Comprehensive encirclement : the Chinese Communist Party's strategy in Xinjiang

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COMPREHENSIVE ENCIRCLEMENT:

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S

STRATEGY IN XINJIANG

GARTH FALLON

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This thesis argues that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has a strategy for securing Xinjiang – its far-flung predominantly Muslim most north-western province – through a planned program of Sinicisation. Securing Xinjiang would turn a weakly defended 'back door' to China into a strategic strongpoint from which Beijing can project influence into Central Asia. The CCP's strategy is to comprehensively encircle Xinjiang with Han people and institutions, a Han-dominated economy, and supporting infrastructure emanating from inner China.

A successful program of Sinicisation would transform Xinjiang from a Turkic-language-speaking, largely Muslim, physically remote, economically under-developed region – one that is vulnerable to separation from the PRC – into one that will be substantially more culturally similar to, and physically connected with, the traditional Han-dominated heartland of inner China. Once achieved, complete Sinicisation would mean Xinjiang would be extremely difficult to separate from China.

In Xinjiang, the CCP enacts policies in support of Sinication across all areas of statecraft. This thesis categorises these activities across three dimensions: the economic and demographic dimension, the political and cultural dimension, and the security and international cooperation dimension. The Party's strategy relies on the interaction of all these measures to Sinicise Xinjiang.

The economic and demographic dimension does the most important and tangible work in Sinicising Xinjiang. Since 1949, millions of Han people have migrated to Xinjiang. By their presence in large numbers and their industrious development of the region, the Han people have made their culture, the Chinese language and the PRC's economy, powerful Sinicising forces in the region.

On a political and cultural level, the strategy involves giving the appearance of permitting Uyghur autonomy that cultivates a harmonious, multi-ethnic region that respects cultural differences, while actually denying Uyghur culture the possibility of growing – or even maintaining its current status.

And finally, the brutal security measures in Xinjiang prevent Uyghur separatists from cohering into a large and effective movement. This buys time for the other dimensions of the Sinicisation strategy to work. This thesis concludes that the CCP's strategy is effective and if it continues to be pursued, is likely to eventually succeed.

Once achieved, successful Sinicisation would mean that culturally, economically, politically, and to the greatest extent practicable in terms of transportation and communication infrastructure, Xinjiang would be extremely difficult to separate from China. Uyghur and other Turkic peoples would become culturally Chinese.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the memory of David A. Lavercombe, Esq.

ABBREVIATIONS

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
ETIM	East Turkistan Islamic Movement
ETLO	East Turkistan Liberation Organisation
ETR	East Turkistan Republic
OBOR	One Belt One Road Initiative
ODWC	Open and Develop the West Campaign
PAP	People's Armed Police
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RATS	Regional Anti-terrorism Structure
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
Second ETR	Second East Turkistan Republic
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
XPCC	Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps
XUAR	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Aim

This thesis aims to examine the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) strategy in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR),[1] including how the situation in present day Xinjiang came about, and how the CCP views the challenges involved in securing the region. This thesis also evaluates the effectiveness of the strategy and its prospects for success.

1.2 Significance

Xinjiang is strategically important to China. The region is China's largest territorial unit and lies in China's far-flung north-western corner. The geography is a combination of extremely high mountain ranges and vast tracts of desert with pockets of fertile oases.

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[1] Except where stated otherwise, I use the term Xinjiang to mean the area that is now formally called the XUAR. For convenience sake where the discussion relates to pre-Qing Dynasty history, I use the term Xinjiang to refer to the general area which has now become the XUAR. As explained later in this thesis, because the term XUAR is inherently misleading, I avoid using it except where I am specifically referring to the political unit that is part of the PRC.

Although Xinjiang constitutes a sixth of the area of the People's Republic of China (PRC), it has just over a sixtieth of the total population of China.[2] Since at least the 5th Century BC it has been home to Turkic peoples[3] and their modern descendants who include around 10 million Uyghurs.[4] Of China's total Muslim population, Xinjiang is home to the great majority of Muslims who are neither Han nor Hui.[5] Xinjiang is a significant security and governance challenge for China. Xinjiang's Uyghurs and the Tibetans of Tibet are both noteworthy as non-Han peoples who live in a geographically distinct and remote area and represent a plurality of the population in their respective regions and which have a history of separatist movements.[6] The Uyghurs and the Tibetans both represent a challenge to China's image of itself as a unitary state of 56 officially recognised 'Chinese' ethnicities, but which is dominated by the Han people who constitute over 90 per cent of the total population within the PRC's current borders. Although most analysts do not think China is at risk of a USSR–like break up, they do

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[2] C. Tyler, *Wild West China: The Taming of Xinjiang*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004, p. 3.

[3] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 18-9.

[4] The total Uyghur population was estimated to be 9,938,000 in 2010. R. Guo *et al* (eds.), *Multicultural China: a statistical yearbook (2014)*, Springer, Heidelberg New York, 2014, table 3.1, p. 68. According to the 2010 census the PRC (including Taiwan) had a total population of 1,339,724,852, and Xinjiang had 21,813,334 people. Thus Xinjiang accounts for 1.63 per cent of China's population. China Data Center of the University of Michigan 'China 2010 Census Data Released', [web page] 29 September 2011, citing the National Bureau of Statistics of China, viewed on 10 July 2016, http://chinadatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=470

[5] The PRC defines the Hui as an ethnicity, but their main cultural trait distinguishing them from Han peoples is the practice of Islam. Therefore, they are essentially Sinicised Muslims. H. Beech, 'If China is anti-Islam, why are these Chinese Muslims enjoying a faith revival?' *Time*, 12 August 2014, viewed on 8 July 2017, http://time.com/3099950/china-muslim-hui-xinjiang-uighur-islam/; and, The Economist says of the Hui: 'Having intermarried with the Han for generations, they look and speak Chinese. ... Unlike the Uighur and Tibetans, they have taken the path of assimilation.' 'The Hui: China's other Muslims', *The Economist*, 26 October 2016, viewed on 08 July 2017, https://www.economist.com/news/china/21708274-choosing-assimilation-chinas-hui-have-become-one-worlds-most-successful-muslim

[6] Mongolians only account for 20 per cent of the population of Inner Mongolia. M. Patience, 'Sweeping change across China's Inner Mongolia', *BBC*, 5 February 2014, viewed on 21 August 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-25979564

believe that if it were to break up, it would be along ethno-territorial lines.[7] Due to their geography, history, and large non–Han population, if China were to break up, Xinjiang and Tibet are the strongest candidates to achieve autonomy or independence.[8] Xinjiang is a strategic weak point on the PRC's periphery because it is physically and culturally remote from inner China. This means that if the PRC were to confront other major strategic challenges – including war with other states – Xinjiang would be potentially vulnerable to being separated from China and/or present a vulnerable 'back door' to inner China, whether it be for clandestine foreign forces or large military forces in the event of a major war.

Xinjiang is also a gateway between inner China and Central Asia. This gives rise to physical and cultural ties which are vectors for trade and social exchanges. Such ties are also potential avenues for political and material support to Uyghur separatists. Physically, Xinjiang lies on the ancient Silk Road connecting inner China with Persia, Turkey, Russia and Europe. Today it lies on what is often referred to as the New Silk Road overland trade corridor between Europe and China. Since 2013, Xi Jinping has championed what is officially called the 'One Belt One Road' initiative. The 'Belt' refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt being the land-route from China to Western Europe; and the 'Road' is the '21st Century Maritime Silk Road' from coastal China to southern Europe.[9] The Belt is intended to revive overland trade routes

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[7] D.C. Gladney and V. Raymond, 'La question Ouïgour: Entre islamisation et ethnicisation' (The Uyghur question: between Islamisation and ethnicisation) *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 59, no. 5/6, (September-December 2004), p. 1174.

[8] M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, pp. 110 and 133.

[9] Xinhua News Agency, 'Chronology of China's Belt and Road Initiative', viewed on 16 October 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-06-24/c_135464233.htm. OBOR in Chinese is *yidai yilu* 一带一路 for short, or in full: *sichouzhilu jingjidai he ershiyi shiji haishan sichouzhilu* 丝绸之路经济带 和 21 世纪海上丝绸之

between Europe and China by constructing a great deal of major new international infrastructure, including railways, highways and pipelines.[10] The Belt is also intended to project Chinese influence into Central Asia and beyond.[11] Xinjiang is host to infrastructure that imports natural gas and petroleum from Central Asian countries to inner China. Xinjiang also has its own natural resources including oil, natural gas and agricultural crops. Xinjiang's natural resources and its connections with Central Asia make it a valuable strategic and economic corridor.

The two largest ethnic groups in Xinjiang are the Uyghurs and the Han. The vast majority of Han migrated there after 1949. Prior to 1949, Xinjiang was Turk-dominated with the Han population standing at around 6 per cent.[12] The region's non-Han peoples of many ethnicities have close ties with their co–ethnics in Central Asia. Xinjiang is home to many Turkic peoples most of whom have fellow members of their ethnicities in large numbers in neighbouring states: Khazaks/Kazakhstan, Kirgiz/Kirgizstan, Tajiks/Tajikistan and Mongols/Mongolia (and the PRC's 'Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region'). Yet, there is no Uyghur state. All these Turkic peoples have distinct cultures and languages, but they have many cultural points in common and the languages are part of a Turkic languages family. Uyghurs tend to be concentrated in agricultural and pastoral occupations; and almost universally self-identify as Muslim. Historically,

路, One Belt One Road website, 'What is OBOR with Pinyin and English' [my translation], viewed on 16 October 2016, http://www.yidaiyilu.cn/display.asp?id=149

[10] Xinhua News Agency, 'China unveils action plan on belt and road initiative', *Xinhua News Agency* website, 28 March 2015, viewed on 08 March 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/28/c_134105372.htm

[11] C. Clover and L. Hornby, 'China's great game: road to a new empire', *Financial Times*, 12 October 2015, viewed on http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/6e098274-587a-11e5-a28b-50226830d644.html#axzz42wb0ePCa

[12] D. O'Brien, 'An exploration of the Han Chinese as political actors in Xinjiang'. in Hayes, A. and M.E. Clarke (eds.), *Inside Xinjiang: space, place and power in China's Muslim far northwest*, (Kindle edition) Routledge, 2015.

Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 117.

Uyghurs have practiced a particularly moderate strand of Islam (Sufism), but during the 1980s and 90s there was a rise in Wahabist-Salafist influence and a rise in popularity of jihadist doctrines amongst Muslims in Xinjiang which has drawn the PRC into the fringes of the 'Global War on Terrorism'.[13]

Despite its importance to China, Xinjiang is inadequately understood by those outside the XUAR including Chinese and foreigners alike. Despite much coverage after 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States (9/11), the world's understanding of Xinjiang barely improved. There was much confusion as to whether it was a breeding ground of Islamic terrorism directed in part against the PRC, or simply a territory that had been dispossessed of its independence by China.[14] Xinjiang experiences sporadic violent attacks on civilians and security forces at the hands of various militant Uyghur separatist groups. From time to time it also experiences protests by Uyghurs which sometimes turn violent. Sometimes Xinjiang's troubles are referred to as an insurgency. The situation does not constitute, in my view, an insurgency. Instead, I use the term 'conflict' to describe the prolonged and sometimes violent struggle by Uyghur separatists against the PRC.[15] Since there have been significant

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[13] M. Dillon, *Xinjiang: China's Muslim far northwest*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2004*op. cit.*, p. 13; and, M. Al-Sudairi, 'Chinese Salafism and the Saudi Connection', *the Diplomat*, 23 October 2014, viewed on 10 June 2016, http://thediplomat.com/2014/10/chinese-salafism-and-the-saudi-connection/; and, T. Stanley, 'Understanding the origins of Wahabism and Salafism', *Terrorism Monitor*, vol. 3, issue 14, viewed on 10 June 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=528#.V1odGldBVTY

[14] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 5.

[15] The security context in Xinjiang, and the related attacks in other parts of the PRC have been variously described as an insurgency, terrorism, separatism, troubles and conflict. For reasons discussed later in the thesis, the term insurgency is overblown and terrorism (preferred by Chinese authorities) may not encompass all of the militancy and may imply judgement against the militants' cause. Probably for these reasons many Western academics avoid using a specific term to describe the situation in Xinjiang (instead they may describe part of the conflict such as 'violent separatism' or they use the quite broad term 'conflict' (see for example and the Australian Centre on China in the World (Australian National University), the *China Story* website, lexicon entry for Xinjiang http://www.thechinastory.org/lexicon/xinjiang/

episodes of violence between Turks and Han people ever the arrival of Han Dynasty troops in Xinjiang in the 1st Century BC, it is almost impossible to give a date for the true start of this conflict. However, the current phase of this conflict is often traced to 1990 when there was an uprising in the township of Baren in south-western Xinjiang.[16]

1.3 Central Argument

Sinicisation through comprehensive encirclement

I argue that the aim of the CCP's Xinjiang strategy is to secure China's north–west and from there project influence into Central Asia. The strategy used to attain that aim is complete Sinicisation of Xinjiang through what I call 'comprehensive encirclement'. In using the term 'strategy' I mean that the various policies undertaken by different parts of the Party and the Chinese state – including state owned enterprises (SOEs) – are guided by an overarching framework. I do not, however, argue that this strategy is perfectly coordinated, executed or even understood, by all these actors. Indeed, it is possible an overarching strategy has not been documented by the CCP. Nevertheless, due to a clear aim of maintaining tight control of Xinjiang and a belief in the virtue of Sinicisation shared by senior Chinese leaders, a preponderance of staff in government organs operating in Xinjiang, and amongst many ordinary Han people, the Party manages to orchestrate diffuse policies and organisations in one strategy.

Accessed on 10 Feb 2015). I use the term conflict because it captures the idea that there is a prolonged struggle, which is, at times, violent and at other times non-violent.
[16] For example, see M.I. Wayne, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

When I say the CCP is working to 'secure' Xinjiang, 'secure' I mean the CCP wants to render Xinjiang free of any significantly capable domestic enemies of the Party and the state, and to deny any significant interference by foreign powers in China through Xinjiang. Foreign interference does not mean mere criticism; it means foreign countries undertaking activities in the PRC that are unlawful in China or threatening to the Party. (This includes preventing foreign government-sponsored clandestine activities in the PRC, but does not include eliminating political support to diaspora groups given how hard that would be to achieve). By using the term 'complete Sinicisation' I mean that Beijing is seeking to transform Xinjiang from a Turkic-language-speaking, largely Muslim, physically remote, economically under-developed and precariously held region on the periphery of China, into one that will be substantially more culturally similar to, and physically connected with, the traditional Han-dominated heartland of central-eastern or 'inner' China.

Once achieved, successful Sinicisation would mean that culturally, economically, politically, and to the greatest extent practicable in terms of transportation and communication infrastructure, Xinjiang would be extremely difficult to separate from China. Uyghur and other Turkic peoples would become culturally Chinese. Sinicised Turks would keep unthreatening cultural markers such as colourful traditional Turkic modes of dress, music and dance and traditional festivals. Xinjiang's Turks, like the Hui ethnic group throughout China, will be allowed to follow Islam for the foreseeable future. The Islam that they follow, however, will be supervised, modified and controlled by the CCP to make it less conducive to supporting Uyghur separatism. The Party foresees and desires that ultimately all religion will be perceived as unscientific and

abandoned, although for the present it can have social benefits as well as downsides.[17]

So while this gradual abandonment of religion is assumed to be underway, religion it is

believed, will need management, especially in Xinjiang's case.

In many ways Xinjiang is a murky border-zone between Han and Turkic cultures. The

internationally recognised frontiers of the PRC lie to the north and west of Xinjiang, but

China's cultural frontier is hazier and seems to lie further east. Full Sinicisation of

Xinjiang would mean taking the cultural frontier right up to the international border. I

contend the CCP believes this will bring China greater domestic and international

security, and greater economic and cultural prosperity. Xinjiang will go from being a

poorly guarded back door to inner China, to becoming an economic and political

bastion – or salient[18] – from which Beijing can exert influence into Central Asia and

beyond.

I describe the strategy to secure Xinjiang as Sinicisation through 'comprehensive

encirclement'. By using the term 'comprehensive' I mean that the CCP uses policies

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[17] This is a summary of a view put by a social scientist who specialises in religion in China,
Fengang Yang whose interview is in the following article: M. A. Kuo, 'The politics of religion in China:
insights from Fenggang Yang', *The Diplomat*, 4 August 2016, viewed on 24 June 2017,
http://thediplomat.com/2016/08/the-politics-of-religion-in-china/. A clear articulation of the CCP's view on religion can
be found in Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, *Document No. 19: The basic viewpoint
and policy on the religious question during our country's Socialist period*, [D, MacInnis translation in
Religion in China today: policy and practice, 1989, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, pp 8-26],
31 March 1982, p. 2, viewed on 9 July 2017, https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/wp-
content/uploads/2014/08/Document_no._19_1982.pdf. However, in the 1990s the Party realised its enforcement
mechanisms were failing. It refined its policy which had slightly softer language on the ideological
aspects of the problems with religion, but focussed on the need to pragmatically manage religions until
they naturally die out. The new policy was stipulated in the Central Committee of the Communist Party
and the State Council's Document No. 6: Some Problems Concerning Further Improving Work,
5 February 1991 (the document is unpublished but reproduced in R.L. Britsch, 'The current legal status of
Christianity in China', in *Brigham Young University Law Review*, no. 2, 1995) referred to in L. Cox,
Freedom of religion in China: religious, economic and social disenfranchisement for China's internal
migrant workers, in Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal; vol. 8, issue 2, Spring 2007, p. 374. Cox
discusses the evolution of the Party's views on religion; he cites Document 6 at footnote 10 of p. 374.
[18] Salient: '*Fortifications* a salient angle or part, as the central outward projecting angle of a bastion or an
outward projection in a battle line.' Macquarie Dictionary.

that unfold across all dimensions of statecraft including: economic, demographic, political, cultural, security policies, and international cooperation. The CCP's strategy relies on these measures interacting to Sinicise Xinjiang. Comprehensive encirclement means that all policy areas are used in an incremental, diffuse and usually (but not always) an indirect way, to deny Uyghur separatists freedom of action and to Sinicise Xinjiang.

The term encirclement is borrowed from military terminology, where encircling means to surround the enemy with one's own forces. Once encircled, the enemy force is not necessarily physically destroyed, but will be denied freedom of action and the potential for victory. Once defeat seems inevitable the enemy will probably lose the will to fight.[19] Therefore simply encircling the enemy may be adequate to elicit surrender. Whether military or political, an encirclement strategy can include other supporting tactics such as penetrations and deception measures. An encircled force can not only be encircled as a whole, but it can also be divided through penetrations that become encirclements of smaller sub-elements. This can help break up the enemy's capacity to resist the encirclement through break-out attacks. An encirclement does not necessarily mean a literal circle of troops around an area, it could be created by their presence at surrounding key points such as major transport nodes. The term encirclement in the context of this thesis, conveys my analysis of how the various dimensions of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang interact to physically and metaphorically, to encircle and divide the Uyghurs. The desired effects are to deny Uyghur separatists freedom of action and

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[19] United States Army, 'Appendix D Encirclement Operations', in *Field Manual 3-90 Tactics*, Headquarters Department of the Army, July 2001.

thereby making their eventual defeat, while ensuring the Sinicisation of Xinjiang is inevitable.

The CCP believes that the conflict in Xinjiang is due to the physical remoteness of the region, and the cultural distinctiveness and 'backwardness' of its ethnic-minority populations.[20] Amongst the Uyghur population is a range of potential obstacles to Beijing's' policies which include militant separatists; human rights activists; diaspora communities in Central Asia who may be supportive of separatists; and disgruntled citizens who passively resist Sinicisation. There are also those Uyghurs who embrace Chinese culture and the economic benefits it confers. More often there are those who make use of the economic opportunities the PRC offers, and yet still resent the actions and the presence of Han people in Xinjiang.

Three mutually supporting dimensions

The CCP's strategy in Xinjiang is founded on the interaction of many mutually-supportive policies. For analytical purposes, I group these into the following three dimensions: the economic and demographic dimension; the political and cultural dimension; and, the security and international cooperation dimension (figure 1). These dimensions interact to create an overall Sinicising effect, although they also have

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[20] See Tian Xu, director of the China Society of Macroeconomics research centre quoted in Liu Xin, 'Nation vows frontier boom', *Global Times*, (hardcopy) 18 March 2016, p. 2. Tian Xu describes how 'backward' and remote areas are always plagued with difficulties. Tian Xu's comments are detailed in the body of the thesis.

undesired side-effects such as provoking some Uyghurs to conduct militant separatist attacks.

Figure 1: A Deduced Model of the CCP's Strategy in Xinjiang
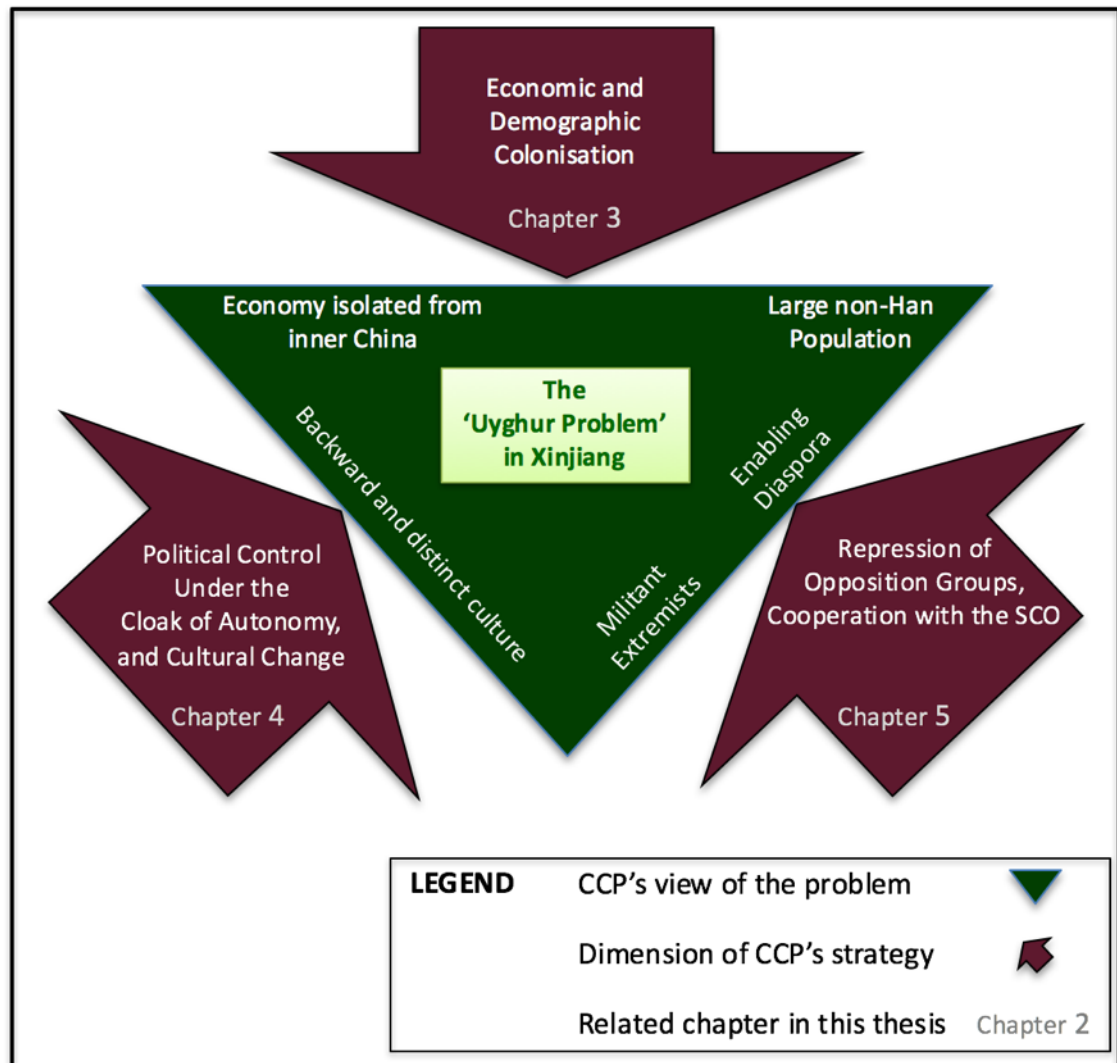
The economic and demographic dimension does the most important and tangible work in Sinicising Xinjiang. Since 1949 millions of Han Chinese have migrated to Xinjiang and now make up the second or equally largest ethnic group there. They have hugely contributed to, and benefited from, developing the local economy, and tying it into the

economy of inner China. Since 1949, by their presence in large numbers and their industrious development of the region, the Han people have made their culture, the Chinese language and the PRC's economy, powerful Sinicising forces in Xinjiang.

On a political and cultural level, the CCP's securing strategy involves giving the appearance of cultivating a pluralistic, harmonious, multi-ethnic region that respects cultural differences, while actually denying Uyghur culture the possibility of growing – or even maintaining its current status. The desired objective is to make Han culture, including the use of the Chinese language, the dominant cultural forces in the region, leading to the marginalisation or even (in the very long-term) the abandonment of non–Chinese cultural features and languages, and Islam.

The political framework of the XUAR, which gives so-called autonomy to the Uyghur people, is a deception measure aimed at shaping foreign and domestic audiences. In reality, Beijing strictly controls Xinjiang through Party, state, civil, military and para-military organs, and an especially large presence of state owned enterprises (SOEs).

The CCP's behaviour indicates that it believes that Sinicisation is in the interest of the 'backward' ethnic minorities throughout China, with Xinjiang being no exception. In an article promoting the need to continue to pursue the Open and Develop the West Campaign (ODWC), which saw an influx of money and Han workers to build major infrastructure in Xinjiang. The relevant minister-level official, the Chairman of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Li Dezhu, said:

> '…due to historical, social, ethnic and other reasons, ethnic minorities and ethnic
>
> minority areas are relatively backward, in order to help ethnic minorities and ethnic

minority areas to accelerate development, the country has adopted many policy measures [which constitute the ODWC].'[21]

The Party also uses the security and international cooperation policies to help manage separatist violence. The Party leadership realises that the economic and cultural policies and large scale Han migration, cause resentment and provoke varying degrees of resistance. Resistance can include peaceful efforts by Uyghurs and other Turkic people to avoid Sinicisation, for example by cleaving to tradition, practicing Islam, avoiding intermarriage with Han people, and striving to keep their non–Chinese languages vital. Resistance can also include violent attacks directed against civilians and security forces. I argue Beijing is willing to manage the risk of separatist violence in the belief that eventually, through weight of numbers and cultural power, the Party will subdue the Uyghurs and eliminate separatism in Xinjiang. The Party calculates that gaining the long-term benefit of securing the largest political sub-division of the PRC, is worth suffering intermittent violent incidents and being criticised for enforcing heavy-handed security measures.

The security measures in Xinjiang focus on preventing Uyghur separatists from cohering into a large and effective militant movement. This buys time for the other dimensions of the strategy to work. This explains why the security practices in Xinjiang are not attempts to win hearts and minds, and indeed why they are often brutal. The

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[21] Li Dezhu, 'The Open and Develop the West Campaign and China's Minorities Question' [西部大开发与我国民族问题 *Xibu da kaifa yu woguo minzu wenti*] in Seek Truth Magazine [求是杂志 *qiushi zazhi*][a Chinese Communist Party journal], vol. 11, 1 June 2000 (full Chinese text available at: China's Ethnic Affairs Newspaper [中国民族报 Zhongguo Minzu Bao] website http://www.mzzjw.cn/html/report/1602256435-1.htm, viewed on 3 Feb 2017, my full translation is available upon request).

CCP uses its security measures to isolate and contain separatists – whether they are violent or not. By 'isolate' I mean the intended effect is to prevent them communicating, finding, meeting and cooperating with each other and with diaspora communities who could support their activities. By 'contain' I mean that these separatist individuals and groups are monitored, their movements within the PRC and abroad are curtailed, their ability to acquire weapons, both inside China and Central Asia, is severely hampered, and their overall effectiveness is highly constrained.

Beijing deliberately blurs the distinction between non-violent resistance and militant separatism in order to make non-violent resistance unattractive to discontented Uyghurs. One of the effects of Beijing's rhetoric and policies is to label all manner of malcontents, criminals and separatists as 'trouble makers' and 'evil doers' who represent the 'Three Evils' of 'terrorism, religious extremism and separatism'.[22] This means that non-violent separatists and political and religious activists may be subject to hefty sanctions and reprisals. By treating these more moderate activists nearly as harshly as militant separatists and Islamic extremists, the Party drastically narrows the scope for people to undertake non-violent protest and feel safe in so doing. This means that for a disenchanted Uyghur deciding on how to respond to CCP rule in Xinjiang, non-violent

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[22] The Three Evils were first identified (although not by this name) in 1998 when the Almaty Declaration pledged the Shanghai Five to combat them. C.P. Chung, 'The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's changing influence in Central Asia', *China Quarterly*, no. 180, December 2004, p. 990. Full text of the Almaty Declaration was published as '上海五国元首在哈萨克斯坦阿拉木图市举行第三次会晤。会晤后五国发表了联合声明' (*Shanghai wu guo yuanshou zai Hasakestan Alamutushi juxing di sanci huiwu. Huiwu hou wu guo fabiaole lianshengming*, The Shanghai Five conducted their third meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Following the meeting they issued a joint declaration [being the Almaty Declaration]) *Xinhua News Agency*, 3 July 1998, viewed on 12 March 2016, http://www.chinaxinjiang.cn/zt2010/18/8/t20100610_607102.htm. By 2001 the term Three Evils had been coined and was in use in the Chinese media. "Major Terrorist Cases Committed by 'Three Forces' First Time Exposed in Xinjiang', *People's Daily*, 11 December 2001, viewed on 12 December 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/english/government/23429.htm

resistance seems almost as risky as militancy, but with a lower pay off as such acts are less likely to change the minds of policymakers.

The narrowing of the scope for non-violent resistance sharpens the choices Uyghurs face, such that they can either comply with the wishes of the authorities, and thereby tacitly accept some degree of Sinicisation; or, they can take the path to being a 'trouble maker' with the grave attendant risks of being monitored, harassed, losing freedom to travel, losing employment, being interrogated, tortured, sent to 're-education' prisons or being executed, and drawing their family and friends towards such risks too. Sharpening the choice between complying and trouble making is helpful to the Party's strategy because many more Uyghurs accept some Sinicisation (albeit grudgingly) than choose to actively resist the Chinese authorities. A third option for Uyghurs – passive resistance – is increasingly unrealistic and ineffective because their environment is being forcibly Sinicised. For the Uyghur culture to survive, it needs an environment that enables the perpetuation of certain cultural practices, such as schools, mosques, work places and gathering places. But the world the Uyghurs inhabit is being changed: old neighbourhoods are bulldozed, children have dwindling Uyghur-language schooling options, and the labour market increasingly requires Mandarin Chinese proficiency. The physical and institutional space afforded to Uyghur culture is shrinking on all sides.

This thesis does not pass judgement on the morality of the CCP's strategy; it is merely attempting to discern what Beijing is attempting to do, why, and the prospects for

success based on its own desired objectives.[23] China's strategy appears set to eventually

succeed, but is likely to face problems for many decades to come.

1.4 Contribution to this Field of Study

This thesis contributes to this field of study by putting forward a deduced model of the

CCP's strategy in Xinjiang considered from Beijing's point of view. In approaching this

topic, the central challenge was there being no direct evidence showing that the CCP

has a comprehensive strategy for Xinjiang, let alone showing of what that strategy

consists. Therefore, the evidence I used included a wide range of secondary sources,

and some primary sources, including government white papers, reports, the PRC's

constitution, and statements by Chinese leaders.[24] I compared the realities of life in

Xinjiang with the PRC's stated policy goals, and then made a series of deductions to

arrive at a model of the CCP's strategy.

I considered Xinjiang's history and geography and the role the Party believes Xinjiang

plays in China's broader national security and economic security aims. From these

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[23] When speaking about the ability of the strategy to achieve its aims I use the terms 'success' and 'effectiveness'. These are not intended to imply support for the strategy or the legitimacy of its aims, only to describe to what extent the CCP is or is not likely to achieve its ambitions through its chosen means.

[24] PRC State Council, white paper on *Development and progress in Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, 21 September 2009, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china-un.ch/eng/bjzl/t621691.htm; and PRC statement *East Turkistan terrorist forces cannot get away with impunity* State Council Information Office, 21 January 2002, viewed on 12 March 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm; and, PRC State Council, white paper on *The history and development of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps*, State Council Information Office, 5 October 2014, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/10/05/content_281474992384669.html; and PRC State Council, white paper on *Historical witness to ethnic equality, unity and development in Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, viewed on 10 March 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2015-09/24/content_36670260.htm; *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (full text after amendment on 14 March 2004), website of the National People's Congress of the PRC, 25 October 2015, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm

observations I deduced both how the Party sees the conflict in Xinjiang (the strategy's start state) and its ultimate aims for the region (the desired end state). Having grasped the start and desired end states of the strategy, I have then deduced the way a wide range of policies − from infrastructure development to cultural policy and security measures − are intended to interact to transform Xinjiang from its start state to the desired end state. The CCP's strategy relies on these various policies interacting to Sinicise Xinjiang and thereby secure it.

This analytical approach helps make sense of apparent contradictions in Beijing's strategy. For instance, Beijing believes that economic development will reduce separatism, but the manner of development in Xinjiang is one of the greatest causes of resentment by Uyghurs.[25] Another apparent contradiction is the way the Party stifles the practice of Islam in the name of preventing religious extremism. Yet interfering with the faith is another major cause of Uyghur grievances.[26] My analysis makes sense of these apparent contradictions by arguing that the CCP accepts its strategy causes resentment but calculates this is an acceptable side-effect while the strategy is being implemented.

1.5 Literature Review

The literature on the CCP's overall strategy in Xinjiang is not well developed. There are multiple reasons for this. Firstly, the Chinese authorities restrict the access of foreign

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[25] J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic militants and the global terrorist threat*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, 2010, p. 44.
[26] M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 123.

researchers and journalists both to Xinjiang and to data about it. Secondly, academics studying Xinjiang tend to focus on different elements of the strategy, rather than on how all its elements interact. Thirdly, the strategy is executed through diffuse organisations and policies, and has probably never been written down, this makes it difficult for researchers to undertake analysis of the strategy as a whole. As a result, this thesis takes the opportunity to define and analyse Beijing's strategy in Xinjiang.

Schools of thought on Xinjiang

There is no standardised terminology for the various schools of thought on Xinjiang. With a few exceptions, the academics studying various fields related to Xinjiang such as history, politics, economics and security matters, tend to fall into four main schools of thought. For this literature review I use five terms to discuss the schools and a few relevant scholars who belong to no school. The terms I use form the basis of the discussion below: the Crossroad School, the Internal Colony School, other Western scholars, the PRC School and the Turk School. The first two schools are dominated by Western academics. The latter two schools are significantly tainted by the political agendas of the Chinese government and pro-independence/autonomy groups respectively.

The Crossroads School

The Crossroads School, whose foremost members are Lattimore[27] and Millward,[28] places the physical location of present day Xinjiang at the heart of a story that begins in the Stone Age, and attempts to dispassionately lay out the history of the various peoples who migrate there or otherwise move through the region. The central tenet of the school is that Xinjiang is a great physical, economic and cultural crossroads which has seen countless waves of migration, conquest, secession, annexation, unification and disintegration, as well as the rise and fall of influences from neighbouring countries and great religions or philosophies especially Buddhism, Islam and Confucianism. This has made for a rich and complex history and makes it very difficult to say exactly who are the forbears of the Uyghurs and whether they can be called the 'original' people of Xinjiang as well as to what extent China can claim that Xinjiang has been a part of China since 60 BC.[29] This school shows that Xinjiang has long been a place the Chinese authorities have sought to control.[30] Since the late 1800s, the attempts to control Xinjiang have often included Sinicising measures.[31] Although this school does not examine the CCP's strategy as a whole, Millward sees the CCP's various policies as

[27] O. Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and Inner Asian frontiers of China and Russia*, AMS, New York, 1950 (1975 reprint).

[28] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007.

[29] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/.

[30] J.A. Millward, op. cit., and [in a prepared statement on] *China's Changing Strategic Concerns: The Impact on Human Right*s in Xinjiang, to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 16 November 2005, viewed on 10 Jul 2017, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-109hhrg25440/html/CHRG-109hhrg25440.htm.

[31] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 124-5, 138, and 189.

having many contradictions which help cause tensions between Turks and Han and produce a strategy that is counter-productive.[32]

This school aims to understand what has happened in Xinjiang, but it is less focussed on the motives of the PRC and its strategy. I attribute this to a few causes. Firstly, the Crossroads School, places Xinjiang in a borderland between inner China and Central Asia in every sense. It seems only natural that this makes for a fluid and confusing social and political setting where cultural misunderstanding and contradictions can be expected. I make use of this school's work to understand Xinjiang's history as a place over which Chinese authorities have long struggled to maintain control.

The Internal Colony School

The Internal Colony School, which is also part of the Western academic discourse on Xinjiang, draws much from the Crossroads School but has a more political focus. The following quote by Tyler summarises the Internal Colony school's view of both Xinjiang's history and current situation: 'Once kept at arm's length, Xinjiang has been repeatedly invaded, occasionally controlled, and finally annexed. Today its people and their way of life are being forcibly absorbed into a 'motherland' they do not recognize, and no not love.'[33] Broadly speaking, Becquelin, Bovingdon, Cliff, Clarke, Gladney

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[32] J.A. Millward in G. Domínguez, "Targeting of Islamic customs reflects 'misdiagnosis' of Uighur discontent" [interview with J.A. Millward] *Deutsche Welle*, 11 May 2015, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://www.dw.com/en/targeting-of-islamic-customs-reflects-misdiagnosis-of-uighur-discontent/a-18444227.
[33] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 273.

Starr, Sautman, Tyler, Rudelson and Jankowiak fall into this school.[34] Rudelson and Jankowiak say that the CCP is using Han migration and infrastructure building to overwhelm the Uyghurs and integrate Xinjiang with inner China.[35]

One of the crucial underpinning views on the PRC held by the Internal Colony School is that the PRC is more like a Han-dominated multi-ethnic empire than a nation-state.[36] It so happens that its multi–ethnicity only resides in some 10 per cent of the population whereas approximately 90 per cent is Han. It also happens that Han civilisation sprang up from the Central Plains region of eastern China and progressively spread outwards. During this expansion various Han statelets were progressively absorbed into the dominions of successive Chinese dynasties[37] and many peoples on the periphery were progressively Sinicised.[38] The Internal Colony School, with Bovingdon as a prime example, sees this pattern of Sinicisation of the periphery as occurring in present day Xinjiang. This school argues that various Chinese ruling dynasties attempted to garrison Xinjiang and established small farming colonies merely to sustain those garrisons, but

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[34] N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 362;
S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004; and, B. Sautman 'Is Xinjiang an internal colony?' *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2, Special Issue: Xinjiang, 2000; and C. Tyler, op. cit.; and, J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004; and, G. Bovingdon, *Uyghurs: strangers in their own land*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010, p. 44; and S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004; and, B. Sautman 'Is Xinjiang an internal colony?' *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2, Special Issue: Xinjiang, 2000; and C. Tyler, op. cit.; G. Bovingdon with contributions by N. Tursun 'Contested Histories' in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 353. D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004; and, B. Sautman 'Is Xinjiang an internal colony?' *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000; and C. Tyler, op. cit.
[35] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, op. cit., pp. 305-6.
[36] N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, p. 40.
[37] Xiaotong Fei, 'Globalization and cultural self-awareness', Springer, Heidelberg, 2015, pp. 81-4.
[38] Ping-ti Ho, 'In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's "Reenvisioning the Qing" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 57, no. 1, February, 1998, pp. 123-8. The author describes this process of Sinicisation as being taken for granted by the scholarly world, p. 128.

that after 1949, a drastically larger migration of Han people was promoted by the CCP with the aim of fully colonising Xinjiang.

Cliff made an important contribution in analysing Beijing's strategy especially in terms of its official terminology.[39] He uses the term 'the partnership of stability' to describe the relationship between the government and Han people in Xinjiang, who are in a role very similar to colonists. The partnership of stability thesis holds that Han colonists occupy and develop Xinjiang and are the chief beneficiaries of said development and in return they recognise the Party is best placed to govern China.[40] In the official discourse, the colonists are described as:

> " …'border supporters' (*zhibianzhe* 支边者) and 'constructors' (*jianshezhe* 建设者) who 'contribute' (*gongxian* 贡献) to nation–building in an 'ethnic region' (*minzu diqu* 民族地区)… that is 'remote' (*pianyuan* 偏远) and both culturally and physically 'barren' (*huang* 荒), requiring 'leapfrog development' (*kuayueshi fazhan* 跨越式发展) to 'catch up' to eastern China."[41]

The Internal Colony school comes the closest to articulating the CCP strategy in Xinjiang, but it has one main shortcoming: its constituent studies have explored different aspects of the phenomena that Beijing's strategy causes rather than the strategy as whole. Phenomena studied by the school include local inter–ethnic resentment, discriminatory hiring practices and economic conditions, repression of religious freedoms etc. My work draws on this school, but seeks to understand how the various policies pursued by the CCP in Xinjiang amount to a coherent strategy.

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[39] T. Cliff, 'The partnership of stability in Xinjiang: state–society interactions following the July 2009 unrest', *The China Journal*, no. 68, July 2012.
[40] Ibid., p. 82.
[41] Ibid., p. 82.

Views by other Western scholars

Dwyer has done important work on Xinjiang that falls between the Crossroads and Internal Colony Schools.[42] Dwyer's work shows the way Chinese culture has been energetically spread through the Party's cultural policies in Xinjiang.[43] She discusses the CCP's policies in Xinjiang in considerable detail and makes it clear that Han Chinese culture is being vigorously spread there. She does not explicitly endorse the Internal Colony thesis, but the thrust of her work is that the PRC is pursuing a mono-culturalist policy in Xinjiang out of a fear the region would otherwise separate from China, but that this approach may counter-productively foster separatism.

There are also Western academics who do not fit into these schools, namely Magid, Shichor and Wayne. For instance, Magid is a rare outlier as a Western academic with a revisionist view of the CCP's cultural strategy in Xinjiang. He sees Beijing as striving to give minorities access to Chinese culture as a way of escaping extreme poverty. He points out that in many cases, due to positive discrimination, minorities benefit from Beijing's cultural policies.[44] Magid's argument has merit: the CCP probably genuinely believes Uyghurs and other minorities would be 'better off' Sinicised rather than not. I place less weight than does Magid on the special privileges extended to ethnic minorities. I draw on Magid's work to show Beijing has a paternalistic attitude towards the Sinicisation of Xinjiang's Turks.

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[42] A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications).
[43] Ibid.
[44] A. Magid, 'Handle With Care: China's Policy for Multiculturalism and Minority Nationalities', *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 1, Spring 1998, see p. 12 on escaping poverty.

In terms of the security aspects of Beijing's strategy, the most compelling and detailed account comes from Wayne.[45] Wayne makes a significant contribution to understanding the situation in Xinjiang, mainly because he has comprehensively examined the security measures in Beijing's strategy. His book *China's War on Terrorism*, used a combination of field work in Xinjiang and secondary sources.[46] He argues that Beijing is pursuing a very successful counter-insurgency in Xinjiang against a serious threat. According to Wayne, as an insurgency/counter-insurgency situation, Xinjiang's conflict is a social process involving the interactions between the people, the authorities and the separatist enemy.[47]

However, I contend that Wayne's overall analysis is mistaken. His characterisation of Xinjiang as suffering an insurgency is overblown. As I explain in Chapter 2, the scale of violence and organisation of Uyghurs in the XUAR and in diaspora areas of Central Asia is simply too small to warrant this term.[48]. Deeming Xinjiang to be experiencing an insurgency can skew one's assessment of the CCP's strategy there. This is because if one deems Xinjiang to be in the midst of an 'insurgency' then one is more prone to believe whatever policies are used to address that 'insurgency' are (by definition) part of a 'counter-insurgency'. Wayne with some reason depicts Xinjiang as being heavily militarised.

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[45] M.I. Wayne, *China's war on terrorism: counter-insurgency, politics, and internal security*, Routledge: New York, 2008, op. cit.

[46] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 26.

[47] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p.11.

[48] M.E. Clarke "China's 'war on terror' in Xinjiang: human security and the causes of violent Uighur separatism", *Regional Outlook Paper*, no. 11, 2007 (available at https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/18239/regional-outlook-volume-11.pdf). See also PRC State Council, statement *East Turkistan terrorist forces cannot get away with impunity*, State Council Information Office, 21 January 2002, viewed on 12 March 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm

Wayne also argues that the Chinese approach in Xinjiang is a case study for emulation by the West because however harsh they are '…China's actions in Xinjiang represent one of the few successes in the global struggle against Islamist terrorism.'[49] He argues that this counter-insurgency strategy is a comprehensive whole-of-government effort led by the security forces; that Xinjiang is a theatre of the post-9/11 global war on terrorism; and, that China's response is brutal but effective. I concur that China's strategy is a whole-of-government effort, but it is not led by the security forces, it long pre-dates 9/11; and, the Chinese strategy is facing a militant local separatist movement rather than part of a global *jihad*. Wayne argues that the security measures are the main vehicle for winning the counter-insurgency and that they are supported by economic, political, cultural and education policies. I disagree. I argue that the migration and economic development aspects, are the main vehicle in Sinicising Xinjiang, and the security aspects play a supporting role.

The PRC School

The other two main schools of thought on Xinjiang are the PRC School and the Turk School. Both of these are heavily tainted by being politically motivated. One Western scholar from the Internal Colony School characterises the political bias of these schools thus:

> 'Historical works produced by official Chinese historians and Uyghur nationalists are fundamentally incompatible, because their purposes are opposed. Uyghur intellectuals are waging a desperate struggle to prove that Uyghurs constitute a

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[49] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 9.

nation and that [,] that nation can rightfully claim the territory of Xinjiang as its homeland. Historians writing for the Chinese state labor to deny both claims, asserting instead that Uyghurs belong to the Chinese nation and Xinjiang to the territory of China.'[50]

Ever since Xinjiang was incorporated into the PRC in 1949, the authorities took a close interest in reinterpreting the region's history in line with Beijing's political requirements. Immediately after 1949 the PRC banned the writings of Uyghurs, especially those related to Xinjiang's history. The slate was wiped clean of any history incompatible with the Party's designs.[51] Some of the leading PRC scholars who emerged over the subsequent years were Feng Jiasheng, Chen Suluo, Mu Guangwen, Su Beihai, and Gu Bao.[52] Later, '[i]n the 1990s… the Chinese government intensified its efforts to co-opt the field of Uyghur studies and employ scholars to write versions of history to meet state goals.'[53] More recently PRC scholars, He Xingliang and Guo Hongzhen have produced *A History of Turks* which has been translated into English.[54] This short book echoes the views by earlier PRC historians and conforms closely with the government white paper on Xinjiang's history.[55]

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[50] G. Bovingdon with contributions by N. Tursun, 'Contested Histories' in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 353.

[51] N. Tursun, 'The formation of modern Uyghur historiography and competing perspectives toward Uyghur history,' *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2008, p. 91.

[52] Feng Jiasheng, Mu Guangwen, Cheng Suluo. 维吾尔史料简便 (*Weiwuer Shiliao Jianbian* Short Collections of Uyghur Historical Materials) Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1956 and 1981, volume 1, pp. 3-7, cited by N. Tursun, op. cit., p. 93 and footnote 7; and, Su Beihai, '*Uyghurlarning étnik Menbesi Heqqide Yéngi Izdinish*' (New Research on the Ethnic Origin of the Uyghurs), *Shinjang Ijtimaiy Penler Tetqiqati* vol. 11, 1981, cited by N. Tursun, 'The formation of modern Uyghur historiography and competing perspectives toward Uyghur history,' *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2008, p. 94 and footnote 18; and Gu Bao, '*Xinjiang Weiwuerzu Zuyuan Xintan* (新疆 维吾尔族 族原 新探 New Research on the Ethnogenesis of the Uyghurs), Zhongguo Shehui Kexue' vol. 6, 1980, cited by N. Tursun, 'The formation of modern Uyghur historiography and competing perspectives toward Uyghur history,' *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2008, p. 94 and footnote 17.

[53] N. Tursun, op. cit., p. 92.

[54] He Xingliang and Guo Hongzhen, *A history of Turks*, China Intercontinental Press, Beijing, 2008.

[55] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/

Over time there have been changes in some aspects of the history as told by this school, but the essentials have not changed, namely: that Xinjiang has been part of China since 60 BC, and the history of the Uyghurs is just a part of the history of the Chinese people.[56] PRC historiography of Xinjiang is nearly unanimous in its view that Uyghur history is simply a branch of Chinese history and that any Uyghur polities were merely exercising administrative authority under Chinese imperial, or later national, suzerainty or were renegade republics. The PRC school holds the Chinese sovereignty over Xinjiang has been unbroken since the Han Dynasty and thus negates the Turk school's notions of indigenous claims to the region.[57]

The PRC School holds that Xinjiang has been an inseparable part of China since the Western Han Dynasty established sovereignty over it in 60 BC by establishing garrisons there.[58] It concedes that there have been varying degrees of effective control, and changes in the administrative institutions used to govern the region, but it dates the start of its sovereignty there to Han Dynasty's establishment of garrisons there.[59] It also

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[56] Ibid.

[57] N. Tursun, op. cit., p. 97.

[58] 'Since ancient times, Xinjiang has been inhabited by many ethnic groups believing in a number of religions. Since the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-24 A.D.), it has been an inseparable part of the unitary multi-ethnic Chinese nation.' It goes on to say "In 60 B.C. … the Western Regions Frontier Command was established. … [this] indicated that the Western Han had begun to exercise state sovereignty over the Western Regions, and that Xinjiang had become a component part of the unitary multi-ethnic Chinese nation. PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/.

[59] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/. It makes this argument on the basis of two quite different facts: the first is that during the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) at times, there were imperial garrisons in Xinjiang. The second fact is that in 1884 the Qing converted its north–western frontier territory into a province governed using the same legal and administrative system as the rest of China, which was the Confucian-trained magistracy – the *junxian* system (郡县制).
J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 132 and 136-7.
The official history then makes an implicit assertion that every dynasty that they consider ruled 'China' or parts of it, actually constituted 'China'. In other words, 'China' has always existed but dynasties have come and gone. This view counts what were at the time of their conquests, foreigners as 'Chinese'

glosses over the fact that a number of China's imperial rulers were not Han Chinese. The PRC School views the Qing empire, and predecessor dynasties' holdings as being synonymous with 'China'. This is regardless of the fact that no government had ever borne the name China in its title until the Republic of China was proclaimed in 1912.[60] Moreover, all the territorial increases enjoyed by China's various dynasties are depicted '…as unifications (*tongyi* [统一]), never as conquests (*zhengfu* [征服]) or annexations (*tunbing* [吞并]).'[61] This concept of 'unification' is also applied to Xinjiang. The PRC School thereby considers the acquisition of Xinjiang by the Qing and the reacquisition by the Communists in 1949 as 'reunifications' of territory that had been Chinese in the Western Han Dynasty.

There are two brief but key Chinese government documents on Xinjiang's economic development, politics, culture and security matters that deserve mention. They are the *White Paper on Development and Progress in Xinjiang*[62], 2009; and, *The History and*

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because the came to rule China and, conversely whatever they ruled is then considered 'China'.
For example the Yuan Dynasty (AD 1271–1368) was a Chinese court name for the Mongol Dynasty which emerged with Genghis Khan's capture of the previous (Manchurian) Jin Dynasty's capital where Beijing now stands. (Encylopædia Britannica entry for *Yuan Dynasty* viewed on 27 January 2016, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Yuan-dynasty). In the case of the final imperial dynasty of China, the Qing, they were Manchurians who defeated the Ming Dynasty and conquered China.
The PRC School takes the view that the territory of 'China' can be interpreted backwards from the lands of the Qing Dynasty at its greatest geographical extent, thereby proving the Xinjiang has been part of China since the Han Dynasty. G. Bovingdon with contributions by N. Tursun 'Contested Histories' in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 355-7.
[60] The term China (or *Zhongguo* 中国) first emerged in common use to refer to the state of China in the 19th Century. E. Wilkinson, *Chinese history: a new manual*, Harvard University Asia Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2013, p. 132, text box 2. On the 1st of January 1912, the Republic of China was proclaimed in Nanjing. Y. Geng, *An introductory study on China's cultural transformation in recent times*, Springer, Berlin p. 189.
[61] G. Bovingdon with contributions by N. Tursun 'Contested Histories' in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 355-7.
[62] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/

Development of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps[63], 2014. In Chapters 4 and 5, I make use of these white papers to show what Beijing says about its policies in Xinjiang, noting that what it publishes about its policies, and what it believes about its strategy will rarely, if ever, be the same. I do this by comparing the claims in the white papers to other scholarship and news reports on what is occurring in reality.

The PRC School is useful in trying to understand Beijing's point of view. But it has severe limitations. Firstly, it is difficult to discern to what extent these views reflect academic opinion in China and to what extent they are merely the Party line. Indeed, they may be one and the same. Regardless, they are not reliable in attempting to understand Xinjiang's history in an objective sense because their purpose is propagandistic.[64]

The Turk School

The Turk School is mainly based on Uyghur works of history. Like the PRC School, it also has significant shortcomings (discussed below). The works of the Turk School are also hard to obtain and is usually in the Arabic-script-rendered Uyghur language. Therefore, I do not rely on them for my argument. The main contours of the Turk School have been described in English by Millward and Tursun and I discuss it here to

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[63] PRC State Council, white paper on *The history and development of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps*, State Council Information Office, 05 2014, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/10/05/content_281474992384669.html
[64] For a discussion on the propagandistic nature of work by PRC historians see H. Khan and A. Feuerwerker, 'The ideology of scholarship: China's new historiography', *China Quarterly*, vol. 22, June 1965, p. 13.

outline the opposing view to the PRC School and to establish the context of the views of Uyghur separatists.

Xinjiang's historiography has been a battleground of an ideological struggle between Uyghurs and the PRC.[65] According to Tursun, the Turk School contends that the Turks are indigenous to Xinjiang and Han authorities have repeatedly achieved varying degrees of control over the region. This school puts Turkic peoples in Xinjiang, most notably the Uyghurs, at the centre of Xinjiang's story – the Han are interlopers of the Uyghur homeland.[66] I found this perspective useful in seeing how the Turkic people perceive the CCP and its policies.

However, the Turk School may be as tainted by political bias as the PRC School. The Turk School takes the identity of the modern Uyghur people and project them back in time to the earliest group that is recorded as using this name. This narrative links the earliest Turkic tribe called Uyghur (AD 742)[67] with the modern Uyghurs despite a quite complex and tenuous connection between the two, and despite the term dropping out of use for many centuries. This 'original inhabitants' narrative also disregards the complex way in which Turkic peoples had a tendency to both break up and merge over time. This makes it very difficult to show for certain where the Uyghurs came from as they seem to have multiple origins. I consider this to be a simplistic narrative that depicts Uyghurs as the original inhabitants of a land which has been conquered by the Han people, most

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[65] N. Tursun, 'The formation of modern Uyghur historiography and competing perspectives toward Uyghur history,' *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2008, p. 87; and, J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 315.
[66] N. Tursun, op. cit.
[67] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 42.

recently in the form the CCP's 'liberation' in 1949. Rudelson and Jankowiak summarise this school thus: 'Uyghur intellectuals know full well that Uyghurs are not united. What they fail to acknowledge is that Uyghurs have been politically fragmented through most of their history.'[68]

1.6 Thesis Outline and Structure

The body of this thesis is divided into four further chapters:

Chapter 2 – historical background of Xinjiang and the CCP's strategy;

Chapter 3 – the economic and demographic dimension of the strategy;

Chapter 4 – the political and cultural dimension;

Chapter 5 – security and international cooperation dimension.

These are followed by the conclusion which includes an evaluation of the strategy and its prospects for success.

Chapter 2 – historical background

Chapter 2 is a brief history of Xinjiang focussing on the aspects that relate to Beijing's security calculations. It shows how and why the region has passed in and out of many different empires and repeatedly fallen from Beijing's grasp. This survey also indicates that some of the CCP's current strategy has historical precedents. This shows that

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[68] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 314.

regardless of Communist ideology, the overriding concern for Beijing has always related to security of its north-western frontier and the retention of its hold over Xinjiang. Chapter 2 also shows that although Beijing's control over Xinjiang, and the ambition for Sinicising it has had peaks and troughs, but that Xinjiang has never been more Sinicised and more firmly within the control of a Chinese state than it is at present. As history and geography set the context for Beijing's present strategy, so too does Chapter 2 set the context for this thesis.

Chapter 3 – economic and demographic dimension

Chapter 3 examines the first and most important aspect of Beijing's strategy: the economic and demographic dimension. This chapter shows that economic development and Han migration are the main vehicles of an effort to tangibly and irreversibly transform Xinjiang. By the weight of numbers, the presence of millions of Han Chinese people in Xinjiang makes the region inherently more similar to inner China than it has been at any time in history. These migrants bring with them family and commercial links with inner China that both necessitate, and help construct, physical links such as oil and gas pipelines, highways, and railways. As a result of these efforts, the Han are on the verge of becoming the largest ethnic group in Xinjiang and may eventually become a majority of the population. Chapter 3 also discusses an institution at the heart of Beijing's strategy in Xinjiang, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC, *Xinjiang shengchan jianshe bingtuan* 新疆生产建设兵团), a para–military

organisation with the stated goal of securing China's north–west and developing its economy through heavy industry and agricultural projects based on desert reclamation.

Chapter 4 – political and cultural dimension

Chapter 4 shows that Beijing's political and cultural strategy is to pursue Sinicisation under the cloak of apparent autonomy that ostensibly exists to safeguard the interests of the region's ethnic minorities. This pseudo-autonomy is the main deception measure used in concealing the real aims and methods of the strategy. In reality, Xinjiang's politics is tightly controlled by Beijing and in terms of culture, there is a deliberate and systematic effort to control and reshape Islam and displace non–Chinese languages by promoting Mandarin Chinese in a way that has become more aggressive over time, especially since the early 2000s. This is intended to lead to the gradual dismantlement of Turkic – and especially Uyghur – identity in Xinjiang with the aim of leaving a people who identify as Chinese in every way.

Chapter 5 – security and international cooperation dimension

Chapter 5 argues that the CCP's security and international cooperation strategy is designed to isolate Uyghur activists and militants from both each other and from the support of the rest of the Uyghur population. The CCP does this through harsh repressive security tactics. The harshness of these tactics, and their application even to

people who merely speak or write about the injustices of certain policies in Xinjiang, are designed to force Uyghurs to make a clear choice between resisting and complying. This security strategy, is not seen by Beijing as, in itself, resolving the Xinjiang problem. Rather it is a supporting policy that manages resistance and buys time for the other dimensions to transform Xinjiang's society. The regional component of this strategy allows China to work with Central Asian states to develop a new Silk Road economic system and to prevent the Uyghurs from having a safe haven that could support separatist activities related to Xinjiang.

Chapter 2

Historical Background

2.1 Introduction

Over the last two millennia, parts, and sometimes all of Xinjiang, have been under the control of countless régimes. A Sino-centric view of Xinjiang's history would focus on four 'high water' marks in the tides of Chinese expansionist fortune: Under the Han Dynasty (on and off from 162 BC to AD 150), under the Sui and Tang Dynasties (AD 581-800), under the Qing Dynasty (1760-1911) and under the present PRC. (The period 1912-48, as is shown below does not constitute a highpoint in China's control over Xinjiang.) The first three forays had quite limited effects on Xinjiang, but the PRC's has brought the firmest control and the greatest Sinicisation by far.

This chapter surveys Xinjiang's past from antiquity until the PRC era. The chapter is laid out in five sections: Geography, Ancient Times, Medieval Times, Modern Times, and a brief survey of Uyghur Separatism and the Conflict in Xinjiang.

2.2 Geography

Figure 2: Geography of Xinjiang with PRC Inset (Source: Chine informations[69])
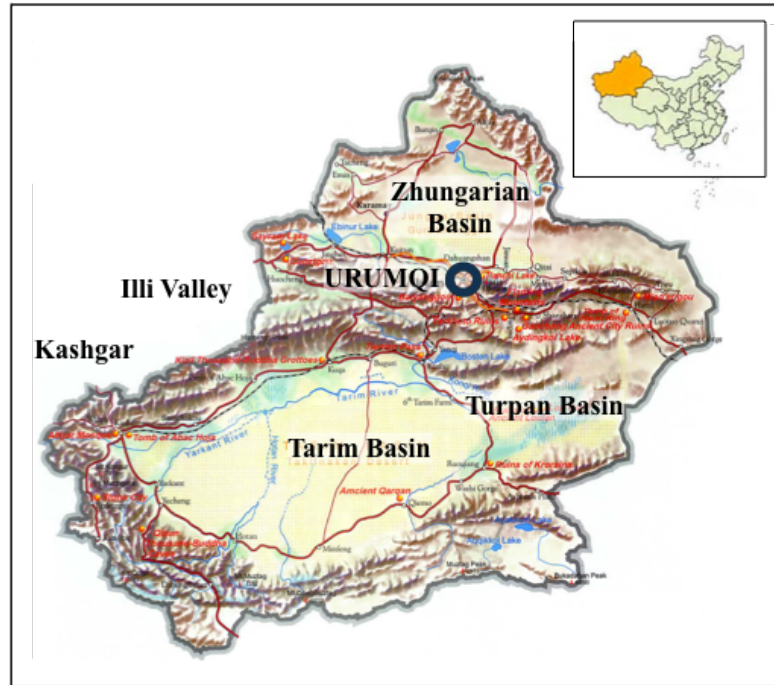
Xinjiang is the PRC's north–westernmost province. It has an area of 1,664,900 square kilometres and is about as big as the world's sixteenth largest country.[70] Xinjiang resembles a squashed figure-eight made of extremely high mountains; the hollows of the figure eight are enormous basins. In the north lies the smaller Zhungarian Basin; to the south the larger Tarim Basin. The dividing mountain range is part of the aptly named Tian Shan range (天山 literally Heavenly Mountains). The basins are a combination of flat deserts and grasslands with a number of lushly vegetated rivers running through them. The surrounding mountain ranges have a number of passes which communicate between the two basins and the world outside. This geography is

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[69] Map was modified by me and taken from 'Chine informations' being the website of a French diaspora support organisation, cited in 'Xinjiang "Travelling" 2007", travel guide by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 45, viewed on 13 July 2017, http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Xinjiang-Travelling_cle881cf1.pdf.

[70] J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 4.

not only stark, beautiful and dramatic, it has been of central importance to the region's history.[71] The mountains have made Xinjiang isolated and remote, but the basins have been high-speed corridors for mounted nomads and their armies. The oases along the rivers of these basins have been prize territories for countless contending peoples. For nomads the grasslands have been valuable pastures, and for agricultural peoples the rivers offer fertile farming.[72] Two other important parts of Xinjiang are the Illi Valley – the most fertile part of Xinjiang – and the Turpan Basin.[73]

Being constituted of a number of isolated oases appears to have inhibited the rise of region–wide state institutions, but helped the people of the oases develop an ability to cope with successive waves of outsiders and the changes they brought.[74] Each oasis community has developed a tight-knit and conservative sub-culture where the main dealings with the outside world only involve the selling of agricultural products. The ancient Silk Road corridor allowed inter-cultural contact, but the scale was heavily constrained by the vast distances between oases. Camel trains could take well over a month to cross Xinjiang.[75] The extent of the distances between the oases and the cultural differences between them meant that they were subject to different types of outside influences and chose different strategies for responding to them. Today there are significant lasting differences between Uyghurs from different oases.[76] This helps explain why the modern Uyghurs find it difficult to cooperate on a large scale against

[71] O. Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and Inner Asian frontiers of China and Russia*, AMS, New York, 1950 (1975 reprint), pp. 152-3.
[72] Ibid.
[73] C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
[74] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 12.
[75] J. Rudelson, *Oasis identities: Uyghur nationalism along China's Silk Road*. New York: Colombia University Press, 1997, p. 39.
[76] Ibid., p. 40.

the CCP régime. On the other hand, the oasis-based, tight-knit, agricultural and conservative Uyghur-subcultures have been resistant to the changes brought by Han Chinese settlers and institutions. This is probably because the oases' populations are big enough and homogenous enough to be largely self-sufficient in cultural and economic terms. Their identities are well formed and contrast greatly with Han Chinese culture.

The region is also rich in natural resources. It has the largest coal and natural gas reserves in China and 20 per cent of the country's oil holdings[77] and is the gateway to Central Asian energy holdings. China imports oil and gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in large volumes.[78] For almost all its history Xinjiang was connected to the outside world, by mountain passes and plains that could be used by riders on horseback; or, in some cases, by unsurfaced roads. Modern infrastructure includes highways, railways, oil and gas pipelines, and since December 2014, high speed rail.[79] Although Xinjiang has been described as Asia's back door to China, and China's front door to Asia,[80] until the late 19th Century, using that door was much easier on horseback than any other means.

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[77] E. Wong, 'China invests in region rich in oil, coal and also strife', *New York Times*, 20 December 2014, viewed on 12 January 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/world/asia/china-invests-in-xinjiang-region-rich-in-oil-coal-and-also-strife.html?_r=0

[78] C. Mackerras, 'Xinjiang and Central Asia since 1990: views from Beijing and Washington and Sino-American relations', in *China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st century*, C. Mackerras and M.E. Clarke (eds.), Routledge, Abingdon, 2009, p. 145.

[79] The Lanzhou-Urumqi high speed rail line began full operation on 26 December 2014. The line will be connected to Beijing in 2017, reducing rail travel time between the XUAR capital and the national capital to 16 hours. 'China extends high-speed rail network to Xinjiang', *Agence France Presse, Business Insider,* 26 December 2014, viewed on 4 February 2016, http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-china-extends-high-speed-rail-network-to-xinjiang-2014-12

[80] O. Lattimore, op. cit.

2.3 Ancient Times: Prehistory until the rise of the Qing Dynasty

Xinjiang has been inhabited for so long, and by such a mixture of peoples that it is impossible to establish who were its first peoples and to unambiguously link them to any modern ethnicity. Archaeological evidence indicates Xinjiang has been inhabited since the Neolithic period (roughly from 10,000 to 4,000 years ago). It had a wide variety of peoples including Europoids.[81] In the case of the Tarim Basin, the Bronze Age inhabitants were Indo–Europeans.[82]

Until the Qing Dynasty, the broad strokes of Xinjiang's history have been painted by various waves of horse nomads. This gave rise to a major pattern in Xinjiang's history where successive waves of these horse nomads arrived in the region and established hegemony over pastoral agriculturalists living in the various oases. Over time, these horse nomads mingled with the settled farmers and themselves become agriculturalists. One of the effects of this pattern, was to create a complex mixture of genetic material in the current indigenous population of Xinjiang and to make tracing ancestry difficult.

It is impossible to know who were the 'first' horse nomads to arrive in the area,[83] although on balance it seems Europoids came from the West before Sino-Mongolians

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[81] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 8-9. Europoids have broadly European physical characteristics.
[82] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 27-8.
[83] The earliest historical records mention a number of peoples, whose origins – and sometimes fates – are not clearly known. These groups include: Tokharians (speakers of Tokharian, an Indo–European language which may have been one of the first to diverge from the mainstream of Indo–European languages; the Saka (also known as the Saka–Scythians) an Iranian speaking horse nomad people, and the Yuezhi who may be one and the same as Tokharians or may have come from Gansu (to Xinjiang's east). J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 12-5.)

arrived from the East.[84] The earliest known horse nomads were the probably Indo-European Kushan. After the Kushan, all the subsequent horse nomads who occupied Xinjiang, were Turkic or Mongolian and came from the Mongolian Steppe. At one time the Kushan's dominion included Xinjiang, but they were eventually pushed westwards, by another horse nomad people – the Xiongnu – towards what is now Uzbekistan. The Xiongnu emerged from the Mongolian steppe around the 5th Century BC and spoke an early Turkic language which they may have introduced to Xinjiang.[85]

The Xiongnu became a long-running difficulty for China's Han Dynasty. The two entities engaged in a 300 year struggle across a long frontier running from inner China to what is now southern Xinjiang. The Han Dynasty's measures for dealing with the Xiongnu mark the start of a long-term pattern of imperial Chinese responses to Turkic horse nomads: the empire used a combination of soft or indirect measures and hard or direct measures. The soft measures focussed on diplomacy, co-option and appeasement. They included royal marriages of Chinese princesses to the barbarians' leaders. This approach is often referred to as *heqin* (和亲) literally meaning royal marriage.

The other approach, hard or direct, included punitive raids, stationing forces in frontier areas and the use of martial law. These two approaches could be used together, but the typical pattern was the alternation between soft and hard – with a preference by the

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[84] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 28. Specifically, early bronze and iron technologies arrived in Xinjiang from Europe before inner China, probably thanks to horse nomad cultures. There is evidence that the people of Xinjiang were in contact with the Androvno culture, originally from Western Eurasia, and later spreading to the Urals and Siberia. J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 11; and, Wikipedia, *Andronovo Culture*, viewed on 14 January 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andronovo_culture
[85] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 18-9.

Chinese empire for the use of the soft. Therefore, the hard measures were resorted to when the soft measures failed or were inadequate. Until 133 BC the Han Dynasty had used the *heqin* approach in its dealings with the Xiongnu, but finding it costly and ineffective it switched to hard measures and adopted a strategy of military and administrative expansion across the Han–Xiongnu frontier.[86]

The PRC has strongly implied that this military intervention established total control over all of Xinjiang.[87] In fact this did not occur, nor was it the aim. The Han did not need total control over Xinjiang to prevent the Xiongnu from being able to consolidate their control over the region, access resources such as pasture for horses and food and other resources for their troops, and use it as a base of operations for campaigns in inner China. Di Cosmo describes this as 'defensive expansionism'.[88] The strategy was one of denying the Xiongnu a logistical base from which they could threaten the Han Chinese empire.

The Han Dynasty established military farming colonies known as *tuntian* (屯田) in southern Xinjiang. It should be noted that at that time the soldiers were not stationed for the purpose of farming, rather these farms were created to help the Han soldiers overcome the logistical difficulties inherent in serving so far from inner China without imposing on the local population.[89] This approach to logistics has also been repeated in

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[86] Ibid., pp. 20-1; Wikipedia entry for Xiongnu, viewed on19 January 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xiongnu; and N. Di Cosmo, 'Han frontiers: toward an integrated view', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 129, no. 2, April-June 2009.

[87] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/

[88] N. Di Cosmo, ''op. cit., pp. 202-3; and J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 25.

[89] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 22-3.

Xinjiang's history. The Chinese imperial military presence helped secure the trade corridor that came to be called the Silk Road.[90]

Due to a civil war, the Han Dynasty fell in AD 220 and China was divided and lost control of its western regions.[91] This marked the beginning of another pattern which was repeated over the last two thousand years until the establishment of the PRC in 1949: as the strength of the régime governing inner China rose and fell, the control by the centre of China's periphery waxed and waned.[92]

The next wave of horse nomads to overrun Xinjiang were the Türks.[93] They were an offshoot of the Xiongnu who emerged from Siberia and Mongolia. From roughly AD 500 for the next thousand years they overran people as far away as Istanbul.[94] The history of the Turks is extremely complex and has been hugely important to Central Asia, as all the major ethnicities of the region are Turkic. To this day there are many governments – including China's – who fear the rise of Pan–Turkism.[95] Yet, the Türks were disposed to fragmenting, which helps explain the later emergence of so

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[90] Ibid., pp. 24-5.
[91] A relationship continued between the western regions and the Chinese. This included the occasional payment of tribute by the region's city states to imperial authorities as well as occasional raids by Chinese forces to subdue local rulers. Despite these changes, trade running through the Tarim basin continued to flourish, probably due to the influence of the Kushan empire to the west. Ibid., p. 25.
[92] N. Di Cosmo, ''op. cit., p. 203-4; J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 21-2, and 24-5. For example, during the Han civil war (AD 8-25), outlying garrisons were withdrawn from the frontier allowing the Northern Xiongnu a chance to fill the void. Once the war was over, the Later Han Dynasty reasserted its control over the Tarim Basin.
[93] They eventually established states spanning the Ferghana Valley, northern Xinjiang, south–western Xinjiang and parts of Afghanistan and India. J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 30-1.
[94] To refer to the ancient Türks I use this spelling with dieresis over the u (ü). To refer to the modern Turks, I use no dieresis (u). Türk was probably a name that meant 'helmet' in reference to their expertise in metallurgy. C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 40. The full name of this first group of Turks was Kök Türk.
[95] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 43.

many different Turkic ethnicities in present day Central Asia.[96] This tendency was exploited by the Chinese Sui and Tang Dynasties, following the adage 'use barbarians against barbarians'[97]. The Sui and Tang used both diplomatic and military means to manage the difficult nomadic power to their north.[98]

Eventually, the Türks split into the Western and Eastern Türks. The Chinese used one group against the other and eventually conquered the Eastern Türks and displaced the Western Türks from the Tarim Basin[99]. This allowed the Tang Dynasty to govern southern Xinjiang through the native city-state rulers from 640.[100] By this time the Tibetan Empire had become powerful and throughout the late 600s and early 700s territory in Xinjiang passed between the Tibetans and the Tang.[101]

Southern Xinjiang was an intersection of corridors for Türks, Tibetans, Tang Chinese, Soghdians and even Arabs. Like their Han forbears, the Tang Dynasty had interests in operating in Xinjiang to weaken nomadic confederations as well as to exploit the area for farming, trading, and taxing traders on the Silk Road.[102] Once again, maintaining an influence in the region was a form of forward defence of inner China.

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[96] Their arrival represented the introduction of Turkic people to the area which became home to Uyghurs, Uzbeks, Kazaks, Kyrgyz and others J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 31.
[97] 'Use barbarians against barbarians' *yiyizhiyi* 以夷制夷.
[98] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 31-2. The relationship between the Chinese court and the Türks was tumultuous: 'Raids and retaliation were followed by truces sealed with royal marriages and tribute – usually of horses in exchange for silk.' The Türks saw this as successful extortion, but the Chinese court hoped that this economic transaction would have a cultural effect: lavishing the barbarians with luxury was meant to corrupt and weaken the Türks and break up their tribal confederations. C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 41 and 44-5.
[99] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 41.
[100] The Tang borrowed the name the Han Dynasty had used for the area 'Protectorate–General of Anxi' (安西 literally Pacified West) J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 32-3. For indirect rule of southern Xinjiang see C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 41–2.
[101] C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 38-9.
[102] J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 35-8

The rise of the Uyghurs

In 744 a number of Eastern Türkic tribes – including a tribe from present day Mongolia overthrew the Eastern Türks' khaganate.[103] This tribe bore the ethnonym 'Uyghur' which is thought to mean joiners or supporters.[104] They founded a Uyghur state (744-840) based in central Mongolia but reaching as far as northern Xinjiang.[105] In the transition from horse nomads to governors of settled peoples, the Uyghurs engaged Soghdian administrators and adopted Soghdian script to represent the Uyghur Turkic language.[106]

Despite the use of the name Uyghur, the connection between this nomadic confederation and today's settled farmers is complicated. These first Uyghurs are *one* of the antecedents of Xinjiang's modern Uyghurs. At this time, the Uyghurs were Mongoloids: closer to Mongols in appearance than their descendants who came to mix with a wide range of peoples by reason of Xinjiang being not only a crossroads but also a land that changed hands so many times in its history. This makes it impossible to date the 'arrival' of the modern Uyghurs in the area and therefore confuses a neat official narrative[107] that says first the Han were in Xinjiang, then the Tang and then the Uyghurs.[108]

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[103] Ibid., p. 42; and, Wikipedia, *Uyghur Khaganate*, viewed on 29 Jan 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uyghur_Khaganate.

[104] The term Uyghur may have referred to their joining together as a tribe or under a particular chief. C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 43-4.

[105] They established a capital at Kara Balghasun on the upper Orkhon River in present day Mongolia. S. Soucek, *A history of Inner Asia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 66; and J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 47.

[106] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 47.

[107] The relevant Chinese government white paper shows a clear chronology where the Han Dynasty operate in Xinjiang, make the territory become henceforth an inseparable part of China, followed by the Sui and Tang Dynasties followed by the 'arrival' of the Uyghurs. There is no admission made that the

The Uyghur state, originally based east of Xinjiang, became powerful but suffered a setback, moved west and eventually was centred on the Turpan Basin.[109] This became the Qocho Kingdom (850-1250).[110] Initially, the Uyghurs adopted Buddhism from local inhabitants of the basin[111], but during the Qocho Kingdom progressively turned to Islam.[112] Islam came to Xinjiang via multiple waves of missionaries and other influences from the 10th to the 15th Centuries.[113] Ever since the Qocho Kingdom, Islam has been closely tied to the Uyghur ethnicity.[114] It should be noted that from the time of its adoption until the present, Uyghurs have almost exclusively been followers of Sufism – considered to be a moderate branch of Islam that is associated with mystical practices.[115]

Uyghurs had ancestors in the region. PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/

[108] This phenomenon lies at the heart of much debate in the modern PRC about the origin of the Uyghurs. The PRC view omits the role other peoples play in becoming the modern Uyghur. Perhaps this can be explained because many of the people whose descendants came to be Uyghurs actually predate the arrival of this Uyghur tribe in the Xinjiang region. From the PRC's point of view the later the 'Uyghurs' are shown to arrive in Xinjiang, the better as it undermines the 'indigineity' argument.

[109] This Uyghur state was so powerful that it was able to provide a military force to help the Tang court crush the An Lushan rebellion (755–63). J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 47. It was around this time that the Uighur khan encountered Manichean missionaries and converted. He brought Manichaeism, and its emphasis on peace and doing good works to the Uighur state. The Tang had forbidden Chinese to practice Manichaeism, but the Uyghurs adopted it as their state religion. C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 45-6.

[110] S. Soucek, *A history of Inner Asia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 77.

[111] Buddhism was then the dominant religion in the Tarim Basin. It had been introduced by Indian merchants and missionaries in the 1st Century AD and been cemented by the influence of the Tibetan Empire C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 35.

[112] S. Soucek, op. cit., p. 79.

[113] É. Allès, 'Usages de la frontière: le cas du Xinjiang (XIX e -XX e siècles)' [(The meaning of frontier: Xinjiang as Case Study (19th-20th Centuries)") *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident*, no. 28, 2006, p. 129.

[114] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 50-1; and A. Berzin, *Historical Sketch of Buddhism and Islam in East Turkistan*, September 1994, viewed on 5 February 2016, http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/history_buddhism/buddhism_central_asia/history_east_turkestan_buddhism.html. Berzin goes on to explain that the adoption of Islam by the Uyghurs was gradual. It started amongst a sub-group called the Qarakhanids in what is now Khotan. The religion spread amongst their fellow-Uyghurs from west to east and eventually included people in the Qocho/Turpan area after the end of the Qocho Kingdom.

[115] M. Dillon, op. cit., p. 13.

In the early 1200s, the Mongols – under Genghis Khan – erupted from the steppe. They overran the Qocho Kingdom and China. The Qocho Kingdom became a vassal state of the Mongol empire in 1209.[116] The Uyghurs lent their administrative techniques and their Soghdian script to the Mongol empire.[117] The Uyghurs maintained their autonomy until the late 1300s after which their ethnonym fell out of use until the 20th Century. As imperial rulers of China the Mongols took the name Yuan Dynasty.

The Mongol empire unravelled and gave way to the ethnic Han-Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). This left Xinjiang divided amongst various Mongol houses. Eastern Xinjiang again found itself in a tug of war between local rulers and imperial China. However, by the 1600s another Mongol confederation – the Zhungharians – emerged in northern Xinjiang and eventually extended their territory south.[118]

2.4 Medieval Times: Xinjiang under the Qing Dynasty, 1644-1911

In the meantime, another expansionist confederation, the Jürchen (who included horse nomads) had arisen out of Manchuria and progressively overthrew the Ming Dynasty. In 1636 the Jürchen Manchus took the name Qing (清 meaning pure or clear) and by

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[116] J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 47.
[117] L. Kwanten, *Imperial nomads: a history of Central Asia 500-1500*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1979, p. 260; and C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 51. Most of Xinjiang was controlled by a nominally vassal house of the Mongols – the Chaghatays. By the 1390s the Chaghatays conquered the Turpan Basin and what remained of direct Uyghur rule ended. The Chaghatays quickly broke down into various ruling houses leaving Xinjiang divided amongst their descendants and other horse nomad houses including Kirghiz and Kazaks whose ethnonyms remain attached to ethnic groups in Xinjiang to this day. J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 69, 70-1.
[118] It was the Zhungars who introduced Uyghurs to northern Xinjiang as they wished to improve agriculture in the north. J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 88-91.

1644 they had defeated the Ming and conquered the Chinese empire.[119] By the 1630s the Manchus had taken over Inner Mongolia and had become more prominent on the borders of Xinjiang. In Xinjiang the see–sawing between warfare and truces went on, but now between Zhungars and Manchus.[120] In the early days of the Qing Dynasty the Manchus were vigorous, expansionist and brutal.[121]

The Qing conquest of Zhungaria – 1755-9: the Western Regions become 'Xinjiang'

The Qing repeatedly beat the Zhungars and concluded truces with them, but these broke down time and again.[122] The Qing emperor decided Zhungaria needed to be conquered – this was over the objection of Chinese officials who said Xinjiang had never been part of China. He rejected their advice on the grounds that he could redefine China to include non–Han peoples and other territories.[123] This set China down the path of becoming officially a multi-ethnic empire.

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[119] The Qing Dynasty arose from some of the descendants of an earlier horse nomad people that had overrun much of northern China — the Jürchen. The Jürchen established the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) which covered northern and north–eastern China based from its capital Zhongdu which is now part of Beijing. That empire was defeated by the twin pressures of the Southern Song Dynasty and the rise of the Mongols. The remnant Jürchen people had settled in different parts of what became Manchuria and came to mix with Chinese émigrés and become partially detribalised and partly Sinicised. By 1616 the Jürchen felt confident enough to declare the second Jin Dynasty. The second Jin empire was determined to remake itself: it took on a new name Qing in 1636 and the subject people abandoned the name Jürchen and now called themselves Manchu (probably meaning great good fortune). J.D. Spence, *The search for modern China*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1990, pp. 27-31; Wikipedia entry for *Jurchen people*, viewed on 2 February 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jurchen_people. The Qing incorporated Mongol forces – on an almost equal terms – who were a common enemy of the Ming and went on to incorporate Chinese forces of the Ming themselves. L. Kwanten, *Imperial nomads: a history of Central Asia 500-1500*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1979, p. 282.
[120] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 88-91.
[121] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 54.
[122] Ibid.
[123] G. Zhao, 'Reinventing China: imperial Qing ideology and the rise of modern Chinese national identity in the early twentieth century', *Modern China*, vol. 32, no. 1, January 2006, pp. 11-2.

The Qing crushed the Zhungars and conquered northern Xinjiang and annexed southern Xinjiang over the period 1755-9.[124] To prevent further problems, the Qing emperor ordered the able bodied men to be killed and the women enslaved; some died of disease and the rest were scattered.[125] The Zhungars had numbered nearly a million people, but were now eliminated.[126] This genocide was probably the single most decisive triumph for Beijing's authority in Xinjiang until 1949, and it was a turning point in China's strategy. Previously, the imperial authorities had operated in and near Xinjiang to deny it to rivals, to keep locals divided and to provide a strategic buffer for inner China. Now the Qing emperor had determined to make Xinjiang a permanent dominion within the empire to assure the security of Mongolia and Beijing.[127]

Theretofore, Chinese imperial courts had referred to areas now part of the XUAR, either by specific place names, or rather vaguely as the 'western regions' (*xiyu* 西域).[128] Whereas the term *xinjiang* (新疆, literally new frontier or dominion) originally referred to many different territories recently acquired by the Qing Dynasty. After the conquest

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[124] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 94-5; on the annexation of southern Xinjiang see J.A. Millward and P.C. Perdue, 'Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 48.
[125] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 55.
[126] J.A. Millward and P.C. Perdue, op. cit., p. 54.
[127] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 96-7.
[128] The term *xiyu* that may go back as far as the fifth century BC. In the early Qing Dynasty the term *Zhunbu* (准部 literally Zhungarian people's area) to describe Zhungaria the large northern basin of the XUAR, and the term *Huijiang* (回疆 literally the Hui people's dominion). A. Rahman, *Sinicization beyond the Great Wall: China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*, Troubador Publishing, Leicester, 2005, pp. 21-2; Encylopædia Britannica entry for *Xinjiang* viewed on 4 February 2016, http://www.britannica.com/place/Xinjiang.

of Zhungaria in 1759, the term Xinjiang was adopted to refer specifically to this major acquisition which falls broadly in the borders of modern day XUAR.[129]

For the first century of their rule, the Manchu Qing Dynasty was strongly influenced by its horse nomad origins and administered Mongolia and Xinjiang in the mode of a Central Asian khan.[130] The Qing were contented with taxing agrarian peoples in Xinjiang's basins and violently quelled any rebellions. Yet they had a hands-off approach to administering Xinjiang's Muslim south, even exempting them from shaving their heads and adopting the queue hairstyle which was used by Han people everywhere else as a sign of submission to the Manchu dynasty.[131] The 300 local landed chieftains – *begs* – ruled as vassals of the Qing who avoided interfering in local matters.[132] This indirect rule saw decades of stability and economic development.[133]

Initially, the Qing did not open the region to colonisation and settlement, but rather treated it as a heavily garrisoned frontier which then led to an expansion in trade.[134] But to reduce the huge costs of sustaining the large Qing garrison in Xinjiang, they embarked on numerous initiatives including *tuntian* military-run farms and running cattle as well as sponsoring countless local ventures from mining to general stores.

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[129] A. Rahman, *Sinicization beyond the Great Wall: China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*, Troubador Publishing, Leicester, 2005, pp. 21-2; Encyclopædia Britannica entry for *Xinjiang* viewed on 4 February 2016, http://www.britannica.com/place/Xinjiang.
[130] J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 103.
[131] J.D. Spence, op. cit., p. 98; and, J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 97.
[132] P.C. Perdue, 'China and other colonial empires: asymmetry, colonialism, and tribute: what's the difference?', *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, vol. 16, no. 1/2, Spring-Summer 2009, p. 93; and, J.A. Millward and P.C. Perdue, 'Political and cultural history of the Xinjiang region through the late nineteenth century', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 57.
[133] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 102.
[134] J.D. Spence, op. cit., p. 98.

To strengthen lines of communication to inner China, the Qing also developed roads and roadside inns. These economic and infrastructural measures supported the garrison and benefited trade throughout Central Asia and India and led to some migration by Han farmers from inner China.[135] By the 1830s, perhaps through a combination of practical concerns and a change in the philosophy of the increasingly Sinicised Manchu court, Xinjiang went from being closed to colonisation to open to it.

This later phase of Qing governance in Xinjiang, according to Perdue, exhibited three features common to colonial empires: 1) it used a different administrative system in its new possessions; 2) these involved indirect rule through co–opted local elites; and, 3) it settled its own people in the outlying areas.[136] Thus emerges a three-pronged strategy for Qing control of the outlying region: economic incentives – aimed at Han settlers – to promote commercial activity in Xinjiang and thereby reduce the burden it placed on the imperial treasury; the active promotion of Han colonial settlement; and, political and military coercion, all of which foreshadow the current PRC strategy – with the exception of indirect rule used by the Qing is replaced by pseudo autonomy under the CCP.[137] 'By creating facts on the ground, the Qing … aimed to control Xinjiang forever.'[138] The PRC seems to have learnt from late-Qing attempts to Sinicise Xinjiang, but executes its strategy on a vast scale.

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[135] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 103-5.
[136] P.C. Perdue, op. cit., p. 93.
[137] J.A. Millward and P.C. Perdue, 'Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 57.
[138] Ibid., p. 56.

One important distinction should be made here between an ordinary colonial endeavour and the Qing strategy. In the Qing case, Han subjects were used as farmer-colonists, whereas Manchus (who were fairly few in number) were used as the rulers. Senior offices were filled only by Manchus and Mongols until the 1880s.[139] Depending on the ethnicity and political background of the subject people, some areas were governed as military zones, some through local chieftains and some as prefectures in much the same way prefectures in inner China were governed.[140]

The 1864 rebellion and Eastern Turkistan Republic 1864-1877

In 1864 a rebellion in the southern Xinjiang city of Kashgar occurred. Its causes were a combination of resistance to bad governance by the Qing authorities [141] and ethno-nationalist resentment against Manchu and Han Chinese people in Xinjiang.[142] This saw the emergence of an independent *sharia*-law-practicing Islamic state[143] for thirteen years[144] until Xinjiang was reconquered by a Qing army under the command of Han Chinese general, Zuo Zongtong, in 1877.[145]

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[139] 'Qing rulers repressed, or even exterminated, certain groups who vigorously resisted them, but they induced willing compliance from any other groups.' P.C. Perdue, 'China and other colonial empires: asymmetry, colonialism, and tribute: what's the difference?', *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, vol. 16, no. 1/2, Spring-Summer 2009, pp. 92-3. See also J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 100-1.

[140] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 100-1.

[141] Ibid., p. 116.

[142] Ibid., p. 108.

[143] Ibid., pp. 120-1.

[144] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 87.

[145] E. Waite, 'From Holy Man to National Villain: Popular Historical Narratives About Apaq Khoja amongst Uyghurs in Contemporary Xinjiang' *Inner Asia*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2006, p. 10. Part of Xinjiang had meanwhile come under Russian control and was retroceded to China by the St Petersburg treaty of 1881.

The 'provincialisation' of Xinjiang – 1884 and the Qing reinvention of China

The reconquest of Xinjiang was undertaken after much deliberation by the Qing court. At the time, the dynasty was suffering the predations of Western imperial powers. Two camps emerged: one favouring building a navy and defending China from the east; and, the more traditional camp which saw Xinjiang as one domino in a set linking Mongolia and Beijing. The traditional camp won out.[146] The conquering troops were demobilised and set to work on the *tuntian*.[147] Shortly after his successful campaign General Zuo was among those who recommended an entirely new approach be taken to governing Xinjiang: transform it into a province.[148] This was done in 1884, 'provincialising'[149] Xinjiang, and thereby bringing it under the *junxian* system [郡县制] – which was the Confucian–trained magistracy used to administer the rest of China.[150] This was the first time China had a province named Xinjiang,[151] and the imperial court redrew maps to show that the new dominion was now part of China.[152]

This brought Xinjiang wholly under Qing control. J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 124-9, 132 and 136-7.

[146] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 124-9.

[147] C. Wiemer, 'The Economy of Xinjiang' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 165.

[148] A. Rahman, op. cit., p. 22.

[149] I have used this neologism because it describes accurately what happened to Xinjiang in 1884 in a constitutional and administrative sense. Other writers have used terms such as 'annexation' and 'incorporation' but these are not clear. The territory became a Qing possession and was thereby annexed to their empire long before it became a Chinese province.

[150] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 132 and136-7.

[151] 'Under the Ming, China referred both to fifteen provinces and to the Han people living in them.' Outlying areas were considered tribute countries, including: Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet and Vietnam. G. Zhao, 'Reinventing China: imperial Qing ideology and the rise of modern Chinese national identity in the early twentieth century', *Modern China*, vol. 32, no. 1, January 2006, p. 5.

[152] G. Zhao, 'Reinventing China: imperial Qing ideology and the rise of modern Chinese national identity in the early twentieth century', *Modern China*, vol. 32, no. 1, January 2006, pp. 16-7.

From the Han Dynasty, the relationship between the Chinese empire and Xinjiang had been principally military (with the state farms used to logistically support the local garrisons). The court's main objective was to secure this frontier against barbarian incursions.[153] Provincialisation heralded the first time a large number of Chinese civilian administrators were deployed to Xinjiang. This meant supplanting high ranking *begs* and absorbing low ranking local officials into the newly applied *junxian* system. Although expensive, the Qing court hoped that a Sinicised Xinjiang which would be less restive and more economically productive.[154]

General Zuo wished not only to provincialise Xinjiang, but to Sinicise it; his recommendations were clear: 'If we wish to change their peculiar customs and assimilate them to our Chinese ways, we must found free schools and make the Muslim children read [Chinese] books, recognise characters and understand spoken language.'[155] There was to be no more autonomy, the Turks were to be assimilated and aggressively converted '...into Confucian Chinese as fast as possible.'[156]

Provincialisation of Xinjiang was the culmination of two parallel trends that began after the Qing defeated the Ming: the Manchus were becoming increasingly Sinicised[157], and they were increasingly given to depicting all their possessions as being part of 'China'. The Manchus believed equating their empire with China would win support from the

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[153] A. Rahman, op. cit., p. 28.
[154] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 132 and 138-40.
[155] Zuo Zongtang, 1968 [1888-97], Complete Collected Works of Zuo Zongtang, Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe cited in J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 142.
[156] Turk parents were coerced into sending their children to Chinese schools by exempting the parents of pupils from the corvée. Confucianism was foisted on the locals, requiring them to attend Chinese temples and to marry in Chinese ceremonies. This was enforced on pain of arrest and even execution. C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 89-91.
[157] J.A. Millward, op. cit., p. 124.

Han population. This marked the Qing court's redefining of China as a multi-ethnic empire.[158]

By the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, the integration of Xinjiang with inner China was a mixed result. Provincialisation '…represented a concerted state effort to Sinicize the administration, population, and economy of Xinjiang.'[159] Administratively it was quite closely integrated although it still relied on local Turkic élites and large subsidies from the central government. Due to Russia's significant trading activities in Central Asia, commercially speaking, Xinjiang remained more integrated with Russia. However, culturally, Xinjiang was barely Sinicised at all. This was due to the size of the Turkic population and the relatively small numbers of Han in the region.[160] Despite the limited Sinicisation achieved in Qing times, their re-imagination of 'China' to include outlying lands and non-Han people was now embedded in Chinese political zeitgeist.[161] This rise and spread of 'greater Chinese nationalism', the official Qing view of China as a multiethnic entity has persisted into the 21st Century '…contributing directly to the construction of the modern Chinese national identity.'[162] In less than 300 years the meaning of 'China' and 'Chinese people' changed fundamentally, and Xinjiang's Turks were now no longer Qing subjects, but Chinese citizens – whether they liked it or not.

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[158] G. Zhao, op. cit., p. 7.

[159] J.A. Millward and N. Tursun, 'Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978' in Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 66.

[160] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 132 and 158; and, J.A. Millward and N. Tursun, 'Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 66.

[161] The Qing abdication edict made it clear that China was a multi–ethnic state and it was handed over to Yuan Shikai on this condition. G. Zhao, op. cit.'', p. 16.

[162] G. Zhao, op. cit., p. 23. The simplistic sequence of change was this: 1) the Ming Dynasty ruled the Han people of (inner) China; 2) the Manchus conquer China, and include their Manchurian homeland, Mongolia and Xinjiang as part of their possessions and ultimately part of China; and, 3) the Qing Dynasty falls, but bequeaths to the Republic inner China plus the outlying regions and peoples.

Even when the Republic of China fell into civil war, whatever their differences, there was one thing on which the Nationalists and Communists agreed: Xinjiang's Turks were Chinese.[163]

2.5 Modern Times: 1911 to Present

With the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, China's politics entered a particularly tumultuous time. In 1912, a new national, republican government was established,[164] but it lacked control of Xinjiang which was governed by a succession of warlords: Yang Zengxin (ruled 1912-28) Jin Shuren (r. 1928-33) and Sheng Shicai (r. 1933-44). All three were Han Chinese who had to manage Xinjiang and deal with the demands of the distant national government, and later, contending Nationalist and Communist armies as well as Soviet Russian influences. During this time, Xinjiang became more isolated from inner China, and Sinicisation (including pro-Han migration measures) fell in and out of favour depending on the political winds at the time.[165]

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[163] 'To the revolutionaries who inherited it, the western empire own by the Manchu Qing Dynasty was something of an embarrassment — not because they did not want it, but because they had no ideological excuse for holding it. Sun Yat–sen surmounted the difficulty by saying that within the borders that made up China there was really only one nationality; the minority races would have to disappear by merging with the Han.' C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 130.

[164] Encylopædia Britannica entry for *Chinese Revolution* viewed on 13 May 2016, http://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Revolution-1911-1912

[165] C. Wiemer, 'The Economy of Xinjiang' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 166; and, J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 180-88; and, C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 90.

Jin Shuren pursued aggressively Sinicisation, but he also enriched himself through taxes on the people.[166] His misrule helped cause a peasant uprising in 1931 which became a southern-Xinjiang-wide rebellion. The conflict that ensued was complex and multi-sided, involving many ethnic groups – it was not the simple Uyghur uprising that some Turk scholars portray it as.[167] It culminated in the creation of the *sharia*-law-observing Turkish Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkistan based in Kashgar (1933-4).[168] The short-lived republic had a modernising and nationalistic ideology but was influenced by Islam and supported by the Soviets. In Millward's view, PRC scholars have depicted this republic as being mainly a fabrication of Muslim extremists.[169]

Jin was replaced with Sheng by the Nationalists who officially took charge of the province in 1933.[170] Sheng fell under the sway of Soviet influence trading their arms for access to Xinjiang's mineral resources which were mined and sent back to the Soviet Union.[171] Sheng adopted features from the Soviet treatment of ethnic minorities. This included officially recognising several ethnicities: Uyghur, Kazak, Kirghiz, Uzbek and Tajik.[172] This sharpened divisions between various groups that had heretofore been recognised as Turkic.[173] These classifications were used to determine representation in political bodies and have been maintained by the PRC.[174] Sheng's rule saw the resurrection of the ethnonym Uyghur which had disappeared from official use since the

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[166] J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 189.
[167] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 192 and 198.
[168] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 115. This republic is often referred to as The First East Turkestan Republic.
[169] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 201-2.
[170] Ibid., p. 198.
[171] Ibid., pp. 206-7.
[172] Ibid., pp. 207-8.
[173] 'Sheng Shicai encouraged the establishment of cultural societies for each group and promoted the publication of Uighur language newspapers.' A. Rahman, *Sinicization beyond the Great Wall: China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*, Troubador Publishing, Leicester, 2005, p. 39.
[174] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 208-9.

end of the 1300s.[175] Although the term had fallen out of official use, the Uyghurs were a fairly distinct ethnic group with many shared features in common including a shared language and identity. They readily accepted the term Uyghur and still do.[176]

Sheng eventually fell out with the Soviets, sealed the border with the USSR, and in 1942 his government implemented Chiang Kai–shek's own North–West Development Movement which resettled poor Han peasants to work the land in Xinjiang in order to develop it as an economic base in the war against Japan and to head off the development Communist support in the area.[177] This marked a return to the late Qing policies and ignored the extent to which those had caused resentment that fuelled rebellions.[178] The closure of the border with the USSR was resented by Kazaks in the three northernmost districts of Xinjiang which led to their rebellion in October 1944. The rebellion broke out in the Illi Valley bordering Kazakhstan, and morphed into the Second East Turkistan Republic (1944-9) which also enjoyed Soviet support.[179] But less than two years later, the Nationalist forces in Xinjiang capitulated to the inevitable, and the PLA peacefully 'liberated' the province including the districts that were part of the Second ETR. Thus prior to the birth of the PRC, there have been three East Turkistan governments: 1864-77, 1933-4, and 1944-9 – all setting precedents which Beijing finds disturbing.

[175] G. Bovingdon, *Uyghurs: strangers in their own land*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010, p. 28.
[176] J. Conway, *The Uyghur and the scholar: competing narratives of ethno-religious identity*, master's thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 2010, p. 7, viewed on 13 May 2016 https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/1974/6011/1/John%20Conway.pdf
[177] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 204.
[178] J.A. Millward, op. cit., pp. 211-3.
[179] Ibid., pp. 214-6.

Xinjiang under the CCP

Over the course of the CCP's 68 years of ruling Xinjiang, there have been many different styles of governing which have mainly reflected what the Communists were doing nationally, rather than being Xinjiang-specific. Xinjiang's remoteness and its strategic importance did, however, keep it insulated from some of the most extreme effects of Maoism. But whether it was during the highpoints of Maoism (Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution), the Deng era, or the post-Deng era, the Sinicising thrust of the CCP strategy remained the same although policies and the pace of implementation varied.

The CCP's early policies towards ethnic minorities were extremely liberal, but once in power became much less so. The CCP was founded in 1921. The next year, it adopted a policy envisaging autonomy for Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang, and in 1931, in imitation of Lenin's approach, adopted a policy stressing the right to autonomy and even secession by ethnic minorities, but the Party also thought that Communism would obviate ethnic differences.[180] By the time WWII was over and the Nationalists had fled to Taiwan, China's ethnic minorities were no longer crucial to the CCP's survival. In 1949, Mao was still making gestures of fraternal friendship towards the Turks including initiatives to train local Party cadres to assist in the administration of Xinjiang.

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[180] The 1922 policy was adopted at the second Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. M.R. Debata, *China's minorities: ethnic-religious separatism in Xinjiang*, Pentagon Press: New Delhi, 2007, p. 20. The 1931 policy was adopted as Article 14 of the Constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic, during the First Chinese National Congress and was declared in November 1931. W. Kymlicka and Baogang He, *Multiculturalism in Asia,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 61

Tyler observes:

> 'However, Mao and his colleagues were less concerned to honour pledges of autonomy for minorities than to consolidate their power, defend the new Republic's borders, exploit the mineral wealth of Xinjiang and make good use of the wide open spaces now at their disposal.'[181]

When the PLA marched into Urumqi in 1949, they found that despite the previous efforts at Sinicisation, Xinjiang was remarkably unintegrated with inner China.[182] The Communists demobilised PLA and surrendered-Nationalist troops in Xinjiang as settlers. These troops were almost all Han. In 1949/50, apart from demobilised soldiers, the first influx of Han in the CCP era were well-suited to modernising the region. They were technically able, keen to teach the locals, small in number – no more than 10,000 and generally welcomed by the indigenous Turkic population.[183] But in Xinjiang's villages the Communists and the Turkic headmen quickly came into conflict. To assure its grip on rural areas in Xinjiang in the early 1950s, the Party quickly moved to undermine these rival sources of political power. Measures to do so included: executing hereditary nobles; confiscating land from mosques and landlords; bringing clergy under state supervision; the appointing of imams by the state instead of allowing local communities to continue to elect them; as well as conducting propaganda campaigns aimed at criticising feudal power structures; and, the use of public humiliation against recalcitrant local leaders and religious figures.[184] In other cases 'acceptable' ethnic minority figures were co-opted by giving them roles in the CCP régime.[185]

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[181] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 131.
[182] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 305.
[183] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 132.
[184] Ibid., pp. 131-5.
[185] M.E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's rise in Central Asia – a history*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 47.

A key figure in the Party's administration was Wang Enmao, a former general and the longest serving Communist Party chief of Xinjiang (1952-67, 81-85). Wang and Beijing's overriding goal was achieving the region's complete integration with the PRC,[186] and to do so '…without unduly provoking the sensitivities of the majority non-Han (and primarily Islamic) indigenous population…'.[187] Initially the CCP's rule was mostly moderate, gradualist and focused on stability.[188] Nevertheless, Wang sought to systematically neutralise rival sources of political power such as Islam, language and ethnic traditions.[189] This was done by stripping mosques and clergy of land and rights they had previously held, sidelining local Islamic courts with CCP-run 'people's courts', co-opting ethnic minority leaders and making use of ethnic minority CCP cadres.[190]

Wang was concerned that if left unmoderated, Maoist radically-assimilationist policies could galvanise opposition to Han-dominated Chinese authorities in Xinjiang and might risk Xinjiang's separation from the PRC.[191] Despite Wang's attempts to isolate Xinjiang from the worst effects of Maoist policies, the Great Leap Forward (1958-61) led to serious socio-economic disruption which caused unrest in the region.[192]

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[186] D.H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist power and policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979, p. 84.

[187] D.H. McMillen, 'Xinjiang and Wang Enmao: new directions in power, policy and integration?' *China Quarterly*, no. 99, September 1984, p. 569.

[188] Ibid., p. 570.

[189] D.H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist power and policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979, p. 311.

[190] M.E. Clarke, 'In the eye of power: China and Xinjiang from the Qing conquest to the "New Great Game" for Central Asia, 1759-2004', PhD thesis, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, 2004, pp. 226-7, viewed on 12 July 2017 https://www120.secure.griffith.edu.au/rch/file/22222fd0-89a9-b505-6cde-4d5fc09ca57a/1/02Whole.pdf .

[191] D.H. McMillen, 'Xinjiang and Wang Enmao: new directions in power, policy and integration?' *China Quarterly*, no. 99, September 1984, p. 571.

[192] D.H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist power and policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979, p. 96.

A major national development that had an impact on Xinjiang was the Sino-Soviet Split. From the Split in 1962 until reform and opening in 1978, the Soviet-Xinjiang frontier became one of the most closed in the world.[193] This cut off the various Turkic ethnic groups in Xinjiang from their Central Asian kin. The Cultural Revolution (1966-76), however was much more disruptive to Xinjiang. Wang was concerned about the stability of Xinjiang and the Soviet threat and did not allow the Red Guards to take over Xinjiang. Indeed, he used the local PLA to suppress the Red Guards.[194] He tried to isolate Xinjiang from the worst effects of the Cultural Revolution, but was accused by those close to Mao of capitulating to minority elites and failing to adhere to Maoism; he was removed as Party chief in 1968.[195]

During the Cultural Revolution religious books including the Koran were burnt, and thousands of religious leaders were sent to labour camps.[196] Land-owners and hereditary Muslim nobles were killed.[197] McMillen states:

> '…from 1966 to 1971 conditions became so chaotic in Xinjiang that the central authorities were compelled officially to suspend the movement there and place the

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[193] É. Allès, 'Usages de la frontière: le cas du Xinjiang (XIX e -XX e siècles)' [(The meaning of frontier: Xinjiang as Case Study (19th-20th Centuries)"] *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident*, no. 28, 2006, p. 130.
[194] Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 150-1. More specifically, during the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the military in Xinjiang was divided in its loyalty. 'The main cleavage appeared to be between members of Lin Biao's Fourth Field Army, represented by Long Shujin and Unit 7335, and those loyal to Wang Enmao and his First Field Army.' J. Teufel Dreyer, 'The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region at thirty: a report card', *Asian Survey*, vol. 26, no. 7, July 1986, p. 727.
[195] J. Teufel Dreyer, ''op. cit., p. 725; and Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 152.
[196] N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, p. 39.
[197] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 132.

turbulent XPCC under direct military control (similar actions were taken in other strategic frontier regions).'[198]

By as early as 1972 many of Wang's more moderate approaches were being re-adopted by Xinjiang's authorities. This showed that although Beijing could replace leaders at will; enforcing the centre's policies without jeopardising stability was more difficult.[199] Aggressively pursuing a Maoist strategy designed to transform Xinjiang (along with the rest of China) too quickly could cause serious political instability and risk losing control over the region. For a transformative strategy to work, it had to be sustainable and not risk the loss of control by the Party. But whatever the pace of change, or the particular policies being pursued, the strategic direction remained towards Sinicising Xinjiang. This can be seen from the fact that the constants in CCP policy in Xinjiang included the political structure of pseudo-autonomy, the use of the XPCC to transform the region's economy, Han migration, the desire to control the practice of Islam, and the drive towards the greater use of Mandarin Chinese in schooling ethnic minority children.

Deng's rise and reform and opening – 1978-1989

Following Mao's death in late 1976, there was a determined effort by the central government to adopt a minority policy path of gradualism and pluralism: meaning the greater acceptance of minorities and their ways in public life. This saw a significant rise in the number of ethnic minority cadres at senior levels of government, and successive

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[198] D.H. McMillen, 'Xinjiang and Wang Enmao: new directions in power, policy and integration?' *China Quarterly*, no. 99, September 1984, p. 571.
[199] Ibid., p. 571.

amendments to the Constitution allowing more rights to accrue to ethnic minorities and their autonomous regions.[200] The 1978 constitution restored provisions guaranteeing ethnic minorities the right to develop their own languages and cultural practices.[201] The 1982 constitution included many wholly new provisions making it explicit that the autonomous regions could regulate to preserve minority cultural practices, and that minorities were entitled to representation in various state organs and would be entitled to use their own languages in court proceedings.[202] Indeed the onset of Deng's reforms, starting in 1979, released Xinjiang from quasi-military rule it had been under since 1949.[203] But Deng's reform and opening brought new types of upheaval to Xinjiang. Market reforms reduced the ability of the state to rely on the panopticon 'work unit' to supervise worker-citizens, and it brought about new forms of competition and new potential for conflict between Uyghurs and Han.[204] Additionally, the rise of telecommunications, the opening of China's western border to regular travel in 1987, and new road and railroad connections with Central Asia, helped unleash new social and

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[200] A. Magid, 'Handle With Care: China's Policy for Multiculturalism and Minority Nationalities', *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 1, Spring 1998, pp. 12-3.

[201] Compare Article 4 of the 1975 Constitution with Article 3 of the 1954 Constitution and Article 4 of the 1978 Constitution. Constitution of the People's Republic of China (full text after amendment on 14 March 2004), [amendments all listed at the end of the document, viewed on 22 May 2016, http://china.usc.edu/constitution-peoples-republic-china-1982; Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted 5 March 1978), viewed on 22 May 2016, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/People%27s_Republic_of_China_1978_Constitution.pdf. Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted 17 January 1975), viewed on 22 May 2016, http://www.e-chaupak.net/database/chicon/1975/1975e.htm.Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted on 20 September 1954), viewed on 22 May 2016, http://e-chaupak.net/database/chicon/1954/1954bilingual.htm.

[202] Compare the 1954, 1975, 1978 Constitutions with Articles 4, 59, 65, 99, 107, 113-4, 116, 119, 122, and 134 from the 1982 Constitution. Constitution of the People's Republic of China (full text after amendment on 14 March 2004), [amendments all listed at the end of the document], viewed on 22 May 2016, http://china.usc.edu/constitution-peoples-republic-china-1982; Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted 5 March 1978), viewed on 22 May 2016, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/People%27s_Republic_of_China_1978_Constitution.pdf. Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted 17 January 1975), viewed on 22 May 2016, http://www.e-chaupak.net/database/chicon/1975/1975e.htm. Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted on 20 September 1954), viewed on 22 May 2016, http://e-chaupak.net/database/chicon/1954/1954bilingual.htm.

[203] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 4.

[204] B. Hopper and M. Webber, 'Migration, modernisation and ethnic estrangement: Uyghur migration to Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC" *Inner Asia*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2009, p. 194.

economic forces and increased Uyghur awareness of their own Turkic identity.[205] In less than two decades Xinjiang went from being a state-led economy, isolated from Central Asia and governed in a quasi-military fashion, to being connected to Central Asia physically, culturally and economically once again. This set conditions for it to be deeply affected when the Soviet Union fell.

Fall of Soviets – 1989-1991

The fall of the Soviet Union brought a fresh salience to separatism for Uyghurs. As the Soviet Union fell, the Central Asian states stood up as independent entities. This gave some Uyghurs hope of their own independence and left them as the last Turkic people under Communist rule.[206] This had a profound psychological effect on Uyghurs.[207] This was partly caused by the understanding that the defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan was due, in part, to Muslim warriors, including Mujahedeen, pursuing a *jihad*. For a small number of Uyghurs, this helped redefine Xinjiang separatism in religious terms.[208]

The Soviet fall represents a major historical turning point for the Chinese authorities' view of Xinjiang: with the decline in the Russian threat, Xinjiang went from being a bulwark against Russian interference in the PRC's north-west to being an economic and

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[205] S.F. Starr, op. cit., pp. 4 and14.
[206] N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, pp. 39-40; and, S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 4-5.
[207] K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 209.
[208] S.F. Starr, op. cit., p. 5; and, R. Castets, 'Le mal-être des Ouïghours du Xinjiang' (The malaise of Xinjiang's Uyghurs), *Perspectives Chinoises*, no. 78, July-August 2003, p. 35.

strategic salient into Central Asia. The sharp decline in Russian influence in Central Asia removed a long–feared threat to Xinjiang and China.[209] At first, the Chinese authorities were thus much more focussed on their prospective strategic gains from the Soviet fall than from the risks brought by a new wave of jihadism in the region.[210] After the Soviet fall, China adopted a policy of opening Xinjiang to both inner China and to Central Asia.[211] By the early 1990s this was officially termed 'double-opening'. Double opening sought to exploit Xinjiang's position as a geographical and cultural link between the Han heartland and the new Central Asian republics.[212]

2.6 Uyghur Separatism and the Conflict in Xinjiang since 1949

What follows is a brief discussion of the causes and course of the Xinjiang conflict here as it is central to the context of the CCP's strategy. During the first four decades of CCP rule, the politically motivated violence and power struggles amongst Han people in Xinjiang caused by the turmoil of Maoist policies, was greater and more threatening to the government's control over the region than was any separatist-related violence.[213] Rebellions and separatist violence existed, but were not major concerns to the regional or central governments. The main incident was the Ghulja Uprising in 1962 which

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[209] M.E. Clarke, 'China's strategy in 'Greater Central Asia': is Afghanistan the missing link?' *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 40, 2013, p. 7.
[210] M.E. Clarke, op. cit., p. 6; and, Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 157-8.
[211] M.E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's rise in Central Asia – a history*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 109.
[212] M.E. Clarke, 'China's strategy in 'Greater Central Asia': is Afghanistan the missing link?' *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 40, 2013, pp. 7-8.
[213] J.A. Millward, 'Violent separatism in Xinjiang: a critical assessment', *Policy Studies* vol. 6, East-West Center, 2004 (available online http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS006.pdf).

involved massive rioting: '… tens of thousands of Uyghurs and Kazakhs rioted in the northwest city of Ghulja, and more than 60,000 fled Xinjiang for the Soviet Union.'[214] It was crushed by PLA and XPCC troops.[215] This incident notwithstanding, after 40 years of relative inter-ethnic calm, it is clear that after the fall of the Soviets, Xinjiang experienced a distinct spike in separatist incidents which has continued to the present (see table 1).

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[214] A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications) p. 92.

[215] G. Bovingdon, Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent *Policy Studies* vol. 11, East-West Center, 2004, p.10 (available online at http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS011.pdf); J.A. Millward, 'Violent separatism in Xinjiang: a critical assessment', *Policy Studies* vol. 6, East-West Center, 2004, p. 6 (available online http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS006.pdf).

Table 1: Key Incidents of Uyghur Separatist Violence 1990-2015

Time/ Period	Location	Description
April 1990	Baren Township south-west of Kashgar	Baren Uprising: A march on a government building turned into an uprising in which 3,000 Uyghurs reportedly have been killed by the PLA.[216] This led to a harsh crackdown on the Uyghur population.[217] The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) was probably involved in this incident.[218]
1992-3	XUAR, mainly Urumqi	A series of bombings which affected a cinema, buses, a hotel and stores; the assassination of local government officials and CCP-approved Imams.[219]
February 1997	Ghulja/Yining in the Illi Valley	Ghulja Incident: a Uyghur protest turned into a confrontation with authorities and scores of protesters may have been killed.[220]

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[216] For a more detailed account of the Baren Uprising see M.I. Wayne, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

[217] J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic militants and the global terrorist threat*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, 2010, p. 47

[218] 'Chinese government reports immediately after the rebellion attributed this event to the ETIM. The rebellion resulted in 22 deaths – 6 police officers, 14 ETIM members and 2 others – and 19 injuries.' J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic militants and the global terrorist threat*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, 2010, p. 55

[219] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 7; and J.A. Millward, 'Violent separatism in Xinjiang: a critical assessment', *Policy Studies* vol. 6, East-West Center, 2004 (available online http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS006.pdf).

[220] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 7; and Human Rights House, *Ghulja Massacre in China: fourteen years after*, 6 February 2011, based on a Rafto Foundation article, viewed on 2 April 2016, http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/15888.html

July 2009	Urumqi	Amid Uyghur-Han tensions a Uyghur protest march results in a confrontation with authorities leading to rioting by over 1000 Uyghurs and the deaths of over 100 Han people.[221] The riots caused Hu Jintao to leave the G–8 summit early – the first time a Chinese leader was forced to leave a foreign summit to attend to domestic troubles.[222] The authorities blamed World Uyghur Congress and Rebiya Kadeer, which gave her a prominence almost akin to Dalai Lama.[223]
October 2013	Beijing	A vehicle-borne attack at Tiananmen Square wounds scores of tourists.[224]
March 2014	Kunming Southern China	Mass-stabbing attack at Kunming railway stations left many killed and a hundred wounded. Described in state media as 'China's 9/11'.[225]
April 2014	Urumqi	Combination stabbing attack and bombing at Urumqi train station just hours after Xi Jinping left following a visit to the XUAR.[226]

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[221] E. Wong, 'Riots in Western China Amid Ethnic Tension,' *New York Times*, 5 July 2009, viewed on 11 February 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/06/world/asia/06china.html; and Xinhua News Agency website http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2009-07/11/content_11691499.htm>, posted July 11, 2009, accessed October 3, 2009 cited in G. Wu, 'China in 2009: muddling through crises' *Asian Survey*, vol. 50, no. 1, January/February 2010, p. 31.

[222] G. Wu, 'China in 2009: muddling through crises' *Asian Survey*, vol. 50, no. 1, January/February 2010, p. 38.

[223] G. Wu, op. cit., p. 38; and K. Tsuo, 'How the west was lost: China's Xinjiang policy', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, Autumn 2009, p. 10.

[224] Z. Li, 'Three death sentences for Tiananmen Square attackers', *CNN*, 16 June 2014, viewed on 11 February 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/16/world/asia/tiananmen-death-sentence/

[225] K. Hunt, 'China executes three for railway knife attack' *CNN*, 24 March 2015, viewed on 1 February 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/24/asia/china-kunming-executions/; and, T. Heberer, 'China in 2014: creating a new power and security architecture in domestic and foreign policies', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no.1, January/February 2015, p. 89.

[226] BBC, Deadly China blast at Xinjiang railway station, viewed on 11 February 2016 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-27225308; and, T. Heberer, 'China in 2014: creating a new power and security architecture in domestic and foreign policies', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no.1, January/February 2015, p 89.

May 2014	Urumqi	Combination assault with cars and bombing throwing at a street market, over 30 people killed.[227]
September 2015	Aksu, northern Tarim Basin	Mass-stabbing attack at a coal mine at least 50 people killed.[228]

[227] 'Urumqi attack kills 31 in China's Xinjiang region', *BBC*, 23 May 2014, viewed on 11 February 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-27502652; and T. Heberer, 'China in 2014: creating a new power and security architecture in domestic and foreign policies', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no.1, January/February 2015, p. 89.

[228] 'Death toll in Xinjiang coal mine attack climbs to 50', *Radio Free Asia*, 30 September 2015, viewed on 11 February 2016, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/attack-09302015174319.html

Since the early 1990s, separatist violence in Xinjiang has usually taken two forms: large protests that turn into riots, and small scale attacks that can include bombings of public places or government buildings, shootings and assassinations. The riots have tended to be spontaneous and enjoyed support from many ordinary Uyghurs. The attacks have been conducted by various small militant groups. Separatist violence in Xinjiang has experienced peaks and troughs. The most serious phase was during the early to mid-1990s; further serious rioting occurred in 2009.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US, PRC claims of terrorist attacks in Xinjiang have been exaggerated. Clarke examines the figures on acts of terrorism in Xinjiang based on Chinese government reports combined with media and scholarly reports. The first official Chinese account of terrorism in Xinjiang, entitled *East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity* which was released in January 2002.[229] It claimed that between 1990 and 2001 there had been over 200 terrorist incidents. If those figures were accepted at face value, it would mean there had been an attack almost every fortnight for ten years. Closer scrutiny however, shows this is an overblown picture of terrorism in Xinjiang. Clarke argues that taken as a whole the figures do not imply a coherent and focused terrorism campaign, rather the events occur in clusters and many of them appear to be criminal acts rather than politically motivated. Clarke argues that the authorities use a broad brush to characterise all acts of dissidence as Uyghur separatism. This has the tendency to overstate the threat in Xinjiang.[230]

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[229] PRC State Council statement, 'East Turkistan terrorist forces cannot get away with impunity', State Council Information Office, 21 January 2002, viewed on 12 March 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm
[230] M.E. Clarke "China's 'war on terror' in Xinjiang: human security and the causes of violent Uighur separatism", *Regional Outlook Paper*, no. 11, 2007 (available at https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/18239/regional-outlook-volume-11.pdf).

For most of the 2000s Xinjiang returned to relative calm, but in 2009 experienced serious rioting in Urumqi. The next wave of significant unrest began in the Xi Jinping era and is ongoing. Many of the attacks since 2013 seem to be particularly aimed at reaching into the Han heartland and attracting sensational coverage. In October 2013, a vehicle-borne suicide attack was conducted under the gaze of Mao's portrait on Tiananmen Square. In March of the following year, commuters in Kunming (China's south) were attacked in a mass-stabbing event.

Causes of the Xinjiang Conflict

The fall of the Soviets had repercussions on frontiers such as the Sino-Kazakhstan border that had been secured by Soviet Border Guards who had to be reorganised and became part of the Kazakhstan military. The turmoil caused a lapse in border security on the former USSR side that allowed weapons to fall into the hands of militant Uyghur separatists.[231] Wayne argues, Xinjiang's recent conflict originated with the mythology that faithful Islamic men who were only basically armed, but supported by the will of Allah, defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan.[232] Generally speaking, the Uyghur separatist cause is much more rooted in ethnic conflict, but *jihad* provides an ideological basis for militancy which can appeal to a small minority. Even a small number of people mounting dramatic attacks can have a significant impression. This means that *jihad* may only attract a small number of people and yet play a significant role in the conflict.

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[231] N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, p. 39.
[232] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 6.

Both Wayne and the PRC depict the conflict in dire terms: Wayne sees it as an insurgency and the PRC sees it as terrorism sponsored by 'outside forces'. The government has cited statistics reporting many thousands of separatist,[233] and hundreds of terrorist incidents since 1990.[234] However, Clarke has shown that with some exceptions, most of the reported incidents are more mundane crimes or protests that are portrayed as terrorism simply due to their connection with Xinjiang.[235] This tendency stems from two aims. To the outside world, the PRC wants to portray itself and its citizens as victims of widespread persistent Islamist terrorism. They hope that by invoking 'terrorism' they will gain uncritical sympathy from the international community. If separatist violence is perceived as terrorism then it is more likely to be considered inexcusable and deserving of harsh counter-measures than if it were seen as a struggle for religious and cultural freedom or even for political independence, in which case international views are more likely to be critical of the PRC policies that prompt such actions.

The timing of the spike in the Xinjiang conflict, following the Soviet fall until now, is due to a combination of factors. In the 1990s many of the outbreaks of tension and conflict arose from the fresh influx of Han to Xinjiang as well as income inequality and

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[233] 'Chinese government sources enumerate almost daily incidents of violence, while an as yet unreleased study by the RAND Corporation is said to have listed 3,000 instance of civil violence for the year 2000 alone.' S.F. Starr, op. cit., p. 15.
[234] 'China asserts that terrorists have killed over 160 people and injured 440 in more than 200 incidents between 1990 and 2001. M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 42.
[235] M.E. Clarke "China's 'war on terror' in Xinjiang: human security and the causes of violent Uighur separatism", *Regional Outlook Paper*, no. 11, 2007 (available at https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/18239/regional-outlook-volume-11.pdf). See also PRC State Council statement, 'East Turkistan terrorist forces cannot get away with impunity', State Council Information Office, 21 January 2002, viewed on 12 March 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm;

interference in the practice of Islam.[236] The new wave of migrants, and the work many of them performed, arose from the ODWC.

Uyghur grievances vary and there is no single united Uyghur separatist movement, although there are many Uyghur activists who use ethnicity and religion as grounds to argue for their own state, or for genuine autonomy.[237] Some Uyghur activists believe their people face the risk of cultural extinction, and are in the meantime suffering economic exploitation.[238] Since 1949, a major grievance of the Uyghurs related to discriminatory practices of state organs and companies in hiring, working and discipline conditions, which reinforces Uyghur consciousness and causes resentment against Han people.[239] Hiring discrimination includes both informal and formal discrimination. Informal discrimination includes cases where major companies use home town connections in choosing who to hire – which thus favours people from inner China (who are vastly more likely to be Han than not). This creates a near-monopoly for Han

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[236] R. Castets, 'Le mal-être des Ouïghours du Xinjiang' (The malaise of Xinjiang's Uyghurs), *Perspectives Chinoises*, no. 78, July-August 2003, p. 41; and M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 122.

[237] E. Van Wie Davis 'Governance in China in 2010', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 4, 2009, p. 204.

[238] N.A. Turkel [a diaspora Uyghur activist] prepared statement to the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, And Oversight, of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in a hearing on 'The Uyghurs: A History Of Persecution' 10 June 2009, http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/nury%20turkel%20testimony.pdf; and M.E. Herberg, prepared statement to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, published in the committee's report on related hearings *Energy trends in China and India: implications for the United States*, 26 July 2005, p. 32, viewed on 12 June 2016, https://books.google.com/books?id=NmZDzjKB3pEC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=2005+trends+in+china+and+india+united+states+se nate&source=bl&ots=t2hpEPqaar&sig=kQ4GFsSKvMNR3CGNMHN8uBD4Eiw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjCvvmp8qDN AhUKwBQKHffNA4gQ6AEIOzAH#v=onepage&q=2005%20trends%20in%20china%20and%20india%20united%20states%20s enate&f=false; and see J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic militants and the global terrorist threat*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, 2010, p. 44.

[239] 'Ethnic minorities: don't make yourself at home', *The Economist,* 17 January 2015, viewed on 05 June 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/china/21639555-uighurs-and-tibetans-feel-left-out-chinas-economic-boom-ethnic-discrimination-not

workers.[240] Informal discrimination could also include denying access to jobs because of a lack of Mandarin Chinese language skills. Formal discrimination is where – as observed as late as 2010 – large numbers of government and SOE jobs were formally reserved for Han people.[241] This discrimination occurred despite being explicitly forbidden by Chinese law.[242] Many Uyghurs find this kind of negative discrimination upsetting despite the existence of some positive discrimination policies such as lower entry requirements to undertake university studies.

Lack of a Coherent Militant Separatist Movement

Despite their shared grievances, Uyghurs have not established a coherent organised movement and most of the incidents labelled as 'separatist' have not been perpetrated by organisations.[243] Those groups that do exist disagree on whether to seek independence or merely genuine autonomy with the PRC; they also disagree over strategy, tactics, the role of Islam in their movements and their goals for the role of Islam in Xinjiang, and the legitimacy of the use of violence in pursuit of Uyghur and

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[240] B. Hopper and M. Webber, 'Migration, modernisation and ethnic estrangement: Uyghur migration to Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC' *Inner Asia*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2009, p. 194.
[241] United States Congressional-Executive Commission on China, website, 'Job discrimination against ethnic minorities continues in Xinjiang', 31 March 2011, viewed on 05 June 2016,
http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/job-discrimination-against-ethnic-minorities-continues-in-xinjiang
[242] In addition to general protections against ethnic discrimination found in Article 4 of the PRC constitution, the 1995 Labour Law of the PRC, article 12, states: 'Labourers shall not be discriminated against in employment due to their nationality, race, sex, or religious belief.' (PRC 'Labor Law of the People's Republic of China', 1995, [English translation posted on China.org.cn a website of the Chinese government operated under the auspices of the State Council Information Office] viewed on 05 June 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/living_in_china/abc/2009-07/15/content_18140508.htm
[243] J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic militants and the global terrorist threat*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, 2010, p. 44; M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 110.

other Turkic minority interests.[244] The bewildering number of militant organisations[245] that have existed, or do exist, is permanently in flux, with groups merging, splintering and collapsing.[246] This lack of a coherent Uyghur movement against the Chinese authorities has not stopped Beijing frequently claiming that incidents of minority discontent are the acts of organised separatist groups.[247]

In the mid-1990s the authorities realised there was a connection between jihadism and the conflict in Xinjiang. This led to a crackdown on Uyghur cadres who practiced Islam as well as grassroots organisations that were not firmly under CCP control.[248] There was certainly evidence to connect jihadism and violent separatist acts,[249] and this was made increasingly clear in Beijing's view of the problems in Xinjiang: '… in Beijing's perspective Uyghur national separatism and religious Islamic radicalism are closely connected, interdependent, and almost identical.'[250]

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[244] D. Lynch, 'The Xinjiang separatist movement at the center of the deadly China rail station attack', *International Business Times*, 01 March 2014, viewed on 12 September 2015, http://www.ibtimes.com/xinjiang-separatist-movement-center-deadly-china-rail-station-attack-1558767

[245] Reed and Raschke list no fewer than 27 organisations most of which had brief existences and few members: Allah Party of East Turkistan; Central Asian Uyghur Hizballah; Central Asian Uyghur Jihad Party; Committee for East Turkistan; East Turkestan Democratic Islamic Party; East Turkistan Gray Wolf Party; East Turkistan International Committee; East Turkistan Islamic Justice Party; East Turkistan Islamic Party of Allah; East Turkistan Islamic Resistance Movement; East Turkistan Liberation Organisation (ETLO); East Turkistan National Solidarity Union; East Turkestan Opposition Party; East Turkistan People's Party; Free Turkistan Movement; Home of the Youth; Islamic Holy Warriors; Islamic Reformist Party; Spark; Tigers of Lop Nor; Turkistan Party; United Committee of Uyghur Organisations; Uyghuristan People's Party; Uyghur Liberation Party; Uyghur National Army; Uyghur Youth Association of Kazakhstan; and Wolves of Lop Nor. J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, op. cit., pp. 36-41

[246] E. Van Wie Davis, 'Uyghur Muslim ethnic separatism in Xinjiang, China', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 1, 2008, p. 16.

[247] Clarke, M.E., 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', European Journal of East Asian Studies, vol. 12, 2013, p. 110.

[248] M. Dillon, op. cit., pp. 85-6.

[249] Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 122; and C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 178.

[250] Y. Shichor, op. cit., p. 123.

Before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, China's separatist violence in Xinjiang was often simply not reported; when it was reported it was described as hooliganism, sabotage and the work of Uyghur separatists.[251] After 9/11, the PRC changed its rhetoric on the separatist violence in Xinjiang to portray the problem as not stemming from indigenous causes, but from the spreading of jihadist terrorism from the Middle East to China's north-west. Xinjiang gained new focus in China and abroad for its role in Islamic–inspired terrorism.[252] The main groups the authorities currently blame are 'Turkestan Islamic Party' and 'East Turkestan Islamic Movement' (ETIM).[253] 'The ETIM is a terrorist organization that demands an independent fundamentalist Muslim state for the Uyghur ethnic minority in northwest China.'[254] ETIM was an obscure organisation until the US, in the wake of 9/11, blacklisted it, which raised it out of obscurity.[255] In the wake of 9/11, China too seeks to cast the insurgency in Xinjiang as the work of external instigators. In the mid-1990s, Western elements were blamed; later, and especially after 9/11, Islamist forces became a focal point. In reality, the conflict in Xinjiang is primarily an indigenous affair. Uyghurs have pursued the assistance of powerful external actors, Islamist and Western, yet this effort does not negate their primary intent: fighting the Chinese in Xinjiang.[256] Whether perpetrated by ETIM or other groups, violent separatist attacks continue to be conducted in and outside Xinjiang.

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[251] A.S. Ahmed, *The thistle and the drone: how America's War on Terror became a global war on tribal Islam* Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2013, p. 290

[252] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 5.

[253] T. Heberer, 'China in 2014: creating a new power and security architecture in domestic and foreign policies', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no.1, January/February 2015, p. 90.

[254] J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, op. cit., p. 46

[255] Ibid., p. 35

[256] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 23.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has set the scene for the current CCP strategy in Xinjiang. Taking the long view of history, over the past two millennia, Xinjiang has been under Chinese control for less than half the time.[257] In the early years, the Han, Sui and Tang Dynasties adopted a forward defence to pacify the western regions, but it was never enough to simply picquet the area with garrisons; the Qing empire concluded the region had to be transformed. Time and again occupying régimes found more and more resources, troops, infrastructure and Han settlers were required to secure China's back door.

To this day, Xinjiang's overall strategic importance has not declined, and in the age of oil and natural gas it has only grown. In the CCP's mind Xinjiang remains the linchpin of its western security over a back door for foreign powers and jihadism alike. But, the prospects for a successful Eastern Turkestan being recreated are extremely slim as the Uyghur opposition groups are divided and the neighbouring countries do not provide a sanctuary from which to mount militant activity.[258] Meanwhile as discussed in the following chapters, the CCP pursues its strategy of Sinicising Xinjiang through comprehensive encirclement with economic development in the lead.

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[257] It is difficult to calculate a specific figure for how long China has controlled Xinjiang. Xinjiang has often been divided. At times it has been under multiple régimes, and on many occasions Chinese rule has been indirect. Additionally, counting the Yuan Dynasty's control over Xinjiang as 'Chinese' is problematic for reasons discussed above. Thus there is no standard methodology for calculating 'Chinese control'. I believe counting the following periods as Xinjiang being under 'Chinese control' would be reasonable: 60 BC to AD 220 (280 years during the Han Dynasty), AD 618-907 (289 years during the Tang), 1271-1368 (97 years during the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty), 1755-1911 (156 years during the Manchu Qing Dynasty) and 1949 to the present (68 years); a total of 890 years. See O. Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and Inner Asian frontiers of China and Russia*, AMS, New York, 1950 (1975 reprint), p. 5.
[258] Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 133.

Chapter 3

The Economic and Demographic Dimension

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the most important aspect of Beijing's strategy in Xinjiang: the economic and demographic dimension. This chapter shows how by weight of numbers – the presence and economic activity of millions of Han people in Xinjiang – and through vast infrastructural development, the CCP aims to irreversibly transform Xinjiang making the region inherently more similar to, and better-integrated with, inner China.

Of all the Sinicising measures in the CCP's strategy, the one with the most tangible effect is the economic and demographic dimension which amounts to treating Xinjiang as an internal colony. Here 'internal' refers to Xinjiang being recognised as belonging to the territory of the PRC; 'colony' refers to 'a group of people who leave their native

country to form in a new land a settlement subject to, or connected with, the parent state'[259].

From the first days of acquiring Xinjiang as part of the PRC, the CCP settled large numbers of Han Chinese in Xinjiang. By their very presence, and their labour, these settlers have physically transformed the region through reclaiming great stretches of desert and building new cities and infrastructure that both remake Xinjiang in the image of inner China and link it to the Han heartland. The result has been to progressively surround Xinjiang's Turkic peoples with Han Chinese people and with the institutions, enterprises, language and cultural practices that come with them. These cities and infrastructural links emanate from inner China. They enable the indigenous population to be economically and demographically encircled.

Section 3.2 of this chapter discusses the motives related to the economic and demographic dimension. Section 3.3 covers the characteristics of this dimension – most notably the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) which is the chief instrument of this dimension of the Xinjiang strategy. Section 3.4 analyses the consequences of this dimension on the situation in Xinjiang.

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[259] Macquarie Dictionary entry for *colony*, viewed on 21 February 2016,
https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?word=colony&search_word_type=Dictionary

3.2 Motives Related to the Economic and Demographic Dimension

Beijing's overall motive is to achieve long-term control over, and stability in, Xinjiang. This goal goes beyond economic considerations, but Beijing has designed its economic and demographic policies to help achieve the strategic goal of fully securing Xinjiang. In terms of the economic and demographic dimension, the PRC's strategy in Xinjiang has three main motives: to Sinicise the region by settling large numbers of Han people there; to be able to use it as an energy corridor and energy base; and to draw ethnic minorities further into the Chinese economy.

Since 1949, Beijing has had reasonable grounds for concern about its ability to hold on to Xinjiang. Being so far from the Han heartland of inner-China, Xinjiang is an inherently more difficult region to secure and defend from outside threats. As seen in Chapter 2, there was never an instance of a Turkic government in Xinjiang seeking to place itself under Chinese rule. Whenever Xinjiang, or parts thereof, were brought under the control of inner-China's authorities it was through coercion resulting in either vassalage or direct military rule.

Xinjiang's remoteness and periodic waves of Uyghur restiveness that pre-date New China and continue to the present, combined with external threats, such as the Soviet Union, explain Beijing's concerns about maintaining control of its north-western flank.[260] With the fall of the Soviets, however, Beijing's concerns for Xinjiang's

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[260] At the dawn of the CCP's rule in Xinjiang, the Soviets had been supporting a break away Turkic republic – the Second ETR (1944-1949) in the northernmost three districts of Xinjiang.J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 214-6.

security shifted to the prospects of separatism aided by the newly independent neighbouring Central Asian states. Beijing was sufficiently concerned that "[i]n the summer of 1990, the PLA defined several of China's border areas as 'zones of uncertain control', and named Xinjiang as the 'zone of most uncertain control'."[261]

A lesson from history that the CCP appears to have drawn from the Qing Dynasty and earlier periods is that whether against Turkic or Russian threats, only Han people can be relied on to secure Xinjiang and keep it in the PRC. Had the CCP left Xinjiang the way it was in 1949 – populated almost entirely by Turkic Islamic peoples with no love for being subsumed into China, and bordered by Soviet troops – it would have meant forever risking its separation from China, and risking it being used as a back gate for Russian or other foreign interference. In other words, from Beijing's point of view, Xinjiang was inherently wild and unruly and transforming it through Sinicisation would be the best way to ultimately secure it.

Beijing saw large-scale Han migration as essential to Sinicising and securing Xinjiang. A CCP policy advisor, Ma Dazheng, said in 2003, 'Hans are the most reliable force for stability in Xinjiang.' [262] Ma's use of the term 'stability' here can be read as 'maintaining CCP control'. Populating Xinjiang with more Han people also helped to nullifying the Uyghur separatist cause. 'Long-term occupation is the basis of the

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[261] G. Christoffersen, 'Xinjiang and the great Islamic circle: the impact of transnational forces on Chinese regional economic planning', *China Quarterly*, no. 133, March 1993, p. 149. Christoffersen cites 'Private communication with Russian scholar, Honolulu, August 1990.'

[262] Ma Dazheng （马大正, 国家利益高于一切 新疆稳定问题的观察与思考 *Guojia liyi gaoyi yiqie – Xinjiang wending wenti de guancha yu sikao*） The national interest above all else: analysis and reflections on the problem of stability in Xinjiang, Peoples' Press, Urumqi, 2003, p. 123 and 234-5 cited in G. Bovingdon, Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent *Policy Studies* vol. 11, East-West Center, 2004, pp. 27-8 (available online at http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS011.pdf).

Uyghur claim to Xinjiang. Demographic change towards a Han majority in Xinjiang weakens such claims through a *fait accompli*.'[263] Considering the potential secession of Xinjiang in practical terms, it is one thing for a largely Uyghur region to separate from the PRC and form a Uyghur nation state; it is another for a region inhabited by millions of Han Chinese people to separate from China.

The motives of stability and development are intertwined. In 1998 the PRC's then president, Jiang Zemin, made it clear that development of Xinjiang was intended to nullify separatism and Islamism:

> 'Stability and development are the theme of Xinjiang's Work. While development is out of the question without stability, from a **long–term point of view it will be very difficult to maintain stability without development.** … Ethnic separatism and unlawful religious activities are the main dangers to the stability of Xinjiang, and we must take a clear-cut stand and resolutely combat them.'[264]

Cheng observes:

> 'The Chinese authorities have long believed that economic growth and higher living standards are the best ways to maintain domestic and regional stability. [Leading them to pour] subsidies and payment transfers into Xinjiang and Tibet to contain the ethnic unrest in these two autonomous regions.'[265]

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[263] T. Cliff, 'The partnership of stability in Xinjiang: state–society interactions following the July 2009 unrest', *The China Journal*, no. 68, July 2012, p. 82.

[264] *Xinjiang Daily*, 15 July 1998, pp. 1 and 3 cited in J.D. Seymour, 'Xinjiang's Production and Construction Corps, Sinification of Eastern Turkestan', *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000, p. 182, emphasis added.

[265] J.Y.S. Cheng, 'The Afghanistan situation and China's new approach to the SCO', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no. 2, March/April 2015, p. 347.

The Party calculates that by investing in Xinjiang, the Han settlers and many Uyghurs and others would benefit economically and acquiesce to the PRC's rule.[266] The Party claims and probably believes that by making minorities better off economically it could resolve the 'nationalities problem' and bring about stability in traditionally non–Han areas.[267] Therefore the Open and Develop the West Campaign (ODWC)[268] can be seen as an economic tool with a political purpose.[269] In short, the hope was that an injection of Han people and the construction of infrastructure would make minorities happier and more acquiescent and also result in a larger already-loyal Han population occupying the border region.

Regardless of the violence of the 1990s or the 2009 riots, the Party has not swerved from its belief that more development was not the cause of unrest but the solution to it. In the aftermath of the July 2009 riots in Urumqi, during a visit to Xinjiang, China's then president, Hu Jintao, said: 'the fundamental way to resolve the Xinjiang problem is to expedite development in Xinjiang.'[270] The following year, during a high-level 'central work conference' on Xinjiang's development the Party announced a range of new economic measures that aimed to address what it claimed was the key problem in the region – a gap between the growing needs of the people and the lack of development

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[266] M.R. Debata, *China's minorities: ethnic-religious separatism in Xinjiang*, Pentagon Press: New Delhi, 2007, p. 188.
[267] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 207; and, S. Tiezzi, 'The CCP's solution to China's 'ethnic issues'',
The Diplomat, 30 September 2014, viewed on 12 June 2016, http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/the-ccps-solution-to-chinas-ethnic-issues/
[268] In Chinese, the ODWC is *Xibu dakaifa* 西部大开发 which has been translated into English in many ways, including the Great Leap West and the Great Western Development Drive. Literally it means Western Region Great Opening and Development.
[269] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 206.
[270] Hu's speech was made between 22 and 25 August 2009. Shan Wei and Weng Cuifen, 'China's new policy in Xinjiang and its challenges', *East Asian Policy*, vol. 2, no. 3 July/September 2010, pp. 60-1.

in the region.[271] In 2012, the nation's then top security official said: 'leapfrog development and lasting stability should be taken as the key to dealing with challenges and problems in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.'[272]

The emphasis on resolving separatist challenges through economic development continues to the present day, with the 13th Five Year Plan (covering the period 2016 to 2020) including a chapter on economic development in border areas as a way of increasing stability. One Chinese academic commented in official media: "Border areas are always plagued by ethnic and poverty issues. Implementing opening up policies to develop their economies could help maintain social stability."[273] The recent Chinese government white paper on religious freedom in Xinjiang lists few concrete measures to prevent religious extremism but among them is economic development and poverty alleviation.[274]

Energy security

The CCP has an overriding desire to secure the north-western frontier of the PRC, but it also has an additional specific interest in securing access to the energy brought to

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[271] Xinhua News Agency, 'Chinese central authorities outline roadmap for Xinjiang's leapfrog development, lasting stability', *Xinhua News Agency* website, 20 May 2010, viewed on 12 June 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/20/c_13306534.htm
[272] Bai Tiantian, 'Growth in Xinjiang urged', *Global Times*, 25 October 2012, viewed on 12 June 2016, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/740462.shtml. The article quotes the then head of security organs for the CCP and member of the Politburo Standing Committee (who was subsequently convicted of corruption) Zhou Yongkang.
[273] Tian Xu, director of the China Society of Macroeconomics research centre quoted in Liu Xin, 'Nation vows frontier boom', *Global Times*, (hardcopy) 18 March 2016, p. 2.
[274] PRC State Council white paper on *Freedom of religious belief in Xinjiang,* State Council Information Office, viewed on 12 June 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7238246.htm. See section VI for preventative measures.

inner China from Central Asia and Xinjiang and even further afield. In terms of China's energy security, Xinjiang plays two roles: it is a producer of energy resources including natural gas, oil and coal; and, a crucial transit corridor of energy resources.[275] In terms of energy sources and trade, Xinjiang is not only a gate to Central Asia, but to south Asia and Europe.[276] The need for energy security has become more acute as the Chinese economy has grown and become more oil dependent.[277] Achieving energy security is a key element in China's economic modernisation strategy.[278] This demand for oil, and the precarious nature of China's main supply – via tanker ships coming from the unstable Middle East – has led to China urgently developing alternative sources and routes for the importation of oil.[279] Over Xinjiang's history, more than once, a garrison of Han Chinese troops needed to develop farms and roads to sustain themselves. But with the advent of modern types of energy sources, exploiting them has become in itself a major purpose to garrison the region.

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[275] A. Atli, 'The role of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the Energy Security of China', *Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies* (OAKA), vol. 6, issue 11, 2011, International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK) [Turkey], pp. 123 and 130.

[276] J. Holslag, 'China's roads to influence', *Asian Survey*, vol. 50, no. 4, July/August 2010, p. 646.

[277] M.E. Herberg, prepared statement to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, published in the committee's report on related hearings *Energy trends in China and India: implications for the United States*, 26 July 2005, p., 32, viewed on 12 June 2016, https://books.google.com/books?id=NmZDzjKB3pEC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=2005+trends+in+china+and+india+united+states+senate&source=bl&ots=t2hpEPqaar&sig=kQ4GFsSKvMNR3CGNMHN8uBD4Eiw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjCvvmp8qDNAhUKwBQKHffNA4gQ6AEIOzAH#v=onepage&q=2005%20trends%20in%20china%20and%20india%20united%20states%20senate&f=false

[278] K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 218.

[279] M.E. Herberg, prepared statement to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, published in the committee's report on related hearings *Energy trends in China and India: implications for the United States*, 26 July 2005, p., 33, viewed on 12 June 2016, https://books.google.com/books?id=NmZDzjKB3pEC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=2005+trends+in+china+and+india+united+states+senate&source=bl&ots=t2hpEPqaar&sig=kQ4GFsSKvMNR3CGNMHN8uBD4Eiw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjCvvmp8qDNAhUKwBQKHffNA4gQ6AEIOzAH#v=onepage&q=2005%20trends%20in%20china%20and%20india%20united%20states%20senate&f=false

Territorial integrity and prestige are important to China, but the hydrocarbon era has made securing Xinjiang more important to China than ever before. Understanding that energy security is such an important goal helps explain why so much of Xinjiang's economic development has focussed on infrastructure development that is directly or closely related to energy supply such as oil and gas pipelines and railways and highways, rather than programs directly related to poverty alleviation amongst ethnic minorities.

Xinjiang is also gateway for foreign trade with potential for growth and for increasing China's influence in Central Asia. Although currently Xinjiang does not play a large role in China's overall foreign trade, it is the most economically important region in China's west, its foreign trade is growing and China has plans to expand it greatly, allowing China to diversify its trade from being almost exclusively maritime based to being overland too. There are already rail links between China and Kazakhstan through Xinjiang.[280] China is planning rail links – which currently go from the east of the country to Xinjiang, to continue to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and ultimately Iran.[281]

The development of Xinjiang's economy has been largely determined by its geography, and the path of development has been bound up with the political and military struggles in the region. From an economic standpoint, Xinjiang's has two opposing

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[280] R. Nurshayeva, "Kazakhs launch 'Silk Road' China-Europe rail route", *Reuters*, 10 June 2013, viewed on 21 February 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-kazakhstan-railway-idUSBRE9590GH20130610

[281] A. Atli, 'The role of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the Energy Security of China', *Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies* (OAKA), vol. 6, issue 11, 2011, International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK) [Turkey], pp. 128-9; and Zheng Yanpeng New rail route proposed from Urumqi to Iran', *China Daily*, 21 November 2015, viewed on 21 February 2016, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/21/content_22506412.htm

characteristics: remoteness from inner China and access to energy resources. By settling Han people in large numbers in Xinjiang, the problem of remoteness could be addressed. The transportation of energy from Central Asia via pipelines, and the extraction of energy sources from Xinjiang both require a technically proficient and docile workforce and – in the eyes of the Party – the Han migrants offered both.

3.3 Characteristics of the Economic and Demographic Dimension

I characterise the economic and demographic dimension of the CCP strategy in Xinjiang as 'internal colonisation'. This colonisation creates large pockets of Han people concentrated in cities. The cities of Xinjiang are economic, transportation and military-basing nodes. Each such concentration of Han settlers, on its own, can be viewed as a penetration in a landscape that has a widespread low-density population of Uyghurs and other Turks. However, as the concentrations are at critical strategic nodes the overall effect is one of encirclement.

The chief instrument of this internal colonisation is the XPCC. In 1997, Xinhua, China's official news agency said: "[The XPCC is a] 'shock brigade in building socialism' whose workers stand 'with rifle in one hand and hoe in the other'."[282] This shock brigade follows in the footsteps of the earlier imperial farming colonies. The use of farming as a vehicle of colonisation is common in world history. The use of farming

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[282] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 195, citing Xinhua News Agency in 1997.

to support military garrisons was common in Xinjiang's history.[283] What was new about the XPCC is that it was not farming to support an army, it was using an army to transform the land.

Of all the institutions involved in the CCP's Xinjiang strategy, the XPCC is probably the single most important, distinctive and telling. The Corps enabled large numbers of Han Chinese to move from inner China and settle in Xinjiang. The great majority of the first wave of migrants (in the 1950s) and many of the later migrants were organised into the paramilitary farming colonies of the XPCC which undertake land reclamation and other infrastructure building. As a large agro-industrial conglomerate organised along para-military lines it fulfils the economic and demographic aspect of Beijing's strategy by providing work and housing to Han migrants. It was also a key element in Beijing's ability to secure Xinjiang.[284] For this reason, in this chapter, I will focus on the XPCC's economic and demographic role, and then discuss its security role in Chapter 5.

The XPCC has always been heavily Han dominated and started with demobilised soldiers.[285] In 1950 as the Communist and Nationalist troops and some Muslim troops were demobilised from the Chinese Civil War, many remained lightly armed and were told to deploy to the fringes of wastelands near the main oases of Xinjiang to reclaim land and conserve water.[286] In 1954, two military logistical organisations were merged

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[283] J.D. Seymour, 'Xinjiang's Production and Construction Corps, Sinification of Eastern Turkestan', *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000, p. 188.
[284] M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 118.
[285] J.D. Seymour, op. cit., p. 172.
[286] D.H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist power and policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979, p. 47; C. Tyler, *Wild west China: the taming of Xinjiang*, Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004, pp. 134-5.

to become the XPCC and absorb over 200,000 former soldiers.[287] They were allocated to regiment-farms and charged with land reclamation, defending the border and domestic riot control.[288] To this day, the XPCC maintains its paramilitary nature.[289]

Although technically the XPCC reports to both the XUAR government and the central government, it has a great deal of autonomy and the XUAR authorities' control over the Corps is quite weak. The Corps is so powerful that sometimes businesses that wish to invest in the region find the XPCC's participation, or assent, to be more important prerequisites to commercial success than the permission of the XUAR government.[290]

The XPCC's structure and scale make it well suited to colonisation. The Corps has a population of over 2.7 million (88 per cent Han) and constituting around 13 per cent of the XUAR's total population and a third of its Han people.[291] Of those 2.7 million, the Chinese government states that 1.2 million are employees, the remainder includes students, prisoners, other dependents and possibly militia.[292] The Corps owns about one third of Xinjiang's arable land. It manages hundreds of farming and manufacturing

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[287] J.D. Seymour, op. cit., p. 172.

[288] C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 134-5.

[289] Xinhua News Agency, 'China focus: six decades on, mysterious border corps opens up', 23 September 2015, viewed on 17 June 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/china/Off_the_Wire/2015-09/23/content_36655092.htm

[290] Shichor, Y., 'Company province: civil military relations in Xinjiang', pp. 123-137 in Nan Li (ed.), Chinese civil-military relations: the transformation of the People's Liberation Army, Routledge, London, 2006, p. 131.

[291] Writing in 2004, Becquelin stated the XPCC was 2.48 million strong. N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, pp. 366-7; and Shepard gives the figure of 2.7 million in 2015, W. Shepard, 'The complex impact of urbanization in Xinjiang', *The Diplomat*, 16 December 2015, viewed on 23 February 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/

[292] In the October of 2014 the government gave the figure of 2,701,400 total population of the XPCC, and states that there were 1,253,400 employees, and from primary to tertiary education 481,300 students, presumably leaving approximately 966,700 people as dependents, prisoners and possibly militia. PRC State Council, *The history and development of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps*, State Council Information Office, 05 October 2014, viewed on 12 July 2017, http://en.theorychina.org/chinatoday_2483/whitebooks/201501/t20150105_316555.shtml.

regiments as well as transport and other commercial units.[293] It is much more than an enormous agro–industrial conglomerate operating farms, factories, forests, mines, canals, water reservoirs and land reclamation sites, and transport infrastructure. It incorporates almost all the functions of a small state: it has a healthcare system with hospitals and laboratories a welfare system with its own pension funds and a justice system[294] with its own police, courts, prisons and labour camps.[295]

The existence of the XPCC means that no matter how much 'autonomy' the region may have, the central government as unfettered control over a large and relatively easily mobilisable part of the population that is explicitly paramilitary in nature. No other part of the PRC has millions of paramilitary-colonists at work. In 1998, President Jiang Zemin said: 'The corps is an important force both for developing and building Xinjiang and for maintaining national unity and consolidating the unification of the motherland.'[296]

In the 1950s and 60s the XPCC played the leading role in settling migrants in Xinjiang.[297] In the 1980s the migration was much more self-initiated as labour markets in eastern China became saturated in the wake of Deng's Reform and Opening policies.[298] But in the 1990s the XPCC again played an important role in this population

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[293] N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 367.
[294] Ibid., pp. 366-7.
[295] J.D. Seymour, op. cit., p. 187; and, C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 194-5.
[296] Jiang Zemin quoted in Xinjiang Daily, 15 July 1998, pp. 1 and 3 cited in J.D. Seymour, 'Xinjiang's Production and Construction Corps, Sinification of Eastern Turkestan', *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000, p. 182.
[297] N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 366 and 369.
[298] A. Howell and C.C. Fan, 'Migration and inequality in Xinjiang: a survey of Han and Uyghur migrants in Urumqi', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, vol. 52, no. 1, pp. 120-1.

shift.[299] In the 1990s, the XPCC itself grew by nearly 300,000 personnel.[300] The previous and ongoing work of the XPCC, such as transportation and city building, also paved the way for other Han settlers to arrive. During the 1990s many of the settlers came as part of a huge development initiative which was officially launched later (in 1999) and called the Open and Develop the West Campaign. In Xinjiang, the ODWC was mainly intended to use economic development to bolster national unity and security; state-building was the aim, economic development was the means.[301] The priority of spending in Xinjiang by the government and SOEs has not focussed on winning over the Uyghur population, but rather to entice Han people to move to the region. 'That means privileging Han people and Han ways of doing things.'[302] It was also a fresh wave of internal colonialism.[303]

Given the non-business demands on the Corps it is no surprise that it is vastly unprofitable and therefore in the early 2000s its budget was subsidised by up to 80 per cent.[304] The XPCC is akin to a gigantic, bloated, ageing and unproductive state owned enterprise.[305] A major reason for subsidising such an organisation is the political, social and security advantages it brings to the restive region, but it must be kept in mind, that inefficient SOEs are a phenomenon throughout the PRC. This means it is difficult to determine to what extent the XPCC is economically inefficient because of its

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[299] N. Becquelin, op. cit., p. 369.
[300] Ibid., p. 369.
[301] Ibid., p. 362; and, J. Holslag, 'China's roads to influence', *Asian Survey*, vol. 50, no. 4, July/August 2010, p. 650.
[302] T. Cliff, 'The partnership of stability in Xinjiang: state–society interactions following the July 2009 unrest', *The China Journal*, no. 68, July 2012, p. 104.
[303] Goodman compares the ODWC to colonial experience elsewhere in the world. D.S.G. Goodman, "The Campaign to 'Open up the West': National, Provincial-Level and Local Perspectives", *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 327.
[304] R. Castets, 'Le mal-être des Ouïghours du Xinjiang' (The malaise of Xinjiang's Uyghurs), *Perspectives Chinoises*, no. 78, July-August 2003, p. 35.
[305] N. Becquelin, op. cit., p. 367.

non-business activities, and to what extent it is inefficient simply due to being akin to an SOE.

Besides the role of the XPCC in Xinjiang's economy, Xinjiang has also been subsidised by the national government and heavily dominated by the public sector. Xinjiang has been heavily subsidised for the last 60 years.[306] Additionally, its economy is dominated by heavy industry and 80 per cent of its heavy industrial assets are controlled by state owned enterprises.[307] A 2010 study of the Chinese economy showed across the following three measures, comparing provincial-level administrative units, Xinjiang was consistently near the top the list:

(1) SOE share of urban employment – 48 per cent, equal third highest[308];

(2) SOE share of urban fixed investment – 47 per cent, equal fourth highest[309] and,

(3) SOE share of VAT (value added tax [equivalent to GST]) and other business taxes/charges – 88 percent, second highest[310]. Between the XPCC, the large state subsidies and heavy presence of SOEs, the dominance of the state sector in Xinjiang is evident and helps demonstrate in empirical terms the economic aspect of internal colonialism in Xinjiang.

[306] PRC State Council, white paper on *Historical witness to ethnic equality, unity and development in Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, September 2015, viewed on 10 March 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2015-09/24/content_36670259.htm

[307] In addition to heavy direct subsidies from the central government to the XUAR government, heavy industry accounts for two thirds of the regional economy, and 80 per cent of the industrial assets in the region are SOEs these sentenecs are largely identical to the sentence in the body text and cane be deleted., see N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 362.

[308] These data are from the National Bureau of Statistics of China, cited in A. Szamosszegi and C. Kyle, *An analysis of state-owned enterprises and state capitalism in China*, a report for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 26 October 2011, viewed on 3 February 2016, http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/10_26_11_CapitalTradeSOEStudy.pdf, table IV-1, p. 27.

[309] Ibid., table IV-2, p. 28.

[310] Ibid., table IV-3, p. 29.

3.4 Consequences of the Economic and Demographic Dimension

Encirclement through migration

It is difficult to obtain reliable data on the population figures of Xinjiang's various ethnicities. One trend of Chinese government statistics about Xinjiang appears to be the general understatement of Han numbers.[311] A further difficulty is that many of the Han people in Xinjiang are migrant workers – many of whom are seasonal labourers. These people are generally not included in the population figures for Xinjiang, but they make up a large share of the workers benefiting from the development of the region. Also excluded are serving members of the full-time security forces – PLA and PAP.[312]

In 1949 around 6 per cent of Xinjiang's population was Han and the vast majority of the population was Uyghur.[313] Han resettlement especially of Han youths led to numerical parity between Han and Uyghurs by 1966.[314] During the 1980s, however the Han population as a percentage of Xinjiang's population shrank – probably due to a faster higher birth rate amongst minorities. In the 1990s a new wave of Han migrants again shifted the balance to an unprecedented level taking the share of non-Han peoples below

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[311] N. Becquelin, op. cit., p. 368.
[312] N. Becquelin, op. cit., p. 368.
[313] D. O'Brien, 'An exploration of the Han Chinese as political actors in Xinjiang' pp. 15-23% in Hayes, A. and M.E. Clarke (eds.), *Inside Xinjiang: space, place and power in China's Muslim far northwest*, (Kindle edition) Routledge, 2015, p. 15%; and, M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 117. Clarke gives a 1955 figure of up to 75 per cent of Xinjiang's population being Uyghur. See also Jin Yunhui (ed.), *Xinjiang jingji yu shehui fazhan gaishu* 新疆经济与社会发展概述 (A general survey of economic and social development in Xinjiang) (*Minzu chubanshe* 民族出版社, Beijing, 1998), pp. 205–6. cited in Yuan-Kang Wang (2001) 'Toward a synthesis of the theories of peripheral nationalism: a comparative study of China's Xinjiang and Guangdong', *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 2, no. 2, 177-195, figure 2, p. 184.
[314] D.H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist power and policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979, p. 311.

60 per cent for the first time in history. According to Chinese official media reports from 2001, during the 1990s Xinjiang's overall population grew by over 27 per cent, a rate higher than any other province, and the main reason given was migration.[315] Figure 3 shows the stark increase in the Han population as a share of the total between 1949 and 1995 according to figures from a PRC academic – which probably understate the reality.

Figure 3: Ethnic Composition in Xinjiang 1949 and 1995[316]
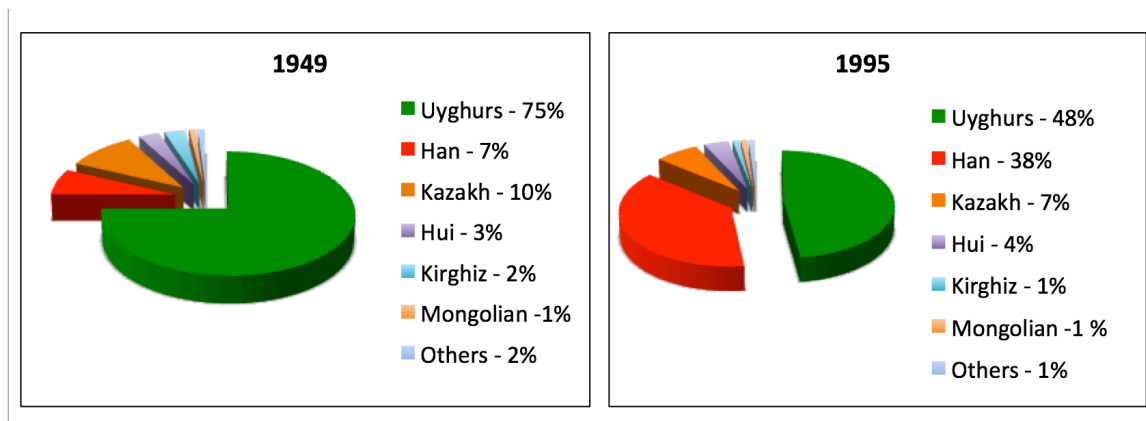
In 68 years, within the space of just a few generations, the Uyghurs have gone from being an outright majority ethnicity (in the region) to being either the largest or the second largest plurality (the Han may be the largest plurality in Xinjiang, but the statistics are unclear due to the exclusion of the PLA, the PAP and the large floating

[315] Xinhua, *Renkou zengfuda – liudong shi zhuyin* "人口增幅大 － 流动是主因" ("Great rise in population: migration is the main factor"), 3 April 2001 cited in N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', China Quarterly, no. 178, June 2004, p. 369; see also People's Daily, '*Diwuci renkoupucha zhuyao shuju di'erhao gongbao gongbu* 第五次人口普查主要数据第二号公报公布 'The fifth [national] census main numbers, announcement number 2, 3 April 2001, viewed on 15 Oct 2016, http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20010403/431575.html
[316] Jin Yunhui (ed.), *Xinjiang jingji yu shehui fazhan gaishu* 新疆经济与社会发展概述 (A general survey of economic and social development in Xinjiang) (*Minzu chubanshe* 民族出版社, Beijing, 1998), pp. 205–6. cited in Yuan-Kang Wang (2001) 'Toward a synthesis of the theories of peripheral nationalism: a comparative study of China's Xinjiang and Guangdong', *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 2, no. 2, 177-195, figure 2, p. 184 (adapted to become a coloured, exploded pie chart by me).

Han migrant labourer population in Xinjiang). Gardiner Bovingdon's book title –
Uyghurs: Strangers in their Own Land encapsulates neatly how many Uyghurs must
feel. This is encirclement on a regional level in that Xinjiang had been around 88 per
cent Turkic but is now nearly half Han (combining Han and Hui gives around 42 per
cent). In practice, though, the migration has played out as a development of pockets of
Han people throughout region amounting to demographic encirclement.

Encirclement through urbanisation

Two types of urbanisation have taken place in Xinjiang. The first is where new cities or
new extensions to old cities are built – mainly to house Han people, since Uyghurs and
other Turkic people have been slower to urbanise.[317] As the XPCC boasts: 'We've made
towns and cities where there was nothing but a vast wasteland, blank spots on a map.'[318]
No better example of this can be found than Shihezi, a city founded in the 1950s on a
bare steppe on the verge of the Gobi Desert in northern Xinjiang. As Chinese official
media put it:

> 'As a city designed and built by the army, Shihezi is a successful example of best
> practice in developing and protecting a border area by stationing troops there with
> a mission to cultivate and develop the area as well as guarding the frontier.'[319]

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[317] Huhua Cao, 'Urban-rural income disparity and urbanization: what is the role of spatial distribution of
ethnic groups? A case study of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in western China',
Regional Studies, vol 44, no. 8, 2010, p. 977.
[318] Wang Guizhen deputy commissar of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps cited in
N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', *Harvard International Review*,
vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, p. 40.
[319] Wang Qian, "Shihezi a 'shining pearl in the Gobi Desert'" [a news item posted on China.org.cn a
website of the Chinese government operated under the auspices of the State Council Information Office
written by Wang Qian credited as a staff writer] 3 October 2004, viewed on 15 June 2016,
http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Oct/108620.htm

Indeed, Shehezi has grown into a modern city of over half a million people. It has a per capita GDP six times greater than the largely-Uyghur city of Kashgar.[320] Such cities encircle the Uyghurs by being dotted around the region. They are linked by growing, modern transportation infrastructure and communications, thereby creating new, inter-linked Han spaces that penetrate the region.

But the second type of urbanisation has a more direct and unsettling effect on ethnic minorities and can help break up potential centres for resistance to the CCP's strategy. In Xinjiang, urbanisation has led to old dwellings being razed to make way for new apartment buildings. Sometimes these are built in imitation of the original architecture. The encircling effect of this type of urbanisation is more subtle; it breaks up traditional communities and families and ways of life. Churchill's observation that 'We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us'[321] is just as true for residential areas and cities.

The most well-known case of the second type of urbanisation in Xinjiang is the rebuilding of the 'old city' in Kashgar. The authorities had claimed, and with some justification, that the old arrangements were unsafe, unhygienic and resulted in poverty. But when the old dwellings were demolished the Uyghurs who had lived there were resettled to the outskirts of the city in apartment block towers. Superficially, this can be portrayed as being to the benefit of the Uyghurs, but it eliminated a cultural bastion.

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[320] A. Cappelletti, 'Socio-economic disparities and development gap in Xinjiang: the cases of Kashgar and Shihezi', pp. 52-63% in Hayes, A. and M.E. Clarke (eds.), *Inside Xinjiang: space, place and power in China's Muslim far northwest*, (Kindle edition) Routledge, 2015.
[321] Churchill speaking in October 1943 in the debate on rebuilding the chamber of the House of Commons. Website of the UK Parliament, viewed on 23 February 2016, http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/building/palace/architecture/palacestructure/churchill/

The change broke up old relationships and ways of living. Many of the residents felt they were losing not just their home, and their old neighbours, but also their culture.[322]

Overall, however, urbanisation is much more a Han phenomenon than it is a non-Han one; and the Han have accordingly reaped much more of the economic benefits that come with it. In 2000, of China's 31 provincial level jurisdictions, Xinjiang was ranked 13th highest in GDP per capita, but 4th highest urban-rural income gap.[323] In 2000 in Xinjiang, the urbanisation rate for Han people was 54%, but as low as 19 per cent for Uyghurs.[324] Whereas Han people are concentrated in cities, especially in more developed areas such as the north-east of Xinjiang. For historical, cultural and economic reasons most Uyghurs live in the less-developed countryside.[325] This helps explain how segregated the Han and Uyghurs are despite the large migration of Han people since 1949. It also partly explains the wealth disparity between the Han and minority groups in Xinjiang. For cultural reasons, the Uyghurs tend to remain in agricultural work and live in country areas, but the government's spending is heavily skewed to urban areas thus exacerbating the gap in urban-rural income gap in Xinjiang.[326]

The demographic tendency of the Han to concentrate in new urban areas is helpful to the Party's strategy in Xinjiang in ways that an alternative distribution would not be. By concentrating in cities, Han people are able to bring their culture with them. If they

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[322] W. Shepard, 'The complex impact of urbanization in Xinjiang', *The Diplomat*, 16 December 2015, on 23 February 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/
[323] Huhua Cao, 'Urban-rural income disparity and urbanization: what is the role of spatial distribution of ethnic groups? A case study of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in western China', *Regional Studies*, vol 44, no. 8, 2010, table 1, p. 968.
[324] Ibid., p. 977.
[325] Ibid., p. 968.
[326] Ibid., p. 979.

were living side-by-side Uyghurs there is a greater chance they would lose their cultural identity by adapting to their surroundings. Instead, by concentrating in large numbers they adapt their surroundings to their culture. Additionally, by being concentrated the Han people are more easily monitored, organised and protected by the authorities. In a case where they are called upon to act as a militia, it is much easier to do so if they are close to centres of PLA and PAP power. Furthermore, had an alternative population distribution been pursued in the 1950s, where Han people were made to live scattered in the countryside in traditional Uyghur rural areas, there would have been a sudden and obvious cultural shock and could have provoked violent unrest. In the case of such unrest the advantage may well have gone to the side that had a better understanding of the local physical environment. By concentrating in cities, the demographic effect is of a Han encirclement at a regional level that is not as obvious and confronting to those who live in the rural environment – the bulk of the Uyghurs.

One of the few positives in terms of demographics for the Uyghurs (along with all China's minorities) has been their greater reproductive freedoms with city-dwellers allowed two children and country-dwellers three, or in some cases more. This may seem odd since the CCP's strategy calls for demographic encirclement, but the aim of increasing the number of Han people in Xinjiang and reducing the number of Uyghurs as a proportion of Xinjiang's population does not mean reducing the raw number of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, it just means encircling them with a growing number of Han people who are strategically placed. Indeed, there have been cases of adjustments made in family planning rules to re-balance in favour of Han people. From 2012 Han people in southern Xinjiang were allowed to have two children and there has been an increase

in enforcement of rules limiting the births of minorities in Xinjiang. One of the motivations for these changes was concerns about Uyghurs outnumbering Han people in some areas.[327] Since the adoption of the two-child policy for Han people in 2016, the relative advantage given to ethnic minorities by this particular measure of positive discrimination has been considerably reduced.[328] One might wonder why the authorities had not simply limited the birth of Uyghurs through the one child policy. Had they done so this would have been in contradiction to the national policy that allowed minorities to have two, and in some cases, three children per married couple. More importantly, it might have raised suspicions that the PRC had an assimilationist policy in relation to its minorities in general or the Uyghurs in particular. It is also worth noting that during the life time of the one child policy, Hans who married minorities were also allowed to have more than one child.[329]

Encirclement through infrastructure

Since 1949, land reclamation and other infrastructure have tangibly transformed Xinjiang. Although land reclamation had been a measure frequently adopted by Beijing to attempt to transform Xinjiang, until the XPCC most reclamation attempts had been

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[327] 'Family planning in Xinjiang: Remote control – the government is trying to limit Muslim births', *The Economist*, 7 November 2015, viewed on 10 July 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/china/21678007-government-xinjiang-trying-limit-muslim-births-remote-control?zid=306&ah=1b164dbd43b0cb27ba0d4c3b12a5e227.
[328] Xinhua News Agency, 'New laws take effect, two-child policy realized', viewed on 06 July 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-01/01/c_134970010.htm)
[329] Ma Ying, ''Sixty years of backwardness and suffering', *National Post* (a Canadian newspaper) 29 Sep 2009, viewed on 12 July 2017, https://search-proquest-com.wwwproxy1.library.unsw.edu.au/docview/330892103?accountid=12763&rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo.

total failures.[330] But the vast size of the XPCC puts it in a stand-alone category: 'From the early 1950s into the early 1960s, the amount of total arable land in the province tripled to 3.2 million hectares.'[331] There has been a large increase in the number of Xinjiang cross–border road and rail links and oil and gas pipelines.[332] This is a logical approach as better road, rail and air access to remote regions makes it easier to grow other aspects of the economy.

Some observers however believe that even transportation infrastructure is aimed more at addressing security vulnerabilities than boosting the region's economy. Indeed the ministry of Transport's National Highway Network Planning Study of 2004 mentions the need to build the transportation system so as to allow the rapid deployment of PLA throughout the country.[333] Comparing Qing and CCP rule Millward and Purdue say: 'Then as now, investment in the region's infrastructure was shaped more by security concerns than by calculations of economic profitability.'[334] Regardless of which motivation is greater, building these infrastructure connections both helps to tie outlying regions more closely with the economy of inner China and allow faster deployment of security forces to trouble spots.

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[330] J.C. Kinzley, *Staking claims to China's borderland: oil, ores and statebuilding in Xinjiang Province, 1893-1964*, PhD thesis, University of California San Diego, 2012, p. 17, available at http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3p7432md#page-375
[331] Ibid., p. 18.
[332] J. Holslag, 'China's roads to influence', *Asian Survey*, vol. 50, no. 4, July/August 2010, pp. 646-7 and 648.
[333] Ibid., pp. 641-62, and pp. 656-7.
[334] J.A. Millward and P.C. Perdue, 'Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 58.

One striking example of the effect of the overall development of Xinjiang, and the developments related to OBOR's Belt is the creation of the Horgos Special Economic Zone (SEZ) straddling the Kazakh-PRC border in north-western Xinjiang. Until 2014, Horgos was a small dusty town. It was first connected by road to Urumqi in the 1930s thanks to Soviet money.[335] But in June 2014 Horgos was upgraded to a municipality, allocated over US $3 billion in central government money, and enjoyed a a hundredfold increase in land area.[336] Horgos suddenly became the largest land port in north-west China.[337] The Horgos SEZ is China's only international SEZ with territory in in Xinjiang and Kazakhstan.[338] Horgos is but one example of small townships being utterly transformed by infrastructure development and urbanisation in Xinjiang. The result is the transformation of yet another place in Xinjiang from a quiet town inhabited Kazakh minority people into a major transportation node flooded with Han Chinese labourers. Without physically moving, those Kazakhs have gone from being on the fringe of Han China to being surrounded by it – this is what demographic and infrastructural encirclement looks like at a local level.

Uyghur discontent and resilience

Although developing the north-west was partly aimed at alleviating poverty amongst ethnic minorities, this form of economic development has given rise to inequality and

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[335] C. Wiemer, 'The Economy of Xinjiang' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 167.

[336] W. Shepard, 'The complex impact of urbanization in Xinjiang', *The Diplomat*, 16 December 2015, viewed on 23 February 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/

[337] Cui Jia and Gao Bo New Xinjiang border city of Horgos gets green light 12 July 2014, *China Daily USA*, viewed on 23 February 2016, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-07/12/content_17767661.htm

[338] Ibid.

the perception of unfairness. Extracting natural resources from Xinjiang to send them to inner-China, and giving local jobs such as the construction of large infrastructure including highways and pipelines to growing numbers of Han people, gives rise to more of the very discontent the Party hoped would be alleviated by development.[339] Put simply, one of the greatest grievances of Uyghur groups is the colonial nature of the economy, with the best jobs taken by Han and profits returned to inner China.[340] Even if they make progress in absolute terms, Uyghurs complain that they do not benefit from Xinjiang's economic development to the extent Han people do.[341] The effects are not limited to income and employment but to quality of life too. According to census figures from 1990, the infant mortality rate amongst ethnic minorities in Xinjiang was 3.6 times greater than amongst Han in the same region. Life expectancy was 63 years for Uyghurs and 71 years for Han there.[342]

In the 1950s with so few Uyghurs having education suitable as senior administrators or technical jobs, it was a simple matter to integrate those who did in the Han–dominated system. Any who were qualified and desired such posts could easily be accommodated and they would remain only a tiny minority within the Han administrative system. But,

[339] A. Atli, 'The role of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the Energy Security of China', *Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies* (OAKA), vol. 6, issue 11, 2011, International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK) [Turkey], pp. 120-1; E. Van Wie Davis, 'Uyghur Muslim ethnic separatism in Xinjiang, China', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 1, 2008, p. 20; and, E. Van Wie Davis 'Governance in China in 2010', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 4, 2009, p. 206.
[340] R. Castets, 'Le mal-être des Ouïghours du Xinjiang' (The malaise of Xinjiang's Uyghurs), *Perspectives Chinoises*, no. 78, July-August 2003, p. 35; and, D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 118; and, E. Wong, 'China invests in region rich in oil, coal and also strife', *New York Times*, 20 December 2014, viewed on 12 January 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/world/asia/china-invests-in-xinjiang-region-rich-in-oil-coal-and-also-strife.html?_r=0
[341] D.C. Gladney and V. Raymond, 'La question Ouïgour: Entre islamisation et ethnicisation' (The Uyghur question: between Islamisation and ethnicisation) *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 59, no. 5/6, September-December 2004, p. 1180.
[342] R. Castets, op. cit., p. 36.

with the reform and opening up era and a significant increase in the number of ethnic minorities with such qualifications, it became impossible for them to all be accommodated in a Han-dominated institutions.[343]

'Few of the benefits of the Great Leap West seem to be going to the native people.'[344] (The ODWC is also known as the Great Leap West.) Income and employment differences between Han and Turkic peoples during the period 1982 to 1990 in Xinjiang were significant, even once geographical differences were taken into account. This situation worsened over this period. This indicates that the changes in Xinjiang's economy were skewed to give the Han greater benefits than the minorities.[345] A 2014 study of 2005 data found that amongst Xinjiang's workers, on average, Uyghurs earnt 66 per cent of what the Han do.[346] There is also disproportionate Han representation in preferred jobs such as state companies' 'staff and worker' category, which includes white and blue collar work.[347]

In Xinjiang's case, Han people usually have more education and skills and may be more willing to do less prestigious work.[348] Whereas Uyghurs may be inclined to avoid

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[343] Ibid., p. 37.

[344] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 215; and, W. Shepard, 'The complex impact of urbanization in Xinjiang', *The Diplomat*, 16 December 2015, viewed on 23 February 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/

[345] E. Hannum and Yu Xie, "Ethnic Stratification in Northwest China: Occupational Differences between Han Chinese and National Minorities in Xinjiang, 1982-1990", *Demography*, vol. 35, no. 3, August, 1998, pp. 332-3.

[346] Xiaogang Wu and Xi Song, 'Ethnic stratification amid China's economic transition: evidence from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region', *Social Science Research*, vol. 44, 2014, p.168, table 5. see also W. Shepard, 'The complex impact of urbanization in Xinjiang', *The Diplomat*, 16 December 2015, viewed on 23 February 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/

[347] C. Wiemer, 'The Economy of Xinjiang' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 179. Staff and worker in Chinese is *zhigong* 职工.

[348] H.H. Lai, 'China's western development program: its rationale, implementation, and prospects', *Modern China*, vol. 28 no. 4, October 2002, p. 460.

commercial relations with Han people.[349] But skills shortfalls are only part of the picture. Contracts for construction in Xinjiang are given to commercial companies from inner China.[350] A major avenue for seeking jobs on such projects is through the Han hometown network, creating a near-monopoly for Han workers.[351] Even the small private enterprise environment is skewed towards the Han. Minority peoples find the licences and approvals process to open small businesses more intimidating than do Han people.[352] It certainly does not help that these rules, and any corrupt ways around them, are administered by Han people too.

Rural development is another area of tension between Uyghurs and Han in Xinjiang. 'Nearly every small farm in in Xinjiang is Uighur, and most of the Uighurs are farmers.'[353] Despite the official policy of avoiding competing with the locals for resources and land, development projects often cause protests and clashes that have no particular discernible separatist motive, but relate to objections to bad governance.[354] 'The state's own field studies have shown that water shortages are the biggest complaint of native farmers, and a common cause for Han-minority conflict. Competition comes not only from new immigrants but from the mighty Xinjiang Corporation which has

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[349] B. Hopper and M. Webber, 'Migration, modernisation and ethnic estrangement: Uyghur migration to Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC" *Inner Asia*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2009, p. 194.
[350] C. Tyler, *Wild west China: the taming of Xinjiang*, Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004, p. 219.
[351] B. Hopper and M. Webber, op. cit., p. 194.
[352] C. Wiemer, op. cit., p. 180.
[353] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 215.
[354] "In one incident, hundreds of Uyghurs protested outside government offices over plans to push them off their farmlands to build a dam, according to a Chinese police official and Radio Free Asia. Police arrested at least sixteen protesters in Xinjiang's Yili county, the site of clashes between security forces and Uyghurs in 1997. The June 2004 protests began outside the offices of a reservoir and hydropower station planned for the local Tekas River. Authorities moved about 18,000 farmers, forestry workers, and herders to make way for the reservoir, but protesters said they were paid only 880 yuan out of 38,000 yuan promised to them. An officer at Tekas County police headquarters confirmed the June 11, 2004, protest, saying, 'The protest was big. People don't want to move because they aren't satisfied with the amount of compensation for resettlement.'" E. Van Wie Davis 'Governance in China in 2010', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 4, 2009, p. 207.

grown to cover nearly half the viable territory of the province and are given automatic priority over small famers.'[355]

Despite the scale of the economic and demographic transformation of Xinjiang, Uyghur culture has a resilience that makes achieving the full Sinicisation of the region slow-going. The Uyghur tendency to remain farmers seems, in part, to be due to their sense of tradition and family, although labour-market discrimination must also play a role. The result, a large rural population dwelling in their ancestral oases, helps explain their surprising cultural resilience in the face of the vast economic and demographic changes described here.[356] Despite all the commerce undertaken along the old Silk Road and OBOR's Belt, the culture practiced within the Uyghur oases is remarkably unchanged.[357] This means there is an economic and cultural basis for Uyghurs to resist the Chinese government's strategy in Xinjiang for a long time to come. Judging from their policies, the authorities are aware of this and urbanisation projects whittle away at rural communities.

Heberer describes how major economic and social changes, and increased contact with other peoples, rather than promoting a melding of people across ethnic lines can cause ethnic revivalism. He argues Xinjiang has seen this phenomenon too.[358] In the 1990s many of the outbreaks of tension and conflict mentioned in Chapter 2 arose from the fresh influx of Han to Xinjiang as well as income inequality and interference in the

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[355] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 215.
[356] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 303.
[357] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 35.
[358] T. Heberer, 'China's nationalities policies: *quo vadis*?' conference paper for Casa Asia conference 'Ethnic minorities in southern China: policies of coexistence in times of great economic changes', viewed on 15 October 2016, https://www.casaasia.es/pdf/21904105720AM1077184640713.pdf

practice of Islam.[359] The conservatism of Uyghur culture, which includes a kind of self-segregation, can be seen as a defensive mechanism against Han physical, economic and cultural encroachment into previously Uyghur-dominated areas. Despite self-segregation and other defence mechanisms, there are plenty of opportunities for inter-ethnic contact and tension. The opening of Xinjiang to inner China has brought many Uyghurs eastwards for trade and education, but this has resulted in them having an even firmer sense of their separate identity.[360]

3.5 Conclusion

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, its economic strategy in Xinjiang was largely based on the colonial work of the XPCC.[361] This allowed for the demobilisation to occur in a way that did not disrupt the Han centre of the China, but allowed the Party to strengthen its position on the periphery, and it was also done in the hope that Xinjiang's untapped potential could enrich the country. This measure is probably the most significant change in Xinjiang's political and economic situation since its conversion into a Chinese province in the late Qing Dynasty. The earlier step marked the application of Han norms to governance, the latter step ushered in the widespread arrival of Han peoples themselves. Between the changes in governance and population,

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[359] R. Castets, 'op. cit.'', p. 41; and M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 122.

[360] D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 114.

[361] A. Atli, 'The role of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the Energy Security of China', *Journal of Central Asian and Caucasian Studies* (OAKA), vol. 6, issue 11, 2011, International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK) [Turkey], p. 117.

it is hard to not see a major effective Sinicisation of the region, even if that were not the aim of such policies.

The XPCC provides the Party with a means of directly controlling the physical transformation of Xinjiang. This encompasses facilitating migration of Han people, conducting large scale land reclamation and the construction of other infrastructure including new cities and towns, bypassing the XUAR government in its administration of millions of residents and vast areas of land, and providing a capable militia that can defend the Party's interests from threats both foreign and domestic.

For senior CCP officials, it may be find fault with a Han–centric '*mission civilisatrice*'; but to many Uyghurs, the development strategy in Xinjiang must be stark and possibly disturbing. The transformation of the economic and demographic dimension '…looks not so much like the promise of a better future but an artificial boom in support of a Han takeover which will break up their communities and destroy their way of life.'[362] The paradox for the Chinese authorities is that their strategy can cause an ethnic revival and strengthen Uyghur identity and thereby sharpen Han-Uyghur differences. Despite their sense of self, in the economic and demographic dimension, everywhere the Uyghurs turn they find themselves surrounded by Han settlers, labourers, officials, enterprises and institutions. They bring with them their political structures, cultural practices and language. These policy areas are discussed in the next chapter.

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[362] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 221.

Chapter 4

The Political
and Cultural Dimension

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the political and cultural dimension of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang. Political and cultural dimensions can be divided into a political framework of pseudo-autonomy for Xinjiang, and cultural policies intended to Sinicise the identities of the Turkic peoples in Xinjiang. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the motives related to the political and cultural dimension. The second section describes the characteristics of this dimension. The third section analyses the consequences of this dimension of the strategy in Xinjiang.

4.2 Motives Related to the Political and Cultural Dimension

The motives behind political framework of pseudo-autonomy

The political framework of the XUAR is based on article 4 of the PRC's constitution. The regional government is a provincial-level government, exercising nominal autonomy, whose legislature elects someone who, consistent with article 4's grant of 'self government', is always a Uyghur (currently Shohrat Zakir[363]) to act as the regional head of government.[364] Within the XUAR are a number prefectures and counties that exercise nominal autonomy for non-Uyghur ethnic minorities. The PRC constitution (article 110) also states that the autonomous regions are subordinate to the central government which creates constitutional grounds for denying genuine autonomy. Despite this formal framework, the XUAR's political arrangements are structured so that Han officials are in charge of the region.

The political framework that the CCP has put in place in Xinjiang is motivated firstly by the need to have a constitutional-legal framework that appears to grant Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities a significant degree of self–government. This framework allows the PRC to portray itself as a multi–ethnic state that respects its ethnic minorities' rights to develop and enjoy their own cultures, including languages and religions, as part of a broader Chinese family of nationalities. Without this, the economic and demographic

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[363] Xinhua News Agency, 'Shohrat Zakir elected chairman of Xinjiang', [posted on china.org.cn a website of the Chinese government operated under the auspices of the State Council Information Office] 24 January 2015, viewed on 12 July 2017, http://www.china.org.cn/china/2015-01/24/content_34648047.htm.
[364] For a discussion on the constitutional framework and the election by regional legislatures see Y. Ghai, K. Loper and S. Woodman, 'China's constitutional and legal framework for autonomy – limitations and possibilities for Tibetan negotiation's viewed on, 12 July 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268015740_China%27s_Constitutional_and_Legal_Framework_for_Autonomy.

dimension (Chapter 3) could much more easily be perceived as a colonial undertaking costing the strategy its legitimacy and support amongst Han people, given that the PRC portrays itself as anti-colonial.[365]

This framework intends to mask the realities of China's rule in Xinjiang, throwing off scrutiny from critics abroad and at home. It also helps create a group of collaborators amongst Xinjiang's population (Han and minority alike) that help advance the overall goal of assimilation. In short, it is the velvet glove of an iron-fisted strategy.

The CCP propagates a narrative that helps legitimise its rule by claiming that it freed China from feudalism and the colonialism of Western powers during the 'Century of Humiliation' (1839-1949).[366] China further claims that having been a victim of foreign aggression, it will never be an aggressor. As President Xi Jinping put it: 'We Chinese love peace. No matter how much stronger it may become, China will never seek hegemony or expansion.'[367] The nature and prominence of this anti-colonial narrative means that appearing to behave in a colonial manner in Xinjiang, or elsewhere, risks tarnishing the Party's reputation.

It is certainly true that there is a significant cultural misunderstanding between Han and Turkic people in Xinjiang, but achieving mutual understanding is not one of the

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[365] A.A. Kaufman, "Testimony before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on 'China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy'", 10 March 2011, pp. 2-3, viewed on 23 October 2016, http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf.
[366] Ibid. This narrative is exemplified in Hu Jintao, 'Full text of Hu Jintao's speech at CPC anniversary gathering,' Xinhua, 01 July 2011, viewed on 23 October 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-07/01/c_13960505_2.htm
[367] Xi Jinping, "Full text: Xi Jinping in military parade speech vows China will 'never seek hegemony, expansion'", South China Morning Post, 3 September 2015, viewed on 23 October 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1854943/full-text-xi-jinping-military-parade-speech-vows-china

objects of Beijing's strategy. If the Uyghurs are successfully Sinicised, they will have taken on Han culture and there will not be a cultural barrier that necessitates mutual understanding.

The motives behind the cultural policies

The cultural policies in Xinjiang are officially consistent with the provisions of article 4 of the PRC's constitution.[368] This means that they are 'pluralist' by accepting the coexistence and development of multiple cultures. The political rights conferred in the constitution are specifically connected to protecting minority culture and languages. Despite this officially pluralist approach, the true tendency is monoculturist towards Han Chinese norms. The cultural aspects of the strategy – language, education and religious policy – have two aims, the first of which is to culturally transform the Uyghurs, and other Turks. Language policy that succeeds in promoting the growing use of Mandarin Chinese in Xinjiang has a particularly prominent role in effecting cultural change. But if the Turks are not changed at a cultural level, despite being physically surrounded by the Han people and the Han-dominated economy, there is a distinct risk that non-Han people will forever perpetuate their own cultures and indefinitely avoid Sinicisation. This would defeat the Party's Xinjiang strategy, as the central thrust of it is to secure the region through Sinicisation. Beijing is willing to make huge investments

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[368] *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (Full text after amendment on 14 March 2004), Chapter 1 General Principles, website of the National People's Congress of the PRC, viewed on 25 October 2015, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm

and implement its strategy over a very long period, because the Party leadership judges there is a reasonable prospect of eventual success.

The second aim of the cultural polices is to manage the blowback from the internal economic and demographic colonisation described in Chapter 3. Religious policy plays the key role in this field. By supervising Islam's adherents, mosques and clerics, the CCP contains the potential of Islam to support separatism. Together, these policies are intended shape the population towards assimilation and allow it to participate in the economic transformation offered by the economic dimension of the strategy.

Relative to the huge Han majority, China's ethnic minorities are few in number and live far away, and in China's mainstream discourse, are perceived as both exotic and culturally and economically backward. Over 91 per cent of China's population is Han.[369] Most of China's ethnic minorities live in remote areas and, therefore on the periphery of Han civilisation. As one Han-Chinese historian said, 'For most Han, then, to be Chinese is to be Han; [and] to be Han, [is to be] Chinese. For them, China is the land of the Han – no matter that the minority nationalities have inhabited large swaths of the country for centuries, even millennia.'[370] In the present day, many Han people put China's ethnic minorities into three categories: the barbarian minorities who are backward, the Sinicised minorities who need to catch up to Han levels of development,

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[369] According to the PRC's 2010 census, 91.51 per cent of mainland China's population was Han Chinese. China' National Bureau of Statistics, *Communiqué of the National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China on major figures of the 2010 population census (no. 1)*, 28 April 2011, viewed on 5 March 2016,
https://web.archive.org/web/20131108022004/http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/newsandcomingevents/t20110428_402722244.htm
[370] From 'remarks made to the writer by a Han-Chinese historian in Shanghai, May 1989' in A. Magid, 'Handle With Care: China's Policy for Multiculturalism and Minority Nationalities', *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 1, Spring 1998, p. 6.

and the delightful minorities admired for their exoticness and colourful dress and dance.[371] Han people tend to paradoxically see the Uyghurs as primitive, superstitious and dangerous on the one hand, and exotic, amusing and attractive on the other hand.[372] Considering this view of ethnic minorities helps explain how Han authorities could see efforts to transform minority culture as benevolent.

According to Dwyer and Goodman, in Xinjiang's case there is a widely-held belief amongst Han élites, and by extension the CCP, that spreading Han culture, and raising the 'quality' of the ethnic minorities is a good thing.[373] This could be called a *mission civilisatrice*.[374] Likewise, superstitious beliefs, including religion, as well as old habits that entrench poverty, and since early 1990s, separatism and terrorism have been seen as bad things that must be resisted. The official narrative, aforementioned in Chapter 3, that the conflict in Xinjiang can be resolved by economic development, strongly suggests that Uyghur separatism and terrorism are cultural phenomenon arising, in part, from a lack of economic development.

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[371] A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications) p. 8.
[372] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 255.
[373] See for example, A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications) p. 7; and, D.S.G. Goodman, "The Campaign to 'Open up the West': National, Provincial-Level and Local Perspectives", *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 329; and, D.S.G. Goodman, "The Campaign to 'Open up the West': National, Provincial-Level and Local Perspectives", *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, pp. 326-7, cites Li Dezhu, 'Large-scale development of western China and China's nationality problems', *Qiushi* (Seeking Truth), 1 June 2000, in US Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, 15 June 2000. This point is further elaborated below.
[374] 'The French saw their mission in the colonies as a *mission civilisatrice* a project for bringing civilization and enlightenment to the colonial subjects who were allowed to exist as long as they adopted the French language and culture, evidently the better choices, as their own.' M. Koro-Ljungberg, M. Gemignani, S. Chaplin, S. Hayes and Ivy Haoyin Hsieh, "'Mission civilisatrice' fixing scientific evidence and other practices of neo-colonialism in social sciences", *International Review of Qualitative Research*, vol. 1, no. 4, Winter 2009, p. 503. A definition of 'mission civilisatrice': 'The perceived calling of (former) imperial powers to introduce civilization into their colonies; specifically, with reference to French colonial policy in Africa and Indo-China' *Oxford English Dictionary* online, viewed 25 February 2016, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mission-civilisatrice

In the official discourse[375], minority backwardness is tied to the concept of cultural quality (*suzhi* 素质 – literally essential character)[376]. Low cultural quality is a cause of poverty and a barrier to progress.[377] Overall, as Dwyer observes, since the early days of the PRC, the Chinese élites have held a nearly universal view that the peoples on the periphery – including non-prestige groups of Han – had low cultural quality justifying a *mission civilisatrice*.[378] The logic runs like this: due to their backward culture the minorities are impoverished; if we are to help them, we must change their culture. Li Dezhu, minister for the national State Ethnic Affairs Commission described in 2000 how economic development could bring non-Han areas up to Han levels of development and thereby remediate the backwardness of ethnic minorities that lay at the heart of China's ethnic policy challenges. 'So the final solution for these problems lies in developing social productivity in areas of minority nationalities. The strategy to promote social and economic development of western China is a fundamental way to speed up the development of minority nationalities, and a necessary choice to solve China's nationality problems under new historical circumstances.' Li Dezhu argued that

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[375] M.L. Zukosky, 'Quality, development discourse, and minority subjectivity in contemporary Xinjiang', *Modern China*, vol. 38, no.2, 2012.
[376] My translation of the term *suzhi* as 'cultural quality' is based on the work of other scholars (see below) and dependent on this specific context of cultivating the Turkic minorities in Xinjiang. I use this translation knowing that *suzhi* cannot be simply translated from Chinese to English. Because the term 'quality' in English is not generally used in relation to culture I include the word cultural' as a modifier for 'quality' thus 'cultural quality' is my attempt to succinctly translate *suzhi* in this context.
Generally speaking *suzhi* is now translated as 'quality' or 'human quality'. ' … a person's *suzhi* can be cultivated or trained. (The Australian Centre on China in the World (Australian National University, the *China Story* website, 2013 yearbook entry for *suzhi* https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2013/introduction-engineering-chinese-civilisation/suzhi-素质/Accessed on 03 June 2016).
In current political usage '...*suzhi* has taken on sacred overtones. It now marks the hierarchical and moral distinction between the high and low and its improvement is a mission of national importance.'
(A. Kipnis, 'Suzhi: a keyword approach', *the China Quarterly*, vol. 186, p. 297.).
[377] L. Yi, 'Ethnicization through schooling: the mainstream discursive repertoires of ethnic minorities', *China Quarterly*, no. 192, December 2007, p. 940; and, M.L. Zukosky, 'Quality, development discourse, and minority subjectivity in contemporary Xinjiang', *Modern China*, vol. 38, no.2, 2012.
[378] A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications) p. 7; and, D.S.G. Goodman, "The Campaign to 'Open up the West': National, Provincial-Level and Local Perspectives", *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, p. 329.

the minority nationalities were backward and need to learn from the more advanced culture of the Han Chinese.[379] The official lexicon describes the minorities as backward in three regards (*sangge luohou* 三个落后) productivity, cultural development, and living standards.[380]

Closely tied to the concept of cultural quality is language. The Uyghur language is part of a family of Turkic languages. It is usually represented through Arabic script, making it a vector for study of the Koran. It is spoken by around 11 million people in Xinjiang, and in diaspora communities in Central Asia and further afield.[381] It is widely spoken as the main communication medium for Uyghurs in daily life, including from the home to the street and in businesses and government bodies.[382] The Uyghur language is a cultural bridge to Central Asia and a cultural wall to Han China. It presents risks to the CCP in both directions. On a practical level, it allows readier access to potential safe havens for militant Uyghurs visiting diaspora groups and other Turkic peoples; and, it complicates intelligence collection and policing by Han officials who are mostly

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[379] D.S.G. Goodman, op. cit., pp. 326-7, cites Li Dezhu, 'Large-scale development of western China and China's nationality problems', *Qiushi* (Seeking Truth), 1 June 2000, in US Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, 15 June 2000. Li Dezhu does not say this in a single sentence, but it is the clear implication of the following two passages: 'However, due to historical, social, ethnic and other reasons, ethnic minorities and ethnic minority areas are relatively backward, in order to help ethnic minorities and ethnic minority areas to accelerate development, the country has adopted many policy measures.' And, '[ethnic minorities should] not only inherit and carry forward the outstanding cultural traditions of one's ethnic group, but also good at absorbing the Han and other advanced ethnic groups' cultural traditions…' Li Dezhu, 'The Open and Develop the West Campaign and China's Minorities Question' [西部大开发与我国民族问题 *Xibu da kaifa yu woguo minzu wenti*] in Seek Truth Magazine [求是杂志 *qiushi zazhi*] [a Chinese Communist Party journal], vol. 11, 1 June 2000, pp 24-5 and pp 25 respectively.
[380] L. Yi, 'Ethnicization through schooling: the mainstream discursive repertoires of ethnic minorities', *China Quarterly*, no. 192, December 2007, p. 935.
[381] The total Uyghur population was estimated to be 9,938,000 in 2010. R. Guo *et al* (eds.), *Multicultural China: a statistical yearbook (2014)*, Springer, Heidelberg, New York, 2014, table 3.1, p. 68; and, 'Conservative estimates place the Xinjiang Uyghur population at 8.4 million (2000 PRC census), with an additional population of 300,000 in Kazakhstan (as of 1993); ca. 90,000 in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (officially 37,000 in 1998); 3,000 in Afghanistan; and 1,000 in Mongolia (according to a 1982 estimate). Uyghurs have also immigrated to other countries, particularly Turkey, Australia, and Germany.' A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., p. 12.
[382] Ibid., p. 13.

speakers of only Chinese dialects. On the whole, Chinese officialdom sees the Uyghur language as a backward, low quality tongue which is not as cultured and practically useful as Mandarin Chinese.[383]

The official view is that catching up to Han productivity, culture and living standards can be achieved through education, and by the minorities being open to broader Chinese society rather than existing in enclaves.[384] This education is broader than questions of improving the taught curriculum; it means passing on superior Chinese habits of mind and moral standards using the more advanced Chinese language to convey higher scientific and technical knowledge.[385] As indicated below, there is also a widespread perception amongst Han people that Islam is a major reason for minority cultural quality being low.[386]

Religion as a threat

Islam and religious organisations play an important role in Uyghur and other minority ethnicity areas in Xinjiang. In many countries, religious organisations and parishes are seen as an important part of civil society; a place where people turn to for spiritual and practical help. Islam in Xinjiang plays this role, but it can do so in ways that are essentially apolitical (or at least not separatist), or it can be used to help militant

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[383] Ibid., p. 37.
[384] L. Yi, op. cit., p. 935.
[385] Ibid., p. 941.
[386] G.E. Fuller and J.N. Lipman 'Islam in Xinjiang', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 325.

extremists reach out to each other within Xinjiang and across the border to wider Central Asia and to other Muslim lands.[387]

Beijing is concerned that Islam creates a vector communication with other Muslim societies that may be conducive to Uyghur separatist activities. The Chinese authorities take a dim view of religion in general, which is seen as superstitious and backward. An opiate that distorts perceptions of reality and is likely to lead common people astray, and a potential vector for fomenting resistance to the government.[388] The Chinese state's history of suffering rebellions often involving secret societies which had religious characteristics goes back at least to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). During the Qing Dynasty and under the CCP, Chinese authorities have sought to regulate and control religions in its borderlands.[389] Beijing sees religion as a major avenue for organising separatism in Xinjiang, whereas the local Muslims are heavily aggrieved by policies designed to control religious practice.[390] Since the 1990s, the authorities have been deeply concerned that Islamic fundamentalism will spread, or is spreading, into Xinjiang from abroad, spurring calls for a separate Islamic state of East Turkestan.[391]

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[387] P.B. Potter, 'Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China' *China Quarterly*, no. 174, June 2003, p. 336.

[388] Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, chapter 3.

[389] P.B. Potter, op. cit., p. 317; and religion was often associated with secret societies, rebellions and revolutions during the Qing Dynasty –, unpublished honours thesis, G. Fallon, *The hidden public sphere: secret societies in mid-to-late Qing Dynasty China*, The University of Queensland, 1999.

[390] M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 123.

[391] E. Kolodner, 'Religious Rights in China: A Comparison of International Human Rights Law and Chinese Domestic Legislation' *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, August 1994, p. 480.

As commented by Fuller and Lipman:

> "The notion that 'minority nationalities' are inherently less intelligent, more backward, and less hardworking than the Han, and that this is due in part to their practice of Islam, has great currency in China – to the point that even some prominent leaders of those same 'minority nationalities' repeat it." [392]

Under the PRC, religion is viewed with deep suspicion. The Party believes that with social development religion will become irrelevant. In the meantime, religion has positive social effects but can be politically threatening to the CCP.[393] The authorities believe that all religion must be wiped away eventually, but they also recognise that doing so at present is impractical – especially in the case of ethnic minorities – and the practice of religion must be dealt with gradually.[394]

According to Radio Free Asia, the XUAR amended its law on the prevention of juvenile delinquency so as to forbid relatives from encouraging the practice of religion by minors – in effect the Uyghur Muslim custom of fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters praying – even at home – became illegal in Xinjiang as of November 2016. As one Xinjiang education department official put it: "If anybody under 18 prays, fasts, learns religion, or follows someone to pray or go to underground religious places to learn, these are all deemed illegal," said the official.[395]

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[392] G.E. Fuller and J.N. Lipman, op. cit., p. 325.

[393] M. A. Kuo, 'The politics of religion in China: insights from Fenggang Yang', *The Diplomat*, 4 August 2016, viewed on 24 June 2017, http://thediplomat.com/2016/08/the-politics-of-religion-in-china/

[394] E. Kolodner, 'Religious Rights in China: A Comparison of International Human Rights Law and Chinese Domestic Legislation' *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, August 1994, pp. 465-7.

[395] K. Niyaz and G. Hoja, "China's new law targets Muslim children for 'correction'", *Radio Free Asia* (Uyghur Service), translated by L. Mudie and M. Juma, 21 October 2016, viewed on 5 November 2016, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/chinas-new-law-targets-muslim-children-for-correction-10212016123917.html.

4.3 Characteristics of Beijing's Political and Cultural policies in Xinjiang

Political Framework of the XUAR – Pseudo-autonomy

In examining the political framework of Xinjiang, the first thing to understand is that from the PRC's point of view, indigineity is not a basis for according political autonomy in China and even if it were, Xinjiang was inhabited and developed by Han peoples before the Uyghurs arrived there. A Chinese government white paper on Xinjiang's history states:

'In 101 B.C., the Han empire began to station garrison troops to open up wasteland for cultivation of farm crops in Luntai [southern Xinjiang] (Bügür), Quli and some other places. Later, it sent troops to all other parts of Xinjiang for the same purpose. …Since the Western Regions Frontier Command was established in 60 B.C., the inflow of the Han people to Xinjiang, including officials, soldiers and merchants, had [sic] never stopped.'[396]

The same paper goes on to state that it was not until AD 840 that the Uyghurs arrived in large numbers in Xinjiang. If this timeline were to be accepted then there is no legitimacy to the view of Uyghurs as an indigenous population who pre-date the arrival of Han people and who therefore have traditional rights over their land. However, the timeline recounted in this white paper also omits the thousand year-long absence of Han Chinese control over Xinjiang from around the An Lushan Rebellion (AD 755-63), until

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[396] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/

the reconquest by the Manchu Qing Dynasty (1755-9) period – a period of nearly a thousand years during which Uyghurs came to see themselves as indigenous to Xinjiang. However, the PRC's official view is that no ethnic group is any more indigenous than any other in China.[397] In fact, China claims it has no indigenous peoples. Long Xuequn, adviser of the Chinese delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1997 said: 'In China, there are no indigenous people and therefore no indigenous issues.'[398]

But it does recognise ethnicity, and any autonomy granted to minorities in what the authorities call 'compact communities'[399] is granted by virtue of recognising that they are a culturally distinct people who have unique governance requirements. Thus, the CCP sees the pseudo-autonomy as a benevolent grant by Beijing, rather than a right earnt by the Uyghurs thanks to their long-standing occupation of Xinjiang.[400] In short, the PRC recognises that there are separate ethnicities, but on the other hand it does not recognise that these ethnicities have any special claim on the places they have long inhabited.

During the CCP's Long March in the 1930s the Chinese Red Army depended on the cooperation and support of many ethnic minority people. It became keenly aware of the Muslim identity of Hui and other groups. During this time, it adopted a minority policy

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[397] M.J. Hathaway, *Environmental winds: making the global in southwest China*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2013, pp. 118-9.

[398] 'China Concerned with Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights', Xinhua news report, 1 April 1997, available on the website of the PRC Mission to the EU, viewed on 12 Jul 2017, http://www.chinamission.be/eng/zt/rqwt/t72327.htm.

[399] 'Regional ethnic autonomy', [a brief from 2006 posted on China.org.cn a website of the Chinese government operated under the auspices of the State Council Information Office] 2006, viewed on 5 November 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/Brief/192293.htm. The term compact communities appears to refer to situations where a well-defined contiguous area has a significant cluster of a particular ethnic minority groups such as Uyghurs in Xinjiang or Tibetans in Tibet.

[400] D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 102.

that paradoxically emphasised the oneness of all Chinese peoples, while preserving the right of self-rule and even secession for the minorities.[401] But the approach they took on controlling minorities can be seen as partly inspired by the Leninist approach. Connor characterises this Leninist approach as consisting of, prior to coming to power, giving empty promises of a right to secession only to terminate that right once the Party has come to power. This is followed by a 'lengthy process of assimilation' of the autonomous areas during which the Party itself was to remain highly centralised and free of minority nationalist proclivities.[402]

The PRC's pattern of recognising different ethnicities and having separate governance arrangements has multiple origins. The Qing had a Bureau of Outlying Regions (Lifan Yuan 理藩院) which managed peoples and possessions on China's periphery ranging from inner Mongolia to Central Asia and Tibet.[403] Soviet nationality thought also affected PRC practice, and resulted in recognising many more ethnicities than had done the Qing. Nationalist practices were also relevant as the GMD government had run a Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission.[404] The ultimate successor organ to the Lifan Yuan is the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. Through it, by 1952, the PRC recognised 56 ethnic groups.[405] Mao seemed to believe that respect for minorities and

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[401] Ibid., p. 105.
[402] W. Connor *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*, 1984, Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. 89 cited in D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 107.
[403] Encylopædia Britannica entry for *Lifan Yuan* viewed on 24 June 2017, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Lifan-Yuan.
[404] D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 104. Gladney only refers to the GMD and Qing influences and does not mention Soviet influence.
[405] Ibid., p. 104. Gladney only refers to the GMD and Qing influences and does not mention Soviet influence. Gladney actually describes the Bureau of Mongol and Manchu Affairs as the precursor to the

mutual understanding between them and the Han were important for resolving local difference, but ultimately he believed that all of China's peoples would be transformed by the journey towards socialism.[406] Given the CCP's view that the attaining Socialism required greater modernisation, and that the Han people were more advanced and modernised than the ethnic minorities, it stood to reason that ethnic minorities would become more Han-like as they advanced towards socialism. Yet, the Party leaders clearly saw recognition of ethnic minorities as a necessary first step in administering them successfully. In Xinjiang, recognition of the Uyghurs and the other minorities, led to the creation of XUAR.

The current PRC constitution, like its predecessors makes provision for regional autonomy of ethnic minorities:

> 'Article 4 – All nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal. The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited. The State assists areas inhabited by minority nationalities in accelerating their economic and cultural development according to the characteristics and needs of the various minority nationalities. Regional autonomy is practised in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self–government are established to exercise the power of autonomy. All national autonomous areas are integral parts of the People's Republic of China. All nationalities have the freedom to use and develop

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State Ethnic Affairs Commission, but the Bureau of Mongol and Manchu affairs was a subset of the broader Lifan Yuan. On the scope and role of the Lifan Yuan see P.K. Crossley, 'The Lifanyuan and stability during Qing imperial expansion', in Managing frontiers in Qing China: the Lifanyuan and Libu revisited, D. Schorkowitz and Chia Ning (eds.), Brill, Leiden, 2017, pp. 92-114.

[406] D. Howland, 'The dialectics of chauvinism: minority nationalities and territorial sovereignty in Mao Zedong's new democracy' *Modern China*, vol. 37, no 2, March 2011, p. 172.

their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs.'[407]

Despite the constitution, Xinjiang remains tightly controlled by the Han–dominated CCP.[408] From the outset, the XUAR was designed by CCP leaders to give the form of autonomy without the substance.[409] It was neither autonomous nor Uyghur-run.[410] In the 18 months preceding its official creation (in October 1955) the Chinese government created a governmental patchwork with a series of pseudo-autonomous districts for other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang composing the whole. Overlaid on this was the large and powerful XPCC which had its own administrative and legal framework.[411] Overlaid on all of this was the Han-dominated CCP. This structure meant the region could appear to mainly belong, politically, to the Uyghurs but their mandate would only extend as far as the Party allowed.

On the face of it, carving up the XUAR into 14 prefectural-level administrative divisions[412] (not including XPCC-administered cities), may seem reasonable depending on the specifics of the demography at play. However, the divisions are clearly calculated to undermine the Uyghurs in particular. For example, after an amendment to

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[407] *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (Full text after amendment on 14 March 2004), Chapter 1 General Principles, website of the National People's Congress of the PRC, viewed on 25 October 2015, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm
[408] R. Castets, 'Le mal-être des Ouïghours du Xinjiang' (The malaise of Xinjiang's Uyghurs), *Perspectives Chinoises*, no. 78, July-August 2003, p. 34.
[409] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 135; and Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 133.
[410] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 6.
[411] G. Bovingdon, *Uyghurs: strangers in their own land*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010, p. 44.
[412] Ibid., figure 2.1, p. 45, and Administrative Divisions Website (行政区划站 *xingzheng quhua zhan*) a Chinese government website, http://www.xzqh.org/html/show/xj/37745.html, accessed 5 Jul 2017.

the internal borders in 1960, Bayangol Mongol Autonomous Prefecture occupied a third of the territory of Xinjiang. By 2004, Bayangol had approximately 48,000 Mongols exercising nominal autonomy in a district with over 370,000 Uyghurs and 660,000 Hans. In this case, the 'autonomy' of the Mongols makes a farce of XUAR in two ways. A tiny minority takes precedence to a large minority (the Uyghurs) but, purely through the name of the prefecture, conceals the fact of a local majority of Han migrants. Furthermore, there are no Uyghur autonomous prefectures or counties. Contiguous, homogenous areas with large Uyghur majorities such as Kashgar, Khotan and Aksu were gerrymandered to become parts of the autonomous districts of other minority peoples.[413] The cumulative effect is a patchwork of autonomies where one ethnicity has an autonomous county, inside a second ethnicity's autonomous prefecture, inside the Uyghurs' autonomous region. Very often these sub-regional areas give the nominal autonomous rights to populations that are as little as 10 per cent of the area's population. It may be the case that the rights in these sub-provincial units are hollow, like those of the Uyghur, but their existence could give Han authorities an excuse for blocking a measure favoured by Uyghurs. The XUAR's internal structures are conducive to 'using barbarians against barbarians'.[414]

Not only does the patchwork of autonomies, and the XPCC's separate colony-like settlements divide and undermine the Uyghur position in the XUAR; additionally, the organs of the state have been increasingly staffed by Han Chinese. Bovingdon goes so far as to describe this too as a kind of bureaucratic colonisation:

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[413] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 140; and J.A. Millward and N. Tursun, 'Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 91.
[414] A. Rahman, *Sinicization beyond the Great Wall: China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*, Troubador Publishing, Leicester, 2005, pp. 67 and 70.

'The government institutions have been heavily colonised by Hans and have been subordinated at all levels to the heavily Han party structure. Uyghur (and other non–Han) leaders have been carefully chosen and forced to act as apologists, even boosters, for unpopular policies, to ensure they do not develop a popular constituency.'[415]

The XUAR structure avoids the appearance of colonialism by having a number of prominent non-Han senior government office holders.[416] But the non-Han officials are kept away from the top Party positions − where the power lies − and are shadowed by Han Party leaders.[417] This shadow system has two parallel lines of authority: one is of the state, and the other is on the Party. In the state, the senior official is a Uyghur or other Turk, and the deputy is a Han. In the Party, the positions are reversed. Thus, by virtue of his position in the Party, the Han official is the true superior.[418] A Muslim official in Xinjiang complained: 'I read books and newspapers in my office because I had no routine work to bother me. They let me know only 5 per cent of the business that is done in our bureau. In fact I am deputy director in name only.'[419] The chairman of the XUAR government is always a Uighur, but he is only the vice-secretary of the region's CCP committee. As with all Chinese provinces the CCP committee is the higher than the state counterpart and therefore has ultimate control over the XUAR except where the central Party organs in Beijing become involved.[420] Given the true role of the

[415] G. Bovingdon, op. cit., pp. 43-4.
[416] J.A. Millward and N. Tursun, 'op. cit.'', p. 91.
[417] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 140.
[418] Ibid., p. 141.
[419] Ibid., pp. 140-1.
[420] A. Rahman, *Sinicization beyond the Great Wall: China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*, Troubador Publishing, Leicester, 2005, pp. 74-5.

minorities in Xinjiang's government and the Party, minority CCP cadres are often seen by other Uyghurs as sell–outs and Han Chinese lackeys.[421]

Cultural and language policy

A number of aspects of Uyghur culture, beyond the widespread adherence to Islam, frustrate Beijing's aims to Sinicise Xinjiang. Many Uyghurs emphasise their language, and their long history in the region, and close connection to the land.[422] Moreover, they probably do not see their cultural quality as being low and in need of being raised by Han Chinese authorities. Nevertheless, the CCP aims to reduce Uyghur culture to a shell of its current self, leaving only features that would not be capable of galvanising a successful separatist movement. This might see Uyghurs retain colourful exotic Turkic clothing (not Arab-style burqas) local cuisine and folk dances – in other words the same kind of cultural markers found throughout many of China's ethnic minority populations.

This is consistent with the approach to Uyghur and other minority cultures taken by Chinese authorities since the late-19th Century which Fuller and Lipman have termed 'Disneylandisation' – were minority cultures are '…emasculated, folklorized, prettified, Hanified, and cast into a nationwide museum of safely packaged ethnicity that serve up exoticism and charm to tourists in China, but precludes any hint of opposition in the

[421] L. Benson 'Education and Social Mobility Among Minority populations in Xinjiang" Chapter 7, pp. 190-215 in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ed. S.F. Starr, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 210-212.
[422] D.C. Gladney, 'Islam in China: accommodation or separatism?', *China Quarterly*, no. 174, June 2003, pp. 451-467, p. 458.

past or present.'[423] The authorities aim to do this through education policy which is intended to be the lead vehicle to allow the minorities to integrate with China and develop obedience to China.[424] In recent decades, the authorities have adopted the neologism 'Xinjiang person' (*Xinjiangren* 新疆人) to conceptually group all of Xinjiang's people – Turks and Han alike – together and avoid drawing attention to specific groups. But this new, unified identity is Mandarin-speaking. This can be seen from the fact very few of Xinjiang's Hans speak Uyghur, and the national standard Mandarin Level Test is used widely to test Turks in the Xinjiang education system.[425]

The official Chinese language policy is pluralistic – embracing the use of multiple languages; but the real tendency is towards national standardisation.[426] Although the PRC's constitution protects minority languages, soon after the country's founding, it headed down a path of linguistic standardisation. The newly standardised spoken language was dubbed Putonghua (普通话 literally – common speech) which is often referred to by English speakers as Mandarin.[427] Beijing adopted this spoken standard throughout the whole country, attempting to reshape speakers of other Chinese dialects,

[423] G.E. Fuller and J.N. Lipman, 'Islam in Xinjiang', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 322.
[424] L. Benson, 'Education and social mobility among minority populations in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 180; and, Y. Chen and G.A. Postiglione, 'Muslim Uyghur students in a dislocated Chinese boarding school: bonding social capital as a response to ethnic integration', *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring, 2009, p. 287.
[425] A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., p. 34. I use the term Mandarin Level Test to translate the name of the widely used HSK (*Hanyu shuiping kaoshi* 汉语水平考试).
[426] L. Benson op. cit., p. 198.
[427] A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., p. 8. For the process of standardisation and energetic promotion of Putonghua see D. Moser, *A billion voices: China's search for a common language*, (Kindle edition), e-penguin, 2016. It should also be noted that the terms 'Chinese language' and 'English language' are not equivalent, where English refers to a written and spoken system which are one and the same, Chinese is actually a written language and a family of sometimes mutually unintelligible spoken languages.

speakers of non–standard Mandarin, and non–Chinese speakers.[428] Under the CCP, language policy has been an important instrument of nation building.[429] The aim was to raise everyone's quality as well as to build a more egalitarian and homogenous society.[430] But, in socio-cultural-linguistic terms it was the non-Chinese speaking ethnic minorities that had the greatest distance to go in conforming to the new standard.

In the PRC era, there have been varying fashions in language policy, but the overall trend has been towards standardisation of school curriculum with ever increasing importance given to Mandarin Chinese. This drive towards standardisation appears to contradict the official policy of constitutionally-founded linguistic pluralism. Dwyer describes this contradiction as amounting to having two language policies, one of which is overt and the other is covert. She also argues that in Xinjiang, language is used to shape the media, education and the awareness of ethnic identity.[431]

> 'Covert policies, which may promote or undermine languages, are unwritten and often not even discussed. They reflect policymakers' assumptions about the nature and comparative worth of ethnolinguistic groups and their speakers, and mesh so seamlessly with elite and popular ideologies that their existence is presumed a given. … Covert policies differ from mere opinions or attitudes in that they are systematically implemented in one or more domains (e.g., education and the media) over a period of time.'[432]

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[428] J. Dong, 'The enregisterment Putonghua in practice' Language & Communication: An Interdisciplinary Journal no 30, 2010, pp. 265-275 Policy Studies 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online http://www.academia.edu/4305909/Enregisterment_Putonghua_Symbolic_power_Indexicality_Language_Standardization) p. 268.

[429] Ibid., p. 268.

[430] Ibid., p. 270.

[431] A.M. Dwyer, op. cit. p. 6.

[432] Ibid., p. 6.

The implementation of the covert language policy in Xinjiang comes under the guise of 'bilingual education'. This term has long been in use in Xinjiang and referred to various approaches, but since 1984 the share of instruction in Uyghur compared to Mandarin has progressively fallen. Since 2004, only a token amount of instruction is delivered in Uyghur. Currently what is described as 'bilingual education' means education in Mandarin Chinese for all pupils in Xinjiang, but a few hours of instruction each week are dedicated to teaching minority languages to minority pupils. Han children, on the other hand, do not usually learn minority languages. Nevertheless, the term 'bilingual education' has been retained.[433] Most Uyghurs argue that government authorities downplay Uyghur history and traditional culture.[434] 'Most educational material for minority classes (using Uyghur and other languages) are direct translations of Chinese-language materials used throughout China. Minority students, however, are required to study the Chinese language, which denies them the option of choosing English or another foreign language as Han Chinese students do.'[435] In 2002, Xinjiang University – which had been founded at the birth of the People's Republic in 1949 as a bilingual institution – ceased teaching in Uyghur. A dean there claimed that the language deficiencies in Uyghur students caused them to fall behind their Han classmates.[436] 'Now, even Uyghur poetry is taught entirely in Chinese…'.[437]

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[433] Ibid., p. 38; and "Uyghur language under attack: the myth of 'bilingual' education in the People's Republic of China", *Uyghur Human Rights Project* 24 July 2007, Uyghur American Association website, viewed on 10 April 2016, http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/UyghurLanguageUnderAttack.pdf
[434] D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 113.
[435] L. Benson 'Education and social mobility among minority populations in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*', S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 198.
[436] A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., pp. 39-40.
[437] Ibid., p. 40.

Xinjiang's then Party secretary, Wang Lequan, justified abandoning Uyghur as a medium of instruction in this way:

> 'The languages of the minority nationalities have very small capacities and do not contain many of the expressions in modern science and technology, which makes education in these concepts impossible. This is out of step with the 21st century. This is why the Chinese language is now used as the medium of instruction from the third grade in primary school in Xinjiang, to overcome the language barrier and obstacles to development. This way, the quality of the Uyghur youth will not be poorer than that of their Han peers when they grow up.'[438]

Dwyer explores the apparent contradictions in the PRC's policies in Xinjiang through the lens of language policy; she notes that the PRC has an official policy, that rests on constitutional guarantees of equality, preservation of local culture and limited autonomy; but that at the same time there is an impulse to raise the cultural quality of ethnic minorities.[439] She concludes that China's minority policy is plagued by contradiction:

> 'As implemented in Chinese Inner Asia, regional autonomy and a monoethnic state appear to be fundamentally contradictory. Chinese policies such as the Law on Regional National Autonomy were unenforceable. In the last 20 years, China has poured resources into infrastructural development and natural–resource exploitation in the Autonomous Regions, especially in the campaign to Develop the Western Regions. Meanwhile, the government has reduced resource allocation for indigenous language support in these regions, a move that has engendered enmity among the local populace. If the central government wants to win back the hearts and minds of some of its Xinjiang citizenry, it needs to devote material and human resources to fostering major local languages and to balancing the language needs of differently sized groups, just as Central Asia policymakers must balance the needs of Russians and other minorities. Yet the Chinese government's response to this

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438 Wen Wei Po newspaper, (Hong Kong), 2 August 2002 in FBIS-CHI-2002–0307, 3 August 2002, cited in N. Becquelin, 'Staged development in Xinjiang', *China Quarterly*, no. 178, June 2004, footnote 87, p. 376.
439 A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., p. 7.

dilemma has been to treat language support as though it were support of separatism.'[440]

Her observation of an *apparent* contradiction is entirely justified, and is consistent with apparent contradictions in other parts of the PRC's overall strategy in Xinjiang. However, Dwyer seems to not consider that the official policy of language pluralism is a front for the real strategy of Sinicisation through promoting Mandarin. This mirrors how centralised political control is masked by pseudo-autonomy. In short, Beijing controls Xinjiang politically, but calls it autonomy and sidelines the Uyghur language in the name of bilingualism.

Another feature of cultural policy in Xinjiang, and in relation to minorities throughout the PRC, is positive discrimination (otherwise known as affirmative action). Although the practice of religion in China is not truly free, ethnic minorities benefit from many concessions the Han do not enjoy, such as the celebration of some religious festivals, use of traditional architecture, music and art, and more lenient rules related to the number of children to whom they may give birth.[441] From the 1980s onwards the education authorities adopted a policy of positive discrimination dedicating quotas for university places for minorities and lowering the university admission test scores for minorities. These policies are resented by many Han Chinese.[442] From a strategic point

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[440] Ibid., p. 58.
[441] A. Magid, 'Handle With Care: China's Policy for Multiculturalism and Minority Nationalities', *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 1, Spring 1998, p. 13.
[442] L. Benson 'Education and social mobility among minority populations in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland'*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 208; and, R. Clothey, 'China's policies for minority nationalities in higher education: negotiating national values and ethnic identities', *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 49, no. 3, August 2005, p. 396; and, A. Magid, 'Handle with care: China's policy for multiculturalism and minority nationalities', *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 1, Spring 1998, p. 13.

of view, these practices fall into two categories. The first category augments the camouflage of regional autonomy because the Party can say: Look how we accept diversity; we let them keep their festivals and folk ways. But these concessions are tokenistic compared to the Sinicisation of language and the economic and demographic transformation mentioned in last chapter. The second category, that of granting easier access to tertiary education for minority groups, could divide minority peoples into groups with different interests which could undermine Uyghur cohesiveness.[443] The group that gains access to university and the benefits of participating in Chinese society may have an increased interest in maintaining the *status quo,* compared to the Uyghur farmer who sees wealth extracted from Xinjiang to go to inner China.

Religious policy

Uyghur identity is not monolithic. It varies from oasis to oasis and between the cities and the countryside. It is composed of many intermixed ingredients; shared history and language are important, but the practice of Islam is a key ethnic marker for the Uyghurs, as well as for other Turks in Central Asia and Xinjiang. In the cities many Uyghurs are less religious, but Islamic heritage is still important to their identity.[444] Most Uyghurs follow a brand of Islam that mixes Sufism and local folk practices.[445] Sufism is a strain of Islam that emphasises seeking divine truth though a direct mystical connection with

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[443] Chen Yangbin, 'Towards another minority educational elite group in Xinjiang?', in *Minority education in China: balancing unity and diversity in an era of critical pluralism*, Leibold, J. and Chen Yangbin (eds.), Hong Kong University Press, 2014, p. 215.
[444] A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., p. 19.
[445] Ibid., p. 3.

God and it is closely associated with asceticism amongst Muslims.[446] Islam, as practiced by Uyghurs in Xinjiang, is formed of a tapestry of influences ranging from the more scriptural or orthodox to traditional or folk practices that some consider heterodox. Those heterodox practices include shamanism and mysticism.[447] Overall, this gives Islam in Xinjiang an unusually syncretic nature with a heavy emphasis on Sufism's mysticism and saint veneration.[448]

The more mystical side of Islam in Xinjiang, has – many argue[449] – made it less fertile ground for fomenting terrorism in the name of jihad than other practices of Islam. If Salafist-Wahabist practices were more widespread in Xinjiang, we would expect much higher levels of *jihadist* violence. However, the practice of Islam in Xinjiang is subject to change and debate.

> 'While virtually all Uyghurs identify themselves as Muslims, what being Muslim entails varies considerably depending on locale and education. Islam appears to permeate most aspects of daily life in rural areas, while many urban Uyghurs only abstain from pork and observe a few major holidays.'[450]

Although most Uyghurs are Sufi, Islam is still a unifying force for Uyghurs and increases the desire of many Uyghurs for independence from China, although few of them resort to violence to pursue this desire.[451] Therefore, despite the relatively pacific

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[446] Encylopædia Britannica entry for *Sufism* viewed on 27 February 2016, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Sufism.
[447] P. Schrode, 'The dynamics of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in Uyghur religious practice", *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 48, issue 3/4, 2008.
[448] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 9.
[449] See for example this work that makes a strong case as to why the Sufism practiced by Uyghurs is antithetical to violent *jihadist* operations. K.T. Kuo, 'Revisiting the Salafi-jihadist threat in Xinjiang', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, v*ol. 32, no. 4, 2012.
[450] A.M. Dwyer, op. cit., p. 3.
[451] G.E. Fuller and J.N. Lipman 'Islam in Xinjiang', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 339.

strain of Islam which is prevalent amongst Uyghurs, the Chinese state justifiably finds it concerning.

Echoing the state's constitutional and legal framework in relation to language, there is an overt and covert side to religious policy in Xinjiang. China's constitution enshrines freedom of religion:

> 'Citizens … enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities.'[452]

The use of 'normal' in the constitutional protection gives the authorities considerable scope to suppress 'abnormal' behaviour. In reality, in Xinjiang Islam is heavily regulated. Who can lead worship in mosques, how clerics are trained, the total number of authorised imams, the location and construction of new mosques and contact with foreign organisations are all regulated and closely monitored by the Party chiefly through the Beijing-based China Islamic Association.[453]

The double-speak of using the terminology of freedom to label what are in fact restrictions is demonstrated by this quote from one Party official:

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[452] *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (full text after amendment on 14 March 2004), [amendments all listed at the end of the document, viewed on 5 July 2017, http://china.usc.edu/constitution-peoples-republic-china-1982, article 36.

[453] E. Kolodner, 'Religious Rights in China: A Comparison of International Human Rights Law and Chinese Domestic Legislation' *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, August 1994, p. 472. Kolodner cites: Xinjiang Official on Management of Religion, microformed on CHI-91-007 Daily Report 57, p. 58 (FBIS, 10 January 1991); and C. Tyler, *Wild west China: the taming of Xinjiang*, Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004, p. 133. In Chinese the China Islamic Association is called Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui 中国伊斯兰教协会.

'The Party's policy of *freedom in religious faith* has been fully implemented. … Religion's interference in administrative and judicial matters, marriage, education, and planned parenthood has markedly reduced. … Many places have stopped the indiscriminate building and expansion of mosques. Unauthorised private schools, classes, and sites for teaching scripture have also been basically banned.'[454]

The China Islamic Association oversees the only body that lawfully train Xinjiang's Islamic clerics: The Institute for the Study of Islamic Texts in Urumchi.[455] In its first 14 years (1987-2001) it only graduated 200 'patriotic clerics' to serve a population of 11 million Muslims in Xinjiang. The patriotic clerics are closely monitored by the authorities and seen by many Turks as turncoats.[456] Although this measure is intended to help control the practices of Islam in Xinjiang, the perception of these clergymen serving the Chinese authorities, and their limited numbers, means that for philosophical and practical reasons, many Muslims are likely to follow other religious leaders.[457]

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[454] Xinjiang Official on Management of Religion, microformed on CHI-91-007 Daily Report 57, p. 58 (FBIS, 10 January 1991) cited in E. Kolodner, 'Religious rights in China: a comparison of international human rights law and Chinese domestic legislation', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, August 1994, p. 475. Emphasis added.

[455] E. Kolodner, op. cit., p. 475. In Chinese, the Institute for the Study of Islamic Texts is *Yisilanjiao Jingxueyuan* 伊斯兰教经学院.

[456] G.E. Fuller and J.N. Lipman, 'Islam in Xinjiang', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 333.

[457] P.B. Potter, 'Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China', *China Quarterly*, no. 174, June 2003, p. 337; and, Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 128.

4.4 Consequences of the Political and Cultural Dimension

Political effects

The main effect of the political structure of the XUAR has been to successfully portray Xinjiang as being an area where Uyghurs benefit from genuine autonomy when in reality, the region is as tightly controlled by the CCP as any other provinces, if not more so. This effect is probably more pronounced in some audiences than others. Han Chinese audiences are well aware of the special privileges the minorities have and may find it easy to believe that they are exercising genuine autonomy. Uyghur audiences are likely to be unconvinced this is the case. Foreign audiences have mixed reactions with many recommending genuine autonomy needs to be given to the Uyghurs. But some observers believe that given the separatist violence encountered in the current strategy, and the improbability of East Turkestan becoming independent again, the best way forward in Xinjiang is through genuine autonomy.[458] Howland, for example, believes the current system threatens to make China appear like an imperialist power in Xinjiang:

> 'The project of a unified socialist nationality has come undone. If the socialist Utopia has been abandoned in favor of something more like corporate and bourgeois management of society, then the government of the PRC will look

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[458] H. Szadziewski, 'How the west was won: China's expansion into Central Asia', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 3, no.2, Spring 2009, p. 218; and, D.C. Boehm, 'China's failed war on terror: fanning the flames of Uighur separatist violence', *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Law*, vol. 2, p. 124, viewed on 12 September 2015, http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/jmeil/vol2/iss1/3; and, Teufel Dreyer points out that genuine autonomy might undercut the arguments of militant separatists. J. Teufel Dreyer, 'China's vulnerability to minority separatism', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 83; and, The PRC government still has an opportunity to win back these people with a more pluralistic cultural policy that emphasizes support for Uyghur and other policy-relevant minority languages and that eases other cultural restrictions, particularly on religion." A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center, Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications) p. xi. Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 133.

increasingly like its imperial and nationalist predecessors as overseers of minority areas. Only true territorial autonomy for minority nationalities—that is, sovereignty for each nationality—offers alternative solutions for China's minorities.'[459]

Another argument put forward by some foreign observers is that failing to give Uyghurs autonomy is what motivates Uyghurs in Xinjiang and abroad to campaign for a separatist and sometimes militant separatist solution. In other words the tight control of Xinjiang by the CCP (regardless of its camouflage as an autonomous region) is self-defeating because it only spurs separatism.[460] Adopting authoritarian measures and failing to cooperate with minorities at a grass-roots level 'forestalls the conditions required for a robust, inclusive and enduring ethnic pluralism.'[461] These criticisms of the XUAR's pseudo-autonomy, and the implicit recommendations to adopt genuine autonomy, suit modern Western ideas about self-determination, respect for indigenous peoples and the role of constitutions and laws in doing so. These criticisms seem to be laden with assumptions that inter-ethnic tensions arise due to the government being clumsy or misunderstanding Uyghur sensitivities. Such views overlook the whole point of the XUAR's political structure, which is not to achieve inter-ethnic harmony through mutual tolerance, but to achieve harmony through eliminating ethnic differences, in other words, through Sinicisation of minorities. If the CCP's strategy was founded on achieving inter-ethnic harmony, it is unlikely to have pursued colonial economic and demographic policies, and Sinicising cultural and religious policies.

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[459] D. Howland, 'The dialectics of chauvinism: minority nationalities and territorial sovereignty in Mao Zedong's new democracy', *Modern China*, vol. 37, no 2, March 2011, p. 192.
[460] A. Bhattacharya, 'Conceptualising Uyghur separatism in Chinese nationalism', *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 27, no. 3, July-September 2003, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, p. 377.
[461] J. Leibold, 'China carrot and stick tactics fail to calm ethnic antagonism', *East Asia Forum Quarterly* January-March 2015, p. 7.

Effects of the CCP's Xinjiang strategy in relation to culture

The CCP's Sinicisation agenda has made uneven progress, indeed the effects are not all in the direction the CCP's favour, as the official recognition of the Uyghur ethnicity and the PRC's acknowledgement of the Uyghurs' special place in Xinjiang have also helped strengthen Uyghur identity, which increases the barriers to Sinicisation. This has led to increased calls for genuine autonomy or independence, and encourages some Uyghurs to use violence.[462] Prior to 1949, during the Warlord Era, the term Uyghur was reindorsed as an officially recognised ethnicity. The Communists also kept the term Uyghur, using it as one of the 56 officially recognised ethnicities in China. This had the paradoxical result of reinforcing a separate identity for the Uyghurs that had not previously been coherent.[463] It seems the CCP kept the ethnonym Uyghur to forestall the emergence of a Turkic ethnicity that would encompass all of Xinjiang's Turks. In the mid-20th Century the CCP's memories of vigorous Turkic nationalist movements in Xinjiang would have been a major concern.[464]

By recognising specific ethnicities, the Chinese authorities have inadvertently strengthened Uyghur identity. Additionally, the political structure of the XUAR that claims to give the Uyghurs autonomy, can promote a desire for genuine autonomy. In other words, if the government calls it a 'Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region' long

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[462] A. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p. 377.
[463] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 136. The term Uyghur was restored during Sheng's régime (1933-44)
J.A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 207-8.
[464] For a discussion on the ethnicity 'Turki' and its connection to 19th Century Turkic nationalist movements in Xinjiang see A. Bhattacharya, 'Conceptualising Uyghur separatism in Chinese nationalism', *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 27, no. 3, July-September 2003, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, p. 361.

enough, some Uyghurs might believe they are owed an autonomous region in Xinjiang. The political framework is therefore, at least partly, pro-ethnic identity at the same time that the economic, demographic and cultural polices are seeking Sinicisation. The pro-ethnic identity effects of the political structure blend with the effects of urbanisation and modern communication technologies and the arrival of large numbers of Han people, help strengthen a cross-regional Uyghur identity that unites what were previously semi-discrete oasis-based ethnic groups.[465] In their minds, this has given Uyghur activists grounds to assert their historical claims to Xinjiang and to argue the CCP has itself recognised the validity of such claims.[466] In hindsight, the CCP might have been better off recognising Uyghurs from different oases as being separate ethnicities, and breaking Xinjiang up into more two or more provincial-level administrative units.

Despite the strengthening of Uyghur identity, there is little indication of a mass movement to actively resist the Chinese authorities. The rebelliousness common amongst Uyghur youths of the 1990s – which seemed to be closely linked to the newfound independence of the Central Asia States – has been replaced by a widespread resigned pragmatism. Uyghur youths resent the presence of the Han, but accept that driving them away is unachievable and therefore turn their attention to improving their own position in society by gaining better education or better-paying jobs, rather than

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[465] W. Shepard, 'The complex impact of urbanization in Xinjiang', *The Diplomat*, 16 December 2015, viewed on 23 February 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/; and, J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 303.
[466] D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 106.

challenging Chinese rule.[467] I contend that most Uyghurs would still prefer either genuine autonomy or independence, but they have recognised this as currently unachievable.

In cultural areas outside of language, Sinicisation's progress has been quite limited. Non-violent resistance is exhibited especially by Uyghurs adhering to Islam, having almost no inter-marriage with Han people and living separately from them. 'The home, mosque, and, to some extent, eating establishments are their borders that are rarely crossed by Uyghurs, Huis, and Hans.'[468] Although Han people eat in Uighur restaurants, very few Uighurs will eat in Chinese restaurants.[469] Han-Uyghur inter-marriage is also exceedingly rare at 0.3 per cent of married Uyghurs having a Han spouse.[470] This can be seen as a kind of reaction and defence mechanism against Han migration and Han dominance in Xinjiang society.[471] Although recently the Chinese authorities have started explicitly encouraging mixed-ethnicity marriages, offering annual cash payments of RMB ¥10,000 (equivalent to over AUD $2,000) as incentives to do so in pilot projects in some parts of Xinjiang as a way of increasing 'ethnic unity'.[472] Although

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[467] N. Baranovitch, 'Uyghur popular music and changing attitudes among Uyghur youth',
The China Journal, no. 58 July 2007, p. 78.
[468] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, op. cit., p. 312.
[469] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 255.
[470] This data dates to a survey of marriages in 1990. R. Mamet, C. K. Jacobson and T.B. Heaton, 'Ethnic intermarriage in Beijing and Xinjiang, China, 1990', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2, Spring 2005, table 2, pp. 195 and 202; and, J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, op. cit., p. 311; and, C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 258.
[471] R. Mamet, C. K. Jacobson and T.B. Heaton, 'Ethnic intermarriage in Beijing and Xinjiang, China, 1990', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2, Spring 2005, table 2, pp. 195 and 202.
[472] S. Denyer, China's campaign for mixed marriages spreads to troubled Xinjiang, the Washington Post, 1 September 2014, viewed on 23 February 2016,
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/09/01/chinas-campaign-for-mixed-marriages-spreads-to-troubled-xinjiang/;
and A. Chen, 'Uyghur-Han Chinese couples offered 10,000 yuan a year to marry in Xinjiang county',
South China Morning Post, 2 September 2014, viewed on 23 February 2016,
http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1583806/xinjiang-county-offers-10000-yuan-reward-uygurs-who-marry-han-chinese?page=all ;
The aim of increasing 'ethnic unity' is mentioned prominently by C. Wong, 'Mixed marriages get cash

these measures have had little effect and they show that even marriage is a vector for the strategy of encirclement.

Modes of dress is another area where Sinicisation's progress is slow. Many Uyghurs dress in a way that sets them apart from the Han. For Uyghur men, embroidered skullcaps and sometimes long beards and, especially in the south; and for women, headscarves (but traditionally not burqas). [473] In Xinjiang the authorities have increasingly clamped down on conservative Islamic dress style and long beards for men. 'Let our hair flow and reveal our beautiful faces' urges propaganda purporting to speak on behalf of Uyghur women. [474] Given that this is clearly government propaganda promoting the abandonment of traditional dress, clinging to such dress standards can be a way of expressing resistance to the government. [475] Indeed, full body coverings for women – which were never part of Xinjiang's customary dress – have become more common. Some see this as the influence of more extreme strains of Islam entering Xinjiang, and the authorities see it as closely linked with terrorism. [476] Again, this shows that the CCP's heavy-handed measures sometimes have counter-productive cultural effects.

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gifts in Xinjiang', *Global Times*, 3 September 2014, viewed on 15 October 2016, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/879657.shtml

[473] Y. Chen and G.A. Postiglione, 'Muslim Uyghur students in a dislocated Chinese boarding school: bonding social capital as a response to ethnic integration', *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring, 2009, p. 302.

[474] B. Demick, 'China imposes intrusive rules on Uighurs in Xinjiang', *LA Times*, 5 August 2014, viewed on 04 March 2016, http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-china-privacy-20140805-story.html

[475] Y. Chen and G.A. Postiglione, op. cit., p. 304.

[476] B. Demick, op. cit., and, S. Dasgupta 'Muslims livid over China's anti-veil drive in Xinjiang', *Times of India*, 26 November 2013, viewed on 5 March 2016, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/Muslims-livid-over-Chinas-anti-veil-drive-in-Xinjiang/articleshow/26386962.cms. The article quotes Meng Xuihui, head of Dunamili Sub-District of Xinjiang as saying that long-beards and certain modes of dress can indicate separatist or religious extremist views.

Effects related to education and language

In the area of language, Chinese culture has made progress in Xinjiang. Widespread education in Mandarin Chinese is a key example of acculturation by ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Bilingualism (Mandarin Chinese and Uyghur), does not necessarily mean the loss of Uyghur culture. It does, however, represent inroads for Han Chinese culture. These inroads are more marked amongst urban Uyghurs who tend to speak Mandarin and are less likely to be religious than rural-dwelling Ugyhurs.[477]

Since 1949 the CCP has managed to raise education standards for all people in Xinjiang, but they have also instituted positive discrimination, the effects of which are not all positive. Since 1949, the average education level of Xinjiang's minorities has risen considerably and may now match or exceed that of Han children.[478] However, the education gap within minorities in China has generally increased. This can be explained by the rise in the number of minority students attending university (thus increasing the average education level) while a large number of minority students do not complete primary or high school.[479] Policies of positive discrimination make it easier for minorities to enter university, but do not apply to students who do not complete high school. To have a greater effect, the government would need to create incentives to have more minority children finish primary and secondary schooling. A side-effect of positive discrimination is to reinforce Han stereotypes about the low quality of minorities necessitating such discrimination, as well as showing that minorities have

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[477] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, op. cit., p. 312.
[478] L. Benson, 'Education and social mobility among minority populations in Xinjiang' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 191.
[479] G.A. Fuller, R. Morrison, A.B. Murphy and M. Ridgley 'Potential for ethnic conflict in China, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, vol. 43, no. 8, 2002, p. 588.

been given advantages stemming from their special administrative status.[480] This does little to advance Sinicisation, although it may help reinforce the willingness of Han people to support the Party's Sinicising strategy as any shortfalls in education, even in the face of positive discrimination – shows how much further there is to go in raising the cultural quality of 'backward' minorities.

Thus far, the effects of Xinjiang's language policies have been to advance a creeping assimilation; separate Uyghur and Han schools have been merged, the 'bilingual' curriculum has been adopted, Uyghur language has been relegated to the status of a second language, Uyghur teachers have lost their jobs. Some Uyghurs perceive this as 'linguicide'.[481] These policies have '…galled the many moderate Xinjiang citizens who once grudgingly accepted Chinese political restrictions as a price of regional economic development.'[482] Although learning Mandarin opens up many economic opportunities for minorities, there are significant group pressures to avoid learning Chinese which is seen as being closely connected with being Sinicised.[483] Yet, as much as Uyghurs may not like this cultural outcome, they appear to have no way out. The cultural encirclement is underway, but its work is far from complete.

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[480] A.M. Dwyer, 'The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language, policy, and political discourse', *Policy Studies*, vol. 15, East-West Center Washington, 2005 (available online www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/publications) pp. 11-2.
[481] Ibid., pp. 37-9.
[482] Ibid., p. xi.
[483] R. Clothey, 'China's policies for minority nationalities in higher education: negotiating national values and ethnic identities', *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 49, no. 3, August 2005, pp. 403-4.

Effects in terms of religion

At present, there is no concerted effort by the CCP to see Islam extinguished from Xinjiang. Rather, for the present, the religion is being managed and the Party expects that eventually all religions will die out. Under the Party's management of Islam in Xinjiang, minors are prevented from legally attending the mosque, but they cannot be stopped from having the religion passed on in the family and in unregulated parishes. The religious regulation is focussed on control and isolating extremists. By carefully circumscribing legal religious activities, and regulating clergy and seminaries, the authorities make sufficient inroads into Islam amongst Uyghurs to make it difficult for militant extremists or advocates of separatism, or even genuine autonomy, to organise, meet, confer, travel and communicate. Much like a surrounded enemy stronghold, this part of the Uyghur problem is allowed to live for now. But it is subject to encirclement and infiltration. By controlling the education of clerics, limiting the growth and expansion in mosques, limiting contact with foreign exponents of Islam, these policies succeed in containing the separatist potential of Islam amongst Uyghurs, but they are still a source of great grievance against the Chinese authorities.[484] In other words, the measures cause resentment, but they still prevent the emergence of a large number of Uyghur separatists, and they prevent those separatists who do exist from coalescing into a coherent force. If it were not for the Chinese government's tight controls, Islam, its clerics, mosques, parish organisations and schools would be a suitable arena for separatists to meet each other, organise within and gain support from. But thanks to the

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[484] M.E. Clarke, 'Ethnic separatism in the People's Republic of China: history, causes and contemporary challenges', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 12, 2013, p. 123.

government's tight controls, this potential basis for separatist organisation has been supressed.

The Uyghur reactions to this are not simple, and the policies have unintended and sometimes counter-productive consequences. The shock to Uyghur culture presented by market reforms, Han migration and urbanisation can cause some people to turn to religion as a social safety net and source of comfort.[485] There is evidence to suggest the government's controls on Islamic practices has helped create a greater awareness of scripturally mandated practices such as fasting and ritual prayer, and hardened attitudes more generally.[486] Beijing's assimilationist strategy can cause resentment that spurs small groups to take violent action. To galvanise such action, separatists can turn to scripturalist Islam and jihadist doctrines imported from the Middle East and Afghanistan.[487] But, given the practical constraints on Islam, and other parts of the CCP's strategy, there may be very limited means to organise a mass movement. As a result, in the absence of a major crisis, a large scale separatist movement is unlikely to develop in Xinjiang. Islam's role in Uyghur separatism, and the CCP's responses, are further discussed in Chapter 5.

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[485] P.B. Potter, 'Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China' *China Quarterly*, no. 174, June 2003, p. 336.
[486] P. Schrode, 'The Dynamics of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Uyghur Religious Practice', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 48, issue 3/4, 2008, p. 429.
[487] E. Kolodner, 'Religious Rights in China: A Comparison of International Human Rights Law and Chinese Domestic Legislation' *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, August 1994, p. 480.

4.5 Conclusion

The political and cultural dimension of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang contribute to the comprehensive encirclement of the Uyghur people aimed at Sinicising them. While the economic and demographic dimension physically connect Xinjiang to inner China and surround the Uyghurs with Han settlers, the political framework creates the illusion of autonomy designed to deflect criticism from the strategy in Xinjiang, and the cultural policies undermine the Uyghur language, contain Islam's organising power and infiltrates the clergy with 'patriotic' imams. On every level the Uyghurs are surrounded, physically, economically, culturally and spiritually and all the while language policy takes the lead in transforming the Uyghurs into Han-like subjects of the CCP by substituting the Uyghur language, and the culture that tongue transmits, for the Chinese language and its modes of thinking. All of this occurs in a framework of so-called autonomy, shielding China from being portrayed as a colonial power.

If the Uyghur language and Islam are the two most important characteristics of Uyghur identity, Beijing's language policy and religious regulation seem to present two prongs. I submit that the CCP intends to use religious policy to contain separatists and limit the spread of their ideas, whereas the language policy is the frontal assault albeit one supported by the deception of shrouding the covert policy in bilingualism. In the short-term there will be discontents and occasional violence.

From Beijing's point of view, every day Xinjiang is being transformed into a genuinely Chinese new dominion. Minority peoples are being raised out of poverty and having

their cultural quality raised through Chinese education, Han civilisation is being spread, and the north-west is more firmly in Beijing's grip than ever before. The undesirable consequences of militant separatism simply have to be managed, while Xinjiang is being colonised and Sinicised. One Uyghur sees how Sinicisation could render separatist hopes irrelevant: "In 50 years, if Uyghurs 'are all assimilated, [if they've] lost their tongue, literature, and everything, what is the use of that independence to me?'"[488]

The political and cultural dimension of the strategy have caused undesirable side-effects such as the strengthening of a modern pan-Xinjiang Uyghur identity, and resentment about language and religious policy. Yet such resentment is not a sufficient condition to build a successful separatist mass movement. Indeed, Uyghur separatists have not been able to build a coherent resistance to the strategy. Nor do they look likely to do so. For one reason, the veneer of autonomy gives Uyghur government officials an interest in supporting the current system, for another the Sufi aspect of Xinjiang's Islam makes it less fertile ground for *jihad* than might otherwise be the case. In addition, the security policies and the cooperation the PRC enjoys with neighbouring Central Asian republics dissuade many would-be separatists from rising up and help contain those who do, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

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[488] S.V. Lawrence, 'Why China Fears This Uyghur Exile' Far Eastern Economic Review (now defunct) 9 July 2004, viewed on 5 July 2016, posted at http://www.radicalparty.org/content/why-china-fears-uyghur-exile. The article quotes Erkin Alptekin is leader of Uyghur ethnic minorities in western China and throughout the world, who was speaking at an event hosted by a group of Turkic associations.

Chapter 5

The Security and International Cooperation Dimension

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the security and international cooperation dimension of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang. I have argued that the economic and demographic dimension is the most important tangible work in Sinicising Xinjiang. Large scale infrastructure development and Han migration change the facts on the ground in Xinjiang. The political framework masks the strategy by creating the appearance of regional autonomy and the cultural policies work to spread Mandarin Chinese and sideline the Uyghur language, as well as supervising and containing Islam. These are the policies intended to transform the region, and when complete – the CCP hopes – there will no longer be a security problem. In the meantime, the creeping Sinicisation of Xinjiang causes resentment amongst many Uyghurs, and prompts a small number to take violent action. The security and international cooperation

dimension of the strategy manage this problem, buying time for the rest of the strategy to ultimately solve the Xinjiang problem.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one discusses the motives related to the security and international cooperation dimension. This includes a discussion of why Beijing is not motivated to conduct a counter-insurgency with the aim of obtaining the loyalty of most Uyghurs, but rather to achieve their acquiescence through a strategy that seeks to win without fighting. Section two examines the characteristics of the security and international cooperation. Section three briefly surveys changes over time in the security and international cooperation dimension. Section four analyses the consequences of the security and international cooperation dimension.

5.2 Motives Related to the Security and International cooperation Dimension

The overarching goals of the CCP's strategy include achieving long-term stability in China's north-west and more broadly Central Asia.[489] The policies detailed in Chapters 3 and 4, however, cause resentment and provoke violent separatist incidents. To allow the rest of the strategy to work, the security forces have to deter militants from acting, detect and disrupt militants in the preparatory phase of attacks, respond to attacks and

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[489] Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, addressed a rally marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in Urumqi, capital city of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 1 October 2015. He stated that '...the long-term stability and security is the top priority in Xinjiang, stressing counterterrorism as the focus of the current work.' Xinhua News Agency, 'China stresses stability, security on Xinjiang's founding anniversary', viewed on 10 July 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-10/01/c_134678570.htm. See also K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 224.

manage protests and quell riots or uprisings. China is not pursuing a counter-insurgency that attempts to win Turkic hearts and minds in the manner Western military theorists, politicians and military leaders understand it.[490]

Winning hearts and minds of Xinjiang's non-Han populations would require both a strategic goal and tactics and institutions that are supported by the target population. One might argue that there are other ways to win the 'hearts and mind' such as improving living standards through economic growth. However, Uyghurs have seen their living standards improve vastly since 1949, and yet few hearts seem to have been thereby won. This shows that economic gains are not enough to make the Uyghurs fond of the Han Chinese, and there is no evidence that Uyghurs are keen to abandon their culture and be willingly Sinicised. Thus, there seems to be no realistic possibility that Chinese authorities can persuade a large number of Xinjiang's Turks that Sinicisation is in their interest. If the authorities were to keep the current strategic goal, but seek to mollify the Uighurs, then Beijing would be going out of its way to minimise the movement of Han people to Xinjiang – a major cause of unrest. It would pursue industrial and employment practices that prefer Uighurs over Han. Once again this is the opposite of its actual behaviour. These alternative strategies are straightforward and hardly require political genius to conceive. As mentioned in previous chapters, these kinds of policies and a framework of genuine autonomy have been suggested by foreign

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[490] The idea of winning hearts and minds became popular after British counter-insurgency efforts in Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) and was later re-popularised in the US war in Vietnam (1963-73) and in Iraq the 2007 surge (2007-11) and Afghanistan (2003-14). For a discussion on the origins of the term under Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer during the counter-insurgency in the 'Malayan Emergency' of 1948–60 see P. Dixon (2009) "'Hearts and Minds'? British counter-insurgency from Malaya to Iraq", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3, p. 354. Dixon argues that the term 'hearts and minds' is confusing and has misled Western audiences into underestimating the level of coercion involved in successful counter-insurgency operations.

observers on many occasions.[491] However, from Beijing's point of view such policies might serve to pacify the Uyghurs in the short term, without a guarantee that true autonomy would not become independence under the right circumstances. True autonomy could create a situation where the Party's authority is too limited to prevent the rise of separatists who use the latitude given to them by autonomy to build their strength to have Xinjiang secede. Giving into such demands could be seen as bending to the will of 'terrorists' and might be taken as examples to be emulated in Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Hong Kong. This is the opposite of Beijing's long term ambitions.

Managing the security situation in Xinjiang

The Chinese authorities, like those of any state, are keen to avoid separatist violence that harms its citizens and its economic interests. In Xinjiang's case, the separatist violence risks imperilling the Sinicisation of the region. Perceptions of terrorism and unrest make it more difficult to keep investors in Xinjiang and attract more Han people to migrate to the region. The 2009 riots and the panic following that incident hit the region's economy hard, nearly shut down Xinjiang's tourism industry, and provoked

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[491] D. Howland, 'The dialectics of chauvinism: minority nationalities and territorial sovereignty in Mao Zedong's new democracy' *Modern China*, vol. 37, no 2, March 2011, p. 192; J. Leibold, 'China carrot and stick tactics fail to calm ethnic antagonism', *East Asia Forum Quarterly* January-March 2015, p. 7; H. Szadziewski, 'How the west was won: China's expansion into Central Asia', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 3, no.2, Spring 2009, p. 218; D.C. Boehm, 'China's failed war on terror: fanning the flames of Uighur separatist violence', *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Law*, vol. 2, p. 124, viewed on 12 September 2015 http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/jmeil/vol2/iss1/3; and, A. Bhattacharya, 'Conceptualising Uyghur separatism in Chinese nationalism', *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 27, no. 3, July-September 2003 , Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, p. 377; Haiyun Ma and I-wei Jennifer Chang, 'Challenging Uyghur Muslim identity: more enforcement, worse results, *China Brief*, vol. 14, no. 17, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/China_Brief_Vol_14_Issue_17__4_.pdf; 'Wooing Islamists with a beer festival', *The Economist*, 27 June 2015, viewed on 05 July 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21656184-chinas-government-wonders-how-stop-terrorism-xinjiang-try-treating-muslims-more.; and, A.Bhattacharya, op. cit.''

capital flight and Han emigration.[492] More recent lower-scale attacks have also been quite sensational, and undermine government efforts to attract investment to Xinjiang. A fairly recent example of this was after Xi Jinping's brush with danger in April 2014 when a bombing-stabbing attack occurred just hours after he left Urumqi's train station.[493] The Party's standing in society is at risk if it seems impotent in the face of separatist violence. Looking weak could invite challenges from democracy activists, other separatists, and pro-independence activists in Taiwan. Whereas crushing separatists would make the Party look strong and capable of securing the interests of the common people, and not just élites.[494]

Managing the risks posed by the Uyghur diaspora

The Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia poses significant risks for China, and is a major driver for Chinese foreign policy in Central Asia and beyond.[495] There are about 1 million Uyghurs in Central Asia (not including Xinjiang) especially in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.[496] The shared language, cultural and religious background of the people in Central Asia and Xinjiang makes it easier for Turkic peoples to cross borders and avoid the security forces of various neighbouring countries. This does not mean

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[492] T. Cliff, 'The partnership of stability in Xinjiang: state–society interactions following the July 2009 unrest', *The China Journal*, no. 68, July 2012, p. 97.
[493] 'Deadly China blast at Xinjiang railway station', BBC, viewed on 11 February 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-27225308; and, T. Heberer, 'China in 2014: creating a new power and security architecture in domestic and foreign policies', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no.1, January/February 2015, p. 89.
[494] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 65.
[495] D.C. Gladney, 'The Chinese program of development and control, 1978-2001' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 117.
[496] K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, pp. 208-9.

Uyghurs have unfettered movement across the international frontier, but it does mean they can obtain support amongst the Uyghur diaspora and sympathisers amongst other Turkic populations. This could help, for example, with living in private residences instead of the more easily surveilled. In remote areas it could also help in obtaining guides that facilitate illegal border crossings. Throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries Central Asia was used by different groups seeking refuge from the Russian or Qing empires or their successor states.[497] The Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia creates a potential organisational and logistical base for Uyghur activists, and gives greater access to international organisations and world media attention.[498] The shared ethnicity and religion also mean many people in Central Asia, despite the attitudes of their rulers, are sympathetic to Uyghur separatism.[499]

The importance of securing access to energy sources, heading off the risk of pan-Turkism and the potential use of support from diaspora Uyghurs led Beijing to promote the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2001.[500] The founding states were China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; but in June of 2017 India and Pakistan became members,[501] and there are other

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[497] É. Allès, 'Usages de la frontière: le cas du Xinjiang (XIX e -XX e siècles)' [(The meaning of frontier: Xinjiang as Case Study (19th-20th Centuries)" *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident*, no. 28, 2006, p. 131. In 1916, 300,000 Kazakhs and Kirgiz crossed into Xinjiang to flee Bolshevik forces. É. Allès, 'Usages de la frontière: le cas du Xinjiang (XIX e -XX e siècles)' [(The meaning of frontier: Xinjiang as Case Study (19th-20th Centuries)") *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident*, no. 28, 2006, p. 132.
[498] K. Shieves, op. cit., p. 209; and, S.R. Roberts, 'A land of borderlands: implications of Xinjiang's trans-border interactions', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 231.
[499] C.P. Chung, 'The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's changing influence in Central Asia', *China Quarterly*, no. 180, December 2004, p. 1000.
[500] The SCO had a forerunner multilateral grouping known as the Shanghai Five being China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. With Uzbekistan's accession in 2001 it changed its name to the SCO. E. Albert, 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organization' *Council on Foreign Relations backgrounder* http://www.cfr.org/china/shanghai-cooperation-organization/p10883
[501] 'India, Pakistan become full members of SCO', *The Times of India,* 9 June 2017, viewed on 6 July 2017, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-pakistan-become-full-members-of-sco/articleshow/59070103.cms

observers and partner states. [502] The SCO's charter states that the organisation cooperates in relation to politics, trade, economy, and culture to education, energy, and transportation as well as combatting combat the 'Three Evils' of terrorism, separatism, and extremism[503] – which is a veiled way of saying radical Islamism.[504] At its founding, the SCO is noteworthy for its focus on security.[505]

Securing energy sources and corridors

China's motives in relation to the SCO are not purely concerned with Xinjiang, they are also geo-strategic. As discussed in Chapter 3, China wants to meet its energy needs and minimise its geopolitical risks, and Central Asia has vast potential energy reserves.[506]

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[502] The SCO has four observer states: the Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia. It has six dialogue partners: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation organisation website, viewed on 6 July 2017, http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/

[503] Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization 15 June, 2001, viewed on 13 July 2016, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwjU-snf1-_NAhUL3SwKHfGeBUAQFggeMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fen.sco-russia.ru%2Fload%2F1013181846&usg=AFQjCNHFwGEk0N67nXXY1pFUV5fY4aEYrw

[504] K. Rahman "Central Asia, Energy Security and Shanghai Cooperation Organization", Policy Perspectives, vol. 8 no.1, January-June 2011, p. 71, he states only that China is 'concerned' about Uyghurs in this connection, the full deduction about safe havens made here is mine. S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 18; and, Each of these three 'evils' was enumerated in the SCO's Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, 15 June 2001, viewed on 2 March 2016, http://www.refworld.org/docid/49f5d9f92.html. The term 'Three Evils' subsequently became commonly used by Chinese media to refer to all three together; and, Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', Asian Affairs, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 127. The Three Evils were first identified in 1998 when the Almaty Declaration pledged the Shanghai Five to combat them. C.P. Chung, 'The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's changing influence in Central Asia', China Quarterly, no. 180, December 2004, p. 990.

[505] N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', Harvard International Review, vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, p. 40; and, C.P. Chung, 'The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's changing influence in Central Asia', China Quarterly, no. 180, December 2004, p. 994

[506] K. Rahman, op. cit., p. 68; and, "Kazakhstan alone holds proven oil reserves of around 30 billion barrels, along with 2.4 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Turkmenistan's natural as reserves, at 7.94 trillion cubic meters, are the fourth largest in the world. Uzbekistan is estimated to have over 1.8 trillion cubic meters of gas, and is one of the largest exporters of this resource. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, relatively smaller countries, are endowed with vast electricity generation potentials. These statistics do not take into account the rich resources present in the wider region, for example, in the Caspian Sea and

The SCO is a way of helping to gain access to such reserves and help China mitigate its Malacca Straits dilemma. [507] Namely that the vast majority of China's energy requirements are met via shipping of oil via the Malacca Straits leaving China vulnerable to a distant naval blockade by the US, potentially in a situation involving China attempting to recapture Taiwan. Central Asia lags far behind the Middle East and Russia as a source of energy for China, but given the potential strategic instability in the Middle East and the relationship uncertainties with Russia, Central Asia is an important alternative.[508] Until recently, Central Asian states were dependent on the Soviet Union and Russia to exploit these resources, but now Western and Chinese companies have made large investments in the energy sector in the region.[509] China has also used the SCO to constrain US influence in Central Asia.[510]

Shaping domestic and international perceptions

The PRC security measures and international cooperation in the form of the SCO are also motivated by the desire to shape international and domestic audience's perceptions. China wishes to depict itself, along with the US, as suffering from Islamic terrorism. This helps deflect questions related to Uyghur grievances. The logic here is simple, and can be summarised as follows: Terrorism is never justifiable. We are suffering terrorism.

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across in Azerbaijan." K. Rahman, 'Central Asia, energy security and Shanghai Cooperation Organization', *Policy Perspectives*, vol. 8 no.1, January-June 2011, p. 65; and, K. Shieves, op. cit., pp. 216-7.

[507] C.P. Chung, 'The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's changing influence in Central Asia', *China Quarterly*, no. 180, December 2004, p. 1000.

[508] K. Shieves, op. cit., p. 218.

[509] K. Rahman, op. cit., p. 66.

[510] C.E. Ziegler, "Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and American foreign policy from indifference to engagement', *Asian Survey*, vol. 53, no. 3, May/June 2013, p. 494.

Therefore, what we are suffering is unjustifiable. This also helps the Chinese authorities argue that their security measures are reasonable and that criticism by others is unfair and hypocritical. As a China daily commentary observed, when the US detained Uyghurs in Guantanamo Bay, Xinjiang is part of the Global War on Terrorism, but when the PRC makes such arrests, it is arbitrary repression.[511]

Most of the SCO's member states are authoritarian régimes. Such régimes often consider national-security and régime-security as one and the same.[512] The SCO helps create a veneer of multi-lateral respectability for the member states' domestic security régimes.[513] Yet it is still sometimes called a club of dictators.[514] The SCO also helps China avoid appearing anti-Muslim, since so many of the member states are Muslim societies.[515]

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[511] 'No double standard on terror' *China Daily* editorial, 17 November 2015, viewed on 6 March 2016 http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2015-11/17/content_22476713.htm
[512] J.Y.S. Cheng, 'The Afghanistan situation and China's new approach to the SCO', *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no. 2, March/April 2015, p. 368.
[513] S.R. Roberts, 'A land of borderlands: implications of Xinjiang's trans-border interactions', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 234.
[514] S. Tisdall, 'Irresistible rise of the dictators' club', *The Guardian*, viewed on 2 March 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jun/06/world.comment
[515] M.R. Debata, *China's minorities: ethnic-religious separatism in Xinjiang*, Pentagon Press: New Delhi, 2007, p. 207.

5.3 Characteristics of the Security and International cooperation Dimension

**Domestic Security Approach – 'Four-in-One Defence System' and Strike Hard**

In its 2003 white paper on the History and Development of Xinjiang, the PRC mentioned a 'four-in-one' defence system for Xinjiang that uses the security forces, the XPCC and the common people to secure Xinjiang.

> 'As an important force for stability in Xinjiang and for consolidating frontier defense, the XPCC adheres to the principle of attaching equal importance to production and militia duties. It has set up in frontier areas a 'four-in-one' system of joint defense that links the PLA, the Armed Police, the XPCC and the ordinary people, playing an irreplaceable special role in the past five decades in smashing and resisting internal and external separatists' attempts at sabotage and infiltration, and in maintaining the stability and safety of the borders of the motherland.'[516]

Wayne depicts the unique security apparatus in Xinjiang in figure 4 below. It depicts the PLA, the paramilitary PAP, the XPCC and Han people as 'defensive' layers against what Beijing perceives as an inherently unreliable and potentially threatening Uyghur population.

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[516] PRC State Council, white paper on *History and development of Xinjiang*, State Council Information Office, May 2003, viewed on 2 February 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/

Figure 4: Wayne's Depiction of Troop Strength in the Four-in-One Model[517]
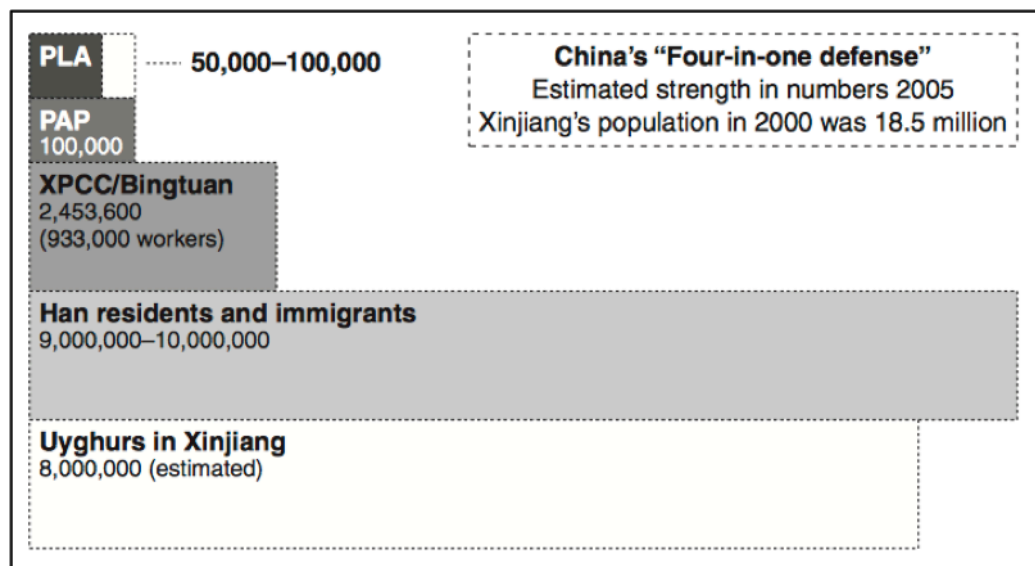
The first institution in the four-in-one system is the PLA. The smallest component of this apparatus is the military itself. Standing somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 troops, the PLA in Xinjiang is able to conduct military operations against neighbouring countries (including India and Russia), counter–terrorism operations, but can also support the PAP or the XPCC in quashing riots or other aspects of civil order policing. These units are mostly motorised and lack helicopter and air support – although there is a PLAAF fighter division based in Urumqi and Korla, and a PLA army aviation regiment based in Kashgar.[518]

Given the size of Xinjiang in area, and the large number of foreign frontiers, the military presence is relatively small. The forces stationed there, however, are concentrated in Xinjiang's cities creating the impression of a strong military presence

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[517] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., figure 4 p. 74.
[518] Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 125; and, M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 76.

especially in the regional capital – Urumqi.[519] Until the PLA reorganisation of late 2015, Xinjiang fell into the Lanzhou Military Region which had the lowest troop density to square kilometre of China's seven military regions measuring troops to square kilometres. Shichor has cited this fact as part of an argument that Xinjiang is relatively lightly guarded.[520] Although on a per capita basis there are roughly twice as many PLA ground forces per person in Xinjiang than the national average.[521] However, this does not take into account the enormous XPCC with its para-military capabilities. Nevertheless, the PLA has a relatively minor role in day-to-day security operations in Xinjiang, especially in populated areas. Basing them in cities makes sense from a logistical point of view as it is less expensive than basing them in the countryside but it also allows for rapid deployment to likely protest sites if the local police and the PAP need support.

The next institution in the Xinjiang security apparatus is the PAP which plays a major role in maintaining stability in China. The Chinese government calls the PAP 'the state's backbone and shock force in handling public emergencies.'[522] The PAP could be described as a civil order police, or as a constabulary force. Throughout China, the PAP has become by far the most used organisation for quashing civil unrest. This prevents

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[519] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., figure 4, p. 74.

[520] Y. Shichor, op. cit., pp. 122-3 and 125.

[521] According to the 2010 census the PRC (including Taiwan) had a total population of 1,339,724,852, and Xinjiang had 21,813,334 people. China Data Center of the University of Michigan 'China 2010 Census Data Released', [web page] 29 September 2011, citing the National Bureau of Statistics of China, viewed on 10 July 2016, http://chin*-+adatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=470. In 2016, the PLA ground forces nationwide stood at 1,600,000. *The Military Balance 2016*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Rutledge, 2016, cited in A. Lockie, 'How the world's largest military stacks up to the US armed forces', *Business Insider,* 30 March 2016, viewed on 7 July 2017, http://www.businessinsider.com/chinese-military-compared-to-us-2016-3/?r=AU&IR=T/#overview-of-chinas-military-forces-1 . Taken together, using 50,000 as the assumed number of PLA ground forces troops for Xinjiang this gives a troop to citizen ratio of 1:436 versus 1:837 for the country as a whole.

[522] PRC State Council, white paper on China's national defense in 2010, March 2011 viewed on 3 April 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2011-03-31/content_22263510.htm

tarnishing the image of the so–called 'People's Liberation Army' by sparing them such duties as could lead to another Tiananmen Square Massacre. The PAP is organised in a light infantry model and trained and equipped to 'police society, create internal security, and crush unrest'.[523] After the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 the PAP was comprehensively overhauled and greatly expanded through the conversion of many PLA infantry units into PAP units.[524] The PAP now number some 660,000[525] personnel, the vast majority of whom are allocated to internal security roles – including counter–terrorism roles – while some conduct border security and other specialised duties.

The PAP is the first line of security against separatism and ethnic unrest in Xinjiang. The PAP's civil order policing role allows a degree of specialised equipment and training for an organisation that needs to be able to use less–lethal force efficiently. Since the 1990s, the PAP in Xinjiang has become proficient in quelling riots and maintaining order through the use of less-lethal weapons and tactics.[526] The PAP has been at the forefront of implementing Strike Hard measures over the last two decades.[527] In Xinjiang this has meant a much more effective force, that looks less like an occupying army than would a larger more visible PLA presence. This means the PLA can still be useful to intimidate and deter would-be-attackers, and can support the PAP if necessary.

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[523] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 77.
[524] Tai Ming Cheung, 'Guarding China's domestic front line: the People's Armed Police and China's stability', *China Quarterly*, vol. 146, 1996, p. 527.
[525] US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, 2008, p. 18, viewed on 7 July 2017, http://www.mcsstw.org/www/download/China_Military_Power_Report_2008.pdf; and Palgrave Macmillan, *The statesman's yearbook 2017: the politics, cultures and economies of the world*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2017, p. 328.
[526] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 81.
[527] Ibid., pp. 80-1.

Wayne illustrates this relationship with the example of the suppression of a protest in Hotan on 7 July 1995. A crowd gathered around a local government building to protest the frequent arrests of their imams for speaking on forbidden topics. The protesters were encircled and contained by riot police (who were probably PAP), tear–gassed and then beaten. Sited in over watch positions were PLA tanks, but that matter was resolved by less–lethal means. Political power grows not only from the barrel of a gun, but the wielding of truncheons too.[528] This simple and direct way of handling riots is now commonplace in Xinjiang. In the case of the Yining riot in 1997, once again the PAP was at the forefront of attempts to restore order, with the PLA in providing a back-up role. On this occasion, the tactics included using water cannon in freezing cold weather, which combined with other injuries and the chaos of the situation reportedly led to over a 150 freezing to death – as well as tear gas, dogs, live ammunition, securing key facilities, dividing the protesters into more manageable-sized groups and arresting leaders. The numbers of wounded, arrested, killed are uncertain, but the figures run into the low hundreds.[529]

The XPCC plays an important role as a kind of reserve para-military force that can support the PAP (or PLA) in times of emergency. In the 1996, during one of the worst periods of unrest in Xinjiang, the XPCC which was required to respond to sabotage attacks that severed railway lines between Xinjiang and inner China. The police guarding roads and railways were supplemented by guard units from the XPCC showing that the XPCC's para-military role is significant.[530] More recently, the authorities reiterated the security role of the XPCC, announcing the formation of new

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[528] Ibid., pp. 82-3.
[529] Ibid., p. 85.
[530] M. Dillon, op. cit., p. 87.

specialised para-military detachments to strengthen the militia capacity of the Corps.[531]

Despite being organised along military lines and being comprised of many former servicemen, the XPCC has a vast agro-industrial conglomerate to run, and therefore it seems only realistic to expect that only a small percentage of its total numbers could be readily mobilised to respond to domestic security or national defence crises. But the vast number of Han people and the agro-industrial capacity of the XPCC is important to security in itself. It creates firm logistical bases for Chinese security forces operating in Xinjiang. This is a huge logistical advantage, compared to attempting to supply hundreds of thousands of troops and para-military police purely from inner China.

The fourth part of the four-in-one system is the common people. Realistically, however, this should be interpreted as mainly, but not exclusively, using Han people as most Uyghurs are reluctant to cooperate with security forces. The most important contribution of civilians to the work of the security forces in Xinjiang is from monitoring and reporting on suspicious behaviour of ethnic minorities. 'The hand of security services and surveillance is a key feature: not only can China pressure professional colleagues, neighbors, and families to police and report on their own members, but the Chinese have Uyghur operatives for all occasions, small and large.'[532] The local surveillance system run by 'security committees' down to the township level (*xiang* 乡) covering schools, workplaces, government bodies and neighbourhoods.[533] This creates a panopticon atmosphere even at the neighbourhood and street level in Xinjiang. It helps deter, detect and disrupt would be militants and intimidates people

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[531] Cui Jia and Gao Bo, 'Xinjiang Corps to step up fight against evil forces', *China Daily*, 8 October 2014, viewed on 3 March 2016, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-10/08/content_18703208.htm
[532] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 3.
[533] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 174.

from communicating about grievances amongst each other and with journalists and foreigners.[534] There is a chilling effect such that Uyghurs are afraid to even have private conversations that express support for Uyghur independence.[535]

These four groups, the PLA, the PAP, the XPCC and the Han people and Uyghur informants act to create an intimidating environment that largely deters militants from taking action and makes it difficult for activists to organise. The security forces also use harsh measures to respond to security incidents and launch periodic crackdowns known as Strike Hard campaigns. Starting in 1983 there was a nation-wide crackdown on crime known as the Campaign to Strike Severely at Serious Criminal Offences or Strike Hard for short. However, in April 1996 a new Strike Hard Campaign was launched that in Xinjiang was aimed at separatist forces as well as ordinary criminal activities.[536] According to a leaked document, 'Document no. 7', the senior Party leaders in Beijing who contemplated the unrest in Xinjiang, appear to have not considered that harsh repression might have been causing the unrest. Instead, they believed that the unrest meant more surveillance and repression was required.[537] Document no. 7 called for a more intense application of all the existing security measures available. The document also placed blame on the interference of foreign forces such as agents of the government of the US.

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[534] C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 266; and M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 3 and 266.
[535] Rotar, I. "The growing problem of Uighur separatism', *China Brief*, vol. 4, issue 8, The Jamestown Foundation, 15 April 2004, viewed on 12 September 2015, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=3644#.VfOsQngxFo4.
[536] M. Dillon, op. cit., p. 84.
[537] Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Document Central Committee (1996) No. 7, Record of the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the maintenance of Stability in Xinjiang. On 19 March 1996, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party held a meeting hosted by Jiang Zemin, viewed on 27 September 2015 http://caccp.freedomsherald.org/conf/doc7.html. See also, C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 179-180; and Document No 7 was translated by Uighurs and posted on the internet in August 1999, 'Its authenticity has not been challenged.' C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 179 and 282.

The Chinese government uses harsh security measures in all its jurisdictions. There is, however, a Xinjiang–specific style of law enforcement and security activities focussed on combatting the Three Evils. 'These crackdowns involve large numbers of arrests and convictions from expedited legal proceedings.'[538] Many Strike Hard features have become standing arrangements. The measures include: a very heavy police and para-military police presence in Xinjiang, especially in Urumqi, shows of force and dismounted and armoured personnel carrier–mounted patrolling , searches of houses, vehicle check points, personnel check points, harassment of activists, breaking up un-sanctioned religious instruction meetings, mass arrest and detentions, harsh questioning, forced disappearances, house arrests, torture and executions.[539] In Xinjiang security measures seem designed more to cow the population than to address terrorism.[540] A leading technique appears to be the large number of detentions and arrests on the grounds of endangering state security.[541] For example, over two years, 2011 to 2012, China arrested over 2,000 people for endangering state security with Xinjiang, accounting for around 80 per cent of all trials. This is vastly out of proportion with its share of the national population which is 1.63 per cent.[542] Such arrests result in swift

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[538] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 84.

[539] T. Narramore, "Exercising sovereignty: China's 'Core Interests' and unfinished national unification', refereed conference paper, APSA, 24-26 September 2012, Hobart, p. 17; and, E. Van Wie Davis 'Governance in China in 2010', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 4, 2009, p. 204; and E. Van Wie Davis, 'Uyghur Muslim ethnic separatism in Xinjiang, China', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 1, 2008, p. 16; and, Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 137. According to Amnesty International Xinjiang was the only part of China where judges seemed to systematically turn a blind eye to torture. People's Republic of China: gross violations of human rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region', April 1999, p 43 viewed on 3 March 2016, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA17/018/1999/en/

[540] 'Xinjiang: Let them shoot hoops: China's turbulent west is unlikely to be calmed by plans for economic development', 30 July 2011, viewed on 1 September 2015, http://www.economist.com/node/21524940

[541] T. Narramore, "Exercising sovereignty: China's 'Core Interests' and unfinished national unification', refereed conference paper, APSA, 24-26 September 2012, Hobart, p. 17.

[542] Arrests for 'endangering state security' crimes stood at 1,049 in 2011, and 1,105 in 2012 according to human rights NGO Duihua citing official statistics released in China Law Yearbook 2013.
Duihua, 'China's State Security Arrests Up 19% in 2012', 26 November 2013, viewed on 10 July 2016, http://www.duihuahrjournal.org/2013/11/chinas-state-security-arrests-up-19-in.html.

prosecutions, sometimes lacking in due process, long prison sentences or executions for Uyghurs, and in some cases Uyghurs who China insisted be repatriated from abroad who simply disappeared.[543] Extra-judicial punishments are common in China, but in Xinjiang the repression falls most heavily on Uyghurs who despite being less than half the population make up the vast majority of the XUAR's approximately 35,000 prisoners.[544]

China also operates an 'administrative' punishment system that has sent millions of PRC subjects to re-education camps.[545] The system was nominally abolished in 2013 and replaced with 'community correctional centres', although the changes are more

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According to the 2010 census the PRC (including Taiwan) had a total population of 1,339,724,852, and Xinjiang had 21,813,334 people. Thus Xinjiang accounts for 1.63 per cent of China's population. China Data Center of the University of Michigan 'China 2010 Census Data Released', [web page] 29 September 2011, citing the National Bureau of Statistics of China, viewed on 10 July 2016, http://chinadatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=470.

[543] US Department of State, 'Country Reports for human rights practices for 2013: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau)', US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dlid=220186#wrapper, 2014, viewed on 11 September 2014. "According to the 2013 China Law Yearbook, authorities in 2012 arrested 1,105 individuals for "endangering state security," a 19 percent increase from 2011. The NGO Dui Hua estimated that arrests from Xinjiang accounted for 75 percent of "endangering state security" charges."

[544] C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 193-4. Extra-judicial practices include: '…arresting suspects' families, jailing suspects without trial, dispensing with defence lawyers, reaching verdicts in secret 'adjudication committees', handing down long sentences for political dissent, persecuting religious...'. Ibid., p. 173. Concerning prisoners in Xinjiang, 35,000 is the number reported be held by the XUAR's department of justice, whereas roughly 49,000 are held by the XPCC. XPCC prisoners come from all over mainland China and serving their sentences with the XPCC is one way of achieving Han migration to the region. J.D. Seymour and M.R. Anderson, *New ghosts, old ghosts: prisons and labor reform camps in China*, Routledge, New York, 2015, p 116. Reliable figures on the break down of prisoners by ethnicity are hard to obtain and are a closely kept secret of the Chinese authorities. G. Hoja, 'China builds more prisons in Xinjiang', *Radio Free Asia* (Uyghur Service), translated by M. Juma and written in English by R. Finney, 27 September 2016, viewed on 7 July 2017, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/prisons-09272016161856.html.

[545] This system included two streams *laogai* and *laojiao*, Laogai Research Foundation, website, viewed on 3 March 2016, http://laogai.org. The *laogai* (劳改 reform through labor) camp was a form of criminal punishment established to punish convicted defendants, whereas the *laojiao* (劳教 re-education through labour) camp was a form of administrative punishment designed to imprison so-called class enemies and petty criminals without the time and evidentiary burdens of a trial. *Laogai* sentences theoretically carried a fixed term, whereas *laojiao* inmates served terms of indefinite duration. In 1979, however, authorities limited *laojiao* sentences to four years, the maximum term of confinement until the system was formally abolished in 2013.

cosmetic than substantial.[546] The re-education camps gave the authorities a speedy way of sentencing people, especially for holding incorrect views, which is often the case with Xinjiang's religious leaders, to confinement for up to three years without the hassle of legal proceedings.[547] In some cases, Uyghurs are legally executed for religious and political crimes making Xinjiang the last known jurisdiction in the PRC that executes political prisoners.[548]

Another common feature of PRC reactions to apparent Uyghur–separatist violence, is to quickly round up the supposed perpetrators, raising suspicions about how perpetrators can be quickly identified straight after an attack, and yet not intercepted before it.[549] After the violence in 1996, thousands of security force troops swept through Urumqi and rounded up over 300 separatist suspects.[550]

In the event of extreme incidents such as the Urumqi riots in 2009, the government also cuts off internet and telecommunications. This may hamper militant separatists, but it certainly makes the spread of news and panic about the security situation in Xinjiang

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[546] Freedom House [a NGO], *Freedom in the World* [report], 2015, China [extract], viewed on
12 July 2016, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/china ; and K. Hunt, "Amnesty report: China's abolition of labor camps a 'cosmetic change'", *CNN,* 16 December 2013, viewed on 3 March 2016,
http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/16/world/asia/china-labor-camps-report/
[547] C. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 187-8. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom makes it clear that Xinjiang still experiences a great deal of arbitrary arrest and extra-judicial detention, and that these measures are frequently used against religious figures in the PRC as a whole although it does not explicitly record instances of religious figures being so treated in Xinjang, I infer that this is still the case. USCIRF, *Annual report 2015, China* [section], viewed on 12 July 2016,
http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/China%202015.pdf
[548] "Between 1997 and 1999 Amnesty recorded 210 death sentences and 190 executions in the province, mainly of Uighurs convicted of political and religious 'crimes'." C. Tyler, op. cit., p. 174.
[549] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 48.
[550] Ibid., p. 84.

slower.[551] Facebook and Twitter and some micro-blogs were also permanently shut down in China following the 2009 riots.[552]

Wayne argues that these security measures are part of a comprehensive counter-insurgency strategy characterised by society-centric warfare. Society-centric warfare is where state and social institutions are the mechanisms and the locations where the enemy's will to fight is contested.[553] He views the efforts as being part of a comprehensive counter–insurgency strategy that is quite effective. He attributes the success to China's focus on the non–security aspects of counter–insurgency (or what he terms 'bottom up' approaches.)[554] He depicts the civilian Han population as participants in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations because they provide the authorities useful information on separatist activities. This observation helps explain why the CCP sees more Han migration to Xinjiang as helping the long-term security situation even while their presence stokes Uyghur resentment.

Security terminology and bundling together violent and non-violent acts

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang is how it uses terminology to bundle together both separatism, terrorism and religious extremism as the Three Evils, but also militant separatists, activists and sympathisers as trouble makers who support the Three Evils. The PRC deliberately conflates terrorism and

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[551] E. Harwit, 'The rise and influence of weibo (microblogs) in China', *Asian Survey*, vol. 54, no. 6, November/December 2014, pp. 1079-80 and 1085.
[552] Ibid., pp. 1059-1087, p. 1064 and 1067.
[553] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 107.
[554] Ibid., pp. 12-3.

separatism using the term Three Evils which in 2004 Hu Jintao blamed as the root cause of conflict in Xinjiang.[555] Authorities often blur distinctions between peaceful religious practice and criminal or militant separatist activities.[556] Almost any violent or criminal act perpetrated in Xinjiang or by Uyghurs anywhere is reflexively described as terrorism in the Chinese media. Even calling for genuine autonomy for Xinjiang has been depicted by the official Chinese media as tantamount to supporting terrorism.[557] Together, these rhetorical techniques conveniently paint anything that Beijing finds threatening in Xinjiang as extreme and evil behaviour or at least as trouble making linked to militant separatism.[558]

Although the authorities claim to be focused on combating the Three Evils, their heavy-handed measures focus on 'trouble makers' which incorporates everyone from separatist sympathisers, activists who air grievances against the state and their lawyers, up to actual terrorists. In short, the authorities make little distinction between cracking down on passive resistance, violent acts of separatism and ordinary criminal acts.[559] The authorities prosecuted Uyghurs for dissent and activism claiming they are manifestations of the Three Evils.[560] The habit of describing a wide range of behaviour as being connected with trouble makers and the Three Evils extends to clothing, headwear and beards. The security forces' using check points to enforce restrictions on

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[555] K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 210; and, K. Tsuo, 'How the west was lost: China's Xinjiang policy', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, Autumn 2009, p. 10.

[556] J. Lipes, "Religious curbs in Xinjiang 'increases potential' for violent extremism", *Radio Free Asia*, 28 July 2014, viewed on 12 July 2016, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/campaign-07282014190503.html.

[557] M.E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's rise in Central Asia – a history*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 156.

[558] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 48.

[559] M.E. Clarke, "China's 'war on terror' in Xinjiang: human security and the causes of violent Uighur separatism", *Regional Outlook Paper*, no. 11, 2007 (available at https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/18239/regional-outlook-volume-11.pdf).

[560] K. Kanat, 'Repression in China and its consequences in Xinjiang, current trends in Islamist ideology vol. 17, August 2014, p. 133.

traditional dress such as head scarves is an example of how adherence to Uyghur customs is conflated with security issues.[561] '… Chinese officials cited concerns over "separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism as a pretext to enforce repressive restrictions" on the religious practices of Uyghur Muslims.'[562]

Trouble makers come in all different sizes. One prominent Uighur academic, a professor of economics at the Central University of Nationalities in Beijing, Ilham Tohti, was arrested in January 2014 on charges of separatism. This is punishable by measures ranging from 10 years in prison to execution. Tohti's lawyer claimed he was being denied access to his client. The World Uyghur Congress condemned the charges saying Tohti's arrest part of '…a well–known pattern that Beijing adopted to suppress independent and critical voices in China.'[563] Tohti was sentenced to life in prison.[564]

One of the advantages of bundling 'trouble makers' in with terrorists is to help sharpen the choice ordinary Uyghur make in responding to the PRC. They either quietly submit, or they are at risk of facing the penalties terrorists face for any acts the authorities deem threatening or subversive. A third option – pretending to submit but passively resisting, is ineffective because the forces of Sinicisation are strong and pervasive. For example, a typical Uyghur farmer who wishes to quietly resist must deal with practical choices

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[561] B. Demick, 'China imposes intrusive rules on Uighurs in Xinjiang', LA Times, 5 August 2014, viewed on 4 March 2016, http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-china-privacy-20140805-story.html; and, S. Dasgupta, 'Muslims livid over China's anti-veil drive in Xinjiang', *Times of India*, 26 November 2013, viewed on 5 March 2016, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/Muslims-livid-over-Chinas-anti-veil-drive-in-Xinjiang/articleshow/26386962.cms. The article quotes Meng Xuihui, head of Dunamili Sub-District of Xinjiang as saying that long-beards and certain modes of dress can indicate separatist or religious extremist views.
[562] J. Lipes, op. cit.
[563] World Uyghur Congress (diaspora activist group) press release *WUC condemns PRC government for charging Ilham Tohti, with inciting separatism in China*, WUC website, viewed on 3 March 2016, http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/?p=22048
[564] N. Cumming-Bruce, 'Ilham Tohti, Uighur scholar in Chinese prison, is given human rights award', *New York Times*, 11 October 2016, viewed on 21 August 2017, https://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/10/12/world/europe/ilham-tohti-uighur-human-rights-award.html

about his children. It is illegal to not send children to school, and in school the curriculum is delivered almost only in Mandarin Chinese. The farmer is very likely to wish to impart Islam to his children as his father did for him. But it is illegal for children to attend mosques and unregistered (home religious meetings) are also illegal. This is another kind of containment strategy. But it is one which causes resentment. This is counter-intuitive as one might expect to see security measures that avoid resentment. It is a type of containment in that it degrades the transmission of Islam in Uyghur youths, and denies them a place to meet and organise.

Another characteristic of the security dimension of the strategy in Xinjiang is the use of rhetoric that evokes both unease and gratitude to the Chinese authorities amongst the Han people. Such terms include 'Uyghur terror threat' and 'strike hard at terror'.[565] More broadly, the Chinese authorities use the term terrorism almost exclusively in relation to Uyghur and Tibetan offenders.[566] In this regard it faces a dilemma if it downplays the threats of religious extremism and separatism, it may make its reprisals look unreasonable, on the other hand if it emphasises the seriousness of the threats, it risks making the Party and the security forces look impotent.[567] The China Daily tried to have it both ways in an editorial in 2014: 'Religious extremism, combined with ethnic separatism, in Xinjiang pose a serious challenge to China's overall domestic security.

[565] T. Cliff, 'The 'terror' angle in China's domestic 'stability maintenance'" blog post, *China Policy Institute Blog*, the University of Nottingham, 18 March 2016, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/2016/03/18/the-terror-angle-in-chinas-domestic-stability-maintenance/

[566] J. Leibold, "How China Sees ISIS Is Not How It Sees 'Terrorism'", *the National Interest*, 7 December 2015, viewed on 7 July 2017, http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-china-sees-isis-not-how-it-sees-%E2%80%98terrorism%E2%80%99-14523

[567] Y. Shichor, 'Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 124.

However, China's comprehensive capability in fighting against terrorism and maintaining stability is improving with the full support of the central government.'[568]

International cooperation and the SCO

The security strategy in relation to Xinjiang also has an important external feature – the international anti-terrorism efforts with neighbouring countries mostly under the framework of the SCO. The SCO is more of an instrument for multilateral cooperation than it is an independent actor.[569] Its key stated goals, according to the Shanghai Convention, are to collaborate in combating the Three Evils and to facilitate regional economic growth. It has additional stated goals of fighting cross–border crime, and narcotics and arms smuggling – all of which are reasonable objectives but can also be potential sources of support and logistics for militants.[570] In terms of pursuing its security and energy goals in Central Asia China buys the acquiescence of the Central Asian republics by reportedly subsidising trade, overpaying for mineral rights and lavishing their visiting dignitaries with official hospitality.[571]

The SCO's secretariat is based in Beijing, but a crucial subordinate organisation is the Regional Anti–Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. RATS was

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[568] 'Terrorists in Xinjiang doomed to fail', *China Daily*, 23 May 2014, viewed on 3 March 2016, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-05/23/content_17535394.htm

[569] J.-P. Cabestan, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Central Asia, and the great powers, an introduction one bed, different dreams?" *Asian Survey*, vol. 53, no. 3, May/June 2013, p. 434.

[570] Human Rights in China [NGO] white paper, 'Counter-terrorism and human rights: the impact of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization', New York, March 2011, pp. 9-10, available viewed on 13 September 2015, http://www.hrichina.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdfs/2011-hric-sco-whitepaper-full.pdf

[571] C. Horner, 'The Other Orientalism: China's Islamist Problem', *National Interest*, no. 67, Spring 2002, p. 44

given the task to combat the Three Evils by coordinating the work of the relevant national security authorities and sharing information and providing intelligence sharing and analytical support, legal advice and coordinating large-scale combined exercises and training. Its governing body is composed of the senior national security officials of the SCO's member states.[572]

The SCO does not have a single consolidated definition of terrorism but taking an aggregate view of the key documents that touch on the definition, show that the organisation takes a broader view of terrorism than the UN definition. The SCO's 2009 counter-terrorism convention, for example, says: "…'ideology of violence' and a 'practice of exerting influence on the decision-making of governments or international organizations by threatening or committing violent and (or) other criminal acts, connected with intimidating the population and aimed at causing injury to private individuals, society or the state.'"[573]

The SCO's definition is sufficiently wide that crimes against the state, or even social movements that it regards as a threat to the national governing régime's survival, could be deemed as threats to 'public security' and therefore 'terrorism'. Such a broad definition no doubt includes genuine acts of terrorism, but it creates the appearance of a

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[572] Human Rights in China [NGO] white paper, 'Counter-terrorism and human rights: the impact of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization', New York, March 2011, pp. 11, 15 and 22, available viewed on 13 September 2015, http://www.hrichina.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdfs/2011-hric-sco-whitepaper-full.pdf
[573] This quote is taken from a human rights NGO's translation and interpretation of a Russian version of the 2009 SCO Convention on Counter-Terrorism. (Human Rights in China [a NGO], Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Kazakhstan, 3 June 2011, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/KAZ/INT_CCPR_NGO_KAZ_102_9349_E.pdf). I am not aware of an alternative translation into English of the aforesaid convention. The SCO's counter-terrorism framework is also built on the 2001 Shanghai Convention on Combatting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, 15 June, 2001 reproduced on the Council for Foreign Relations website, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://www.cfr.org/counterterrorism/shanghai-convention-combating-terrorism-separatism-extremism/p25184

legal cloak that can be cast over a broad range of behaviour that threatens the SCO member states in any way. SCO's anti-terrorism framework therefore seems more concerned with protecting governing régimes, rather than protecting citizens.[574]

In practical terms, the SCO, through RATs, has used untransparent cooperation to crack down on a wide range of behaviour under the banner of counter–terrorism. The cooperation has included intelligence sharing with a lack of transparency, including the use of a shared database and blacklists compiled in a manner not subject to outside scrutiny by either human rights organisations or the lawyers of the accused. Such sharing often leads to extraditions in violation of international legal norms, and without due process.[575] All the while, law enforcement and military cooperation have created a more militarised flavour to international cooperation sending signals about the willingness to use force against problem groups including diaspora Uyghurs.[576]

5.4 Changes Over Time in the Security and International cooperation Dimension

The security dimension of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang has experienced continuity and change. Generally, security measures have been consistent in that they focus on the use of force to quell protests and uprisings, and to deter further outbreaks of violence. But ever since the 1996 Strike Hard campaign, the security forces posture and approach

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[574] Human Rights in China [NGO] white paper, 'Counter-terrorism and human rights: the impact of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization', New York, March 2011, pp. 42-3 and 66, available viewed on 13 September 2015, http://www.hrichina.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdfs/2011-hric-sco-whitepaper-full.pdf
[575] Ibid, p. iii.
[576] Ibid.

has been markedly harsher.[577] In short, there has been a progressive hardening of security approach, which sees security forces treating harshly any civil disorder, whether separatist or not.

The SCO has played an important role in responding to security concerns related to the rise of jihadism and managing the Uyghur diaspora, especially since 9/11. With the fall of the Soviet Union the newly independent Central Asian states inevitably had to renegotiate their relationship with China. Additionally, Beijing had to manage the risk of Uyghur diaspora groups and other sympathetic Turks aiding Uyghur separatists. The SCO was a natural response to both requirements. With the rise of Islamic radicalism in Iran in the late 1970s and Afghanistan in the 1980s, and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the region became more open to Islamic radicalism – which Beijing refers to as religious extremism being the third of the Three Evils.[578]

Three days after 9/11 on 14 September, the SCO held a prime ministerial level meeting at which the Chinese premier, Zhu Rongji urged the SCO to play a leading anti-terrorism role.[579] The SCO subsequently shifted its emphasis from border demarcation and military confidence building measures, to fighting the Three Evils.[580] On 18 September 2001 a first–grade military alert was proclaimed and a large number

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[577] The PLA faced resistance in 1950–51 from a number of quarters. GMD troops that refused to surrender, local bands of natives, such as a group of Kazaks led by Osman Bator and others.
D.H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist power and policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1979, p. 101.
[578] Y. Shichor, op. cit., p. 127.
[579] C.P. Chung, 'The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's changing influence in Central Asia', *China Quarterly*, no. 180, December 2004, p. 994.
[580] K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 213.

of military forces were surged to the Sino–Afghan border.[581] Upon hearing the news of the 9/11 attacks, China deployed military forces to its north-western frontiers to seal the border and act as a show of force against any Uyghurs who might find inspiration in what took place in the US. There was also a crackdown on Uyghur separatists and general ramp up of surveillance measures directed against Ugyhurs.[582]

After 9/11, China changed radically its propaganda on the problem of Uyghur militancy in Xinjiang.[583] In the 1990s it had always played down the unrest caused by what it depicted as a small number of separatist agitators; but after 9/11 the same unrest was played up to highlight that China too was a combatant in the 'war on terrorism' and the separatists it faced were now called 'Islamic terrorists.' This also meant that China's security measures which might have previously been seen as harsh repression of an ethnic minority, were now acts in the Xinjiang theatre of the global war on terrorism.[584]

One of the specific benefits China gained from apparently joining the US's war on terrorism (in the broadest sense of 'join') was convincing Washington to brand the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a terrorist organisation. The ETIM is a Uyghur militant separatist organisation whose origins, membership and operations are not yet

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[581] Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 120.
[582] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 86; and, Y. Shichor, 'The great wall of steel: military and strategy in Xinjiang', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 120.
[583] C. Tyler, *Wild west China: the taming of Xinjiang*, Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004, p. 177.
[584] J.N. Smith, 'Research report: maintaining margins: the politics of ethnographic fieldwork in Chinese Central Asia', *China Journal*, no. 56, July 2006, p. 134; and, M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 32; and, K. Rahman, 'The challenge of terrorism and war on terror: Chinese response', *Policy Perspectives*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2012, p. 11.

well understood. [585] Immediately following 9/11 the ETIM became increasingly mentioned in the Chinese media. This new media campaign sought to connect the ETIM with international groups and therefore depict the US as fighting a problem that afflicted China too.[586] China was able to use this opportunity to successfully encourage the US to officially list the ETIM as a terrorist organisation which it did in 2002. Thanks to the US's listing, ETIM went from being obscure to notorious.[587]

The global war on terrorism brought about a situation where the US, Central Asian states and China could be seen as sharing a common threat to national security from radical Islam.[588] But it also created the possibility the US would spread its intervention to undertaking operations in Central Asia or even Xinjiang. In the days following 9/11 a number of Central Asian states opened the way to allowing US forces to operate out of bases there. China was concerned about the large presence of US military power there, and worried that it might become permanent.[589] The US 'war on terror' gave China reason to fear a rise in legitimacy of US intervening in foreign countries against terrorism. This made it important for Beijing to show not only that it was a victim of

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[585] B. Xu, H. Fletcher and J. Bajoria, 'The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)', *Council on Foreign Relations backgrounder,* viewed on 13 July 2016, http://www.cfr.org/china/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim/p9179

[586] S. Shen, P. Liu, 'Perceptions of anti-terrorism among students at China's Guangzhou University: misinformation or misinterpretation?', *Asian Survey*, vol. 49, no. 3, May/June 2009, p. 563.

[587] J.T. Reed and D. Raschke, *The ETIM: China's Islamic militants and the global terrorist threat,* Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, 2010, p. 35.

[588] C.E. Ziegler, 'Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and American foreign policy from indifference to engagement', *Asian Survey*, vol. 53, no. 3, May/June 2013, p. 491.

[589] In testimony before a US Congressional Executive Commission, historian and Sinologist, James Millward claimed Chinese officials were concerned about a Kosovo style US intervention in Xinjiang or US support for a 'colour revolution' in Xinjiang. J.A. Millward, [prepared statement on] *China's Changing Strategic Concerns: The Impact on Human Righ*ts in Xinjiang, to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 16 November 2005, viewed on 10 Jul 2017, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-109hhrg25440/html/CHRG-109hhrg25440.htm

See also, K. Shieves, 'China turns west: Beijing's contemporary strategy towards Central Asia', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 2, Summer 2006, p. 220; and, K. Rahman, 'The challenge of terrorism and war on terror: Chinese response', *Policy Perspectives*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2012, p. 11.

terrorism, but that it was taking appropriate, and multilateral, steps against terrorism in Xinjiang.[590]

The major international changes that have taken place relevant to security in Xinjiang since 1949, are the fall of the Soviet Union, the rise of Islamic terrorism, and the Global War on Terrorism. These changes have not fundamentally altered China's use of security forces – which has been consistently harsh – but they have given rise to the SCO and the focus on the Three Evils. More recently, with the rise of ISIS, China has not missed the opportunity to once again portray itself as a victim of international Islamic terrorism, claiming that 300 Uyghurs have joined ISIS ranks, with some returning from the Middle East to attack China.[591] No one disputes that some Uyghurs have joined ISIS, but China's figure of 300 seems a gross exaggeration.[592]

5.5 Consequences of the Security and International cooperation Dimension

Although Strike Hard tactics have reduced the level of violence in Xinjiang from its peak in the 1990s, they have certainly not reduced anti–PRC sentiment.[593] Indeed the heavy-handedness stokes a feeling of injustice and mistrust of authorities by the

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[590] K. Shieves, op. cit., p. 219.

[591] Qiu Yongzheng Turkey's ambiguous policies help terrorists join IS jihadist group', *Global Times* 15 December 2014 viewed on 6 March 2016, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/896765.shtml

[592] J. Drennan, 'Is China making its own terrorism problem worse?' *Foreign Policy*, 9 February 2015, viewed on 5 March 2016, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/is-china-making-its-own-terrorism-problem-worse-uighurs-islamic-state/?wp_login_redirect=0

[593] N. Hasan, 'China's forgotten dissenters: the long fuse of Xinjiang', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 22, no. 3, Fall 2000, p. 39.

Uyghurs.[594] The suppression of religious and cultural freedoms, and the treatment of prisoners, is a major cause of resentment by ethnic minorities.[595] Many Western academics believe this resentment either may, or already has, contributed to Islamic-inspired militant separatism amongst Uyghurs.[596] "…China's 'war on terror' – an effort to crush the Uighurs' then–tepid separatist movement–has become a self-fulfilling prophecy, instead helping to radicalize some factions of a relatively peaceful and non-cohesive separatist movement into a full-fledged terrorist operation."[597] In my view, the CCP understands that its policies cause resentment, but the Party accepts that this is a side-effect of implementing its strategy in Xinjiang.

Making it harder to resort to non-violent resistance

Rudelson and Jankowiak argue that Uyghurs respond to Sinicisation efforts in three main ways: acculturation (where Sinicisation is accepted), non–violent resistance (where Uyghurs avoid engaging with Chinese culture and the authorities and live as separately as possible from Han people), and violent resistance.[598] Of these three responses, the first – Sinicisation – is the CCP's aim for its overall strategy in the region. The second option – non-violent resistance – at first glance, compared to militant

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[594] E. Van Wie Davis 'Governance in China in 2010', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 4, 2009, p. 204.
[595] K. Tsuo, 'How the west was lost: China's Xinjiang policy', *Harvard International Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, Autumn 2009, p. 10.
[596] E. Van Wie Davis 'Governance in China in 2010', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 35, issue 4, 2009, p. 207.
[597] D.C. Boehm, 'China's failed war on terror: fanning the flames of Uighur separatist violence', *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Law*, vol. 2, p. 66, viewed on 12 September 2015, http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/jmeil/vol2/iss1/3
[598] J. Rudelson and W. Jankowiak, 'Acculturation and resistance: Xinjiang identities in flux', in S.F. Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 300.

attacks, does not seem like a serious problem for the Chinese authorities – but in fact it is.

By 'non-violent resistance' I mean a range of behaviours practiced by Uyghurs and other minorities to resist Sinicisation without use of violence, which includes speaking out against the Chinese authorities, protests, economic and political non-cooperation, and minimising participation in Han-dominant institutions and minimising meaningful contact with Han people. Non-violent resistance to Sinicisation means the CCP's long-term strategy is encountering a serious obstacle. For as long as non-violent resistance exists, then the strategy has not achieved its ultimate aim. This is because even non-violent resistance means the Uyghurs have not acquiesced, and groups that organise non-violent resistance can evolve into ones that advocate violence. The longer non-violent resistance goes on, the longer Beijing can expect to also face violent opposition, because, although non-violent resistance may seem benign in the short term, in the long-term it is a serious threat because it keeps alive a community that may one day have an opportunity to separate from China. Even if only a very small fraction of that community maintains the motivation to act violently against the PRC, then violent resistance will persist. violent resistance – the third response – is currently at manageable levels.

The security aspects of the CCP's strategy are intended to force Uyghurs to make sharper choices between acculturation and violent resistance because although the scope for non-violent resistance still exists, it is slowly narrowing. While some, especially young men have reacted to Beijing's rule with overt resistance, others have chosen to

prioritise their children's economic future by accepting the new reality.[599] Although Uyghurs may wish to choose non-violent ways of resisting assimilation, as seen by their self-segregation from Han people, not many Uyghurs are choosing this path or able to take this path. The steady rise in Mandarin Chinese education and the concomitant sideling of the Uyghur language, means that little-by-little Uyghurs are being Sinicised regardless of how much they may resent it. Uyghur can be spoken at home and in the community, but barely using it a school means that over time for more advanced academic and professional contexts, Mandarin must be spoken. Projected far enough, Uyghur may become a mere regional dialect.

Every Uyghur that leaves behind resistance and participates in the Han–dominated economy, education system and falls into the cultural fold of greater China is a victory for the strategy and denies the militants active support. Regardless of how bitterly they may resent the authorities, their behaviour is compliant. This gain for the CCP does not directly prevent the threat from the small number of motivated militant separatists, but it does progressively reduce the level of support the latter receive from the broader Uyghur community.

The CCP's security strategy, created a wedge amongst Uyghurs forcing people to make sharper choices than in the past between becoming part of Han Chinese society and participating in resistance. They appear to have been successful in preventing large scale disturbances that were common in the 1990s. The Party has created new grounds

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[599] S.F. Starr, 'Introduction' in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, S.F. Starr (ed.), ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, pp. 14-15.

for fear and resentment amongst minorities in Xinjiang, and has managed to portray its acts of suppression as counter–terrorism actions in the interests of the Chinese people.

The level of violence in relation to Xinjiang is now undesirable but manageable

The Party's security strategy is managing the challenging situation in Xinjiang and enjoys the Han public's support. Despite high profile bombings and stabbings since Xi's ascent, the New Silk Road has seen ever increasing levels of investment and development in Xinjiang. The Han public meanwhile, is generally united in its support of the Party to take whatever measures are necessary to stamp out the Three Evils for the sake of safeguarding stability.[600]

In terms of the narrow security problem, Strike Hard tactics appear to deter or quickly quash any attempts at large scale rioting or protesting by Uyghur activists. This is probably due to a combination of greater PAP presence, with less violent tactics and less lethal equipment (which are effective but less likely to draw opprobrium than indiscriminate violence), effective intelligence gathering at a local level, effective isolation of militants from potential supporters within Xinjiang, and a lack of ready access to safe havens and supplies from nearby countries thanks to RATS and the SCO. Although there has been a distinct rise in Western coverage and awareness of China's 'Uyghur problem', with the exception of the 2009 Urumqi riots, there have been fewer riots than in the late 1990s when the security forces had difficulty coping with the

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[600] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 67. The Han public was particularly supportive of Strike Hard measures following the 2009 Urumqi riots. M.E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's rise in Central Asia – a history*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 156.

geographical spread, scale intensity and persistence of riots and attacks. The recent more terrorist-style attacks since Xi Jinping came to power are much more characteristic of a small number of motivated militants, than they are of a mass social movement that frequent protests and riots would represent. Rooting out small numbers of militants, especially using tools designed to suppress and intimidate the population as a whole, is quite challenging.

Thus far, the work of the RATS and the SCO appears to be broadly successful in achieving regional stability, permitting multilateral cooperation, and securing economic interests of its member countries, especially China, in the region. One of the side-effects for China however, has been to force Uyghur activists in neighbouring countries underground, and into closer contact with radical Islamic groups.[601] But this makes meeting, organising and training more dangerous and difficult for those Uyghur separatists operating under-ground. This means those Uyghur separatists with less commitment and motivation are less likely to participate, than they might have if organising attacks seemed straightforward and less risky.

Additionally, the SCO and the opening of China's north-western frontier and the growth in energy exploitation, transportation and other commerce, has given Beijing an unprecedented level of influence in Central Asia.[602] After the fall of the Soviet Union, China's border security was poor, its level of trade was miniscule and its ability to influence the Uyghur diaspora was almost non-existent. Now it has managed to turn

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[601] Rotar, I. 'The growing problem of Uighur separatism', *China Brief*, vol. 4, issue 8,
The Jamestown Foundation, 15 April 2004, viewed on 12 September 2015,
http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=3644#.VfOsQngxFo4
[602] S.R. Roberts, 'A land of borderlands: implications of Xinjiang's trans-border interactions', in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland*, ed. S.F. Starr, ME Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2004, p. 235.

Central Asia into a strategic and economic salient for Chinese influence. China has not only secured its back gate through the PAP, the PLA and the XPCC, it has also managed to co-opt the élites of Central Asia to act as a security buffer for China. The cooperation of Central Asian élites is noteworthy, as it has been gained despite the potential Pan-Turkic sympathies of the Uyghurs' ethnic cousins in Central Asia, and the large Uyghur diaspora. This is a very significant achievement for Beijing's strategy in Xinjiang, and its broader national security ambitions.

5.6 Conclusion

The security and international cooperation dimension of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang encircles the Uyghur people with Chinese security forces in Xinjiang and neighbouring countries' security forces in Central Asia. The Uyghurs are surrounded by security forces and informants. In their neighbourhoods, workplaces and mosques, they are under the constant eye of Han authorities and constrained by rules about prayer, fasting and what they can wear. All the while, the region is being transformed physically and demographically, and Uyghur culture is besieged on every front. These policies cause deep resentment that helps motivate militant attacks that have been quite serious over the last three years.

China's security strategy in Xinjiang has been interpreted in many ways by foreign journalists and academics. Some have found the harshness of its repression against the Uyghurs confusing, because they believe it is counter-productive for the CCP's

strategy.[603] It appears to be in contradiction to the Uyghur's supposed autonomy and intuitively seems unlikely to win any hearts or minds. The side–effect is to create a great deal of resentment and confirm the sense amongst Uyghurs that Xinjiang is being occupied and colonised by Han authorities. The resentment this causes is a major criticism levelled against China's strategy in Xinjiang, and it is frequently misdiagnosed by observers in the West as meaning the strategy is 'counter–productive'.[604] This is founded on an interpretation that implicitly or explicitly believes genuine autonomy and would solve China's Uyghur problem. This is to misunderstand the strategic mindset at work in Beijing, however. In the PRC's mind, having millions of un-Sinicised Turks living together far from the Han heartland and on the international border, means that autonomy leaves Xinjiang only one step away from splitting with China. This cannot be

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[603] G. Domínguez, "Targeting of Islamic customs reflects 'misdiagnosis' of Uighur discontent" [interview with James Millward] *Deutsche Welle*, 11 May 2015, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://www.dw.com/en/targeting-of-islamic-customs-reflects-misdiagnosis-of-uighur-discontent/a-18444227; A.T. Grunfeld, 'Ethnic relations in China', pp. 109-180 in Zhidong Hao and Sheying Chen (eds.), *Social issues in China: gender, ethnicity, labor, and the environment*', Springer New York, 2014, p. 158; J. Mullen, China ramps up security in Xinjiang after unrest, CNN, 1 July 2013, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2013/07/01/world/asia/china-xinjiang-violence/ (this article quotes a US State Department spokesmen Patrick Ventrell as describing harsh security measures and discrimination against Uyghurs as counter-productive); D.C., Boehm, 'China's failed war on terror: fanning the flames of Uighur separatist violence', *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Law*, vol. 2, viewed on 12 September 2015, p.113, http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/jmeil/vol2/iss1/3 (this article argues the generally hostile measures by the Chinese authorities against Islam are counter-productive); J. Famularo, 'Chinese religious regulations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: a veiled threat to Turkic Muslims?' Project 2049 Institute, 2015, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://www.project2049.net/documents/Famularo_PRC_Religious_Regulations_Xinjiang.pdf, p.12 (the author describes the CCP's policies in Xinjiang in general as counter-productive and responsible for the 2009 Urumqi riots.); M. Forsythe, 'Deadly attacks in Xinjiang go unreported in China', *New York Times*, 26 February 2015, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/26/deadly-attacks-in-xinjiang-go-unreported-in-china/?_r=0 (author questions to what extent the severity of the Strike Hard measures are counter-productive); S. Denyer, "China orders Muslim shopkeepers to sell alcohol, cigarettes, to 'weaken' Islam", *Washington Post*, 5 May 2015, viewed on 13 July 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/05/05/china-orders-muslim-shopkeepers-to-sell-alcohol-cigarettes-to-weaken-islam/ (article describe attempts to force Muslims to shed beards and veils and sell alcohol as counter-productive and quotes James Leibold as saying that such measures only inflame resentment against the Chinese authorities); Associated Press, "China seizes hundreds of 'terrorists,' tons of explosives in Xinjiang sweep'", *Japan Times*, 24 June 2014, viewed on 13 July 2016, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/06/24/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/china-seizes-hundreds-terrorists-tons-explosives-xinjiang-sweep/#.V4ZaBFd0Wb9 (article quotes Human Rights Watch researcher Maya Wang as stating the current Strike Hard campaign might prove counter-productive because it targets petty criminals rather than true perpetrators of violent separatist acts.)
[604] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., pp. 88-9.

allowed to happen, as it could see China's periphery uncoil and the Party lose power.[605]

In short, some Western observers see the conflict in Xinjiang as being caused by Beijing's lack of pluralism and understanding. This analysis is not wrong in itself, but adopting genuine autonomy would run completely against the CCP's overarching approach to governing China. In its starkest terms, Beijing's logic is that there would not be a Uyghur problem if there were no Uyghurs. From Beijing's point of view the problem with Xinjiang is not a lack of understanding by the CCP, but a lack of homogeneity in the XUAR's population.

Wayne argues that strategy in Xinjiang is an effective coherent counter-insurgency where the civil authorities, and much of the Han population, are working in close support with the security forces to win a 'society centric' struggle.[606] I have argued that China has deliberately pursued security measures that repress the Uyghur population, intimidate them to prevent large scale rioting, and deter them from undertaking acts of violence. Wayne in contrast, sees this as a comprehensive effort to win over the Uyghurs rather than to subdue them. By bundling all the trouble makers together, and having a very broad definition of what amounts to terrorism and support for terrorism, Uyghurs face a sharper choice about whether they accept Sinicisation or resort to arms. The economic and demographic dimension, and the political and cultural dimensions, inter-lock with the security strategy such that the third alternative – that is, non-violent resistance – is made increasingly unviable especially due to the Sinicisation of the school curriculum.

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[605] M.E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's rise in Central Asia – a history*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 156.
[606] M.I. Wayne, op. cit., p. 146.

Before Sinicisation ultimately solves the problems in Xinjiang, the Party is faced with the prospect of ongoing militant attacks, probably quite often in inner China. But this is a manageable by-product to be expected in such a muscular strategy that aims to transform Xinjiang. The violence was much worse in the 1990s and is now at a level that is undesirable, but manageable.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This thesis argues that the CCP has a long-term strategy of Sinicising Xinjiang through comprehensive encirclement. The Party orchestrates diffuse policies and organisations to encircle Xinjiang's Turkic populations with Han people, institutions and practices, the Han-dominated economy, infrastructure from inner China, and the Chinese language. Despite its pseudo-autonomy, Xinjiang is at least as closely governed by the CCP as a typical Chinese province. In terms of religion, the practice of Islam is tightly constrained in Xinjiang. The CCP looks on all religion throughout the PRC with concern, but in Xinjiang's case, the Party is concerned that religion can be a source of strength for Uyghur identity, motivating passive and active resistance, and even jihadism. Therefore, the CCP's strategy is based on the lessons the Party draws from history about the difficulty of controlling non-Han people in the XUAR, the role of religion in galvanising resistance, and Xinjiang's strategic importance for China.

On and off for over two thousand years, Chinese imperial rulers have sought to secure what is now Xinjiang. Time and again, the dynasties of inner China found their control

of outlying regions imperilled by various, often Turkic, horse nomads. Originally the Chinese court paid tribute to appease horse nomads from the steppe. Soon the establishment of military garrisons was added to the menu of options for managing the threat such horse nomads posed to inner China. Due to Xinjiang's extreme remoteness from inner China, it was difficult to supply these garrisons, and as a result the troops established their own farms. In turn, the security the garrisons brought helped to promote trade from inner China through Xinjiang, along what came to be called the Silk Road. Over time, however, the imperial authorities found the various Turkic peoples were difficult to control and predisposed to rebellion. The imperial authorities found they had to devote increasingly more effort, deploy more troops and administrators, and send more Han settlers to provision the soldiers in response.

The Qing Dynasty saw two key turning points in Beijing's relationship with Xinjiang. The first was the genocide of the Zhungars in the late 1750s. This eliminated a major source of resistance to imperial rule, and led to a much larger permanent Qing presence in Xinjiang. The second turning point stemmed from the Qing Dynasty's redefinition of China in the late 1800s. Until the Manchu Qing Dynasty's overthrow of the Ming and capture of their imperial possessions, the Chinese identity had been synonymous with Han identity. But with a Manchu governing élite and the inclusion of other outlying peoples into their orbit, the Qing redefined China as a multi-ethnic empire. [607] Xinjiang epitomises this phenomenon as, in 1884, the Qing court converted it from a district under martial rule, to a Chinese province under the Confucian magistracy. This was the second key turning point for Xinjiang. When the Qing Dynasty abdicated in

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[607] G. Zhao, 'Reinventing China: imperial Qing ideology and the rise of modern Chinese national identity in the early twentieth century', *Modern China*, vol. 32, no. 1, January 2006, p. 7.

1912, the concept of 'China' included Taiwan, Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and the Han heartland of central-eastern and southern China. The Nationalists and Communists both adhered to this definition of China.

The underpinning philosophy of the Party's strategy in Xinjiang since 1949 has been colonial. The first tangible step in the CCP's Sinicisation of Xinjiang came with the demobilisation of hundreds of thousands of Han soldiers there. This was soon followed by millions of migrants from inner China – mostly workers and farmers. Han people have been used by the Party as constructors who undertake nation-building in a remote, physically and culturally barren borderland.[608] This migration has gone on for the last 67 years and shows every sign of continuing.[609] The most important institution in shepherding this migration, especially in its early years, is the XPCC.

The economic and demographic dimension of the Xinjiang strategy is exemplified by the XPCC, which is ideally suited to internal colonisation. It is fully self-reliant administratively, functioning as its own *de facto* government, as well as being a large agro-industrial and para-military organisation. The Corps, SOEs and Han migrants have brought an enormous amount of economic development to the region. Most notably, vast fields of land reclaimed from the desert, new cities and new parts of cities and large scale public infrastructure including highways, railways, high-speed railways, natural gas pipelines, oil pipelines, and communications infrastructure. This infrastructure not only ties Xinjiang more closely to inner China, it also allows China to import energy

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[608] T. Cliff, 'The partnership of stability in Xinjiang: state–society interactions following the July 2009 unrest', *The China Journal*, no. 68, July 2012, p. 82.
[609] Agence France Presse-Jiji Press, 'China seeks new wave of migrants to restive Xinjiang', 11 May 2015, viewed on 23 July 2016, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/05/11/asia-pacific/social-issues-asia-pacific/china-seeks-new-wave-migrants-restive-xinjiang/#.V5Mvn1d0Xox

and goods from, and through, Central Asia. The vast majority of this infrastructure was both built by Han labourers and has mainly helped service the heavily urbanised Han population and Han-dominated economy of Xinjiang. Additionally, the greatest beneficiaries of Xinjiang's economic boom have been the Han, and one of the reasons for this, is the widespread labour market discrimination against ethnic minorities.

The political and cultural dimension of the strategy provides a political framework of pseudo-autonomy which is actually a vehicle for tight central government control over Xinjiang. The titular autonomy gives the strategy a cloak of legitimacy that helps prevent China being branded as a colonial power. The cloak is intended to manage the perceptions of foreign audiences, but also domestic Han audiences in the PRC. Broadly speaking, Han mainlanders see the Uyghurs and other minorities as benefiting from autonomy and various forms of positive discrimination. In reality, however, the Party is concerned about the precarious situation in Xinjiang and closely supervises the regional government and the XPCC.

The cultural measures that the Party oversees in Xinjiang include language and education policies that are increasingly Mandarin Chinese dominated. The so-called bilingual education now taught throughout Xinjiang's schools has very little Uyghur-language instruction, and large numbers of ethnic Uyghur teachers have been displaced by Han teachers who can meet the Chinese language requirements. Therefore, the students are not only being taught mainly in Chinese, they are having Chinese culture imparted through Han teachers. Legally compliant mosques offer no substitute for the education of children, as minors are barred from attending mosques in Xinjiang. Since children are required to attend school, there is no practical and legal way around

the significant Sinicisation of children at school. Even when young people leave school, they find mosques and preachers are tightly controlled by the state and, workplaces that promise economic advancement and places of higher education are also Han run and call for Chinese language proficiency.

The changes brought by the economic and demographic dimension, and the political and cultural dimension of the Party's strategy, have caused great resentment amongst Xinjiang's Turks, especially so for the Uyghurs. This resentment has fuelled conflict characterised by planned violent attacks on security forces, and civilians and occasional protests that spontaneously turn into riots. The current phase of the conflict in Xinjiang can be traced to the early 1990s in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union. But Xinjiang's separatism also draws inspiration from earlier rebellions, and the ETR and Second ETR. In the post-9/11 world, jihadism has also provided motivation to a small, but committed number of Uyghur militants. With the fall of the Soviets, the Uyghurs saw the rise of Turkic republics in Central Asia, leaving them as the only ones without their own state.

The security and international cooperation dimension of the Party's strategy has sought to manage this conflict by preventing the emergence of a coherent separatist movement. It has done so by using brutal para-military police tactics. Draconian, swift and arbitrary treatment by police of 'trouble makers' whether they are Uyghur activists, lawyers, protestors, petty criminals or hardened separatist militants, deters many Uyghurs away from actively resisting the Chinese authorities. Harsh policing and extra-judicial measures combined with pervasive surveillance, the use of Uyghur informants and co-opted Uyghur officials, helps create fear and uncertainty amongst separatists.

Additionally, Uyghur separatists are divided over the goals they should pursue and the tactics they should use. The preferences range from pursuing jihadist style militancy with the aim of establishing a Uyghur Islamic republic, to peacefully seeking genuine autonomy within the PRC. The security measures employed in Xinjiang do nothing to win Uyghur hearts and minds, but they are preventing a successful separatist movement from emerging, and they buy time for the other dimensions of the strategy to Sinicise the region.

The international cooperation dimension is embodied in the SCO's Regional Anti-terrorism Structure which, together with SCO conventions related to terrorism, permit the Chinese and Central Asian republics to cooperate in intelligence sharing, extraditions, military exchanges and multi-lateral military exercises aimed at countering Islamist violence in Central Asia, Xinjiang and further afield. For China, this cooperation prevents the Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia from freely supporting Uyghur activists. If such support were available to separatist Uyghur militants, the chances of the Xinjiang conflict turning into a full-fledged insurgency would be much greater. The security and international cooperation dimension thus deny Uyghur militants conditions that permit the creation of a large-scale movement, even though they exacerbate Uyghur grievances, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.[610]

I argue the three dimensions of the CCP's strategy in Xinjiang are mutually supportive and interact so as to Sinicise Xinjiang over the long term and thereby secure it.

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[610] Cui Jia, 'Xinjiang to ratchet up anti-terrorism campaign', China Daily USA, 12 January 2016, viewed on 24 July 2016, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2016-01/12/content_23049524.htm

The economic and demographic policy brings large numbers of Han people to the region and builds supporting infrastructure that physically transforms the region and connects it with inner China and Central Asia. The political and cultural dimension provides a cloak of legitimacy that conceals the colonising endeavour, while forcefully promoting Mandarin Chinese at the expense of Uyghur language education and supervising and controlling Islam in Xinjiang. These first two dimensions are Sinicising Xinjiang, but also causing grievances and militancy amongst Uyghurs. The security and international cooperation dimension, contains the Uyghur separatists, and dissuades others from joining or supporting them. Physically and metaphorically, the Uyghurs are encircled by the forces of Sinicisation. If successful, the Xinjiang strategy will turn a strategic weak spot into a strength – a salient into Central Asia, from which Chinese influence can be projected.

Unless a drastic change such as a large war, an economic depression, or the overthrow of the CCP were to occur, the Party is likely to continue to successfully pursue its strategy in Xinjiang. Should its implementation continue, I foresee the strategy eventually succeeding. The strategy is so comprehensive, that no avenues have been left open for Uyghurs to pursue a lifestyle that avoids Sinicisation in significant numbers. The education policies in particular mean that younger generations are likely to increasingly speak Mandarin, read and write in Chinese, and think along Chinese lines. Their connection with Islam is likely to diminish, since they cannot attend mosques until adulthood and once out of school, find themselves in workplaces and educational institutions that promote a Chinese brand of secularism and shun Islam.

Despite the creeping Sinicisation of Xinjiang's Turks, at present there is a large ethnic minority Islamic population that resents Beijing's rule, and most of them live in Xinjiang's oases. The Uyghurs' traditional homelands in their various oases have proven to be quite resilient. Although there are limited educational and professional opportunities there, they are still the Uyghur heartland, and their continued existence allows their culture to endure. These centres of Uyghur culture can be used by Uyghurs motivated to resist the government to seek each other out, and to obtain practical and moral support from other aggrieved Uyghurs.

Amongst Uyghurs in particular, who have no other homeland to turn to, there is likely to remain a hard core of highly motivated individuals and small groups – many of whom are prepared to use violence against the Chinese state and Han citizens to further their aims of either an independent Uyghur republic, or genuine autonomy. As long as their culture endures, such people are likely to exist and continue to conduct attacks and participate in riots. To date, the Party has met violence and resistance with greater determination and the allocation of more money, para-military police, Han settlers and new infrastructure; and it is committed to pursuing such measures until Xinjiang is fully Sinicised.

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