Abstract

This project sets out to investigate the role of security in the Chinese Western Development Plan (WDP) and its application in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, along with the consequences of this for the Uyghur community. The analysis of this project begins by unraveling the historical role of security and the central components in the Sino-Xinjiang relation. Combined, these form the context from which the WDP was formulated and implemented in Xinjiang. Through an analysis of the rhetoric of the WDP we establish that the role of security accords with that of a non-traditional security agenda, as opposed to the previously dominant traditional-military security agenda in Sino-Xinjiang relations. However, this change in the role of security remains rhetoric, as the traditional-military security agenda that re-emerges with the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Global War on Terror not only co-exists with but gains prominence over the non-traditional security agenda of the WDP. As a consequence, the Uyghur population of Xinjiang continues to be sidelined by the Chinese government, despite the promise of the WDP.

Introduction 4
Problem Area 5
Problem Formulation 7
Research Strategy 8
Theoretical Framework 8
Methodology 12
Historical Sino-Xinjiang Relations 16
Introduction 17
The Region of Xinjiang 19
Sino-Xinjiang Relations in the 20th Century 20
The Economic Development of the PRC in the 1980s 21
Sino-Xinjiang Relations in the 1990s 23
The Geo-strategic Importance of Xinjiang 23
The People of Xinjiang: Demographic Composition 24
The Economic Aspect of Sino-Xinjiang Relations 25
Political Struggles & Control of Xinjiang 29
The Bingtuan: the Chinese Production and Construction Corps 30
Forces of Ethnic Separatism & Religious Extremism 35
Sub-conclusion 39
The Western Development Plan: A New Take on Security? 43
Introduction 44
The Western Development Plan- Background, Rationale and Content 45
Objective, Scope and Major Investments 45
Pillar Industries: The Perceived Growth Engines of Xinjiang 47
The Continued Influx of Han Chinese 48
The Role of Security: The Rhetorical Background of the WDP 50
Bingtuan in the 21st Century 52
The Western Development Plan and the Bingtuan 53
From Corps to Corporation 55
Sub-conclusion 57
Consequences 59
Introduction 60
The Emergence of Two Security Agendas in Xinjiang 61

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Global War on Terror 61
The Emergence of Two Security Agendas 65
Merging Security Agendas 66
China's Anti-terror Laws 68
The Regulation of Islam 70
The 2009 Ürümqi Riots 72
Consequences for the Uyghur community 73
Sub-conclusion 75
Conclusion 77
List of References 79
Appendix 82
List of Abbreviations 82

Introduction

Problem Area, Problem Formulation & Research Strategy

Problem Area

The last decades has seen a China on the rise. Indisputably, China's wealth has increased impressively. Similarly, China has grown to play a significantly larger role in international politics – today, China is a global power to be reckoned with to say the least. In fact, in light of China's relative strength as both an economic and political power, some now argue that China has long outgrown the label of 'developing country' and that grouping China with such countries is not possible.

When looking closer at China, however, it becomes apparent that not all parts of the country show the trends of economic growth and increased prosperity that reflect the nation as a whole. A cleavage is apparent which separates the Eastern, coastal areas of China from the inlands. It clearly shows that the economic transformation which China has undergone is geographically limited to the coastal area, i.e. the Eastern part of China, while the inner part of the country, that is the Western part, has largely been left unaffected. Notably, these less advantaged Western regions span over more than half of the Chinese territory (Van Wie Davis 2008: 6).

This development of an advancing Eastern coastal area and a relatively less prosperous West was not unforeseen by the Chinese government. In fact,

> *"[i]n the early 1980s, then-leader Deng Xiaoping developed a policy to first develop the eastern coastal regions, which already had a better economic foundation than the western regions, and then increase the development of the western regions after the development of the eastern regions reached a certain point"* (Ibid.: 19)

Actions taken by the Chinese state in recent years indicate that this 'certain point' has come now. The *Western Development Plan*(WDP), or *The Campaign to Open Up The West* launched in 1999 by Jiang Zemin (Clarke 2008: 2) most clearly highlights the priority given by the Chinese state to making the Western regions catch up with the economic and developmental state of the coastal regions. Yet, more than an economic strategy to stimulate economic growth in the western regions of China, one might benefit from viewing the WDP as;

> *"[...] a major state project of nation-building directed at the interior provincial-level jurisdictions in order to encourage endogenous economic*

> *growth, to reduce socio-economic inequalities, and to ensure social and political stability in non-Han areas of the PRC"* (Goodman 2004: 2).

Out of the Western regions, of which there are six, the autonomous region of Xinjiang stands out. The region has historically been known for its tensions between the ethnic minorities of the region and the Chinese state, in particular between the Uyghur group and the Han Chinese. While the Uyghur are difficult to place in one coherent group, they are generally characterised as a Muslim population with Turkic roots. The Xinjiang province separated twice form the Chinese state to form the East Turkistan Republic, first in 1933 and 1944 (Clarke 2008: 15). The fact that, in relatively recent history, Xinjiang has been in conflict with and separated itself from the Chinese state may suggest that the province's inclusion into the middle kingdom might be more forced than voluntary – this is reflected in a wide range of bombings, shootings and general civil unrest in the region (Becquelin 2000; Clarke 2008). The blame for the violent attacks has widely been placed on extremist Uighur groups, who are claimed to be influenced equally by separatism and fundamentalist Islamism. Cui and Li (2011) emphasise that

> "*[...] social stability' and 'national unity' are always at the center of China's (especially official) thinking about national security.*"

As such, the Chinese efforts to combat this security threat might originate in the general objective of the PRC. Clarke (2008; 2010) draws on notions of *human security* to portray what he refers to as China's *security dilemma*. In short, China's persistent effort to remove security threats through the eradication of extremist groups in Xinjiang is in turn decreasing the human security for the Uyghur population in the autonomous region. According to Clarke, this point is illustrated in China's anti-terror laws, which he holds to be "widening the net" (Clarke, 2010) to such an extent that, though being targeted at terrorist networks, it is targeting Uyghur culture at large. This, in turn, contributes to an increase in hostility towards the Chinese central government among the Uyghur people and thus, the effort to increase national security in turn decreases the Uyghur sense of security and to some extent also the regional security for civilians in the XUAR. The result is what one might refer to as a self-inflicted decrease in national security, caused by failed policy measures by the Central Chinese government.

In discussing the central Chinese government's strategy for dealing with the issues of security and socioeconomic development in the Xinjiang province the Western Development Plan is key**.** Whereas Clarke (2008; 2010) criticises the Chinese strategy in

Xinjiang as "widening the net" and using security as an argument for cracking down on the Uyghur population generally, the Western Development Programme (WDP) has been emphasised as an effort to remove the focus of the Chinese strategy from policing and traditional security strategies to a more "developmental" strategy. Cui & Li (2011) describe how the WDP is in fact contributing to removing the emphasis from military- and policing efforts towards the Xinjiang issue, by focusing on developing rather than policing. Thus, the WDP can be seen as marking a potential shift in the strategy of the PRC in the Xinjiang region, where they decrease the emphasis on the fight against security threats, and rely upon an increase in living standard in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

It is apparent that different and potentially contradicting perceptions exist on an issue that apparently has great implications for the involved parties, both the Xinjiang population, especially the Uyghur, and the Chinese government. As such, the notion that the WDP could in turn be a departure from China's claimed attack on the *human* security of the Uighurs is indeed relevant to explore. As in the above, Chinese government actions can be understood as being a response to the number of security challenge in Xinjiang that in turn is diminishing the human security of the people living in the region. At the same time, it is claimed that the PRC with the formulation of the WDP is pursuing a more development-oriented strategy. It is argued that the WDP can be seen as an indicator of change in the Chinese government's strategy towards Xinjiang. The purpose of this research paper is thus to establish an understanding of the role of security in the Chinese strategy after the formulation of the WDP. To do this, we explore the role of security in the WDP, and discuss the consequences of the Chinese strategy in Xinjiang. To do this, we pose the following question:

Problem Formulation

How and to which extent does security figure centrally in the Western Development Plan towards the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and with which consequences for the Uighurs?

Research Strategy

Our problem formulation is in essence two questions, and for this project to arrive at a position enabling us to answer our problem formulation, three research questions have been formulated. These will serve as a guide in our research, as well as provide us with the structure of our analysis. The research questions are as follows:

1. What characterises the role of security, and what are the central components in the historical Sino-Xinjiang relations?
2. How and to which extent does security figure centrally in the WDP towards Xinjiang?
3. What are the consequences of the Chinese strategy to the Uighurs?

Thus, our analysis is composed by separate chapters. The first chapter will in essence focus on establishing an understanding of the historical relation between China and Xinjiang, chapter 2 will analyse the WDP specifically, and part 3 will view the Chinese strategy more broadly. Yet, before explaining this more specifically, let us instead turn to the theoretical framework of this research project.

Theoretical Framework

The most central concepts of this research project is that of "security" and that of "development". Thus, the first task of the theoretical framework of this project is to clarify this relationship before seeking to understand "security", which will serve as the main object of analysis.

Security-Development Nexus

As such, the main argument for analysing issues of security in development studies is the increasing emergence of a theoretical framework for analysing this connection, most commonly referred to as the "security-development nexus" (SDN) (Buur & Jensen et. al., 2007). In the case of China, we have discussed this relationship in our problem area based

on preliminary observations. Yet, the framework of the SDN is significant as it situates these observations about the merging security- and development agendas within a scientific body of work, and as such, a field of thinking. Thus, adhering to the principles and thoughts of this theoretical notion, the issue of security gains prominence as an object of analysis within development studies. The basic principle of the SDN is the acknowledgement of the need to view e.g. issues of war, terrorism and conflict as more than military conflicts – thereby differing from traditionalist security studies which regard security threats exclusively as threats to national sovereignty and the survival of the state. Contrary to this belief, one of the basic notions of the SDN is that the security agenda is broadening and that civil war, terrorism etc. are to be viewed as a consequence of disparities in other parts of society. Thus, security issues must be viewed in connection with economic issues (e.g. poverty), societal issues (e.g. social exclusion) etc. (Ibid). As such, security issues are seen as intrinsically linked to wider aspects of the mainstream development objectives of economic development, social integration etc.

There are two main understandings of the relationship between security and development in the SDN. One is what one might refer to as the "securitisation of development". This implies that issues traditionally related to development are broadened to also be relevant to security. Consequently, issues such as poverty, social exclusion and weak government apparatuses are seen as causes of security threats. For instance, in the global discourse on terrorism, poverty, weak state apparatuses and general human grievance is seen as threatening the overall aim of a security agenda, which is, protecting people from threat (ibid). The other is what one could refer to as the "developmentalisation of security". This implies that, while the traditional definition of security is the freedom from threat, security is viewed in terms of the provision of certain basic *human rights.* For instance the fight to promote Human Rights internationally can be seen as an effort to achieve security through ensuring certain basic rights. These understandings are complimentary rather than competitive. As regards 'security' with these two understandings combined, it can be characterised as a non-traditional view of security in the context of development studies. In this scope, whereas the traditional-military view on security is the absence from threat, whereby its main objective is the direct removal of threat with measures of force, the non-traditional has a more *positive* view on security. In this view, security is the presence of certain human needs, consequently the security agenda should work to *provide* these, rather than *remove* threat directly with force.

Before any attempts of identifying "security" as a central part of the Chinese development policies are carried out, we need to establish an operationalised definition of "security". Furthermore we will clarify what consequences are inherent in the choices made in order to operationalise the problem. As this research project is in essence focused on empirical data, rather than theory, the role of the theoretical framework will be to operationalise the central concept of *security* while also providing the basic components of ontology and epistemology inherent in our research.

The Copenhagen School: Securitization

Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, the fathers of the Copenhagen School's work on *security* through the book with Jaap De Wilde "Security: A New Framework for Analysis" (1998) will form the definition of security and its understanding and employment in this body of work. The theory of *securitisation* is essentially made up of a combination of realist- and constructivist principles. The theory focuses on the role of "speech acts", and perceives security not as a real existing entity per se, but rather as a *constructed* entity. The aim of *Securitization theory*, as presented by Buzan and Wæver, is thus not to establish whether a security threat is in fact *real*, but rather analyse the discursive, rhetoric framework that makes up the security issue. Therefore, the main analytical focus is "speech acts", as these are the rhetoric moves that *construct* the issue as security, rather than ordinary politics.

As such, the Copenhagen School has a process-oriented view on security, and focuses on the transformation of issues in the political arena into security issues. According to the Copenhagen School, *security* is

> "*the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics.*"
> (Buzan & Wæver et. al. 1998: 23)

This process is referred to as *securitisation*, and reflects an actor's effort in legitimatising extraordinary means against a perceived threat. The process of securitisation is *intersubjective* meaning that it is neither a question of an objective threat or a subjective

perception of a threat. The Copenhagen School presents three central components in an act of *securitisation*:

1. **Securitizing actor**: the entity that makes the move to securitise
2. **Referent object of security**: the object that is being threatened, and thus needs to be protected
3. **Audience**: The target of the securitisation act that needs to be persuaded and accept the issue as a security threat. Usually, a securitization process gains it political legitimacy by convincing the audience

A fourth component of securitisation is that of *threat.* While not listed with the other three, if one wishes to understand the issue of security, one must also understand what it is that is *threatening* security. More than identifying what is threatened, the referent object, one needs to understand *who* or *what* is threatening it.

The theory deals with securitisation on 5 levels of analysis ranging from global to individual: 1) *The international system*, includes conglomerates of interdependent units with no system level above them, e.g. the UN; 2) *The international subsystems*, includes units within the international system, but without international influence (e.g. regional institutions); 3) *Units*, the "state" or "nation"; 4) *Subunits,* includes organised groups of individuals within unit-level; and 5) *Individuals.*

Similarly to the notion of the SDN, the Copenhagen School supports the notion of security as more than the traditional-military definition. The Copenhagen School operates with five sectors within which securitisation can take place. While military threats are still relevant, the issue of security is apparent in other sectors of society as well. These include the *military sector, political sector, societal sector, economic sector,* and *environmental sector.* The sectors are not necessarily to be analysed separately, and while this might occasionally be of relevance to an analysis, often, a securitising agent securitises threats which reach into multiple sectors simultaneously. In connecting the Copenhagen School's notion of sectors to the SDN, one could argue that a similar divide is evident through the SDN, between traditional-military security and non-traditional security. Adhering to the characterisation of the sectors, the military sector could be characterised as similar to a traditional-military security agenda, whereas the remaining 4 sectors make up the non-traditional security arena.

Methodology

It is important to emphasise that the application of theory to our problem formulation is essentially driven by our empirical observations, which is a preliminary notion of an appearing, complex congestion between security- and development policies in the relationship between China and Xinjiang. As such, the foundational problematic of this research project is illustrated through the following conflict of opinion in the literature. Hence, on one hand, the WDP in Xinjiang can be viewed through the non-traditional view of security as 1) an attempt to enhance security through ensuring its population basic human needs and 2) an acknowledgement that security issues such as social instability, terrorism etc. is essentially conditioned by issues that reflect internal factors such as poverty, social inequality, corruption etc. On the other hand, the Chinese strategy in general in Xinjiang is claimed to abide to the traditional-military view of security, which in turn means that the PRC government could be analysed as securitising the perceived threat of e.g. terrorism with the aim of allowing themselves the use of "extraordinary means", in turn threatening the human security of the population of Xinjiang, most notably the Uyghur. In order for this research project to understand this problematic, it must essentially seek to analyse the role of security within 1) the WDP and 2) the strategy in general. This analytical task will in turn enable us to discuss the consequences in relation to the people of Xinjiang. This last task is significant. Even though conflicting views on China's strategy exist, they also have some things in common. Most of the literature on China and Xinjiang is centred around issues concerning the Uyghur, and are as such preoccupied with whether the Chinese strategy, be it the WDP or other aspects, has a security agenda of either a) utilising a traditional-military security agenda to target the Uyghur population at large and remove the identified threat with force, or b) utilising the WDP to move away from a military focus, and towards ensuring basic human rights and –needs and remove the threat through promoting equality and common prosperity. These are the two essential interpretations of China's strategy, and while conflicting, they both seek to understand to which extent China is looking out for the Uyghur population. As such, analysing and discussing the consequences for the Uyghur of the Chinese strategy is essential in evaluating the consequences of the role of security.

Operationalisation

Yet, before initiating the analysis, in order to understand security, we operationalise it according to the theory of *securitisation* as described by the Copenhagen School. The main analytical tools we extract from the theory of securitisation are first and foremost the analytical entities within the securitisation process. We are in this research project mainly interested in two aspects. The first is the role of security in the WDP. Here, the main source of data will be government speech acts, e.g. official statements, speeches, official media etc. Security will in turn be identified as processes of securitisation, and the nature of the securitisation will be categorised according to the definitions of the traditional-military security agenda versus the non-traditional security, as explained in the theoretical chapter – thereby allowing us to analyse '*how* security figures' as we ask in our problem formulation. The second aspect is the consequences of the identified role of security in the Chinese strategy at large. To discuss these, we will first widen our understanding of the role of security in other aspects of China's strategy by including policy measures external to the framework of the WDP. This analysis will be performed similarly to the analysis of the WDP. Subsequently, we will relate these findings to the findings of the WDP analysis, and lastly, we will establish to which extent the Chinese security agenda in Xinjiang is 1) coherent, and 2) to which extent it works to ensure basic human rights with the aim of increasing security, or securitising the Xinjiang issue and in turn possibly legitimising "extraordinary security measures" against the perceived threat.

In answering research question 1, the first task will be to analyse the historical relationship between China and Xinjiang, dating back to the Chinese dynasties, with an emphasis on the period 1949-2001, and even more specifically, the period immediately leading up to the formulation of the WDP. The purpose of this chapter is to establish an understanding of the historical notions of security in the relationship between China and the Xinjiang region and characterise them according to the framework, while also analysing the context from which the WDP was formulated. As will be shown in the analysis, especially the 1990s are pivotal for understanding the emergence of the WDP in the decade that followed, since the Sino-Xinjiang relations and Chinese policies towards the region of the 1990s can largely be seen to have paved the way for the creation of the WDP. Hence, the findings make up the point of departure for part 2 of our analysis. Part 2 will focus on analysing the specific content and rhetoric surrounding the WDP through

speech acts, i.e. official statements, speeches, government media outlet etc. In addition to identifying security, the analysis will, as mentioned, also focus on characterising the nature of the security, essentially answering both "how" and "to which extent" security figures centrally in the WDP. Part 3 of the analysis will centre on relating the conclusions from part 2 to the overall Chinese strategy. We explore and analyse other aspects of the Chinese strategy with an approach similar to that of the analysis of the WDP. Analysing the role of security in the WDP and relating the results to the role of security in the Chinese strategy in a more general perspective will ultimately allow us to discuss the consequences of the Chinese strategy for the Uighurs. To arrive at this point, part 3 discusses the relationship between the traditional-military and the non-traditional security agenda in the case of Xinjiang. In order to enable a more nuanced discussion of the central problematic of this project we connect these points with the various interpretations of the PRC and Xinjiang problematic which form the point of departure for this project (see for instance *Problem Area*). In sum, the three parts will enable us to answer how and to which extent security figures centrally in the WDP towards Xinjiang, and by understanding the Chinese government's strategy towards Xinjiang more broadly, and relating the WDP to this, we will be able to discuss the consequences for the people of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, most notably the Uighurs.

Delimitations

The essential analytical task for our research is analysing a set of state policies, and securitisation processes within this set of policies. This has some implications. As China is not a democracy in the traditional, western understanding, the Chinese government is not as dependent on public sentiment, and as such, within the framework of the Copenhagen School, the role of the *audience* in the process of securitisation is debatable. One could argue that the Chinese government is essentially not dependent on the approval of their audience, since the government is not elected by its people. Furthermore, due to the nature of China's view on sharing information, one would most likely meet great difficulties in extracting data analysing public sentiment – mainly due to censorship, but also due to the fact that most government material in China is published in Chinese languages. As such, identifying the reaction of the audience is beyond the scope of our analysis. As a point of criticism to this choice, one might argue that the significance of a

successful securitisation of an issue is that the state is allowed to implement measures without the approval of the public or the parliamentary political system, as the issue is essentially lifted 'above ordinary politics'. While this might be the case, we argue that even though we do not directly include the role of the audience in our analysis of the WDP, we assume that there is an inherent interest from the Chinese government to convince the public. Even in non-democracies, public sentiment of opposition can manifest itself in other forms than votes and ballots; for instance through riots, demonstrations and uprisings which the Chinese government clearly has an interest in keeping at a minimum. Furthermore, in viewing the Chinese strategy in Xinjiang on a more general level in part 3 of our analysis, we include the international system and international subsystem level, and as such, we will briefly touch upon issues concerning the audience, and thus also Chinese legitimacy, within these levels of analysis – i.e. China's geographic neighbours and the international community at large.

On a finishing note, for the sake of validity, we must explain the wide use of especially two authors throughout the project. As the investigation of issues concerning development and security in Xinjiang as a rather minimal area of research, not many social scientists have contributed to this. As such, we rely heavily on the authors of Nicolas Becquelin and Michael Clarke who, besides providing excellent analytical insight, provides numerous translated quotes from government officials, Chinese policy documents etc. Numerous references appear throughout the project, but as will be noticed, we have relied heavily upon these as our sources of data on official statements, policies etc. As such, this could be claimed to decrease the scientific validity. Yet, much of the data extracted is quotes and policy documents, and as such, our analysis still relies upon data, and not solely on the opinion of the authors.

Part I

Historical Sino-Xinjiang Relations

Central Components & the Role of Security

Introduction

In this chapter, we seek to unravel the historical relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) with two overall objectives. One is to identify and characterise the central components of the Sino-Xinjiang relations seen through history and the second is to analyse the role of security in this relation. Both make up crucial analyses in the endeavour to answer our problem formulation in different ways. Hence, the former focus on establishing the central components of the relationship serves the purpose of shedding light on the historical circumstances and events which simultaneously provide the context of and resulted in the formulation and implementation of the Western Development Plan as the central government's response to the challenges and opportunities of Xinjiang. The second focus of this chapter, i.e. the role of security in the relation employs the theoretical concepts of securitisation, allowing us to identify referent objects and central security threats and trace how the PRC's perception of these has developed through history. Combined, this analysis is intended to shed light on how and to which extent the role of security has figured historically in the Sino-Xinjiang relationship.

The chapter is constructed as three sections. The first seeks to characterise the region of Xinjiang through history and to trace the events and turning points which culminated in the region's inclusion in the PRC in 1955. It proceeds to analysing 20th century Sino-Xinjiang relations till the 1990s, highlighting the differences between the region and China proper which become apparent in the central government's economic strategy of uneven development.

The second section zooms in on the 1990s, focusing more in depth on the central components which shape the Sino-Xinjiang relationship not only historically but also presently in the context of the Western Development Plan. We identify three main components as central in this regard. Hence the first sub-section is devoted to the component of *the geo-strategic importance of Xinjiang* in the 1990s in light of the Central Asian geo-political context. Second is *the demographic composition of Xinjiang*, concerning the proportion of Xinjiang's ethnic population relative to Han and other population groups. The third component is *the economic aspect of the Sino-Xinjiang*

relation which is employed here to denote and tie together several developments. Hence, it refers to the economic inequality between coastal China and its interior but also deals with the inequality internal to XUAR. Subsequently, the chapter turns to focus on the economic reforms of regional development by the central government during the decade.

Dating this chapter from the 1990s is not intended to signify that none of the components or their inherent developments predates this point in time but rather, as this chapter will show, the decade of the 90s saw significant change in the three developments. Moreover, the developments of these three components not only influenced and prompted a renewed strategy towards Xinjiang by the Chinese government but also, in turn, altered the disposition of the Uyghur and other ethnic groups of Xinjiang towards the PRC – or rather, the central Chinese government. In sum, these three components are used as prisms through which we gain insight into the historically crucial dynamics of Sino-Xinjiang relations, allowing us to analyse the historical role of security in the relation and, in addition, the balance between regional autonomy and central government influence in Xinjiang.

The third part of the chapter deals with the two components of *the Bingtuan: the Chinese Production and Construction Corps* and the issue of *Forces of Ethnic Separatism and Religious Extremism.* These components differ from the previous three as they can be characterised as the central political struggles of control in Xinjiang. The first sub-section on the role of the Bingtuan in the Sino-Xinjiang relations is a significant indicator of the role of security in the relation and reveals a great deal about the aspect of regional autonomy versus central government control in Xinjiang. Therefore the sub-section proceeds to highlighting the resulting administrative relationship between PRC and Xinjiang, that is, the balance between regional autonomy and central government control in Xinjiang. The sub-section devoted to ethnic unrest deals with the emphasis by the PRC on the resurgence of separatism in the region of XUAR.

We have separated the analysis of the historical Sino-Xinjiang relations into these five sub-sections for analytical purposes, not because we claim that they figure as actual, separate entities to the actors involved in the relation. Rather, it is done for the analytical purpose of unravelling and highlighting these features which we deem important for the relation in their own right and, more importantly, in order to show how these themes and their developments are intertwined. This, in turn, will show the way in which the aspects

at the point of the early 90s arguably prompt a renewed Xinjiang strategy by the PRC which developed during the decade. Overall, the purpose of this chapter, with its five categories, is intended to weave together the historical trends and developments which have been analysed in the previous sections, and to bind them all together in an analysis of the historical context from which the WDP evolved.

After this, the conclusion will bring together the central trends and developments that have shaped the relation through history, highlighting the role of security in the characterisation of the historical Sino-Xinjiang relationship and thus paving the way for the following analysis of the WDP.

The Region of Xinjiang

Xinjiang literally means *new border* or *new frontier*. This characterization of the region is interesting in relation to its place in the Chinese conscience. Xinjiang, with its vast, sparsely populated steppes and deserts, divided by the Tian Shan Mountains cutting through the region from east to west, has been named in several different ways. These include *Xiyu*or *Qurighar*, meaning *western region*; *Huijang,* or *muslim frontier; Chinese Turkestan; Uyghuristan;* and it was not until 1880 the region was given its current name. The label of *new frontier* indicates both that Xinjiang had at that time been removed from Chinese rule for some time, and while also emphasizing its geographical distance to the Han-dominated plains of inland China, the use of the label *frontier* has some interesting connotations in relation to security and national sovereignty, many of which we will return to.

As the early nexus of the famous Silk Road and the gate to the east, the identity of this geographically remote region has bounced between pivot and periphery (Zhao 2001). As a pivot, the region was crucial in the transportation of culture and goods between east and west, and was as such a crucial proponent for the continued success of the Chinese progress, and the continued power of the Chinese rulers. As a periphery, from a Chinese perspective, the region has been ruled by several different empires, khans and warlords, and was for long periods (a millennium at one point) removed from influence from the

Chinese Dynasties. Thus, the periods of penetration by central Chinese rule into Xinjiang have in turn been replaced by periods characterized by resistance or distance to central Chinese rule. The history of Xinjiang is characterized as much by the presence of central Chinese rule as its absence.

The largest ethnic group in current day Xinjiang continues to be the Uighurs. The Uighurs are a people with Turkic origins (not to be confused with modern day Turkey). Turkic presence in the Xinjiang region has been traced back to around AD 540, and the Uighurs were a nomadic people, believed to have roots in the Siberia-Mongolia area (Tyler, 2003). *Uyghur* simply means "follower" or "supporter", with the early Uighurs being mainly followers of Buddhist principles. Yet, with the influx of Arab culture in the Central Asian region, Islam would solidify itself within the Uyghur culture, and would slowly become the common denominator for the cultural heritage of the region and its people. The Mongol invasion in around 1200 AD was a major setback for Islam, and much of the area remained outside of Arab and Muslim influence until the fourteenth century (Tyler, 2003). Similarly, China's influence has been of changing intensity. It was not until with the Qing Dynasty that longer periods of Chinese presence was initiated. The conclusion to draw from the previous is that Chinese presence and rule in Xinjiang has not been a constant feature. And as we turn to the modern period, this trend is evident in this period as well.

Sino-Xinjiang Relations in the 20th Century

In 1912, the days of the Chinese dynasties had come to an end, as the Qing dynasty was replaced by the Republic of China and the Kuomintang party in the Xinjiang province. Until the late 1920's, the region was relatively stable. Yet, with the assassination of Yang Zengxin, head of the region, the coming decades would come to be dominated by unrest and conflict. Uyghur and Hui groups revolted against Zengxin's successor, which culminated in the formation of the East Turkestan Republic in the Kashgar region on November 12th, 1933. The republic was short-lived as the national army defeated the republics forces and executed its two Emirs, ceasing the existence of the East Turkestan Republic.

Parallel to the events in China, the formation of the Soviet Union was developing just north of the Xinjiang region, and would also come to influence the conflict ridden region. Following the national army's victory over the forces of the East Turkestan Republic, the Soviet union invaded the region, and the Xinjiang War in 1937 would consolidate the Soviet backed warlord, Sheng Shicai, as the ruler of the region in the following years. The Republic of China did not meddle, as it was occupied with defending the republic against the Japanese. Uyghur groups resenting Soviet influence would continue to exist alongside Shicai's rule. In 1944, a series of events, including his affiliation with the Soviets, would lead to the Kuomintang's removal of Shicai as head of the region. This in turn led to a further decrease in regional stability.

As a result of this, negotiations between the Kuomintang and the Soviets would result in the Second East Turkestan Republic being constituted in the northern parts of Xinjiang. The Second ETR was pro-soviet, and as such, was the subject to Uyghur uprisings, that demanded the influence of the soviets to be decreased. The Second ETR would continue to exist until the Chinese Communist Party invaded the region in 1949, following the victory of Mao Zedong against the Kuomintang. The People's Republic of China was the new ruler of China, and had now ceased control over the conflict ridden Xinjiang region. Thus, at the brink of Xinjiang's inclusion into the PRC in 1955, the region had enjoyed a history of switching periods of foreign rule, Chinese dynastic rule, partial independence. As such, this notion of the history of Sino-Xinjiang relations is significant to modern day relations.

The Economic Development of the PRC in the 1980s

Following Mao's Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution through the 60's and 70's, the 1980's was the decade where China started to show signs of the economic development that would come to increase national income tremendously over the next decades. The strategy that would come to determine the patterns of growth in China was established by then-leader Deng Xiaopeng and is known as the strategy of uneven development (Zhao, 2001). The idea was to open up economic zones in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country, which already had a better foundation for economic growth, and then follow up this effort with a targeted strategy to develop the interior and western parts of the country (Van Wie Davis, 2008: 19). The efforts from the PRC to

stimulate economic growth have resulted in the emergence of China as an economic and political powerhouse. Today, China is the world's second largest economy in terms of GDP, and has achieved great power status in the Asia region, and, some would argue, challenging the US for international hegemony. Clarke (2007) quotes chairman Mao:

> *"We say China is a country vast in territory, rich in resources and large in population; as a matter of fact, it is the Han nationality whose population is large and the minority nationalities whose territory is vast and whose resources are rich."*

Though extracted from Mao's writing on *The Ten Great Relationships* from the 1950's, the quote expresses a foundational national dilemma in China. Even today with the economic growth in China mainly concentrated on the eastern seaboards, the Chinese are highly dependent on the sources of oil, gas and mineral located in the minority regions. This is definitely relevant in relation to Xinjiang, whose steppes, basins and mountain are rich on minerals for the Chinese industrial sector, and is also believed to have one of the country's largest oil fields in the Tarim Basin.

In the 80s, the declared goal by the PRC was to quadruple the industrial and agricultural output by 2000; meanwhile the western regions were to "actively prepare" for a similar development once the eastern regions had fulfilled the declared goals (Lai 2002). So-called "open areas" where state-owned companies were to manufacture and export goods were created along the eastern, coastal areas. These areas experienced a tremendous influx of foreign capital as a consequence of export, and it is estimated that these areas were responsible for 32.8 per cent of the national industrial output (Ibid: 437). The data shows a clear trend of regional inequalities; no "open areas" were created in the western- and central regions until 1992, and until then, it is estimated that the western- and central regions produced 8.4% and 6.5% of national industrial outcome, respectively. Furthermore, it is estimated that in 1992, over 70% of the people living below the national poverty line were situated in the central- and western regions (Ibid: 437). Of these 70%, app. 50% was situated in the western regions in spite of being sparsely populated. Between 1978 and 1995, Gross Domestic Product grew 10.2% per annum in the coastal regions, while only growing 7.5% in the western regions. This might not sound dramatic, but in actual terms this meant that the share of national income decreased in the western region from an already low 17.8% to an even lower 14.5% (Ibid: 437).

Sino-Xinjiang Relations in the 1990s

We now turn to analyse the Sino-Xinjiang relations specifically in the 1990s. This decade is particularly interesting in that, by understanding the development of the 90s immediately leading up to the formulation of the Western Development Plan, one has a broader understanding of the context the plan was formulated in. We look both at geo-strategic importance, demographic composition and central economic policies of the PRC in Xinjiang in the 90s.

The Geo-strategic Importance of Xinjiang

The primary change in the Sino-Xinjiang relation of the 1990s came from developments exterior to China. The 1990s' Sino-Xinjiang relations were in fact defined by the geo-political context which emerged around in Central Asia with the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent formation of the new Central Asian states. While these events may be characterised as background to the relation between China and one of its regions, as will be shown, they increased the geo-strategic importance of Xinjiang for the PRC and, consequently, the Chinese interest in and approach towards the region.

As was mentioned in the above, two historical developments have shaped and influenced the Sino-Xinjiang relationship of the 1990s. One was the resurgence of geopolitics in light of the collapse of the USSR. At large, this explains the Chinese strategic interest in Xinjiang: due to its geographical location, the region makes up a potential gate to its Central Asian neighbours. Similar to Xinjiang, the Central Asian countries are rich on energy resources and raw materials. In addition to potential new markets for China's products, good relations with the Central Asian states means access to energy resources which China strongly needs (Becquelin, 2000: 66). Arguably, Xinjiang is also culturally related to Central Asia, seeing as a large number of Uighurs are citizens in Central Asian countries and, in turn, a large number of people of Central Asian ethnicity live in Xinjiang. This makes up another strategic reason for China's interest in Xinjiang, as the autonomous region not only ties China to Central Asia geographically, but also culturally.

The People of Xinjiang: Demographic Composition

The second factor is the aspect of the demographic composition of Xinjiang. This is a factor in the Sino-Xinjiang relation which influences the cultural balance in Xinjiang between the ethnic groups such as the Uyghur and the Han who, by extension, arguably represent China proper. It is influential to the Sino-Xinjiang relation in two ways. First, as the demographic composition of Xinjiang around 1990 prompted the PRC to alter their approach towards Xinjiang by bringing into play other factors as part of what became the Xinjiang strategy during the decade. Simultaneously, this demographic factor is also used actively by the PRC in their strategy towards Xinjiang during the 90s in response to developments in the domains of the other four factors.

Not only had changes happened around the region of Xinjiang; at the time of the fall of the Soviet Empire, the Xinjiang region itself had also undergone major changes (since the days of Chinese rule). In light of these changes, the PRC's interest in Xinjiang had not only changed in terms of geostrategic importance (as described in the above), the region also demanded increased attention in its own right, as a region of the Chinese state.

Firstly, in terms of demography, by 1990 Xinjiang had been altered dramatically since the initial subjugation to Chinese sovereignty in 1949. By then, the proportion of Han-Chinese residing in the region had grown to 37.5 % - a huge increase since 1978 with only 6 % (Becquelin 2000, p. 68). In itself this fact does not reveal much about the Xinjiang-Chinese relationship, however it signals a change in the attitude of the PRC towards Xinjiang: It points towards a development of Xinjiang slowly becoming less of a 'buffer zone' between China and Central Asia (Ibid: 68) and less of a 'border region', remote and unknown to Beijing but rather more of an integrated part of China. The term 'integration' is employed here as opposed to segregation, referring to the massive influx of people belonging to the ethnic group held to be China's largest, while in contrast, the ethnic groups of Xinjiang and the Han had previously been divided geographically. Hence, the increase of the proportion of Han people in the population of Xinjiang can arguably be seen to have transformed the relationship between Xinjiang and PRC into actual, physical encounters on the street between people belonging to the two parties as they now lived within the same region. However, more is to be said about this apparent change to the Xinjiang population. Nicolas Becquelin reveals two trends of the demographic development of Xinjiang which made 'Beijing extremely worried about the

region's stability' (Ibid: 68). First of all, a huge divide between the Northern and Southern part of Xinjiang needs highlighting. North of the Tianshan mountain range, which cuts through the region from east to west, the majority of the Han immigrants had settled, while in the South less than 10 percent of the population are Han (Ibid.). Demography is not the only difference between the two sub-regions. As we will explore below, the North, with the provincial capital Ürümqi, was far more advanced than the South in terms of infrastructure and industrial capacity. Becquelin states:

> *"The north* (Beijiang) *had already been integrated into China proper, but China's control over the southern part* (Nanjiang) *was much weaker."*(Ibid.)

A second demographic trend which worried Beijing was that the proportion of Han in Xinjiang had in fact decreased since 1978 from 42 percent to the aforementioned 37.5 percent in 1990 – and due to lower Han birth rates combined with high growth rates among the ethnic population, this trend was believed to accelerate (Ibid.: 69). According to Becquelin,

> *"The central authorities' multiple concerns prompted an "internal and external strategy"* (neiwaizhanlue) *by Beijing to isolate and weaken the cross-border separatist movements and to strengthen the influence of the Han population in Xinjiang."*(Ibid.:70)

The Economic Aspect of Sino-Xinjiang Relations

In terms of the economic aspect of Sino-Xinjiang relations, the beginning of the 1990s saw a change in the Chinese government's approach to Xinjiang – and the western provinces in general. According to Yueyao Zhao (2001), the central government was confronted with strong opposition to its coast-oriented development strategy was forced to re-evaluate its regional policy. He highlights a number of reasons for this. First of all, opponents were concerned with rising regional inequalities which, if increased, could have social and political implications in the ethnic areas in terms of stability and unity (Ibid.: 6). Furthermore, they argued that some areas in the interior, Xinjiang for example, did not fit the east-west economic divide, as

> *"[they] already had a relatively advanced economy and industrial base, and therefore should be encouraged to become growth poles in those areas (...)*

> *and should be granted with more favourable policies in terms of inflow of foreign investment and technology transfer"* (Ibid.)

Another reason for the change in the central government's strategy towards the interior was the outflow of skilled labour and capital from the poor to the rich areas which impeded the poorer regions from attracting investment and enterprises.

In response to the challenges of 'regional inequalities and persistent poverty (Ibid.: 7), the Chinese government developed a new economic strategy based on dividing China into seven regional economies in 1992. A central part of the economic strategy was the government's emphasis on 'cultivating and improving market mechanisms, utilising each region's comparative advantage' (Ibid.). Another aim was the promotion of interregional integration by linking all regions through transportation and communications networks and unifying the planning of the development of energy resources and raw materials. What is more is that the West was 'opened' – and in the case of Xinjiang, this process was dual. On the one hand, XUAR was opened towards China, as interregional trade and cooperation was encouraged while on the other hand, XUAR and two other ethnic border regions were also 'opened' towards neighbouring countries. This move was made to accelerate the economic development of these regions and, overall, to open up China to the world. In sum, as part of China's overall strategy for economic development, the central government's initiatives in XUAR were aimed at 'taking advantage of its local resources, its geographical proximity and geo-cultural affinity with neighbouring countries' (Ibid.). As such, the economic strategy is reflecting the emergence of new regional economic opportunities with the fall of the Soviet Union and the regional change in geopolitics.

A range of initiatives were taken by the central Chinese administration to develop the economy of XUAR during the 90s. Through financial subsidies from the state, substantial growth in foreign investments (see Zhao, 2001: 12-13) and with the establishment of a growth pole around the provincial capital of Ürümqi (or, paraphrasing Becquelin (2000:71), 'economic zones, officially of the same kind as those of the coastal provinces'), it would appear that Xinjiang stood to benefit significantly in terms of economic growth from the central government's transformed economic strategy. In fact, in terms of 'fiscal transfers' from the central government (see Becquelin, 2000: 71-72)

and its entitlement as an ethnic minority region to keep 80 per cent of local taxes, against the usual 50 per cent, Xinjiang was to benefit far more than other provinces.

In spite of this, Nicolas Becquelin argues that *"the government has quietly sought to recentralize fiscal and decision-making powers"* (2000: 71-72). He holds that it is for this purpose that Xinjiang's development has been linked to that of its neighbouring north-west provinces, as was described in the above, as part of the regional economic policy after the establishment of the seven regional economies – and he interprets the infrastructural development and integration of Xinjiang's export zones with other provinces in the same light. Hence, the two infrastructure projects of constructing the Taklamakan Highway and the extension of the rail link from Korla to Kashgar, completed in 1995 and 1999, respectively, were *"aimed at increasing the economic integration of, and control over, the southern oases, previously linked to the north by a single road"* (Ibid.: 72-77).In fact, in spite of the central government's apparent boost of the province through the increased state subsidies and investments, Xinjiang's economy was kept under close control of the state. This view is supported by most of XUAR's industries being predominantly state-owned, and by Xinjiang having one of the highest national ratios for publicly owned industrial assets (Ibid.:72). Moreover, although foreign investment had increased, according to Becquelin it was still extremely low compared to other provinces – and budgetary expenditures increased so much between 1990 and 1998 that the fact that budgetary revenue had tripled during this period still created a budget deficit which made the province's economy entirely unsustainable if it were not for the 'largesse and support' of the central government (Ibid.).

Nonetheless, in spite of it owing to billions of state subsidies and investment, Zhao states that by 1995,

> *"Xinjiang has established a relatively independent economic structure, featured by a fairly solid agricultural foundation, an industrial system, basically serialised infrastructural facilities and basic industries, elementary self-supply of energy, raw and semi-finished materials, farm products and other products. In terms of Xinjiang's GNP composition, agriculture constitutes 43.2 per cent, while industry constitutes 32.2 per cent"* (Zhao, 2001: 209).

Above all, the economic structure that was established in XUAR rested on an economic strategy to 'rely on two pillars', 'one black, one white' – that is, oil exploitation and cotton cultivation (Becquelin, 2000: 80). But in 1994 a national fiscal reform was

introduced, presented by the government 'as a way to facilitate a redistribution of revenue among the provinces in order to reduce the gap between the coast and the interior' (Ibid.: 72). Among other things, this reform reduced taxes on manufactured products but increased those on raw materials – clearly creating a disadvantage for Xinjiang which mainly produces raw materials. On top of this, with the decrease of revenue caused by the reform of 1994, Xinjiang was apparently compensated through tax reimbursements – yet, according to Becquelin, the central government continuously cheated the provincial government from this money. In fact, he concludes that,

> *"Although extra finance poured into Xinjiang during the 1990s, the local government had less control over this money (...) Overall, Xinjiang's economic boom has paradoxically translated into increased extraction and tightened fiscal control from the centre."* (Becquelin, 2000: 74)

With regard to the two pillars of oil and cotton, these were to spur the economic development of XUAR – in the view of the central administration, the oil and petrochemical industry was not only to bring about revenue but also to pull all the other industries in Xinjiang forward, meanwhile cotton cultivation was to 'bring prosperity to all nationalities' (Ibid.: 81).Here we will mainly focus on the second pillar, that of cotton, as this arguably had more of an impact on the economic Sino-Xinjiang relation of the 1990s. With the decision of the central government to make cotton cultivation one of XUAR's pillars, a number of initiatives were taken to promote cotton farming and - manufacturing – from propaganda by the provincial authorities that 'cotton is the best way for farmers to increase their incomes' to financial incentives for farming. However, the promotion of the cotton industry had major implications which came to cause – or increase – friction in the Sino-Xinjiang relation.

First and foremost, through the cotton strategy Xinjiang became China's leading cotton producer, responsible for 25 per cent of national production – a point that stands in stark contrast to the apparent lack of economic viability of cotton as a development strategy for Xinjiang or source of income for farmers in Xinjiang (Ibid.). It is unprofitable for the central government since the strategy to encourage it is undertaken through large subsidies – meanwhile it remains remarkably cheaper to import cotton than to produce it locally. More importantly, however, cotton production does not benefit the Uyghur. Measures are taken by the government to ensure that farmers grow cotton even though it is unprofitable for them. This fact is underlined by the requirement that farmers only sell

their cotton at fixed prices to state-owned cooperatives – prices which were lowered in 1998, substantially lowering the income of farmers even further (Ibid.: 82).

Instead of benefitting the Uyghur and developing the region, Becquelin argues that the actions taken by the central government related to the cotton production are intended to keep control of the cotton supply in the hands of the state. Hence, those who gain from Xinjiang's cotton are the provincial authorities – from the state subsidies and from selling the cotton from the provincial cooperatives at full market price, though it was bought at the artificially low price (Becquelin 2000: 81-82).

Another issue remains, however, the unprofitability for Uyghur farmers of cultivating cotton in Xinjiang. In fact, cotton cultivation is usually only profitable if cultivated on a large scale, requiring both large areas and many workers. It begs the question of why the Chinese government has chosen the cotton strategy to develop Xinjiang economically. Since it does not benefit the poor Uyghur farmers, the answer lies instead in other parts of the cotton strategy which also involved an extensive program of land reclamation and led to a wave of Han migrants moving into XUAR to work with the various parts of the cotton cultivation process. In fact, this is exactly the reason for implementing the cotton strategy in XUAR, according to Becquelin: through land reclamation and the attraction of immense Han migration, the central government increased its control over the Uyghur in the region.

Political Struggles & Control of Xinjiang

The following will deal specifically with issues of security and control of the Xinjiang Region in the 90s. We will look specifically at the Bingtuan as a central organisation for the PRC's control of Xinjiang, and also analyse the resurgent forces of separatism and extremism.

The Bingtuan: the Chinese Production and Construction Corps

A vital part of the Sino-Xinjiang relations which remains to be explored in this chapter is the Bingtuan. As will be shown, this is key in understanding the role of security in the relation. Literally meaning 'corps', the *Bingtuan*, also known as the Chinese Production and Construction Corps (CPCC) has historically been an integral part of the PRC's efforts to control remote border areas. Since Mao's reign, the CPCC can be defined as military-agricultural, colonial settlements. It is perhaps best described as military colonists organized in ranks who were sent to the frontier region that was Xinjiang. The Bingtuan has historically served a multitude of purposes. Comprising both soldiers and civilians – often combined in the individual – a central function of the Bingtuan was the farming of land for the purpose of self-sufficiency or for supplying the military. While some settlements were focused on agriculture, others were military settlements in Xinjiang that made up part of the effort to colonise and thus control the remote border region - however, not all settlements were colonial in nature. (Cliff, 2009)

In the era of Mao, the Bingtuan consisted mainly of demobilised Kuomintang soldiers who to this day still make up part of the members of the Corps. The Bingtuan's role was to secure the border areas against external threats, specifically that of the Soviet Union and its potential invasion of Xinjiang, while at the same time making up the tool for Chinese, or rather Han colonisation of XUAR. In other words, the Bingtuan was to secure the border region against internal as well as external threats. With the fall of the USSR, the external threat largely disappeared for which reason the main focus of the Corps was to secure the border region internally (Ibid). This latter function is largely what prompts analysts such as Nicolas Becquelin(in New York Times, 2009) and James Cliff (2009) to characterise one of the main purposes or even the raison-d'être of the Bingtuan as one of PRC colonisation of the peripheral and estranged provinces.

The most important change of the CPCC of the 1990s concerns its place in the national bureaucratic hierarchy. Whereas the CPCC was in part subject to the XUAR's regional government during Mao's reign (in addition to also being administered in part by the central government and the military), its hierarchical status was altered and, more importantly, elevated during the 90s. First, in 1990 it became a so-called 'Stand-Alone Planning Unit' which meant that the CPCC was no longer under the control of the regional government of XUAR but now ranged solely and directly under the State

Council. In 1994 the next alteration was made to strengthen the Bingtuan through a reform to reorganise and unify it. The third move was in 1997 when the Corps was given the status of a corporation and renamed the Xinjiang New Construction Corporation, thereby enabling it to engage in economic activity with China and beyond (Becquelin 2000: 77-80). The build-up of the Corps hardly appears coincidental but seems more appropriately understood as a deliberate move by the central government to strengthen its standing in XUAR. In fact, since the CPCC is no longer subject to the control of the XUAR it is better characterised a “state-within-the-state” in the XUAR, only controlled directly by the Central Government in Beijing. According to Cliff (2009: 84),

> *“[…] the power and influence of the bingtuan is now second to none in Xinjiang: the organisation is once again one of the primary tools with which the central government shapes development in Xinjiang”*

The reach of the Bingtuan is extensive indeed. The military-agricultural settlements began to develop into communities in the 1980s and through the 1990s the trend of urbanisation continued, mainly in the northern part of Xinjiang. The autonomy of the Bingtuan was disputed by regional authorities; nonetheless the Corps had its own systems of schools, prisons, hospitals and its own armed police corps. Its paramilitary function was highlighted further through its role in enforcing stability and public order – a role that was also strengthened by the central government throughout the 1990s. Moreover, its budget was independent from the regional government and it held a share of 48 per cent of the region’s land. The 2.4 million members of the Bingtuan made up one seventh of XUAR’s entire population in 1997. 90 per cent of the members were Han – and this was no coincidence. The aforementioned massive inflow of Han migrants to XUAR is closely linked to what Becquelin calls ‘the resettlement policy of the 1990s’, denoting the deliberate encouragement and transfer of people to XUAR from other provinces so as to ‘guarantee the security of the region’ (Becquelin 2000: 77-80). Thus, the influx of Han Chinese takes on the character of colonial settlements in Xinjiang which again hints towards the colonising character of the Chinese strategy to integrate the region.

The sheer size of the Bingtuan combined with its large share of Xinjiang’s land sheds light on a question that was raised previously; namely that of implementing the cotton strategy in XUAR despite its unprofitability for the region in general, for the Uyghur farmers in particular and for the central government that subsidises it. The CPCC has the capacity to cultivate cotton on a large scale which, as will be recalled, is necessary in

order to profit from it. This refers simultaneously to its labour force, consisting of Han migrants who were attracted to the region to grow and manufacture cotton through central government campaigns, and to the vast land mass of the CPCC acquired through land reclaimed by the state (Ibid.: 80-84). This provides an explanation for the apparently strange decision of the central government to make cotton one of XUAR's pillars as it has made the Bingtuan the main beneficiaries of the region's cotton cultivation, standing for almost 40 per cent of the cotton project. In fact, this leads back to a point that was made earlier in this chapter, namely that the Chinese government above all seeks to keep the control of cotton cultivation in the hands of the state. Moreover, the establishment and decade-long expansion of the cotton project brought with it waves of poor, Han immigrants to Xinjiang who came to work, highly encouraged by the central government (Ibid.). It also involved the reclamation of large areas of land by the state and the 'corporation' of the Bingtuan – to the disgruntlement of the regional government that used to administer it. In effect, the cotton strategy is arguably a strategy of the central government to increase its control in the region by reclaiming huge areas of land and populating them with Han migrants, all of which is implemented as part of the cotton strategy and through the reinforcement of the Bingtuan which in effect functions as the government's proxy. Hence, the cotton strategy takes the shape of colonial settlements – in the words of Becquelin:

> *"(...) the ultimate explanation for the importance of cotton in Xinjiang lies in the opening up of new land through land reclamation: a key element in bringing in massive numbers of Han settlers to reinforce territorial consolidation"* (Ibid: 83)

In sum, the CPCC makes up a crucial component in the Sino-Xinjiang relations as it combines the role of a security force protecting the Chinese from internal threats, with the role of a corporation which carries out government investments and is thus both a military- as well as an economic/political tool for the PRC to maintain and – as was shown in the above – expand its influence and control in XUAR.

Administrative Relationship

The region of Xinjiang is a so-called autonomous region – a status that one would arguably expect to entitle the region to some degree of self-government. The previous

five chapters have explored different aspects of the Sino-Xinjiang relationship which in various ways shed light on the balance between the regional government's autonomy and the influence or control of the central government. The focus of this chapter is to elaborate and deepen the analysis of the administrative relationship between regional and state control of the XUAR.

It seems unclear what the status of being autonomous region translates into. However, as transpires from the previous chapters, towards the end of the historical period we have investigated, in the 1990s, the PRC has tightened its grip in XUAR. Arguably, the disgruntlement and objections of the regional government of Xinjiang to the initiatives that increased the authority of the central government indicates/bears witness to the trend of the central government expanding its authority into areas of the XUAR that used to be under the jurisdiction or control of the regional government.

In sum of what has been mentioned previously, the Chinese central administration has reinforced its authority in Xinjiang in a number of ways during the 1990s. This stands out in comparison to the previous strategy of the PRC, particularly that of the 1980s in which the emphasis was more on economic growth with the attention of the central government directed towards the coastal regions. By contrast, the 1990s saw a shift in these priorities. Attention turned inwards towards central and interior China in light of the acknowledgement of regional and east-west economic inequalities and the changing geo-political landscape of Central Asia all of which in the case of XUAR translated into central government fear of increased ethnic unrest or separatist movements alongside a new geo-strategic interest in the region.

Since the establishment of the XUAR as part of the PRC the movement of Han migrants into the region significantly altered the demographic composition of the region, reducing the proportion of the ethnic population whereby, indirectly, the cultural and political balance arguably shifted in favour of the Han or 'proper' Chinese. One might argue that this trend of migration into Xinjiang consisted mainly of poor Han workers from densely populated areas seeking new ground in the vast and less populated area of China's largest region in terms of territory, yet this argument is countered by several facts. The central government actively promoted an increased migration wave during the 1990s as a response to the 1990 acknowledgement of a decrease in the Han proportion of the Xinjiang population combined with a projection that this trend would continue. This

promotion is exemplified by the implementation of the cotton strategy, intended "to attract and support a larger population" (Becquelin 2000: 80). As was mentioned previously, an important part of this strategy was the simultaneous extensive reclamation by the state directly and indirectly through the corporation of the Bingtuan intended for cotton cultivation by Han workers – and consequently, their settlement. This indicates the deliberate and strategic plan by the government to entice Han settlements in the region – in effect, a move to integrate Xinjiang to China proper. More importantly, however, the Han migrants have historically settled mainly in the north, transforming this area into a densely populated – and increasingly also Han dominated – area. This is closely linked to the development of the Bingtuan, whose military-agricultural settlements have in fact developed into communities. This urbanisation, beginning in the 1980s and accelerating in the 1990s, translates into an increase of 1.5 million in the region's urban population over a period of seven years – from 1990 with 3.6 million to 5.12 million in 1997 (Ibid.: 75). Nicolas Becquelin states that:

> *"This has direct implications in terms of territorial control by the centre. Geographers have demonstrated that one of the most important mechanisms in the progressive assimilation of the periphery by the centre is the creation of small centres down the line. As Xinjiang's cities and towns grow in size, their administrative functions also expand and take an increased weight vis-à-vis the surrounding territory."* (Ibid.)

In this light, the inflow of Han settlers in Xinjiang along with the increased urbanisation is no small thing in relation to the balance between the control of China proper and regional autonomy in the XUAR. The two major infrastructure projects of the 1990s in Xinjiang can also be seen in extension of this. The Taklamakan Highway, which created a central transport axis from north to south Xinjiang, coupled with the rail link extended from Korla to Kashgar were not merely endeavours of increased economic integration. Rather, Becquelin argues that they were intended to connect the region to the rest of China by linking the Han-dominated town of Korla to the major east-west while increasing control over the southern parts of the region which were still rural and largely populated by poor Uighurs.

> *"While China had successfully colonized and integrated the northern part of Xinjiang, control of the southern part was much more problematic, and it was difficult to enforce order there. The dissatisfaction of the ethnic population, echoed by local cadres, was reflected in a growing number of small-scale, isolated "sudden incidents" (tufa shijian)."* (Ibid.: 69)

More directly influential to the balance between regional autonomy and central government in the XUAR is the lack of Uyghur representation in the autonomous regional government. While the state's policy on regional autonomy clearly dictates that the head of an autonomous region must be a member of the ethnic group exercising autonomy, Michael Clarke explains that it is in fact the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) *"that wields real power in the region"* (Clarke 2008: 334). Ethnic minorities are immensely under-represented in the CCP which is instead dominated by Han, especially towards the top of the regional bureaucratic hierarchy of which no member is from an ethnic minority (Ibid.). The exclusion of the Uyghur is not only political but is also reflected economically. For instance, the major economic development project that was the cotton strategy did not benefit the Uighurs but rather let the Han workers and especially the Bingtuan reap the financial grapes.

The central government has increased its control in Xinjiang in two additional ways; first through the economic reforms which in effect translated into increased government control over the regional economy during the 1990s by recentralising fiscal and decision-making powers that used to be in the hands of the regional government (Becquelin 2000: 71-72). The second was through the reinforcement of the Bingtuan whose regional standing and power was elevated in various ways, from the formal upgrading that placed it directly under the central government giving it equal standing with – and autonomy from – the regional administration, to the increased involvement in enforcing order in Xinjiang. Both moves were deliberate boosts of the Bingtuan which effectively strengthened the central government's control in Xinjiang.

Forces of Ethnic Separatism & Religious Extremism

Entering the last decade of the 20th century, the collapse of the Soviet Union changed the face of central Asia; and with the emergence of numerous newly independent states, so changed the agenda for China towards its western frontier. The collapse of the USSR presented China with both new challenges and new possibilities. A long time security threat, in form of the Soviet power projection towards Xinjiang, was gone and the road was paved for Chinese influence in the newly founded, post-soviet states of central Asia. Yet, along with this shift of regional dynamics came also a shift in the internal situation in

the Xinjiang province as ethnic dissent and unrest increased and posed new threats to Chinese presence in Xinjiang.

Tracing ethnic unrest in the Xinjiang province is indeed difficult, as it has deep historical and complex political roots. We have already covered what can be claimed to be the origins of its current extreme form, represented by the Uighurs' struggle for emancipation, reflected in the emergence of the double effort to establish a Turkestan republic in the 1940s. In turn, much of the ethnic unrest is linked to the promises made to the Uighurs by the Communist Party in 1949. When Mao invaded Xinjiang, the Communist Party exploited the Uyghur resistance towards the nationalist Kuomintang, and promised the Uighurs independence and religious liberty under Communist rule. Subsequently Xinjiang was included in the PRC in 1955. Yet, this initial support of the issue of multiculturalism was quickly abandoned and replaced by Maoist doctrines of Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward. These policies were the first attempts of homogenisation of the Xinjiang region in modern history, with the aim of its integration into the PRC. During the Cultural Revolution, indigenous cultures, such as the Uyghur-Muslim culture, were seen as threats to the formation of national unity and Chinese rule. As a consequence of policies aimed at eradicating mosques and other religious institutions, the spirit of opposition against Chinese rule was forged. The next development in Chinese-Xinjiang relations came after years of decreased focus on the role of culture and politics under Deng Xiaoping – a turn of events that may be characterised as a shift from a 'hard' to a 'soft' approach to multiculturalism and ethnic minority culture and religiousness. During the 1980s in the Deng Xiaopeng era, China decreased its control of religious activity and turned its focus to the achievement of economic growth, concentrated on the coastal regions in eastern and southern China. An essential conclusion on the Chinese current view on ethnic unrest is based on experiences from this era. In the view of the Chinese government in the 1990s, the increased religious and cultural liberty led to increased ethnic opposition to Chinese (Becquelin, 2000). Subsequently, in 1990, the regional government in Xinjiang declared martial law an enacted the *Regulations for Religious Personnel and Regulations on Religious Activities*, closing numerous mosques and stirring ethnic opposition.

The prominence of separatism and extremism in the 90s is essentially the priority it was given by the Chinese government. The battle against ethnic unrest was the essential

struggle for the Chinese government in Xinjiang during the 90s. In fact, eliminating the threats posed by separatism in its north-western frontier region has even been argued to be the main objective of China's effort strengthen its position towards and thereby influence in the Central Asian states (Becquelin, 2000: 66). Separatism in Xinjiang has been linked primarily to groups which Chinese officials define by the so-called twin ideologies of ethnic separatism and Islamic radicalism (Shichor, 2005). This is also characteristic of the re-emergence of separatism in the 90s. Whereas ethnic separatism has roots all the way back to the inclusion of Xinjiang into the PRC in 1955, the influence of Islamic Radicalism on ethnic unrest came much later. Following 1979, with a Chinese (re)turn to a 'soft' approach towards religiousness and multiculturalism, pilgrimages to Mecca were once again permitted to the Uighurs. With this symbolic act, many believe that the Chinese government paved the way for radical Islamism as the influx of religious text and symbol would once again fuel the wish for ethnic separatism (Ibid.).

The smoking gun that has been characterised by Chinese and International Media as the first blow in a campaign of Uyghur terrorist attacks was in 1992, where Chinese officials claim that Uyghur separatists detonated bombs in two busses in Urumqi, killing multiple civilians (Steele & Kuo, 2007: 8). The attack was prominent in the sense that it is regarded widely as one of the most violent attacks, which has been claimed by multiple parties to be performed by a Uyghur Islamic, separatist movement, 'the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Party'. Thus, with the relatively broad agreement on the role of separatism and religious fundamentalism, the 1992 bus bombings became a prime example to be used by the Chinese government in its attempt to emphasise the urgency in addressing ethnic unrest in Xinjiang as a threat to not only stability and safety, but even unity and sovereignty in China at large.

In the wake of increasing incidents of assassinations, riots, bombings in the 1990s, the Chinese representatives in Xinjiang received a confidential letter from the central government in 1996, stating that:

> *"The separatist organizations abroad have reinforced their collaboration (...) Within Xinjiang, illegal religious movements are rampant. Groups are fomenting trouble, assaulting Party and government structures, bombing and committing terrorist attacks. Some organizations have already turned from underground to semi-public, to the point of openly confronting the government... There is also a possibility that this as yet limited chaos and*

> *turmoil may influence Xinjiang's and eventually the whole country's stability."*(Becquelin, 2000: 88)

According to Becquelin, the above quote in essence reflects a shift in policies towards ethnic unrest. There is a clear definition of referent object of security; Chinese sovereignty and national security is directly challenged by forces of separatism, and the main threat is perceived to be the extremist groups adhering to the ideology of extremist Islamism. With this rhetoric came the *Strike Hard Campaigns.* As the most prominent in a series of policies towards ethnic separatism in Xinjiang, the goal of the campaign was to strike down on groups associated with separatist activity, as well as limiting free speech and the liberal rights of ethnic groups – both considered by the Chinese government as enforcing separatism and extremism. Thus, the strategy aimed at controlling separatist activities had a wider scope, and was targeting the issue of ethnic resistance by groups of Uighurs towards Chinese rule by suppressing and limiting the role of Uyghur ethnic identity in Xinjiang as a whole (Ibid.: 88). In this return to a 'hard' approach to religiousness and non-Han ethnicity, the extensive Strike Hard Campaigns are held to target the Uighurs at large – even in cases which merely concern dissent or critical comments on 'discriminatory Han policies in Xinjiang' (Cliff 2009: 89). Thus, with the hard policies the Chinese government in effect approached and securitised the Uyghur community as the embodiment of threat to Chinese national security. As such, the security agenda of the 90s was in line with the traditional-military view on security, and emphasized the need for China to take "extraordinary" measures of force to remove the identified threats of extremism and separatism.

This shift in internal policies towards separatism and extremism in Xinjiang also had a regional counterpart; the formation of the Shanghai Five, in 1996. The Shanghai Five is a Central Asian regional institution promoting economic, political and military cooperation among its members; these include China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and, recently, Iran with observatory status. The organization has a strong security agenda, and was developed primarily to address security issues within the member countries (Aris, 2009: 464). China's devotion to the Shanghai Five can be seen as an indicator of the acknowledgement of the issue of ethnic unrest in Xinjiang being intrinsically linked to the Central Asian region. This conclusion contributed to further the importance of attending to the issue of separatism in Xinjiang, and in turned linked it to the war on terrorism. Thus, the solution to the threat posed by ethnic unrest was not only

for China to concentrate on national organizations in the Xinjiang area. Efforts to secure the border against illegal migration of terrorists trained in Central Asia or Afghanistan, as well as illegal weapons- and drug trade in the frontier area, became central to the Chinese strategy. Furthermore, this allowed China in essence to downplay the importance of national issues as causes of civil and ethnic unrest (e.g. poverty and social exclusion among Uighurs) and emphasize the impact of transnational terrorist organizations and other external forces operating in Central Asia as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan on separatism.

Besides sanctions towards religious freedom, Uyghur cultural identity and the like, the results of the shift in policies have been an increase in military and police actions against groups perceived as separatist and fundamentalist movements during the 90's. Within the first years of the *Strike Hard* campaign, in turn guided by the security principles of the Shanghai Five, the Chinese government identified several organizations that were perceived as part of the separatist movement in Xinjiang. The result would be military and police operations aiming at neutralizing these organizations by any means necessary, as well as institutional policies aimed at preventing new organization to form, including restrictions on the rights of assembly in public- as well as private space. The Strike Hard campaign featured collective arrests of Muslim Uighurs, speedy trials and a high number of executions (Clarke, 2010). While this strategy this might have helped in decreasing the number of violent incidents, the use of collective arrests, executions and general obstruction of social order among the Uighurs might in turn have increased some of the grievances shared by Uighurs towards the Chinese presence in the region (Steele & Kuo, 2007).

Sub-conclusion

The preceding pages combined provide some assistance in defining the relationship between mainland China and the region of Xinjiang in a historical perspective. As the chapter shows, Sino-Xinjiang relations have a long history of conflict characterised by political, social and economic issues. Despite their complexity, we are able to derive a

few conclusions as to the nature and central components of the relationship and the inherent role of security.

In a historical perspective, the amount of control of Xinjiang in the modern age is indeed unique. Traditionally, Xinjiang has been a remote and hostile area for the Chinese, and while Chinese warlords and dynasties have been present in the region for long periods of time, the degree of control has varied greatly – seen in the fact that the region has even been unmarked entirely by Chinese influence for considerable periods of time through history. In addition to this, Xinjiang has a history of opposing Chinese rule, most notably through the separatist efforts prior to the formation of the PRC. This history of separation is interesting in the light of the resurgent forces of separatism apparent in more recent Sino-Xinjiang relations. Arguably, the control which China has of Xinjiang currently was not established until its official inclusion in the People's Republic in 1955. The relationship between the Chinese government and Xinjiang's ethnic groups is characterised by alternating soft and hard approaches by the PRC towards the issues of multiculturalism and ethnic minority cultural and religious expression. Thus, the initial inclusion of Xinjiang in the PRC was arguably founded on the promised religious and cultural liberty of the people of Xinjiang, yet this soft approach was abandoned and replaced by a hard approach to culturally homogenise the region so as to integrate it into the PRC owing to the view that the alternative would undermine and thus was a threat to national unity and Chinese rule. The consequent shift to 'soft' policies occurred in the 1980s under Deng Xiaoping. His strategy of uneven development and the allowance of increased multiculturalism were widely believed by the Chinese to be the reason for a resurgence of separatism towards the end of the 1980s and early 90s. In the 90s separatism came to be considered and securitised as the main threat to national unity and, by extension, the sovereignty and thereby survival of the PRC. Along with the decreased control of religious activities during the 80s, the ideology of fundamentalist Islamism combined with the forces of ethnic separatism made up the resurgence of the threat to the referent object of security: the sovereignty of the PRC. The resurgent forces of separatism and extremism in Xinjiang, the embodiment of the threat to the sovereignty of PRC in Xinjiang, was in turn reinforced by two trends that were apparent during the 80s and continued in the 90s: First, the large number of Han migrants encouraged by the central government; and second, the opening up of Xinjiang towards the Central Asian countries,

Pakistan and Afghanistan, which in turn apparently generated an increased influx of foreign terrorists along with illegal drug- and weapons trade.

Sino-Xinjiang relations in the 1990s, immediately preceding the formulation of the Western Development Plan, were dominated by a securitisation by the Chinese state, where Chinese presence was threatened by separatism. As such, these forces put into question Chinese sovereignty in the rule of Xinjiang, and as such, the security threat was seen in the context of a traditional-military threat to national security, border defence and national sovereignty. The twin ideologies of ethnic separatism and Islamic fundamentalism were presented as the main threat in the XUAR and China as a whole, and thus also the issue of the forging of China as a nation. Subsequently, China carried out internal military and policing efforts to ensure strict control of separatist- and religious extremist activities, mainly performed by Uyghur organisations, during which process the Uyghur community was targeted as a whole through collective arrests and strict control of religious activities, -institutions, and –representatives. Hence, this security agenda can be characterised by its domination by military initiatives. Meanwhile, the Chinese government continued to pursue its economic imperatives through infrastructure projects as well as agricultural projects, focused on cotton. Common for the economic policies of the 90s was an increase of the import of Han workers to carry out the projects, partly through the Bingtuan, which in turn sustained the political, social, and economic divide between the Han Chinese and the Uyghur people. Moreover, while the military- and policing efforts had some success in decreasing violence and ethnic unrest, the broad strategy of China in Xinjiang has speculated to increase the Uyghur grievances through social, political and economic exclusion.

While stark, the characterisation of the relationship between China and Xinjiang as that of coloniser and colonised makes up an interesting notion in characterising the 1990s – and it is arguably sustained empirically when considering the historical role and function of the Bingtuan and the way these were reinforced by the central government through the decade of the 1990s. It seems that the efforts of the Chinese state to securitise Chinese rule in Xinjiang as a referent object of security, to be protected from the embodiment of threat, i.e. Xinjiang's forces of separatism and extremism, while simultaneously emphasising ethnic homogenisation and the reliance on Han Chinese workers and government officials in turn created an increase in hostility and grievance in the region.

We have found no evidence or statements during the 1990s indicating that the economic and social strategy of the PRC in Xinjiang intended to provide the Uyghur with a platform for inclusion into China proper. This underlines the analysis that China's overall objective of integrating the autonomous region into China proper is best characterised as colonisation – for instance reflected in the influx of Han and the override of the regional authorities by the central government through the central government's strengthening of the Bingtuan's economic and political/administrative control vis-à-vis the XUAR government. More to the point is the simultaneous emphasis on the threat which the organisation of Uyghur culture poses to the unity and stability of China which is approached as a threat to national security through military and policing efforts along with the control of institutions and organisations associated with the embodiment of threat.

Perhaps as an acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the strategy of the 1990s, with the formulation and establishment of the Western Development Plan (WDP) the Chinese government is apparently attempting to turn the page on Xinjiang. Thus, the WDP may indicate a change in the Chinese strategy towards Xinjiang. This immediately begs a question of to which extent this is true – and how and to which extent do processes of securitisation, mainly concerning threats to national unity, continue to figure centrally in the WDP and the Chinese strategy as a whole vis-à-vis XUAR.

Part II

The Western Development Plan: A New Take on Security?

Introduction

Whereas the previous chapter analysed the historical relations between China and Xinjiang this chapter will deal specifically with the Western Development Plan (WDP) in the context of Xinjiang. Hence, this chapter answers how and to which extent security figures centrally in the WDP. Therefore, the chapter will focus on first establishing an overview of the content of the WDP, and second to identify the role of security by analysing *securitisation processes* within the official statements, speeches and other speech acts performed by the Chinese central government and its representatives concerning the objective of the WDP. The chapter will furthermore seek to categorise the role of security within the framework of a traditional-military and non-traditional understanding of security. Thus, the chapter establishes not only whether or not security plays a role within the WDP and to which extent it is central, but more significantly *how* security figures. Yet, the chapter will also relate to the potential consequences of this by establishing an understanding of the relationship between the declared objectives of the plan and the actual content. Furthermore, we will include an analysis of the Bingtuan – which was previously established as a central component in Sino-Xinjiang relations – in order to establish the connection between the WDP and the Bingtuan. Above all, the main point of interest of this chapter is to establish to which extent the role of security in the WDP is different from the historical role of security in the Sino-Xinjiang relation, especially that of the 1990s, and thus, the implications of this for China's view on security and development.

The following pages will start out by explaining the content of the plan, including specific projects and investments. We will in this process seek to situate the WDP in relation to the economic strategy of China in the 1990s as explained in the previous chapter. Secondly, we will analyse the rationale of the WDP, that is, the rhetoric and argumentation, or *speech acts* that form the basis of the formulation of the WDP and its implementation in Xinjiang. This will allow us to conclude both to which extent security is central to the WDP, but more importantly whether and in which way this differs from *how* security was central in the period immediately preceding the formulation of the WDP, the 1990s. However, while security is the main focus of this chapter, we must also

discuss to which extent the WDP benefits the Uyghur in order for us to proceed with a discussion of the consequences of the WDP in the next chapter.

The Western Development Plan- Background, Rationale and Content

First task of the chapter will be to outline the content of the WDP, including the main scope of investments, projects etc. The content will be outlined for us to eventually be able to evaluate to what extent the declared objective of the WDP, once established, is consistent with the actual content. We will focus on economic policies as well as other development strategies. Lastly, we will analyse the specific role of security as expressed through speech acts from the Chinese Central Government and its representatives.

Objective, Scope and Major Investments

The strategy to develop China's western regions has been named in a number of different ways, most notably the instrumental *The Great Western Development Plan* or the more abstract *The Campaign to Open up the West*. We will simply refer to it as the Western Development Plan (WDP). The WDP is not so much a concrete set of formulated policies, as it is an attempt to encompass the total amount of efforts towards integrating Xinjiang into China proper under one 'plan' or 'campaign'. Thus, while the term 'development' has economic connotations, there is more than economic growth to the goals of the WDP. In 1999, a State Council Group chaired by Zhu Rongji (in Zhao, 2001: 203) formulated some goals of the WDP. The WDP was to:

1. Speed up the construction of infrastructure
2. Strengthen ecological and environmental protection and preservation
3. Adjust industrial structure
4. Develop science, technology and education, and train skilled workers
5. Deepen reform and opening

The tenth Five Year Plan (2001-2005) announced investments of app. 50 Billion US$ in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), with just below a quarter of this being allocated to construction of projects within the areas of infrastructure, environment and industry (Becquelin 2004: 364). In the context of Xinjiang, two of the largest projects are the construction of a natural gas-pipeline stretching more than 4000 km. from the Tarim Basin to Shanghai and the restoration of the Tarim River. Firstly, the pipeline, known as the *east-west pipeline,* serves to fulfil the increasing energy consumption in China, but also creates the opportunity of laying the infrastructural foundation of a pipeline going further eastward towards the Central Asian region, rich on oil and natural gas. Plans are already in motion to increase the pipeline from the Caspian Sea to Xinjiang, giving the region the status as the future 'energy centre' for China (ibid: 365), emphasising China's energy objectives in the region. The pipeline project alone takes up 15 billion US$ of the budget. Secondly, the restoration of the Tarim River, a dried out river bed, is internationally supported and will divert water back into the river running from the north to the south which will increase the opportunities for settlements in the scarcely populated south Xinjiang. Zhao (2001: 205) argues that China's present regional policy through the WDP seems to be aimed at:

1. Building an integrated national economy through regional development and interregional cooperation
2. Allocating industrial production on the basis of efficiency and comparative advantage; emphasising the need to equalise regional differences and raise standard of living for all regions
3. Achieving high economic growth without ignoring other objectives (e.g. equity, socio-political stability, and ethnic unity)

What must especially be noted here, besides the economic aspects, is the third point; the aim for the WDP to achieve more socially-oriented values such as equity, social stability and ethnic unity. This observation is important to note in analysing the WDP as more than an economic strategy of regional growth, and it fits the statements made by Chinese government officials on the previous page; that in order for Xinjiang to rid itself of issues such as ethnic unrest, social- and political instability, the WDP must focus on ensuring equity and unity, decreasing social and ethnic unrest through economic development. Yet, it also underlines the notion of the WDP being a departure from the emphasis on the

threats posed by the forces of separatism, extremism and terrorism in the 90s. The WDP can thus be viewed as an attempt to emphasise the importance of social stability, ethnic equality and economic prosperity as the basic objectives of the Chinese strategy in Xinjiang, rather than an aim to contain the threat to national security posed by the forces of extremism, separatism and terrorism. Thus, the WDP seems to be adhering to the non-traditional view of security, by focusing on *providing* the foundational requirements for security rather than *removing* threats by force directly. Thus, an interesting question is to which extent this declared goal of the WDP is reflected in its specific content in the context of Xinjiang.

Pillar Industries: The Perceived Growth Engines of Xinjiang

Through the 1990s, the focus of China's economic policies in XUAR had a deliberate focus on industrial areas where the Xinjiang already enjoyed a regional, comparative advantage. The most notable was the pillar industries of oil extraction (and related industries, i.e. petrochemicals) and cotton. As we have already showed, some serious arguments can be made against the development, especially in the cotton-industry, through the 90s in terms of its wider impact on all levels of society. As demonstrated, the strategy of cotton cultivation in the 1990s was focused on the import of skilled Han labour, and did by no means assist in ensuring the division of revenue to other ethnic groups, most notably the Uighurs. Hence, a question is whether the WDP has provided alternatives to this strategy in its aim to ensure 'equity and ethnic unity'?

We have not found evidence that the WDP provides a radical new strategy of economic policies compared to those of the Chinese government of the 90s. On the contrary, it seems that the economic policies are still focused very much on the pillar industries of oil and cotton (Vaughn Moeller, 2006). Most notably, the oil-sector's focus has shifted from oil exploitation to the derived petrochemical industry. On top of this are the continued efforts to invest in infrastructure projects with the aim of connecting the southern parts of Xinjiang to the northern parts and China proper. These infrastructure projects include the already described pipeline- and highway projects to exploit Xinjiang's enormous reserve of minerals (China's largest regional source with 80 percent of the reserves), natural gas and oil reserves (34 percent and 30 percent of China's estimated reserves, respectively) to supply China's increasing energy and mineral demand (Zhao, 2001: 212).

Vaughn Moeller (2006) provides an economic analysis of the continued focus on the cotton industry in XUAR and its impact on society as a whole. It is emphasised that measured for the region as a whole, the cotton industry has been a relative success, with tremendous growth in production and revenue and while cotton is presented as "the strategic motor for the province's economic growth" in the WDP, some serious arguments are made against its divisional dimension (ibid). In fact:

> *"Much of the increase in cotton yield has been contributed by predominantly Han areas [...] Though Uighur areas in general experienced strong growth in cotton production as well, those regions with the highest concentrations of Uighur cotton farmers and formerly key production bases experienced modest increases or even declines in production [...]"* (Ibid: 24-25)

Thus, in spite of the relative successful growth rates in the cotton industry, serious doubts can be raised as to the developmental aspects of cotton production in Xinjiang. Despite the fact that the region is a promoted receiver of government investments and subsidies it seems that it is predominantly Han Chinese who are benefitting from this, whereas Uyghur peasants are left out. The same trend can said to be true for investments in infrastructure, resource exploitation and the production of petrochemicals (Becquelin, 2004). The focus for the inflow of funds through the WDP seems to be industries either predominantly located in Han areas, as with cotton and petrochemicals, or implemented in Uyghur areas with the use of Han labour, as is the case for highway- and railway construction as well as resource exploitation (ibid).

The Continued Influx of Han Chinese

Though it seems indeed that the WDP continues the overall strategy to pursue investments in the industries identified through the 90s as the perennial backbone of Xinjiang's economic development, it does seem that it departs from the traditional-military security agenda, and focuses in terms of rhetoric on ensuring social stability and ethnic equality as a way of securing Xinjiang against social instability and ethnic unrest. As such, the WDP seems to be an acknowledgement of and adherence to a non-traditional security agenda. The increased emergence of a notion of the connection between economic development and security is interesting indeed. We will now analyse the impact of this on one of the other government strategies of the 90s, the migration of Han Chinese

into XUAR, to determine to which extent this new process of securitisation is evident here as well.

In 2000, an article fostered partly by the Central Committee Nationality Work Conference acknowledged that an essential component in developing Xinjiang (the central objective of the WDP) was the effort to increase the migration of Han Chinese to Xinjiang (Becquelin, 2004). But perhaps most notably, in contrast to the previous Chinese rhetoric on the issue, the article acknowledged the potential consequences of this strategy:

> *"In keeping with the increased population flow of the various ethnic groups, there will be some changes in the proportions of the nationalities. There will also be some conflicts and clashes in their contacts. If this is not handled well, it will have a deleterious effect on national unity and social stability, and should draw a high level of attention."* (Ibid: 374)

This is an interesting perspective that could be perceived as contradictory to the development strategy of the WDP with its aim to increase Han migration. One could argue that the migration of Han Chinese to Xinjiang is perceived by the Chinese government as essential in the non-traditional security agenda of achieving stability through economic development and common prosperity, yet, at the same time, the migration of Han to Xinjiang is perceived as a cause of ethnic dissent, and thereby ultimately a threat to national unity and social stability. However, this might not be all there is to say about this apparently contradictory line of statements. Arguably, the increased awareness of the effects of Han migration into China is not so much an acknowledgement of the negative impacts of Han migration per se, but should rather be viewed as an acknowledgement that, while Han migration might be crucial in developing Xinjiang, the efforts to pursue the strategy in Xinjiang must also contain measures to deal with increased conflicts between nationalities. In light of the security agenda identified in the economic strategy of the WDP, this points to the importance of the WDP in providing the conditions for security so as to prevent the potential threat of conflicts and clashes between nationalities to the apparent referent object of social stability and national unity From this perspective, the quote demonstrates that on the issue of Han migration as well as economic development, the securitisation process performed by the Chinese government focuses on *providing* the foundation for security in Xinjiang, rather than *removing* threats by force.

The Role of Security: The Rhetorical Background of the WDP

In establishing an understanding of the role of security in the formulation of the WDP, we need to return to the last half of the 90s, where the Chinese government seemed to acknowledge some of the negative effects of its traditional-military view on security.

The ideological foundation for presenting the WDP stems from 'Deng Xiaopeng's promise' from the 80s (Holbig, 2004), where the then-leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC) promised prosperity to the western regions in turn for their patience with the strategy to first develop the coastal regions. The ideological and rhetoric foundation for the plan in the latter half of the 90s clearly combined this 'promise' and was a clear reaction to the trend of re-emerging ethnic unrest. Thus it linked Deng's promise of economic development to the objective of ensuring social stability and national unity. Most notably, in 1996, the Chinese Communist Party XUAR committee chairman Wang Lequan declared that:

> *"[...] Xinjiang lags behind in economic development, and some new situations, new contradictions, and new problems have occurred with the intensified efforts to carry out reform and with continued adjustment of interests. As a result, contradictions among the people have become salient."*(Quote from Clarke, 2004: 420)

It transpires from this quote that the issue of economic development or the lack thereof, was identified as one of the main reasons the existence of 'contradictions among the people' which by extension arguably translates into ethnic unrest. The existence of such 'contradictions' along with the shortcomings of the government's own strategy have not been acknowledged before by the central authorities (Clarke, 2004). It signals an abandonment of the idea that ethnic separatism was driven by external forces, and an acknowledgement that the government's own policies might in turn have increased the very issue of ethnic unrest they wished to control through 'intensified efforts to carry out reform'. As such, this is a clear change in the PRC's perception of *threat.*

The connection between development and security was further developed in 1996 by XUAR regional council Chairman Abdulahat Abdurixi, who stated that:

> *"[...] We must use economic development to ensure stability, and on the other hand, we must use political stability to guarantee economic development and*

> *ensure that people of various ethnic groups can become prosperous and advance toward a comfortable life."* (Quote from Clarke, 2004: 421)

In continuation, David Goodman elaborates that,

> *"[In] his Government Work Report of March 2000, Zhu Rongji made it plain that "common prosperity" would result in the "strengthening of national unity, safeguarding of social stability, and consolidation of border defence," all of which were barely coded phrases for being concerned about issues surrounding the non-Han Chinese*" (quote from Goodman, 2004: 326)

These quotes are particularly interesting as they support the notion of a significant shift in the official rhetoric regarding security in the WDP compared to that which prevailed in the 1990s. Instead of the traditional-military view on security, with the threat essentially being forces determined to challenge Chinese sovereignty and decrease national security, the view on security in the argumentation for the WDP is that by ensuring prosperity one thereby removes the perceived threat to national unity without the use of military force. While the Chinese strategy to secure the referent object of security in the 1990s was to meet the threats with military force and policing efforts, it appears that the strategy now emphasised economic development as the means to 'safeguard' social stability and national unity. Thereby essential development objectives become central in China's effort to increase security in Xinjiang.

Indeed, it seems that government officials in the latter part of the 1990s and the start of the 2000s were busy presenting development and security (or a lack thereof) as dependent entities, thereby implicitly arguing that issues of development and security are intrinsically interlinked in line with the non-traditional view. As such, the WDP show a clear departure from the security agenda of the 1990s, which focused on issues of terrorism, separatism and extremism as the main causes of threat to security in Xinjiang. In this light, we argue that, while security must still be concluded to be a central aspect of the WDP, how security figures in the Plan reflects a significant change from the traditional-military security agenda of the 90s.Yet, a conflicting relationship is also apparent between the declared goal of the WDP to ensure common prosperity for the people of Xinjiang as a central measure against security threats and the actual content of the economic policies to provide this, which continues to be centred on Han labour, thereby not performing much to ensure the division of revenue to all parts of society. To

explore this conflict we will now turn to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, or the Bingtuan, as they are commonly referred to.

Bingtuan in the 21st Century

Bingtuan holds a strategic function in the Chinese government's objective towards the Xinjiang region: namely integration into the centre. Historically, the relationship between the region and the PRC has altered between increased integration into and estrangement from the 'core' of China, which is what James Cliff calls, 'a cyclical process of when a frontier region progresses from being unoccupied to being an occupied frontier but reverts to being unoccupied (in an imperial sense)' (Cliff 2009: 86). By contrast, he argues that the Chinese strategy of the 1990s – of which a large part had been carried out by the Bingtuan – had brought XUAR onto a path of linear process towards integration into China proper. Indeed, looking at the region by the turn of the millennium, he argues that parts of Xinjiang have in fact become fully integrated into the PRC and subsequently, the notion of Xinjiang as a frontier region no longer applies (Cliff 2009). Nicolas Becquelin's statement reflects the same interpretation:

> *"Xinjiang . . . has moved from a phase of accelerated assimilation and national territorial integration by the centre, which typified the decade of the 1990s, to a phase essentially of consolidation of the advances made during this period"* (quoted in Cliff 2009: 91)

This applies especially to the northern part of XUAR as well as to certain urban zones of the Southern sub-region (Ibid.). This indicates that the XUAR has undergone significant change since, as will be recalled from the historical analysis, the southern sub-region was the cause of some concern for the Chinese central government in the 1990s in that it was considered remote and unconnected to the rest of the PRC – and, more importantly, beyond the influence and control of the Chinese government.

Returning to the role of the Bingtuan, historically one of its primary functions has been to extend Chinese government control into frontier regions by the use of military-agricultural settlements, that is to say that its historical function has arguably been one of colonisation of the periphery by the core. As was shown in the historical analysis of

Bingtuan in Xinjiang in the 1990s, this core function of the Corps has not changed. On the contrary, it is evident that the Bingtuan came to play an increased role in the PRC's strategy to integrate the region into China proper. This is seen mainly in the immense influx of Han into the region, a process that the Bingtuan was highly involved in and even facilitated, as well as in their involvement in infrastructure and construction projects. As will be recalled, both the Han migration and the infrastructure projects were mechanisms through which the PRC government sought to integrate the Xinjiang region and, more directly, the Corps also served to empower the central government through the elevation of the Bingtuan's administrative position in the region.

The Western Development Plan and the Bingtuan

With the launch of the Western Development Plan, the Corps' role of carrying out central objectives in the XUAR was strengthened. Cliff argues that,

> *"these objectives include the de facto recentralisation of Xinjiang's political structure and the Autonomous Region's complete and final integration into the core, and that they are being pursued by further increasing the power of the bingtuan and expanding the geographic area in which the organisation operates."* (Cliff 2009: 88)

In order to undertake these new functions, the Bingtuan is undergoing a gradual transformation from being perceived as a rural, military organisation part of whose responsibility is indeed social, into an urbanised and civilian corporation free of social or military responsibilities (Ibid.). This transformation is to be seen as a continuation of the previous decade's effort to turn the Bingtuan into a corporation, the success of which was limited since it had not changed the way the Bingtuan was viewed (Ibid.: 84). Bingtuan becoming a corporation – what Cliff calls 'Incorporation' (Cliff 2009) – did, however, have major implications for the organisation in that it effectively severed the ties between the military, i.e. the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and commerce for the first time in Chinese history (Ibid.: 87-88). This move by the central government was motivated by two objectives, first, to professionalise the PLA and reduce its involvement in Xinjiang and second, letting the Bingtuan fill in the void in the political economy created by the army's new sole focus on military affairs. Arguably, this falls exactly in line with the strategy of the Western Development Plan, namely to de-emphasise the role of military

security in Xinjiang and replacing it with economic development as the new remedy to Xinjiang's problems.

The aforementioned 'social responsibilities' of the organisation have not been dealt with in the previous chapter on the Corps. This largely owes to the apparent lack of clarity as to the extent and nature of these social services. While government publications emphasise equally the Bingtuan's tasks of securing and developing the border regions – both historically and contemporarily (Ibid.: 86) – evidence as to what the second task consists of is sparse. One example that does testify to its presence is that of the Bingtuan farms positioned at the headwaters of most of Xinjiang's rivers. While this strategic positioning of the farms gives them effective control over the land and people living downstream, the organisation is known for having taken 'a degree of responsibility for them, although many of them may not be Bingtuan members or live or work on Bingtuan farms' (Ibid.: 92).

By becoming a corporation, these costly social responsibilities will not be expected of the Bingtuan in the same way as it was associated with the paramilitary colonial settlements. Additionally, the Bingtuan shedding its social responsibilities should also be seen in light of the growing perception among Bingtuan leaders that the threat posed by the ethnic minorities of Xinjiang is diminishing. Hence, Wang Lequan, Party Secretary of both Xinjiang and the Bingtuan, who was an original proponent of the Strike Hard Campaigns of the 1990s, stated in 2004 that the threat of separatism had diminished. According to Cliff, this reflects the confidence among Han authorities to deal with minority problems, should they arise. Consequently,

> *"[...] ethnically-oriented internal security is seen by at least some in Beijing as no longer being the primary role of the bingtuan"* (Cliff 2009: 89)

Instead, the Chinese government's attention – and thereby also that of the Bingtuan – has turned more exclusively to the Han farmers and workers who have settled in the region, seeking to secure their 'complicity and support' in the restructuring of the XUAR economy (Ibid.). In sum, in connection with the launch of the WDP, the reduction of the role of the military and the Incorporation of the Bingtuan has given the organisation the opportunity to shed the social responsibilities towards the population of Xinjiang historically associated with the military-agricultural colonial settlements, concern itself less with the ethnic population, however dissatisfied, who has by now effectively been

sidelined economically, politically and even culturally by the increased Han domination (Ibid.). Instead the organisation can now focus more exclusively on the ‘proper Chinese’: the Han groups, who have settled in Xinjiang as workers or farmers. Notable for the new role of the 21st century Bingtuan is that its military power has now been replaced with economic power, a transition that was considered crucial for the Bingtuan’s ability to carry out the PRC’s central objectives in the region. This owed to the view of the central government that

> *“[...] economic power was accepted as a legitimate form of control and power projection in a way that military force was not”* (Ibid.: 88)

Arguably, the above quotation reflects similar notions inherent in the WDP and by these means the Bingtuan became the perfect tool for the Chinese government to obtain its overall goal in XUAR: namely, to maintain and solidify its political and economic control over the fully integrated parts of the region, and expand its reach into the areas where integration was not yet complete.

From Corps to Corporation

In order to carry out its tasks of increasing and extending its control over Xinjiang, the Bingtuan has first of all commenced a process of merger of Bingtuan areas with land administered by the XUAR government while retaining a ‘disproportionate amount of influence over a now expanded jurisdiction’ (Ibid.: 89). Since, as has been described, the Bingtuan takes its orders directly from the central government, the result of this process is increased government control over Xinjiang’s regional affairs that no longer has to go through the XUAR government structure – in effect, this translates into further recentralisation of Xinjiang, continuing the trend of the 1990s. Along with this process is the intended transferral of former Bingtuan social responsibilities onto Xinjiang’s administration (Ibid.: 94). Secondly, the Bingtuan is also to extend its control into the less integrated and marginal parts of the region, for instance the southern sub-region, in order to continue the government’s pursuit to integrate the Chinese periphery into China proper. This objective is being carried out by the Bingtuan heightening its engagement in large-scale infrastructure projects in the south, and not only continuing but intensifying the development of urbanisation (Ibid.:90-92). Combined, these measures *“contribute further gravitational pull to this force”* (Ibid.: 92). Another means through which the Bingtuan is

'cementing its dominance' in the words of James Cliff, is that of controlling and regulating the water supply.

It is important to emphasise that these new priorities of the Bingtuan do not require any major alterations to the current positioning of the Bingtuan in the region. In fact, at the time of the presentation of the WDP and the consequent new objectives of the Bingtuan, land areas administered by the corporation, such as reclaimed land or farms, were already spread out across the region, holding key strategic positions, for instance, as mentioned in the above, at the headwaters of most of the rivers in XUAR. Hence, in order for the Bingtuan to extend its reach it did not need to invent new strategies but merely continue its already existing path towards the south. In terms of urbanisation, which is known as key to integrating the periphery to the core, the areas which were naturally next in line for urban development were the military-agricultural settlements of the 1950s which had developed into communities over the years – in other words, the areas up for urban development were already Bingtuan administered (Ibid.: 90). James Cliff summarises the 21st century Bingtuan as follows:

> *"[...] the bingtuan is currently experiencing a significant growth in power as it intensifies urban and industrial development, asserts further control over Xinjiang's water resources, and transfers some of its costly social responsibilities to the Autonomous Region government. This latter is part of the process of merging bingtuan areas with parts of Xinjiang, with the ultimate goal of this strategy being to create a centrally-controlled governance structure in the region that is not subject to the standard rules and regulations that relate to provincial-level governments"* (Ibid.: 94).

In sum, the Bingtuan has become more powerful in comparison to the provincial government of Xinjiang, and in light of the fact that the Bingtuan administratively stands directly beneath the central government, the increased control of the Bingtuan translates into increased central government control of the region. Interestingly, the change of the Bingtuan in its transition from corps to corporation is in line with the non-traditional view of security in the WDP. This is seen in the shift of emphasis of the Bingtuan from being a safeguard of stability through direct efforts –military or policing force – to remove national security threats into becoming an economical tool focused on assisting the government in providing the essential foundation of security through economic development. However, serious questions can be made to the coherence between the role of Bingtuan in the WDP and its actual significance in achieving common prosperity for

the people of Xinjiang. Indeed, it seems that the Bingtuan have become a stronghold for Han Chinese in Xinjiang reflecting that the Chinese conception of heartland or 'core' and periphery remains ethnic as well as spatial (Cliff 2009: 85) – especially when taking into consideration the corporation's recently removed 'social responsibilities' to the ethnic population.

Sub-conclusion

In conclusion, the launch of the Western Development Plan (WDP) signals not so much a departure from the PRC's economic strategy for XUAR of the 1990s but more a continuation and, arguably, a reinforcement of them through the articulation of it as a coherent, explicit 'plan' or 'campaign'. Thus, several trends from the previous decade prevail as part of the plan – for instance the continued focus on the pillar industries, continued and promoted Han in-migration, expansion and extension of the efforts to recentralise the region politically and economically through the tool that is the Bingtuan. Above all, the prevailing central objective of the Chinese government is to integrate the region into China proper through the various means of political, economic and infrastructure development. More than extending the objectives of economic development of the WDP, the Bingtuan of the 21st century is evidence of the continued and strengthened effort of the Chinese government to expand and intensify its control over Xinjiang – thereby reflecting a strategy to recentralise Xinjiang.

However, in terms of security and its role in the Sino-Xinjiang relations, the WDP reveals a rather significant shift in the Chinese government's XUAR strategy. In the 90s, the government's emphasis was the security threat of ethnic extremism, separatism and terrorism stemming from Xinjiang, in the view of the government jeopardising the fundamental survival of the state: Chinese sovereignty. While security remains a central component of the WDP, the official statements made on the rationale of the WDP presents the referent object as social stability and national unity the threat to which was considered to be the 'contradictions' between the ethnic and Han groups in the autonomous region. Arguably this signals a shift in the level of threat perceived to be present in the XUAR by the central government, and also notes a shift in strategy from

removing the threat by force to provide the right foundation for security. Thus, the means of 'safeguarding' national unity and social stability were no longer to be found in the area of military and policing and the use of force, but in economic development and promoting economic redistribution. Moreover, rather than fighting the perceived threat with military means, as is usually associated with threats to state survival, the threats in Xinjiang were instead addressed as having roots in socio-economic issues. The rhetoric surrounding the WDP reflects a significant transformation of the role of security in the Chinese government's Xinjiang strategy – arguably, the rhetoric of demilitarisation consequently gives security a diminished role. Additionally, rhetorically the threat was also addressed as one that had its roots in social inequality and whose remedy was economic redistribution and –equality. For this reason, the WDP can be perceived as a clear shift in security agenda, from the traditional-military security agenda of the 90s, to a non-traditional security agenda.

However, a strong claim can be made that this acknowledgment appears to have remained a rhetoric one: the effects of the WDP do not appear to have reduced the inequality between Uyghur and Han groups in XUAR. Moreover, the Bingtuan clearly turned its attention away from the ethnic groups of the region and onto the Han residents. This reveals two aspects of the Sino-Xinjiang relations after the launch of the WDP, first that the threat of the ethnic population was considered to have diminished to a degree that it had become manageable and did no longer require the same attention as previously. Second, it reflects the Chinese conception of core and periphery which remains ethnic as well as spatial. As such, the potential impact of the rhetorical shift in security agenda from a military-traditional one to a non-traditional may be limited when it comes to developing and improving the conditions for Xinjiang's non-Han population. As promising as it may sound, the objective of the WDP of common prosperity and social equality could be criticised for not translating into an actual change of policy – this claim will be explored further in the next chapter.

PART III

Consequences

Implications of the Western Development Plan and the Chinese security agenda for the Uyghur Community

Introduction

Having concluded on the role of security in the Western Development Plan (WDP), the following chapter will deal with the broader aspects of the Chinese strategy in Xinjiang and discuss the potential consequences for the Uighurs specifically. The objective of the following chapter is first to include an analysis of the role of security in China's strategy in Xinjiang, specifically with a focus on the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Global War on Terror (GWoT), and relating it to the WDP. In its approach this analysis is similar to that of the WDP; identifying and analysing the role of security within government rhetoric. Secondly, as we shall demonstrate, the analysis of the role of security in the Chinese government's Xinjiang strategy through the PRC's engagement in the SCO and GWoT has some implications. These will be explored, and form a basis for an analytical discussion of the apparent Chinese view on security. Here we will consider whether we can arrive at establishing a Chinese security agenda in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) by exploring the degree of coherence in the take on security in all aspects of the Chinese strategy, or whether several security agendas become apparent in XUAR. Based on this, we will elaborate on the wider implications of the Chinese security strategy/strategies for the people of Xinjiang.

Ultimately, this chapter will broaden the understanding of the role of security in Xinjiang besides the WDP, and thus assist in answering the 3rd research question, thereby providing the final component in answering our problem formulation.

To perform this function, the chapter takes a point of departure in two events that occurred almost simultaneously with the formulation and implementation of the WDP in Xinjiang: the renaming of the Shanghai Five into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 2001 and the subsequent emergence of a 'Global War on Terror' (GWoT). The chapter will continue by analysing the significance of these two events in the PRC's definition of and take on security and its connection to the security agenda as expressed in the WDP in Xinjiang. As a result, the conclusions of this chapter will establish first, whether the shift from a traditional- to a non-traditional security agenda in the WDP is representative for all parts of China's strategy towards Xinjiang, or whether the official rhetoric surrounding SCO and the GWoT reflects an alternative understanding of security. Furthermore, the chapter will clarify if these are

indeed separate agendas and if not, how the security agendas merge. Combined, these points should allow us to discuss the potential consequences of the Chinese strategy among the Uyghur people in Xinjiang, and discuss to which extent the WDP has succeeded and been significant in its declared objective of providing 'common prosperity and social equality'.

The Emergence of Two Security Agendas in Xinjiang

In the following we will outline the Chinese Xinjiang strategy as understood through two significant events that occurred around the same time as the formulation and implementation of the WDP; namely, the formation of the SCO and the GWoT in 2001. We shall relate the identified security agenda herein to the security agenda of the WDP.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Global War on Terror

In 2001, the organisation formerly known as the Shanghai Five, whose objectives and foundation has been explored previously, added Uzbekistan as a member state, and changed its name to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. While the SCO now covers 'security, economic, cultural and humanitarian collaboration between its members' (Aris 2009: 458), the main focus dating back to its formation is security problems, based on the common notion among its member states that their security threats cannot be viewed and tackled as territorially restricted by national boundaries. Instead, 'collaborative approaches between member-states' are required (Aris 2009).

For this reason, the foundation of the SCO's security cooperation has been the harmonisation of its member-states' take on these challenges. The 'three evils' of terrorism, extremism and separatism has been identified as threats to the security of all the individual SCO member states:

> *"For each member state, addressing these threats is essential for ensuring the stability of both their regimes and the region"* (Ibid.: 466).

The concern with the threats posed by the three evils is common to the members of the SCO, making it a primary source of collaboration as seen in the creation of the SCO 'Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism' from June 2001. The Convention mainly consists of the inter-state exchange of information and intelligence. Its security concept revolves around 'flexible' definitions of terrorism, extremism and separatism, which have been adopted to be in line with the various definitions of the member states, and these are employed in the identification, pursuit and punishment of actors contravening the convention (Ibid.: 464-466). Along with the development of methods to combat sub-state security threats, according to Aris the cooperation and coordination of tackling the three evils is characterised by the fact that,

> *"(...) the leaderships of the members are in agreement when it comes to questions of terrorism and the sovereign right of governments to pursue a security agenda as they deem fit"* (Ibid.: 466)

Transpiring from the above outline of the SCO's cooperation and collaboration on security issues is the focus on regime security which arguably makes up a central objective of the SCO. Employing Ole Wæver's concepts of security, regime security, which can be understood as national sovereignty, appears as the common referent object of security among the members of the SCO. In turn the member states become the securitising actors, meanwhile the perceived security threat, that is, the issue that they securitise is the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism. As such, the understanding of security in the SCO can be seen as a continuation of the traditional-military security agenda of the PRC in Xinjiang in the 1990s.

A different point in relation to the SCO's security agenda relates to its definitions of the three evils. These were made flexible towards the national definitions applied by the individual member states since one of the cornerstones of the SCO, as quoted in the above, is the 'sovereign right of governments to pursue a security agenda as they deem fit'.

> *"[...] under this convention, terrorism, extremism, and separatism are given broad definitions, providing its signatories with wide latitude to repress dissidents and insurgents alike"* (quoted in Aris 2009: 467)

In other words, the collaboration of the member states in the realm of the SCO targeting the three evils can be analysed as a way for the individual member state to seek to legitimise its attempt to securitise the three evils. Immediately following this line of

argument is the question of who the SCO member states – in our case the PRC – are intending to convince of the threats' legitimacy. Or, in Wæver's terms, who is the audience which the PRC attempts to convince with the securitisation of these threats?

The PRC can be analysed as a securitising agent, the SCO member states can be considered to be the audience and the threat which the PRC seeks to securitise is the three evils. As regards the securitising agent, it would be interesting to analyse more narrowly which segment or even group of persons of the PRC has actually made the attempt at securitisation, i.e. 'the securitising move', yet this is beyond the scope of possibility for this project. Arguably, the Chinese central government is ultimately the securitising agent seeing as it is generally seen to act on behalf of the PRC as a whole and we therefore choose to equal the PRC with its government but will not explore this point further. In addition, one might question whether the PRC actually makes up the securitising agent, or whether the initial securitising move in fact originates among one or more other SCO member states. Yet we argue that the PRC cannot be dismissed on these grounds since the Chinese government's focus on the forces of terrorism, extremism and separatism predates both the SCO and its convention to combat them as well as the SCO's predecessor, the Shanghai Five. In fact, as shown in our analysis of the historical Sino-Xinjiang relations, the Chinese government's approach to e.g. the XUAR in the 1990s clearly reflects a Chinese government perception of these forces as threats to national security and social stability. Thus, at the very least the PRC can be regarded a securitising agent in the forum of the SCO.

Turning instead to the SCO member states, as stated in the above these may be considered the audience which the PRC seeks to convince of its securitisation. Analysed as such, one can conclude that the PRC's securitisation has indeed been successful; this is manifested indisputably from the fact that the SCO created a convention to combat the perceived security threat. In order for us to draw such a strong conclusion we would, however, need to make evident that it was indeed only the PRC government that sought to promote this issue among the SCO member states – for the present purpose it suffice to say that internally among the SCO members, the securitisation of the three evils was successful, both as common threats to regime security and – thereby – as common regional threats. However, looking beyond the SCO, the securitisation of the three evils can be analysed differently with the so-called 'international community' as target audience and the PRC

government as the securitising actor. From this angle, the PRC's engagement in the SCO can be interpreted as an attempt to legitimise the measures taken to combat its perceived security threats in the eyes of actors external to the SCO – hence, the PRC's reason for collaborating with and engaging in the SCO is to legitimise its measures taken to combat its perceived security threats by making both the security threats and the measures taken to counter them common among the SCO members and thereby not unique to the PRC. Again, the scope of this project impedes the conclusion that the PRC government was the sole instigator of this attempted securitisation in the eyes of the international community. However it is clear from this logic that the PRC benefited from the SCO's coming together as opposed to the PRC standing alone on this issue.

From one perspective, the emergence of the GWoT and its impact on the PRC can be analysed similarly to the PRC's engagement in the SCO. The GWoT is especially interesting in that, as we shall see, it contributed with another dimension in China's effort to define the three forces. Thus, extending the arguments of the previous analysis, the GWoT and the rhetoric surrounding it can be seen as an opportunity for the Chinese government to employ the new heading of the internationally accepted and widely used 'counter-terrorism measures' in the continuation of its historical struggle to integrate the estranged region of Xinjiang. As such, the understanding of the three forces as an essential threat to China's national security was connected to the GWoT.

Arguably, the internationally supported war on terror provided the Chinese government with international legitimacy for striking down hard – or harder – on what it apparently perceived as threats to national security, i.e. terrorism. While this point will be elaborated further, the arguments largely follow the line of the previous section on the PRC's engagement in the SCO. We will instead proceed to analysing the Chinese government's response to security threats post-9/11 from a different angle, exploring the impact which the global war on terror did have on Chinese policy – whether the war on terror instigated the alteration or was merely used to justify it remains uncertain. Indeed, Davide Giglio points to how the global war on terror made a significant contribution to the Chinese security agenda as it resulted in a renewed and reinforced emphasis on terrorism as a 'major security threat and a national defence priority' for the PRC (Giglio 2004: 3). He argues that this is reflected in China's Defence White Papers: While the Defence 2000 White Paper made 'sparse and general references to terrorism', the document 'China's

National Defense in 2002' contained an entire section devoted to the threat of terrorism, identifying terrorism as a 'top ranking security issue' (Ibid.). Thereby, the GWoT and the following statements made by the PRC seems to be an attempt to move the issue up on the agenda – which arguably translates into an effort to securitise this newly defined threat to Chinese sovereignty and national security, i.e. terrorism. Subsequently, with the connection made between the threats to Chinese sovereignty and their affiliation with the GWoT, the PRC adopted a new set of policy measures. Michael Clarke (2010) elaborates on the aforementioned alterations of the PRC's Criminal Law on December 29 2001. The Chinese government implemented a range of amendments, with the aim of combatting terrorism, of which the declared purpose was,

> *"[...] to punish the crimes of terrorism, safeguard the security of the State and of people's lives and property and maintain public order"* (cited in Clarke 2010: 547-548).

As such, the formation of the SCO and China's proposed connection between the security threats in Xinjiang and the GWoT can be seen as a continuation of the security agenda of the 1990s.

The Emergence of Two Security Agendas

Interestingly, the formation of the SCO and the initiation and China's self-declared participation in the GWoT, occurred almost simultaneously with the formulation of the WDP. As we concluded in the previous chapter, the rhetoric surrounding the WDP is focused on economic development in protecting the referent objects of security of social stability and national unity. In line with the logic of the rhetoric surrounding the WDP, the identified threats to this objective was mainly economic and social inequality in that these were explicitly connected to potential 'contradictions among the people'. Yet, the rhetoric of the PRC also illustrated the shortcomings of the WDP:

> *"Currently, there is a belief that the first priority for Xinjiang is to develop its economy [...] This belief is wrong and dangerous. Economic development cannot eliminate separatists and cannot prevent them from separating from the motherland and seeking independence."* (Goodman, 2004: 374)

Thus, it seems that two different security agendas are emerging in Xinjiang. One is a departure from the focus on combating ethnic separatism and religious extremism through

policing- and military efforts through the 90s, concerned with the referent object of social stability and national unity, and as such, the integration of Xinjiang into China proper. To achieve this, the security agenda of the WDP is characterised as being in alignment with a non-traditional security agenda, and focuses on common prosperity and economic development as purveyors of protection of the referent objects of security. Yet, as we have shown on the preceding pages, a second, co-existing security agenda seems to have appeared almost simultaneously with the formulation of the WDP. In this security agenda, perhaps adhering to the above quote, the focus is similar to that of the 90s; protecting Xinjiang and the PRC in general against threats to sovereignty and security of the state. Thereby, this security agenda fits within the traditional-military idea of security seeing as the formation of the SCO and the PRC's connection of the 'three forces' in Xinjiang to the GWoT clearly present issues of terrorism, extremism and separatism as threats to national sovereignty and national security. This is different from the security agenda of the WDP in that it focuses on policies intended to combat the identified threats to the referent object by 'striking down hard' on the three forces. Similar to the traditional-military security agenda and the 'Strike Hard' campaigns of the 1990s, the security agenda as formulated through the SCO and he GWoT targets people, organisations and institutions (including Islam) that are seen as part of or affiliated with the threat. While the security agenda in the WDP is focused on providing the foundational framework for security through a development agenda of economic development and social equality, the security agenda of the SCO and the GWoT is focused on removing the threat directly through extraordinary measures of force, i.e. policing- and military efforts.

Merging Security Agendas

It appears from the above section that while the PRC changed the security agenda in Xinjiang through the formulation of the WDP, it simultaneously emphasised the very same traditional-military security agenda from the 1990s that the WDP departed from. In this light, the question which we will address is to which extent these agendas are indeed separate, or whether there are instances of mergence between the two. And if one can in fact identify issues that merger between the two, what are the potential consequences for the people of Xinjiang. The following will present examples of the merging of the two

security agendas and discuss the consequences this has for the people in Xinjiang – most notably the Uighurs which, as we have shown, have traditionally been identified in connection with threats to Chinese security.

The existence of apparently two different security agendas in China's strategy in Xinjiang is an interesting notion. Clarke (2007) cites Li Dezhou, head of State Ethnic Affairs Commission in an article from 2000:

> *"Implementing the Great Western Development strategy will provide the material foundation for strengthening national unity and social stability ... [Yet] implementing the strategy will lead to further opening-up. Overseas hostile forces will probably take this opportunity to penetrate China. We must be highly vigilant on this and take effective measures to safeguard national unity and social stability in order to smoothly implement the strategy"*

This quote can be seen as a mere acknowledgement of the potential consequences of opening up Xinjiang to the Central Asian region. However, the quote can also be seen as an important acknowledgement of the connection between the need to coordinate strategies of economic development with strategies of the direct removal of threat. Interestingly, the quote juxtaposes economic development strategies of opening up for trade and foreign investments for instance, with the potential of strengthening the influence of external threats to Chinese sovereignty in the Xinjiang region. As such, the regional framework of the SCO and the international framework of the GWoT are emphasised. However, the question remains to which extent this connection can be seen as merging the two agendas. Indeed, the quote is significant in that it emphasises efforts to protect national security as essential components in the effort to ensure national economic development, integration and social stability. Stephen Blank (2003) states:

> *"[China's] ... approach clearly reflects a profound insecurity about China's internal cohesion and evinces an apprehension that this cohesion is an inherently fragile and under threat. Therefore the rhetoric or discourse of sovereignty is closely tied to the state's efforts to "instrumentalize" nationalism for purposes of forging greater social cohesion and suppressing separatism."*

According to this author, due to the nature of Sino-Xinjiang relations, the strategy of protecting national sovereignty through military efforts cannot be separated from the objective of integrating Xinjiang into China proper. Therefore the efforts to provide the foundation for security are undertaken simultaneously with efforts to remove the threat

directly – in other words, the traditional-military and the non-traditional security agendas coincide. Blank continues:

> *"Therefore, economic development through large scale investment, including major energy projects, entails goals that are broader than overcoming the gap between the richer coastal provinces and the interior, and the problem of mass poverty in the interior and Western provinces, i.e., the China "go west" program is very much a comprehensive security project."* (Ibid)

It should be noted here that Blank, contrary to this research project, regards security mainly as a traditional-military agenda and it is from this perspective that he identifies the WDP as a 'security project'. Hence, Blank draws clear parallels between the security agendas of the SCO and the GWoT, and the security agenda of the WDP. This is an interesting perspective indeed. The possible consequences of the merging security agendas are manifold. The perhaps most notable consequence is the possibility that the – arguably positive – implications of the WDP's non-traditional security agenda for the Uyghur community are neglected. Thus, the declared objective of the WDP to ensure 'common prosperity' and 'social equality' might be disrupted by the increased links made between what can be characterised as an internal social conflict and external threats in the traditional-military security agenda. Thereby, instead of focusing solely on providing the comprehensive societal, economic and political circumstances for security, increasingly, the agenda of removing security threats through the use of force and regulation gains prominence in security issues that could be argued to be within the scope of the non-traditional security agenda. By considering the extensive anti-terror laws that were implemented in China post-9/11 we will now analyse the above-mentioned impact of the coinciding security agendas for the Uyghur community.

China's Anti-terror Laws

In light of the GWoT, the PRC developed an extensive legal framework for defining and punishing terrorism and acts of terror. Overall, the legal framework is characterised by an expansive, imprecise definition of terrorism and what constitutes an act of terror, a consequence of which is the potential criminalisation of 'a wide range of activities, including peaceful expressions of dissent or opposition to the state'. Perhaps more worrying is the issue of punishment, as maximum sentencing lacks in several of the

amendments which makes it legally possible to apply the death penalty under the majority of the amendments. (Clarke, 2010: 547-550)

Returning to the analysis made by Davide Giglio of the PRC's national defence priorities, in connection with the top ranking security issue of terrorism, the XUAR was explicitly highlighted:

> *""China's National Defense in 2002" [...] pointing to the restive Western Xinjiang region, where separatists want to create an independent "East Turkistan". In portraying China too, as a victim of terrorism, the White Paper said that "The 'East Turkistan' terrorist forces are a serious threat to the security of the lives and property of the people of all China's ethnic groups.""*(Giglio 2004: 3)

In this context it is important to emphasise that the threat of terrorism cannot be claimed to be merely an imagined one by the Chinese government. Indeed, as was also indicated in our historical analysis, certain groups of Uyghur have been involved in terrorist movements. For example, according to Clarke, some Uyghur groups have been connected with the 'Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan' and the Taliban (Clarke 2010: 545). However, what is more important for this analysis is the Chinese government's response to this threat which, rather than targeting the involved 'small, and arguably marginal, number of Uighurs', is seen to crack down on the Uyghur population as a whole (Clarke 2010). Hence, not only has the PRC adopted an expansive definition of terrorism, the application and consequent punishment in accordance with its anti-terrorism legislation and amended Criminal Law has had severe impact on the lives of the broader population of Uighurs in XUAR (Ibid.: 543). For instance, according to Amnesty International, the Chinese anti-terrorism legislation has

> *"[...] been used to punish people peacefully exercising the right to free expression through peaceful public gatherings or demonstrations"* (Ibid.: 549)

Based on the estimates of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch that thousands of Uighurs in Xinjiang have been arrested or detained under the new amendments between 2001 and 2005, confirmed by the official newspaper 'Xinjiang Ribao', reporting that 18,227 citizens in Xinjiang had been arrested during 2005 for endangering national security, Clarke concludes that

> *"[...] the available evidence suggests that the authorities have applied the new provisions in a draconian manner with deleterious consequences for individual human rights."* (Ibid.: 550)

The GWoT is often emphasised as the overarching context of China's effort to control the Xinjiang terrorist threat. However, a strong case can be made that the toughening of the PRC government's response to perceived threats to national security in fact predates the GWoT. Indeed, the expansion of the Shanghai Five along with its transformation into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation happened in 2001 (Aris 2009) – prior to the attacks of 9/11. More important is the subsequent conclusion that the SCO's declared focus to combat the 'three evils' (Bailes et al. 2007: 7) cannot merely be regarded part of the trends of state and regional responses to security issues associated with the GWoT since it was signed three months prior to the 9/11 attacks, and was the result of the 'accumulation of two years' work on its development' (Aris 2009: 467).

In this light, the traditional-military security agenda in the case of China's Anti-Terror Laws which is intended to protect the PRC against terrorism from what is largely recognised as externally conditioned threats, is being applied beyond its scope. Thus, the Anti-Terror Laws allows a widespread regulation of, for instance the right of assembly. Similar, as shall now be demonstrated, is the influence of the traditional-military security on the issue of Islam.

The Regulation of Islam

A prominent component in China's presentation of the issue of separatism and extremism in the 90s and 'the three evils' after the formation of the SCO is the role of religion, most notably Islam. We have already touched upon this in dealing with the re-emergence of the military and policing efforts against organisations perceived as a threat to national unity through their association with separatism and extremism. Yet, the Chinese policies towards another important component of Uyghur culture besides language, namely religion, seem to follow them. The PRC's effort to regulate religion is explained in the following:

> *"The 1996 Document No. 7 remains in force to restrict religious freedom. Participants of pilgrimages (hajj) must receive a patriotic education to ensure that they will not fall under the influence of subversive and hostile forces.*

> *Religious education and the management of mosques and temples must be led by credentialed and patriotic religious personnel. Unregistered scripture classes, theology classes, and martial arts training establishments were restricted."* (Chou, 2012)

Thus, the importance of regulating Islam's role in Xinjiang is clearly portrayed as a matter of national security. People adhering to the principles of Islam are seen as prone to influence from 'subversive and hostile forces' and therefore Islam must be regulated.

To restate an important notion, the GWoT presented China with an opportunity to reemphasise the threat stemming from terrorism. In this context, the role of Islam was, similarly to the PRC rhetoric of the 90s, connected to the PRC's struggle to secure the referent object, i.e. the sovereignty and national security of China, against the three forces of separatism, extremism and terrorism. Subsequently, in 2001, then-president Jiang Zemin stated that

> *"[...] we will never allow the use of religion to oppose the Party's leadership and the socialist system or undermine the unification of the state and unity among various nationalities."* (cited in Clarke, 2010).

A Human Rights Watch report (2005) cites an official Chinese report on 'Religious and Ethnic Work' in Xinjiang in which 16 issues of illegal religious activity is listed. These include regulations on printing religious material, issuing religious material from abroad, organising religious gatherings and mosque activities. Indeed, the Chinese government practices wide regulations of the practice and institution of religion (most notably Islam through the naming of mosque- and pilgrim activities), regulations stemming from the idea that Islam makes up a central component in the threat posed to national unity. As such, the cultural and religious institution of Islam, which could arguably be approached by the central government to promote a sense of ethnic equality and individual rights for the Uyghur community, for instance through a government supported freedom to exercise religious and cultural devotion to Islam, is instead regulated strictly. The framework for the regulation lies within the traditional-military understanding of security, as Islam is perceived as directly linked to the influence of 'hostile and subversive' forces. The Human Rights Watch (2005: 3) report based on a wide number of documents and interviews concludes that:

> *"[…] a multi-tiered system of surveillance, control, and suppression of religious activity aimed at Xinjiang's Uighurs […] peaceful activists who*

> *practice their religion in a manner deemed unacceptable by state authorities [...] are arrested, tortured, and at times executed. The harshest punishments are meted out to those accused of involvement in separatist activity, which is increasingly equated by officials with "terrorism"."*

It transpires from this that the traditional-military view of threat is seemingly utilised to regulate the religious institution of Islam, and its followers in Xinjiang, at large.

The 2009 Ürümqi Riots

On the 5th of July 2009 violence broke out in the regional capital of Xinjiang, Ürümqi. Essentially, the background for the riots this day was a common view that the Chinese government had proved inefficient in investigating a brawl at a toy factory, leaving two persons dead and several injured. The significance of the events this day was that the protesters were identified by official media as members of the Uyghur ethnic group and that, as the riots escalated, they directed their anger and force against Han people and police at the scene to control the riot (Barbour & Jones, 2012). This resulted in several hundred deaths and thousands of injured. While significant in terms of the extent of violence, the incident could be claimed to be essentially connected to social issues and the Uighurs' perception of inequality. The perceived lack of interest by the Chinese government in solving the violent brawl at a toy factory could be claimed to have stirred a feeling of ethnic inequality and dissent among the Uyghur community. Furthermore, this can be seen as an example of the shortcomings of the Chinese strategy to ensure ethnic equality, one of the declared goals of the WDP. This acknowledgement could in turn have resulted in increased focus on discrimination and ethnic conflict in Xinjiang. Instead, official media was quick to connect the 2009 riots to the issue of terrorism. In the aftermath of the riots, regional governor of Xinjiang stated:

> *"The violence is a pre-empted, organized violent crime. It is instigated and directed from abroad, and carried out by outlaws in the country [...] It was a crime of violence that was premeditated and organized."* (Ibid: 11)

Furthermore, in a Chinese government news article:

> *"Qin [Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang] said the Chinese government had evidence that the people suspected of inciting the riot had received training from terrorist organizations abroad" (Ibid: 13)*

The most notable implication of the 2009 riots is these statements by official PRC representatives. Similarly to the other points discussed above, it can be claimed that what could be viewed and tackled as a security issue in the non-traditional security agenda of the WDP is instead interpreted and presented as a traditional-military security issue, linking civil unrest and riots to terrorism, separatism and extremism. A New York Times editorial arguably reflects this notion:

> *"Although there is no dispute that clandestine Uighur groups have from time to time carried out violent attacks – most recently in a series of bombings and attacks on Chinese soldiers just before the Olympic Games – the massive propaganda offensive about the threat of "East Turkestan" terrorism drove Chinese public opinion toward an even more negative perception of the Uighur people, who in turn felt increasingly ostracized and discriminated against." (Ibid: 13)*

As such, the events of July 5 2009 reflect the overall problematic in the spillover between the traditional-military and the non-traditional security agenda.

Consequences for the Uyghur community

Drawing on conclusions on the content of the WDP it seems that while 'national unity and social and economic equality' are certainly declared goals of the WDP, the specific content of the plan may not support the objective. Though the WDP is presented by the PRC as a departure from the security agenda in the 90s, the actual content has proven very similar to the economic strategy of the 90s which, as will be recalled has not proven beneficial for the Uyghur community. Similarly, many infrastructure projects are carried out by central government, Han-dominated companies (i.e. the Bingtuan) and industrial investments are directed at areas with a large amount of Han inhabitants. Thus, the content of the WDP can largely be characterised as a continued process of 'colonisation' from the 90s, with the aim of civilising and homogenising Xinjiang. As argued previously, according to Becquelin ethnic equality, despite it being an overt objective of the PRC's policies, might not be the actual aim of the central government's strategy towards XUAR. Thus, the potential significance of the WDP as a departure from the military-traditional security agenda of the 90s with its subsequent focus on ensuring 'common prosperity and social equality' is reduced. Therefore, though it can be argued

that the non-traditional security agenda of the WDP is intended to ensure the common prosperity among all ethnicities, the actual impact of the WDP in changing the PRC's strategy largely remains rhetoric.

Furthermore, two potentially conflicting security agendas have emerged. Along with the non-traditional agenda of the WDP we note a continuation of the traditional-military security agenda of the 1990s through the formation of the SCO and the GWoT. While these arguably reflect conflicting views of security, there are definite areas in which the two different security agendas overlap. Recently, this can especially be said to be true for the rhetoric surrounding the 2009 Ürümqi riots. These events can be claimed to stem from dissatisfaction with issues related to the rights of the Uyghur, and as such, manifests an issue that is internal to China. Yet, media reports have specifically identified the Ürümqi incidents as acts of terrorism, and thereby connected them to the external threats to Chinese sovereignty defined as terrorism, separatism and extremism. In this way, a connection is made between the grievances and dissent among Uighurs concerning social and political issues and acts threatening national security in China as part of a traditional-military security agenda. The same can be held to be the case with China's Anti-terror laws and regulation of Islam. Issues related to the freedom of the Uighurs to exercise Islam have been regulated on the basis of a traditional-military security agenda. In this way, China is regulating Islam as a cultural and religious institution for the Uyghur population at large, with the declared aim of containing arguably isolated pockets of terrorism. Hence, the securitisation of the three forces as an external threat to Chinese sovereignty can be assessed as being employed in order for China to use extreme measures of control and regulation of an Uyghur institution in its entirety. Thereby a religious and cultural institution comes to be securitised as the embodiment of an external, traditional-military threat to Chinese sovereignty.

Combined, these points beg the question of what are the wider consequences for the Uyghur of the changing role of security and the appearance of two different security agendas. One important implication that could be emphasised is issues concerning conflicting interests of actors in Xinjiang. One could argue that the connection made between internal- and external security threats in the Ürümqi riots benefited the actor in question; the factory. As such, the factory, by linking internal issues to external threat legitimised the use of extraordinary means against a group of people that was dissatisfied

with internal issues, rather than being interested directly in separation and acts of terrorism against China. Similarly, on a political level, one could claim that the merging of the security agenda of the WDP with that of the SCO and the GWoT could in turn enable the PRC to legitimise similar connections. From this perspective, the significance of the new security agenda of the WDP is greatly diminished since on one hand it remains rhetoric and not substantial and on the other hand, it is effectively sidelined by China's effort to remove security threats by extraordinary means.

While highly speculative, and beyond the scope of our research, one might argue that the regional and international legitimacy which the PRC has obtained through its engagement in the GWoT and the SCO has reinforced its traditional military measures to combat threats thus identified in Xinjiang. This argument is largely supported by the fact that through the securitisation process of the three forces, along with the policing- and military efforts to combat them has resulted in extensive regulation of Uyghur culture in general. This is exemplified with the PRC's regulation of Islam in its entirety, including the limitations for how the Muslim Uighurs can practice their religion. In turn, the securitisation of the three forces as a threat to national sovereignty can be claimed to be an effort to regulate Uyghur culture and society in general. Similarly, issues relating to the education of Uyghur and the use of Uyghur language is regulated based on the securitisation of national unity in the WDP; that both education and language policies should ensure equality between ethnic groups, and that certain 'standard measures' should be implemented. In reality, one could claim that these measures might in turn result in the strict regulation of another cultural component of the Uyghur, i.e. Uyghur language being prohibited in the educational sector, similar to the regulation of religion (Dwyer 2005).

Sub-conclusion

In sum, the significance of the rhetorical shift surrounding the WDP and its apparent non-traditional security objective might be substantially limited when comparing it to other aspects of the overall security agenda. As such, the rhetorical shift in the WDP, and its focus on providing common prosperity and social equality for all ethnic groups could be claimed to be significant in its departure from the traditional-military agenda from the

1990s, and in line with this, one could imagine that the WDP would be a significant step towards providing prosperity and increasing social equality for the Uyghur community. Yet, as we have demonstrated, the traditional-military security agenda can be claimed to have continued alongside the initiation of the WDP, seen through the PRC’s engagement in the SCO and the GWoT. Furthermore, the continuation of the traditional-military security agenda has even been apparent in areas that arguably concern issues of social equality and which therefore presumably fall within the scope of the non-traditional security agenda of the WDP. Consequently, the declared shift of emphasis of the WDP onto issues of social equality and common prosperity becomes less significant as it remains rhetoric and, instead, the traditional-military security agenda is evident and its centrality appears increasing. As we have shown, the traditional-military security agenda prevails in the argumentation for regulating Islam, the right to assembly and the legal rights of the Uyghur people in particular – all of which are issues to which the Chinese approach could have reflected the declared objective of the WDP to increase social equality in accordance with the non-traditional security agenda. This could have been done for instance by promoting religious and cultural freedom and the legal rights of the Uyghur. Instead, the extension, expansion and spill over of the military-security agenda into wide parts of the Chinese strategy can be claimed to have decreased the social equality and individual rights of the Uighurs.

Conclusion

This project has set out to answer the problem formulation: *How and to which extent does security figure centrally in the Western Development Plan towards the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and with which consequences for the Uighurs?*
Similarly to the historical relations between China and Xinjiang, security issues of unrest and instability figure centrally in the rhetoric of the Western Development Plan (WDP). Yet, where the security agenda, especially through the 1990s was dominated by a traditional-military conception, the WDP signals a new take on security. Thereby, the security agenda of the WDP differs from the 90s in that, instead of focusing on *removing* the identified security threat through direct use of force, it focuses on *providing* conditions to ensure security through economic development and integration, with the ultimate goal of common prosperity and social equality. In this light, the WDP can be characterised as promoting a non-traditional security agenda.

However, based on an analysis of the content of the plan with its specific policies, the People's Republic of China (PRC) does not seem to focus on providing common prosperity. Instead the policies emphasise and reinforce the role of Han labour and Han-dominated organisations in the endeavour to develop the region. Furthermore, the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Global War on Terror have resulted in a continuation of the traditional-military security agenda of the 90s alongside the non-traditional security agenda of the WDP. Rather than making up two separate and co-existing security agendas, we have identified several examples where these two agendas merge in that the traditional-military security agenda spills over and gains prominence in issues that are clearly within the scope of the non-traditional security agenda of the WDP. As a consequence, the traditional-military security agenda, and the measures it involves to combat identified threats to national security, is employed in matters of religion and culture, and have resulted in a very strict regulation of Uyghur culture and even a decrease in the individual rights for the Uighurs.

Therefore, the potential for the WDP to increase common prosperity and equality among Han and Uyghur has proved limited indeed. This is seen both in the lack of coherence between rhetoric and content of the WDP, but also through the continuation and even reinforcement of the traditional-military security agenda in Sino-Xinjiang relations.

Coupled with the ongoing strengthening of central government control vis-à-vis the regional administration of the Autonomous Region, the Chinese strategy towards Xinjiang continues to reflect the historical role of the PRC as coloniser and that of Xinjiang as colonised. Thus, it seems that the PRC continues to come up short in providing the conditions to fulfill the needs and rights for the Uyghur in spite of its declared objective in the WDP. With the continued emphasis on security by the PRC in its relation to Xinjiang, one may expect a further decrease in social stability and worsening conflict, adding fuel to the fire that continues to characterise Sino-Xinjiang relations today.

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Appendix

List of Abbreviations

PRC: People's Republic of China

XUAR: Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

CPCC: Chinese Production & Construction Corps

GWoT: Global War on Terror

WDP: Western Development Plan

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization

SDN: Security-Development Nexus