patriotic education, etc).
2. What problems are caused by these policies on the parts of the local actors in borderlands?
3. How do China’s foreign policies impact the borderlands?
4. How do the local actors interact with the actors in neighbouring countries and international communities in response to the problems resulting from the policies?
5. What are the responses of Chinese governments towards the local actors’ actions?

All papers will be included in the conference proceedings on the condition that the final paper is submitted before the deadline. A selection of papers will be invited for inclusion in a peer-reviewed book published by World Scientific, and in a special issue of *Journal of Contemporary China*.

PAPER PROPOSALS

Please send the following information via email to Dr. Bill Chou (e-mail address: kpchou@umac.mo) on or before 30 November 2009:

Name:

Paper Title:

Paper Abstract (up to 300 words):

Institution:

Position:

E-mail Address:

Postal Address:

Fax Number:

Telephone Number:

Further details of the conference will be forthcoming.