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Media and Minkaohan Uyghurs: Representation, Reaction, and Resistance

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MEDIA AND MINKAOHAN UYGHURS: REPRESENTATION, REACTION AND

RESISTANCE

By

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Abstract

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Media and *Minkaohan* Uyghurs: Representation, Reaction and Resistance

Thesis directed by Professor Marguerite J. Moritz

Chinese media have seen a grand transformation since the 1980s. However, the relationship between Chinese media and its 56 ethnic minority groups is under-researched. This dissertation intends to contribute to this field by examining media and in the context of the Uyghurs, a Turkic-speaking Muslim people who reside in China's far west Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Uyghurs number nine million, and consequently this research focuses on a sub-group of them: *Minkaohan*, who are ethnic Uyghurs who have attended Mandarin-language schools.

This dissertation examines the post 9/11 representation of Uyghurs in Chinese state media and shows how *Minkaoahan* react to these portrayals. By examining *Minkaohan*, we can better understand the degree to which Chinese media depicts or disregards complexity in its representations of Uyghurs and the meaning-making practices of *Minkaohan*. This dissertation also studies how Han Chinese in Xinjiang perceive Uyghurs in relation to media.

Based on a content analysis on four state newspapers and 38 in-depth interviews, this dissertation finds that Uyghurs are represented in China's state media in a partial and biased way. The content analysis identifies an important shift in Uyghur representation after 9/11, corresponding to an increase in negative depictions of Uyghurs as more related to terrorism and a greater threat to China.

The in-depth interviews reveal that the state media frames are contested by both Uyghur and Han audiences. *Minkaohan*, as much as they consume state media content, reject the state-produced Uyghur representations. With the Internet, *Minkaohan* build a set of frames that are in direct competition with the dominant constructs. With regard to Han Chinese audiences, they reject state-media representation of Uyghurs too and refuse to endorse the state produced "terrorism" frame. This study of media and audience frames demonstrates the necessity of examining both media and audience frames in framing analysis, especially in an authoritarian context.

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Preface

In 1949, the Communist Party of China won the civil war and took over the Nationalist government's assets. Chairman Mao moved hundreds of thousands of the nation's Han majority to Xinjiang in the far west, a region dominated until that time by Muslim Uyghurs. My grandparents were among that generation of intellectuals who answered Mao's call to "build the frontier region." When they settled in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, the city had no more than a few paved streets. My mother was born in Urumqi in the early 1950s and married my father, who was on military deployment in Xinjiang, in the 1970s. Urumqi is now the largest city in Central Asia, with far more ethnic diversity than Western media depictions of China normally suggest. Uyghurs, Han, Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Hui, Mongols, Tajiks, and people of many other ethnicities live in this western region where I was born and raised. My mother tells me that an old Kazakh colleague of hers was really fond of me when I was a baby and often brought me to a nearby park. I remember that we called him "Grandpa Kasim."

In this mixed neighborhood, I was conscious of my Han ethnicity from an early age. Some of my friends looked different from me and spoke different languages with their siblings and parents. I learned that Uyghurs practice Islam, and that they are one of 56 distinct ethnicities in China. From primary school to high school, I always had Uyghur classmates, sent to Han schools by their parents to study in Mandarin. In spite of our differences, we played basketball together,

took the same courses, and went to the same (Muslim-owned) restaurant. Ethnic differences were never a problem among us.

Nonetheless, I was excited to leave home after high school. When I went to Beijing for college in 1999, I couldn't wait to bury Xinjiang in my memory and brace myself for a new life in the capital city of China. I lived in Beijing for eight years, earning my BA and MA from two different universities while visiting Urumqi only once or twice a year. The first major turn in my life started in Beijing, after I was assigned as a tour guide to Dr. Marguerite Moritz in 2006. During our boat trip in an ancient royal park in downtown Beijing, Meg convinced me not only to continue my academic pursuit for a Ph.D., but to do so in the United States.

My first two years at the University of Colorado at Boulder were spent reading books, writing papers, and making presentations. I never thought about dissertation topics. But in Dr. Nabil Echchaibi's *Media and Diaspora* class in Fall 2008, I had a chance to study the construction of identity and its relationship with media. I found this topic riveting; it made me rethink the basic question, "Who am I?" By the end of the semester, Nabil announced that a conference on Islam and Media was to be held in January 2010 and encouraged us to participate. As I explored paper topics, an idea came to me: "Why not study Uyghurs and media? I grew up with them, they are Muslims, and Urumqi is a media saturated city." In fact, China's media systems today are more varied than is generally acknowledged. The Party strictly controls some media organizations, while others are more commercialized and liberal. Additionally, the Internet has over four hundred million

users in China. What is the relationship between media and Muslim Uyghur identities? I discussed this with Nabil and he offered really helpful advice, especially on choosing interview questions. With the research questions and methods in place, the next step was my fieldwork in summer 2009; but I would never have anticipated the tragic events of that summer, which would not only point me to a dissertation topic but also completely change my life.

I arrived in Beijing on July 2nd and checked into a hotel, eager to meet several old friends before flying back to Urumqi on July 8th. On the evening of Sunday, July 5th, I read the news about a "mass gathering" in Urumqi. I knew it was a local Uyghur demonstration in response to a deadly brawl between Han and Uyghur workers in late June in southern China's Guangdong province. The government had declared that two Uyghur workers were killed, but Uyghurs in Xinjiang insisted that Uyghur casualties were much higher than the government figures. From late June to early July, calls for protest against government incompetence and the lack of transparency had circulated on the Internet, but nobody knew if or when it would take place. When the protest actually happened on that Sunday, I didn't even pay much attention to it. I went to the US embassy on July 7th for my visa interview, and then to a nearby post office to pay for the express mail for passport delivery. It was at least 30 degrees Celsius that day; by the time I got to the post office, I was covered in sweat. The Xinjiang government's first press conference on the riot was live on a big screen. When the mayor of Urumqi said 140 were found dead after the riot and most of them were just civilians,

I was shocked. Even though I was still sweating, my body felt cold as ice. I couldn't believe it. Why were so many people killed? Where were the police? What had actually happened?

I rushed back to the hotel and tried to call my mother in Urumqi. When my phone application (Skype) didn't work, I had to switch to the hotel landline. My mother sounded agitated as she repeated the stories that 140 were killed by Uyghur rioters, and more than 50 bodies were found in back alleys. She stayed at home all day, but witnessed from the balcony thousands of Han protestors pushing the police line, trying to enter the Uyghur neighborhood to seek revenge. She described the battle as Han crowds were dispersed by police tear gas. She even asked me if I could wait in Beijing for a couple of days until things calmed down. I wavered, but still jumped on the plane the next morning.

Before departure, I contacted several of my friends in Urumqi. They confirmed that the situation was really tense: some rioters were still at large and wouldn't hesitate to kill at any chance. Since my arrival was at 8pm, they suggested I stay in a heavily-guarded hotel close to the airport, where they could come to meet me. I agreed. The plane was full and people seemed calm, but I could sense the uneasiness during the flight. When I walked out of the terminal, I was surprised to find a line of taxis waiting. A driver told me they were ordered by the government to continue their service, but he would have to charge double the regular price for the risk. On our way to the hotel, I asked what he would do if rioters tried to stop the

car. He answered, "I would run them over. Drivers who stopped two days ago lost their lives."

Two of my Uyghur friends greeted me in a cozy hotel room. I knew they would come since we have known each other for a long time. They were very emotional and eager to share stories; we barely slept that night. I could not have anticipated this unusual meeting after two years in the US, arriving in the middle of a riot and seeing my friends before my mother. We separated the next morning and I hailed a taxi for home. The entire city was like a ghost town. At one point, we were the only taxi on the road. This was definitely not the Urumqi I grew up in. On a regular summer day, the streets would be full of people. Today, you could count the number of people on one hand.

For the rest of the summer, my mother urged me to be home before dark. I understood her concern. One of her colleagues, a geography teacher, had been beaten to death by rioters. At night, I saw few cars through the window except police vehicles. Sirens blared all night. Whenever I met with friends, relatives, or neighbors, there was only one topic: the riot. Han residents unanimously condemned the brutality and crimes committed by Uyghur rioters. Many described the bloody details after watching videos shot by witnesses and traffic cameras. Several days later, the government declared these videos "illegal publications" and threatened to punish anyone who spread them. Later, the topic shifted to blaming the government. Han residents felt the government betrayed them because the police didn't take forceful measures until it was too late. Angry rumors against the

Party chief, Wang Lequan, were spreading quickly among locals. Many claimed that

he was drunk, celebrating his birthday, while the police force waited for orders.

Even though the situation was tense, I still hung out with my Uyghur friends. We

chose to meet in various restaurants, as it was difficult to go out together in public;

other Han residents would glare at me with hateful eyes. At each and every one of

our gatherings, the riot was an unavoidable topic. My Uyghur friends condemned

the violence too. They explained that the student demonstrations had been used as

a cover for Uyghur killers not from Urumqi, given away by their southern accents.

My friends were disappointed by the lack of media coverage of the July 7th vigilante

revenge attack by the Han. They wanted to know the number of Uyghur casualties

on that day.

I was immersed in and later overwhelmed by a number of emotions: anger,

shock, anxiety, pain. This trip was supposed to be a vacation and reunion with

family members. Not anticipating the outbreak of violence, I hadn't planned for a

long stay in the region. By the time I left Urumqi in mid-August, I was deeply

traumatized and didn't know how to get back on my feet. Things got worse in

Urumqi again in early September, when thousands of Han residents reported to the

Urumqi government that they had been stabbed with HIV-tainted needles. Rumor

and terror spread quickly. Locals believed that the government deliberately covered

up the truth that a new wave of rioters launched a new form of attack. The popular

anger erupted on September 3rd, when tens of thousands of people, mostly Han,

took to the streets in protest. This time their objective was clear: Party chief Wang Lequan had failed the people and must go!

My first week back in Boulder was particularly difficult. Every morning, I woke up feeling I was still in Urumqi. I couldn't concentrate on anything and my mind always slipped back to those days at home. The communication blackout imposed by the government was still in place, which meant that regular telephone lines and the Internet were gone. Fortunately, I could reach landlines in Xinjiang with Google Voice, an online phone application. Although it was an unstable connection with poor sound quality, at least I had a channel to talk with my mother and friends; that, to some extent, eased my anxiety.

While following all these events from the US, seeing my home city ravaged by one tragic event after another, I felt it made no sense to continue staying in Boulder and merely watching. I wanted to act. I went to my friend, Timothy Weston, for advice. I made it clear that I would like a one-year time-out so I could go back and do something. Tim disagreed and after a long conversation, he persuaded me to stay in the program. I didn't go back in late 2009, but that was the moment I finally discovered my passion. It was the first time I realized how much I love Urumqi. I decided to shift my research focus to Xinjiang and work on a dissertation related to Xinjiang and Uyghurs.

As I was conducting research and writing up the dissertation, I gradually realized and was always reflecting on my "strategic location." Edward Said (1979) proposes this concept for studying authority because Said considers the author's

position in a text with regard to what he writes is an important methodological device. Said also points out that "no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim it's author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances" (p. 11). My "strategic location" brings me both advantages and disadvantages. I was born in Xinjiang as Han. I finished my primary and secondary education in Urumqi and Beijing, but was admitted to a Ph.D. program in the United States. The combination of these three *locations* gives me a unique vantage point to look at Xinjiang/Uyghur, China, and the West. At the same time, the dilemma these *locations* bring to me is that I have to use Western theories to frame a Chinese and Uyghur reality. Working on a dissertation in English in the US, to a certain extent, means I myself am the captive or even the victim of Western framing of those issues. I am always aware of this dilemma and trying to find alternatives to compliment the Western theorization and interpretation, many of which are not wholly suitable to the situation in Xinjiang. However, the contemporary Chinese scholarship is lacking discussion on media and Chinese minorities and this forces me to rely on Western theories. Building on Western frameworks, I am hoping this dissertation will contribute to create new insights and to the discussion on media and minorities in China. Antonio Gramsci once noted that "the starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which was deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory" (Said, 1979, p. 25). Said added the missing English translation to Gramsci's words that "therefore it is imperative at

the outset to compile such an inventory" (p. 25). This dissertation derives from my reflection on my life as a Han in Xinjiang, my education in both the US and China, and my deep connection to Xinjiang as my homeland. Given that the relations between Uyghurs and media are rarely examined, I am hoping this dissertation will contribute to this new dimension in media and communication studies, and in Xinjiang Studies as well. What follows is the result and pinnacle of my academic endeavor over the last four years.

Finally, I have to mention a number of outstanding individuals who have helped me and pushed me to become better during the course of my studies. I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Meg Moritz, Chair of my dissertation committee and also my friend and mentor. My four-year stay in the US wouldn't have been so rich, colorful, and rewarding—both academically and culturally—without Meg and her much-appreciated guidance. I also want to thank Dr. Bella Mody, who offered me a considerable amount of helpful advice on research theories and methods, especially on international communication. I was part of Dr. Mody's content analysis project in my third year of the doctoral program; this yearlong practice provided me deeper understanding of the method of content analysis and directly contributed to my dissertation. Dr. Tim Weston also deserves warm thanks for his help. As a leading China expert on CU campus, Tim's understanding of historic and contemporary China is truly impressive. I met Tim in 2008 and he did two interviews with me on my experience of growing up as a Han in Xinjiang. Retrospectively, this was the beginning of my dissertation; Tim was the first one who helped me reflect on my

past. While Tim pushed me to look inward, Dr. Nabil Echchaibi helped point the way forward as I began defining my research and this dissertation topic. Taking Nabil's *Media and Diaspora* class, I went further in reflecting on my identity as a Han Chinese in Xinjiang and came up with the idea of studying *Minkaohan* Uyghurs and media. Nabil's class and advice will certainly prove as instrumental to my future research on Islam and China as to this dissertation. My thanks also go to Dr. James Millward, whom I first knew after reading his book: *Xinjiang: Eurasia Crossroad*. The scope and depth of this book made me feel like a stranger to my own homeland. Dr. Millward's well-thought-out comments facilitated the writing of this dissertation.

I would like to say thank you to my mother, who gave me life and supported me all the way to the doctoral level. I hope this dissertation is the best gift for your endless care and love to me. I also want to say thank you to all my interview respondents. I can't disclose your identities here, but this dissertation would not have been possible without your cooperation and dedication.

Chapter I: Uyghurs and Chinese Media: Historical Context

Tensions around immigration and minority populations have been problematic for centuries. The contemporary world has seen more than enough hatred, violence, and chaos caused by the movements of people across political borders as they seek food, shelter, safety and opportunity. Control of territory itself has led to countless conflicts. In Europe, the Irish Republican Army has plagued UK for decades, and Spain has suffered bombings and assassinations at the hands of the Basque separatist organization, ETA. More recently, France was plunged into riots started by mostly young immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa in 2005. Three years later, both Abkhazia and South Ossetia declared independence from Georgia with the support of Russia. Kosovo was formally recognized as independent from Serbia in 2010. The following year London was engulfed in violent urban demonstrations while in Africa, South Sudan seceded from Sudan after years of conflict. In Asia, East Timor declared independence after years of bloody encounters with the government of Indonesia in 2002, and Tamil Tigers are still waging war against Sri Lanka government. Yuezhi Zhao (2009)calls for examining the culture role of media and communication in those ethnic, religious, and identity-based conflicts within and beyond national boundaries.

This dissertation mainly focuses on media and minority Uyghurs in China, but I hope this could also be a footnote to the general discussion on issues and tensions around immigration and minority populations. In the case of China, I hope this dissertation will contribute to the building of a more representative media

environment and healthy inter-ethnic relations in Xinjiang. This chapter addresses the history and contemporary situation of Chinese media system and the background of Uyghurs. The chapter also introduces Uyghur celebrities who are well known in China's cultural industry and the specific group that this dissertation focuses on: *Minkaohan*.

In 2007, Jensen and Weston (2007) made an interesting observation that media and politics are converging in similar ways in the United States and China. This reflects how changed the Chinese media are since the founding of PRC in 1949. The complexity of China's media system has not received sufficient attention in the West. Since the 1980s, when China abandoned Mao's brand of Communism in favor of capitalistic reform, the Chinese media system has been in flux. One of the most dramatic changes has been a proliferation of new voices. Far from having only the static, monolithic media system of Mao's China, today Chinese audiences no longer have to watch one channel, read one newspaper, and hear one voice all across the country. There are thousands of new television/radio stations, newspapers, and magazines competing for audiences by serving different and tailored content for different niche segments. To increase its soft power, the Chinese government began broadcasting its news programs to Western countries in the early 2000s. The Internet and new media technologies have also fundamentally changed the Chinese media landscape; first, the Internet allows four hundred million Chinese netizens an effective channel to engage in the public discussion and the formation of national

public opinion, and second, generates start-ups and numerous new websites, thus becoming part of China's economic engine.

My dissertation focuses on this particular period in history—the reform and opening era of China since the 1980s. The changes that brought up by the economic reform have tremendous impact on media, including in Xinjiang. Before I delve into contemporary Chinese media system and operation, I will first review the development of Chinese media, beginning in the early 19th century.

1. Early History

The history of modern China began in 1911, when a group of Nationalist revolutionaries violently toppled the Manchu Qing Dynasty and declared the first republic in Asia: the Republic of China (ROC). However, the first newspaper in China was created at least 1,000 years before the fall of Qing. The ancient Song Dynasty (960-1279,AD) invented *Di Bao (an ancient court newspaper)* for communication within its empire (Fang & Zhang, 1995; Xiantao Zhang, 2007). *Di Bao* was published by a special section of the court to inform the entire empire about important issues and decrees. As a part of imperial power, *Di Bao* was closely monitored and regularly censored to guarantee it served the court.

By the end of the Qing Dynasty (the last feudal dynasty) in 1911, *Di Bao* was far from the only newspaper circulating in Chinese society. The Western missionary press, which had established a strong foothold in China through the 19th Century, dramatically influenced the formation of modern Chinese journalism. Independent elite newspapers in China modeled themselves on Protestant papers from the West, retaining the missionary press' zeal for science, modernization, and education while

discarding the Christian worldview(2007). The late Qing period had actually seen the emergence of varied commercial publications, which were localized Chinese papers, in coastal cities (Judge, 1996; Mittler, 2004; Wagner, 2007; Xiantao Zhang, 2007).

2. Republic of China (ROC)

The founding of the first republic in Asia brought democracy to China. Restrictions collapsed; print publications flourished. With the expansion of capitalism in the Republic of China (ROC), the commercial press gained momentum. Although there were a few government-sanctioned publications, most newspapers and magazines in Republican China were privately owned and self-supporting. The city of Shanghai, with its unique political and economic situation,[1] proved an important center of activity in the movement toward a "more independent and less politically partisan press" (T. Weston, 2006).

However, the Nationalist government consolidated its power and reasserted political control over the Chinese press in the 1920s. In spite of ongoing commercialization and Western influence, by the 1930s, there was a greater role for and acceptance of state censorship and propaganda (1997). Since the Chinese press worked within the state political system, independence in the sense of operating as *Fourth Estate* had yet to be experienced. Overall, Chinese journalism faced unprecedented situations in the Republican era. A modern journalism was taking shape but still under strong partisan influence, and various political forces were

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[1] As a coastal city, Shanghai was the seat of a number of foreign concessions in the late Qing China, which were independent from Qing jurisdiction.

competing to have sway over the press. Capitalism seeded entrepreneurship; foreign

concessions in Shanghai reaped the harvest with a prosperous commercial press.

Also in this period, Chinese intellectuals who championed or were influenced by the

New Culture movement advocated journalism for a mass audience, and the Chinese

who received Western journalism education joined their ranks. All these forces

combined to achieve conspicuous progress in the field. However, this was not

without problems. The failure of the national government and the encroachment of

Western powers contributed to the rise of a Chinese nationalism in the 1920s.

Chinese journalism had no way to remain separate from nationalistic sentiment,

which put it in conflict with the Western journalistic model of independence and

objectivity. Some Chinese journalists who were educated in the West chose to vent

their criticism and discontent against the West in a cooperative frame rather than

completely breaking with their Western "teachers" (T. Weston, 2010). Others,

however, embarked on a totally different path by adopting the Leninist journalistic

model of strict censorship and state propaganda.

3. Chairman Mao's China

Leninist journalism finally trumped Western teachings on press objectivity

and independence. After 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) won the

Civil War and drove the Nationalist Party (*Guomin Dang*) to the island of Taiwan,

the CCP had free reign to design and implement a national information system.

Keenly aware of the role of information in empowering and mobilizing citizens, the

CCP imposed strict controls on every form of news and information in China. In

Chairman Mao's era (1949-1976), the diverse and vibrant journalism seen in the

late Qing Period and Republican China were obliterated; only propaganda remained.

The CCP devoted huge amounts of resources to managing public opinion on all

issues. State-controlled newspapers and broadcasters were labeled the "throat and

tongue" of the CCP: their sole purpose was to mobilize public support for CCP

policies (de Sola Pool, 1973) . The Chinese public received all of its highly

homogenous information from a small number of officially controlled media sources,

such as the Central Television Station (CCTV) and the *People's Daily*. As of 1979,

there were only 69 newspapers in the country, all run by CCP and government

organs (Liebman, 2005).

As for media content in Mao's China, Susan Shirk (Shirk, 2010) describes the

standard newspaper template as "a front page with photos and headlines glorifying

local and national leaders, with invariably positive reports written in formulaic,

ideological prose inside." Editorial policy emphasized "positive coverage," usually

leaving local events such as fires and crimes unreported. The effect of this

propaganda bombardment is hard to gauge in Mao's China due to the lack of

reliable statistics. As part of this propaganda machine created in Mao's era, the 7

pm news program on CCTV-1 is a daily news propaganda program.[2]

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[2] It is so dominant in people's life that you turn on a TV set any day at 7pm in China you will find virtually every channel is broadcasting it. However, Chinese citizens in the Internet age are openly making fun of this program. For example, netizens are summarizing this 30-minute program into three parts, "First ten minutes: Our leaders are busy [meeting foreign dignitaries and attending conferences. Second ten minutes: Our people enjoy life in China. Last ten minutes: Lives of people in other parts of the world are living hell."[2] This proves Shirk's point that "a steady diet of propaganda de-politicized the public" because "when regimes impose daily propaganda in large doses, people stop listening" (de Sola Pool, 1973). Ordinary Chinese have no problem in dismissing the CCTV news, but it is a different story to CCP members.

In a political system that lacks transparency, millions of Party cadres are also kept in darkness when it comes to their promotion, demotion and Party's major policy initiatives. Party members have to be attentive to every single detail of the CCTV news, such as the order of officials' appearance, and the seconds and frames given to each official in order to evaluate their political status. A change in the standard verbal formulas is a cue that conflict within the CCP leadership or at least a policy change is in the offing. Sometimes this esoteric communication is intended as a signal from the top CCP leaders to subordinates about impending change (Griffith, 1971).

4. The Reform Era

The age of total, one-channel propaganda ended with Mao's death in1976. Facing the imminent collapse of the national economy and widespread discontent in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government embraced market reform in the early 1980s. The state discontinued subsidies to most media organizations and let them support themselves with advertising revenue. In 2003, the CCP eliminated mandatory subscriptions to official newspapers, such as the *People's Daily*, and ended subsidies to all but a few such papers in every province (Shirk, 2010). Riding the tide of capitalist reform in the country, Chinese media have become profitable thanks to new entrepreneurs eager to promote their products. Even though all media organizations in China are state property and thus under state control and news content in particular is heavily managed, there are some media, categorized as "market media" (such as Southern Media Group), which receive no subsidies from the government thus have to survive on advertising and

other revenue streams. Market media run more local and human-interest stories and are more popular than "Party media," such the *People's Daily*.

Thirty years after the reform, the Chinese media landscape is no longer dominated by Party press outlets dedicated solely to CCP propaganda. The Party still retains ideological and personnel control over media organizations, but there is greater diversity in the ways these organizations manage their obligation to the state. For example, media in Beijing are more likely to follow the Party line, whereas those in the south, such as the Southern Media Group, are more willing to confront the government on various social and, in many cases, political issues. In other words, media in southern China are more commercialized and bolder than those in the north. The emergence of commercial media offers audiences vital alternative sources that are generally considered more credible and trustworthy than the Party press. Daniela Stockman (2010) found that only about 36 percent of readers in Beijing read official papers such as the *People's Daily*; the rest read only semi-official or commercialized papers.

With all these complexities, Hu Zhengrong (Hu, 2007) characterizes the current Chinese media system as "Single Ownership, Dual Operation."[3] According to Hu, all of China's media are still state property, but areas such as content production and advertising are open to private capital. The two-fold objective of a typical media organization in China is to compete for profits while also implementing the will of the Party. Although private investment is allowed, the

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[3] Hu's theory applies to all media organizations in China.

government always has the final say. This arrangement is based on the Party's concern over its monopoly on Chinese media and its control over the flow of information. The ingenuity of this system lies in the fact that the Party does not pay a penny to the media, yet media organizations have to do the Party's bidding to be granted a license enabling them to stay in business.

The drawbacks of this arrangement are obvious. Functioning as a part of government rather than independently, the media may lease its power to interest groups. The government and commercial entities may also use media to infringe upon public interests. During my fieldwork, one of my journalist interviewees informed me that his news organization sometimes has to kill critical coverage on companies that provide significant advertising revenues.

The trend of commercialization doesn't mean that the Party has loosened its control over media. The Chinese government introduced a "four-level development" policy to the media sector in 1983. This policy structures Chinese media according to administrative institutions: Each level of government is in charge of developing its media organizations, which in turn are subject to control and management by the government. This institutional arrangement has guaranteed that each level of media is under the Party's direct supervision.
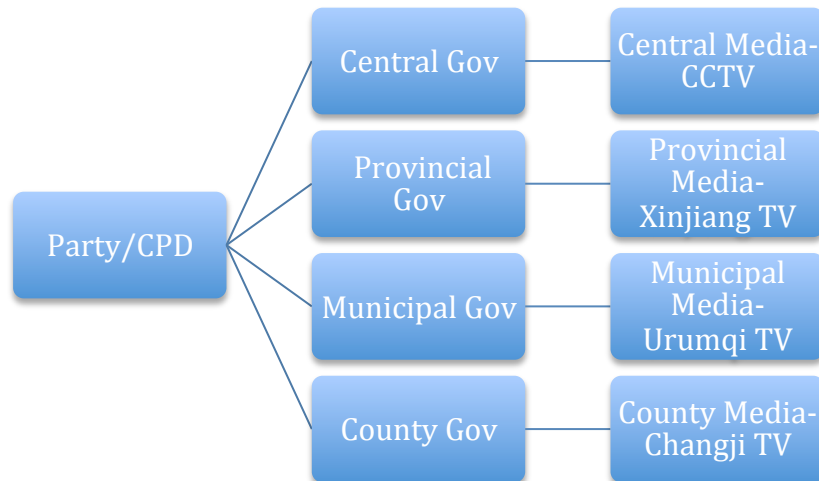
Figure 1 Chinese Media System

(With TV stations in Xinjiang as examples)

In fact, the CCP has managed to tighten its control through the years without exception. As in Mao's era, all television/radio stations are tightly controlled by the state. Print media are subject to a government licensing system, which requires every publication to be licensed before going for print. Since the 1980s, only a handful of newspapers, magazines, and news Websites are completely independent and privately financed (Shirk, 2010, p. 12). However, most of these important independent publications have been banned by the government in the last three years (e.g., *Citizen*, created by a group of intellectuals in 2006 to promote human rights). Today, all major independent publications have moved to the Internet. For example, the Far and Wide Journal (fawjournal.com) is an online magazine that features deep analysis on current affairs and offers readers alternative opinions on international relations.

At the core of this control system is the CCP's powerful Central Propaganda Department (CPD). The CPD is the "omnipresent body, exerting its formidable power in sustaining the Party's dominance in the area of ideology and culture" (Y. Zhao, 2008, p. 24). The CPD issues its propaganda disciplines (*xuanchuan jilv*) mainly through word of mouth and telephone calls, and of course those telephone numbers are concealed. Judy Polumbaum (1990) describes a "directive mode" by which the Party controls media through a set of implicit and explicit policy statements and instructions governing news media operations. According to Shambaugh (2007), propaganda guidelines are transmitted through various "red-headed" documents such as speeches by leaders, "urgent announcements," "minutes" of conferences, "opinions," and the articulation of an official line and exact formulation (or "the size of the mouth" (*koujing*) and wording (*tifa*)) on a particular issue (p. 53)(p. 53)(p. 53)(p. 53)(p. 53)(p. 53). Media organizations refusing to abide by all these control measures are punished with the sacking of editors, slashing of incomes, or the jailing of "troublemakers." According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), China had 34 journalists in jail as of December 2010, the highest of any country.[4] When President Hu Jintao took over from Jiang Zenmin in 2004, many expected that he would introduce a more open and tolerant media policy. Unfortunately, Hu has proven to be more cautious, conservative, and ideologically dogmatic than his predecessor in managing media. In a leaked speech reportedly given by Hu to the CPD, Hu claims that "in terms of managing ideology, we should

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[4] http://www.cpj.org/imprisoned/2010.php

learn from Cuba and North Korea."[5] The first casualty of such policy in 2011 was

Chang Ping, a prominent columnist for the Southern Media Group. He is famous for

a 2008 article titled "Tibet: Nationalist Sentiment And The Truth," in which he

called upon Chinese citizens to reflect on the government's policies on Tibet. This

articles angered nationalist citizens and certainly the CPD in Beijing. Chang Ping

believes that his removal was only part of an overall tightening of censorship since

the Nobel Peace Prize[6] was awarded to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo in 2011.

5. The Internet

The Chinese authorities appear to be succeeding at managing traditional

media, but the explosive growth of new media, especially the Internet, has created a

formidable challenge to the Party. The Internet first entered China in the mid-

1990s. As of July 2010, the number of Chinese citizens connected to the Internet

reached 457 million (CNNIC, 2011), which is more than the total population of the

United States. Chinese users have been enjoying almost every application that the

Internet provides: Over 304 million people use instant messaging applications, such

as the MSN messenger and QQ. The latter is so popular in China that in early 2010,

the highest number of users online at the same time reached 100 million.[7] The

Internet has also given people a platform for honest self-expression. More than 231

million in China are writing blogs on a wide variety of topics. If a blog is a personal

platform, then the numerous BBS forums serve as virtual public squares in which

over 10 million posts are published every day. All the above-mentioned applications

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[5] http://news.boxun.com/forum/200904/qingshui/41604.shtml
[6] http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/world/asia/28china.html?_r=1&ref=asia
[7] http://tech.qq.com/a/20100305/000528.htm

are used to disseminate information, connect users, and coordinate actions among netizens in China.

The exponential growth of the Internet in Mainland China has brought about tremendous changes in people's lives and the operations of traditional media. Initially a tool for instant communication (e-mail and instant messaging, online chatting), the Internet has now become an alternative source of information. Chinese people increasingly rely on the Internet for breaking news stories and perspectives/opinions different from government-sanctioned versions. More impressive is that the average Internet usage time is 19.8 hours per week, or over 2.5 hours a day. Facing such a challenge from the Internet, traditional media adopt new strategies, such as opening their own websites and paying more attention to the Internet in newsgathering. In addition, Chinese Internet users are going mobile. Of the 457 million Internet users, 303 million are connected through cell phones, which means they can upload pictures and post comments from anywhere they may be.

The Internet has also fundamentally changed the Chinese economy. According to the deputy minister of China's Ministry of Industry and Information, China's Internet market was 27.9 billion US dollars in 2009, with total online business transactions totaling over half a trillion US dollars. The more than twenty Chinese Internet companies listed in US stock exchanges are worth an aggregate

sum of tens of billions of dollars.[8] This IPO craze has created thousands if not tens of thousands of millionaires.

Citizen empowerment through Internet usage continued into 2010, which was dubbed by netizens "the first year of microblogs in China." Although Twitter and its Chinese knock-off *Fanfou* were introduced earlier (2006-07), both of them were blocked in 2009 during the bloody riot in Xinjiang. Other social networking sites such as Youtube and Facebook were banned earlier in 2008. The local Chinese social networking sites and microblog services truly took off in 2010 partly due to the government-imposed ban on their Western competitors. Today, Sina Weibo is the red-hot microblog service in China with over 70 million active users.[9] Tencent, which owns the popular QQ, has a microblog that trails Sina Weibo with 20 million active users. Microblogs have become a new tool for netizens to exert public pressure on the government, redefining China's ancient culture of "*Weiguan* 围观 (Surrounding Gaze)." According to *China Media Project*, based in Hong Kong, *Weiguan* is a term used to describe the cultural phenomenon of Chinese who would look on blankly, with cold indifference, as their fellows were dragged off for execution or subjected to other injustices. In the Internet age, the "surrounding gaze" can now point to the social and political possibilities of new communications technologies, which might, some say, promote change by mobilizing public opinion around certain issues and events.[10] A vivid example of "*weiguan*" in 2010 began

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[8] http://tech.163.com/10/0817/10/6E9J7BI500094IO0.html
[9] http://techrice.com/2011/03/08/chinas-top-15-social-networks/
[10] http://cmp.hku.hk/2011/01/04/9399/

with a traffic accident. A young man driving a car on a university campus in northern China hit two college girls and killed one of them. Local media reported that this young man shouted at the scene of the accident, "Sue me if you dare, my father is Li Gang" *(the deputy chief of local public security)*. This story instantly became a national sensation. Enraged netizens retweeted and reposted the story so many times that "My father is Li Gang" became a catch phrase to mock official privilege and injustice. Finally, Li Gang apologized publicly and his son was thrown into jail. Netizens celebrated; without microblogs, this young man might otherwise have gotten away unpunished.

Microblogs have become so hot an online application as to potentially threaten the CCP's control of news, raising the specter that microblogs might be shut down by the government someday. But Gady Epstein, a Beijing-based Forbes journalist, offers a different perspective. In his interview with a Sina CEO,[11] Epstein suggests that the government is more likely to let Weibo exist but keep tight control over its content and take advantage of it in case of controversy and crisis. A real event seems to support this view. Zhang Chunxian, Xinjiang CCP secretary, opened a microblog account in March, claiming that Weibo is a "better tool for communication."[12] Without a doubt, the Internet has become the most influential medium in China today due to its unprecedented citizen participation. The success of some citizen collective efforts through the Internet has emboldened

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[11] http://www.forbes.com/global/2011/0314/features-charles-chao-twitter-fanfou-china-sina-weibo_2.html
[12] http://news.qq.com/a/20110309/000115.htm

the Chinese people to continue resisting the official monopoly on media and information.

The Chinese government has a love-hate attitude toward the Internet. On one hand, the new technology has dramatically boosted the growth of the economy, especially in sectors such as trade, online businesses, and logistics. But on the other hand, the Internet has threatened the Party's monopoly on information. Thus, the Party invests heavily to "control online content and contain its powerful potential to mobilize political movements" (Shirk, 2010). The government spent billions of dollars building what may be the world's most advanced online filtering system, officially called the "Golden Shield Project." However, Chinese netizens joke about it as "the Great Firewall." This system blocks any websites that the Party deems harmful to its rule and filters out numerous keywords such as "Tiananmen," "Dalai Lama," and "East Turkistan." According to Xiao Qiang (Xiao, 2010), "The government's primary strategy is to hold Internet Service Providers and Internet Access Providers responsible for the behavior of their customers, so business operators have little choice but to proactively censor content on their sites."

Beyond this purely technological measure, the Party has mobilized its vast human resources as well. First, the Chinese government has established an Internet police force of over 30,000, who are in charge of monitoring online content.[13] The CPD's more recent invention is called the "Fifty Cent Army"— netizens paid roughly fifty cents per post for anonymous online messages endorsing

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[13] http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2005/jun/14/newmedia.china

the government's position on controversial issues. This creates the impression that public opinion supports the government, and thereby reduces the possibility of anti-government collective action (Shirk, 2010). Businesses have been quick to adopt the same public opinion manipulation strategy to defame and discredit their competitors. For example, Meng Niu, China's biggest dairy company, hired hundreds of paid posters in 2010 to launch a smear campaign against its competitor, Yili. The campaign seriously damaged Yili's reputation in the baby formula market and resulted in huge losses of revenue. Meng Niu finally apologized after the police uncovered its plot. Ironically, this kind of opinion manipulation has become so rampant that China's State Council Information Office issued a notice saying, "We will enhance the regulation of those paid posters."[14] The Chinese government also deliberately slows down the Internet speed to hamper netizens' access to content that particularly depends on speed, such as video sharing. According to CNNIC, China's average Internet speed is 100.9 kps, less than half of the world's average (230.4 kps). The government's last resort when in a desperate situation is to cut off the Internet physically, as the government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) did in the aftermath of the deadly riot in 2009. As a result, twenty million people in Xinjiang suffered a ten-month long information black out.

The government has imposed many restrictions, but Chinese netizens have their counter measures. The most commonly used tool is Virtual Private Network (VPN), which, by directing the user's traffic through servers located outside China,

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[14] http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/13641783.html

allows access to all blocked sites. Netizens also widely use homophones of certain keywords to evade filtering software. The fact that Chinese netizens are becoming more tech-savvy has created bigger obstacles for censors. Thus, Xiao (2010) argues that "[w]hen one deals with the blogosphere and the whole Internet with its redundant connections, millions of overlapping clusters, self-organized communities, and new nodes growing in an explosive fashion, total control is nearly impossible. The government can no longer maintain absolute control of mass media and information." Overall, the Chinese government's approach to media reflects its deep-rooted insecurity. Thus, China's media policies are "an inconsistent amalgam of improved transparency and responsiveness on the one hand and huge investments in more effective censorship on the other" (Shirk, 2010, p. 40).

6. Media in Xinjiang

As the media system in China is structured into the administrative system according to the "four-level development" policy, Xinjiang media are rooted in regional government. Xinjiang started broadcasting on the radio in 1948 and on TV in 1960. Both radio and TV now broadcast in five local languages: Han, Uyghur, Mongolian, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz. In the first two decades of Xinjiang's TV Station, most programs were produced by inland TV stations and merely translated and rebroadcast from Xinjiang. It was not until the 1980s that Xinjiang TV and radio stations started creating programs on their own. By the end of 2010, radio broadcasts in Xinjiang reached 94.9% of the total population, and TV 95.28%.[15]

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[15] http://gdtj.chinasarft.gov.cn/showtiaomu.aspx?ID=6967e266-ed57-4c85-a455-c6c46b951293

With regard to print media, the newspaper *Xinjiang Daily* (XD) is dominant in the region due to its status as the official mouthpiece of the regional government. The *Xinjiang Daily* is the largest provincial daily newspaper in XUAR, with a history dating back to the ROC. Founded as the *Xinjiang Gazette* in 1914 by warlord Yang Zengxin, the newspaper later became the *Tianshan Daily* after another warlord, Jin Shuren, succeeded Yang as ruler of the region. Sheng Shicai, who replaced Jin as the head of Xinjiang, finally used the title *Xinjiang Daily* in 1935 and published it as the official newspaper of the Xinjiang government.[16] Due to Sheng's pro-Soviet policy, the CCP sent a number of its cadres to Xinjiang; nine of them joined the *Xinjiang Daily* to "assist the work and promote the anti-Japanese war."[17] However, this arrangement ended in 1942, when Sheng switched allegiance from the Soviet Union to the Nationalist Government based in Nanjing. All the CCP members working for the *Xinjiang Daily* were either jailed or executed. After winning the civil war against the Nationalists, the CCP regained control of the paper in 1949. General Wang Zhen, who commanded People's Liberation Army (PLA) First Field Army, took over Xinjiang through a "peaceful liberation" in 1949 and delivered a speech to the staff members: "The *Xinjiang Daily* should be the voice of the people and let people speak, but put to silence the voices of bureaucrat capitalism, feudalism, and imperialism."[18] From day one in the PRC, the *Xinjiang Daily* became a regional vessel for CCP propaganda. Since 1953, the *Xinjiang Daily*

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[16] (*Xinjiang Tongzhi: Jiaoyu Zhi (Annals of Xinjiang: Education)*, 2009)

[17] Ibid. 8. p.5.

[18] Ibid. 8. p.8.

has been publishing in four local languages: Han, Uyghur, Kazakh, and Mongolian. It is distributed all across Xinjiang. Given its political importance and history, the *Xinjiang Daily* can be considered the regional equivalent of the national *People's Daily*. The *Xinjiang Daily*, the *Xinjiang Economic Daily*, and the *Bingtuan Daily* are the three regional newspapers. Other local papers such as the *Xinjiang Metropolis Daily* (XMD) and the *Urumqi Evening News* are more market-oriented and active in competing for readers and advertisers. There are several Uyghur-language newspapers, but all of them, without exception, mostly print translations of Chinese editions.

Throughout the 1990s, the newspaper industry in Xinjiang was under heavy pressure due to market reform. To cope with this change and attempt to increase revenue, the *Xinjiang Daily* created a new, more local, market-oriented paper in 1998: the *Xinjiang Metropolis Daily* (XMD). The XMD is affiliated with the *Xinjiang Daily* but operates on its own, without state subsidies. Heavily reliant on advertising revenue, the XMD runs more human-interest stories and less of the brazen propaganda found in the *Xinjiang Daily*. Although the XMD has a region-wide distribution network, more than half of its subscriptions (170,000 of 320,000 daily copies)[19] are in Urumqi.

Table 1 Revenue Source[20]

2005	The Xinjiang	Xinjiang Metropolis

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[19] http://baike.baidu.com/view/374884.htm
[20] Ibid. 4.p.264-268.

	Daily	*Daily*
State Subsidy	*25.15 million*	*0*
AD Revenue	*31.92 million*	*40.13 million*

As in other parts of China, Xinjiang has seen an exponential growth of Internet use in recent years. CNNIC (2009) reports that 27% of Xinjiang's total population is online; this number is above both the national and the world average. In the capital city, Urumqi, the Internet has become a crucial part of people's lives since the mid-1990s.

Unlike government-controlled traditional media, the Internet appeared to offer Uyghur users a relatively private and free space to articulate their needs and concerns. The Internet does provide an alternative to the mainstream media by offering more and diversified information to Uyghurs in Xinjiang; however, like users in any part of China, Uyghurs in Xinjiang have to face the limitations imposed by censorship, such as the omnipresent "Great Firewall" and a sophisticated keyword filtering system. Although savvy users can bypass this firewall, less ambitious and adept users usually just stop looking for the blocked content.

The July 5, 2009 riot in Urumqi was a watershed moment for the Internet in Xinjiang. In light of the fact that the riot was organized through the Internet and cell phone messages, the Xinjiang regional government imposed a communication blackout that lasted for ten months. The Internet was completely cut off, leaving

users unable to communicate with the rest of China and the outside world. International calls were also strictly limited. When the Internet ban was lifted in May 2010, all popular Uyghur websites and forums had been closed. Two months later, the Urumqi Intermediary Court sentenced three Uyghur webmasters to 3-10 years in prison (Jacobs, 2010). My fieldwork was conducted in May, June, July and August of 2010, when local residents had a keen sense of life both with and without the Internet.

While the Internet has changed the media landscape in most parts of China, television and newspapers still command a dominant presence in people's lives and are the primary sources of information in Xinjiang (this was especially true during the 10 months without Internet service). Chinese state TV and newspapers have their websites, but audiences do not often visit them. As a common practice, most people in Xinjiang remain consumers of traditional media content by watching television, listening to the radio, and subscribing to national or local newspapers delivered to their doors on a daily or weekly basis.

7. Who Are Uyghurs

China officially recognizes fifty-six ethnic groups within its borders; one of these is the Uyghur group residing in China's far west Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which is bordered by Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and India. Uyghurs are a Turkic-speaking people whose history can be traced back to AD 840 (Rudelson, 1998). Uyghurs followed a number of religions in history before they converted to Islam in

the fifteenth century,[21] and today Uyghurs are the second largest Muslim

population in China.[22] Most Uyghurs live in Xinjiang, though there are a small

number of Uyghurs living in inland China attending schools and engaging in

business or other activities. Since the founding of XUAR, some members of Uyghur

communities have borne a grudge against the rule of the Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) and have resorted to violence for an independent "East Turkistan" (Millward,

2004). After September 11, 2001, one of the Uyghur separatist organizations, the

East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), was listed by the US State Department

as a terrorist organization.[23] According to Yom (2001) Uyghurs present the principal

internal Muslim challenge to the Chinese government because they occupy a

historic homeland, articulate focused claims to self-determination, and stubbornly

resist assimilation into the broader Chinese nation.

This stiff resistance against the assimilation mainly comes from Uyghurs'

cultural and religious heritage. Different from other ethnic minority groups, who

have been integrated to the Han-dominated political, economic, and cultural

systems for a long time, Uyghurs' integration with inland China has been low. This

is partly due to the geography, which has a huge Gobi Dessert separating Xinjiang

and inland China. The Uyghur language and Islam have also sustained Uyghur as

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[21] While there are a small number of Uyghurs who are following Christianity and other religions, this number is insignificant compared to Muslim Uyghurs.

[22] The total population of the ten Islamic ethnic groups in China (2000) was 20,320,580, which equals to 7 percent of American population. The largest Muslim group in China is Hui, and most them reside in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region while you can find Hui Muslims in almost everywhere in China.

[23] Fletcher, H., & Bajoria, J. (2008, July 31). *The East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)* (Rep.). Retrieved December 12, 2009, from Council on Foreign Relations website: http://www.cfr.org/publication/9179/

a people. Among China's 55 ethnic minority groups, Tibetans are in a similar

situation with Uyghurs, though Tibetan causes are better known and supported by

the international community. Both Xinjiang and Tibet are economically under-

developed and receiving financial aid from the central government. Both are waging

a struggle for independence/autonomy for years. However, Tibetans have a revered

leader, the Dalai Lama, where Uyghurs are still searching for someone with equal

status. While Tibetans have been following peaceful resistance, Uyghur struggle for

independence has seen sporadic violence and some separatist organizations even

engaged in terrorism in recent years. For example, two Uyghur men launched a

serial of attacks in Kashgar in July 2011, killing more than 20 people and injuring

more.[24] A month later, a Uyghur militant group, Turkistan Islamic Party, which is

believed to be another name of ETIM, claimed responsibility for the attack.[25]

8. Uyghurs in Cultural China

Unlike Uyghur political figures, who usually serve nominal positions in the

central government outside Xinjiang, Uyghur musicians, singers, and artists have

long made into China's mainstream culture ever since the founding of the PRC,

many of whom have become superstars and known to most ordinary Han Chinese.

Although there are a number of Uyghur artists widely loved and popular among

Uyghurs, this section will focus on Uyghur artists and celebrities best known to

Han in inland China in that they, to a certain extent, represent Uyghurs to Han

Chinese.

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[24] http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/01/world/asia/01china.html?_r=1
[25] http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/09/world/asia/09china.html

Uyghur artists and popular culture figures mainly consists of two categories. One belongs to state institutions, which means they own their status to state education, training, and promotion. The most famous among them are usually from People's Liberation Army (PLA) Cultural Troupe（文工团）. The cultural troupe was modeled on similar groups in the Soviet military to stage artistic performances to members of the Chinese military. Due to the resources allocated to it and the rigorous training, PLA Cultural Troupe boasts several of China's best artists. For example, the wife of the next president of China, Peng Liyuan, is a PLA soprano. To broaden it representativeness and tap ethnic minority talents, PLA Cultural Troupe also recruits from various ethnic minorities. Kirim and Bahargul Rehmutulla are two best-known Uyghur musicians.

Kirim is a tenor soloist. He was born in Turpan in eastern Xinjiang, and joined PLA at the age of 11. He is widely known as the "first Uyghur singer who sings in Chinese and praised by Chairman Mao."[26] Kirim had regular appearance in China' annual Spring Festival Gala（春节晚会）, which is a must-watch for more than 80% of Chinese audiences in the night of the Spring Festival.[27] Kirim mainly sings Uyghur folk songs, such as *Alamhan*, and *Afanty*, but as a PLA singer, he is also part of the state propaganda machine. His self-composed song *Ode Dedicated to the Beloved Party* is one example as such. Kirim was promoted to the ranking of General.

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[26] http://baike.baidu.com/view/1306300.htm
[27] http://wenwen.soso.com/z/q262343740.htm

Like Kirim, Bahargul Rehmutulla also enjoys national fame as a Uyghur soloist. Originally from Hoten in southern Xinjiang, Bahargul joined the PLA Cultural Troupe in 1977 as a dancer. She visited Pakistan in 1979 as a member of a Chinese youth delegate. Her Urdu solo *Long Live Pakistan* impressed Pakistani audiences and President Zia ul-Haq personally received her. She was later promoted to the regional PLA cultural troupe and officially became a soloist. Bahargul was admitted in both Shanghai Conservatory Of Music and PLA Art College to study vocals in the 1980s, and she has won numerous awards through the years. Bahargul was best known for Chinese audiences for two of her Chinese songs: *Sweet Songs Greet Distinguished Guests* （甜甜的歌儿迎贵客）, and *The Most Beautiful Place Is Always Our Xinjiang*（最美的还是我们新疆）, both of which have become household music and Karaoke favorites these days.

Outside PLA system, Uyghur artists have spectacular achievements too. Dilnar Abudullah is the best-known Uyghur solo dancer in China. Dilnar started dancing at the age of four, went to Beijing at 11 to learn dancing, and graduated from Minzu University Department of Dancing. She is very good at Uyghur folk dance and staged a number of solo dancing performances in Beijing, which brought to her numerous awards. For example, her solo dance *Picking Grapes* and *Plates* were considered as the "20th Century Chinese Classic." In addition to numerous awards, Dilnar's achievements are recognized by the state with a number of official titles, such as the vice chairman of China Dancing Association and member of All China Youth League. She receives "special stipend" from the State Council. She also

marries the son of Ismail Amat, the former Chairman of XUAR. Dilanr has two daughters, and one of them, Vinira Nijat, has made to the pop culture scene in recent years.

Riding the tide of the market reform in Xinjiang in the 1990s, a younger generation of Uyghur singers breaks loose the restraint of state institutions and chases their dreams on their own. Erkin Abudullah and Esqer Mehmet are two representatives of this new generation of Uyghur singers that are well known in both Xinjiang and inland China. Erkin was born in southern Xinjiang's Kashgar and graduated from Minzu University in Beijing in 1999. Out of a deep love to music, Erkin organized a band and became a professional singer upon graduation. Different from the older-generation of Uyghur singers, Erkin only consider traditional Uyghur music as a starting point, he introduced to Uyghur music the elements of jazz, country, and Latin, thus made his music modern and international. His fans dub him "Prince of Guitar." As Kirim, Erkin was invited to perform in CCTV's Spring Festival Gala several times. Esqer Mehmet is a bit older than Erkin but was also from Kashgar. He was originally assigned to work in Tianshan Film Studio but later quit that job for music. He is the first to stage solo concert and rock concert in Urumqi. Esqer later moved to Beijing for better opportunities, and nowadays he is considered a representative of Uyhgur rock music. Esquer is better known as Esquer Graywolf, which derives from his band *Graywolf*. Different from Erkin's pop music, Esquer often expresses his love to Xinjiang and Uyghurs through his songs. Both Esquer and Erkin received little support from state music

institutions. They have been working in the market and generally producing commercial music. Both of them have no problem singing in Mandarin and have issued a number of personal albums, some of which have become national hit since release. As younger generation, they take advantage of the emerging social media platforms. Both of them have accounts in China's Twitter, Sina Weibo. Each has roughly seven thousand followers and most of them are Han Chinese.

The introduction of the best-known Uyghur singers would be incomplete without mentioning one unique figure: Abdulla Abduriyim. Abdulla was born in Maralbashi County in southern Xinjiang and has dominated Uyghur music scene for more than a decade. He is good at Muqam, which is the melody type used in Uyghur music. Uyghur Muqam was developed from the Arabic maqam modal system and in Xinjiang local Muqam systems are named after oasis towns, including Dolan, Ili, Kumu, and Turpan. Abdulla is recognized as the best singer of Dolan Muqam. Abdullah is highly popular in Xinjiang and has issued more than ten albums, and he "saved Muqam from extinction by merging this ancient music form with modern electronic instruments."[28] Abdullah's talent and contribution to Uyghur music brought him to the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in 2011, where he sang the Dolan Muqam in Uyghur to hundreds of millions national audiences. Even though most Han viewers had to rely on the translation subtitle, Internet users poured in comments such as "magnificent" and "impressive" after the gala. Nonetheless, Abdullah is little known to Han audiences. Unlike Erkin and Esquer,

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[28] http://www.cnr.cn/xjfw/tndbxjr/whml/200802/t20080218_504707807.html

who have mastered Mandarin for a long time and had easier access to inland market and audiences, Abdullah is still struggling with Mandarin and his first Mandarin album only sold 1,6000 copies.

In addition to the music and art, Uyghurs are also active in TV entertainment. This group is even younger than abovementioned singers and musicians. Most of them are college students, and some are just kids. Arapat is the first Uyghur kid who achieved national fame. He won the champion of a CCTV talent show "6+1" in 2004, when he was only six. His dance show combined Uyghur, rock, and hip-hop, which was rare in the early 2000s. Arapat formally entered the Chinese entertainment industry, and has acted different roles in children's TV shows, sang numerous songs for kids, represented various products as the image ambassador, and of course regularly appeared on entertainment programs. While Aarapat reached stardom as a kid, Nighmat Rehman became a household name before he graduated from college. Nighmat was from Urumqi and in his senior year at the Communication University of China, he won the champion of a CCTV host contest, and joined CCTV right upon graduation. He co-hosts a very popular quiz show *Happy Dictionary*, which boats sky-high viewer rating nationwide. Almost all audiences love Nighmat, but one of his younger schoolmates, Vinira Nijat, is a controversial figure. Vinra, as mentioned before, is a daughter of Uyghur dance master Dilnar Abdullah and belongs to post-'90 generation, which usually refers to a generation of Chinese teenagers who are eccentric, bold, and never hesitate to rebel against the rules. Vinira is currently a senior student at the Communication

University of China and hosting a CCTV program *China Ethnicities* part time. What brought her into national focus and controversy was an entertainment show in which both she and her mother Dilnar participated. In October 2010, Dilnar was invited to Hunan TV as a Uyghur dance master. She brought Vinira with her as a guest host. While Dilnar showe up with traditional Uyghur dresses and a *Doppa* on her head, Vinira was wearing a tight-fitting, revealing outfit that would be commonplace on the streets of New York and London. It was this tight dress that caused controversy after the show. Many Uyghur viewers accused Vinira of being "immoral," "degenerated ", and "shame of Uyghur," while her supporters have argued that it is not wrong to wear a mini-skirt and Uyghurs can and should be modern. Vinira was undaunted, "Saliva (criticism) won't drown me, and I will forge ahead."[29]

So far, Uyghur celebrities have concentrated in music, TV, and entertainment industries. Most of them owe their rise to the Uyghur culture, especially the dance and music. Their entrance to the inland market usually started with spectacular demonstrations of their dancing and singing talents. While this show of talent help Han Chinese viewers learn certain aspects of Uyghur culture, it is also reinforcing the stereotypes against Uyghur. That is: Uyghurs are a people only good at singing and dancing. Being conscious of it or not, these Uyghur celebrities are benefiting form those stereotypes, and none of them have ever indicated that they would do something to change it. So where are Uyghur

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[29] http://www.xjdaily.com/channelcenter/fashion/557620.shtml

scientists? In summer 2011, Halmrat Hupur, president of the Xinjiang Medical University, was selected candidate to Chinese Academy of Sciences. This is unprecedented progress made by Uyghur scientists because so far there haven't been one Uyghur served as a member of CAS. However, this breaking news is only circulated among scholars and never made it to mainstream media outlets, thus unknown to most Han audiences.

9. Uyghurs in Diaspora

While most of Uyghurs live in Xinjiang, some left their homeland and migrated to other parts of the world. Traditionally, Uyghur migration was Asian-oriented. Due to their cultural and religious affinity with various peoples in Central Asia, Uyghurs can be found in all Central Asian states and today the largest Uyghur diaspora outside China is in Kazakhstan. Since the 2000s, most Uyghur emigrants have chosen to go the West as their destination. Gardner Bovingdon (2010) suggested that Uyghur migration generally follow the organizations that striving for an independent Uyghur nation. The destination of this migration shifted three times in history. The first center of Uyghur diaspora was Turkey, when some of the leaders of the second East Turkestan Republic in Yili fled China after the communist takeover in the 1950s. Then the center was moved to Central Asia, and in the 21t century, the center of Uyghur diaspora has moved to the West, especially the United States. Each time, Uyghur diasporic groups had to reorient, refocus, and try to hold their organizations together. When it comes to the reason behind these constant shifts of geography, goals and activities, Bovingdon points "These [host] states have inevitably used Uyghur organizations to pursue their

particular interests and then cast them aside for the same reason. This was true of

the Soviet Union, to a lesser extent of Turkey, of the Central Asian states for a time,

and then more recently of the United States" (p. 152). The current leader that

unites all Uyghur diasporas is Rebiya Kadeer, whose life is quite a legend. Before

exiled to the US and took over the World Uyghur Congress, which is based in D.C.,

as Chairwoman, Kadeer was a "fashion designer, entrepreneur, self-made

millionaire, former member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Conference, Muslim, philanthropist, anti-drug crusader, celebrated prisoner of

conscience, refugee and twice-married mother of eleven" (Millward, 2007, p. 357).

First was touted as "China's wealthiest woman," Kadeer was a symbol of the

success of China's ethnic policies. However, her relations with the Chinese

government soured over her persistence on Uyghur human rights issues. She was

arrested on her way to meet with US lawmakers in Urumqi in 1999 and then

sentenced to eight years in prion for "leaking state secretes." She was released in

2005 with the intervention of the United States. Millward (2007, p. 306) believes

that Kadeer's release was largely due to the fame and attention she has garnered

through the years, but BBC reported that her release was part of a deal made

between the US and China: China releases Kadeer for the US not proposing a "anti-

China Motion" in return at the UN Commission on Human Rights.[30] There is no

way to confirm this with Chinese diplomats or the foreign ministry, but Chinese

media reported on March 17, 2005 that "China Welcomes The US To Drop Its Anti-

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[30] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4357637.stm
http://www.duihua.org/media/press/statements/statement_on_kadeer_release.htm

China Motion."[31] Kadeer was released on March 14, three days before the UN human rights meeting. Nonetheless, Kadeer is now part of a Sino-US strategic and ideological competition over issues regarding democracy and human rights.

10. Uyghurs and Global Islam

Since converted to Islam 800 years ago, Uyghurs have been part of the global Islamic community. Situating on the ancient Silk Road, Uyghurs in history was a cultural and economic bridge between the Confucius China and the Islamic Middle East and Central Asia. The establishment of the USSR in the 1920s changed this dynamic by cutting off the historical link between the Uyghurs and the Islamic Middle East. The ten-year long Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), especially the state's persecution on all religious activities across China, aggravated Uyghur's isolation from the world. Uyghurs embraced a revival of their faith only after the end of the Cultural Revolution, when the Chinese government adopted more tolerant and moderate policies in religion in the 1980s (Dillon, 1994).

Since the 1990s, Uyghurs have been reintegrated into the Islamic *umma*. Many factors contributed to this reintegration. First, forces of globalization gained the momentum and increased the flow of information, including religious information, into Xinjiang. Second, the fall of Soviet Union removed the obstacles (Soviet Central Asia) between Xinjiang and the Middle East. Feeling more confident about the security in its western border, the Chinese government opened up borders in Xinjiang for trade with former Soviet states, the west and south Asia. Third,

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[31] http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-03-17/21535389459s.shtml

more Uyghurs paid their way to Mecca and study in the Middle East for religious knowledge.[32] Joanne Smith Finley (2007) described this revival as the "re-Islamization" of Xinjiang. This process was accompanied by the deepening of relations and cooperation with Muslim countries. In addition to China's long-time "all-weather" friendship with Pakistan, China established diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia in 1990.[33] In 1989, Ayatullah Ahmad Jannati, president of Iran's Islamic Propagation Organization, stated his preparedness to strengthen Iran's relations with China's Muslim community through the exchange of cultural and scientific delegations and (significantly) theology students (Shichor, 1994). In the same year, Iranian President Ali Khamenei visited China.[34] Again in 2000, Iranian President Mohammad Hatami visited China and in his trip to Xinjiang he met with local Uyghur religious leaders in Urumqi and Kashgar.[35] Uyghurs are also moved closer to Muslims in the Middle East with the help of mass media. Finley (2007) identifies a strong anti-American and ant-Israeli sentiment among Uyghurs because what they see and hear about the West after 911, for example, are full of invasion, suppression, and occupation of Muslim countries. Finley believes that this sentiment has consolidated Uyghurs' sense of belonging to the global *umma*.

Uyghurs have been important to China's relations with the world's Muslim countries. As a net oil importer, China depends on the Middle East for its crucial oil supply. Gladeny (2003) suggests that "mishandling Muslim problems will alienate

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[32] In 2001, more than 6,000 pilgrims visited Mecca, mostly privately financed (Dru C. Gladney, 2004, p. 235).
[33] http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2006-05/30/content_4621483.htm
[34] http://www.cssn.cn/news/224909.htm
[35] http://www.people.com.cn/GB/channel1/10/20000626/117324.html

trading partners in the Middle East, who are primarily Muslims." In addition to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, Turkey is particular important to China and its Uyghur population. Sharing common cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage, Turkey has been active on issues regarding Uyghurs. After the ethnic riot on February 5, 1997 in the northwestern city of Yining, Turkey's Defense Minister, Turhan Tayan, officially condemned China's handling of the issue, and China responded by telling Turkey to not interfere in China's internal affairs (Dru C. Gladney, 2003). In the aftermath of July 5 riot in Urumqi; Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan described the violence as "genocide."[36] China's foreign ministry refuted this description and argued that most of the dead in the riot are Han, not Uyghurs.[37]

Realizing that Uyghur issue may be China's Achilles' Heel, CCP leadership organized its Xinjiang Work Conference in May 2010 and decided to invest billions of dollars in Xinjiang to boost local economy and to build two "special economic zones" in Kashgar and Ili. The Chinese government also wants to build Kashgar into a model of peaceful coexistence between Confucius culture and Islamic culture. In September 2011, China debuted its first Eurasia Expo in Urumqi, which is supposed to be a new platform to boost business and trade across the Eurasian continent. Both Dillon (1994) and Gladney (2003) have observed that the success of China's push for a New Silk Road and better relations with Muslims states depends on China's handling of its domestic Muslim issues, especially Uyghur issues.

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[36] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8145451.stm
[37] http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/Turkey-07152009164901.html

11. Who are Minkaohan and why study Minkaohan

When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took over from the Nationalists in the 1950s, they created a separate educational system for all ethnic minorities. Two types of school were introduced: the Han school, with mainly Han students and instruction carried out in Mandarin Chinese, and the minority school, teaching in different minority languages such as Uyghur, Tibetan, or Mongolian. Among thirteen indigenous ethnic minorities living in Xinjiang, five have their own schools: Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Mongols, Xibo, and Kyrgyz. Tatar and Uzbeks speak Uyghur as their native language, and Tajiks use Uyghur as their written script but retain Persian as their spoken language (*Chronicle of Education*, n.d., p. 577). There are some Han students attending minority language schools in Xinjiang, but this situation is rare and only happens when Han students live in predominantly minority areas where no Mandarin schools are available.

Students in minority schools are mostly from ethnic minority families. In practice, students from minority backgrounds have two options, and it is up to their parents to decide which type of school they should attend. Understandably, most ethnic minority parents prefer to send their children to minority schools, but some parents assume that a Han education, especially the mastery of Mandarin, will bring their children a more promising future. Broadly, *Minkaohan* refers to ethnic minority students who attend Mandarin schools and later test in Chinese for college entrance examinations. *Minkaohan* literally means "minority students who test in Mandarin." In the case of Xinjiang, *Minkaohan* include students from eleven ethnic groups: Uyghur, Khazak, Mongolian, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek, Xibo, Dawoer, Tatar,

Tibetan, and Russian (Mehsut, 2001). Students, who attend minority language schools, are called "*Minkaomin*."

Minkaohan Uyghurs are a distinct group. Typically, they are born in Uyghur families but educated in Mandarin schools and use Mandarin Chinese as their primary language. Many of them speak perfect Uyghur, but are not likely to be accepted by mainstream Uyghur society because they cannot write a word in their native language (Xing Zhang, 2008). However, more and more *Minkaohan* Uyghurs tutor themselves in Uyghur script and are no less fluent in written Uyghur than their peers who attended minority schools. With their fluency in Mandarin, *Minkaohan* Uyghurs have easier and broader access to Chinese-language media like books, magazines, newspapers, and especially the Internet. Because *Minkaohan* Uyghur students are educated in predominantly Han classes, the obvious differences between them and their Han classmates compel them to think about their own identity at an early age. At the same time, these students can allow their Han classmates a view into the culture of Uyghurs, promoting and facilitating cultural exchange between the two groups.

Given that China is officially an atheistic nation and religion is not allowed in schools, most *Minkaohan* Uyghurs follow a practice that distinguishes public and private spaces. They speak Mandarin and never wear scarves in public places, but at home they speak Uyghur exclusively and some pray several times a day. According to the Xinjiang Regional Education Bureau (*Zizhiqu Jiaoyuting*), of the 4.4 million students registered across the region in 2009, 59.1% of them were

minority students (*Xinjiang Jiaoyu Jiben Qingkuang, 2010*). While the official number of *Minkaohan* Uyghurs in Xinjiang has not been published,[38] there are a total of 99,4000 students from all ethnic groups who are either *Minkaohan* or receiving "bilingual education" in the region (42% of all registered minority students). Since the Chinese government started to push so-called "bilingual education"[39] in the early 2000s, this category is growing much faster than *Minkaohan*, whose numbers are in a relative decline. Generally, it is estimated that *Minkaohan* Uyghurs make up less than 10% of the total Uyghur population of 9.9 million in Xinjiang.

Despite their relatively small numbers, however, *Minkaohan* are highly influential in contemporary Xinjiang; most of them work in key sectors in the region, such as government agencies, media organizations, State-Owned Enterprises, and in services like banking, real estate, and retail. The Uyghur Chairman of XUAR, Nur Bekri, is one of the most well-known *Minkaohan,* who are regarded as the elite in Uyghur society by Han Chinese. Naturally, most *Minkaohan* Uyghurs are living in the provincial capital Urumqi, where the booming economy in recent years has created more opportunities than in the rest of the region.

Media in contemporary society encompass a wide variety of artistic and commercial products—from books, films and magazines to billboards and even

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[38] Despite extensive searches, it proved impossible to find exact data about the number of *Minkaohan* Uyghurs. These figures are not openly published, and all my connections in Urumqi either said they didn't know where to find such data or that it was a "state secret."

[39] "Bilingual education" in reality ends up with Uyghur students learn Mandrin, but no Uyghur classes for Han students.

matchbook covers. While media is a useful concept and broadly used by scholars, as demonstrated above, it is far from precise. For the purposes of my dissertation, I am focusing on three types of media—state television, state newspapers and state monitored Internet—and one type of content: news and information. Many other media forms are emerging in China, but those are beyond the scope this study.

12. Research Questions

Newspapers and television are categorized as mass media, i.e., content is broadcast from one sender to many users. The Internet is unique in that it can be both mass ("one to many") and personal ("one to one") at the same time. Additionally, it is interactive and operates in real time. Users no longer passively wait for content from a distant provider. Instead, they can access the information they want at any time and, more importantly, they are able to respond to received content and create their own content.

Uyghurs in China are part of this media-saturated world and take advantage of easy access[40] to various kinds of media (TV, radio, newspapers) for their own cultural and religious pursuits. *Minkaohan* Uyghurs are regular, and sometimes heavy, users of mass media and the Internet; they receive secular modern education, but identify themselves as Muslims; they are educated in Mandarin, but strongly recognize themselves as Uyghurs; they are Uyghur to Han, but not recognized as 100% Uyghur to *Minkaomin* Uyghurs (Mehsut, 2009). Unfortunately, adequate research has not been done on media representations of Uyghurs in China

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[40] By easy access, I am referring to the situation before the riot on July 5, 2009.

and how Uyghurs respond to these images. *My dissertation intends to fill this vacuum by focusing on: 1) how Uyghurs are portrayed in state media, 2) how Minkaoahan Uyghurs react to these portrayals, and 3) how Minkaohan Uyghurs express their own beliefs, concerns, and intentions in their individual and collective Internet practices.* By examining *Minkaohan* Uyghurs, whose self-perceptions teem with conflicts and contradictions, we can better understand the degree to which Chinese media depicts or disregards complexity in its representations of Uyghurs.

I am especially interested in examining Uyghur Internet expression and exploration of identity because this will offer a rare glimpse of Uyghur online agency, demonstrating how Uyghurs engage in active reinterpretation of state media representations. It is generally accepted in media studies that audiences are not passive; rather, they are active users of the media content and builders of media discourse (Ang, 1996; Morley, 1995). The Internet strengthens this ability to negotiate and reinterpret state-produced images and messages.

Chapter details:

Chapter One: (Introduction) offers a historical overview of media in China, especially media in Xinjiang and the four newspapers that were analyzed (The People's Daily, The China Daily, The Xinjiang Metropolis Daily, The Xinjiang Daily.) The chapter also provides a historical background of *Minkaohan* Uyghurs.

Chapter Two: (Literature Review) reviews previous scholarship on state propaganda in China and Western theories on ethnic representations in media. The chapter also reviews media effects theories developed in the West.

Chapter Three: (Methodology) introduces and discusses the two main methodologies used in this dissertation (content analysis and in-depth interviews).

Chapter Four: (Content Analysis) is dedicated to the examination of how Uyghurs are framed/represented in state (central and local) newspapers.

Chapter Five: (In-depth Interviews) investigates both *Minkaohan* and Han Chinese reactions to and interpretations of state media message on Uyghurs. The chapter examines the Uyghur resistance against state-produced representations/meanings, emphasizing the role of the Internet in this process.

Chapter Six : (Conclusion) summarizes the findings and connects it to the literature.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Much has been written on the relationship between media and minorities in the United States, as well as on China's media system in general. However, there has not been much discussion on media and minorities in China until very recently. My dissertation links these two components: Chinese media and minority Uyghurs in China. To address the question of minority representation and its impact in China, I will draw from existing literature on minorities and media in the US; but since the US and China have vastly different media systems, I will not apply US theories and frameworks blindly to China. Instead, I will try to find useful applications of US literature to the Chinese context, in which media organizations are constantly under the sway of the Central Propaganda Department. The fact that the CPD can impose its will on any media organization in China means that news programs will, to a certain extent, lack subtly when representing minorities. In other words, Chinese media may sometimes resort to direct propaganda when covering Uyghurs. Thus, my literature review looks at: 1) state propaganda in China, 2) audience resistance against state-produced media messages in China, 3) ethnic minority media representation and marginalization, and 4) media effects theories and how they relate to the Chinese context. 5) how Western theories does/doesn't apply in Chinese context.

This literature review aims to address one main question: how do Chinese media, with certain Western characteristics, represent Uyghurs in an authoritarian (propaganda) context? Specifically, framing theory will shed light on how state

media shape the image of Uyghurs and influence the interpretations of and agendas regarding Uyghurs that citizens adopt (media frames). In addition to examining media strategies, I will also look at audience responses and resistance to state-manufactured media products (audience frames).

1. State Propaganda in China

All Western media effects theories have their roots in liberal democratic societies, where media organizations present themselves as fair, objective, and balanced, while pushing their agendas by means of subtle and sophisticated techniques. But China, as an authoritarian state, has neither a liberal political system nor free and private media. Chinese media organizations are part of the government and are controlled by the CCP. Since efforts to shape public opinion and uphold Party interests are part of Chinese media's official mission, the operation and effect of the Party propaganda must be taken into consideration when evaluating media influence on Chinese audiences.

According to political scientist Harold Lasswell (2009, p. 329), "Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols." Lasswell further explicates that propaganda can be understood culturally as presentation of an object in a culture in such a manner that certain cultural attitudes will be organized toward it. He describes propaganda strategy in the language of stimulus and response, which means the propagandist sees to the amplification of those stimuli best calculated to evoke desired responses, as well as the nullification of those stimuli likely to instigate undesired responses. Lasswell believes that the ever-present function of propaganda in modern life results from

two factors: 1) the disintegration of traditional, organic society, which enables a single leader to command loyalty from people across vast geographical spaces, and 2) the advancement of technology, which enables quick transmission of messages.

The modern application of propaganda on a national level was first realized in Nazi Germany, but the Chinese government learnt most from its Soviet teachers. The Chinese Communist propaganda system represented the quintessential Leninist "transmission belt" for indoctrination and mass mobilization (Kenez, 1985). Since its establishment 85 years ago, the CCP has viewed propaganda as education of the masses—a legitimate, proactive tool to be used for building the kind of society sought by the Party (Shambaugh, 2007). The underlying logic for this propaganda system is the belief that the sphere of ideas and their transmission is linked to the interests of one class or another and thus, in a socialist society, the transmission of ideas must be managed in the interests of the people.

1.1 Domestic Propaganda

Today, the Chinese propaganda machine is a vast and sophisticated system that is responsible for almost all aspects of life in China. At the center of this machine is the CCP's Central Propaganda Department. According to one CCP publication (1992, p. 676), the scope of propaganda oversight includes: "newspaper offices, radio stations, television stations, publishing houses, magazines, and other news and media departments; universities, middle schools, primary schools, and other vocational education, specialized education, cadre training, and other educational organs; musical troupes, theatrical troupes, film production studios, film theaters, drama theaters, clubs, and other cultural organs, literature and art troupes, and

cultural amusement parks; cultural palaces, libraries, remembrance halls, exhibition halls, museums, and other cultural facilities and commemoration exhibition facilities." In addition, hundreds of internal circulation papers and local gazetteers, over 400 million Internet users fall under the purview of the CPD. As the nerve center of this vast control system, the CPD supervises other government departments for propaganda purposes. The bureaucratic division of labor can be broken down as (Group, 2006):

Table 2 State Propaganda Systems

The State Council Information Office	Overall authority, monitoring the content of news nationwide.
The Ministry of Culture	Monitoring the art world, theater, literature, and museums.
The Ministry of Education	Monitoring curriculum and textbooks at all levels of the educational system.
The Ministry of Information Industry	Jointly responsible for monitoring and blocking electronic communications into China.
The Ministry of Public Security	
The Ministry of State Security	
The People's Liberation Army General Staff Department	Jamming satellite, short wave and other electronic broadcasts into China.
The PLA General Political Department	In charge of all propaganda work within the military.
The State Council General Administration of Press and Publications	Principally responsible for monitoring the publishing industry.
Xinhua News Agency	Propagating the Party line and filtering international news.
The State Internet Information Office	In charge of technical and political control of the Internet.

All these sprawling departments are under the supervision of the CPD, which was founded in 1922, only one year after the creation of the CCP. The CPD has its provincial, city and districts level branches all across China. According to Anne-

Marie Brady (2008), the CPD's work can be divided into three aspects: 1) overseeing all ideological work in China, 2) performing an overall policy-making role and helping to coordinate China's development strategy, and 3) managing the *nomenklatura* system for propaganda, culture, and education cadres as well as leading scholars and experts.

The CPD mainly uses oral and written directives to implement its "guidance" of public opinion. No one dares to disobey these directives, even though there is no legal framework giving CPD orders the official force of law. Rather, CPD censors operate in a gray area. In recent years, the CPD has become more likely to use oral communications in order not to leave any evidence of its activities (Brady, 2008).[41] These oral instructions are usually delivered in meetings between bureaucrats and leaders in the media and cultural sectors, or by phone calls to editors working in various media organizations. To further guarantee the control of information, the CPD has installed special liaisons in some key media organizations, such as Xinhua News Agency and CCTV, to "guide" the propaganda work. In the case of the *People's Daily*, the CPD goes so far as to directly draft editorials. Each week, the CPD meets to determine guidelines on media content. Themes and issues to be highlighted as well as those to be downplayed or erased are chosen by a work group of five to six CPD members. The output of each meeting includes a set of *tifa* (wording) and *koujing* (unified path). Any deviation from these language patterns may be a serious transgression.

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[41] There is no law in China that stipulates legal status of the CPD's directives. The CPD censors' orders are operating in an gray area.

For many years, the contents of CPD "guidelines" or "directives" were kept in the dark, as were the exact operational details of the CPD. Fortunately, this deliberate secrecy has been cracked by Xiao Qiang, a physicist turned activist based in Berkeley. A section of Xiao's website, *China Digital Times*, is dedicated to releasing actual CPD directives on a weekly basis. The directives are leaked to Xiao by free speech sympathizers who have access either to CPD weekly meetings or oral communications. For example, the directive on February 18, 2011 contains reporting regulations on the Middle East revolutions:

> *From the Central Propaganda Department: "Media reports on the current changing situation in the Middle East must use standard copy sources. Reports cannot have the word 'revolution' (geming). Regarding the reasons for the emergence of these mass protests, nothing can be reported regarding demands for democracy or increases in commodity prices. Reports also cannot draw connections between the political systems of Middle Eastern nations and the system in our country. In all media, when the names of the leaders of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and other countries are given, the names of Chinese leaders cannot appear next to them."[42]*

In another example:

> *From the State Council Information Office: "Please immediately remove all news related to 'leather milk' from the front pages of websites. Interactive*

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[42] http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2011/02/latest-directives-from-the-ministry-of-truth-february-17-21-2011/

spaces such as online forums, blogs, micro-blogs, and text messages are

forbidden from hyping and discussing this incident."

These directives cover such a wide scope of issues and themes that almost anything

related to a given news event could be considered "sensitive information" requiring

censorship. As the leaked directives demonstrate, CPD officials keep themselves

updated on international and domestic news while issuing oral instructions on a

daily basis.

1.2 External Propaganda

In addition to domestic propaganda, the CCP also dedicates resources to

external propaganda that targets an international audience. Such procedure is in

line with the CCP's long-term policy differentiating domestic and international

issues (*neiwai youbie*). External propaganda work is thus oriented towards four

principal missions: (1) to tell China's story to the world by publicizing the Chinese

government's policies and perspectives, and promoting Chinese culture abroad, (2)

to counter what is perceived to be hostile foreign propaganda (such as the so-called

"China threat theory"), (3) to counter Taiwan's aspirations for independence and

promote continued unification, and (4) to propagate China's foreign policy.[43]

Chinese and English-language coverage of the same events often contains major

differences, easily spotted by bilingual audiences.

In the early 1980s, the CCP began to set up separate organizations to

promote external propaganda through a variety of media, including international

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[43] See description of external propaganda priorities in Central Propaganda Department Cadre Bureau Writing Group, X*in shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, pp. 188-89.

broadcasts of Radio Beijing, Central People's Broadcasting System Taiwan and

Hong Kong services, CCTV broadcasting to Taiwan of Cross-Strait Voice (*Haixia*

zhisheng), publications such as the *People's Daily* foreign edition (*haiwai ban*),

China Today, Beijing Review, People's China, China Pictorial, China Daily, Voice of

China, the *Liaowang* weekly edition, and various publications of the Foreign

Languages Press (J. Zhang, 1997). Xinhua News Agency's International

Department is also actively involved in external propaganda work. Answering

President Hu Jintao's call for "strengthening external propaganda and promoting

national image,"[44] Xinhua News Agency launched its English-language TV service,

CNC World, in July 2010. According to Xinhua president Li Congjun, this 24-hour

news channel "will present an international vision with a China perspective. It will

broadcast news reports in a timely way and objectively and be a new source of

information for global audiences."[45] Even though the Chinese government has

poured billions of dollars into this new endeavor and set up an office in Times

Square, New York, the *Guardian* believes the effects will be limited because of

China's extensive censorship and the anchors' lackluster performances.[46]

Another prominent example of China's external propaganda was a series of

advertisements launched during President Hu's visit to the US in January 2011.

The campaign included a 60-second ad on a Times Square mega-screen, a 30-second

segment at Gallery Place, Washington DC (DC's "Chinatown," though it's a rather

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[44] http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2008-01/22/content_7476705.htm
[45] http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-07/01/c_13378575.htm
[46] http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/02/china-english-tv-news-channel-cnc-world

small one), and a series of 15-second advertisements airing on several news networks over a multi-week period. A host of Chinese celebrities, models, entrepreneurs, astronauts, and other household names appeared in these ads, standing and smiling at the camera with their names and significance to China written on the screen in English (Heselton, 2011). Even though the initial response within China was very critical, Heselton argues that this round of external propaganda offers something new because it shows "a greater understanding of the importance of manipulating a national image to gain favorable international support." He adds that the campaign "moves beyond hackneyed images of the Great Wall, quaint ethnic customs, or cuddly panda bears, but instead pushes a more modern depiction of the country and its people that places China in a light that Americans could find very familiar" (Heselton, 2011). This ad campaign was also a demonstration of the CPD's incorporation of PR strategies into external propaganda. Shambaugh (2007) indicates that, "progress has been made by Chinese propagandists and diplomats, but they still have a lot to learn about public relations and public diplomacy." We will definitely see more of these campaigns in the future.

As part of the huge investment in media development, the Chinese government has set up "International Communication Talent Pools" in three major national universities. Students are recruited for a two-year graduate program dedicated to international communication, and assigned to major Chinese media organizations upon graduation. During his stop at the Communication University of China, the

CCP's propaganda czar Li Changchun called the program "essential in elevating China's soft power."[47] Days after Li's visit, the students of this program were organized to visit Xibaipo, a CCP revolutionary base in Hebei Province, to receive "patriotic education."[48] Obviously, CCP leadership maintains firm ideological control of this program.

2. Audience Resistance

Despite the CPD's massive, all-pervasive propaganda efforts, Chinese audiences have various ways to subvert its intended effects. Stuart Hall offers a brilliant "encoding-decoding" model to explain how audiences in the pre-Internet era refuted, negotiated, and even reconstructed the meanings of media messages. According to Hall (2006), meaning is a social construction; to transmit and interpret messages requires a code. Hall focuses on the discursive form of meaning making and emphasizes that the meaning is actually made by the receiver. In Hall's view, the defining moment of communication is the moment of "decoding." He writes: "Before the message can have an effect, satisfy a need or be put to a use, it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this decoded meaning that has an effect with complex, perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological, or behavioral consequences" (p. 165)(p. 165)(p. 165)(p. 165)(p. 165) (p. 165). Hall identifies three hypothetical audience positions when decoding media messages. The first is a *dominant-hegemonic position*, which means that audience members totally accept whatever is coded into the message, allowing it to

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[47] http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/13516152.html
[48] http://news.cuc.edu.cn/shownews.jsp?newsid=11060

produce within them the dominant and hegemonic social values. The second is a *negotiated code position*, in which the audience partially acknowledges the legitimacy of hegemonic definitions while reserving the right to "decode" or interpret the message in its own way, according to its own rules. The last is an *oppositional code position*, which means the audience rejects the dominant encoding and finds an alternative frame of reference. More importantly, Hall notes, "Effects, uses and gratifications are framed by structures of understanding and produced by social and economic relations which shapes their realization and meaning." Hall's three-position proposal offers a relevant approach for examining audience interpretation and construction of meanings. Chapter Five will make use of this approach in further exploring audience frames.

With the advent of the Internet, Chinese audiences gained a powerful tool to directly counter state propagandists. But even though controlling the Internet is much harder than managing traditional media organizations, Chinese authorities exert a lot of influence over online communications. A sophisticated filtering system is in charge of deleting any "sensitive" words and phrases. A highly advanced firewall was established to block access to numerous foreign-based websites that publish "harmful information." Additionally, an Internet police force over 30,000 strong is employed to read web sites and and manually censor content. In May 2011, the Chinese government set up The State Internet Information Office, which brings all technological and political control of the Internet under one body.[49] Such

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[49] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13281200

intrusive censorship breeds resentment among netizens and inspires new forms of resistance in the struggle for greater freedom of information. Chinese netizens bring this "battle" to the arena of language, where CCP polices are often criticized in the form of political satire, jokes, songs, popular poetry, code words, mockery, and euphemisms (Xiao, 2010). For example, President Hu Jintao's policy proposal of "building a harmonious society" has long been construed as a negative term that implies state censorship. When something disappears from the Internet, netizens say that it has been "harmonized." The most recent example of semiotic resistance came in the form of online discussions about the 2011 Middle Eastern revolutions, in defiance of a CPD-ordered ban on the subject; users substituted one of the main "sensitive" keywords (埃及, *Aiji,* meaning "Egypt") with a clever homophone that would escape deletion (爱鸡, *Aiji*, a nonsense word combining the characters for "love" and "chicken").

Over the years, scholars have observed that the efficacy of Party propaganda is declining due to commercialization and the multiplication of new media technologies and their applications (J. Campbell, 2000; Li, 1990, 2000; Lynch, 1999). However, others argue that the Party propaganda system has been revitalized and is fully capable of shaping public opinion through media content (Brady, 2008; Esarey, 2005; Shambaugh, 2007). I agree with the latter view. The commercialization of Chinese media does not significantly detract from the government's propaganda activities; on the contrary, propaganda funding is always guaranteed because the CPD is the most extensive and important of all CCP

agencies (Brady, 2008). Even though Internet applications such as Weibo have mounted tremendous pressure and challenged the Party monopoly on information, the CPD has always found a way to manage online content, whether by regulating/co-opting the largest provider (Sina) or by hiring a massive "fifty-cent army" to flood the web with pro-government comments. As a matter of fact, national ideology and propaganda are among the few key sectors still under full sway of the CCP, and thus constitute the life blood (*shengming xian*) of the Party State. In addition to adapting to the new social and technological situation, the state also employs the methodologies of political public relations, mass communications, political communication, and other modern mass persuasion techniques commonly utilized by Western democracies (Brady, 2008). The national image advertisement is one such case.

As the discussion above demonstrates, Chinese media have a unique national context, but have also integrated into the international media scene and global capitalism. Zhao (2003) identifies China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the key moment: One of the far-reaching impacts of China's WTO membership is the scope and depth of transnational media operations in the Chinese market. The Chinese government has introduced and allowed many media practices that are originally from the West. However, the Party's accommodation doesn't mean it loses control over the media industry in China. Although the commercial aspects of many Chinese media organizations today are not that different from their Western counterparts, Zhao argues that China's media system

under market logic has taken the form of "bureaucratic monopoly capitalism" (2003, p. 62); the dominant positions in this system have been assumed by transnational businesspeople, domestic economic and political elites, and the largely urban middle class. This "neo-authoritarian market ideological hegemony" has repressed, marginalized, and contained China's popular class in mass media (Y. Zhao, 2003, p. 63). Given that China's media industry has become an integral part of the global capitalist system, just focusing on the uniqueness of China's media landscape (i.e., prevalent state propaganda and control) is far from adequate. Also, ethnic minorities in China are among the various groups marginalized by mass media. Thus, it is indispensible to tap into the vast literature of Western media theories, derived from Western social contexts and media practices but rich in insights relevant to Chinese media studies.

3. Ethnicity and Media

We live in a rapidly-changing world, where almost every individual uses mass media to understand events, developments, peoples, conflicts, and cultures beyond his or her own experience. Among the many impressions we get from mass media is a feel for what to consider the most salient issues of the day (M. McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). Gitlin (1980) emphasizes that mass media are a significant social force in the forming and delimiting of public assumptions, attitudes, and moods. He writes that "mass media have become core systems for the redistribution of ideology" (p. 2) (p. 2) (p. 2) (p. 2) (p. 2) (p. 2). by normally and regularly "selecting certain versions of reality over others." Similarly, media representations of ethnicities do not provide an objective mirror for reality, but rather a manufactured

reality, designed and produced for the interests of the dominant social group. All mediated news is therefore a constructed reality as well.

Professionals in the business of creating media products commonly use techniques such as exclusion, stereotyping, and themes that mask racism while celebrating a dominant ideology in ethnic-minorities-related media coverage in the U.S. (Larson, 2006). A number of studies examine these techniques. For example, Christopher Campbell (1995) analyzed forty hours of programming from twenty-eight local news stations across the US; he found that hard news stories ignored issues concerning minority communities and individuals, and that minorities were rarely quoted as news sources. When minorities were the focus of soft news, the emphasis was on the novelty and flair of their festivals, celebrations, rituals, and clothing (D. Heider, 2000). It is believed that such repeated images trivialize minorities and contribute to a sense of "otherness." According to Mary Ann Weston (1996), stereotypes have become subtler, but continue to flourish in "what stories are selected, the prevalence of minorities in certain types of stories, or in the way a sentence or headline is phrased." She argues that journalism practices have thus reinforced rather than challenged stereotypes on minorities, perpetuating a generic image of a group for all its members. In terms of system supportive themes Larson (2006) suggests that news about racial minorities is paradoxical in that it tells white audiences both "they are just like you" and " they are different from you." Minorities are presented so as to suggest that the system works for them, as long as they work hard, play by the rules, and assimilate. Larson and Bailey (1998) find in

media representations a message that "The American Dream" is realized by various individuals through hard work and their ability to "pick themselves up by their bootstraps" and "go from rags to riches." The success of these people is living proof that society is fair and open, allowing everyone to prosper. These achievements also demonstrate that assimilation is agreeable: "Those who escape their destined place are not a threat to society because they manifest the same values and ambitions as the dominant culture and overcome the deficits of their home communities" (Wilson & Gutiérrez, 1995).

Larson (2006) identifies several factors that lead to biased coverage of racial minorities in news coverage. The first factor lies in the business nature of the news industry. In order to sell advertising space during news broadcasts, producers must attract and cater to the needs of majority audiences to whom advertisers wish to target. Thus, there is an economic incentive to ignore minority audiences who lack purchasing power while presenting coverage that appeals to the more financially prosperous majority group. Second, mass media tend to broadcast "easy" stories (e.g., stereotypical portrayals) due to time and resource limits; this leads to simplified portrayals of minorities, lacking depth and comprehensiveness. Mass media also tend to rely on the government for "authoritative sources" seen as credible, important, and accessible. Thus, the news media are generally involved in shaping and reflecting "the dominant notion of what is significant" and participating in "the ongoing process of constructing a dominant ideology" (Erjavec, 2001). Meanwhile, audience members often regard the dominant ideology expressed

in news as normal and something to be taken-for-granted, even as ethnic minority groups are portrayed within shallow, stereotypical categories (Gardikiotis, Martin, & Hewstone, 2004). Speaking of American society, Gans (1979) points out that coverage of those small number of people in positions of authority promotes American values of individualism, capitalism, and nationalism. The third factor is the role of new organizations with regard to the representation. Lance Bennett (2007) suggests that news organizations translate the complex and multi-voiced reality of our times into a symbolic realm of simpler and fewer voices; this process happens in specific ways according to the organization's own values and priorities. Although the points above concern representations of ethnicities in the West, they are relevant to ethnic minorities in China as well. The Chinese media system has been undergoing reform for decades and in many ways resembles its Western counterparts. Next I will go over the theoretical constructs of Western media effects research.

4. Media Effects Theory

As mass media engage in the ideological work of representing minority groups, they have a tremendous impact on audiences. A number of communication theories are available in helping explain media's influence/effects on audiences and audience response to media messages. The first important theoretical construct relevant to media influence on audience attitude is agenda setting theory. In their pioneering study on political communication, McCombs and Shaw (1972) examine the influence of media campaigns on individual choice. They suggest that media's agenda-setting function means that the press "may not be successful much

of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling

its readers what to think *about."* They argue that there is a strong correlation

between the emphases that mass media place on certain issues and the importance

attributed to these issues by audiences. One concept closely related to agenda

setting is priming, which refers to "changes in the standards that people use to

make political evaluations" (S. Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). While agenda setting

focuses on the salience of a certain issue and the subsequent importance of it in

audience members' minds, priming has to do with how the news distributes

responsibility for the problem or situation in question. This type of information

impacts audience perception of the cause of problem. Priming occurs when news

content suggests to news audiences that they ought to use specific issues as

benchmarks for evaluating the performance of leaders and governments. It is often

understood as an extension of agenda setting.

However, both agenda setting and priming are based on the theoretical

premise of *salience*. This theoretical foundation can be traced back to psychological

concepts of priming in work on the cognitive processing of semantic information. By

receiving and processing information, individuals develop memory traces (Shue,

2004) or activation tags, as described by (Said, 1979): "When a concept is primed,

activation tags are spread. . . . When another concept is subsequently presented, it

has to make contact with one of the tags left earlier and find an intersection." The

concepts of traces and tags were later replaced by the construct of accessibility. The

idea of accessibility is the foundation of a memory-based model of information

processing, which assumes that individuals make judgments about other people or issues based on information easily available and retrievable from memory at the time the question is asked (Downing, 1996). According to Scheufele (2000), mass media can influence the salience of certain issues as perceived by the audience; that is, media affects the ease with which these issues can be retrieved from memory. As hypothesized in the priming model, perceived issue salience becomes the independent variable and influences the role that these issues or considerations play when an individual makes a judgment about certain issues presented in media. Given the complexities of mass media and audiences jointly constructing reality, Scheufele (2000) further argues that research on agenda setting and priming as media effects can be classified along two dimensions. First, agenda setting needs to be examined across levels of analysis; that is, both in terms of media agendas and audience agendas. Second, agenda setting needs to be examined as both an independent and dependent variable. Both agenda setting and priming affect how minorities are represented and evaluated. When media consumers who have no personal access to minority populations are exposed to portrayals of minorities, these media images or stereotypes are particularly credible. Oscar Gandy (1998) points out that minority status makes every minority person a representative of his or her race. In other words, a few media-favored members of a given ethnicity can come to represent the whole group in the eyes of non-minority audiences. In addition, the salience of certain minority issues in media affects audience perception of minority society in general. Priming affects how minorities are

evaluated. Shanto Iyengar (1991) believes that media stories about minorities tend to discourage progressive political solutions by focusing on individuals and their problems rather than social and institutional structures; such stories prime audiences to hold the individual responsible for his or her difficulties.

Another popular theory, closely related to agenda setting and priming, is framing. McCombs (1994, p. 37) has suggested that "framing is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed." Entman (2009, p. 53) argues that 'to frame is to "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described." Entman (2007) believes that textual framing (e.g., as seen in speeches, presentations, etc.) is the means by which political actors influence the agendas and considerations that people adopt. He defines salience as "making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences" (Thussu, 2009). An increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will see the information, process it (i.e., discern meaning), and store it in memory (Dru C. Gladney, 2004). Pan and Kosicki (1993) point out that framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences. Through repetition, placement and reinforcement, the texts and images that constitute the

frame provide a dominant interpretation more readily perceivable, acceptable, and memorable than other interpretations (Finley, 2007).

Framing is theoretically premised on attribution. In his work on attribution theory, Heider (1930) assumed that human beings can not understand the world in all its complexity. Therefore the individual tries to infer underlying causal relations from sensory information. Drawing on Heider's distinction between societal and individual attributions of responsibility, Iyengar (1991) argued that people try to make sense of political issues by reducing them to questions of responsibility. In other words, responsibility for social issues or problems can be framed as individual responsibility or the responsibility of society at large. In Goffman's seminal work (1974, p. 21), he maintains that people all actively classify, organize and interpret their life experiences to make sense of them, and the "schemata of interpretation" enable individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label." Framing is based on the assumption that subtle changes in the wording of the description of a situation might affect how audience members interpret this situation. In other words, framing influences how audiences think about issues, not by making aspects of the issue more salient, but by invoking interpretive schemas that influence the interpretation of incoming information (Ma, 2000).

While acknowledging that framing is not likely to have universal effect on all people, Entman (2009) argues that the frame determines whether most people notice and how they understand and remember a problem, as well as how they evaluate and choose to act upon it. In addition, he suggests that frames are defined

by not only what are salient, but also by what are omitted, and the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience.

Framing can be broken down into media frames and audience frames Tankard et al. (1998) have described a media frame as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration." Gitlin (1980) argues that media frames are the reflection of the dominant ideology of the audience and power structure. Recent research also suggests that "framing is a strategic action in a discursive form. It involves political actors making sense of an issue and participating in public deliberation… and is a discursive means to achieve political potency in influencing public deliberation" (Z. Pan, 2001). *Audience frames* are defined as "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information" (Thussu, 2009, p. 53).

The concept of framing is so closely related to agenda setting and priming that some scholars even define framing as an extension of agenda setting (Y. Zhao, 2009). However, as Scheufele (2000; 1999) pointed out, framing differs from agenda setting, priming, and other media effects theories because its theoretical premises are linked to social psychology theories such as attribution. From this perspective, framing underlies the construction of social reality through a process model that involves frame building, frame setting, individual-level processes of framing, and a feedback loop from audiences to journalists. In order for news coverage to have a

frame-setting effect, it is necessary for the coverage to pass a threshold in which the media frames may rise above the buzz of competing media messages and directly impact audience frames and subsequent assignment of attribution (Ma, 2000). Weaver (1994) has a similar view that "framing does seem to include a broader range of cognitive processes—such as moral evaluations, causal reasoning, appeals to principles, and recommendations for treatment of problems—than does second-level agenda setting (the salience of attributes of an object)." Thus, framing is a more sophisticated theory for examining media effects on audience.

For minority audiences, consuming state media content is the only way to learn how the nation's majority Han Chinese perceive them. Observing what is highlighted and omitted in media coverage is essential for their understanding of state policy and the social environment. Thus, framing, as compared to other media effects theories, offers the most relevant theoretical perspective for examining both the media representation of Uyghurs and Uyghur audience responses to / interpretation of the framing presented in state media. This dissertation builds on Scheufele's process model of framing, but will not examine all framing processes. Rather, the analysis will focus on the process of "framing setting" and "the individual level of consequences." Chapter Four and Chapter Five are dedicated to media frames and audience frames, with attributions of causal responsibility addressed in each of these two chapters.

5. Representation of Uyghurs

Representation is an essential part of understanding a culture. Stuart Hall (Ma, 2000, p. 23) believes that representation is the production of meaning through

language, a "process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture." Modern mass media play the key role of producing these representations and relaying them to every corner of the world. But the meanings created in this way are limited by the fact that representations are always imperfect and selective. According to Paul Rabinow (1997), representations are manifestations of (and are *manifested in*) knowledge, values, beliefs, social hierarchies, and justifications of the wider society. As such, representations have become "social facts." Thus, media representation (i.e., state-produced imagery of Uyghurs) is crucial to *Minkaohan* Uyghurs' understanding of themselves. It also shapes how China's majority Han population perceives Uyghurs.

When it comes to ethnic identification and categorization, the Chinese approach is based on Fei Xiaotong's (1986) *duoyuan yiti geju* (pluralistic unitary structure). The point of this interpretation is to subjugate ethnic minority identities to an overarching and honorable identity of the Chinese nation (1992). Thus, in Chinese state media representation, scholars (Z. Zhao & Postiglione, 2010) suggest that minorities are most frequently depicted as primitives afflicted by pathologies such as poverty, illiteracy, and superstitions. In his study of the *Chinese Nationalities* Magazine*,* Dru Gladney (Blum, 2001; Harrell, 1995) finds that female dancers represented fifty-three out of fifty-five minority groups. By "equating minorities with the 'weaker' gender, these characterizations serve to reinforce a perception of these groups as subordinate" (p. 97). Gladney (1999) further suggests that this representation of "modern" and "educated" Han vs. "backward minorities"

derives from China's continued commitment in its social science to the study of minorities as "living fossils" who shed light on the origins of "primitive communism." Thus, the Han, as representatives of those at the "higher" end of development, are defined as the cultural and technological vanguard, "leading the manifest destiny of all the minorities" (1994) (1994) (1994) (1994) (1994) (p. 58). More specifically, Gladney indicates that Muslims in China are often portrayed as "exotic and even eroticized in the public media even though Muslims are generally much more conservative socially and morally." As Gladney rightly points out, "For most Han Chinese, who have never darkened the door of a mosque and have learned little about Islam in public schools, this representation in the public sphere is their only exposure to knowledge about Islam in China or Muslim identities" (p. 58) (p. 58) (p. 58) (p. 58) (p. 58) (p. 58). Given the fact that non-Muslims in China are not allowed to enter the mosque, media representations have become the most potent force in shaping the image of Muslims and Islam in China.

In Matthew Hoddie's (p. 64) examination of the *People's Daily*, he demonstrates a relationship between periods of heightened interethnic tensions and greater levels of official media attention to minority groups. In other words, the state media pays more attention to ethnic minorities during times of crisis such as minority-centered protests and violence. Based on content analysis, Hoddie argues that the state's favored propaganda tactic when confronting ethnic-based resistance movements is to emphasize the economic and social benefits enjoyed by minorities under the leadership of the CCP.

Drawing upon Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*, Louisa Schein (2006) finds that the "*internal orientalism*" in Chinese media is the reason for a resurgence of interest in the exoticized minority "Other." According to Said (1997), orientalism is productive: it generates ideas and statements that constitute a hegemonic description of the object. Those represented are rendered mute while the culture of the producers "gains in strength and identity" by contrasting with the Other as a "sort of surrogate and underground self." Shein proposed "*internal orientialism*" to describe a relation between imaging and cultural/political domination that takes place inter-ethnically within China. In this light, Uyghurs in state media are usually portrayed as a happy group who are good at singing and dancing. The media representation of Uyghurs also features unique Uyghur traditions, colorful dress, and a variety of local fruits. All these features are part of an "orientalist agent" that engages in domestic othering.

Such "*internal orientalism*" may serve the needs of the government by consolidating the dominant status of Han Chinese and reinforcing the Party's argument that minorities, being "less advanced," will benefit from belonging to the Chinese nation. A further analysis by Ann Anagnost (1978, p. 3) suggests that the Party's image manipulation is meant to represent itself as a "modern, activist state opposed to all that is irrational, traditional and local." In contrast, Colin Mackerras (1994, p. 229) argues that Chinese authorities do not inhibit ethnic minorities' cultural representation, but rather, they produce selective representations meant to support harmony and national integration. But in recent years, this happy

portrayal of the Uyghur has increasingly given way to representations associated

with terrorism and extremism. The 9/11 attacks have been significant for Muslims

all around the world; when the United States rallied international support to

combat Islamic fundamentalism, China was part of this campaign. The Chinese

government published a report in January 2002 detailing the threat that China

faced from terrorists. It particularly emphasized the close link between Osama bin

Laden and an organization called the "East Turkistan Islamic Movement."[50] China's

report claimed that Al Qaeda had "given much financial and material aid to the

'East Turkistan' terrorists."[51] The U.S. State Department listed the ETIM as a

terrorist organization in 2002,[52] but later removed it.[53] The term Uyghur has been

linked to international terrorism ever since.

In the wake of China's deadliest ethnic riot in July 2009, the Chinese

government blamed the exiled Rebya Kadeer and her "World Uyghur Congress" for

inciting the violence in Urumqi.[54] But domestically, China Central Television

(CCTV) unveiled a series of interviews with Uyghur politicians, scholars, artists,

musicians, dancers, and others. These interviews were aired in prime time on

CCTV's News Channel. This was a positive first step in introducing the rich Uyghur

history, culture, and tradition to national audiences, and might have the potential

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[50] Gladney (1995) estimated that there were at least twenty-five separatist organizations at the time working for an independent "East Turkestan Republic."

[51] China, State Council, Information Office. (n.d.). *East Turkistan" Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away With Impunity*. Retrieved December 12, 2009, from http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/fk/t28938.htm

[52] Fletcher, H., & Bajoria, J. (2008, July 31). *The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)* (Rep.). Retrieved December 12, 2009, from Council on Foreign Relations website: http://www.cfr.org/publication/9179/

[53] http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm

[54] http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/k/rebiya_kadeer/index.html

to break the shackles of "internal Orientalism." However, these interviews were still far from enough for comprehensive and equal treatment in media; they were concentrated in July and August only, and could easily be interpreted as the state's knee-jerk response to the riot.

6.Western Theories and Chinese Context

The effects theories discussed above are all products of Western academic traditions which in recent years have received increasing criticism for being applied in non-Western contexts. After all, Western social conditions, on which popular media effects theories are based, do not represent those in developing and transitional societies. For example, John Downing (1996) has criticized the attempts to universalize the experience of the UK and US, as if those affluent and stable democracies are representative of the world. UK communication scholar Daya Thussu (2009) is calling for "internationalizing media studies" because the process of globalization demands us to move our focus from the vertical integration of national societies to the transnational integration of media and communication processes, institutions and audiences. Thussu also identifies the impact of the digital revolution. He suggests "the Web 2.0 and the blogosphere, with its 'citizen journalists' and activists, are challenging the notion of editorial gatekeeping and bringing hitherto neglected or under-reported issues into the public discourse (p. 4). Thussu's argument brings to the fore an important dimension of media studies in the 21st century: new media. Digital technologies have fundamentally changed the way people communicate, organize, and interact. This change has to be reflected in the study of both national and international media.

When it comes to Chinese media studies, Eric Kit-wai Ma (2000) has an incisive piece on how China is different from the West and why western theory can and cannot apply to the Chinese context. According to Ma, the most distinguishable characteristic of the Chinese media in the 1990s is the tension between rapid commercialization and continued ideological control. In other words, media organizations have to both serve political purposes and make a profit to sustain themselves. Due to this "duality of political and commercial imperatives, journalists constantly test the boundaries of their organizations " (p. 19). Journalists sometimes faithfully carry on the Party line, but sometimes ignore official directives. Then how do we conceptualize Chinese media systems? If we follow critical media theories, we would see media as ideological agents that are reproducing and reinforcing dominant ideologies and social relations. But Chinese media are now in the market. They are still under the control of the state, but they have much more leeway than they did 30 years ago to shape their form and their content. If we take a liberalist stand, which argues that market competition is the change agent that promotes diversity and checks state power, then Chinese media are not operating in a pure capitalist market. Media's potential as a forum for free expression has been severely curbed by rampant Party censorship. As Ma suggested, media analysts in China face a different type of political-economic situation, "in which the Chinese state continues to play a constitutive role in media dynamics" (p. 22). Thus neither critical nor liberalist perspectives on media can be copied and pasted to fit the Chinese situation. Jing Wang (1998) argues that to

understand media in China, we need a "duel recognition that neither the state nor the market is external to each other. The development of the market with the blessing of the state is constructing a hybrid of overt conflicts but structural coexistence between the two." Specifically, Ma believes that this state-market complex "works in and through the media to form a contingent and shifting alliance for winning popular support, and the state consolidates power by promoting consumer culture" (Ma, 2000, p. 23). Thus, it is unrealistic to position Chinese media and the government in opposition to one another. Since it is difficult to separate Chinese media from the government, then how do we see Chinese audiences? As discussed in section four, Chinese audiences have demonstrated a tremendous level of agency and consciousness in deconstructing the state discourse. Those phenomena seem like a perfect fit for the "active audience," which both culturalists and liberalists celebrate as an example of resistance against strong media influence. While recognizing the applicability of "active audience" in China, Ma reminds us that this notion is only partly true in China and should not be taken as a "romanticized notion of audience power and autonomy" because "Chinese audiences are more skeptical reading political news, but more receptive when consuming entertainment contents" (p. 25). In general, Ma doesn't argue for the complete abandonment of Western theories. Instead, he argues for modification and adaptation of existing theories to fit more accurately the Chinese context.

While Ma focuses on what Western communication theories do and do not apply in the Chinese context. Zhao (2009) is calling for a general shift in Chinese

media studies. Zhao contextualizes Chinese media in the overall Chinese reform process, which is a neo-liberal capitalist reform. She suggests that the study of Chinese media censorship needs to be placed "not only in the context of the Chinese state's role in containing popular and anti-imperialist nationalistic sentiments and disciplining Chinese laborers for transnational capitalistic production, but also within the context of the unfinished ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism" (p. 177). Zhao tries to redefine "agency" because it is inadequate to retain the construction of Western-style "media consumer", "the public", and "the audience," in light of the widening social divisions in Chinese society. "It is important to pay attention to the everyday communicative practices of China's subaltern social classes, and the ways these subaltern Chinese social forces have managed to communicate their struggles with, and often without, the state-controlled, market-driven, and increasingly globalized media system" (p. 184). Zhao is well aware of various blind spots in Chinese communication studies, which include the formation of class-consciousness, agency, subjectivity, and communicative needs and practices of farmers and workers. She doesn't mention China's ethnic minority population here, but she does point out that "modernization and globalization will not do away with the human need for collective belonging and 'communities of memory' that allow people to make sense of their history, their place in the world, and their future"(p. 187). This is a useful and correct observation about Uyghurs in Xinjiang. This dissertation is one effort as such to examine the communicative needs and practices of one of the subaltern groups in China—ethnic

Uyghurs. In the next chapter, I will examine the methodologies that I use for this

dissertation.

Chapter III: Methodology

I will introduce two main methods that I used for this research: content analysis and in-depth interview. As I will demonstrate, these two methods fit the best for the purpose of this dissertation and the context in Xinjiang. Each method was given one section in this chapter, and the discussion follows "sampling", "data collection", and "analysis plan" for each method.

1. Quantitative content analysis

According to Ole Holsti (1969), content analysis is "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages." The assumption behind quantitative content analysis is that the words and phrases repeated most often reflect the content producers' biggest concern Given the prevalence of news media in Urumqi (State TV, newspapers, and near-universal Internet access), as well as the vital importance of news messages to *Minkaohan* Uyghurs, content analysis was a logical choice for this research. The diverse array of Chinese-language television news programs/articles offer Uyghur representations that are important to analyze not only because they reflect the government's attitudes and policies toward Uyghurs, but also because they play a key role in Uyghurs' self-perception as well as Han perception of Uyghurs. Thus, there is potentially an impact on ethnic relations between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. To investigate the representation of Uyghurs, I conducted a quantitative content analysis on four state newspapers (two national-level and two local) to see how Uyghurs were framed (Media Frames).

1.1 Sampling

Klaus Krippendorff (2004) outlines six questions that must be addressed in every content analysis: 1. Which data are analyzed? 2. How are they defined? 3. What is the population from which they are drawn? 4. What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed? 5. What are the boundaries of the analysis? 6. What is the target of the inferences?

Following Krippendorff's questions, four state newspapers were selected for this content analysis: two national-level newspapers (the *People's Daily* and *China Daily*) and two local newspapers (the *Xinjiang Daily* and the *Xinjiang Metropolis Daily*).[55] The *People's Daily* is the official paper of the CCP with an average nationwide monthly distribution of 2.31 million in 2008,[56] a number generated mainly through obligatory subscription by various party organs. The tone and wording of the *People's Daily* usually serves as a political barometer for Chinese people to measure their country's political atmosphere. Party officials look to the *People's Daily* for guidance about how shifting political currents might affect their career prospects. The views presented in the newspaper are thus reinforced by the actions and statements of Party officials throughout the country, and the impact of the *People's Daily* has the potential to be felt well beyond its immediate readership (Hoddie, 2006). *China Daily*, the leading English-language newspaper in China, was included because of its international standing and because we can use it to differentiate between the CCP's internal and external communication strategies.

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[55] Both of these two local papers are introduced in chapter one.

[56] http://guide.ppsj.com.cn/art/1186/fxlhyczdjmrmrbdttsccx/

China Daily was launched in 1980 as the English voice of the Chinese government and was printed in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, New York, San Francisco, and London. *China Daily* is the only national English-language newspaper and is the national government's main means of articulating and reflecting on state foreign policy (Stone, 1994). Several notable differences between the two newspapers also contribute to the selection for this analysis. First, *China Daily* is an English newspaper that targets international audiences, whereas the *People's Daily* is a Chinese-language paper that focuses on Chinese readers. The different audiences may generate different framing and agenda setting strategies in the daily operations of these papers. When it comes to the nationwide newspaper, the goal is to see how Uyghurs are presented to readers within China. This part of the analysis will help answer the question: Does the state media present the same picture of Uyghurs to a domestic audience as it does to an international audience?

1.2 Data Collection

Uyghurs have been represented in PRC media for six decades. As it was beyond the scope of this research to sample all articles published on Uyghurs since the founding of the PRC, I chose to focus on media representations of Uyghurs since 2001. Many scholars (Bovingdon, 2010; Dru C. Gladney, 2003; Israeli, 2010; Millward, 2004, 2007) argue that the Chinese government has been using the U.S.' s "War on Terror" as a pretext for a harsh crackdown on Uyghur separatists, lumping all known or unknown Uyghur dissident organizations under one umbrella group called the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement." In light of this shift in China's policy on Uyghurs, the purpose of the content analysis is to examine the

representation of Uyghurs in State newspapers after 9/11. A composite period was

constructed for the comparison consists of four time periods. I conducted a search

with "Uyghur" as the keyword in *China Daily* and the *People's Daily* databases

(CNKI) from 2002-2007. The selection of this seven-year period for analysis was

based on my judgment that these were ordinary times,[57] whereas the years 2008,

2009 and 2010 had seen the outbreak of a major ethnic conflict and a series of

traumatic events in the aftermath of the July 5th, 2009 riot in Urumqi. Media

always chase dramatic events such as war, hunger, disaster, etc. The minority

population of Uyghurs in far western China doesn't garner much attention from

media in ordinary times. However, Uyghurs were brought into the limelight in July

2009 due to the riot. To analyze Uyghur representation during the years that

Uyghurs became the center of news coverage, I selected two local newspapers in

addition to two national newspapers for content analysis. A three-month period

(July, August, and September) was selected for 2008, 2009 and 2010, in order to

examine the representation of Uyghurs before, during and after the riot in 2009 and

at the riot's one-year anniversary. The rationale behind the national/local

differentiation is that it will help demonstrate differences in representations of

Uyghurs that emerged at both national and local levels of news production. In

particular, local newspapers are expected to have more coverage on Uyghurs since

Uyghurs are part of their target audience. It can be expected that the Uyghur-

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[57] Bovingdon (2010) demonstrates that the armed/violent resistance has never ceased throughout
the history of the PRC, but most of the conflicts and clashes never made it into the headlines.
Therefore, I treat the period between 2002 and 2008 as relatively peaceful times in comparison to the
riot on July 5, 2009 and the tense one-year anniversary in 2010.

related coverage will be concentrated in 2008, 2009 and 2010. The selection of front-page articles has its limitations in that some stories may not be the best choice to feature on the front-page all the time, such as traffic conditions, historical studies, and many cultural performances. I am aware of this problem and will increase the number of articles from more pages in the follow-up to this research.

1.3 Analysis Plan

The content analysis will compare representation in ordinary times (2002-2007) with crisis times (2008/2009/2010). The results of content analysis will give us reliable information on how Uyghurs are represented, and demonstrate what type of media content *Minkaohan* Uyghurs are consuming in their everyday lives. The next part of the analysis will be to hear what Uyghurs actually say about those representations.

2. In-depth Interviews

Interviews are particularly well suited to understanding a social actor's experience, knowledge, and worldview. In discussion, the researcher can probe deeply and broadly into subjective realities. In-depth interviewing is one of the preeminent methods in communications studies (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). If, as Heron observed in 1981, the meaning of being human is the ability to symbolize experience through language, then to understand human behavior means to understand the use of language. Thus, "interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry" (Seidman, 1991, p. 2). Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher defines a purpose for the conversations and then finds potential interviewees whose responses will help achieve this purpose. Sometimes, researchers allow interviewees

to lead the interaction, giving them space to reveal their inner thoughts. The basic assumption of in-depth interviews is that the meaning people make of their experiences affects the ways in which they define themselves. The point of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, but to understand the interviewee's experience and the meaning he or she makes of it. In this sense, interviewing enables researchers to gather information about things or processes that cannot be observed effectively by other means. In particular, this research uses the "informant interview" and "respondent interview, which means that interviewees were selected based on their knowledge and experience. My purpose was to determine how *Minkaoahan* interpret state representations of Uyghurs (Audience Frames).

To study *Minkaohan* Uyghurs' response to state representations, a sample survey is a statistically reliable method to use. However, given Xinjiang's political atmosphere, Uyghurs are reluctant to respond to this topic in writing because they could be traced. It is reasonable to believe that if a questionnaire was distributed, I would only receive politically correct answers. Additionally, the government might intervene at some point and confiscate all of the questionnaires. Therefore, the idea of a sample survey was rejected for this dissertation research. Instead, I adopt in-depth interviews to try to understand *Minkaohan* Uyhgurs' meaning-making practices in their daily lives.

2.1 Interview Subject (Sampling)

As I have learned from media studies, audiences are by no means passive vessels waiting for the media's injection of information. They have their own

initiative and agency to selectively interpret and even rebuild media messages. I have to listen to what audience members actually say in order to better evaluate the effect of state media messages. I conducted 38 interviews in total, 18 Uyghurs and 20 Han Chinese. All Uyghur respondents come from a unique sub-group among Uyghurs, *Minkaohan*, who are educated in Mandarin schools. They speak and write perfect Chinese and are heavy consumers of Chinese-language media. The Uyghur interviews concentrate on how respondents react to Uyghur representation in state media (TV and newspaper). They were also asked to differentiate between Uyghur imagery on traditional media (TV and newspaper) and the Internet, and why any such difference exists. The interviews with Han respondents target their perception of Uyghurs and particularly the influence of state-produced Uyghur imagery on their perception. I selected Han respondents based on occupation, hoping this will reflect a wide spectrum of Han understanding.

In 2007, a young Uyghur intellectual based in Kashgar set up a BBS forum (www.xjmkh.com.cn) intended for all *Minkaohan* Uyghurs both within and outside of Xinjiang. The forum was mostly populated by *Minkaohan* Uyghurs, but it also included *Minkaokan* from other ethnic minorities and Han users. As of July 2009, when the Internet in Xinjiang was unplugged, the forum had over 5,000 registered users, and some of its postings were translated into English by China blogs in the West. I have been personally involved in this BBS since 2008 as an active reader and contributor. As mentioned above, *Minkaohan* Uyghurs are relatively better off economically and thus have more free time after work to actively engage in online

debates and discussions on issues related to ethnicity, religion, and culture. In fact, the different sections offered in the forum cover a wide array of topics, and it is not unusual to see an original posting attract hundreds of replies within 24 hours. Meanwhile, due to the lack of means and channels of expression offline, Uyghurs' expression online is a reflection of and response to what they have learned/consumed, accepted, or rejected from the state media that have played a dominant role in shaping public opinion for decades.

2.2 Data Collection

All of my *Minkaohan* respondents are registered users of this BBS. I conducted field research (five months) in 2009 and 2010. I did my first field research in July and August of 2009, right in the immediate aftermath of the riot. Even though I wanted to travel to other parts of the region when in Xinjiang, the situation remained unstable throughout July and August. In the end, I had to abandon my plan of traveling and stay in Urumqi to interview as many people as I could. The trip in 2009 was my pre-dissertation research, which laid the foundation of this analysis. My second fieldwork trip took place in the summer of 2010. From May to August, I travelled to six cities/prefectures across Xinjiang: Karamay, Aksu, Bortala, Ili, Kashgar, and Urumqi. I interviewed 18 *Minkaohan* Uyghurs and 20 Han Chinese. The fieldwork started with two interviews with the founder of the BBS in Kashgar. The first interview was on his rationale and ideology in establishing the forum, and the second was on him as an ordinary user and his responses to the state media representation of Uyghurs.

All other Uyghur respondents for interviews were readers and/or writers for the *Xinjiang Minkaohan Forum* www.xjmkh.com.cn. Two sampling methods were applied. First, I already had several Uyghur friends who were regular users of the BBS. With them as the core respondent group, snowball sampling was employed: I asked them to introduce other respondents to me. Second, the founder of the BBS, who knows most of the active users, randomly introduced me to respondents he knew. Interestingly, more female respondents than male who were contacted accepted my request for an interview; I had easier access to women than men. My respondents were college professors, businesspeople, government employees, doctors, former police officers, state-owned enterprise (SOE) managers, and teachers, all in their early-30s to mid-40s. During the fieldwork, my respondents volunteered to introduce me to more *Minkaohan* Uyghurs from broader social sectors, such as media practitioners, drivers, security guards, oil field workers, etc. Although these connections may bring respondents for my future research, this project did not include *Minkaohan* Uyghurs who were not members of the BBS Forum.

All my interviews were open-ended with about nineteen questions (or interview guides)[58] and usually lasted 60-90 minutes; *probes* were used to generate more detail. Questions were selected with the intention of revealing *Minkaohan* Uyghurs' deeper thoughts on issues that this dissertation focuses on. During the interviews, I started with Question One and asked all of the questions in that order.

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[58] Interview questions are listed in Appendix

All interviews were recorded with an electronic voice recorder. Most respondents who accepted my request were initially hesitant to be recorded. They openly expressed concerns about the content of my interview and the safety of the recordings. To address their concerns, I showed them the HRC (Human Research Committee) Approval and gave each of them a copy of the HRC consent form, which lists the measures I must take to protect the data as well as contact information for the HRC at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The HRC document was crucial in easing their concerns; some of the respondents said to me, "Well, I will let you record since you have this (HRC Approval)." Apart from the University documents, I explicitly told them they had the right to reject any questions that they believed were harmful to their employment and normal life. Most of my interviews were conducted in café houses in Urumqi without any interruptions or interference. But when interviewing people outside Urumqi, the reactions were a bit different.

In Aksu and Kashgar in southern Xinjiang, where the police presence is heavy (but no more so than in Urumqi), my local respondents were reluctant to come to my hotel room for interviews; they insisted that all hotel rooms were bugged and that cafés were monitored by plainclothes officers. I had to interview them in public parks and squares, considered a protected place in which greater comfort and confidentiality could be assured. Once my Kashgar interview was done, I decided to go out and learn more about the city. I hailed a taxi and told the driver with my limited Uyghur where I intended to go. Hearing a young Han man speak to him in Uyghur, the driver instantly became excited and corrected minor errors in

my use of his language. To my surprise, all the taxi drivers (six in total) that I

spoke to in the predominantly Uyghur city of Kashgar could speak Chinese fluently,

although with heavy Uyghur accents.

I got out at the People's Square, famous for its giant Mao statute. Wandering

through the square for about an hour, I observed only a couple of Han families;

mostly there were Uyghur kids playing with balloons as their families watched from

nearby. Since it was almost International Children's Day when I was there, all the

kids in the square were wearing colorful clothes. During my one-hour stay, I noticed

at least three children crippled by the aftereffects of polio. This and the fact that my

interview respondent in Kashgar had also been crippled reminded me that I hadn't

seen polio-crippled kids in Urumqi for many years. In Kashgar, it seemed that basic

immunization was still lacking. When I was about to leave the square, I witnessed a

brawl between two balloon-sellers, both Uyghur. At least 20-30 people gathered

around to watch, but no one tried to stop them. The police patrol no more than 80

meters away apparently saw the disturbance, but seemed uninterested and walked

away.

From the People's Square, I strolled north into the famous old city, which is

also the center of Uyghur life in Kashgar. My next stop would be the Idkah Mosque.

As I followed the meandering alleyways deep into the old city, I realized I had lost

my way; a Uyghur boy selling *nans (a baked bread)* by the alley pointed me the

right direction to the Mosque. It was getting dark when I arrived. There are two

major city squares in Kashgar: one is the People's Square and the other is in front of

the Idkah Mosque. As I found a place to sit by the side of the square, I seemed to be the only Han present. My local friend had told me that Han Chinese in Kashgar prefer the People's Square, whereas Uyghurs usually relax outside the Mosque. The atmosphere was peaceful. I saw one police car parked by the curbside, but no more than that (in contrast to the heavy police presence in the People's Square).

After two days in Kashgar, I went to Yining, the capital of the northern Kazakh autonomous prefecture. The city is also where the former East Turkestan Republic (1941-1945) government was seated. I encountered a tense political atmosphere, as expected. Military patrols on the street were more frequent than in Kashgar. Having learned my lesson in Kashgar, I conducted the interview alongside the Ili River, where we were seen as tourists killing time. There was one small incident worth mentioning. On our way back to downtown Yining in the evening, our taxi was stopped at a police checkpoint. My local respondent said all cars entering downtown from suburbs or other places were subject to this routine check. One Uyghur officer collected our ID cards and said he would have to register us. In a moment, he returned with our IDs and said to us in Chinese, "Don't blame us, we are just carrying out orders. Bye."

Most of my interviews with Uyghurs were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. I understand the fact that speaking one's mother tongue must be different from speaking a second language, but I am not yet proficient enough in Uyghur to carry out in-depth interviews. Two things will ameliorate the loss of meaning due to the language difference. First, *Minkaohan* Uyghurs grow up speaking Mandarin every

day and so it is like their native tongue. Throughout the interview, I rarely encountered a situation in which my respondents had problems understanding my questions or expressing themselves properly. Second, I specifically and repeatedly asked them to think about whether the meaning of an idea would be different when speaking Uyghur.

Almost all *Minkaohan* Uyghurs have Han colleagues at some point, and for some Han, *Minkaohan* Uyghurs are their only window to Uyghur life and culture. For a contrasting perspective, an equal number of Han respondents (20 in total) were interviewed to see how local Han viewed Uyghurs and to explore their attitudes and reactions toward media representation of Uyghurs. Given that the main audience of State media is Han Chinese, state representation plays a crucial role in Han perception of Uyghurs. The Han response reflects the efficacy of the State's effort in representing Uyghurs. My Han respondents were selected based on occupation (higher education, police and military, business, government, and media). They were asked about their life experiences with Uyghurs in Xinjiang. During the interviews, Han comments on state media representation of Uyghurs were noted and the respondents were asked to distinguish between the representation of Uyghurs on state media and on the Internet. Interestingly, I had a lot more difficulty in acquiring Han respondents' consent. More Han declined to be interviewed than Uyghurs, often claiming: "This is too sensitive (敏感)." Even after I reassured them that my project had nothing to with sensitive topics, they still politely turned down my request. One of them told me, "You are doing Uyghur-

related stuff, which makes it absolutely sensitive. So I don't want to talk about it."

This is particularly worrying because it seems to me that some Han in Xinjiang have already internalized state repression in terms of Uyghur representation and free speech. Since the 1950s, Han in Xinjiang have been constantly exposed to the state's propaganda campaign against "separatists," "three evils," and "terrorists." Thus, some of them naturally consider the word "Uyghur" as something negative to the State and censor themselves on this topic voluntarily. But fortunately, I managed to interview 20 local Han during my fieldwork. By "local Han," I mean people born and raised in Xinjiang rather than inland China.

It was a little bit surprising that some of my interviewees did not acknowledge the "official" termination of the interview after I turned off the recorder and said, "That's it!" It seemed to me that those interviewees enjoyed the whole process and were willing to continue sharing their stories with me. In those cases, I chose to sit down with them and be a good listener. Overall, my research went smoothly in the summer without any major restrictions. I was neither followed nor harassed by local police. The fact that I am a native of Urumqi probably helped me. My interview sample of 38 people is relatively small and this group of people is by no means a statistically representative sample, but it will offer insights into how *Minkaohan* Uyghurs and Han view the State representation of Uyghurs. This dissertation, based on a content analysis and 38 interviews, aims to critically examine the state representation of Uyghurs and how Uyghurs react and resist the state-produced imagery. This study also evaluates the impact of the state media on

Urumqi's Han Chinese, as they live and work with Uyghurs every day and are influential in Uyghurs' self-reflection. Their attitude toward Uyghurs also affects the future of the region in terms of majority-minority social relations.

Chapter IV: Content Analysis Findings: The Representation Of Uyghurs In State Newspapers

As the discussion of framing analysis has suggested, frame building consists of two levels: media frames and audience frames. This chapter is devoted specifically to the building of media frames and will focus on China's state newspapers, examining which issues are made salient as well as which narratives are promoted when covering Uyghurs both before and after 9/11. This chapter begins with the research questions and hypotheses followed by the findings of the content analyses that have been carried out. The chapter ends with a discussion on how to interpret the findings and their implications.

1. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Since the founding of the PRC, Uyghurs have had an ongoing presence in state newspapers. This dissertation focuses on representations from 2002 to 2010, hoping to find the mobilization, shifts, and changes of frames that the government used in relation to Uyghurs. Since Hoddie (2006) has demonstrated that China's state media devotes more attention to ethnic minorities in times of crisis, I separate these nine years into ordinary times (2002-2007), which refer to years without major news events related to Uyghurs, and times of crisis (2008/2009/2010). In March of 2008, the year of the Beijing Olympics, a Uyghur woman tried to blow up an airplane.[59] Months later, just days before the Olympics began, two Uyghurs in

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[59] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1583033/Woman-admits-trying-to-blow-up-Chinese-jet.html

Kashgar plowed a truck into a large group of police officers, killing 16 of them.[60]
July 2009 saw the unprecedented ethnic riot in Urumqi, which killed 197 people
according to the government. The one-year anniversary of the riot came in July
2010. Comparing representations of Uyghurs in ordinary times and crisis times will
reveal the changes in government strategy after 9/11 in general.

Like any of China's 56 ethnic groups, Uyghurs receive media coverage as a
distinct entity. However, it is possible that Chinese newspapers adopt different
approaches to different ethnic groups. Thus, the first question is:

*RQ1: What were the most salient frames in the coverage of the Uyghur population in
Chinese newspapers after 9/11?*

Since the formative years of the PRC, the Chinese Communist Party and
central government have considered themselves major sponsors of development for
various ethnic minority groups. They have emphasized that their mission is to help
ethnic minorities develop their economies and cultures, in order to achieve socialism
in harmony with the dominant Han Chinese. Thus, in examining the
aforementioned topics and themes in news articles on Uyghurs, I propose a number
of hypotheses along with each research question. For RQ1, I propose the following:

H1: State newspapers will be more likely to emphasize the historical backwardness
and contemporary poverty of Uyghur society (H1a), and the fact that most Uyghurs
believe in Islam (H1b).

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[60] http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/29/world/asia/29kashgar.html

H2: State newspapers will be more likely to focus on Xinjiang's economic development (H2a) and stress government aid programs (H2b).

H3: State newspapers will be more likely to stress Uyghurs are good at art performances (H3a), and promote tourism (H3b) in Xinjiang.

H4: State newspapers will be more likely to emphasize issues of terrorism when covering Uyghurs after 9/11.

The Chinese government put a huge investment into keeping the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games safe, but a deadly attack happened in Kashgar. The following year's riot in Urumqi shocked the world, and the government launched a media campaign aiming to maintain social stability. Meanwhile, the Chinese government accused an overseas Uyghur separatist organization (WUC) of masterminding the tragic riots. The situation was tense at the one-year anniversary in 2010. My second question is:

RQ2: Are there any changes in the representation of Uyghurs in times of crisis?

H5: State newspapers will be more likely to focus on crisis (H5a) and promote ethnic unity (H5b) in times of crisis.

H6: State newspapers will be more likely to stress the importance of social stability (H6a) and the need to combat terrorism (H6b) and separatism (H6c) as a remedy for the crisis.

H7: State newspapers will be more likely to offer comprehensive coverage of Uyghurs, including their history (H7a) and culture (H7b).

H8: State newspapers will be more likely to cover Uyghurs in connection with criminal activities.

H9: State newspapers will be more likely to focus on social and economic benefits in crisis times.

Following Scheufele's (1999) propositions regarding sources of influences on frame building, it is critical to examine how state newspapers differ in the sources they included in their news coverage. Therefore, my third question is:

RQ3: Who do state media usually quote in Uyghur-related articles?

H10: State media are more likely to quote government sources.

H11: State media are more likely to quote Han Chinese rather than Uyghurs.

H12: State media are more likely to quote Uyghur women rather than men.

Lastly, the Uyghur population is not evenly spread across Xinjiang. More than 85% of Uyghurs live in southern Xinjiang, whereas less than 15% of them reside in the northern part of the region. So my fourth question is:

RQ4: Where was most of the Uyghur-related reporting conducted?

H13: State media are more likely to report from southern Xinjiang.

The *People's Daily* and *China Daily* have different target audiences, whereas the two local newspapers are supposed to focus more on Uyghur-related stories. My fifth question is:

RQ5: What are the differences between the People's Daily and the China Daily, and between two national newspapers and two local papers?

H14: The *People's Daily* is more likely to emphasize the local economic development.

H15: The *China Daily* is more likely to focus on the issue of terrorism in order to rally international support.

H16: The *Xinjiang Daily (XD)* and the *Xinjiang Metropolis Daily (XMD)* are more likely to quote more Uyghurs than the two national dailies.

2. Sample

Four state newspapers were selected for content analysis, including two national newspapers (*China Daily* and the *People's Daily*) and two local newspapers (the *Xinjiang Daily* and the *Xinjiang Metropolis Daily*). A keyword search of "Uyghur" in newspaper databases generated thousands of articles, but this study only focuses on news articles on the front page. Without a doubt, the front page signifies the importance of a news event and reflects the perceptions of the newspaper and the government. After carefully reading these front-page stories, I excluded any that did not focus on Uyghurs for at least 50% of the article's length. During the ordinary times (2002-2007), all front-page articles focusing on Uyghurs were selected, while in the times of crisis (2008/09/10), I only examined front-page articles from the crisis months (July, August, and September). The total sample came out to 143 front-page articles. These articles were coded with a presence/absence (e.g., 0/1) threshold, with more than one coding measure potentially present in each category except the "theme" (e.g., more than one source and gender could be present in an article). I coded these articles based on four main categories: themes, sources quoted, gender of those quoted, and location of focus.

Choosing two different levels of newspaper is intended to examine if there are differences in the representation of Uyghurs produced for national vs. local

audiences. In particular, local newspapers are expected to have more coverage on Uyghurs since Uyghurs are part of their target audiences. When it comes to national newspapers, it will be interesting to see how Uyghurs are presented to all readers within China. In addition, to compare coverage of *China Daily* (the leading English-language mouthpiece of the Party) with the other three Chinese-language newspapers will offer us insight into how the Chinese government differentiates its internal and external communication strategies. This part of the analysis will also help answer the question: Does the state media present the same picture of Uyghurs to both its domestic audience and the international community?

2.1 Reliability Testing

Intercoder reliability was assessed by having two independent coders separately code 41 articles (around 27%). Coders were trained to use the recording instrument correctly, and did not discuss the coding procedure during the coding process. Intercoder reliability was tested based on Krippendorff's Alpha with the Macro built into syntax in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). All measures had reliability scores greater than .80. Individual scores for all measures are attached in the Appendix. To analyze our data, which was based on binary coding for each variable, we used Pearson's chi-square to assess whether news articles from the four sources differed significantly from each other in these categories.

3. Findings:

3.1 Amount of Coverage

Table 3 Amount of Coverage

			NEWSPAPER				
			PD	CD	XD	XMD	Total
Date	2002-2007	Count	19	15	0	0	34
		% of Total	13.3%	10.5%	.0%	.0%	23.8%
	2008 Jul-Sept	Count	1	6	6	1	14
		% of Total	.7%	4.2%	4.2%	.7%	9.8%
	2009 Jul-Sept	Count	7	22	28	30	87
		% of Total	4.9%	15.4%	19.6%	21.0%	60.8%
	2010 Jul-Sept	Count	0	2	5	1	8
		% of Total	.0%	1.4%	3.5%	.7%	5.6%
Total		Count	27	45	39	32	143
		% of Total	18.9%	31.5%	27.3%	22.4%	100.0%

As shown in Table 3, the *People's Daily* had slightly more coverage on Uyghurs in ordinary times (2002-07) than appeared in *China Daily*, but the difference was marginal. The two national newspapers had roughly the same amount of Uyghur coverage. However, to have less than twenty articles on Uyghurs in six years make it to the front pages of each of the two central newspapers clearly speaks to the insignificance of Uyghurs in the state media agenda.

In crisis times (2008/09/10, July-September), the *People's Daily* had only eight articles to *China Daily*'s thirty--an annual average five times higher than during ordinary coverage. In times of crisis, Uyghurs are still unimportant to domestic audiences, but occupy more space for international readers. As for the two local newspapers, based in Xinjiang and supposedly counting Uyghurs among their target audiences, the coverage on Uyghurs was scarce except for in 2009, when the

riot rocked the region. It is reasonable to expect a spike in Uyghur coverage in 2009 due to the tragic event. In fact, more than half of the total articles (87 of 143) were from 2009, as shown in Figure 2. *XMD* paid much more attention to Ugyhurs in 2009 than in any other year. But the fact that only eleven articles on Uyghurs made it to the front pages of the two major Xinjiang newspapers in 2008 and 2010 further demonstrates that Uyghur issues are insignificant in ordinary times.

Figure 2 Uyghur Coverage by Newspaper[61]
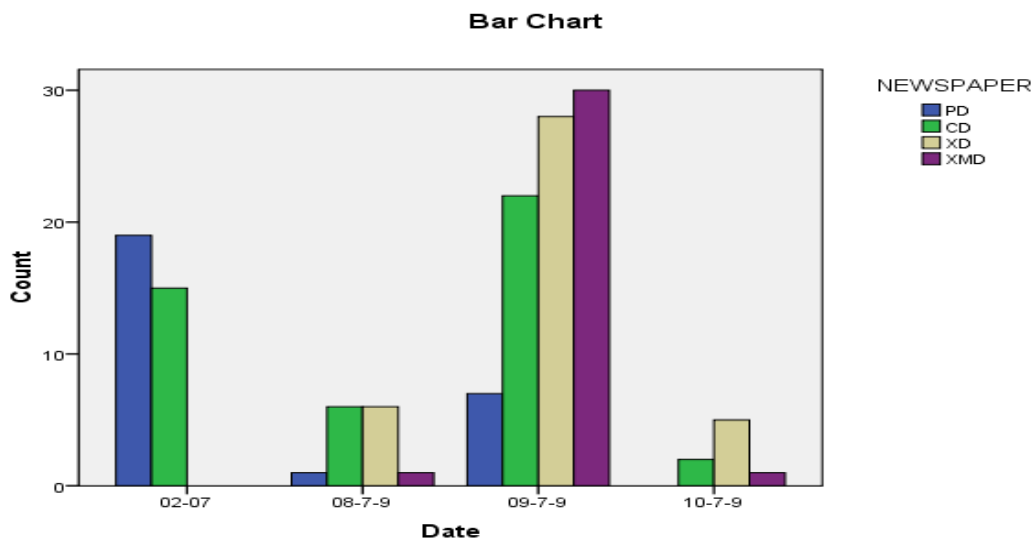
3.2 Central Themes

Uyghur issues are insignificant to state newspapers in terms of numbers of articles, but what key themes emerged from this limited amount of coverage in ordinary times?

Table 4 Themes

	N	Sum
7/5 Riot	143	25

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[61] This chart shows the Uyghur coverage by four newspapers in four different time periods. The *China Daily* and the *People's Daily* have roughly the same coverage from 02-07, while the coverage of two local newspapers is consistent except during the 2009 riot in Urumqi.

Terror	143	24
Other	143	18
Ethnic Unity	143	14
Social Stability	143	14
Economy/Development	143	13
Crime	143	12
Culture	143	5
Separatism	143	5
Education	143	3
Sport	143	3
Aid	143	3
History	143	1
Religion	143	1
Art/Peformance	143	1
Natural Resource	143	0
Tourism	143	0
Employment	143	0
Agriculture	143	0
Poverty	143	0
Valid N (listwise)	143	

To address our first research question on key themes, we found that the most salient themes, over these nine years, were the July 2009 riot, terrorism, ethnic unity, social stability, economic development, and crime. Thus our first hypothesis (H1a and H1b) is not supported: a focus on poverty/backwardness or Uyghurs' Islamic beliefs was not identified. Thus, this finding doesn't support the general observation that Uyghurs are backward and less developed in Chinese media. When we look closely at the theme of economic development and government aid to Xinjiang, there are only three articles on aid but thirteen articles (9% of 143) on economic development. Thus, hypothesis 2 is partially supported: state newspapers

are likely to emphasize economic development (H2a). When we compare ordinary times and times of crisis (Table 5), we find that the difference between them is not significant (χ^2 = .386, p= .053). So hypothesis 9 is not supported: state newspapers are **NOT** likely to emphasize economic benefits in times of crisis. This finding doesn't necessarily disapprove Hoddie's argument (2006) that Chinese media tend to emphasize economic benefits that minority groups received in times of crisis because Hoddie studied the general situation, which includes other ethnic groups. It may still be true to other minorities in other parts of China, but not the case of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Table 5 Economic Development (ordi times vs. crisis times)

| | | | Economy/Development | | Total |
			Not Present	Present	
OrdiCrisisTimes	Ordinary Times	Count	30	4	34
		% of Total	21.0%	2.8%	23.8%
	Times of Crisis	Count	100	9	109
		% of Total	69.9%	6.3%	76.2%
Total		Count	130	13	143
		% of Total	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%

In testing hypothesis 3, we find that there is only one article on art and performance (H3a) and zero articles on tourism (H3b). Thus, hypothesis 3 is not supported since the state newspapers did not focus on art/performance or tourism when covering Uyghurs. As several scholars have argued, terrorism has been used by the Chinese government to suppress Uyghurs; we found 24 articles (16.8% of 143) on this theme, supporting hypothesis 4 that Chinese media are more likely to focus on terrorism after 911 when covering Uyghurs.

With regard to our second question on whether there are changes in Uyghur representation in times of crisis, we find that 22.9% of 109 articles in times of crisis focused on the riot, while 12.8% of 109 articles addressed ethnic unity. Hypothesis 5 is supported: state newspapers focused on the riot itself (H5a) and promoted ethnic unity (H5b) during the crisis. As for potential remedies for the crisis (Figure 3), state newspapers were most likely to emphasize fighting terrorism to fix the problem. Figure 3 in fact demonstrates that the numbers of terror-themed articles were roughly the same in both ordinary times and times of crisis, which clearly reflects how the government defines the nature of problem in Xinjiang. Given that the sample sizes of the two are 109 (crisis)[62] vs. 34 (ordinary), state newspapers focused more on combating terrorism in times of crisis (χ^2=10.95, p= .001). In terms of terrorism, the number of articles on this theme during crisis times was slightly higher than in ordinary times, but this difference is not significant (χ^2= .041, p= .08). When it comes to social stability, all articles on this theme appeared in times of crisis (2008-10); state newspapers bring up this theme as a direct response to the crisis. Thus, hypothesis 6 is partially supported, as state newspapers consider fighting terrorism (H6b) and maintaining social stability (H6a) as ways to address the crisis, but not combating separatism (H6c).

Figure 3 Remedies for Crisis

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[62] "Crisis times" consists of only three months in each of 2008/09/10, so the total number of terror-themed articles will be much higher if 36 months are sampled.

Bar Chart
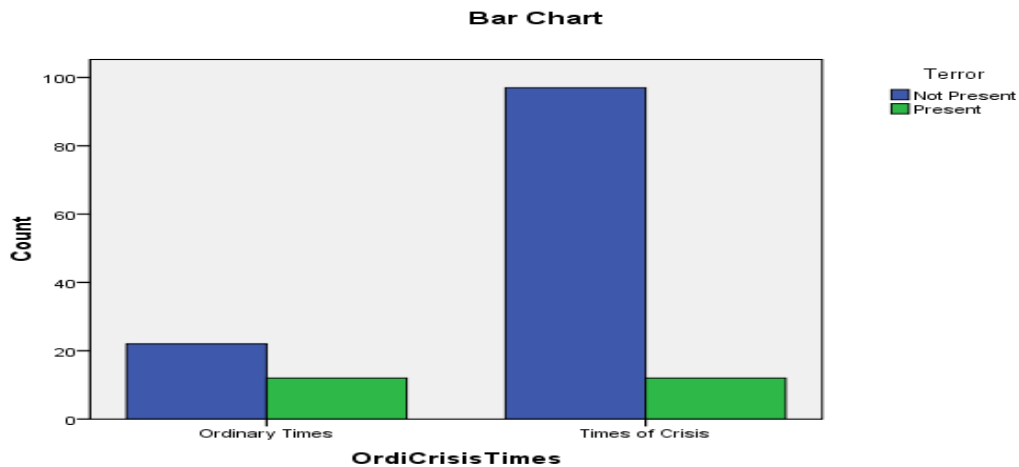
In the aftermath of the 2009 Urumqi riot, the Chinese government launched a media campaign to promote Uyghur culture and history, hoping to restore mutual understanding between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. However, this analysis finds that only five articles on culture and one on history made it to the front pages; the crisis-time increase in coverage of Uyghur culture was not significant statistically. So this change might just be a tactical response rather than a long-term strategy. Thus, hypothesis 7 is not supported: China's state newspapers **did not** pay more attention to Uyghur culture (H7b) and history (H7a) in times of crisis.

Beginning in September 2009, the Xinjiang government has been putting those involved in the riot and the needle-stabbing scare on trial. Several Uyghurs have been prosecuted. We find that all crime-themed[63] coverage (12 articles) appeared during crisis times; there was no front-page coverage of Uyghur-related crimes in ordinary times. Thus, hypothesis 8 is supported: state newspapers connect Uyghurs to crimes in times of crisis.

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[63] "Crime" here refers particularly to the needled-stabbing and the riot related crimes.

3.3 Quotes and Gender

In terms of sources quoted (RQ3), Table 6 shows that 55 articles (48.3%) quote the local government (Xinjiang regional & Urumqi municipal Government), 32 (22.4%) quote the central government, 25 (17.5%) quote law enforcement agencies/personnel, and 16 (11.2%) quote the top CCP leadership. These numbers suggest that state newspapers rely heavily on official sources. This is not surprising in that Chinese media are controlled by the state and are supposed to promote state policies, especially in Xinjiang. Hypothesis 10 is thus supported. It is also interesting to find out that 12 articles quote the World Uyghur Congress/Rebya Kadeer, and that all of these articles appeared in times of crisis. As to the ethnicity of sources, 91 articles (63.6%) quoted Uyghurs, thus hypothesis 11 about preferential quoting of Han Chinese is **NOT** supported. With regard to gender, 55 of 91 articles to quote Uyghurs (60.4%) used male sources, whereas 15 such articles (16.5%) quoted female Uyghurs. The remaining 21 articles (23%) included quotes from both male and female Uyghurs. The Uyghur male's voice was much stronger than that of the female, and thus hypothesis 12 is **NOT** supported.

Table 6 Gender that Quoted

	N	Sum
Uyghur	143	91
Han	143	65
Local Gov	143	55
Central GOV	143	32
Law Enforcement	143	25
CCP	143	16
WUC	143	12
CN Media	143	9
Foreign Gov	143	9
Terror Expert	143	7
Academic	143	6

Religious Personnel	143	4
Foreign Media	143	4
Business	143	3
Other Exiled Uyghurs	143	1
HR Org	143	1
Foreign Resident	143	0
Valid N (listwise)	143	

3.4 Locations

The next question (RQ4) addresses the location where the reporting was conducted. Of all articles, 66 (46.2%) were done in the capital city, Urumqi, while only 31 (21.7%) reported from southern Xinjiang, where Uyghurs are the dominant ethnic group. Hypothesis 13 is **NOT** supported: state newspapers did not focus more on southern Xinjiang than Urumqi. Three factors might explain this: 1) Zhao (2009) has identified that one consequence of media commercialization in China is the urban-oriented media, which means media organizations, for profit concerns, only cater to the needs of urban audiences but ignore rural populations. In Xinjiang, the majority of Uyghurs are peasants living in the south, thus Han-controlled media may tend to serve Han Chinese populations who live in the city, are better off, and have more purchasing power. 2) Han-controlled media organizations may not have enough capable hands in southern Xinjiang to cover Uyghur issues. Since advertisers prefer Han-oriented content, journalists from Urumqi or those posted in southern Xinjiang may not get adequate funding for their work, so the easier alternative is to rely on the dispatch from local propaganda department. 3. Politically, there are issues considered as taboo that can never be discussed openly, such as religion and human rights. Facing this many restrictions and attractions in Urumqi, young journalists may choose to stay in the capital city to chase fame and

fortune, instead of spending days and nights pursuing news stories in remote areas.

3.5 Comparisons

The last question (RQ5) compares reporting strategies in four categories: "national vs. international" and "central vs. local." We found that *China Daily* had 22 articles (49%) on the issue of terrorism when covering Uyghurs, while the *People's Daily* had none on this theme. This supports hypothesis 15 that *China Daily* was actually promoting the "terrorism" theme to international audiences. In terms of economic development, the *People's Daily* had 6 articles (22.2%) while *China Daily* had none. So hypothesis 14 is supported: the *People's Daily* focused on economic development in Xinjiang in coverage for its domestic audience. One reason of such difference is the Chinese government's economic concern of domestic tourism and unity. Xinjiang garners billions of RMB of tourism revenue each year, and the central government may fear that too much focus on "terrorism" in the *People's Daily,* given its symbolic status in Chinese politics, may dissuade tourists from Xinjiang. One other factor might contribute to this is the policy agenda. To provide "economic aid" to Xinjiang has been a consistent through the history of PRC, but the emphasis on combating terrorism demonstrates the government's understanding of its audiences. The Chinese government needs the international support for its campaign on "terror," and it knows that most Chinese don't read English, thus promoting the threat of domestic terrorism on one of its leading English papers becomes necessary for its policy. By differentiating its domestic and international communication strategies, the Chinese government guarantees that both of its internal and external policy agendas can be implemented and pushed

forward. With regard to "central vs. local," even though the two local newspapers indeed quoted more Uyghurs (36.4%) than the two national papers (27.3%), this difference was not significant statistically ($\chi^2 = 5.62$, p= .018). Hypothesis 16 is not supported.

4. Discussion

This chapter attempts to examine how state newspapers in China represent Uyghurs. Interesting patterns emerge when we compare ordinary times and crisis times. Generally speaking, Uyghurs are insignificant to China's state newspapers in ordinary times, which could be partially explained by newspapers' yearning for sensational and explosive stories. However, Uyghurs are largely invisible to domestic audiences even in crisis times. The government's obsession with stability might explain this. As long as the situation is under control, it can just treat it as a local problem rather than letting the crisis spill over to inland provinces. The fact that *China Daily* featured much more coverage on Uyghurs than the *People's Daily* suggests that central-level newspapers tend to play down the importance of any Uyghur-related crisis to domestic audiences, while providing more coverage for international audiences. *China Daily* dedicating so much more space to English readers demonstrates 1) the government's lack of confidence over its handling of minority affairs, 2) its long-term delusion that censorship/news black-out leads to social stability, and 3) its attempt to shape international public opinion for its policy agenda.

As for the local newspapers in Xinjiang, it is frustrating to see that *XMD* and *XD* had ZERO front-page coverage on Uyghurs even in ordinary times. The main

coverage only came in 2009, when the riot dominated front-page space in both papers. In other words, Uyghurs and Uyghur-related issues are not significant even in Xinjiang media, where Uyghurs are the majority.

In terms of key themes that emerged from state representation, the July 2009 riot, terrorism, social stability, economic development, and crime were the most salient ones. It is interesting to note that there was only one article on the theme of "art/performances" and no articles on "tourism" at all. Articles talking about how "backward" Xinjiang is or how Uyghurs suffer from poverty were also absent. However, the absence of this exoticized representation does not spell the end or of "internal orientalism" because only front-page articles are examined. In addition, all media outlets in China are still controlled by the Party and state, which have the final say over major media policy and personnel changes. The powerful CPD censors media content on a daily basis. Uyghurs are a mute group in China's media landscape and the representation of them, despite any apparent changes, remains fundamentally subject to the state's hegemonic manipulation. In fact, Uyghur representations in state newspapers are changing for the worse.

Over 24 articles addressed terrorism when covering Uyghurs, which makes "terrorism" one of the central themes among all articles. This tendency was more conspicuous in crisis times, when state newspapers were more likely to attribute the cause of crisis to terrorism. The Chinese government did not use the terror frame indiscriminately. *China Daily* tended to focus on the threat of terrorism and emphasize fighting terrorism as the remedy to the crisis, while the *People's Daily*

stuck to the economic development frame. This difference shows that the

government has different strategies for domestic and international audiences. The

Chinese government may need to use "fighting terrorism" as an excuse to justify its

crackdown on Uyghurs in Xinjiang, while hyping economic development to buttress

its assumption that Xinjiang is still economically backward and in need of help from

Beijing. The fact that most of the terrorism-themed articles appeared in *China*

Daily speaks for itself on how China wants to present Uyghurs to the international

community. The following list of all 22 terror-themed articles from *China Daily*

gives a textual sense of Uyghur imagery.

Date	*Title*
09-13-2002	*ETIM Added To Al-Qaida Black List*
10-25-2002	*FM: FBI Office In Beijing A Positive Move*
01-15-2003	*Turkish Stance On Xinjiang Applauded*
07-12-2003	*Suspects In Bus Slaying Linked To Terror Group*
12-16-2003	*Nation Names Terror Groups*
02-14-2004	*Joint Crackdown On Terrorism Moves Ahead*
04-17-2004	*German Police Urged To Curb Terrorists*
08-26-2005	*Xinjiang Cracks Down On Terrorist Threat*
09-06-2005	*Terror Threat Requires Effective Countermeasures*
08-28-2006	*Anti-Terror Exercise Targets "3 Evil Forces"*
03-10-2007	*Noose Tightening On Xinjiang Terrorists*
01-09-2007	*Terrorists Killed In Xinjiang*
07-28-2008	*Police Deny Terrorist Link To Blasts*
07-21-2008	*Terror Groups Still Pose A "Threat"*
08-02-2008	*Official Vows To Crack Down On Terrorists*
08-05-2008	*16 Cops Die In Kashgar Terror Strike*
08-06-2008	*E. Turkistan Group "Behind" Terror Attack*
07-15-2009	*Al-Qaida Threatens Chinese Abroad*
07-31-2009	*PLA Adds Anti-Terror Ops To Cache*
09-11-2009	*Syringe Suspects Seized In Xinjiang*
09-17-2009	*"Terror Gang" Rounded Up In Xinjiang*
07-05-2010	*Joint Drill Targets Terrorists*

This list suggests that casting Uyghurs in the light of terrorism has been

quite consistent in *China Daily* since 9/11, after the State Department put ETIM on its terror group list. Since then, China has indicated that because some Uyghurs are engaged in terrorist activities and involved in Al-Qaeda, China too is a victim of home-grown and international terrorism. The titles listed above also suggest that anti-terror campaigns are badly needed to treat the problem. In addition to terrorism, state newspapers also link Uyghurs to crime. The analysis finds seven articles dedicated to this theme. Thus, crime is identified as one of the main frames mobilized in state newspapers when covering Ugyhurs in times of crisis.

Although terrorism and crime have been used as frames, it is interesting to note that economic subsidies were not emphasized as a remedy for the crisis. Thus, Hoddie's (2006) argument that the government tends to tout economic gains in crisis times is not supported. But the government does focus on economic development as the chief remedy or panacea to address root causes of crises. In light of the July 2009 riot in Urumqi, the Chinese central government convened a "Xinjiang Work Conference," an unprecedented move in which they deployed a "pairing assistance" system to "help" developing Xinjiang.[64] Inland Chinese provinces had to dedicate a certain percentage of their annual GDP to investing in various towns and prefectures in Xinjiang. The investments are mostly "livelihood projects" such as low-rent apartment buildings, irrigation projects, etc. In May 2011, the Chinese government convened its second "Pairing and Assisting Xinjiang Work Conference," and vice Premier Li Keqiang again highlighted local economic

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[64] http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/11514545.html

development as the key to governing Xinjiang.[65] As an example of the scale of this

huge economic drive to transform Xinjiang, as of May 2011, the rich eastern coast

province of Jiangsu alone has invested 4.3 billion USD on "livelihood projects" such

as herders' permanent settlements, "bilingual education," and industrial parks.[66] In

addition to rich inland provinces, various central government departments have

their own "assisting Xinjiang project" too.[67] The economic development frame has

been consistent in covering Uyghurs for years (2002-07), while the analysis

indicates that ethnic unity and social stability frames dominate in times of crisis.

As for sources, it is not surprising that all newspapers quote official sources

given the state ownership of Chinese media. However, it is interesting to see that

Rebiya Kadeer and the World Uyghur Congress were quoted twelve times, all of

which were in times of crisis. Apparently, state newspapers have identified Ms.

Kadeer and the WUC as the chief troublemaker. The WUC was almost unknown

before the Urumqi riot, but has garnered worldwide fame largely due to vilification

by the Chinese government in 2009. In terms of gender of those quoted, there were

more Uyghur males than females. This is different from Gladney's interpretation

(1994) that ethnic minorities in China are cast in a feminine light. But this does not

mean that Uyghurs are not feminized in Chinese media. It is possible that media

are always looking for male speakers to interview rather than the female. Lastly,

most reporting was conducted in the capital city Urumqi rather than southern

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[65] http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/14767184.html
[66] http://news.hexun.com/2011-05-31/130112373.html
[67] http://www.xinjiang.gov.cn/10013/10036/10151/index.htm

Xinjiang, home to more than 85% of the Uyghur population. This once again demonstrates Chinese newspapers' lack of comprehensive attention to Uyghur society; such willful blindness to the Uyghur heartland will not provide audiences with a real picture of contemporary Uyghur society. Additionally, focusing on Uyghurs in Urumqi, which contains less than 10% of the total Uyghur population, may offer Han Chinese readers a misleading representation of Uyghurs and Xinjiang. In general, Chinese newspapers only offer Han-centric coverage of the Uyghur population, and the representation of Uyghurs is issue-based and variable. Over time, four major news frames have emerged from Chinese newspapers: "Terrorism" and "Economic Development" have become the dominating frames throughout ordinary times (2002-07), while "Stability" and "Crime" emerged as the main frames in times of crisis (2008/09/10). State newspapers define problems in Xinjiang and in Uyghur society as a problem of terrorism, originating from outside China (the WUC and foreign plots). The local population is susceptible to this foreign influence because they are still poor. Thus, all crises in Xinjiang must be countered with anti-terror campaigns and vigorous economic development. This frame building, controlled by state newspapers, leaves out Uyghur voices and addresses only one main reason behind many endemic problems in Xinjiang. This economic reductionism in state newspapers reflects China's official Marxist ideology, which also defines state policies on ethnic minorities.

At the same time, frames such as "Poverty," "Religion," and "Singing and Dancing" are not identified. While we can't say that "internal Orientalism" is no

longer an appropriate framework to examine state newspapers' representation of Uyghurs, Uyghurs in media after 9/11 are not portrayed as a "backward and primitive" people who need help from more "advanced" Han brothers. Rather, Uyghurs are increasingly represented as a clear and present threat to China's internal stability, security, and national integrity. In addition to counter-terror campaigns and economic development, state newspapers also adopt strategies that differentiate domestic and international reporting to address this threat. They take advantage of the "War On Terror" to mobilize international support in dealing with the Uyghur issue in its English newspaper, while focusing on economic development and maintaining stability as remedies in coverage for domestic readers. However, both approaches are purely tactical, rather than offering a real solution and bringing true stability on the ground.

The content analysis of this chapter has shed light on the frame building in China's state newspapers. How do these media frames affect audiences, especially Uyghur and Han audiences? Are they effective in promoting the government's definition, interpretation, and solution to the problem in Xinjiang? In the next chapter, I will examine the audience frames that Uyghurs and Han Chinese have developed as a response to state-produced media frames.

Chapter V: Audience Interview Findings: Reaction and Resistance

Chinese media representations of Uyghurs are vastly important to both Uyghur and Han audiences. In addition to reflecting the state's attitudes and policies toward minority Uyghurs, media representation also has a direct impact on ethnic relations in western China. Although audience members rely on state media, they also have the agency to resist official constructions of reality. Stuart Hall (1972) stressed the role of social positioning in the interpretation of mass media texts by different social groups, proposing three hypothetical audience positions. This chapter will make use of Hall's approach to examine audience frames. Based on 38 interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork in Xinjiang, this chapter will demonstrate: 1) Audiences (Uyghur and Han) can and do resist government messaging, finding their own meanings in line with Hall's "oppositional decoding," and 2) How respondents constructed audience frames (specifically, the way *Minkaohan* used the Internet to construct audience frames while Han Chinese in Xinjiang built audience frames from personal and occupational experience among Uyghurs).

Given that few Uyghurs work for state media organizations, this ethnic minority has little to no influence over its representation in the news. The Internet offers them an easy platform to negotiate with the official Uyghur representation and build their own representations. This chapter will show two examples of how *Minkaohan* use the Internet to contest state-manufactured Uyghur representations.

I will also analyze the extent to which Han Chinese go along with strategic propagandistic representations (both positive and negative) vs. the extent to which they base their understanding of Uyghurs on first-hand knowledge.

1. *Minkaohan* Reaction to State Media

The following table shows demographic information for all *Minkaohan* respondents. To protect the privacy of all interviewees, I will use M and F plus numbers to represent male and female respondents, e.g., M-2, F-4, etc.

Table 7 Uyghur Interviewees

ID	Age	Education	Occupation	Language
M-1	36	College	Doctor	Uyghur, Mandarin, Khazak
M-2	42	College	Government	Uyghur, Mandarin, Kyrgyz
M-3	30	College	Oil Extraction	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
M-4	38	College	Library	Uyghur, Mandarin
M-5	44	College	Business	Uyghur, Mandarin
M-6	32	College	Social Service	Uyghur, Mandarin
M-7	35	College	Oil Extraction	Uyghur, Mandarin
F-1	35	College	High School	Uyghur, Mandarin
F-2	44	College	Oil Business	Uyghur, Mandarin
F-3	30	College	University	Uyghur, Mandarin, Russian
F-4	28	College	State-owned Corp.	Uyghur, Mandarin, Russian
F-5	30	College	Government	Uyghur, Mandarin
F-6	35	College	Int'l Trade	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
F-7	42	College	Government	Uyghur, Mandarin
F-8	43	Master's	College	Uyghur, Mandarin
F-9	42	College	Vocation School	Uyghur, Mandarin, English
F-10	31	College	Insurance	Uyghur, Mandarin

As shown in the table, all *Minkaohan* respondents are well-educated with at least a college degree. They all have well-paid jobs either with the state or in the

private sector, and all speak at least two languages. It is also interesting that most

respondents are from northern Xinjiang, including Urumqi, and only three of them

are from southern Xinjiang (Kashgar and Aksu). This is in line with the region's

economic situation. Northern Xinjiang is generally more prosperous than the south,

so more of the *Minkaohan* respondents who have access to the Internet and BBS

forum live in northern Xinjiang. In fact, the founder of the *Minkaohan* BBS

acknowledged to me that his site gets more visitors from northern Xinjiang than

from the south.

1.1 Media Usage of Minkaohan Uyghurs

When it comes to media usage, my *Minkaohan* respondents were clear that

they preferred Chinese-language media, especially various CCTV channels.

However, this doesn't mean that they never consumed Uyghur-language media at

all. Although two of them said they still read books occasionally, most of them have

switched to TV and newspapers. *Minkaohan* watch Chinese TV stations for news

and information and Uyghur channels for entertainment and cultural

performances.

> I rarely read newspapers and I don't buy newspapers. I watch TV the most, and I
> like CCTV's News and Movie Channel. My favorite programs are those introducing
> science, nature and animals. (M-1)

> I don't like local newspaper because they have too much advertisement. With regard
> to Uyghur TV channels, we watch a lot of cultural [performance] programs and
> interviews. (M-4)

I mainly watch TV at home and mostly for news program. I am not interested in entertainment at all. I like the CCTV News Channel most. I am interested in finding out more about environmental protection. (F-3)

While all of the *Minkaohan* respondents said they watch TV at home, twelve of them made it clear that they read newspapers (both national and local) on a daily basis. While some of them subscribed to national newspapers such as the *Southern Weekend*, local stories were their favorite. *Minkaohan* were interested in finding out what was going on around them every day.

I use Chinese language media a lot. I guess that's because I was educated in Mandarin. I am even dreaming in Mandarin. TV is only for entertainment purposes every day. I read Chinese language newspapers, such as *the Xinjiang Metropolis Daily*. (M-2)

I often read *the Xinjiang Metropolis Daily*, the *Global Times*, the *Nanfang Weekend* and the *Reference News*. (F-1)

I read newspapers everyday. Urumqi evening news is my favorite. I am interested in international and domestic news. I am mostly interested in what's going on in this world, especially how people in the West see Uyghurs. (F-4)

Given the language background of *Minkaohan*, it is natural for them to rely on Chinese-language media in daily life. State newspapers and TV channels are the main provider of information to *Minkaohan* thus the state construction of Uyghur imagery is widely received by *Minkaohan*. With regard to the Internet, all my *Minkaohan* respondents have access to computers at home and in their offices. They are heavy users of it, for varied purposes such as information, chatting, and shopping.

The Internet used to be for working purposes only, but later it became an important source of knowledge and information. I spent at least eight hours online each day. I also make several new friends online, and that seriously extended my social network. (M-2)

I use the Internet and read newspapers a lot. I like shopping online so I use Taobao.com [Chinese version of Ebay] a lot. (F-1)

Minkaohan use the Internet for information and also as an alternative source of news because they realize the state media are not 100% credible. In addition to being heavy users of the Internet, some of them were among the early adopters of this new technology in Xinjiang, such as M-4, for example, who dedicated over one-sixth of his salary to learn and use the Internet in the early 2000s.[68]

I don't believe in state media, especially the state media. I did some propaganda work when I was young and I know what it is. I will tell you what: at least 60% of those state media content is fake. (M-2)[69]

I have used the Internet a lot since its appearance in Xinjiang. I bought my first computer in 2001 and had to use the Internet through a modem, which was pretty slow. My salary was only 600RMB back then and the Internet cost me 120! (M-4)

I started chatting online in 2000, and I like chatting because I can share my stories with other people. I used to believe that people who like to chat with text must be different. I mean their thoughts must be unique and their stories must be more interesting. Online chatting brought me many unique friends whose experiences are really enriching for me. (F-8)

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[68] The Internet has been widely used in China since the mid-1990s.
[69] M-2 is talking about his experience of working in the local propaganda department when he was young. He admitted that most of media content they produced was not true to the facts.

While most of my respondents stick to China's state media, three of them

read/watch English-language media or overseas Chinese TV stations such as

Phoenix TV, based in Hong Kong.

> In terms of TV, I prefer to watch Hong Kong television programs. I think the
> mainland TV is too pro-government and Hong Kong TV stations such as Phoenix TV
> offer more balanced and objective coverage. They are reporting real news. I know not
> everyone in China has access to Phoenix TV, and I pay extra (over 300RMB) to view
> six Phoenix channels. This is the government-sanctioned package. To tell you the
> truth, we also have two satellite dishes installed on our balcony. So far nobody has
> come to my family to check it. We use them mainly for Russian TV channels for
> business information. (F-6)

> I use the Internet most and it is my main news source. I usually read Sina.com and
> Singapore's Zaobao online. I also read the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and
> the *China Daily* occasionally. (M-3)

Minkaohan respondents are unable to get news from Western media sources,

due to either a lack of access or an inability to read English-language websites. The

most commonly-viewed overseas TV station is Phoenix TV based in Hong Kong;

Minkaohan rely on this Chinese-language station as an alternative news source.

Among my interviewees, Al Jazeera was known primarily for broadcasting tapes of

Osama bin Laden. Most of my respondents believed that Al Jazeera is affiliated

with Al-Qaeda. Given their heavy use of state media such as CCTV, where Al

Jazeera can only be referenced in connection with bin Laden circulating a tape, this

belief is not surprising. The Qatar-based satellite station has become a synonym for

"terrorism" in China. This was also confirmed by Melissa Chan, a Chinese-

American journalist who works for Al Jazeera's Beijing Bureau. She said in a public

lecture that whenever she mentioned Al-Jazeera to Chinese farmers, the response

was always, "Oh, bin Laden!"

1.2 Representation of Uyghur in state media

As regular users of state media (TV and newspapers), *Minkaohan* have a

keen sense of how Uyghurs are represented. Most interviewees complained about

the one-sided depiction of Uyghurs, who are usually portrayed as simple, happy,

dancing and singing people in colorful clothing. They are resisting the state

dominant portray of Uyghurs and adopting the "oppositional stance" described by

Hall (1972).

> You know, I don't trust Chinese TV at all because it never truly represents any ethnic group fairly and objectively. It just wants to promote tourism in Xinjiang. Whenever I see programs produced by inland TV stations, I think they are laughable. For example, in every program on Uyghurs, you will always see an old man with white a beard and Uyghurs dancing around. It seems to me that Uyghur understand nothing more than dance. (M-1)

> Well, I think Uyghurs on TV are capable of nothing more than singing and dancing. Of course it is simplified because Uyghurs are a people who have a long history and a very rich culture. You know, Uyghurs have existed for more than a thousand years, and do you believe a group a people can survive such a long time of history only relying on dancing and singing? Certainly not. (M-2)

The quotes suggest that "internal Orientalism" is still perceptible to my

Minkaohan respondents. This "internal Orientalism" is reflected in a way that

Uyghurs are portrayed as a group only capable of singing and dancing. Even though

the content analysis does not identify it as a potent frame on front-pages when state

media covering Uyghur after 9/11, singing and dancing Uyghurs have not

disappeared from state media overnight. Also, the content analysis only examined

front-page articles. *Minkaohan*, who consume state media every day, are always

aware of this Orientalistic representation of Uyghurs. They know this state-

manufactured representation is incomplete and biased toward promoting tourism

instead of true Uyghur culture and history; in some cases, the shortcomings of such

representations actually motivate *Minkaohan* to pursue knowledge on their Uyghur

heritage. One of my respondents admitted that the more she watches Uyghurs on

state TV, the more books she will read to learn about Uyghur history and culture.

> There are more than enough programs on Uyghur singing and dancing, and Han
> Chinese need to know more about Uyghur history. I am not saying all history but
> important facts about Uyghur history. (M-7)

> I think this biased representation should be addressed. The images of Xinjiang in
> inland TV screens are dominated by grassland and mountains. I have classmates
> from inland and they were shocked to find so many skyscrapers when they got here
> for the first time. I want our Uyghur culture to be well preserved and promoted,
> which means that people need to know Uyghur are capable of more than singing and
> dancing. (F-3)

Minkaohan respondents raised two more important issues. One is the

absence of a media "watchdog" in the realm of social development: respondents F-1

and F-3 pointed out that state media fail to pay enough attention to abuses of power

at the local level, which allows local officials to manipulate state policy[70] for their

own benefit at the cost of most farmers. If state media were able to produce more

programs on development and state preferential policies, or expose local abuses of

power to the public, local farmers would stand a better chance to profit from the

national government preferential polices toward minorities.

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[70] The national government has preferential policies in place that specifically intend to help minority populations.

I think they miss a lot of things, such as livelihood and suppression. My uncle lives in southern Xinjiang. For old people in southern Xinjiang, praying is forbidden, and this policy is widely hated. When senior leaders visited southern Xinjiang homes, local officials only brought them to beautifully decorated homes. That's not real, and they are deceiving the senior officials! I feel CCTV pays little attention to Xinjiang except for big crises and disasters. (F-1)

[I think] some interview programs are biased. For example, some journalists only interview wealthy villagers instead of poor ones, so the government and Han only see Uyghurs who are living happily. Obviously, corruption is involved. Most Uyghur farmers do not have first-hand information of the government's preferential policies, which gives local officials chances to exploit this gap between the central government and the people. But now I heard things are changing. Farmers' rights consciousness is awakening. (F-3)

The other is the impact of this insufficient and biased Uyghur representation on inland Han Chinese. Respondent F-4 offers a vivid example of the power of representation. Shanghai, as one of a few cities colonized in the 19th and 20th centuries, has a unique culture to accommodate foreigners (especially for those with lighter skin color). F-4's experience of being greeted as a "foreigner" at first, but later ignored when she confirmed her Uyghur identity, speaks clearly to the effect of Uyghur representation in China. It may be different in other Chinese cities, but the state representation certainly contributes to the "backward" and "negative" images of Uyghurs in Shanghai.

I just don't understand why all Uyghurs on TV are wearing headscarves and raising livestock on grasslands. This image of backwardness has been so deep that I was asked if Uyghur were riding horses to schools last year in Shanghai. It is also interesting that people in Shanghai usually considered me as a foreigner (*lao wai*) and were friendly and warm, but when they learned that I am a Uyghur from

> Xinjiang, their attitude instantly changed. All the friendliness just disappeared. I have another example. CCTV did an interview with my grandfather last year. My grandfather lives in an apartment building in Beijing, but instead of conducting the interview at his home, the crewmembers took him to a farmhouse in suburban Beijing to "reflect Uyghur life." I think they are deceiving audience members. (F-4)

Respondent M-4 goes deeper and reflects on the reason behind this biased and partial representation.

> This representation is so narrowly constructed that an inland Chinese with little knowledge on Uyghurs would conclude that Uyghurs are just singing and dancing every day. In fact, Uyghur culture is really diversified. You see only one aspect on state TV. I think one reason for this is that the Xinjiang economy is backward and Uyghur society lacks professionals who truly understand media. (M-4)

He is right that state media have no economic interest in Xinjiang and that Uyghurs lack capable media producers. What he didn't mention are the political and cultural factors. Chinese media are all controlled by an authoritarian state. Uyghurs, without genuine representatives in the current political system, have no access to communication resources. Even if Uyghurs had enough capable media practitioners, it would still be difficult to change Uyghur imagery under the current power structure. Culturally, China is dominated by the majority Han Chinese, and media organizations would do anything to cater to the needs of the predominantly Han market.

Interestingly, the government and state media changed their rhetoric after the July 2009 riot in Urumqi. The government imposed a communication blackout in Xinjiang after July 5th and conducted numerous police raids to confiscate video showing the brutality of Uyghur killers, fearing Uyghurs in inland provinces might face retribution from angry Han Chinese. In July 2010, Norway busted a terror

group and arrested three members. One of those arrested was a Uyghur man originally from China, according to the *New York Times*.[71] China's state media, in this case the Xinhua News Agency, downplayed the background of those arrested and never mentioned the Uyghur suspect. Major news sites such as Sina.com ignored it too.[72] However, this subtle change does not mean state media have completely changed direction; rather, this could be seen as a tactic to maintain social stability. In general, state media representation of Uyghurs reflects the state's political concerns.

1.3 Media and Islam

Islam has undergone a worldwide revival in the late 20th century, especially after the Iranian revolution. Dru Gladney (1996) has identified a similar "tide" of Islam in China during the same period. Religions in China, including Islam, have been allowed to develop more freely since the 1980s, when China ushered in an era of capitalistic reform after the suffocating ten-year-long Cultural Revolution. Gladney suggests that the ethnic identities and nationalism of Muslim minority groups drove this "tide" in the 1980s. However, Israeli (2002) contradicts this view. He believes it was the religious identity of Chinese Muslims that motivated what Gladney describes as a "tide."

Either way, the Chinese government's somewhat more liberal approach toward Muslims has not been accompanied by any true understanding of the Muslim population. State policies tend either to ignore Muslims entirely or interfere

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[71] http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/09/world/europe/09norway.html
[72] http://news.sina.com.cn/w/2010-07-09/085817779937s.shtml

in ways that lead to religious extremism and politicization of the Muslim identity.

Media practices, as an important part of the government's overall behavior toward

Muslims, reflect the same failures. When I asked my *Minkaohan* respondents (all of

whom identify as Muslims) whether current media programs meet their religious

needs, every one of them answered in the negative, citing a total lack of state TV

programs and newspaper articles on Islam. Despite their awareness that China is

officially an atheistic nation, most respondents said they would like to see

informational programs on Islam in state media.

> I hope the government will invite some famous religious personnel to teach us
> religious knowledge, and this guy should from abroad, from a Muslim country. I
> don't trust local Imams because they don't know what they are doing. (F-9)

> When I was in Kazakhstan on business, I found that there was a special TV program
> introducing Islam. I think this is also necessary in Xinjiang because I believe
> religion should guide people into kindness and greater good. You know, those
> programs are also teaching people decent behavior, and these I believe actually help
> people interpret Islam in a right way. (F-8)

Obviously, *Minkaohan* are not satisfied with the state media's offering of programs

on religion. First, the government-sanctioned religious schools and personnel are

either badly trained or tightly controlled, which render them almost useless when

Muslims need them. Second, Chinese media are bound by the state's atheistic

ideology and therefore unable to provide programs on Islam to *Minkaohan*

audiences. These two factors together create a void that all *Minkaohan* respondents

are calling the state to hire some authoritative religious figures to fill. They expect

that such an authority on Islam could show up on TV to lead people onto the "right path."

> That [having an expert on Islam on TV] would be great because it would be a more convenient way for us to learn Islam. You know, I don't think current media programs can satisfy my religious needs, but the Internet can because I can search and be more active whenever I have questions. (M-5)

Respondents also raised an important issue: the interpretation of Islam in Xinjiang. It is notable that female respondents, whose religious rights are even less protected that those of Uyghur males, expressed a much stronger desire to learn about Islam. Given that females are not allowed to enter the Mosque in Xinjiang, there is no way that they can stand side by side with men and learn. They feel that this practice stems from a misinterpretation of Islam, and are eager to see the government/state media do something to redress this injustice. In other words, Uyghur women in Xinjiang are victims of both religious ignorance and media silence.

> Uyghurs used to be Buddhists, but converted to Islam after centuries of war, which means we were converted by force. So there are not many knowledgeable Islamic scholars who can truly provide guidance to us. Even some Imams are not well educated on Islam and lacking the deep understanding of this religion. Some even misinterpret this religion and stoke violence in the name of Islam. This place (Xinjiang) badly needs a figure or a group of knowledgeable scholars to guide Muslims on a right path. There are some government run religious schools in Xinjiang, but the number is few and far between. Most people still have to rely on the mosque for their religious needs. But here in Xinjiang, only men are allowed in the mosque, and so most women have to talk to their friends or husbands if they want to learn Islam. (F-7)

F-6 mentioned that a separatist organization (ETIM) is using Islam for their political agenda.

> [The] problem is that East Turkistan Islamic Movement (*Dong Tu*) was defined a terrorist group, and this group wants to establish an independent Uyghur nation by force. This group is using Islam to promote its political agenda, so this put Islam in an awkward and sensitive position because this group threatens the national security. You know, I think those overseas organizations are misinterpreting Islam for their own political purposes, and at the same time, the government is increasingly consider Islam as a political threat in Xinjiang. The situation right now is many people are engaging in illegal activities in the name of Islam, and it is better to lead those people onto the right path than simply cracking down on them. Why doesn't the government use the right interpretations [through media] of Islam to overwhelm those wrong interpretations? (F-6)

Her observation indicates that Islam has been politicized in Xinjiang. Uyghur separatist groups are using Islam to rally support among ordinary Uyghurs, while the Chinese government has considered such groups as an existential threat. Since most Uyghurs follow Islam, this religion to some extent has been treated as a problem, rather than a solution. Ordinary people, who only want Islam to bring them peace, calm, and a sense of belonging in life, are caught in the middle. As F-9 mentioned, Muslim-style beards are not allowed for government employees in southern Xinjiang, and women are forbidden from covering their faces in public, in order to sever any "connection to Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan."

Contrary to these harsh restrictions in southern Xinjiang, Urumqi has seen a marked increase, especially in the last two years, in the number of Uyghur women who wear black full-body-covering *Niqab* in public spaces. They are allowed to roam the city freely, without harassment from anyone. F-1 and F-8, who were born in

Dushanzi (an oil town close to Urumqi), have informed me that Wahhabism is on the rise in that booming oil city. Both of them have relatives who converted to Wahhabism and quit well-paid state jobs because they didn't want to take the "infidel's money." Both F-1 and F-8 were puzzled, because they believed that people of their well-educated and financially-secure position in society should be immune to fundamentalist teachings. They also noticed that nobody, especially the government, seemed to care about Wahhabism in northern Xinjiang; new converts were given leeway to dictate "who are real Uyghurs" and "who should marry whom." I was curious if what they described were only isolated cases, but they made it clear that the rise of Wahhabism was prevalent in Dushanzi and Karamay.

The respondents' observations form an interesting contrast in that the government on the one hand is suppressing normal religious practices in southern Xinjiang, while on the other is blind to expressions of Islamic fundamentalism in the north. This suggests that the government does not understand Islam and cannot differentiate normal religious practice from Islamic fundamentalism. But does this increase in new Wahhabi followers really represent a rise of Islamic fundamentalism? While the number of *Niqab*-wearing Uyghur women is still small in Urumqi, they are impossible to ignore whenever you are in public. F-2 personally witnessed a *Niqab*-wearing woman in a restaurant lift her veil and drink a cup of *Baijiu* (a strong Chinese liquor with more than 50% alcohol), which shocked her. A woman drinking alcohol in public is totally against the teaching of Wahhabism. When asked why some people decided to go for fundamentalism, many respondents

recounted that those new followers believed that only a "pure Islam" could "save" Uyghur society and only the followers of this "pure Islam" were "true Uyghurs." Although it is difficult to evaluate the scale of Wahhabism in Xinjiang without any statistics, it is hard to say that Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise in Xinjiang for the moment. Historically, Uyghurs have practiced a moderate form of Islam; fundamentalist Islam has never dominated the region. Also, based on the respondents' accounts, this "rise of Wahhabism" is more likely to represent Uyghurs' new quest for cultural and national identity, albeit in the form of religion.

For many years, Uyghurs' cultural and religious rights have been strictly controlled and restricted by the government. The Uyghur language is gradually disappearing from classrooms as the language of instruction. Many Uyghurs feel besieged, threatened, and disillusioned. Unfortunately, Uyghurs have no access to state-controlled communication media and there are few public spaces for them to discuss, debate, and voice their concerns. Religion, under this circumstance, has become a platform or a channel for some Ugyhurs to assert and distinguish themselves. As a result of the deadly July riot in Urumqi, the limited space for Uyghurs has been further restricted; many may feel desperate and finally resort to Wahhabism. Some of them may be true believers of this fundamentalist form of Islam, while others just use it to demonstrate how different they are from Han Chinese. Even though Islam is only part of Uyghur history and culture, these people still claim only Wahhabi believers are "true Uyghurs," and as long as they show their "Uyghurness," drinking alcohol no longer matters. Actually, Finley (2007)

identifies that the "re-Islamization" in Xinjiang have happened for a long time since the late1990s and Uyghurs have been using Islam to mark a symbolic boundary between them and the Hans. However, Finely's fieldwork was mainly based in Urumqi and so couldn't have anticipated the rise of Wahhabism in two wealthy oil cities north of Urumqi. But one thing is certain: Islam has becoming a potent force in Xinjiang.

Chinese state media, as an extension of the Chinese government, naturally aligns itself with the official discourse. Thus, the state's outdated policy and media ignorance go hand in hand, as state media are just carrying the Party line on the issue of religion. The partial and biased representation of Uyghurs is more than just media ignorance/failure; rather, it is part of the state's objective of "representing the Chinese nation as the governmet's chief source of political legitimacy"(Shue, 2004). The actual objective of the state media seems to be supporting the status quo, which means opposing any positive change for Uyghurs, and thus, in this case, minimizing exposure to Islam. However, this media strategy actually backfired. Bound by an atheistic ideology, the Chinese government cannot allow religious content or any open discussion of issues related to religion in state media. Ironically, this "self-discipline," along with suppression of normal religious practices such as growing beards, visiting the Mosque, praying, and fasting, will only facilitate the spread of fundamentalism. Instead of stifling Muslims in Xinjiang, the government should nurture a vibrant civil society and offer Uyghurs an open platform for cultural and religious expression. The empowerment of ordinary people, especially the secular

Muslims, and the guarantee of basic rights would form a shield against religious

fundamentalism.

1.4 Media and 911

The 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States has been a significant event for

Muslims around the world, fueling hatred against Islam and launching US armed

forces into two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When the United States rallied

international support to combat Islamic fundamentalism, China jumped on the

bandwagon. Gladney (2002) estimates that there are at least twenty-five

international organizations working for an independent "East Turkestan Republic."

Among these various bodies, the most important is apparently the "East Turkestan

Islamic Movement" (ETIM). The Chinese government published a report in January

2002 detailing the threat that China faces. It particularly emphasized the close link

between Osama bin Laden and the ETIM, arguing that Al Qaeda had "given much

financial and material aid to the 'East Turkistan' terrorists."[73] The U.S. State

Department listed the ETIM as a <u>terrorist organization</u> in 2002.[74] However, James

Millward (2009) argues that "China…deliberately publiciz[ed] the issue of Uyghur

dissent as 'terrorism, separatism and religious extremism,' and explicitly link[ed]

potential unrest in Xinjiang (the region was in fact quiet from 1997 through 2008)

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[73] China, State Council, Information Office. (n.d.). *East Turkistan" Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away With Impunity*. Retrieved December 12, 2009, from http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/fk/t28938.htm
[74] Ibid. 73

to Al Qaeda and the U.S. 'global war on terror.'"[75] Chapter Four has demonstrated

that state media faithfully followed this government shift in tactics.

To most Han Chinese audiences, 9/11 was just another media event, a set of

images from thousands of miles away that had no impact on their daily lives. But to

Uyghurs, as mentioned in Chapter Four, 9/11 was a watershed moment. China's

state media publicly acknowledged problems in Xinjiang and began increasingly

linking Uyghurs to international terrorism. Have *Minkaohan* noticed this shift?

How do they respond to it?

> I just feel 911 is a tragedy in the United States and has nothing to do with me. But I
> can tell that my Mom always feels some kind of affinity whenever she saw Muslims
> on TV, be it Arabic Muslims or Muslims in other parts of the world. (F-8)

> The *Minkaohan* response to 9/11 and its media coverage was far from unified. First,
> some felt indifferent to this far-away event and identified it only as an American
> problem. Others expressed their suspicion over the official explanation that it was
> the Al-Qaeda who carried out the attack, and tended to consider 9/11 an American
> plot to control Middle Eastern oil.

> Well, when it comes to 9/11, there is much controversy around it. I personally don't
> believe Muslims did it. I read on some newspaper several years ago that no Jewish
> people died in 9/11, so who is the real mastermind? (F-6)

> As an ordinary man, I am suspicious of the explanation of 9/11. I read some articles
> online saying that 9/11 was a self-inflicted tragedy by the US government in order to
> control the Middle East oil. Who knows? Of course I don't recognize violence
> because I don't believe Islam is violent. (M-5)

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[75] http://www.uyghurnews.com/humanrights/Read.asp?HumanRights=james-millward-on-free-the-uighurs&ItemID=XL-54200957103520563674l

Given that China has considered itself an ally of Arab countries, Chinese

media coverage on the Middle East has been very pro-Arab. Thus, there is no

wonder that some respondents expressed their sympathy to and solidarity with

Afghan and Iraqi Muslims. Finley (2007) identifies a similar sentiment in Xinjiang,

demonstrating that Uyghurs expressed negative attitudes toward the US and Israel

because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

In addition, some did sense the change of attitude of inland Han Chinese, who used

to be friendly to Uyghurs but became hostile due to repeated media indoctrination

that China is threatened by ETIM terrorists demanding an independent Uyghur

nation in Xinjiang.

> Since 911, media have been focusing on the Muslim background of those attackers,
> and strangely the media coverage seems to strengthen my identity of being a
> Muslim. I feel sympathetic to Iraqis, to Afghanis, and I began to hate the United
> States. I can tell that 911 is a watershed because people around me started to wear
> hijab and grow beard. It is a conspicuous change after 911 to demonstrate Muslim
> identity. (F-7)

> I think 911 changed the destiny of Uyghurs and Uyghur are the biggest victim of
> 911. Before 911, I feel the Chinese government was keeping a low profile when
> handling ethnic minority affairs, but after 911, the government openly and publicly
> links Uyghur to international terrorism. The Xinjiang government has since adopted
> a high-pressure tactic. Since the government declared its war on ETIM, state
> television has been broadcasting this struggle year after year. Gradually, ordinary
> people accept this rhetoric. Inland Chinese used to be very friendly to Uyghurs
> before 911, but that feeling has changed. (M-4)

The changes in the Chinese government's tactics toward separatism in

Xinjiang do have an impact on *Minkaohan*. Since 9/11, the Chinese government has

held a number of press conferences on its campaign against terrorism and separatism, and each time they emphasized the words "ETIM" and "Xinjiang." These high-profile public declarations were broadcast nationwide, and suddenly inland Chinese audiences realized that there were terrorists in Xinjiang. According to respondent M-7, he was singled out many times in airports for extra security checks due to his Central Asian appearance. Such brazen racial profiling has angered many Uyghurs because they witness Uyghurs subjected to extra searches but rarely see Han Chinese asked to remove their shoes.

> I think overall the image of Muslim was damaged and I am Muslim so was affected. One of the consequences of 911 is that Muslim is related to terrorist. In China, I was selected many times at the airport for extra security check because I am Uyghur. They usually just let me take off my shoes and make some phone calls to someone, possibly to check if am on some list. (M-3)

Since 9/11, Muslims worldwide have been treated with greater suspicion of negative attributes and even links to terrorism. In the United States, there have been many complaints about discrimination and racial profiling against Muslims; similar incidents have happened in Europe as well. But in China, the largest Muslim group is not Uyghurs, but Hui. So was the government targeting all Muslim groups, or just focusing on Uyghurs? *Minkaohan* respondents seem to have been aware of the difference.

> As far as I know, loudspeakers are still allowed in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. I also remember a Muslim village in Hainan province in southern China. It is very special to me because I saw a huge plaque saying, "Among everything in the world, only Allah is the true god." Those eight characters would never appear in Xinjiang even though they were written in Chinese. So I think Muslims in other parts of China are practicing Islam more freely without state interference. You know, when I was in college, the school even arranged special dormitories for Muslim students during Ramadan. We were also provided Ramadan meals during the night. We were

even allowed to miss classes during Ramadan, but all those things were happening

outside Xinjiang. (M-2)

ETIM might be a reason too. You know, Uyghurs in Xinjiang tried many times in

history to establish a Uyghur nation but never succeeded. I feel some Uyghur

nationalists might feel frustrated especially when they see other minority peoples

around them have their own nations. Well, I guess the threat of separation from

Beijing might better explain the different treatment. Muslims outside Xinjiang do

not demand separation, so they are free to practice Islam. (M-2)

Gardner Bovingdon (2010) recorded an interesting story in China's Ningxia

Hui Autonomous Region. According to Bovingdon, a Hui Muslim cleric was allowed

to establish a "virtual religious state" with one and a half million followers and a

wide network of mosques and religious schools, even though this cleric

acknowledged having heard Osama bin Laden speak and meeting many

fundamentalists while in Pakistan (p. 68). Bovingdon identifies that the price for

his religious freedom is his loyalty to the Chinese state and service in the local

People's Congress. This account, in line with M-2's observation, confirms the

differential treatment of Muslims in China. Hui Muslims, who do not oppose the

Chinese state, are allowed religious freedom and even fundamentalism. Uyghurs,

among whom some engage in separatist activities and have political agendas, are

targeted to such an extent that Uyghurs as a people are treated like a potential

troublemaker. Thus, the Chinese government has targeted a certain Muslim

minority group after 9/11 rather than the entire Muslim population in China. This

selective treatment is based on the government's political rather than religious

concerns. The government seems as if it couldn't care less about Islam as long as

Chinese Muslims are loyal to the CPC and China. State media coverage on Uyghurs also reflects the government's concern, as they focus on religious fundamentalism and terrorism in Xinjiang without ever mentioning the "religious state" in the Hui region.

2. Minkaohan Resistance

The discussion above has demonstrated that *Minkaohan* are fully aware of the simplified, partial, and biased representation of Ugyhurs in state media. In line with Hall's (2006) "oppositional code position," *Minkaohan* audiences reject the dominant encoding and find an alternative frame of reference. Hall's famous piece on "encoding-decoding" dates back to before the Internet, when the only way to probe an audience's alternative framework was by interviewing. Now, in the Internet age, researchers have one more platform to observe audiences' *decoding* process and their creation of alternative frameworks. In this section, I will combine both interviewing and observation to examine *Minkaohan* construction of alternative frames, or audience frames.

2.1. Minkaohan and the Minkaohan(MKH) BBS

The Internet went mainstream in China in the mid-1990s and had its golden age in the early 2000s. Uyghurs set up many of their own sites, some in the Uyghur language and some in Chinese. One of the most influential Chinese-language Uyghur websites is the *Minkaohan (MKH)* BBS Forum. Since its creation in 2007, this forum has become both a major platform for *Minkaohan* to express themselves and a window into Xinjiang Uyghur life for inland Han Chinese. The founder of this BBS explains its origins:

Initially, I just wanted to make some money. My salary is like nothing and I found selling software is very profitable, so I set up a website for business software and I was the first in Kashgar to sell software online. But the big problem was no one ever came to visit! In 2007, I set up the MKH BBS and the main purpose was to promote my business software. I am *Minkaohan* so a MKH forum was a natural choice. The MKH forum was very popular from the start. You know *Minkaohan* are not the mainstream in Uyghur society and a BBS offers them a platform to communicate. The forum eventually had 5,000 registered users, but about 2,000 active users and more than 800 active IP visit every day.

Visitors frequent the site to learn about Uyghur culture, engage social issues relevant to Uyghurs, and make new friends. But regardless of users' specific motivations, they exchange information on Uyghurs that challenges official depictions in state media, and thus potentially alters audience frames. According to Entman (1993, p. 53), audience frames are "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information." As the following discussion will show, the MKH BBS provides a dynamic and interactive alternative to state media that impacts "clusters of ideas" about Uyghurs for both Uyghur and Han Chinese audiences.

Most inland netizens have never traveled to Xinjiang or met a Uyghur from the region; thus, their knowledge of Xinjiang Uyghurs tends to be either outdated or based on stereotypes. On the MKH BBS, Uyghurs became real and palpable individuals, interacting directly with inland netizens for the first time in history. Unlike the state propaganda machine, which subjects all information to rigid censorship, the BBS offers more complete and original information; for some inland users, it has become a main channel to learn about Xinjiang and Uyghurs. My

interviews revealed that even *Minkaohan* themselves use the BBS to better understand their Uyghur heritage.

> I am particularly interested in postings about Uyghur history and culture. I learned many things from those postings. They are nice additions to my knowledge. I am interested in culture because I believe that culture is essential for a group of people. I think Uyghur culture in China is relatively weak. I have to do something to make it strong. (M-6)

Many *Minkaohan* fear that immersion in Mandarin schools has weakened their cultural connection to other Uyghurs. This BBS to some extent eased their anxiety by giving them a place to learn, exchange ideas, and find Uyghur-specific information unlikely to be broadcast or published in state media. In this sense, the BBS community fills a void left by traditional media production. In addition to culture and history, *Minkaohan* are also very concerned about contemporary issues in Uyghur society, such as employment. Facing the influx of Han migrants from inland China, many Uyghurs, including college students, have had a very hard time finding jobs. Respondent M-2 has personal experienced this problem and tried to help in his own way by posting a job ad on this BBS; he successfully recruited two new *Minkaohan* employees for his agency. The Internet gave him direct access to Uyghur job seekers, allowing him to bypass the government and Han-controlled recruitment channels.

> I don't have a particular interest in any certain section of this BBS, but I do focus more on the minority employment issue. I once posted a job ad for our agency. I am in charge of the recruitment, and I want more *Minkaohan* applicants to join us. It is not like I discriminate against *Minkaomin*, but the fact is that *Minkaohan* applicants are more qualified for our positions. (M-2)

The *MKH* BBS also provides an online space for *Minkaohan* to socialize and connect with each other. As a marginalized group in Uyghur society, *Minkaohan* face unique difficulties in finding a spouse. The experience of Mandarin education separates them from other Uyghurs and often makes them reluctant to marry *Minkaomin*, yet interracial marriage with Han Chinese is socially unacceptable in most cases. In Xinjiang, marriage between Uyghur men and Han women is allowed but not encouraged; Uyghur women who marry Han men are usually disowned by their families. Thus, it is best for a *Minkaohan* to marry another *Minkaohan*. The BBS is a place for *Minkaohan* Uyghurs, scattered throughout the region, to get to know each other. The founder told me there were at least three couples who got married after meeting on the BBS.

> I like this site because I want to know what others think about our people, especially those who are like me, *Minkaohan*. As an individual, your knowledge of your people must be limited, but with the help of others, you will know more. I am eager to see what I can do for my people and how to move Uyghurs forward as a whole. The topics that concern me the most involve the current situation of Uyghurs. I am also interested in *Minkaohan* relationships. What's their attitude toward love, life, and so on? I'll tell you, I just got married, and I met my wife on this forum. Initially we didn't know each other, but some prominent members of the forum organized a series of informal gatherings in Urumqi, and I met my wife on one such occasion. Once we knew each other, we realized that we had very much in common and then we started dating. Now here we are. I had high hopes for this forum because I believed there were so many like-minded people using this site. I guess I would have become another ordinary person who is busy living a mundane life without this site. (M-1)

Many postings on the site are marriage and dating tips. One of the most popular and debated postings, as mentioned by F-5, was about a marriage between a *Minkaohan* woman and a Han man. It was a personal story that attracted thousands of replies beneath the original article. The author, whom I interviewed, admitted to me that hundreds of young *Minkaohan* girls sent her messages and friend requests (as on Facebook) on **QQ** (a online chatting software) for tips after reading her story. The girls too were torn between their Han boyfriends and their Uyghur families, facing a really tough decision.

> I knew the MKH forum through a *Minkaomin* friend and since then the MKH forum had become my must-go place every day. I usually opened the MKH forum first thing in the morning. I was most impressed by one posting on *Minkaohan* marriage with Han Chinese. It was a serial and I followed that posting day after day. I remember my first post was about how excited I was to find a place of my own. (F-5)

As a result of activities and relationships enabled by the BBS, my *Minkaohan* Uyghur respondents felt a sense of belonging and achievement. The BBS became a must-go place in their daily lives; they knew that on this site, they would be able to communicate with people like themselves, with similar educational backgrounds, worldviews, and attitudes toward life. A "spiritual home" for *Minkaohan* Uyghurs (in the founder's words), the BBS has provided validation and support for contributors like F-7.

> The BBS satisfies my psychological needs. You know, I like writing, things like poems and essays, and I used to write a lot. Posting my work online would draw attention from many people with similar interests, and that made me feel good because I knew many people actually shared my interest in literature. I am not a professional writer, and writing is just my hobby, but the BBS offers me a platform

to publish my work without strict scrutiny and fierce competition, and I also made several new friends on that BBS. (F-7)

In two years of operation, the *MKH* BBS has BBS has provided what state media have no intention of providing. *Minkaohan*, who realized the limitations of state media, are using the Internet (in this case the BBS) to construct their own representation and solve their own problems. The pursuit of knowledge on Uyghur culture and history is a direct response to the absence of such topics in state media. The many posted articles on Uyghur history and culture provide an alternative source of information for both Uyghurs and inland Han Chinese, who otherwise would remain dependent on state media. It is no wonder the founder proudly said, "Many inland Chinese speak really highly of my forum and admit to me that their view on Uyghurs changed positively after communicating with *Minkaohan* in this forum." The audience frames constructed by *Minkaohan*, as reflected through their Internet practices, transform the "Orientalized Uyghurs" of Xinjiang into real and palpable human beings; therefore, the BBS functions as a direct denial of media frames manufactured by the state. This resistance breaks the state monopoly on the representation of Uyghurs. As the BBS founder claimed, "The Internet offers Uyghurs our own channel and platform to speak out for the first time in 500 years."

2.2. Examples of Minkaohan Audience Frames Online

The previous section introduced how *Minkaohan* use the Internet (BBS) to defy the state media's Uyghur representation. Next, I will show in greater depth what the alternative audience frames look like and how they are different from state media frames. I have selected two representative posts from the forum and

translated parts of them as examples of how *Minkaohan* see themselves in relation

to Han Chinese and the Chinese nation. The full translation is in the Appendix.

Essay One: On Contemporary Uyghur Political Factions and Their

Thoughts[76]

（浅议当代维吾尔政治流派及思潮）

As discussed earlier, ordinary Uyghur voices can rarely make it to state

media; usually it is only government-sanctioned comments from Uyghur officials

and "sanitized" interviews with Uyghurs. Many traditional Uyghur intellectuals are

either heavily censored or have their works banned from publication entirely.

Thanks to the Internet, we have access to the thoughts of a young generation of

Uyghur intellectuals, in this case a *Minkaohan*, on a number of pressing issues

regarding Uyghur society. Content such as this posting could never be found on

state media. Moreover, traditional Uyghur intellectuals lack the proficiency in

Chinese to deliver their message clearly to Han Chinese. *Minkaohan* are different.

Since Mandarin Chinese is their native language, they have no problem writing

thoughtful and argumentative essays as Han Chinese scholars do. Thus,

Minkaohan deliver Uyghur messages to Han Chinese in a way that Han audiences

have little problem comprehending, which guarantees the quality of communication.

The content of this essay can be seen as a direct rebuke to state

representation of Uyghurs. The basic argument of this essay is that Uyghurs are a

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[76] This essay was written in some point between 2008 and 2009. It is now available as a blog post on in the BBS founder's blogger, and in Chinese only.
http://xjmkh.blogspot.com/2009/04/blog-post_2896.html

secular people, and that in spite of Uyghur involvement in separatism and religious extremism, the mainstream is willing to be part of the Chinese nation and cooperate with the government for the sake of all Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

> *"Most Uyghurs want peace not turbulence. Most members of this mainstream are benefiting from China's reform…they would like to see problems fixed within the system…they hope Uyghurs can play a bigger role in China's opening to Central and West Asia. They hope Xinjiang will become the economic and cultural center of Central Asia. This is a win-win deal to both the state and Uyghurs."*

> *"The mainstream [political faction] is familiar with the history of Xinjiang and the contemporary situation, and based on Uyghur's political and economic power, separation is not in the interest of most Uyghur people. ETIM has the minimum number of followers but is very influential. If the economy slows down and some policy goes wrong, ETIM will develop much faster. The bulk of ETIM followers are religious extremists, madrassa students, unhappy religious scholars, clergymen, farmers, migrants, unemployed people, workers and craftsmen. Their thoughts are pan-Islamic, not nationalistic. Their aim is to free Muslims."*

This argument is in direct contrast to state media framing that Xinjiang is teeming with terrorists and that ordinary Uyghurs are closely related to the ETIM. The overall analysis presents a wide spectrum of Uyghur political factions, no less complex than CCP Party politics.

> *"Uyghurs, as an ethnic group of ten million, have various political factions and this is natural. The overseas factions that demand independence consist of two factions. One is represented by ETIM, which asks for an Islamic state with Sharia as the supreme law; the other is represented by Rebya Kadeer. I don't know much about Kadeer, but I guess her faction must be secular in order to secure the support from the West. Ms Kadeer must be on the same boat with those democracy activists, which means they oppose whatever the Chinese government supports.*

Domestically, there are two factions too. One is represented by current Xinjiang Chairman Nur Bekri, who inclines to maintain the status quo and to fight corruption and improve people's livelihood within the current system. The other faction just asks for democratization and they want Xinjiang to be democratized with the rest of China and they don't ask for separation.

The rest are groups on the margins. Some believe in the return of Communism and to Mao's age, while others argue for an Islamic state."

To some extent, this breaks the Orientalist myth about Uyghurs: readers will find out that Uyghurs are more than singers and dancers. Moreover, this essay was written as a direct communication with Han Chinese readers. The author of this essay acknowledged that many inland Han readers sent him messages saying, "I never expected that a Uyghur could write a perfect essay like this" and "It seems that not all Uyghurs are separatists and some of them are just like us."

The author is based in Kashgar, the modern center of Uyghur culture. His evaluation of the situation, based on his deep understanding of Uyghurs and southern Xinjiang, demonstrates a certain level of prescience. For example, he identified that economic problems and issues such as employment and education might cause ethnic strife if not properly handled. The July 5, 2009 riot in Urumqi was partly the consequence of unbalanced economic development and high unemployment among Uyghurs. He observed that Uyghurs could be the connection between China and Central Asia, and Xinjiang could become the cultural and economic center of Central Asia. Currently, the Chinese government is pumping billions of dollars into Xinjiang to transform it into a regional center of trade. The new Party secretary of the region has indeed switched the main focus to people's livelihood. However, nothing even close to this author's level of understanding of

Uyghur culture and society, or his ability to observe regional trends, appeared anywhere in state media.

***Essay Two: Don't indulge our "ethnic complex"*[77]** （不要放纵自己的民族情绪）

This posting addresses a different topic than the first one. When the *MKH* BBS was still open, a large chunk of its postings were about Uyghur-Han relations in Xinjiang and inland China. Users from both groups were often involved in fierce debates on current issues concerning Uyghurs and China. Sometimes, those debates became blame games. Both groups blamed each other for a number of social problems. For example, Han netizens blamed Uyghurs for not properly managing their children, so that some of them ended up as thieves in inland Chinese cities, while some Uyghurs retorted that the influx of Han Chinese and the lack of job opportunities in Xinjiang were the reasons for Uyghur crimes. The author, who was sick of such debates and finger-pointing, addressed Uyghur-Han relations in this posting. She started by recounting the good old days, when Han and Uyghurs were living peacefully together, then went on to categorize Han Chinese in Xinjiang into two groups: "old Xinjiang (lao Xinjiang)," born in Xinjiang and remaining there for generations, as compared to late-comers who were born in inland China and migrated to Xinjiang.

> "*In the alley where our home was, the left side was entirely Han, while the right side was entirely Uygur. During hot summer evenings, everyone sat together cooling off in the courtyard, talking about everyday things. The alley was filled with harmonious*

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[77] The Chinese version of essay is no longer available online. The English translation was done by Fool's Moutain Blog in 2008. I just selected parts of this blog's translation and only changed "racial complex" to "ethnic complex." http://blog.foolsmountain.com/2008/06/23/dont-indulge-our-race-complex/

laughs and chatter. The couple across the street was both teachers, "old Xinjiang" (usually Han who have lived in Xinjiang since the '50s). Our families had excellent relations. During the summer, when our fruit was ripe, we'd carry over some. When they had vegetables they couldn't finish, they'd bring it over…. later on, we moved away. Although we never sold our home in that alley, we rarely went back. After my parents retired, in recent years they've been spending their summers in that old home. During the May 1st holiday this year, I also went back. The couple across the street had moved away long ago. The alley still had Han on the left side and Uygurs to the right, but all of the Han were strangers. My mom said, the old neighbors were all rotated back to their ancestral homes (inland China), and all of these were new emigrants. The neighbors weren't interacting any longer; we were all strangers to each other… what changed?"

This categorization identifies a fact never seen in state media: that there is an indigenous Han population in Xinjiang who live in peace and harmony alongside Uyghurs. State media programs on Xinjiang are always about Uyghurs, prairies, and snowy mountains. When inland Han Chinese say "*Xinjiangren* (people of Xinjiang)," they usually mean Uyghurs rather than other ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Many Han Chinese from Xinjiang, upon revealing their place of birth to inland Han, have been told that they don't look like "*Xinjiangren.*" This ignorance on the part of inland Han Chinese is one of the consequences of state media's partial representation of Xinjiang, which concentrates on depicting Uyghurs and occasionally other minority groups instead of transmitting accurate information about the region as a whole.

The essay identifies why the "good old" Uyghur-Han relations are long gone. The author believes that "Old Xinjiang (lao Xinjiang)" were respectful to Uyghurs and conscious of local culture and traditions, whereas late-comers are ethno-centric,

refuse to mix with the local population, and only care about themselves. Moreover, the late-comers have a certain sense of superiority and look down on Uyghurs.

> *"As a Minkaohan, for a long time I've been in an environment where I work and live with Han. I've never had any sort of hatred towards any other ethnic group. I've also never had any sort of ethnic emotion… but I've found that both in life and work, only those "old Xinjiang" are really close to us. And instead, those young Han who've just arrived, they're all very arrogant, very aware of their Han identity. They only interact with people from their own ethnic group, and don't really interact with those from other ethnicities. They also have a tendency to look down upon us, even if we make a minor mistake. The sort of harmonious unity between ethnic groups that used to exist in our work units? That atmosphere has become history…."*

This posting echoed many of my respondents' accounts of the past: they too remembered when Uyghurs and Han were like one family, and attributed the change to the new Han Chinese migrants. They suggested that "old Xinjiang" were mostly Han intellectuals who came to Xinjiang with a love of the place; they truly wanted to contribute to the well-being of local people and were open to Uyghurs returning the favor with their hospitality. My respondents also believed that late-comers were mostly lower-class Han Chinese who came from inland China to Xinjiang in the wake of personal financial failure. These people certainly wouldn't bother to learn the Uyghur language or respect Uyghur culture.[78] The author finally calls on netizens to play down their different ethnic backgrounds, and pay more attention to their common citizenship and equal rights within a Chinese nation.

> *"All of us, we don't need to "take care" of each other. We aren't enemies. We are just people of different ethnicities living in China. Watch our speech, manage our "ethnic*

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[78] See Justin Rudelson (1997) for an interesting account of how Han migrants ended up in manual labor for Uyghurs in Turpan in the1980s

complex", think before speaking, and then write what is in our hearts. None of us represent anything; none of us are citizens above anyone else. No matter which side you are, I ask that you forgive the extreme speech of others […]"

She promotes mutual understanding and self-reflection, hoping Uyghur and Han users can move beyond the bickering over ethnic issues and work together again. The author of this posting actually has done what state media should have been doing all along: promoting mutual understanding and reconciliation between different ethnic groups.

2.3. The Internet Blackout

In light of the July 5, 2009 riot, the Xinjiang regional government imposed a ten-month Internet blackout on Xinjiang. Netizens in this period of time only had access to some local websites, while connections to inland China and the rest of world were physically severed. What happed to *Minkaohan* in those days without the Internet? How did they deal with this? In my interviews, conducted in the summer of 2010 after the Internet was restored, I asked for respondents' attitudes toward this state management of the Internet.

> My life was fine but I think Xinjiang's economy was badly hurt and it caused some inconvenience to my work. My job demands intensive use of the Internet but each time I clicked something, the page went blank. I did lose contact with some of the friends I know online. We just called each other occasionally to catch up. (F-10)

The Internet blackout was one of the regional government's answers to the riot. However, the ten-month-long blackout inflicted at least as much damage to the local economy as the riot itself. Some respondents reported stock market losses because they couldn't connect to the Internet, while others complained about the disruption of work routines that required regular contact with inland China. There

have been no statistics on economic losses caused by the blackout, but the disappearance of Internet service was a death sentence for Xinjiang's online businesses, such as the numerous stores on Taobao.com (China's E-Bay) selling dried fruits and other specialties from Xinjiang. Small and medium-sized Internet-dependent businesses either had to move to inland China in order to go on,[79] or abandon their operations entirely.

The Internet blackout had negative impacts on *Minkaohan* life too. Many of them were addicted to the Internet. Suddenly, a part of their daily lives was gone and they had no idea how to kill the time normally spent online. In spite of the difficulties, all *Minkaohan* respondents managed to keep in contact with one another through regular phone calls and occasional dinners if they were in the same city.

> It was like a nightmare in the beginning, but gradually I got used to it. I kept meeting with friends from the MKH forum during the blackout, just to maintain our friendship. The MKH forum is an essential part of my life. (M-6)

> The blackout had some impact on the forum; a member was jailed (Gheyret Niyaz). But we managed to keep our friendships by getting together at least once a month because we all cherish these friendships. We actually continued to discuss issues that we would have discussed if the forum were still there. This community had formed and it didn't disappear with the Internet. (F-7)

Interestingly, most respondents confirmed that their chief topic of discussion whenever they met was the riot. They said they wanted to know the "truth," which suggests they didn't accept government explanations. They were confused as to why

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[79] http://bangpai.taobao.com/group/thread/191042-6366901.htm

the government did so little to prevent the initial demonstration from spiraling into

a riot that killed almost two hundred people, most of them Han Chinese. While

condemning violence against innocent people, they seemed to buy a conspiracy

theory claiming that government "inability" was primarily a trap to lead Ugyhurs

into gruesome crimes, which would give the government "evidence" for a harsh

crackdown. In fact, the government did open fire on rioters late at night on July 5,

hours after the killing began. *Minkaohan* thus were interested in finding out how

many Uyghurs were killed that night and on July 7 when Han vigilantes exacted

revenge on Uyghurs.

> I only kept contact with a few of those I knew online. My observation of life during
> the blackout was: Uyghurs sit down together scolding Han Chinese, Han Chinese sit
> down together scolding Uyghurs, and Uyghurs and Han sit down together scolding
> the government. It seemed to me that there was no better topic than the riot.
> Everything came down to the riot. (F-9)

> Well, the blackout was devastating to me. I was so addicted to the Internet that the
> blackout seemed to destroy my entire world. For example, I couldn't read those great
> articles anymore. During the blackout, I was only interested in finding out the truth
> of the 7/5 riot. I went to the Middle East on business in late 2009 and so I had access
> to some blocked websites. But what I got were all conflicting accounts and in the end
> I found it so difficult to process all the information that I quit. I stopped trying to
> find the truth. (F-6)

The Internet was restored in May 2010, as the first thing new Party secretary

Zhang Chunxian did upon his appointment. However, many things have changed

since 2009.

I do censor myself. I wanted to initiate a discussion on the difference of life before and after 7/5, but eventually I didn't write a word because I knew this is a sensitive topic. I do have reservations. (F-8)

I have this fear and I know my activities are being monitored, so I stopped posting on certain topics [after 7/5]. Still, I am concerned that people (both ordinary people and the government) might misinterpret my words or twist my intentions. (M-6)

The resumption of Internet service in Xinjiang in mid-2010 didn't mean that *Minkaohan* could express themselves as freely as before the 7/5 riot. The biggest difference was that most of them developed fear over their online words and comments being twisted or misinterpreted by the government. One of the *MKH* BBS users, Uyghur journalist Gheyrat Niaz, was sentenced to 15 years in prison just for being interviewed by a Hong Kong magazine.[80] This sent a chilling message to all *Minkaohan* respondents, many of whom personally know Niyaz. As a result, most *Minkaohan* chose to remain silent because they didn't know "what is permitted to say and what is not." Many even chose not to discuss current affairs at home because they suspected the set-top boxes on their TV sets contained government bugging devices.

Now that the Internet is back, I know the monitoring measures are more stringent and more words have become sensitive words. For example, when I tried to send a message "I am about to explode" under heavy pressure, the message never went through. I realized that "explode" is a blocked word. Now I think Uyghurs have lost the right to speak. I mean even on the same issue we have to remain silent while members of other ethnic groups can discuss it freely. And we have to listen no matter what we want. So when my Han colleagues raised topics such as politics in

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[80] http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/25/writer-jailed-15-years

Xinjiang or the 7/5 riot, I usually would choose to leave because I didn't want to be part of that discussion. It's not like I have nothing to say, but because I am afraid people would misinterpret my words. (F-10)

Minkaohan, and Uyghurs in general, had a relatively free and secure space for online discussion before 7/5; they enjoyed this limited freedom and produced many high-quality products such as essays and articles. However, the relative freedom disappeared as the government tightened control over the Internet. Local Internet regulations were much more stringent than the national regulation that "online and cellphone transmission of separatist and terrorist activities could be met with up to the death sentence."[81] It is particularly disturbing because *Minkaohan* who were outspoken before the riot started to censor themselves and stopped their online expression. Overall, Uyghurs as a whole were further muzzled and marginalized as a result of the riot. The Internet, which was the only channel for Uyghurs to speak out, was lost. As the Chinese government can be expected to continue aggressively opposing this type of self-empowerment, Uyghurs' semiotic resistance against state media frames grows more dangerous and there are higher stakes involved in Uyghurs forging their own frames.

3. Han Chinese Response to State Media

We have discussed *Minkaohan* response and resistance to state media representation of Uyghurs. However, the main target audience of China's state media is not *Minkaohan*, but the country's majority Han population. As discussed in Section 2.2, state media are ignorant of Han Chinese in Xinjiang, thus Han

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[81] http://hk.aboluowang.com/news/data/2010/0506/article_99544.html

audience frames are not commonly found in state media either. But how do they view Uyghurs in light of state media representations? Do they totally accept what state media feed them, or do they have their own oppositional readings or frames too? As introduced in the first chapter, most of the Xinjiang Han population resides in northern Xinjiang, and 75% of the population in Urumqi is Han Chinese. Thus, the perception of Uyghurs among Urumqi Han is to a certain extent representative of all Han Chinese in Xinjiang.

I didn't interview Urumqi Han randomly; rather, I chose respondents by occupation. My twenty Han respondents are from seven occupations: college students, professors, media, government employees, business people, police officers, and People's Armed Police (PAP) officers. The PAP is different from China's regular police force in dark blue uniforms. The PAP is a paramilitary force which is better trained, disciplined, and equipped to handle urban riots and other emergencies. I didn't interview people from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) because they are not always involved in riot control. Since the 1980s, most of these situations have been handled by the PAP. The demographic information of all Han respondents is listed in the following table.

Table 8 Han Interviewees

ID	Age	Occupation	Education
F-1	34	Government Employee	Associate Degree
M-1	40	Government Employee	High School
M-2	30	Newspaper	College
F-2	23	College Student	College
M-3	25	College Student	College
M-4	20	PAP	High School
M-5	44	PAP	Associate Degree
M-6	36	PAP	College
F-3	37	Police	Associate Degree
M-7	38	Police	Associate Degree
F-4	50	Police	Associate Degree
F-5	48	Police	College
M-8	49	Professor	Ph.D.
M-9	45	Professor	Ph.D.
F-6	30	Teacher, studies Uyghur	College
F-7	30	Business	College
F-8	50	TV Station	Associate Degree
M-10	35	Journalist	Associate Degree
M-11	26	Business	College
F-9	26	Business	College

As shown in the table, most Han respondents are from northern Xinjiang, or predominantly Han areas, except three who are from southern Xinjiang or Uyghur areas. Two of them are from inland China, which means they were not born in Xinjiang and only came to Xinjiang later in their lives. How do people distinguish local Han Chinese and inland Han Chinese? The first indicator is accent. Local Han Chinese speak Mandarin with a "Xinjiang accent" and a local dialect that borrows words and tones from Uyghur. Both Jay Dautcher (2009) and Justin Rudelson (1997) have examples of Uyghur words in Mandarin in their books. For example, "*bikar*" in Uyghur means "useless" and local Hans speak "*baiker*" for the same meaning. In my interviews, I just ask my respondents to identify their origin.

3.1 General Han Perceptions of Uyghurs

When I asked my Han respondents to share the first thing that came to mind upon hearing the word "Uyghur," their responses covered a wide range of topics.

> I grew up in a Uyghur environment and the first things I think of will be their customs and culinary traditions. I will also think about their religion and related taboos, such as no pork. I know Uyghurs are a people that intermarried frequently in history, but now it is a different story. There are clear lines between Uyghur and Han. (F-1)

> First, they eat meat more than vegetables and that makes the fundamental difference from Han Chinese. When you go to Uyghur houses in holidays, they usually serve a full plate of meat without vegetables. Second, due to religion, I feel they respect their senior people better than Han Chinese. Third, they are slow to adopt new things such as new technology. For example, when I was in Southern Xinjiang, Uyghur farmers neither buy high-quality seeds from factories nor use fertilizers, so in the end they reap less than Han farmers. (M-1)

> I would think of their dancing and singing. As you know, Uyghur kids are really good dancers. I also know Uyghurs are really frugal and never waste food. I know they are following Islam and pigs are taboo, so I never mention the word "pig" when talking with them. Uyghurs also have fine handicrafts, such as their beautiful knives. (M-2)

Even though state media propagates partial representations of Uyghurs, some Han respondents demonstrated much nuanced understanding of Uyghurs during the interview. These respondents, local Han Chinese who were born in Xinjiang, grew up with Uyghurs. Thus, they had access to many aspects of Uyghur society that are not available in media and showed awareness of Uyghur food, holidays, the religious regulation against eating pork, the frugal way of life, and Uyghur handicrafts. Some of them even referred to Uyghur history in order to

explain the present, such as the college student M-3, who clearly states that Uyghur

and Han cultures are not compatible because Uyghurs are closer to Central Asia.

> Xinjiang. I think this word represents Xinjiang because most Uyghurs live in
> Xinjiang. Then I will think about their culture and history. From what I know, they
> were not Muslims initially but later converted to this religion. I know they are more
> closely related to Central Asia rather than inland China. On the positive side, they
> are candid and straightforward. On the negative side, I think they are not good
> Muslims as they claim. For example, many Uyghurs smoke and drink and even
> engage in gambling. Are they true Muslims? I feel their culture and our Chinese
> culture are not necessarily compatible. (M-3)

This observation is in stark contrast with the official line that Uyghurs are part of

the Chinese nation and Uyghur culture is part of Chinese culture. Since some level

of involvement with Uyghurs is part of their daily lives, local Han are also aware of

certain negative aspects like the drinking problem among Uyghur males, most of

whom self-identify as Muslims. But while local Han Chinese have a generally

balanced perception of Uyghurs, all PAP members expressed more negatives views

on Uyghurs.

> Uyghurs are warm-hearted. But I am not saying they are all positive. Some of them
> are involved in extremist organizations and even in terrorism. I feel this negative
> side is related to their religion. We know Islam has its extreme forms and some
> Uyghurs might be influenced by Islamic fundamentalism. The situation on the
> ground is that they would rather attend religious schools than secular schools in
> southern Xinjiang. But the situation is different in the north. I feel Uyghurs are
> more educated in northern Xinjiang. For example, my Uyghur colleagues
> demonstrate a sense of superiority to their southern peers. Uyghurs in southern
> Xinjiang are more isolated and lack access to information. (M-4)

Here the PAP member M-4 relates Uyghurs to extremism and terrorism, and this

might be due to all the propaganda he receives in the military. The Chinese military

commonly identifies the main enemy of the state in Xinjiang as the "three evils" of

religious extremism, separatism, and terrorism. Given that the ETIM was declared

a terrorist organization, Uyghurs in general are sometimes viewed as potential

troublemakers. But this officer is not a blind victim of state propaganda. He

observed that Islamic fundamentalism mostly plagued southern Xinjiang and that

Uyghurs in the north are better educated. He identified the regional discrimination

within Uyghur society, which is true; many *Minkaohan* respondents lamented that

Uyghurs in Ili look down upon Uyghurs from southern Xinjiang.

> Violence. I grew up with Uyghurs and have many friends. Strangely, we became
> friends only after we fought. I was born and grew up in a Uyghur neighborhood
> where most residents were Uyghurs. My impression of Uyghurs was that they are
> arrogant and unreasonable. They will start a fight with you for really small things
> such as a bump on the shoulder in a busy street. I should say that they are different
> once you become their friend. They are really warm and will invite you to their
> homes. I think some of them are hostile to Han Chinese, but once you become their
> friends, things are different. I have some Uyghur friends I didn't fight with--they
> were introduced by my other Uyghur friends. (M-6)

The PAP member M-6 is a soldier who grew up in a Uyghur neighborhood

and had numerous experiences of fistfights with Uyghurs his age; he understands

that teenage scuffles over small things do not mean Uyghurs are violent by nature.

The fact that he and the teens he fought eventually became friends, and that those

Uyghur teens even introduced him to other Uyghur teens, supports his view of

Uyghurs as more than thugs. Also, the lack of a common language and mutual

understanding also played a role in the initial fighting. As a part of China's law

enforcement, the PAP is crucial to the future stability of the region. How do the PAP

members' attitudes toward Uyghurs differ from those in the regular police force?

> I will first think of my Uyghur friends and colleagues. I grew up with Uyghurs in
> Kashgar and you know we were the only Han family in the neighborhood. Uyghurs
> are really warm to friends and in great love with life and cherish family values very
> much. But I feel they usually are content with the status quo and lack the
> motivation to innovate and change. Overall, some of my Uyghur friends and
> colleagues are really excellent people but there are also some of them that I don't
> want to speak a word with. (F-3)

Han police officers' perceptions of Uyghurs were basically neutral. One of them, F-3,

was born in the Uyghur city of Kashgar, grew up in a Uyghur neighborhood, and

worked in the area for more than ten years before being transferred to Urumqi. Her

knowledge on Uyghurs is mostly from her experiences with colleagues, neighbors,

and friends in Kashgar. In contrast, M-7's view on Uyghurs was very negative and

this was partly due to his inland background. He came to Xinjiang in his twenties.

> I will first think of an ethnic group. Overall I feel that Uyghurs are less educated
> and lacking civilized manners because they spit everywhere and speak loudly in
> public spaces. Many of the thieves arrested in our station are Uyghurs. They don't
> care about serious jobs and would rather sit somewhere idly for a day. They lack the
> motivation to learn new things. I don't think they are reasonable. For example, one
> Uyghur man asked for 5,000 yuan for a sheep killed in a car accident. What kind of
> sheep cost 5,000 yuan? I was also sent to inland China many times to assist local
> police handling cases involving teenage Uyghur thieves, who were either abducted
> or tricked to inland province and forced into theft. (M-7)

He works in a police station right in the middle of the Urumqi Uyghur

neighborhood and deals with Uyghur crimes every day. He recounted that almost

two hundred Uyghur rioters laid siege to their station and prepared to torch it on

July 5, 2009. The crowd was dispersed only after his colleagues fired warning shots.

It is not surprising to see this officer's negative view of Uyghurs. Perhaps more

surprisingly, professors and business people don't have favorable views on Uyghurs

either.

> The first thing I feel would be "sensitivity." I mean the mutual distrust between Han and Uyghurs. They gave me an impression that they are not reasonable and many Han Chinese have similar feeling too. Generally, I think Uyghurs are easy to hang out with, but sometimes I feel they are narrow-minded. I mean they believe everything Uyghur is the best and they are second to none. They are superior to Han Chinese. (M-9)

The professor, M-9, points out an interesting phenomenon in Xinjiang, and I term it

"reverse racism." Uyghurs have been complaining about Han discrimination for

years. One of their strategies to address this is to portray Han Chinese as "inferior

human beings" who are "dirty" because they eat pork.[82] The views of Uyghurs

expressed by the two Han businesspeople I interviewed showed racial tension and a

high degree of ambivalence; they identified Uyghurs as "backward" and admitted

they would rather "reject" them, but later mentioned that they both have Uyghur

friends whom they like and respect.

> The first thing that came to my mind was their backwardness. For example, shanty towns in Urumqi are mostly populated by Uyghurs, who lack ambition and are content with a poor living standard. Their academic performance in schools is less desirable than Han students. Moreover, it is really difficult to communicate with them. But there are positive sides also. I have very good Uyghur friends and they are warm to friends. I mean I look at them generally in a negative light, but some individuals are exceptional. (M-11)

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[82] This Uyghur racism against Han was confirmed by my *Minkaohan* respondents.

> The first impression is rejection because they are different from me, from a different ethnic group. I have been to southern Xinjiang (Kashgar and Hotan) and local Uyghur farmers there are very simple and warm, but in big cities, some Uyghurs are very poor and engage in theft. Sometimes I feel conflict internally because some of them I know are really nice but some are barbaric and prone to violence. (F-9)

F-9's suggestion that Uyghur farmers are nicer than urban-dwellers might be due to the lack of communication between Han and Uyghurs. She also believed that some Uyghurs were barbaric and prone to violence while admitting that other Uyghurs were nice to her. M-11 talked about Uyghur slums without mentioning the fact that there are Han shanty slums in Urumqi too. Both M-11 and F-9, based on their responses, appear to be biased against Uyghurs in that they demonstrate no further understanding of a people who live side by side with them.

I didn't interview enough Han Chinese to have a sample representative of all Han Chinese in Urumqi; furthermore, my respondents' feedback was too varied to be summarized into a single and one-dimensional "Han perception of Uyghurs." But based on their occupations and origins, there were indeed interesting patterns. First, local Han respondents demonstrated much more empathy of Uyghurs than those who migrated from inland. However, this is not absolute: M-11 and F-9 were born in Urumqi but obviously were not friendly to Uyghurs. As to their occupations, most of the respondents offered balanced answers, meaning they saw both positive and negative things about Uyghurs. The one exception was PAP respondents, who collectively saw Uyghurs negatively. As mentioned above, this might not represent their personal views, but rather the attitude of the state.

3.2 Han Perception of Uyghurs in Media

The previous section addressed Han Chinese personal perspective on Uyghurs. But what about the representations of Uyghurs they see on TV and read in newspapers? Are these media images consistent with Uyghurs they encounter in daily life?

> I think Uyghurs on TV are not real because they are produced for us, but in reality they are not that different from us. I feel that through all these years Uyghurs and Han are sharing more things in common. For example, Uyghurs have started to eat fried vegetables with rice and this used to be a uniquely Han Chinese way of dining. On the Han side, my son and all the boys living nearby have been circumcised, not because we are Muslims but we found it is good for boys. (M-1)

On the question of media representation of Uyghurs, almost all the Han respondents collectively dismissed Uyghur imagery as partial and incomplete, and some of them directly said it was state propaganda and therefore couldn't be trusted. This demonstrates once again the failure of state media to get its messages across. It is not only *Minkaohan* Uyghurs who lack faith in state media, but also Han Chinese in Xinjiang. With regard to content, many Han respondents complained about state media's simplistic and unvarying representation of Uyghurs as dancers, singers, or other performers.

> Most TV programs on Uyghurs are about their traditions such as music and dancing. I think Uyghur culture is open to outside cultures and they are good at learning from other peoples. For example, Uyghur dance has strong Indian elements. (F-1)

> I often see Uyghur performances on TV. Other than that, I see nothing particular on TV. I don't see a significant presence of Uyghurs. (M-2)

In Chapter Four, the content analysis identified the Orientalist portrayal of Uyghur singing and dancing as no longer a frequently used framework on front-pages. Han respondents' observations, however, indicate that there is more to this topic. The content analysis only analyzed the front-page articles, whereas cultural topics such as singing and dancing are not usually favored as front-page stories. Even though state newspapers feature much more content about Uyghurs and terrorism on front pages, cultural topics may still occupy space on other pages and in state TV broadcasts. The Han respondents' observations suggest that even though state media are shifting their focus on Uyghurs, the Orientalist portrayal has not disappeared overnight and continues to resurface every now and then.

> I think state media have to focus on particularities and differences so that [inland Han] audience members would be interested. It is natural for media to chase ratings. However, focusing too much on particularities would bring stereotypes. For example, whenever we see Xinjiang on TV, we see high mountains and minority people singing and dancing. When I was in Beijing in the 1990s, my classmates still asked me if we rode horses to school in Urumqi. It is difficult for media to offer comprehensive coverage because media by nature are stereotypical. (M-8)

It is also interesting to find that many Han respondents considered Uyghurs dancing and singing on TV to be "positive" portrayal. If so, then what kind of representation would strike them as "negative?"

> Media representation is always positive and I know that it's all propaganda. The reality is totally different. For example, I have rarely seen Uyghur drivers follow the traffic rules in this area (Yan'an Lu). They think this is their "territory," so they park everywhere and block many ways. We are just suffering endless traffic jams just because of those reckless and irresponsible Uyghur drivers. This is obviously a lack of social virtue and carelessness about others. The interesting phenomenon is

> that the Uyghur drivers follow the rules every well in the northern part of Urumqi. Why, because Uyghurs are only concentrated in the south. (M-5)

So the "negative" sides, which are not seen in media, include social problems such as traffic and drivers' behavior. It is hard to say that irresponsible driving is specifically a Uyghur problem, but M-5 made it clear that Uyghur drivers behave differently in different areas of Urumqi. To Han Chinese in Xinjiang, the absence of a faithful representation of Uyghurs proves that state media are not credible. In addition to the traffic problem, F-3 raised a more pressing problem in Xinjiang: Uyghur unemployment.

> State media usually feature positive things such as singing and dancing. They also portray them as a people in need, such as the export of Uyghur labor to inland China because they need jobs. I am sure state media lack a comprehensive treatment toward Uyghurs. For example, the young generation of Uyghurs lacks upward mobility because of the current system. I mean some of the well-educated young Uyghurs still fail to get jobs and this is not their fault. Uyghur college graduates actually have a very low employment rate. Media should pay more attention to this because it is one of the main reasons behind ethnic conflicts. (F-3)

F-3, born in Kashgar, has many personal friends who are college-educated but unemployed Uyghurs. She is well aware that Uyghur unemployment is not merely a personal matter, but rather has institutional roots. The Uyghur jobless rate, like other pressing social issues in Xinjiang, was completely absent from state media coverage. F-3 actually links this issue to social stability and wanted to see more media attention to it.

One year after my interview, the Xinjiang government under the new Party secretary, Zhang Chunxin, did start a sweeping program to boost minority employment; however, the state media's focus was on extolling the new policy

rather than tracking or investigating its effectiveness. Among my respondents was

one senior TV producer who shared some interesting details about covering

Uyghurs:

> When we are editing programs related to Uyghurs, we sometimes receive orders
>
> from the propaganda department. For example, they ordered us to delete the bus
>
> bombing in Urumqi in 1992 from one of our programs. I just mentioned that event in
>
> one sentence, but they still deleted it. Additionally, they don't like the image of
>
> minarets. You know what, I think minarets are one of the representative images of
>
> Xinjiang, but they indicated that I should remove it. I don't understand. I personally
>
> don't have any preferences or self-censorship, and the changes always come from the
>
> propaganda department. We don't have programs specifically on religion. (F-8)

It is not surprising that Urumqi TV practitioners receive orders from the

propaganda department, as this is a very common practice in China's media

industry. However, for local propaganda officials to order the deletion of a bus

bombing that happened in 1992 shows a high degree of concern over image. They

would not like both locals and inland Han Chinese to see Urumqi as a city of

violence. Similarly, in the discussion of the 7/5 riot, its causes and consequences, the

real casualty numbers, and the impact on locals were all forbidden topics in

Xinjiang. Such things did not appear in state media, and were blocked by the

Internet firewall. The government wanted to erase this tragic event from people's

memory. The erasure of the minarets reflects the government's concern about Islam

because they consider this religion a source of trouble, given Islam's potential in

mobilizing followers in Xinjiang. So state media/the government do have a particular censorship regimen on Xinjiang and Uyghurs.

All my Han respondents refused to believe the state-produced Uyghur representation because they had access to Uyghurs in their daily lives. However, the 7/5 riot was a deeply traumatic event to all Han Chinese in Urumqi, and I've heard many Han Chinese saying things like, "Our good relations with Uyghurs were completely destroyed," "Thirty years of ethnic unity is gone," or "I swear I will never again go to the Uyghur neighborhood in Erdaoqiao." How was Han perception of Uyghurs shaped by the media, and how did *coverage* of the riot change ethnic relations?

Most Han respondents identify drastic changes in their view toward Uyghurs after the riot. Most of them either personally knew friends or relatives who were killed by rioters or watched bloody videos recorded by traffic cameras or cell phones. The scale of violence and the brutality of the rioters shocked them. They cannot explain why rioters could kill innocent Han people "like slaying animals."

> This positive impression turned very negative after 7/5. I don't think I have favorable views on Uyghurs anymore. I didn't have relatives harmed or killed in the riot, but seeing my fellow Han people treated like that still makes me uncomfortable. It is the loss of a sense of security. You know, I have seen many videos and pictures of the riot and watching those innocent people murdered brutally, I just couldn't believe that this city has become a hell. I don't think the government handled this riot carefully and correctly. (F-2)

> I feel it is really difficult to explain. I mean we always have quarrels in one family, but is it necessary to kill someone? Are we supposed to be one family? My neighbor's only son was killed in the riot. Anyway, I am traumatized. There are changes. I

stopped trusting Uyghurs. I realized that some Uyghurs have no sense of right or wrong. (F-6)

Videos of the riot initially circulated freely among Han Chinese, but after Han counter attacks on July 7, the government started to censor those videos. First, they completely cut off the Internet on July 7 to prevent those videos being sent to inland China. Then, the Xinjiang government launched its campaign on "fighting illegal publications," which meant that anyone circulating those videos would be punished. In addition, the Xinjiang government started a month-long propaganda blitz to show how some Uyghurs braved the violence and saved Han Chinese from destruction. Although all Han respondents acknowledged the bravery of Uyghurs who saved Han Chinese, they were still deeply traumatized by those bloody videos and many of them secretly kept copies. They suggested that the censorship of videos and state media emphasis on Uyghur heroes was merely to appease Han Chinese and protect Uyghurs, in inland provinces particularly, from Han reprisals. Overall, the prevailing sentiment of Han respondents was that the relations and mutual-trust were badly damaged, and their attitudes toward Uyghurs changed from friendship, affinity, or indifference to rejection, distrust, and even a simmering hatred. Once again, Han respondents completely rejected state media's selective representation.

> I feel no big changes, but the mutual-distrust is damaged and we will never have the candid conversations we used to have between Uyghurs and Han. The damage to our relations is beyond words. None will raise this topic whenever Uyghurs and Han are together. (M-9)

In contrast to ordinary Han Chinese's plain expression of distrust and rejection,

PAP respondents stood closer to the official line of explanation.

> It was the act of a group of separatists. Most of those engaged in smashing, looting
> and beating were young people. They didn't have any stable jobs, so they just took
> advantage of the riot for themselves. But I don't think the rioters are separatists.
> The real separatists are using those young people to create chaos. It was the same
> when some Han Chinese rioted in inland China too. Those are just mobs who are
> only interested in looting. Now the relations between the two groups are very fragile
> and the mutual trust was destroyed and the hatred is palpable. (M-5)
>
> Well, I think it is a small group of Uyghurs that should be blamed, not the entire
> Uyghur people. But the riot absolutely caused an estrangement between Uyghurs
> and Han, and this wound requires time to heal. The mutual trust has been badly
> damaged. For example, I like to eat in Uyghur restaurants, but now you will find far
> fewer Han customers in Uyghur restaurants. (M-6)

Both M-5 and M-6 attribute the riot to a small group of Uyghur, or Uyghur

separatists, rather than underlying social and economic problems. This is in line

with the government reaction that blames Rebiya Kadeer and the World Uyghur

Congress as the masterminds of the riot. However, M-5 compares the Urumqi riot

with riots in inland China, and concludes that most rioters were not separatists, but

rather were involved in the riot just because they didn't have stable jobs. PAP

members are trained in riot control and M-5 must have studied various riot cases in

different parts of China; thus, he looks at the nature of the problem with greater

depth than ordinary Han respondents. M-6 also believed that the riot was caused by

a small number of people, but he recounted to me his duty on July 7 to show his

understanding of his mission as a soldier.

During the riot, we had to take a stand, but we were standing for the Chinese nation rather than for either Han or Uyghur. As a soldier, I had to protect ordinary Uyghurs from Han attackers too because they were innocent people like others. On July 7, when the Han protestors were confronting Uyghurs in Erdaoqiao, we managed to separate the two groups. The situation was tense. Han protestors refused to leave and we fired tear gas to disperse them. Uyghurs were nervous and our Uyghur officers told them through bullhorn that we were there to protect them. There was no need to panic. That night we stayed up all night on the street, and the next day, a Uyghur woman brought us a big wok of *polo (Uyghur rice pilaf)* for lunch and said to us, "You are here and we feel safe now." (M-6)

In fact, both *Minkaohan* and Han respondents believed that the July 7th Han counter attack shouldn't have happened if the government had resolutely controlled the situation on July 5th. They suggest that the government's failure on July 5th was indirectly responsible for the death of many Han Chinese, and this in turn fueled the anger of more Han Chinese to seek revenge against ordinary Uyghurs. At that point, the whole event was transformed from "police vs. rioters" to "Uyghurs vs. Han Chinese." Thus, no matter how neutral the PAP tried to be, Urumqi residents had to choose sides based on their ethnicity rather than as Chinese citizens. This is completely different from state propaganda claiming that "Uyghur and Han residents united to condemn separatists and safeguard ethnic unity."

3.3 Han Perception of Terrorism in Xinjiang

Chapter Four argued that state media have increasingly linked Uyghurs to terrorism. Interviews with *Minkaohan* also reflected that Uyghurs are uneasy about the negative impact this link has caused. How do Han Chinese see this problem? Do they follow the state media, or do they have their own interpretations as on other issues? I didn't ask this question to PAP members or police officers because they

were immersed in state propaganda and unlikely to give me answers based on their daily lives. With other Han respondents, I asked if they felt any threat of terrorism on an everyday basis (not what they saw on TV and newspapers). Most of them denied that terrorism or the ETIM were credible threats that had any bearing on their daily lives. Some of them were cautious because they realized that neighboring countries, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, have problems with terrorist groups. They were only concerned about possible terrorist infiltration from the other side of the border. Additionally, most of them did not recognize the 7/5 riot as a terrorist attack.

> I don't feel it for real. I don't feel the threat of terrorism at least in Urumqi and other big cities, but I am not sure about rural areas. But I believe their existence is somewhere. (F-7)

> I don't think Xinjiang actually faces the threat of terrorism. I feel that Pakistan and Afghanistan have the terrorism problem. China is a different story because our government is strong and the military is capable of handling this matter. Specifically, I don't feel ETIM is a credible threat. My life won't be impacted and I think most Uyghurs are good people and not potential terror suspects. (F-8)

> I think Xinjiang faces the threat of terrorism because countries around Xinjiang are generally poor and are not stable. Those countries are more likely to fall prey to international terrorism. Personally, I don't have any experience on terrorism and only read that on newspapers and hear that on TV. There might be some terror organizations in southern Xinjiang. (M-11)

Although *Minkaoahan* expressed concern about the negative changes in Uyghur imagery in state media since 9/11, Han respondents' answers suggested that the state media terror frame wasn't working in Xinjiang. Local Han Chinese

could tell from their everyday experiences that Urumqi was not facing imminent

terror attacks. The Chinese government and media were trying to conflate Uyghur

dissent against Chinese rule with international terrorism and Al-Qaeda, and

Millward (2009) suggests that "the Chinese public and most Chinese academics,

party-members and officials sincerely believe Uyghur terrorists pose a grave

security threat to China. ETIM is their Al Qaeda."[83] However, the interview with

Han Chinese in Urumqi suggests that the government and its controlled media once

again failed to get their message across.

We know that media messages are powerful, but audiences are also capable

of "oppositional coding," and additionally, they actively construct their own versions

of reality. Such active audience framing was analyzed in this chapter. Both

Minkaohan and Han respondents are heavy users of state media, but they reject the

state representations of Uyghurs. This doesn't mean that state media unimportant

to them. In fact, state media is highly significant for *Minkaohan* Uyghurs: state

media are the most readily available media sources to Uyghurs in Xinjiang. And

Minkaohan have no other alternative to resort to whenever they need official

sources of news because they don't read Uyghur. State media is crucial for them to

understand the government polices regarding Xinjiang and Uyghurs.   In order to

build their own counter-frames, *Minkaohan* need to know the official frame first.

State media is like a mirror, but what they see in that mirror is NOT Uyghur. Thus,

their exposure to and critique of state media ultimately consolidates their ethnic

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[83] http://www.uyghurnews.com/humanrights/Read.asp?HumanRights=james-millward-on-free-the-uighurs&ItemID=XL-54200957103520563674 1

identity. While *Minkaohan* are well aware of the biased and partial representation of Uyghur in media, Han respondents show a first-hand understanding of Uyghurs that differs from media discourse. With the Internet, *Minkaohan* respondents carefully construct their own frame of reference, which directly challenges the official representations of Uyghurs. Thus, state media representations in Xinjiang are contested and the study of audience frames in this chapter demonstrates the competition between media frames and audience frames.

Minkaohan Uyghurs are a unique group in Xinjiang society, because they occupy a strategic location between Han Chinese and Minkaomin Uyghurs. The examination of how Minkaohan and Han Chinese negotiate with and resist against state media representations is bound to help us understand not only how media works on Xinjiang audiences, but also the dynamics of Uyghur-Han relations.

Chapter-VI Conclusion

The contemporary Chinese media system is much more complex and diversified than it was thirty years ago. Although all media are owned and controlled by the state, more commercially-oriented media and Party media are competing side by side in one market. When we look at Chinese media, both commercial strategies for profit and political calculations for control are operating in almost every media organization. Meanwhile, the Internet has mounted tremendous challenges to the effects of traditional media and government control over the flow of information. Ordinary people, especially the marginalized and under-represented, have an easily available platform for communication. Even though the Chinese government imposes a firewall to filter the information and monitor netizens' online activities, savvy users still have ways to bypass the firewall and stay anonymous.

Uyghurs are represented in China's state media in a partial and biased way. These representations are created using three main methods, which are all deployed in similar ways in US media. First, Uyghurs are excluded from mainstream Chinese society and portrayed as "Other." This is meant to consolidate the majority identity of Han Chinese. Second, Han audiences usually see stereotypical, trivializing portrayals of Uyghurs in state media. The common depiction is of singing and dancing Uyghurs celebrating their simple, traditional, happy lives. Third, state media use this partial representation of Uyghurs to support the dominant ideology, which claims that all ethnic groups in China are

equally part of a unified Chinese nation. Uyghurs' unique historical and cultural ties to Central Asian countries are selectively ignored. These three techniques have political, economic, and cultural roots. In an authoritarian state, Uyghurs have no genuine representatives in the state political insitutions; lacking reliable channel to voice their concerns, they are unable to change the fact that media imagery is always manipulated by non-Uyghurs. Economically, Uyghurs are the minorities within China, and their purchasing power is quite limited in contrast to the nation's Han majority. State media are more than willing to accommodate Han Chinese and offer them an exoticized portrayal of Uyghurs to secure ratings and profit. Lastly, most media practitioners in China are Han Chinese with a cultural preference for the Han majority. The programs they produce are Han-oriented rather than fair to Uyghurs.

Chinese state media have a unique propaganda function. As introduced in Chapter One, propaganda officials have direct power to censor media content. For example, they can force TV editors to delete images of the Mosque in order to downplay the importance of Islam in Xinjiang, and they intervene in media organizations' personnel decisions whenever necessary. In this four-level media system, propaganda officials on each level are responsible for their respective media organizations. The system is quite effective in controlling and censoring information in traditional media, such as TV and newspapers. Media representations of minority groups are not as subtle as in US media; in many cases, state media resort to direct propaganda to maintain the dominant ideology. In the case of Uyghurs,

this strategy amounts to portraying Uyghurs as part of the Chinese nation historically, minimizing their differences from the Han majority, and promoting tourism. The government doesn't use one form of propaganda for everyone. It consciously distinguishes domestic propaganda from international propaganda. The state's leading English-language newspaper, *China Daily*, has reached every corner of the world, and the Chinese government is still investing in a new international news station (Xinhua News) to get more international audiences.

With the combination of commercially-orientated media organizations, direct propaganda, and external and internal communication strategies, the Chinese government has a very powerful system at hand to shape minority representation for both domestic and international audiences. Based on 143 front-page articles in state newspapers, my content analysis suggests that many articles on Uyghurs are related to economic development, which implies that Xinjiang and Uyghurs are still backward economically in relation to inland China. This is one of the frames that state media mobilized to treat various kinds of problems in Xinjiang for domestic audiences. However, for international audiences, state media increasingly connected Uyghurs to terrorism. The English-language *China Daily* featured by far the most front-page stories on Uyghurs and terrorism; it defined the problem in Xinjiang as an international one, caused by external factors such as Al-Qaeda rather than domestic policies. In crisis times, such as during the tension surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and after the Urumqi riot in 2009, social stability and crimes emerged as dominating frames in addition to terrorism

and economic development. The content analysis doesn't support the idea of "internal Orientalism," by which Chinese minorities would have been portrayed as little more than singing and dancing groups. Since the content analysis studied only the front-page articles, this finding doesn't suggest the end of Orientalistic representation of minorities in China. However, it does identify an important shift in Uyghur representation after 9/11, corresponding to an increase in negative depictions of Uyghurs as more related to terrorism and a greater threat to China. Whether this frame-building in state media is powerful in terms of constructing social realities requires further analysis. In the case of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, the definition of the problem is individualized (a group of Uyghur terrorists wreak havoc), the interpretation is one-dimensional (some Uyghurs are influenced by radical groups such as Al-Qaeda), the evaluation is grim (a grave threat to China), and treatment would be simple (strong anti-terror campaigns and rapid economic development). But how were these constructed realities (media frames) interpreted by audience members, in this case, by *Minkaohan* Uyghurs?

The in-depth interviews reveal that *Minkaohan* Uyghur audiences reject state media frames. *Minkaohan*, as much as they consume state media content, reject the state-produced Uyghur representations. They refuse to accept the singing and dancing Uyghurs on state media; rather, they would like to see more media content on Uyghur history, culture, and pressing social issues in Uyghur society. They value their distinct ethnic identity, but emphasize that this identity is not in conflict with their national identity as a part of the Chinese nation. They realize

that political separation, or independence, is not a viable option, and would like to work with the authorities to make improvements within the current system. Their personal quests for knowledge on Uyghur culture and history, their expressions of unique identities, and their recognition of one Chinese nation are a direct rebuke to the biased state representations of Uyghurs. *Minkaohan* broke the state media monopoly through the help of the Internet, which offered them a relatively free and open platform to express themselves. *Minkaohan* use the Internet for various purposes, including information, networking, and entertainment. In particular, the *Minkaohan* BBS was their spiritual home, visited on a daily basis to communicate with like-minded users and to explore topics that interested them. The two essays that I quote in Chapter Five and many other postings construct *Minkaohan* audience frames, or "mentally stored clusters of ideas" that illustrate how Uyghurs are different from state media representation and reflect specific *Minkaohan* concerns and visions about Xinjiang and China. *Minkaohan* audience frames are constructed online with the help of the Internet rather than state media. *Minkaohan* audience frames are constructed online with the help of the Internet rather than state media. Despite identifying with the Chinese nation and the pursuit of Uyghur history and culture, *Minkaohan* audience frames also include their opposition against violence and their aspirations for a democratic China, in which citizens from every ethnic group could have equality, peace, and respect, and all disputes could be handled within the rule of law. Most *Minkaohan* expectations depend on institutional changes in Chinese society, especially in the political

establishment. Given the current situation, they might not be able to see their expectations come true very soon, but the frames that *Minkaohan* constructed will continue to guide their processing of information and help them to deconstruct the dominant state representations of Uyghurs. Even though *Minkaohan* consume state media content on a daily basis, the nation's Han majority is the true target audience. Interestingly, Han Chinese tend to reject state-produced representations of Uyghurs too. For example, most of my Han interviewees didn't identify the threat of terrorism in their everyday lives, even though state media have dedicated a lot of coverage to terrorism in Xinjiang. Most of the Han Chinese I interviewed were born in Xinjiang and grew up alongside Uyghurs. It is possible that Han Chinese in inland China would adopt positions similar to those presented in state media and internalize the state's frame constructions, but Xinjiang Han rejection of such views demonstrates that state media frames are not omnipotent. For Han Chinese in Xinjiang who are working and living with Uyghurs, state media are not their only channel to learn about the Uyghur people. These Han are to some extent immune to state media frames. In terms of Han audience frames, the difference is identified before and after the Urumqi riot in 2009. Han respondents used to view Uyghurs just as another ethnic group in Xinjiang; some even expressed affinity for Uyghur people and their culture. However, the traumatic experience of the bloody riot instilled a sense of fear into many Han respondents, and their attitudes have changed to distrust, rejection, and even hatred. Even though state media built a campaign to promote the heroism of some Uyghurs, it achieved little in changing

Han perceptions. The importance of identifying Han audience frames lies in that the Han perception of Uyghurs is vital to peaceful ethnic relations in Xinjiang. The negative turn of Han perception after the 7/5 riot means that it will take a long time for this wound to heal.

Overall, state media frames do not work on either *Minkaohan* Uyghurs or Han Chinese in Xinjiang. State media frames have tried to shape perception of Uyghurs after 9/11 by means of a terrorism frame, and have hyped social stability and economic development in the aftermath of the riot in 2009. This frame-building by state media has been countered by both *Minkaohan* Uyghurs and Han Chinese in Urumqi. While Han Chinese questioned state media's comprehensiveness, *Minkaohan* doubted state media credibility and challenged the state monopoly on information and Uyghur representation via the Internet, until access was cuff off in the summer of 2009. Additionally, Han respondents also rejected the state portrayal of Xinjiang as a place ridden with terrorism. They made it clear that terrorism did not impact their daily lives. This study of media and audience frames demonstrates the necessity of examining both media and audience frames in framing analysis, especially in an authoritarian context. Mass media messages are not magic bullets: the effect depends not only on how media mobilize frames, but also on how audiences interpret, resist, and rebuild those frames. Thus, audience frames (Entman, 1953) are more than "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individual processing of information." Audience members are more active than merely storing media frames and then processing information based on them. In

this dissertation, I discovered that Han respondents' rejection of state media frames made it impossible for such frames to "guide" them in processing future Uyghur-related information. *Minkaohan* respondents not only rejected state media frames but went further by replacing them with their own social reality as expressed in an online forum.

Hall's (1972) "oppositional position" is still relevant to study audience resistance today due to its emphasis on the relationship between audience interpretations and their social positions. However, this dissertation suggests that his theory falls short concerning applications of the Internet. Audiences in the pre-Internet age were capable of resisting dominant ideologies, but that resistance was individual and isolated. They lacked a channel to express and share the resistance with others. In China, where traditional media are tightly controlled by the state, the Internet becomes the only media platform to which average audiences have easy access. With the Internet, *Minkaohan* build a set of frames that are in direct competition with the dominant constructs. *Minkaohan* mobilize online to make their frames effective. Their definition of the problem does not point to a bunch of "terrorists," but rather to a set of endemic social, cultural, and economic factors in Xinjiang. Their interpretations do not blame "outside influences," but rather the inadequacy of state policy on Xinjiang and Uyghurs. They evaluate problems not as a "threat to China," but as issues to solve within the current system. The treatment they would like to see involves equality, the rule of law, and democratic institutions. Thus, framing theory is ideal to examine the presentation of such issues, and in the

Internet age, it is indispensible to incorporate the examination of audience frames in order to better understand the effects of media.

Two years after the Urumqi riot, we haven't seen any major changes in the state media's representation of Uyghurs, but *Minkaohan* are no longer active in expressing themselves because of tightening state control over the Internet. Without this platform, how *Minkaohan* will continue their resistance against partial and biased representations and assert themselves remains to be seen.

Future Research

Upon finishing this dissertation, there are several issues that remain unexplored. They are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but would be worthy of future research. First would be an expanded content analysis. The current analysis in Chapter Four identifies a major shift in Uyghur representation by examining front-page articles. But what about the old "singing and dancing" representation that may still appear in other parts of the newspaper? What is the status of "internal Orientalism" in news coverage as a whole? Judging from interview responses, such depictions might still feature prominently in places other than the front page. Future research could also include more *Minkaohan* respondents. This dissertation only focuses on those who use the *MKH* BBS. Perhaps a future study could go beyond this BBS and study how *Minkaohan* use state media and the Internet in general (i.e., more websites and applications), and include *Minkaohan* respondents from all walks of life. This dissertation doesn't include inland Han

Chinese; it would be interesting to see how inland Han and Xinjiang Han Chinese differ in their attitudes and perceptions in relation to Uyghurs. With regard to *Minkaohan* identity, the Han Chinese "Other" shapes their self-identification; but at the same time, their *Minkaomin* brothers and sisters constantly remind them what they are and what they are not. Future research on *Minkaohan* identity should include both Han Chinese and *Minkaomin* Uyghurs. The future research would also contribute to the general discussion and the problem of ethnic issues within larger states.

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Appendix

1. Reliability Testing Results for Items Used in this Study

Variable	Reliability Score
Description of articles (all items):	
Newspaper, date, location	1.00
Themes	
Poverty	.93
Arts/Performances	.84
Religion	1.00
Economy	.92
Aid from Inland China	1.00
Agriculture	1.00
History	1.00
Culture	.84
Employment	1.00
Terrorism	1.00
Separatism	1.00
Ethnic Unity	.92
Tourism	.84
Sports	1.00
Crime	.84
7/5 riot	1.00
Natural Resources	1.00
Social Stability	.92
Education	1.00
Other	1.00
Sources Cited/Quotes	
Local government	.91
Central Government	1.00
The CPC	.89
Foreign Government	1.00
Human Rights Organizations	1.00
World Uyghur Congress	1.00
Other Exiled Groups	1.00
Academic/university researchers	1.00
Uyghur resident	1.00
Han resident	1.00

Foreign resident	1.00
Business/industry group	1.00
Terrorism experts	1.00
Chinese media	1.00
Foreign media	1.00
Religious Personnel	1.00
The Law Enforcement	1.00
Gender	
Male	1.00
Female	1.00
Both	1.00
Cannot Identify	1.00
Location	
Urumqi	1.00
Northern Xinjiang	1.00
Southern Xinjiang	1.00

2. Questions for Minkaohan

1. *Tell me something about yourself (age, sex, religion, years of formal education, employment, language spoken, type of school attended).*

2. *How often do you use media? (Address each medium individually: TV, newspaper, the Internet) Probe: Which newspaper/TV program do you read/watch most? Any must-read sections or must-watch programs? Which Internet sites do you visit most frequently? When did you first use the Internet? Why? What kind of things did you do online? How and when did you find this BBS? What was your first posting about? How often do you visit this site? Do you visit other Uyghur sites? Which sections of this BBS do you visit most often? Anything of particular concern to you?*

3. *How do you identify yourself, culturally and ethnically (Uyghur/Muslim)? Which is more important to you and why?*

4. *Is there anything in media that influenced how you identify yourself? Probe: which is your first identity, and second, etc.? The impact of Minkaohan BBS?*

5. *How are Uyghurs portrayed in media? (Examples on TV/newspaper/Internet)*

6. *What are your comments/feelings on how Uyghurs are represented in media?*

7. *Where do you get your information on religion? (TV/newspaper/Internet or other?)*

8. *Are current media programs meeting your religious needs? (Does any program address religion? Do you need authoritative sources/figures?)*

9. *How do you want your children to study/learn religion? How do you want your kids to be educated (Minhaokan or Minkaomin)? What is your attitude toward Minkaomin?*

10. *How did 9/11 affect you as a Uyghur? (Uyghur/Muslim/Minkaohan)*

11. *In your opinion, was there an increase in tension between the state and Islam after 9/11?*

12. *What is your opinion on the government's management of media? Probe: Did you feel you were putting yourself or your family at risk by writing on a Uyghur site? Did you ever think your postings were being monitored? Did you as a result censor your own words or write in a kind of code? Were you completely free to write whatever you wanted? How did you and your on line community deal with these issues?*

13. *Did you/do you meet in person with the on line community? Where does "on line" and "in person" come together?*

14. *What happened when the BBS was closed down? What impact did it have on you, your family, and your online community? Did you meet in person? Or what did you do to carry on the conversation that you had been engaged in on line? Did you find alternatives to the Internet?*

15. *Now that the Internet is restored, do you feel any changes / differences / fear / self-censorship or other sentiment while on the Internet?*

16. *What is your opinion of Western media? (Have you ever seen any? How much do you know about them?)*

17. *What do you know about Al Jazeera?*

18. *Do you know Facebook and Twitter, or the Chinese versions of them?*

19. *Discuss the role of the Internet in the riot last summer.*

3. Questions for Han Chinese

1. *Tell me something about yourself (age, sex, religion, years of formal education, employment, language spoken, type of school attended).*

2. *When you hear the word "Uyghur," what comes to your mind first? What is your perception on Uyghurs generally?*

3. *Where do you get your information/knowledge about Uyghurs?*

4. *In your opinion, how are Uyghurs portrayed in media? (Examples)*
    Media: Radio, TV, newspaper, the Internet, cell phone, etc.

5. *What are your comments/feelings on how Uyghurs are represented in state media?*

6. *Do you have Uyghur friends offline or online (Minkaohan and/or Minkaomin)?*

7. *What was the impact of the July 5th riot on your perception of Uyghurs? (Changes)*

8. *What is your opinion on Western media? (Have you ever seen any? How much do you know about them?)*

9. *Do you know Facebook and Twitter, or the Chinese versions of them?*

10. *What do you know about Al Jazeera?*

11. *Do you feel the threat of terrorism in Xinjiang? Does it exist at all?*

4. Essay One: On Contemporary Uyghur Political Factions and Their Thoughts[84]
Author: The Founder of MKH BBS

Uyghurs, as an ethnic group of ten million, have various political factions and this is natural. The overseas factions that demand independence consist of two factions. One is represented by ETIM, which asks for an Islamic state with Sharia as the supreme law; the other is represented by Rebya Kadeer. I don't know much about Kadeer, but I guess her faction must be secular in order to secure support from the West. Ms. Kadeer must be on the same boat with those democracy activists, which means they oppose whatever the Chinese government supports.

Domestically, there are two factions too. One is represented by current Xinjiang Chairman Nur Bekri, who is inclined to maintain the status quo and to fight corruption and improve people's livelihood within the current system. The other faction just asks for democratization and they want Xinjiang to be democratized with the rest of China and they don't ask for separation.

The rest are groups on the margins. Some believe in the return of Communism and to Mao's age, while others argue for an Islamic state. As for those who are calling to "kill off all Han and annihilate Hui," I think we can just ignore them because this is already the 21st century!

So overall, most of those political factions are secular except one asking for an Islamic state. This reflects the current situation. Uyghurs are a secular people in general. Among all these factions, the one represented by Chairman Nur Bekri is most influential and has the most followers. They are the mainstream and as pragmatists, they are in line with the inland thought of "less ideology and more interest" (shaotan zhuyi, duotan liyi). They are reluctant to get stuck in the debate about theory or religion and ethnicity. They tend to maintain national integrity and oppose separation.

Most Uyghurs want peace not turbulence. Most members of this mainstream are benefiting from China's reform…they would like to see problems fixed within the system…they hope Uyghurs can play a bigger role in China's opening to Central and West Asia. They hope Xinjiang will become the economic and cultural center of Central Asia. This is a win-win deal to both the state and Uyghurs.

The mainstream is familiar with the history of Xinjiang and the contemporary situation, and based on Uyghurs' political and economic power, separation is not in the interest of most Uyghur people. ETIM has the minimum number of followers but is very influential. If the economy slows down and some policy goes wrong, ETIM will develop much faster. The bulk of ETIM followers are religious extremists, madrassa students, unhappy religious scholars, clergymen, farmers, migrants, unemployed people, workers, and craftsmen. Their thoughts are pan-Islamic, not nationalistic. Their aim is to free Muslims.

[…]Rebya Kadeer's faction is under the flag of nationalism and democracy. They are very influential to petit intellectuals, business people, writers, artists, and the city lower class…They are not the mainstream, but their call of nationalism and non-violence is very appealing to many. Meanwhile, their weakness is also obvious. Basically, they have no solution on people's livelihood and the development of Xinjiang…they are only interested in political power, so most Uyghurs won't risk their lives and property for them.

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[84] This essay was written in some point between 2008 and 2009. It is now available as a blog post on in the BBS founder's blogger, and in Chinese only.
http://xjmkh.blogspot.com/2009/04/blog-post_2896.html

[…]In terms of ideology, pan-Islamism has the decisive advantage but it is not applicable at all because it will only lead to chaos and disaster. If the poverty problem in the countryside was not handled properly and more people returned to poverty, pan-Islamism would gain strength. Unemployment in cities and unfairness in education would increase the power of Kadeer's faction…If the Chinese government managed to raise people's incomes, properly reformed China's housing, education, and medical care system, and set up safety net for urban and rural low-income groups, the mainstream political faction would be empowered.

5. Essay Two: Don't indulge our "ethnic complex"[85]
Author: Mahliya

      I've been silent for several days; I've maintained my silence out of doubt. These few days, I've been thinking a lot. I've been thinking of my childhood; at the time, I was the only minority student in my class, and all of my friends were Han. We went to school together, went home together, and played together. In the alley where our home was, the left side was entirely Han, while the right side was entirely Uygur. During hot summer evenings, everyone sat together cooling off in the courtyard, talking about every day things. The alley was filled with harmonious laughs and chatter.

      The couple across the street were both teachers, "old Xinjiang" (usually Han who have lived in Xinjiang since the '50s). Our families had excellent relations. During the summer, when our fruit was ripe, we'd carry over some. When they had vegetables they couldn't finish, they'd bring it over…. later on, we moved away. Although we never sold our home in that alley, we rarely went back. After my parents retired, in recent years they've been spending their summers in that old home. During the May 1st holiday this year, I also went back. The couple across the street had moved away long ago. The alley still had Han on the left side and Uygurs to the right, but, all of the Han were strangers. My mom said, the old neighbors were all rotated back to their ancestral homes (inland China), and all of these were new emigrants. The neighbors weren't interacting any longer, we were all strangers to each other… what changed?

      An incident let me understand the answer to that question. That day, I had just gotten home, and were all in the courtyard. Suddenly, a Han girl pushed the door open and came inside, asking, "Did anyone see a chicken? Our chicken ran away." My dad was busy digging a drainage ditch said, "Sure, saw it." The girl paused for a second out of confusion, and then said, "Yesterday we forgot to close our front page, the chicken ran away… I'm asking door to door." She kept explaining. My dad said again: "Sure, I saw it." Haha, I know my dad's got a sense of humor, loves to make fun of people… so I said: "Dad, stop teasing, she'll think you're serious." My dad said: "I wasn't teasing, I really did see it." The girl stood there, not knowing what to say… so she kept explaining what her chicken looked like. My dad laughed, and said, "I told you I saw it, your family's chicken wandered into our home last night. We were afraid it would eat from our little garden, but if we pushed it out, we were afraid someone else would eat it. So, we put it in our chicken coop, and were waiting for its owner to come fetch it." Wow, he really had seen it!

      The girl called over her husband, and they carried the chicken away. As she left, she just muttered "that's our chicken, we're taking it!" I was a little unhappy: "Not a word of thanks! As if we were intentionally trying to hide their chicken?" My dad said: "As long as they don't suspect we actually stole their chicken, that's already pretty good. Who cares about thanks?" I said: "Why'd you keep it! You should've shooed it away last night." My dad said: "If that chicken really was lost, everyone in this alley would be a suspect, is that any good? It's good enough if they're happy." Today, people and people no longer have that

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[85] The Chinese version of essay is no longer available online. The English translation was done by Fool's Moutain Blog in 2008. I just selected parts of this blog's translation and only changed "racial complex" to "ethnic complex." http://blog.foolsmountain.com/2008/06/23/dont-indulge-our-race-complex/

mutual trust. They grabbed their chicken left; even if they ran into my dad later on, they probably wouldn't even greet him… how could there be any neighborly feelings left? As a Minkaohan, for a long time I've been in an environment where I work and live with Han. I've never had any sort of hatred towards any other race. I've also never had any sort of racial emotion… but I've found that both in life and work, only those "old Xinjiang" are really close to us. And instead, those young Han who've just arrived, they're all very arrogant, very aware of their racial identity. They only interact with people from their own race, and don't really interact with those from other races. They also have a tendency to look down upon us, even if we make a minor mistake. The sort of harmonious unity between races that used to exist in our work units? That atmosphere has become history….

I used to never think about the past this way. With work pressure and the constant competition in society, I don't have the time to relax and really chew over these issues. I came to this forum just to relax, have fun, be myself. I've also heard friends introduce "Uygur Online" (ed: internet forum for Uygur just closed by the government, more details below); I logged in once, and I was scared away by the dark smoke (ed: it has a reputation for being heavy on angry racial rhetoric) in there, and I've never been back. But now that forum has been closed, a bunch of characters from that forum have migrated here. Our forum has been filled with Uygur Online topics for several days now. Many have expressed their unhappiness at "Uygur Online"'s suppression, and this leads to a battle of tongues…. I normally don't care about these either, but after stumbling into these heated topics, I found myself quickly sucked into the discussion. Only then did I realize that I had such a deep "racial" complex.

Looking at the forum, no matter what the topic of debate is, it always ends up being an issue of race. When I see Han and Uygur debating, and then some excessive language… I grew really angry. Some people are recklessly dragging in various conflicts, and endless debate around the topic of "Uygurs are so and so… Han are so so so… Koreans are so so so…. Because Uygurs are this way so Han are that way… Because Han are that way so Uygurs are this way…" This kind of debate can have no conclusion, but quickly draws up hostile emotions on both sides. To tell you the truth, for a few days, I was really angry at those Han debaters. Their arrogant speech, repeatedly claiming they represented the Chinese government, that they're the real masters of China, completely ignoring the feelings of all other minorities with the same legal rights as masters of China.

One person kept emphasizing: "If you're anti-China, if you stir up trouble, if you curse Han people, I will … something something…" An attitude as if he was China's bodyguard, a sense that we had all become separatists, all supporters of Xinjiang independence. I participated in some debates; although I knew I wasn't much of a debater, but I have the same blood and flesh, and I felt a need to defend my own race, I couldn't let others insult and curse at my race. I wasn't that extreme, and could only use my typical warm style to extinguish the fierce fires held by those extremists… but in doing so, I hurt myself. I don't deny that I have a "race complex". I've just discovered it these few days; seeing my compatriots cursed, I wanted to help. When I saw my own race being cursed, I really couldn't take it. And at the same time, I realized every race has a race complex!

We can all calm down, and turn back and look at our own words and actions. That way, in one of my short posts, I mentioned an idealistic world, an innocent online platform. I have no interest in emulating Uygur Online, but I really hope for a fair environment where everyone can say their piece, say what's in their hearts. But that kind of environment can only be realized by thousands of users joining together… and now I realize how childish and immature that hope was.

These days, I've been silently thinking of many things. All of this heated debate are all borne of one thing: all of us are indulging in our "racial complexes".
All of us can reflect and reconsider.

Here, no one is anyone else's enemy. There are no Xinjiang-independence seekers here; there is no one looking to inflame racial emotions; and absolutely no one here threatening our motherland's safety. We're on a platform where there are no class divides; no one is better than anyone else, no one is anyone else's master Don't randomly accuse each other of crimes, and don't push all problems onto race. We should discuss issues on the basis of facts; we shouldn't defend or protect perspectives that aren't right; we should all try to be objective. Don't type without thinking. Otherwise, we'll all accumulate anger, and then we will become real enemies. Can we all stop and think about what we're doing? Control your mouths, and control your keyboards. Otherwise, we're all criminals.

Don't indulge your racial feelings. Try to think about problems from the perspective of others. Good and bad, how many of us can really clearly understand it? Don't think of yourself as an Internet policeman; there are already professionals on the job. Don't hurt the feelings of other minorities; it's not just you and me that are hurt, but our country will also suffer. If you really love our country, then please don't let your passions flow out in a flood; just maybe, the sentence you're about to type without thinking could bring disaster to the country. Everyone, let's be more low key.

All of us, we don't need to "take care" of each other. We aren't enemies. We are just people of different races living in China.
Watch our speech, manage our "racial complex", think before speaking, and then write what is in our hearts. None of us represent anything, none of us are citizens above anyone else. No matter which side you are, I ask that you forgive the extreme speech of others… just think of it as a black bubble that can't survive in an atmosphere full of oxygen.