

# **The Enterprise of Chinese Nationalism**

*People as Consumers of Discursive Formulations, 1997-2009*

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis titled **The Enterprise of Chinese Nationalism: People as Consumers of Discursive Formulations, 1997-2009** submitted by me in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** at Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

  
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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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**DEDICATED TO**

**My Quest for China**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BAC	Buddhist Association of China
CBRC	China Banking Regulatory Commission
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCTV	China Central Television
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPCCC	Communist Party of China Central Committee
CPLAC	Central Political and Legislative Affairs Committee
CPPCC	Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference
CSSTA	Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration
DIIR	Department of Information & International Relations
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
ECFA	Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement
ETIM	East Turkistan Islamic Movement
ETIM	East Turkistan Islamic Movement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GWD	Government Work Department
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
IMAR	Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region
KMT	Kuomintang
MSAR	Macao Special Administrative Region
NED	National Endowment Democracy
NRA	National Regional Autonomy
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
PLA	People’s Liberation Army
PRC	People’s Republic of China
REAL	Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law

RFA	Radio France Asia
ROC	Republic of China
RTL	Re-education through Labour Programme
SARA	State Administration for Religious Affairs
SASAC	State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council
SEF-ARATS	Straits Exchange Foundation – Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits
SFTI	Students for Free Tibet India
TAR	Tibetan Autonomous Region
TBA	Taiwan Business Association
TCHRD	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
TECC	Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre
TG-iE	Tibetan government in Exile
TIN	Tibet Information Network
TIPA	Tibetan Academy of Performing Arts
TWA	Tibetan Women’s Association
TWF	Tibet Work Forum
TYC	Tibetan Youth Congress
UAA	Uyghur American Association
UFWD	United Front Work Department
UHRP	Uyghur Human Rights Project
UIA	Uyghur Information Agency
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UWFD	United Work Front Department
WDC	Western Development Campaign
WUC	World Uyghur Congress
XPCC	Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps
XUAR	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region



## PREFACE

Nationalism as an idea has had immense appeal for me since very early days of my institutionalisation into higher studies. Right from instances of nationalist revivals in contemporary India to the increasingly buoyant rhetoric on nationalism in contemporary China, my experiences in learning have been exhilarating to say the least. It was not just a matter of coincidence that when I started my foray onto this topic in the Chinese demesne, public emotions ran high on the Olympics fervour in China and in addition the various incidences of ethno-nationalist uprisings were giving the Chinese administration a tough time. Both these trends combined nationalism in China made a subject of great interest to the students of my generation.

Over the previous decade, as I have come to know China largely through the eye of an outside observer, I continue to be in awe and enchanted by the spectre that China presents to young researchers. China has been seen largely as a country with dynamic economy that pulled millions of its people out of poverty in a short while as compared to many other rising states, yet the scale of contradictions and complexities that are currently unravelling in China render useless any simplistic analysis. It has not been only difficult to gauge the Chinese thinking merely on account of being not being so proficient in the language but also as the society itself presents myriad challenges wrapped in the form of multiple ethnicities, multiple languages, multiple landscapes as well as multiple strands of strategic thinking. It has been therefore my endeavour to at least try an attempt an understanding of the dynamic that influence the subversion or revival of nationalistic sentiments in China.

At my M Phil level I chose to write on the depiction of nationalism in China's public sphere by assessing its presence in the cinematic and sports realm using Habermas as a guide, however, it has been my attempt to look into the more harder aspects of nationalism and how ethno-nationalism is being controlled by the Central authorities in an enterprise to keep the fabric of the Chinese state together. Therefore, this doctoral thesis has been crucial to my understanding of how Chinese nationalism has developed historically and how it has portrayed at the international level.

This enterprise has not only meant doling out economic incentives to keep the peripheral regions under the control of the State but also hedging a flurry of human rights abuses ostensibly under the garb of ‘non-intervention into the domestic affairs’ of China. Despite all the criticisms on neglected ethnicities and corrupt business practices, China essentially remains a society that aspires growth on its own terms rather than bowing down to the demands of western political systems. There is some overlap though as a consequence of global pulls and pushes and China’s adoration for the West such as the recent switch-over to the American military system of command controls, yet China holds on to its eccentricities by dubbing all that is inexplicable under the maxim of Chinese characteristics. In consequence we are witnessing an era that is dominated by ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’, ‘nationalism with Chinese characteristics’ and even a ‘market model with Chinese characteristics’.

I have been fortunate to have visited several Chinese cities over the period of my association with Chinese studies and also to have worked with two prominent research institutions – Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) and Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) in New Delhi, which have substantially benefitted my Knowledge of China. I’m especially grateful to my colleagues Anu Sharma, Dr. Shalini Chawla and Hina Pandey who have helped me through my course at the CAPS. Though I did not have the opportunity to study the mandarin language in detail, but the regions that I deal with in this project are largely constituted by non-mandarin speaking communities and hence I do not believe that language has been a substantial barrier to my understanding of China’s ethnic issues. Though the content would have reasonably benefitted if I would have been better equipped with language skills; that however remains an ordeal for the future. This thesis, for now, can be considered as my attempt to introduce how nationalism plays an important role in the way China deals with its minority nationalities and how the minority nationalities respond to state policing and methods of control. I undertake that no part of this thesis has been presented or published elsewhere.

# **CHAPTER – 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

“Long live the Great Unity of the Chinese People!

Long Live the People’s Republic of China!

Long Live the Central People’s Government!”

exclaimed Mao Zedong on 30 September 1949 addressing the First Plenary session of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference beckoning the memories of the long years of struggle by the Chinese people. He cited the unceasing struggles of generations of Chinese in overthrowing oppression by the imperialists and attaining their goal of a united China. Nonetheless, in retrospect, he conceded one of the most significant reductions to the national goal by allowing for the provision of regional autonomy instead of integrating all the provinces in one go in 1949; the explanation being that the situation was still not ‘ripe’. Remarkably he was also one of the first leaders to recognise the limits of Han Chauvinism and how ideas characteristic of the Kuomintang and the landlord class and the bourgeoisie needed to be criticised (he noted local-nationality chauvinism must be opposed too) and education was to be assiduously carried out to solve the problem step by step (Mao Zedong 1977). And though he called for working conscientiously with the minority nationalities to train cadres along with intellectuals, industrialists, leading religious figures, democratic personages and businessmen, as a part of the United Front Work, today, half a century hence, China still finds itself struggling with the lingering question of assimilating its minorities. Amongst the many pressures that China faces today, separatism and ethnic nationalism rank the highest. It has been therefore China’s prime concern to keep the fabric of the nation together.

While transiting from an anti-colonialist mode of nation-building during the British century to a more development-oriented nation, China had struggled to maintain its hold on the external regions. According to its first constitution (1954), minority groups residing in traditional habitats are authorized for the rights of regional autonomy. In its pursuit to encourage an inimitable national form of “diversity and unity within Chinese configuration” consisting of 56 equal constituencies or *minzu*, Chinese nationalism has become manifest in various forms over the past few decades

as China continues to face internal threat from the separatist tendencies in its border regions (Wu and He 2018: 185-215). That is, sometimes in the garb of economic nationalism, while at other times in the form of ethnic nationalism. According to the details released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2013, of the 1,354,404,000 population in Mainland China more than 91 per cent belong to the Han majority while the rest of the population is constituted by its ethnic minorities.

The extent of strain on its national fabric is pronounced by the fact that though small in numbers these ethnic minorities are spread over huge chunks of the Chinese mainland (*xiao jizhong da fensan*). They occupy almost 64.3 per cent of the PRC territory (Wang and Chen 2001: 4-5) and are commonly referred to as “big dispersion and small concentration” (*dazaju xiaojuju*) and play a significant role in China’s relations with its bordering regions. To keep a check on the ethnic populations the Chinese state has maintained the policy of Han migration to minority areas as check on their population. The simmering discontent among the Tibetans and the sporadic unrests among the Muslims in Xinjiang in recent times indicate the inability of the Chinese leadership to deal satisfactorily with the national question and protect its image internationally. Though provision had been made since the very beginning to provide counter-balances against the regional actors, for instance, both the 1952 Program for Implementing Regional Autonomy and the 1954 constitution explicitly state on behalf of the central government that autonomous units at county, prefectural and provincial levels would have governmental organs broadly similar to those at the corresponding levels at the centre, but these measures have not been effective in preserving the system of *minzu regional autonomy*.

The problem is further complicated due to the role that these provinces play regionally as they constitute potentially dangerous issues which could affect the Party’s legitimacy, regime stability and national sovereignty. While Xinjiang is instrumental in China’s policy vis-a-vis Central Asia, Tibet has been at the core of Sino-Indian relationship since the Dalai Lama took asylum in 1959 in India as well as the United Nations and similarly, Inner Mongolia remains a vital region that helps to connect China with Russia and Outer Mongolia. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Macao Special Administrative regions (MSAR) also play a significant role in China’s international conduct, especially with the

western countries and Europe, as they are often cited as illustrations of China's ability to cope up with dissent by allowing for special liberties and yet these regions are not without their own set of problems. Therefore, frequently China has found itself at the centre of controversies for its perceptibly hyper-nationalist interventions in its autonomous regions and its inability to offer and sustain sufficient democratic prerequisites in its polity. It is determined to achieve its unidirectional goal of maintaining national unity notwithstanding the cost to regional autonomy. Moreover, the relentless attempts at historical legitimation of its own version of historical perceptions on China's national unity have kept it at loggerheads with its own minority population which harbours different ethnic, linguistic and cultural allegiances.

The Chinese state upholds that it promotes affirmative action approaches to engulf all communities for the larger goal of nation-building and envisions itself as a fundamentally benevolent entity working for the prosperity of the greater Chinese family. This is evident in the speeches and reports given by the leadership, right from Mao to Xi Jinping. In legal terms the minorities are assured of cultural and religious freedom under Article 4 of the Constitution (1982) of the People's Republic of China which states that "all nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal," but in practice the violability of this assurance is exposed by undeniable Han dominance in most spheres of the country. The impact of alienation of the minorities is clear in the change of the nomenclature from 'nationalities' to 'ethnicities' after 1988.

Consequently, the minorities find it difficult to relate to the national goal of unification and are pressing for more political, economic and religious autonomy modelled on the right to self-determination under a federal system which was initially offered to them by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) but found no mention in the *Common Program* approved by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in September 1949 (Zhao 2004: 173-174). Though, regional leaders have started to accommodate the national vision taking note of the fact that the Constitution strictly *prohibits secession*. The leaders or representatives of these minority regions have chosen to voice their concerns under different sets of rubrics for instance "genuine autonomy" or "right to ethnic liberties and preservation". While the Dalai Lama promotes a 'Middle Way Approach' which would grant high degree of

autonomy in Greater Tibet, on the other hand, the World Uyghur Congress, which spearheads the Uyghur struggle from abroad, has been demanding more regional autonomy in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

At the same time though China was considered to have successfully assimilated Hong Kong and Macao under the ‘one country, two systems’ approach, the recent protests for greater democracy that erupted in September 2014 under the garb of the Umbrella movement convey a completely different message. It has also not been so successful in bringing Taiwan (Republic of China) under its political leadership so far. Hence, the state and the political machinery in China is, even today, rigorously focused on achieving the national goals of unity and brotherhood of a socialist system under the “democratic dictatorship” of the CCP. Towards this aim, it is employing both historical and contemporary discourses to gain national and international acceptance for its practices and strategy embodying a *discursive nationalism*. These discourses are being challenged by the minorities who feel marginalised from the mainstream of the Chinese state or their sentiments are driven by ethnic-nationalism in response to the dominant trend of Han nationalism.

It is in this regard, that there is more urgent need for reconsidering the role of ethnic minorities in the formation of national identity or the nation-building process. Since these groups are often communities which may have dual ethnic alliances, that is, membership in minority communities or even loyalties to online or virtual groups (Carlson 2009: 20-35). Moreover, the constant tussle between the more ‘homogenising trend of state nationalism’ and the ‘problematic trend of ethnic nationalism’ presents an opportunity to study the evolution of discursive trends which evolve from this enterprise as each tries to manipulate the rhetoric to its own advantage.

The root cause of the competing discourses between these two nationalist trends lies in the fact that the state and its minorities are divided on the rationale and means to attain national unification and on the question as to whom this unification will benefit in the long-term. How far will the minorities be able to preserve their customs, traditions and languages, if at all they are able to do so? This struggle is even more prominent in the discursive realm. As V I Chapman (2004: 95-103) suggested

“discourses are linguistic and social structures. They enshrine the following: what knowledge theories, and concepts are acceptable among groups of people; who in that group accrues power from using that knowledge; what is supposedly normal and what is not; what is supposedly true and what is not; and who to exclude and include. Discourses signify who can speak and who cannot, who can be understood and who cannot.”

A similar attempt is also visible internationally where the notion of presenting a ‘One China’ that is a China which ideologically adheres to a certain ‘set of beliefs’ in comparison to another set adhered internationally becomes prominent. And even more important is the fact that China insists that any country that wants to trade with China has to oblige to the ‘one China policy’ as a prerequisite for bilateral relations. In dealing with states like Japan, the US, India and Southeast Asia, the issues of national integration, sovereignty, cultural baggage and future aspirations are primarily shaped by Chinese notion of the self and their collective identity as a nation (*Zhonghua Minzu*).

The humiliation experienced at the hands of the Japanese during the twentieth century is still fresh in the Chinese psyche and thus are reflected in anti-Japanese overtures in foreign policy delineations. It also shows how China is unwilling to move away from the rhetoric of the century of humiliation and disregard the memories of the war crimes committed by the Japanese. This remains a significant hurdle in improvement of bilateral ties between the two neighbours. Similarly, security concerns have led to skirmishes between China and the US like in the case of the EP3 plane crash incident and various other sovereignty related issues like the Belgrade Embassy bombing incident in 1999. Taiwan and trade imbalances are also potential flashpoints as far as Sino-US relations are concerned as China remains adamant on not letting go even an inch of its territory. With respect to India, the territorial and sovereignty related issues have remained of primary concern to the two neighbours. Thus, nationalist concerns hold high ground in China’s interactions with other countries and also present a dilemma with respect to its rising aspirations of playing a greater role internationally and its ‘harmonious world discourse.’ The conciliatory spirit exhibited by the CCP is by and large a discursive tool for the economic and political integration of regional autonomy. It has in effect become an ‘enterprise’ for the state to utilize nationalism



for achieving its aim of uniting all nationalities into one cohesive whole and exterminating any possible outside or international interference and calumny.

Thus it is being attempted through this thesis to view **Chinese nationalism through the prism of a political and economic enterprise which is aimed at maximising nationalist goals** whereby ‘enterprise’ is construed as a commercial strategy of investment to maximize political returns. Analysing the backdrop of China’s economic policy towards these minority regions and foreign states, the present work aims to make a comprehensive study of the ‘national question’ as faced by the CCP and the minorities as well as other citizens of China and the consequences thereof for other countries worldwide.

Bringing out the policy initiatives and contemporary dynamics, the study aims to analyse the nature of nationalism being generated by the interaction of these varied strands of thought. The thesis tries to explore the multitudinous nature of this phenomenon and its manifestations that have accrued to shape the iconic image of a country (China) that now holds. In addition, it intends to explore the internal variations and the unfolding ethnic-currents within the Chinese nationalist movement and preview the guiding nationalist concerns with regards to China’s internal behaviour.

## **1.2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Ethnic Challenges versus State Nationalism**

Being a multi-ethnic state, the struggle for cooptation of minorities into the mainstream was visible right from the Qing period onwards and into the present post-reform Chinese polity. While the Qing emperors adopted a rather wise strategy of preserving local cultures and having multifarious ways to govern the Hans, Mongols, Uyghurs and Tibetans along with other smaller ethnic groups thus laying the foundation of strong empires (Rawski 1996; He and Wang 1989; Togan 1992), today’s political elite finds it more difficult to formulate strategies to keep the minorities in line with the desires of the state.

Chronological developments of the last century obviously have a major role to play in this phenomenon. While earlier, the ethnic groups were accustomed to having a more free hand under the Qing Empire and the Uyghurs, for instance, even experienced complete independence in the 1930s and 40s, they find it difficult to survive under the tight-fisted control of the present government, which makes even the preservation of basic religious and educational practices difficult.

However, in a seminal analysis of why China retains its coherent identity as compared to the Soviet Union and other communist regimes which disintegrated after falling prey to ethnic nationalisms, Zhu and Blachford postulate that the Han majority component gave China more homogeneity and stability and has built a system with special institutional arrangements, known as '*minzu quyu zizhi*' (minority nationality autonomous governments) which helped it to retain the bureaucratic paraphernalia in comparison to other communist countries (Zhu and Blachford 2006: 329-348). They built upon the previous theories presented by Mou Benli and Fei Xiaotong who had given the following five reasons:

- “First, historically China has always been a multinational country.
- Second, China has the long enduring tradition of *duoyuan yiti* (multi-section but one core) that indicates that the Han Chinese and other ethnic groups have amalgamated intensively.
- Third, a wide range of policies have been conceived to accommodate the particular needs of minority groups and to provide a certain gesture of respect for their diverse socio-economic development, customs, and cultural traditions.
- Fourth, in China’s modern history of revolution, ethnic groups and the Han people all made their contributions and therefore strengthened their ties.
- Fifth, the establishment of the new People’s Republic in 1949 started a new nation-building campaign in which all the ethnic groups were encouraged to participate in the process (Zhu 2006).”

To avoid such a drastic consequence, the Chinese leadership even initiated a study of the fall of the Communist regimes to avoid making similar mistakes. The Chinese state is cognisant that ethnic identities remain strong and the peril of secessionism has to be contained before it becomes a monster staring the Chinese state in its face.

Several scholars have already warned of disastrous consequences for the Chinese state if these tendencies are not truncated.

To begin with, Wenfang Tang and Gaochao He, based on a survey in 2006-2007 on 1600 students in 17 high schools amongst several ethnic groups like Uyghurs, Tibetans, Kazaks, Mongols and Huis and also Han majority, recognize that “ethnic minorities in China express strong feelings of intra-group identity through ethnic-language learning, religious practices and through exclusively ethnic-based marriages.” These ethnicities show high levels of both ostensive ethnic identities and national identities but are willing to abide by the state’s rules only as long as the state doesn’t interfere beyond the constitutional necessities (Tang and He 2010).

The Chinese authorities, who of late realise the dilemmas of these minorities, consistently maintain that the state is attempting all in its capability to meet the essentials of national unity. Through the recent Western Development Campaign (*Xibu da Kaifa* 2000) and the ‘flourishing borders and prosperous people’ (2005) initiatives, the state has meant to rectify the economic deprivation felt by the autonomous regions previously, especially in the wake of the focus on coastal developments in the 1990s.

Through the various Government White Papers it has time and again stressed on the fact that it opposes all activities which are detrimental to the unity of the state, whether is Han chauvinism or local nationalism. It repeatedly maintains that “Marxist and Maoist theories on nationalities are the guiding light for solving nationality problems in China.” It guarantees the legitimate rights of all minorities in both urban and rural areas and has promulgated the *Regulations on Ethnic Work in Urban Areas* and *Regulations on Administrative Work in Ethnic Townships* in order to help minority communities develop production, improve their lives and meet their cultural as confirmed in the 2009 White paper. The White paper on China’s Ethnic Policy (2009) further states that

“The state adheres to and improves the system of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities. In line with its actual conditions, China practices the system of regional ethnic autonomy. This system has organically integrated centralization at the state level and regional autonomy in areas

where ethnic minorities live in compact communities. It is a great creation in handling China's ethnic issues. The system of regional ethnic autonomy has played an important role in guaranteeing that ethnic minorities fully perform their roles as the masters of the country and that the ethnic relations are consolidated and developed on the basis of equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and harmony. For many years the state has guaranteed the full exercise of the self-government rights by the ethnic minorities, and respected and guaranteed their legitimate rights and interests. The state is convinced that quickening the economic and social development of minority communities and minority areas is the fundamental solution to China's ethnic issues." (Government White Paper 2009)

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the Chinese state in its attempt to sustain an overarching unitary state structure has resorted to several key strategies like economic growth, propaganda, tolerance, rewarding cooperation to coercion<sup>1</sup> and censorship and even ethnic unity education. For instance, in 2008 the state circulated the Outline on Education of Ethnic Unity in Schools on a trial basis. Further, the state included the topic of ethnic unity into the scope of examinations for primary school students, graduation examinations for junior high-school students entering into senior high-school education, senior high-school students entering institutions of higher learning in 2009, as well as for those entering secondary vocational schools (Government White Paper 2009). The content and homogenising nature of this education came to be severely criticised and opposed by the minorities at that time.

The state has held four national commendation conferences for promoting ethnic unity and progress since 1988 which included commending 4,993 role models from the 56 ethnic groups. Besides these domestic efforts, China has also joined international conventions such as

“The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, and Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and has conscientiously performed the

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<sup>1</sup>In his book *China's Communist Party, Atrophy and Adaptation* (2010) David Shambaugh commenting on the evolution of Communist Party states outlines that most theorists of comparative communism agree that ruling communist parties pass from an initial stage that emphasises ideology and social transformation – employing classic totalitarian methods of terror and propaganda, to a second stage of guided economic development that emphasises technical rationality and efficiency – which applies softer authoritarian methods that utilize bureaucratic management.

duties prescribed in these conventions and made unremitting efforts together with the international community to realize ethnic equality and oppose racial segregation and ethnic oppression and discrimination in all countries of the world” (Government White Paper 2000)

to show its commitment towards international practices on minority issues.

Though these arguments by the Chinese state are bought by some sections of the society, many still remain unconvinced. Most ethnic minorities resist the encroachment of their land and job opportunities by Han immigrants and several anthropologists have attested to the destruction of indigenous practices and the fragile eco-systems of these border provinces due to external interferences from the centre. Analysing the impact of modernisation on the social structures of these communities, Fu Chun, an ethnic Buyei scholar, finds that economic development has fundamentally changed the close relationship between human activities and the land in these regions leading to loss of traditional values and fomenting identity crises (Chun 2007: 180).

While the Central authorities are trying to assimilate these regions with economic incentivisation, the same are giving rise to discontent. The renaming or sinicisation of the Uyghur children and the compulsive learning of the Chinese language have become yet other issues of dissent. Therefore, much of the efforts of the government are proving futile. This aspect has been accurately documented by Blaine Kaltman (2007) in his book ‘Under the Heel of the Dragon’, where through a series of interviews he accounts for the mutual prejudices of both Hans and Uyghurs against each other. The rooted discrimination in terms of tax laws and feelings of oppression by the Uyghurs are the most significant causes of the tussle. He is supported in this argument by several scholars like Michael Dillon (2004) who yet again looks into the cultural, nationalist and Islamite response to what they perceive as the Han Chinese control (*yanda/ Strike hard campaign of 1996*).

Similarly, Christian Tyler (2003) in his book *Wild West China: The Taming of Xinjiang* delves into the deep sense of aloofness from the mainland which hinders its assimilation into the larger nation. Though much has been written about the facets of ethnic identity and socio-cultural moorings in Xinjiang, no substantive work has been

done upon the manifested relationship between the nationalist agendas of Beijing and the Xinjiang population which can be accounted at large to the strict control of publication of material within the realms of its accommodation and the lack of primary information to researchers.

Comparable concerns are seen in the inner Mongolian region through the survey of available literature. The Inner Mongolian People's party consistently beckons community support for the overthrowing of the Chinese colonial rule. Issues of ethnicity and cultural differences are significantly hindering its assimilation within the mainland. Despite several efforts of providing economic incentives and building infrastructure, the central government has been held back by the popular demonstrations of the local people.

Consequently, the domestic debate in China is divided amongst two strands of thinking: those who support the current policies of the government on national integration and second, those who seek change. The first set of scholarship is led by government officials and media personnels endorsing the official Chinese stand that "the last sixty years of experiences have proved that China's ethnic policies are correct and effective" (Leibold, 2012). Scholars offer full support to the National Regional Autonomy (NRA) scheme citing that it is a product of combination between Marxist theories on Nationalism and the CCP's experiences in solving ethnic problems, and that after years of implementation and adjustments the policy has gradually become flawless. (Zhou, 2005: 7-9)

On the other hand, many scholars believe that the time is ripe for an overhaul in the perceptions and strategies for national integration in China. Pioneered by Chinese scholars like Hu Angang, Hu Lianhe (Tsinghua University) and Ma Rong (Peking University) this group of intellectuals is demanding a second generation of reforms to address the 'nationalities question' (*minzu wenti*) in China (Leibold, 2012). They believe that if China continues to tread the current path, similar to that of the Soviet Union (*da pingpan moshi*), it will also meet the same fate. However, if they switch over to a new policy orientation (*fangzhen*) they will be able to create a melting pot of cultural pluralism lessening fears of disintegration.

These reforms, they argue, should be aimed towards scrapping the ethnic autonomy and privileged policies as “the systematic segregation of ethnic groups and institutions in China has rendered the Chinese nation an empty concept, and that the assimilation, or literally Hanification of minorities, is an inevitable process of modernization.” (Ma Rong 2008: 366-389). While these debates continue, it is irrefutable that China is hard pressed for policy options when it comes to the minorities.

The situation is further exacerbated by international intervention which holds China guilty for various human rights abuses. James A Millward observes that the number of ‘mass incidents’ has been mounting in the previous decades in China, not only among the autonomous regions but also among the Han population. Yet it is more difficult for the disadvantaged ethnic groups to voice their concerns since they beckon severe reprehension from the state which reacts to these incidents as being fundamentally ethno-nationalist in nature (China File Conversation 13 February 2014).

On the contrary, the Chinese authorities believe that the scale of ethnic problems and the hitch in their assimilation would substantially reduce if the outside forces (foreign governments or institutions) do not provide support to them and do not attempt to subvert the legitimacy of the government (Xin 2008: 136-167). After the ethnic unrests in 2008 and 2009, the Chinese government published a series of booklets on the history of Tibet and Xinjiang, claiming it to be the true version of history and blaming the involvement of foreign forces for creating troubles in China’s territories (Nima and Chao 2009).

Nevertheless, the wrangle between the ethnic minorities and the central government and at the same time, the Chinese government and foreign interventions continues unabated due to the very intrinsic nature of the problem. These issues will be studied at length in the forthcoming chapters. Meanwhile, another conundrum present at the domestic level for China is the question of reconciliation with Taiwan or the Republic of China (ROC). The pragmatic diplomacy being followed by the PRC authorities has not proved fruitful in re-uniting the island with the mainland Chinese nation. The cross-strait dialogue resumed in 1998, has not yet made any significant progress towards an agreement on the political relationship between Beijing and Taipei, though large numbers of people from Taiwan travel across the straits.

Most of the scholars tend to be divided along the lines of those speculating a re-union and those arguing for an independent country of Taiwan. In his book, ‘The short history of Taiwan: A case for independence’, Gary Marvin Davison (2003) presented a case for the separate identity of Taiwan. He believes that the Taiwanese people with as strong sense of historical bonding and a pride within their culture, arts and literature would continue to assert for their independence. Since, they do not associate themselves with the particular history and culture of the Chinese mainland.

Christopher Hughes (1997) in his book, ‘Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism’ argues that the government in Taipei maintains the island and its inhabitants are part of the Chinese nation and by implication an expression of Chinese identity. Correspondingly, the government in Beijing acknowledges that identity as part of its claim that the island is a renegade province whose political destiny is restoration to the motherland. He further asserts, as Taiwan continues to register a separate international identity and as an irredentist China reasserts a traditional one, drawing confidence from the reinstatement of its sovereignty over Hong Kong, the status of the island will be a matter of growing international interest and concern.

Bernard D. Cole (2006) in his book ‘Taiwan’s security: History and prospects’ sheds light on the fact that Taiwan remains at the heart of several international controversies given its strategic location. On the contrary, Su Chi in ‘Taiwan’s relations with mainland China: A tail wagging two dogs’ presents the argument for the persuasive efforts by the Taiwanese leadership for de jure independence.

Besides, Cheng-feng Shih and Mumin Chen, in their article present a case for a fractured Taiwanese identity pulled into two different streams by the pro-China or “pan-Blue” camp, led by the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Pro-Taiwan independence “pan-Green” camp led by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (Fleischauer 2007: 373-401). These trends will be further analysed to discern which group will have more prominence and say on the future of Taiwan in Chapter 5.

Between 1949 and 1955, China established diplomatic relations with 26 countries (including two at the charge d’affaires level) irrespective of their systems of



government. Commencing from its first international arrival at the Geneva Conference of 1954<sup>2</sup> and the Bandung conference of 1955 to its arrival on the international stage as a rising superpower, China's diplomatic corps was extensively shaped by the domestic and international environment (Ibid: 10) and this process continues even today. While most of the autonomous regions were assimilated with critical interventions by the then Soviet Union, the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR) remains in its present state aloof from Mongolia due to Soviet Union's internal strategic interests.

More or less, the pursuit of national unity reflected in the various institutional processes adopted by China today also bears the imprint of these histories. It seems to be challenged by several international factors at one level and bolstered by the same factors at another level. For instance the concern on human rights makes a case for foreign intervention but actual secession is blocked by at least two restraining conditions in international politics: the sovereignty principle and realpolitik (Zhu and Blachford: Op Cit).

International intervention, often in the garb of Human rights issues, is also limited by precedents and statutes. For instance, the UN resolution proclaiming the "self-determination rights during the era of decolonization carefully disclaimed any intention to authorize action threatening the territorial integrity of existing states. Nothing that has happened since the end of the Cold War suggests any erosion of this intergovernmental consensus."(Zhu and Blachford: 346, Op Cit)

In this context, scholars have postulated two scenarios: first, that China's foreign relations will be determined by more pragmatic interests, and second, China's stance in world politics will become increasingly assertive and confrontationist as it struggles with a changing international system (Carlson: Op Cit, 32). It can be stated without much doubt that, China's international behaviour is increasingly being

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<sup>2</sup>*Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Inside China's Cold War* edited by Christian F Ostermann, Issue 16, Fall 2007/Winter 2008, Woodrow Wilson Centre for Scholars. China wanted to bring up the question of Taiwan and opposition to rearming Japan besides the running agenda of Korea and Vietnam at this conference. However not having substantial international environment it dropped both issues from its agendas (The Declassification of Chinese Foreign Ministry Archival Documents, Introduction by Zhang Sulin, Document No. 3, p.13).

determined by its domestic concerns as visible in its approach to the US, India and Japan.

The Sino-US relationship may continue to be marred by antagonistic interests of the two in Taiwan as well as various other parts of the world, sometimes for resources and sometimes for strategic reasons. While efforts of co-operation are palpable given the responsibility of the two being the world's two most powerful countries at the present time, there have been several issues of discomfort. These revolve around issues deemed as interference in its internal affairs by Beijing, such as the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1994-1995, the spy plane incident in 2001, the embassy bombing in Belgrade and enduring indictments on China regarding human rights abuses by the US & others.

Realists believe China will exhibit more forceful stance as a rising power which will posit it as a threat to international order. Samuel Huntington provides ample evidence of this thesis in his attempts to apply past correlations to China's intentions in the near future. Robert Gilpin also makes another correlation between growing power and the expansion of interests in his book (*War and Change in International Politics*) and argues that as a rising power there is high possibility for China and the US to go to war at some point.

Liberals, on the other hand, believe in the pacifying powers of democratization and economic interdependence. As Aaron L. Friedberg notes, "the greater the volume of trade and investment flowing between two countries, the more groups on both sides will have a strong interest in avoiding conflict and preserving peace." However, most scholars agree that the Sino-US relations may move towards a conflicting debacle given the inherent differences of their national goals, unless constructive efforts are consistently made to turn this conflict into co-operation.

Similarly, the Sino-Japanese relations also witness both strands of co-operation and conflict. Niklas Swanstrom and Ryosei Kokubun (2008) point out the Sino-Japanese relations will be of immense bearing on the entire East Asian region since they are among the top five economies in the world. Though not within the purview of the current thesis, yet Sino-Japanese relations hold key importance for Northeast Asia's

regional security and need to be considered profoundly when looking at the larger picture of security in Asia.

The memories of Second World War crimes and the shrine visits often lead to expression of disapproval from the Chinese authorities. In his works, Ming Wan (2006) has carefully studied the patterns of interaction, logic, emotions and transformations of the Sino-Japanese relations since 1989. Caroline Rose (2005) in her book 'Sino-Japanese relations: facing the past and looking into the future', highlights the tensions that accrue from the textbook issues and historical revisionism.

Several scholars like Laura Newby and Shunji Cui have emphasised the need for co-operative engagement for the purpose of community building in East-Asia and the need for a socially constructed regional identity to meet security challenges. Zhang Tuosheng believes that the relations improved, especially after the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Premier Wen's visit to Japan in 2006. Most scholars agree that the two countries should embark on the path of pragmatic reconciliation for the sake of benefit of the East Asian region at large. Otherwise, unfortunately their relationship may continue to be marred by nationalist agendas which resurface through popular discourse in the media of both the countries.

Sino-Indian relations are similarly weighed down by the historical baggage of these two historically loaded countries and their pursuit of nationalistic goals at the cost of cooperation. While Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea (2001) was amongst the earliest of Indian scholars to provide an insight into the changing nature of Sino-Indian relations, the present dynamics are being considered by several scholars who continue to wrestle with their complex relationship. Previously, Xuecheng Liu (1994), in his book 'The Sino-Indian border dispute and Sino-Indian relations' had emphasised the need for settlement of border issues. A significant effort was also made by Francine. N Frankel and Harry Harding (2004) in compiling the volume 'The China- India relationship: What the United States need to Know', wherein they dealt with the larger issues of cultural comparisons and the international contexts and the tensions existing therein.

The present work however does not aim to look at the external dimension referred above for the lack of time and breadth that such a study would require. The work limits itself to internal dimension of China's nationalism and the discourses waived on the issues of domestic politics.

### **1.3. DEFINITION AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Any foray into a research problem needs to be placed within the three categories of definitions and rationales as being explained below:

- a) **Historical Significance**
- b) **Theoretical Relevance**
- c) **Contemporary consequences**

Placed within the historical debate of how communist regimes survive through legitimization of their authority using nationalism, the current study will be relevant in postulating the future trajectory of the Chinese state as well as the perceptions of its majority and minority populations. This study elicits an understanding of the previous debate on China's Minority issues and ethnic nationalism in comparison to Han nationalism and how the contemporary discourses are evolving through influences from different factors.

For the purpose of the present work nationalism is defined as a '*discursive and syncretic*' phenomenon as previously held by the author. This is a nationalism that holds economic development at its core and is buttressed through the "*media*", a "nationalism" which fosters an unprecedented revival of national pride and a sense of collective self-actualisation through accommodating differences.<sup>3</sup> It manages, realigns and curbs the dissensions and contradictory spaces created by the global onslaught while providing for qualified reasonable public spaces. However the nature of the present work is substantially different in that it looks at the working relationship between nationalism and the state instead of dwelling on the nature of nationalism per se. For this purpose the study analyses the impact of nationalism on the internal dynamics of the functioning of the Chinese state.

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<sup>3</sup>An argument which was made by the author in her MPhil Dissertation.

The scope of the study is limited to time duration of roughly twenty years, specifically from 1997 to the present, since the earlier period has been effectively dealt in the existing literature. The year 1997 marks the first Party Congress (Fifteenth Party Congress) following death of Deng Xiaoping and the return of Hong Kong to China on 1 July 1997. This was the time when, Jiang Zemin had forced party rival Qiao Shi to retire and succeeded in including Deng Xiaoping's philosophy into Party constitution. Much has happened on both domestic and international front ever since and hence this time frame has been chosen for the current research.

The work consists of a study of Chinese nationalism in its relation to the internal regions of Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Taiwan. Thus, the work is limited in terms of taking into account areas with ethnic dimension like Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia instead of other much homogenised areas of the north since they provide a better understanding of how an ideology works in tandem with the goals of the state when posited against opposition. Nevertheless, instances and events from these regions are being utilised to validate theoretical understanding. An attempt is being made to study the oscillating trends and the disparity between the ethnic groups' and the central governments' understanding of their own forms of nationalism.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Every research begins with certain aims and it has been the author's sincere attempt to do justice to the procedures of identifying research objectives and thereby streamlining the various trends of thought and organising them into a comprehensible body. The main aims of this study are:

- To analyse, explain and understand the differences of perception between the majority and minority populations of China which as a corollary result in differences on the goals, meaning and role of Chinese nationalism.
- To study the discourse of irredentism as applied to the case of Taiwan by which China intends to realign the political loyalties of the Taiwanese people and the legalities inherent therein.

- To analyse, explain and understand the dynamics of China's internal dynamics and its conformity to the 'patriotic education discourse' and its relevance to the hyper-nationalistic responses on issues affecting its 'core interests'.

## **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In view of the foregoing outline, the following research questions/problems are presented:

1. To what extent and by which means will the Chinese state be able to assimilate its minorities towards its nationalist goals?
2. How do the minorities culturally assert themselves against a more homogenising trend of nationalism through economic or political means?
3. What kind of space for cultural preservation is available to the minorities within the populist notions of Chinese nationalism? Is there a reconsideration of strategy or a 'second generation of reforms' at the national level?
4. What specific approaches does it apply to legalise its claims to the Republic of China or Taiwan?
5. What will be the predominant trend for the Chinese state in the next few decades - whither nationalism or disintegration?

## **1.6. HYPOTHESES**

The preliminary examination of Chinese Nationalism vis-à-vis regional or sub-national tendencies lead to the following hypotheses:

1. The national discourse often harps on development benefitting all sections of society irrespective of ethnicity aimed at the larger goal of creation of a collective Chinese consciousness.
2. The current trends in nationalist discourses indicate a more assertive China which relies on status-quo with minorities, introducing gradual change in policies, and resorting to force whenever necessary, to keep its legitimacy intact.

## 1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the case-study method to explain the evolving perspectives and nature of Chinese nationalism. According to Stephen Van Evera, case studies help to achieve four main purposes: “testing theories, that is, testing which theory best explains the phenomena, identifying antecedent conditions, testing the importance of these antecedent conditions, and explaining cases of intrinsic importance” (Evera 1997: 55). For the purpose of this thesis, the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region serve as the case studies within the precincts of the PRC, while Taiwan is a case-study on integration across the straits while Hong Kong and Macao serve as instances of relatively successful cases of integration.

The study also brings into application deductive methods. In a deductive method one begins with thinking up a *theory* about the topic of interest accompanied by a narrowing down into more specific *hypotheses* that one can test. The endeavour is to ultimately be able to test the hypotheses with specific data arriving at a *confirmation* (or not) of the original theory of research to reach an understanding of what the phenomenon upholds in the country-specific circumstances. Thus, beginning with the premise of a discursive nature of nationalism, the present work engages in testing nationalism through the undercurrents of ethnicity and core interests in specific regions, thereby testing the validity of the approach.

Secondly, the study relies on several primary as well as secondary sources of information to arrive at conclusions based on empirical research. It deals with the Chinese Government White Papers and the People’s Daily, domestic laws of the PRC, surveys, interviews, various national interest related regional and international conventions, treaties and bilateral agreements. In addition it takes into account several secondary sources including journal articles, books, monographs, conference papers and memoirs as well as internet sources.

For the purpose of this study, the Chinese state is being deemed as independent, while nationalism as an ideology is being considered as an intervening variable and the consequential domestic and international situations are considered dependent on it. In

certain circumstances the intervening variable and the dependent variable are seen as having a mutual impact also on each other.

## **1.8. STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

**Chapter 1** Introduction outlines the literature survey on Chinese nationalism and its challenges internally and externally and the nature of the research topic chosen.

**Chapter 2** examines the primary research question of the thesis: role of ethnicity within the nationalist discourse and its impact on the sub-national tendencies in Tibet (TAR). It traces the origins of the dispute between the various actors in the Tibetan scenario and tries to understand the nuances of how economic incentives are impacting the relationship between the centre and the Tibetan community.

**Chapter 3** examines the role of ethnicity within the nationalist discourse and its impact on the sub-national tendencies in Xinjiang. The primary intent is to understand the dynamics of Uyghur discontent against the state policies and towards this purpose the chapter reflects on Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of core and periphery and relies on the views of the elite leadership of the Uyghur community to understand their side of the story.

**Chapter 4** examines role of ethnicity within the nationalist discourse and its impact on the sub-national tendencies in Inner Mongolia. Inner Mongolia being a lesser active region both politically and less sensitive as compared to the two regions mentioned above, it is easier for the Mongolian minorities to relate with the State. However, some instances of disaffection have been witnessed in this region of late mainly due to the change in the living patterns which have shifted from nomadic to more settled communities.

**Chapter 5** takes into account the growing tenor of irredentism with respect to Taiwan, which is being largely pursued through economic means and also analyses the role of nationalism in China's policies with regards to Hong Kong and Macau. These regions have seen some rebellious activities over the last few years as demands for democratic revival have surfaced. These regions differ from the other autonomous regions primarily because the demands are more centred on political rights than ethnic



issues and hence present interesting case studies as far democratic institutions versus authoritarian regimes are concerned.

**Chapter 6** being the final chapter summarizes the arguments and findings of this research. It tests the hypotheses with empirical results and cross-checks the questions raised. It also evaluates how much this research achieved the aims and objectives, and then mentions the limits of this research.

It also needs to be mentioned at the outset that since the study has been submitted with a gap of almost nine years, the deductions and analyses have tried to cover the period beyond that is mentioned in the title of the thesis (2009). It therefore refers to the current leadership and their vision in the concluding chapter. The study is limited in terms of not being able to interview prominent personalities in the field which could have made substantial contribution to the content of the thesis. Access to primary sources has also been a critical impairment since the author did not have the opportunity to stay in China for a longer period of time.

## 1-1 Divisions of Administrative Areas in China (End of 2017)

(unit)

Provinces, Autonomous Regions and Municipalities	Number of Regions at Prefecture Level	Cities at Prefecture Level	Number of Regions at County Level	Districts under the Jurisdiction of Cities	Cities at County Level	Counties	Auto-nomous Counties	Number of Regions at Townships Level	Towns	Townships	Street Communities
<b>National Total</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>2851</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>1355</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>39888</b>	<b>21116</b>	<b>10529</b>	<b>8241</b>
Beijing			16	16				331	143	38	150
Tianjin			16	16				248	124	3	121
Hebei	11	11	168	47	20	95	6	2255	1128	818	308
Shansi	11	11	119	23	11	85		1398	564	632	202
Inner Mongolia	12	9	103	23	11	17		1020	505	272	243
Liaoning	14	14	100	59	16	17	8	1531	641	202	688
Jilin	9	8	60	21	20	16	3	919	426	182	311
Heilongjiang	13	12	128	65	19	43	1	1192	532	353	307
Shanghai			16	16				214	107	2	105
Jiangsu	13	13	96	55	21	20		1284	758	68	458
Zhejiang	11	11	89	37	19	32	1	1378	641	274	463
Anhui	16	16	105	44	6	55		1486	965	275	246
Fujian	9	9	85	29	12	44		1105	642	284	179
Jiangxi	11	11	100	25	11	64		1561	825	579	157
Shandong	17	17	137	55	26	56		1824	1094	70	660
Henan	17	17	158	52	21	85		2441	1151	640	650
Hubei	13	12	103	39	24	37	2	1234	761	165	308
Hunan	14	13	122	35	17	63	7	1927	1134	398	395
Guangdong	21	21	121	64	20	34	3	1601	1124	11	466
Guangxi	14	14	111	40	7	52	12	1251	799	319	133
Hainan	4	4	23	8	5	4	6	218	175	21	22
Chongqing			38	26		8	4	1030	626	182	222
Sichuan	21	18	183	53	17	109	4	4610	2196	2064	350
Guizhou	9	6	88	15	8	53	11	1379	839	317	223
Yunnan	16	8	129	16	15	69	29	1398	682	543	173
Tibet	7	6	74	8		66		697	140	545	12
Shaanxi	10	10	107	30	4	73		1295	983	23	289
Gansu	14	12	86	17	4	58	7	1355	816	413	126
Qinghai	8	2	43	6	3	27	7	400	143	223	34
Ningxia	5	5	22	9	2	11		240	103	90	47
Xinjiang	14	4	105	13	24	62	6	1066	349	523	193
Hong Kong											
Special Administrative Region											
Macao Special Administrative Region											
Taiwan											

a) Number of regions at townships level include one district office of Hebei and Xinjiang separately.

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2018

## 2-6 Population at Year-end by Region

Region	(10 000 persons)											
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
National Total	131448	132129	132802	133450	134091	134735	135404	136072	136782	137462	138271	139008
Beijing	1601	1676	1771	1860	1962	2019	2069	2115	2152	2171	2173	2171
Tianjin	1075	1115	1176	1228	1299	1355	1413	1472	1517	1547	1562	1557
Hebei	6898	6943	6989	7034	7194	7241	7288	7333	7384	7425	7470	7520
Shansi	3375	3393	3411	3427	3574	3593	3611	3630	3648	3664	3682	3702
Inner Mongolia	2415	2429	2444	2458	2472	2482	2490	2498	2505	2511	2520	2529
Liaoning	4271	4298	4315	4341	4375	4383	4389	4390	4391	4382	4378	4369
Jilin	2723	2730	2734	2740	2747	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2733	2717
Heilongjiang	3823	3824	3825	3826	3833	3834	3834	3835	3833	3812	3799	3789
Shanghai	1964	2064	2141	2210	2303	2347	2380	2415	2426	2415	2420	2418
Jiangsu	7656	7723	7762	7810	7869	7899	7920	7939	7960	7976	7999	8029
Zhejiang	5072	5155	5212	5276	5447	5463	5477	5498	5508	5539	5590	5657
Anhui	6110	6118	6135	6131	5957	5968	5988	6030	6083	6144	6196	6255
Fujian	3585	3612	3639	3666	3693	3720	3748	3774	3806	3839	3874	3911
Jiangxi	4339	4368	4400	4432	4462	4488	4504	4522	4542	4566	4592	4622
Shandong	9309	9367	9417	9470	9588	9637	9685	9733	9789	9847	9947	10006
Henan	9392	9360	9429	9487	9405	9388	9406	9413	9436	9480	9532	9559
Hubei	5693	5699	5711	5720	5728	5758	5779	5799	5816	5852	5885	5902
Hunan	6342	6355	6380	6406	6570	6596	6639	6691	6737	6783	6822	6860
Guangdong	9442	9660	9893	10130	10441	10505	10594	10644	10724	10849	10999	11169
Guangxi	4719	4768	4816	4856	4610	4645	4682	4719	4754	4796	4838	4885
Hainan	836	845	854	864	869	877	887	895	903	911	917	926
Chongqing	2808	2816	2839	2859	2885	2919	2945	2970	2991	3017	3048	3075
Sichuan	8169	8127	8138	8185	8045	8050	8076	8107	8140	8204	8262	8302
Guizhou	3690	3632	3596	3537	3479	3469	3484	3502	3508	3530	3555	3580
Yunnan	4483	4514	4543	4571	4602	4631	4659	4687	4714	4742	4771	4801
Tibet	285	289	292	296	300	303	308	312	318	324	331	337
Shaanxi	3699	3708	3718	3727	3735	3743	3753	3764	3775	3793	3813	3835
Gansu	2547	2548	2551	2555	2560	2564	2578	2582	2591	2600	2610	2626
Qinghai	548	552	554	557	563	568	573	578	583	588	593	598
Ningxia	604	610	618	625	633	639	647	654	662	668	675	682
Xinjiang	2050	2095	2131	2159	2185	2209	2233	2264	2298	2360	2398	2445

a) Data of 2010 are the census year estimates; the rest are the estimates from the annual national sample survey of population. Data by region are of usual residents.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **CHINA'S NATIONALIST ENTERPRISE IN TIBET: COMPETING DISCOURSES ON ETHNICITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

## 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Assimilation as well as integration of Tibet into the PRC has been a long drawn and a highly contestable process which has not yet reached its full culmination and a final solution is still far from fathomable in the near term. Tibet's sovereignty remains highly contested and has in the past led and often leads to discursive wars between China's national government and the claimants of Tibet's sovereignty and support groups. The problem lies with the fact that both the Central government in Beijing and the Tibetan government-in-exile (TGiE) in India (based at Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh) claim to be "the sole and legal representative of Tibet (Roemer 2008: 2)." Through a gradual process of 'sinicization' which includes migration of Hans into the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), cultural assimilation and economic reforms, China has tried to assert its authority and control over the region. These activities have drawn wide criticisms from the Tibetan support groups who castigate these as attempts at 'cultural genocide' and repression of the Tibetan people. Yet in the face of China's 21<sup>st</sup> century reality, it is increasingly difficult to establish whose claims are more legitimate than the other. While most international organisations and governments support Tibet's struggle for freedom of religion and expression and preservation of human rights, they also concurrently concede that "Tibet is an inalienable part of China's territory." Therefore, it is being attempted here to contextualise the claims of these two opponent parties and assess their aspirations and current exigencies to postulate scenarios on the future of Tibet and the impact of Chinese Nationalism on Tibetans' identity as a nationality.

## 2.2. HISTORICAL CLAIMS AND THE DISCOURSE OF BELONGINGNESS

The region often referred to as the "roof of the world" covers an area of 12,00,000 square kilometres (Chen 2011: 1)<sup>4</sup> and has a population of 30,80,000 according to the official Chinese statistics, among which 28,28,400 belong to the ethnic minority

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<sup>4</sup>Ancient Tibet is believed to have been constituted by three provinces which were known through the concept of *Cholka-sum* and this idea continues to influence the Tibetan demand for recognition of Greater Tibet. Tibetan expatriates (numbering approximately 1, 45,000) are settled in various parts of India, Nepal and Bhutan as well as other parts of the world.

population (China Statistical Yearbook 2013). Speaking historically several scholars have attributed the establishment of significant and concrete ties between Tibet and China far back to the *Qiang tribe* which was the original inhabitant of the Qinghai-Tibet plateau (central to the role of formation of the current Tibetan race) and expanded in two different directions: one that joined the Han race in the course of historical development and the other that travelled southwards forming the ethnic groups of the Tibetan-Burmese language families (Xiaotong 1999: 28). After a series of disintegration and recombination, some new tribes set up the “twelve small kingdoms” and began institutionalizing bureaucratic posts. These kingdoms were then unified by a single ruler, Nyatri Tsanpo and his descendant - Songtsan Gambo under the Tubo kingdom and laid the foundations of a Tibetan script, a unified legal system, an administrative system combining military and civilian systems and attempts for the unification of the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau were initiated which brought them in direct conflict with the newly established Tang Dynasty (Chen: 16). A compromise was reached through the matrimonial alliance of Tang Princess - Wen Cheng with the Tubo tsampo, king of Tibet in 641, whose statue is still preserved and venerated in the Potala Palace (White Paper on Tibet: September 1992). The unity of the two sides was further reemphasised in 823 when the Tang-Tubo Alliance Monument was established, which still exists near the Jokhang Monastery. Tibet was officially incorporated (for the first time) during the Yuan Dynasty in the mid-13th century, as claimed by the 1992 White Paper on Tibet issued by the PRC government and “since then, although China experienced several dynastic changes, Tibet has remained under the jurisdiction of the central government of China” (Ibid).

This position is refuted and challenged by the Tibetan Youth Congress<sup>5</sup> based at Dharamsala (India) which claims the “only period when Tibet and China were in the same political grouping was when Tibetans and Chinese were both subject peoples under the Mongol rule.” (Tibetan Youth Congress 2005: 1) It also argues that Tibet had regained its independence in 1358 from the Mongols, which was a decade earlier than the official Ming China in 1368 (Shakapba 1984: 81). At the same time a leading Chinese historian Ge Jianxiong stated that while considering China’s historical record

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<sup>5</sup>It is the most vocal claimant/Non-governmental Organisation to the position of the exiled Voices amongst Tibetans being supported by the Dalai Lama. For more information see: <http://www.tibetanyouthcongress.org/about-tyc/>

during the Tang Dynasty (7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century) “we cannot include the Qinghai Tibetan plateau, which was ruled by Tubo/Tufan...It would be defiance of history to claim that Tibet has always been a part of China since the Tang Dynasty; the fact that the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau subsequently became a part of the Chinese dynasties does not substantiate such a claim (Jianxiong: China Digital Times 2007).”

Similarly, while the 1992 White paper mentions that

“In 1247 Sagya Pandit Gonggar Gyamcan, religious leader of Tibet, met the Mongol Prince Gotan at Liangzhou (present-day Wuwei of Gansu, China) and decided on terms for Tibetan submission to the Mongols, including presentation of map and census books, payment of tributes, and the acceptance of rule by appointed officials,”

other sources argue that the Tibet–Mongol relationship was not one of submission but mutual cooperation (“the Mongol-Tibetan relationship was an expression of a racial, cultural, and above all religious affinity between the two peoples- an affinity that neither shared with the Chinese” (Praag, Colorado 1987: 7)

It was in 1253, that Kublai Khan offered thirteen myriarchies (Triukhor Chusum) of Central Tibet to Drogon Choegyal Phagpa, the nephew of Sakya Pandita as a gratitude for giving him the vajrayana initiation. It is to be noted that the area referred to as Tibet under the Mongol Khanate included the Tibetan areas of Shaanxi and Sichuan, present day Gansu, Qinghai and the TAR, and some Chinese historians even claim the southward expansion of the Mongol forces into Ngari (present Ladakh beyond China’s borders) (Qinying Op Cit: 30). Hereafter, Tibet was governed by a sequence of eleven lamas of the Phagmo Drugpa lineage and many invitations by the Ming and Qing emperors were turned down by the Tibetan Lamas (Gyatso, 1962: 65). Several scholars argue that the Tibetans had at this time developed a sense of Tibetan nationalism based on their religious identity “defined in terms of the shared memories articulated by some of the more important treasures (*terma*) such as the Mani Kabum, etc” (Dreyfus, JIATS, 21: 10-14) which created a base for the Tibetans to catapult into a modern nationalist identity on their own terms around the 1950s which had much less to do with the western kind of nationalism or western influences (Shakya, 1999).

On the contrary, the Chinese government claims that “Tibet became an administrative region directly under the administration of the central government of the Yuan Dynasty which established the Xuanzheng Yuan or Ministry for the Spread of Governance to directly handle important military and political affairs of the Tibet region and this right to rule was inherited by the Ming rulers later on (White Paper on Tibet 1992, Op Cit). After the Qing government came to power, it officially established the titles of the Dalai Lama and the Bainqen Erdeni and their political and religious status in Tibet and set out to reform Tibet’s administrative system by dispelling the Zungar forces entrenched in Lhasa in 1719. The government asserts that between 1727 and 1911, when the Republican government came to power, the Qing dynasty had stationed more than 100 high commissioners in Tibet (Ibid).”

This argument is also refuted by the Tibetans who stress that on both occasions in 1719 and 1880, when the Manchu troops stationed their representatives (*Amban*) in Lhasa, they were expelled by the Tibetan forces (Understanding the Issue of Tibet, 2007: 5). In 1904, when the Manchu emperor attempted annex Tibet by force, his attempts were opposed by the Tibetans and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama fled to India as an outcome of this advance. After his return in February 1913, he issued a statement confirming the “independence of Tibet” along with Mongolia;<sup>6</sup> this was buttressed by the 1913 Treaty of Simla between Tibet and British India (not signed by China) which upheld Tibet’s sovereignty/suzerainty.<sup>7</sup>

It is possible to argue that during the late Qing period in China the Tibetans being stationed at a critical frontier were being pulled by the British Indian empire on the one side and the Qing interferences in appointments of local administration and the institutions of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama on the other side, as well as

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<sup>6</sup> The XIII Dalai Lama in his response to Sun Yat-Sen’s letter conferring the title of “Loyal and Submissive Vice-Regent, Great, Good, and Self-Existent Buddha” on him, said that he had not asked for his former rank from the Chinese government and that he “intended to exercise both temporal and ecclesiastic rule in Tibet.” The original text of the Treaty between Tibet and Mongolia rediscovered in 2007 shows that the treaty was signed and sealed by officials acting in the capacity of Minister-Plenipotentiary of the Dalai Lama.

<sup>7</sup> There exist multiple observations on the status of Tibet in the Simla Agreement which tried to bring about a compromise between the Tibetans and Chinese and used the word suzerainty for Tibet’s condition under Chinese. This booklet mentions that Nepal in 1949 cited its relationship with Tibet to prove its sovereignty while applying for the UN membership. Besides, Tibetan representatives participated in the Asian Relations Conference and Afro-Asian Conference held in Delhi in 1947 and 1948 respectively.



increasing pressures from Mongol allegiances. The British strategy on Tibet had its own limitations since though “Great Britain had to deal directly with the Tibetan government to achieve its goals; it had to deal with China to legitimize them (Goldstein 1997: 24).” Also the practice of Buddhism and *choesi-sungdrel*, which encourages the Buddhist tenets of compassion, moral integrity and equality, had made the Tibetan people very soft in their outlook and their army was not a proper mercenary force or a patriotically driven organ of the state and hence inadequate to protect them. For this reason, it is significant to recognize that the Tibetans forged and often shifted allegiances from one group to the other depending on their circumstances and interests, which meant there were simultaneous or alternative loyalties to the Chinese empire or the British Indian Empire or even phases of independence in Tibetan history.

Differing perspectives emerge also on the status of Tibet during early twentieth century. The Chinese Government White paper quotes from the first speech of Sun Yat-sen, that “The foundation of the country lies in the people, and the unification of lands inhabited by the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui and Tibetan people into one country means the unification of the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui and Tibetan races. It is called national unification.” Later, when the Kuomintang formed the national government in 1927 in Nanjing (as per the promulgations of the Organic Law of the Parliament of the Republic of China, 1912) at the national assembly in 1931 - both the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Bainqen Erdeni sent representatives to participate in elections (White Paper on Tibet 1992, Op Cit).

However, the biggest turning points for Tibet came with: first, the succession of the XIV Dalai Lama after the death of the previous one in 1933, who reincarnated in the Qinghai province and second, in 1949, when the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) led by General Liu Bocheng and his political Commissar Deng Xiaoping *ostensibly* peacefully liberated Tibet from its feudal entrenchment. The consequent signing of the “17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” in May 1951

remains one of the most contentious issues even till date within this plethora of claims and counter-claims,<sup>8</sup> as is explained below.

The government White Papers claim that a formal notification was issued to the local authorities in Tibet to send their delegates for negotiating the issue with China. However, the then Tibetan Regent Dagzhag Ngawang Sungrab rejected this offer<sup>9</sup> and deployed military forces on the border of Qamdo for armed resistance. “Under such circumstances, the central government was left with no choice and had to order the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to cross the Jinsha (Yangtze) River in October 1950, and Qamdo was liberated” (White Paper on Tibet 1992, Op Cit) However, offering a second chance, the Chinese government (claims) again urged Tibetans to send local delegates for negotiating the settlement.<sup>10</sup>

On 29 April 1951, negotiations opened between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama’s (who was 16 years old at this time) representative Kalon Ngapoi Ngawang and Kemai Soinam Wangdui, Tubdain Daindar, Tubdain Legmoin and Sampo Dainzin Toinzhub with a draft proposal from the Chinese side. This draft was rejected by the Tibetan delegation as it stipulated that “Tibet was an integral part of China.” A modified draft presented a few days later was equally objectionable; the Tibetan Delegation was put under duress<sup>11</sup> by Chinese delegates Li Weihai and

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<sup>8</sup>See Annexure II for full text of the 17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet.

<sup>9</sup>The Chinese government blames the influence of outside forces, especially the British Indian Empire for this decision (See White Paper 1992- How Have Imperialists Instigated Tibetan Independence?). However, it is to be noted that the Chinese government was itself under severe influence of the Soviet Union on its decision about Tibet, which also helped militarily in the occupation of Tibet by China. “Mao Zedong – I would like to note that the air regiment that you sent to China was very helpful. They transported 10 thousand people. Let me thankyou, comrade Stalin, or the help and ask you to allow it to stay a little longer, so it could help transport provisions to (CCPCC member and commander of the PLA’s Second Field Army) Liu Bocheng’s troops, currently preparing for an attack on Tibet. Stalin- It’s good that you are preparing to attack. The Tibetans need to be subdued. As for the air regiment, we shall talk this over with the military personnel and give you an answer.” Conversation on 22 January 1950, Cold War History Project Bulletin, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.9.

<sup>10</sup>At this time the Tibetan representatives sent appeals to the international community, including India, US, Britain and the UN to support against the PLA. But even though the UN recognised (Article 35, section 2) its right as a non-member entity to raise its issues at the international level, the primary responsibility of tackling with the Tibetan question was left to India and Britain, both of whom wanting to develop friendly relations with the PRC recommended that the Tibetan Question should be dealt with later.

<sup>11</sup> According to other sources, this delegation had admitted to signing the draft taking full responsibility of negotiating the best possible consensus with the Chinese government. But it was cognizant of the fact that the Dalai Lama could reject it if found detrimental to Tibet’s interests.

Zhang Jinwu, forcing them to either accept it or be responsible for military action on Lhasa.<sup>12</sup> The Agreement was consequently inked on 23 May 1951.

While the Chinese government states that it was agreed upon by the Dalai Lama,<sup>13</sup> the Tibetans argue that the Tibetan delegates were unable to inform the Tibetan government of the clauses in the agreement and had signed only in personal capacity. The Dalai Lama came to know about the agreement only from the Radio Beijing on 27 May which broadcasted the full text. He however, consented to abide by the agreement to save his people from further wrath of the Chinese government (Tibetan Response to China's White Papers: 8).

There seems to be a fair amount of veracity in the Tibetan claim since the White paper also mentions the date of the telegram from the Dalai Lama to be 24 October 1951, if that was so how could the Chinese announce the signing of the agreement on 27 May 1951. As was confessed by Mao Zedong, in the Directive of Central Committee of the CPC issued on 6 April 1952, cited in his Selected Works (1977), the initial agreement was discussed by the ecclesiastic sections and secular officials and representatives of the three most prominent monasteries in Tibet only around 26-29 September 1951. Thus it had limited support, particularly in the upper stratum of Tibetan society and not really approved by the Dalai Lama.

Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama's decision to give in to the demand of the central government for the betterment of Tibetans, though hesitantly, laid down the foundation for Tibet's assimilation into China as an autonomous province in the initial decades of the establishment of the PRC, and thus sealed the fate of Tibet as an

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<sup>12</sup> The military advance was criticised by India and the Indian Foreign Ministry responded by writing: "Now that the invasion of Tibet has been ordered by Chinese Government, peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronized with it and there naturally will be fear on the part of Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress. In the present context of world events, invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and in the considered judgement of the Government of India, not in the interest of China or peace." NCNA, November 21, 1950, Government of India to Government of PRC, October 26, 1950.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. The Dalai Lama sent a telegram to Chairman Mao Zedong on October 24, 1951, in which he wrote, "On the basis of friendship, delegates of the two sides signed on May 23, 1951 the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. The Tibetan local government as well as ecclesiastic and secular people unanimously support this agreement, and under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the central people's government, will actively assist the PLA troops entering Tibet in consolidating national defense, ousting imperialist influences from Tibet and safeguarding the unification of the territory and the sovereignty of the motherland."

independent nation. While the agreement sought to legitimise China's claims on liberation of Tibet, it is more significant due to the fact that it admitted at that time Tibet did not belong to China (one of the reasons cited by Tibetans in exile to explain why China also abrogated (later) and does not like to refer to the document in recent years). The 17-point Agreement stipulated that most affairs of Tibetan governance would be taken care of locally, without any interference by the Central authorities in Beijing.

However, the changes introduced by the Chinese government marked several retrogressions to the original 17 point-Agreement which led to popular discontent in Tibet and its repudiation by the Dalai Lama in exile. For instance, while the agreement stated that there would be no changes in the status of the Dalai Lama and other political representatives, effective political regulations made it difficult for them to exercise their powers. The decisions of this committee were mostly guided and pruned by the Chinese authorities and had a solid core of at least 20 members chosen by the Chinese authorities. In fact the committee was not set up until late December 1959, though the office had been in place since 1956 (Tibetan's Response to Chinese White Papers, Op Cit: 11). Moreover, district and village leaders were executed, degraded or humiliated on a large scale. In addition taxes were imposed as an input to the 'Aid to Korea' fund. Hence, the provisions laid down in the 17-point Agreement were given a mere lip-service and the functioning of the local bodies differed substantially than promised.

The XIV Dalai Lama found it difficult to cope with the Chinese assertive stance<sup>14</sup>, which went on introducing changes in the Tibetan administration and did not fulfil the promises of the 17-Point Agreement,<sup>15</sup> which eventually led to the flight of the Dalai

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<sup>14</sup>In response to the Dalai Lama's letter to General Tan on 12 March 1959, the Chinese General had used the words "traitorous activities of the reactionary clique of the upper strata in Tibet", a language still in use by the Chinese authorities. Though the Tibetan unrests in 1959 had witnessed participation from more than 90 per cent of Tibetans and could hardly be called upper class alone (Arpi 2009).

<sup>15</sup>International Commission of Jurists, Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet, Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic (Geneva 1960); the report made by this commission holds that Tibet was an independent country for all purposes between 1911 and 1950, For more see – "The case concerning Tibet: Tibet's sovereignty and the Tibetan people's right to self-determination" by Tibet Justice Center (Andrew G. Dulaney and Dennis M. Cusack) and Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (Dr. Michael van Walt van Praag) for The Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 1 June 1998, Update added by Tibet Justice Center, 13February 2013.

Lama to India in 1959. Though the perception of a ‘threat to his life’ was the most predominant reason for this move, foreign assurances of providing help to the Tibetan Independence Movement were also a significant factor.<sup>16</sup> However, the XIV Dalai Lama did not get any opportunity to reorganise a military movement against China and regain Tibetan independence after he went into exile, as was possible for the XIII Dalai Lama who returned to Tibet through military help during his exile in Darjeeling (1912-1913).

The critical role of the foreign forces in instigating Tibetan Independence and yet not entirely supporting their case also finds mention in Chinese assertions of British manipulations at the time of Lhasa convention and the Convention between Great Britain and Russia in 1907 (White Paper on Tibet, Op Cit). Similarly, while most western countries agreed that about Tibet being an independent state from 1911 onwards, they did not support the cause in the United Nations.

Yet the sense of nationalism that developed as a corollary to Chinese repression or foreign intervention in Tibet was often driven by traditional religious themes reinvented by Tibetans in exile to express their national aspirations like the “Prayer of Truthful Words (*dentsik mönlam*)” and the National Anthem which also express political motives at the same time. Their belief in a peaceful movement based on compassion made them quite vulnerable and weak in the face of onslaught from the Chinese government. There were also some digressions who tended to differ from this peaceful method spearheaded by the Dalai Lama, and propagated a more violent or militant kind of struggle for independence led by certain monks and Lamas, but that strand was more sporadic than steady.

Soon after the moderate reform process started in 1956 (which did not attempt at introducing large scale reforms in TAR per se) the ethnic Tibetan population in Sichuan and neighbouring regions spilled over to the TAR leading to popular discontent, uprising and appraisal. Though Mao Zedong stuck to his “Gradualist

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<sup>16</sup>The Dalai Lama in his autobiography mentions that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had promised to help with his cause but failed substantially as they were driven primarily by their efforts to destabilize all communist regimes worldwide and not by a genuine desire to help Tibet.

policy”<sup>17</sup> by reaffirming his commitment in 1957 to not introduce any reforms in Tibet until the conditions were ripe, the internal situation in TAR turned frantically dangerous. Local elites were divided on the question of reform: while one section advocated modernisation and education reforms (supported by the Dalai Lama) another section, conservatives were completely opposed to it. Thus, the Chinese government also abrogated the terms of the 17-point Agreement and overrode traditional culture and polity enabling it to completely annex TAR<sup>18</sup> under the Central government and ended all references to Regional Autonomy in Tibet, again ostensibly under the rubrics of democratic reforms. This also brought the Tibetan question onto the international stage.

### **2.3. THE ERA OF REFORMS AND ENTICEMENT FROM WITHIN**

Post 1959, the CCP restructured Tibet’s pastoral areas into communes under the “Cultural Revolution” and the “Four Olds” campaign (Goldstein, Op Cit: 61). The enormous loss of lives and imprisonment of families of those who participated in the uprising led to popular discontent as massive “reeducation campaigns” or “Anti-rebellion campaigns” were launched against those who participated in the 1959 protests or the “upper class reactionaries” and Tibet’s economy came to be equally affected by the central policies and famines. In addition there was a deliberate attempt to demean Tibetan customs and traditions through films, posters and verbal propaganda, which instilled a feeling of humiliation and hatred amongst Tibetans (Sharlho, 1992, 36).

The general election of 1961 reflected the increasing grip of the central government on local political procedures and institutions. While Tibetans were allowed to vote but the candidates were predetermined and most of the powerful positions were filled up by traditional Chinese instead of indigenous Tibetans. For instance, the post of Secretary of the TAR since 1959 onwards has been held by native Chinese people

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<sup>17</sup> Mao’s policy of gradually assimilating instead of outright conquest has been often criticised by internal critics for the current state of languishing political conundrum over Tibet.

<sup>18</sup>Most International Organisations maintain that the 17-point Agreement was not a legally binding agreement.

(Zhang Guhua, Zeng Yongya, Ren Rong, Yin Fatang, Wu Jinhua, Hu Jintao, Chen Kuiyuan, Guo Jinlong, Yang Chuangtang, Zhang Qingli and Chen Quanguo) and not indigenous Tibetans.

Followed by the “Campaign to study Dazhai”, a model brigade in China, production methods were blindly copied from mainland China disregarding local practices. Only after Mao Zedong’s death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping doled out several initiatives to normalize relations with the US as well as solve the pending questions of Tibet and Taiwan. Unilateral gestures were made in 1978 by releasing prisoners, allowing Tibetans visit relatives stationed abroad, and visas for exiled Tibetans (Golstein, Op Cit). These moves were a prelude to persuade the Dalai Lama and his followers to give up their *splittist* activities and join the nationalist enterprise or the national integration program of the Chinese state.

First of these efforts was initiated in 1978 when informal talks were initiated between Gyalo Thondup and the Chinese representatives. The central government offered that everything else could be discussed except ‘total independence’ for Tibet and for this purpose the Dalai Lama could send fact-finding missions to Tibet in 1979-80. In pursuance, the Dalai Lama sent three fact-finding missions to Tibet with the help of his family members which were received with demonstrations of massive reverence for the Dalai Lama and outpour of Tibetan Nationalism on their arrival. The Chinese authorities realized only at this point that years of reform had completely failed to erase the strong sentiments of Tibetan loyalties and hence had to reconsider their strategies. Consequently the fourth fact-finding mission<sup>19</sup> was not even allowed to enter Tibet and there was a considerate amount of unwillingness on part of the Chinese authorities to entertain any further dialogue until circumstances changed in its favour.

The Chinese authorities themselves also sent a fact-finding mission to Tibet to explore whether these sentiments were wrongly placed or the situation was actually dismal on ground. On seeing the ground realities Hu Yaobang is believed to have expressed “whether all the money Beijing had poured into it over the years had been thrown into

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<sup>19</sup>Two parallel dialogues were also initiated with the authorities in Beijing in 1982 and 1984.

the Yarlung Tsangpo River.” Thereafter General Ren Rong was dismissed from the post of the TAR Party Secretary and replaced by Yin Fatang (Raman, C3S Paper No. 151, 2008). In 1980, the CCP convened its **First Tibet Work Conference** in Beijing (These series of Work Forums began as an offshoot of Deng Xiaoping’s call for reform and opening up in 1978 as a means to secure national stability and prosperity). There Party Secretary Hu Yaobang proclaimed a six-point reform programme for Tibet which would enable them to govern Tibet according to Tibetan sensitivities:

- “1. Under the unified leadership<sup>20</sup> of the Central government, the autonomous regions autonomy should be fully exercised;
2. In light of Tibet’s seriously difficult situation, the policy of rehabilitation should be fully implemented so that the burden on the masses may be reduced;
3. Regarding economic issues and policies, Tibet should be treated as a special case and with flexibility according to Tibet’s own conditions;
4. A substantial portion of the subsidies should be used for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry and the essential needs of the Tibetan people;
5. Under the direction of socialism, Tibetan’s science, culture and education should be developed;
6. The party’s cadre policy for nationalities should be correctly implemented and Chinese and Tibetan solidarity must be greatly enhanced (Sharlo, Op Cit: 39).”

These reforms helped the Chinese government to temporarily arrest the governance crisis in Tibet since Hu Yaobang took cognizance of local conditions and disbanded the communes, but there were no significant political concessions given to the Tibetans. A major shift in strategy occurred in the religious, ethnic and economic spheres, whereby some of the major monasteries destroyed during the Cultural Revolution were allocated funds for reconstruction. Almost 230 major and 900 minor religious structures were renovated under this scheme, though most of the funding for the minor structures came from the Tibetans themselves. This was also followed by relaxation on religious prohibitions allowing them to teach and practice various traditional methods such as the joint prayer chanting sessions (Sharlo, Op Cit).

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<sup>20</sup>This was also interpreted by many Sinologists as being a precondition for the Dalai Lama to return to a Tibet being governed only under the leadership of the CCP.



However the Chinese state soon realized the backlash of these leeways. The pent up emotions of the Tibetans began to congregate around the monasteries which became places of political mobilization and education, mostly through monks who had borne a severe brunt of the repressive stage of the Cultural Revolution. An image of a strong and proud Tibet came to be formed through their imagery and feelings of Tibetan nationalism were revitalized through educating the younger generations on these issues. Simultaneously the Chinese cadres began to draw the wrath from the re-emergence of local nationalism and their inability to respond due to internal political dissensions in Beijing (Ibid: 43).

On the other hand a disillusionment with non-Tibetan Chinese in Tibet also grew due to the fact that the state invested huge subsidies on these citizens who were paid almost 87.6 percent (Sharlho) higher than their counterparts elsewhere in China and were employed in much larger numbers as compared to Tibetans in the state-owned enterprises to maintain political control, for instance, the Naching Power plant which employed more than 300 workers (majority of them non-Tibetans) as compared to 40 workers on similar plants in other parts of China. Besides a huge part of the subsidies being allocated to Tibet was spent on institutionalizing the bureaucratic paraphernalia required to politically control Tibet, rather than the welfare of Tibetans as such, which further fuelled anger. The reforms were not perceived as meant for making the Tibetans self-reliant or making the economy in Tibet more robust rather they merely accentuated the perceptions of more Chinese infiltration into Tibet and widened the economic gap between the indigenous Tibetans and the Chinese in Tibet.<sup>21</sup>

Besides, overwhelming responses to the fact-finding missions of the Dalai Lama forced the Chinese authorities to relook at the agendas of reform. The **Second Work Forum on Tibet** was held from 27 February-6 March 1984 with a special focus on economic reform aimed at placating Tibetan sentiments. The meeting decided to undertake 43 projects mostly in the tourism and construction sectors. Huge numbers of workers and entrepreneurs entered Tibet as the procedures of applications for opening shops, relaxing market controls and other regulations were simplified (Smith

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<sup>21</sup>The number of entrepreneurial households from China in Tibet increased from 5746 in 1984 to 11884 in 1988 and almost 10,000 individual entrepreneurs came to Tibet between 1984-85. At the same time around 45000 international tourists visited Tibet in 1987.

1996: 591). Similarly, the Education Bureau of the Specific educational measures were also promulgated to suit TAR's "special circumstances." These included the "three guarantees" (*sanbao*) which were reinstated in 1999 and the Inland Tibet schools (*neidiban*) (Postiglione, Jiao and Goldstein: 92-109). The perceived success of these *neidi* schools in the TAR led to establishment of similar schools for students in the XUAR in 2000. Most school textbooks were produced in the local language to promote ethnic minority education. Several groups were set up to facilitate production of Tibetan language learning resources and some task forces were sent to foreign countries to observe how bilingual education could be undertaken. But updating these materials was a tedious process, hence most of the Tibetan language books were actually translated versions of the Chinese school curricula, thus bringing criticism to the government on erosion of indigenous textbook education. Improving the quality of teacher training was yet another challenge that the Chinese government had to face.

However, these economic and educational reforms also failed to garner sympathy from Tibetans as it was largely meant for enabling them to change the quality of its population (*renkou suzhi*) and not for actual benefit of the Tibetans (Yi, 2007: 933-948). Hu Yaobang lost favour as his policies were seen as detrimental to indigenous Tibetans and leading to increased competition with Chinese immigrants. Meanwhile the local leadership was bifurcated into factions favourable or non-favourable to the conservative structures, for instance, Yin Fatang's petition blaming the strong influence of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama for the failure of reforms led to his replacement by Wu Jinghua, a Yi minority from Sichuan Province. Even Wu struggled to implement his reforms in the TAR as he did not get support from local administration, especially after the ouster of Hu Yaobang by the conservatives' (who ascended to power both in Beijing and TAR) influence in the Central government who started deriding attempts by locals or reformers as *splittist* in nature.

Further a rule to integrate the "unreceptive border regions" into China's economy was initiated under the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1986-1991). The then CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang remarked "Our goal is to seek common prosperity for all nationalities, but this cannot be achieved simultaneously. For the time being, the western region is to supply raw materials for the development of the eastern region and, in return, will market its goods produced in the western region" (Beijing Review:

1988, p.17). This economic initiative led to further migration of non-Tibetan population into Tibet. It was reported that sixteen labour units in the Lhasa Municipality replaced 30,000 of their Tibetan workers with Han migrants and the ousted Tibetans were told to go to the villages and find employment (Tibet under Communist China, Op Cit). While the state continued to assert that the regional people's congress was adopting laws according to its needs in the religious sphere, a detailed analysis reveals that the changes were influenced by the majority (Han) culture and to an extent reflected an abrogation of local customs and practices. For instance, the Regional People's Congress adapted China's marriage law to make it more acceptable to Tibetans. As a result, the once common practice of polygamy and polyandry greatly changed (Tibet adapts Law Tailored to its needs, SWB FE/0216 B2/5 29 July 1998). The debate is not whether these changes were progressive or regressive but they changed essentially the way the Tibetans looked at their traditional way of life.

The 1987 riots were however a major eye-opener for the authorities in Beijing. The monks and nuns had launched an active movement around Lhasa mainly headed by monks from the Drepung monastery, showcasing the Tibetan political consciousness. Till now the government had managed to put the blame on outside forces or reactionaries or splittists for the discontent spreading in Tibet, but the four riots in 1987-1989 pointed to a severe misjudgement on part of the Central government officials. Though the Central authorities had tried to placate the Tibetans by allowing the Great prayer Festival to take place from Lhasa, the riots depicted that the Tibetan loyalties could not be swayed by mere symbolic gestures.

Hereafter, liberal reforms (in the religious sphere) since 1984 were withdrawn and a hard-line strategy in the garb of martial law (introduced on 7 March 1989 and repealed on 1 May 1990) was adopted since they came to believe that the monasteries could turn into hotbeds of nationalism. A high-level CCP Politburo meeting in 1989 took the decision to speed up economic incorporation of Tibet and constrict security mechanisms in the province. At the same time, the centre continued to blame "outside forces" for instigating these riots.

## **2.4. COOPTATION OF LOCAL ELITES: POLITICS OF APPEASEMENT, REPRESSION, AND DEVELOPMENT**

The above-mentioned new hard-line strategy was designed to consign limited autonomy and designed to co-opt local elites in Tibet vis-à-vis the Tibetan leadership in exile. The Chinese government upped its ante by trying to bureaucratize its own pool of Tibetan loyalists and employing them for creating a pro-China stance among Tibetan masses. For instance, Doje Cering, the Deputy Secretary of the Tibet Regional CCP Committee delivered a speech (under guidance from Qiao Shi) that

“we must take a firm and clear-cut stand in informing the masses in Tibet that there can be no restoration of the reactionary rule in Tibet. The dream of the separatists to split the motherland can never be attained...Tibet can only prosper, develop and enjoy bright prospects in the great family of the PRC...Preserving the unity of the motherland and building socialism with Chinese characteristics represents the common political foundation for unity, and also represents the goal of our unity. Our thinking and actions must be subordinate to this great goal. It is extremely important to strengthen unity in all respect between Hans and Tibetans, aiming at this great goal.”  
(SWB, FE/0205 B/1, 16 July 1988)

There was also an immediate move to discredit the Dalai Lama and his separatist activities, evident in the Party rhetoric. In response to the Dalai Lama’s address to the United States’ Congress in 1987 and the simultaneous riots in Lhasa, Yang Mingfu, the head of the United Front Work Department, wrote to Gyalo Thondup that

“on September 19 this year, the Dalai Lama visited the United States and openly raised an outcry about ‘Tibet’s independence’ on September 21 by propounding a ‘Five Point Peace Plan’ at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. A few splittists in Lhasa supported the Dalai Lama’s splittist activities and created disturbances on September 27 and October 1. The Central government views with extreme seriousness the Dalai Lama’s splittist activities and Lhasa disturbances... The Lhasa disturbances fomented by a few splittists, are serious political incidents instigated and planned by the Dalai group. Their aim is to undermine the unity of the motherland and sabotage the unity and stability in Tibet by supporting the Dalai’s illegal splittist activities in foreign countries. We will never allow the Dalai Lama to spread his activities to destroy the unity and stability of Tibet as well as the unity of Motherland...The Dalai group is depending on foreign support to spread splittist activities in Tibet... The

signal from our side is crystal clear. No one is allowed to harm the territories under China's ownership. Foreigners are not allowed to interfere in China's internal affairs...Our nation will not tolerate interference from any quarter." (Arpi, Op Cit: 106-110)

From 1991 onwards, there were constant raids in the homes of the Tibetans and anybody found with things deemed subversive/anti-nationalist were arrested and things such as the Dalai Lama's pictures, autobiography and videos or audio cassettes were confiscated. The deputies at the fifth Regional People's Congress denounced all acts that could be deemed as separatist in nature and declared

"we shall never permit Tibet to become an independent or semi-independent state in any disguised form" – this is the determination shared by deputies to the current session of the Tibetan Autonomous Regional People's Congress...Any act violating Buddhist rules and state laws using religion to split the motherland is firmly opposed by the monks and the common people." (SWB FE/0217 B 2/1)

The CCP Central Committee and the State Council laid out indications at the **Third Tibet Work Conference** held at Beijing from 20-23 July 1994, presided over by President Jiang Zemin to suppress the "separatist" movement and undermine the authority of the Dalai Lama. The Forum decided to focus efforts on economic development,

"firmly grasp the two major tasks of developing the economy and stabilizing the situation, securing the high-speed development of the economy, overall social progress and lasting political stability in Tibet, and ensuring continuous improvement of the Tibetan people's living standards. The Central Government also adopted the decision to devote special attention to Tibet and get all the other parts of China to aid Tibet, and formulated a sequence of special favourable policies and measures for speeding up the development of Tibet" (White Paper on Tibet's March Toward Modernisation 2001).

At the same time, it was stressed that the struggle to oppose separatism must be carried on thoroughly by meting out 'relentless blows' to the Tibetans and particularly to the Dalai Lama:

"The struggle between ourselves and the Dalai clique is neither a matter of religious belief, nor a matter of the question of autonomy, it is a matter of securing the unity of our country and opposing splittism... we must reveal the true face of the Dalai hidden behind the religious mask, and prevent by all means and ways the monks and nuns in the monasteries of our

region from being affected by the influence of the Dalai Clique.. We must teach and guide Tibetan Buddhism to reform itself. All those religious laws and rituals must be reformed in order to fit in with the needs of development and stability in Tibet” (Third Forum on Work in Tibet 1994)

Meanwhile, the administration and the Party continued to stoke local sentiments of patriotism by asserting that the Tibetan people must continue their tradition to guard the solidarity of the nationalities and the unification of our country -

“Tibet’s vast numbers of cadres and the masses are the strength and guarantee to secure unification and stabilisation. We have the correct leadership of the Party, Old the solid unchangeable support of the People’s army and the Public security plus the garrison command. Whoever sabotages the solidarity of the nationalities and wants to separate, will be completely opposed by the Tibetan people and people of the whole country, and they will definitely be smashed and will become criminals of the most heinous crimes. By holding high the banner of patriotism, implement correctly and in an all-round way the policy on nationalities and religion.”

Under this forum overall 62 new projects were launched mostly concentrated in and around Lhasa. The Human Rights Watch reported on the repressive nature of these policies, for instance, they talked about curtailing the spread of religious activities, upgrading of security work, creation of the “temple registration officials” by the Religious Affairs Bureau. It was decided to identify and purge Tibetan cadres and natives suspected of harbouring ethno-nationalist compassions. The most significant change that was adopted was to increase the “ideological content in school education and delineate socialist thinking” as the objective of all education under the patriotic education campaign.

At the same time, the Chinese authorities did not restrain from punishing those Tibetans who were considered as betraying the trust of the authorities. This was perceptible after the death of the Tenth Panchen Lama (1989), when the next reincarnation had been sought. Tibetan official, Chadrel Rimpoche was imprisoned for six years in 1997 for having passed on secret information to the Dalai Lama, who had preemptively announced his approval of the proposed candidate (Gendun Choekyi Nyima). The Chinese government simultaneously announced another candidate (Gyaincain Norbu, who was chosen after a draw of lots from the golden urn) as suitable for the position while intensified its attacks on the Dalai Lama. Thus

along with its policy of integrating or assimilating Tibet through development and modernization, an anti-Dharamsala stance became quite evident in China's approach.

## **2.5. PATRIOTIC EDUCATION AND THE INCULCATION OF ALLEGIANCE: PROPAGANDA AND DISCOURSE**

Three major political reforms were announced in 1996 – ‘Patriotic Education’<sup>22</sup>, ‘Spiritual Civilization’ and ‘Strike Hard’ (*Yan da*, April 1996) which were to become the defining face of the overall impact of Chinese nationalism on Tibet. On 6 May 1996, Raidi, Deputy Secretary of the CCP, affixed this programme to the already on-going anti-splittist campaign

“Tibet is located on the frontline of the anti-separation struggle, and safeguarding social stability and the Motherland's unity is the most important political responsibility... paying great attention to this struggle to severely crack down on crimes is both an expression of whether or not we have a sense of the masses of people, and an expression of whether or not we attach importance to politics (Xizang Ribao, 11 May 1996, SWB 20 May 1996).” On 23 July 1996, Chen Kuiyuan, the then Communist Party Secretary of the TAR, launched the “*Spiritual Civilization campaign*” and declared its main drive in Tibet as

“One of the important tasks in facilitating the Spiritual Civilization drive is to screen and eliminate Dalai's influence in the spiritual field. If we fail to accomplish this task, we cannot claim to have attained any great results in facilitating the Spiritual Civilization drive.” (BBC 1996)

From the outset, ethnic minority education (*minzu jiaoyu*) was streamlined with the specific goals of fostering allegiance and ensuring stability in the border areas. Instilling patriotism became the major dogma under these education campaigns initiated in the last two decades. As part of the re-education process, the Chinese sent “work teams” to the monasteries to educate monks on the evils of following the Dalai

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<sup>22</sup>This has been dubbed as the Third Cultural Revolution in Tibet by the Tibetan Government-in-exile, See Statement of the Kashag on the 40th Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day, 2 September 2000. However, as far as Patriotic Education as an overall strategy for the PRC is concerned it was adopted much earlier in 1991 by two official directives under the CPC Central Committee 1991 (Notice about Conducting Education of Patriotism and Revolutionary Tradition by Exploiting Extensively Cultural Relics) and (General Outline on Strengthening Education on Chinese Modern and Contemporary History and National Condition) and Ministry of education 1991.

Lama's path and not to pursue Tibetan nationalism; if the monks refused, they had to suffer harassment, expulsion or sometimes even arrest. On the other hand, Monks who acquiesced to the five principles of:

- "a. opposition to separatism,
- b. the unity of Tibet and China,
- c. recognition of the Chinese appointed Panchen Lama as the true one,
- d. denial that Tibet was or should be independent,
- e. agree that the Dalai Lama is destroying the unity of the people,"

were given red-cards which allowed them travel freely within China as they were seen as, "having great belief and love for their country and religion" by the Chinese, on the other hand, those who refused to comply by these rules, received green or blue cards that restricted their travel to their respective regions of domicile. Towards this purpose four books entitled "The Essence of How to Read Out and Explain the Religious Policy"; "... Anti-Splittism"; "... the History of Tibet"; and "... the Law", issued by the 'Office for the Promotion of Education in Patriotism of the Monks and Nuns in the Tibetan Autonomous Region' were commonly used (Tibetan Centre for Human rights and Democracy 1996).

'Democratic Management Committees' and 'Patriotic Education Work Units' were set up in all monasteries and nunneries since these were deemed to be hotbeds of support for the Dalai Lama and several religious objects of immense cultural significance were sold off in the antique markets to keep them out of the reach of the Tibetan masses lest they stoke feelings of attachment with the traditional culture. An impetus was added to the official propaganda from President Jiang Zemin's speech in March 1999 at the Ninth CPPCC National Committee, where addressing the ethnic and religious leaders he declared-

"To correctly handle religious problems, first we should completely and correctly implement the party's religious policy; second, we should strengthen management of religious affairs according to the law; third, we should actively guide religions to adapt to the socialist society"... (South China Morning Post, 23 June 1999)

"First, the religious masses should abide by our socialist country's law, regulations, guidelines, and policies religious activities must be conducted within the bounds of the law; second, religious activities should be subjected to and should serve the country's maximum interest and the nation's entire interest."



The Chinese government, at this time, used religion as a double-edged sword wherewith religious leaders were at the same time perceived as threats to stability and political tools for mobilization. Senior Tibetan monk, Living Buddha Bomi Jangbaluozhu (Qiangbaluozhu) who played a crucial role in the controversial selection of the 11th Panchen Lama in 1995 is a case in point where the Chinese resorted to appeasement. He was appointed to the national committee of the CPPCC in recognition of his support to the Chinese government in Beijing (PTI News Agency, 22 November 2002). The government tried to incorporate several local leaders into its own paraphernalia of leadership positions, at the same time creating a base of Chinese leaders who could easily step into leadership positions to replace the anti-national elements as and when the need arose.

For the laymen the government exhibited an attitude reflective of the White man's burden - that Tibetans were 'uncivilised' people with relatively less or no interest in scientific education and thus the curriculum had to be selectively determined to suit the needs of farmers and herdsmen. Through an investigation of the curriculum, Catriona Bass, exposes how the CCP tried to present a "moral"<sup>23</sup> project of remoulding the culture" of its nationalities (which is considered deficient) into a "unitary modern socialist culture" by giving them new sets of values and beliefs (Bass 2005: 433-449). Chinese educators and researchers reported high illiteracy levels amongst Tibetans largely due to their resistance to 'progress' (Lamontagne, 1999: 145).

A common problem the government faced amongst Tibetan people initially was their attitude that education which could assist in learning language and mathematics thereby helpful to sustain their indigenous style of living would be more than sufficient for their children.<sup>24</sup> Despite these cultural hindrances, the Chinese government tried to further education (more in line with the state agenda) amongst Tibetans by providing opportunities for them to attend inland boarding schools (which

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<sup>23</sup> According to Li Maosen most of this moral education is largely constituted of expressed thought of political leaders and reflects political indoctrination and the concepts of positive and negative role models.

<sup>24</sup> The State managed to institute a course on 'ideology and morality' amongst all primary schools besides making it compulsory to hoist the Chinese national flag and singing the Chinese national anthem along with courses on English and mathematics in the rural areas, while the curricula for urban primary schools reflected a more diverse use of courses in Chinese, English, sport, arts and social science. Between 1996 and 2000, 1000 classrooms for moral education were built in the TAR and 100 new centers of moral education (People's Republic of China State Council Information Office, 2000).

now constitute the biggest pool of educated Tibetans returning back to Tibet as teachers and workers). This is not to argue that these educated Tibetans are a part of the solution for national integration, quite to the contrary, these educated Tibetans are at the crux of identity disorders because when they return back to Tibet after attaining a minority education in the mainland they were neither accepted as fully Tibetan or fully Chinese; though they were acculturated in both the languages but they were not acculturated in either “traditional” cultural knowledge nor the totally scientific modern education of the Han Chinese. Yet the government consistently tries to inculcate values of loyalty and allegiance to the Chinese state among the local people.

Besides, the government announced a new campaign in 1999 to ‘enhance the overall quality,’ of the cadres. The mainland cadres were instructed to learn Tibetan which could prepare them for future leadership roles. According to the Tibet Statistical Yearbook, the share of Tibetans in the regional government was only 49.7 percent in 2003 with the rest filled by migrant Chinese (Tibet: The Gap between Fact and fiction: 23). These figures are significant as the regional government and units owned by it account for 94 percent of all the jobs in Tibet.

Alongside attempts to assimilate Tibetans through re-education campaigns the state continued to popularise its commitment to preserve the traditional Tibetan culture in an attempt to appease the masses at large. The 2000 White paper claimed that substantive attempts to retain Tibetan language as a medium of expression were being made, for instance, the local radio and TV stations in the TAR broadcasted in the Tibetan language for over 20 hours per day especially after October 1999. At least 25 movies dubbed into the regional language were showcased every year based on their pastoral lifestyle (White Paper 2000). The government collected and collated Chinese documents and historical materials on Tibetan studies of which 200 works were published.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>These included “A *General History of Tibet* (Tibetan and Chinese editions), *A Political History of Tibet* by Xagaba (Annotated), *A Communications History of Ancient and Modern Tibet* (Chinese edition), *The Reasoning Theory in Tibetan Philosophy* (Tibetan edition), *A Dictionary of Tibetan Philosophy* (Tibetan edition), and *Index of the Catalogues of Tibetan Studies Documents.*”

There was also an attempt to appease international audience by showcasing how the ethnic minorities had been brought into the national fold. In his speech at the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the CCP, Jiang Zemin expressed:

“We have persistently carried forward the fine cultures of all ethnic groups of the country and actively absorbed what is advanced in other civilizations in order to make our socialist culture increasingly flourish. We have put an end once for all to the disunity in the old China and attained a high degree of national unification and unparalleled unity of all ethnic groups” (Jiang Zemin’s speech at the Meeting celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Communist party of China)

Since educational institutions had been identified as the prime-movers of the patriotic campaign, huge investments were made to establish schools and colleges and other institutions of higher learning. The 2004 White paper noted that

“by the end of 2003, Tibet had 1011 schools of various types and levels and 2020 teaching centres, with a total of 4,53,400 students, the enrolment proportion of primary schools rising to 91.8 percent and the illiteracy rate dropping to less than 30 per cent. Since 1985, the Central Government had established Tibetan classes/schools in 21 provinces and municipalities, training up to 10,000 college and secondary technical school graduates.”

In 2004, the TAR Patriotic education committee announced another campaign to eliminate internal splittist activities and external separatist activities and reduce the influence of religion. The attempts by the Chinese government at generating covert assimilation were also visible in the state schooling of communist and nationalist principles. The state regularly endorsed such interferences in local practices reiterated in the meeting held between the Public Security Bureau and the State Security Bureau in Chengdu in 1999, where Chen Kuiyuan, TAR Party Secretary, advocated that

“We must gradually stamp out the so-called Tibetan religion and culture until they are reduced to mere museum pieces without the current ability to influence generation after generation of people...Dalai and their so-called exile government in Dharamsala are the main impediment to peace and stability in Tibet. Therefore, we should uproot them.” (Cited from Statement of the Kashag on the 40th Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day, 2 September 2000)

Launching the campaign of the “Three Serious Offences” throughout China, “separatism” was declared as the core ‘evil’ as Tibetan cadres were subjected to “Four Prohibitions” namely – “prohibition against religious faith, against displaying religious altars and the Dalai Lama’s photos at home and putting up prayer flags, against participating in the activities of feudal blind faith, and against sending children to schools in foreign countries.” Also, a campaign on “Education in Four Ideological Precepts” was introduced (Kashag 10 March 2001).

On 5 May 2000 Hu Jintao met the Tibetan members of the NPC and announced “Resolute struggle against splittist rebellions and other activities disturbing social stability must be treated as an important work on the high-level political agenda. We must implement this campaign seriously. All splittist activities must be curbed and repressed firmly according to the law” (Ibid).

Likewise most Tibetans were also not satisfied by these developments as they claimed that “the increase in the number of schools and educational institutes in Tibet over the years had little significance to Tibetans, because the education policies in Tibet were used as a means to inculcate communist ideologies.” The ‘materialism and atheism’ campaign launched by the government in 2000, where parents and teachers were advised to raise atheistic children in order to purge them from the bad influence of religion was one example of such interventions by the state (Bass Op Cit: 436). The government also hardened its stance towards Tibetan refugees returning to Tibet from exile by issuing new border regulations to control crossings without papers in June 2000.

Simultaneously, the destruction of traditional buildings like the Gyalhakang mosque damaging Lhasa’s cultural heritage became another reason for resentment amongst Tibetans (TIN 2002). An unintended consequence of the 1980 Lhasa development plan had been the large scale destruction of traditional Tibetan housing throughout the 1990s which included destruction of monastic institutes to curtail religious freedom. Large scale abandonment of monasteries as in the case of the Kardze monastery became routine. The handiwork of Chinese nationalism was apparent in the state’s attempt to project Han imperial symbols as representative of all Chinese irrespective of their ethnic origins. For instance, while the myths of origins amongst the Tibetans

are based on monkey being the animal progenitor, the state insisted on representing the Chinese nation as descendants of dragons (Sautman, 1997: 78-95). Such instances generated antagonistic feelings among the local Tibetans and strengthened local nationalism.

Meanwhile, such attempts at cultural subjugation were constantly challenged by local Tibetans who adopted alternative means to state directions. The Chinese government failed to realise that the Tibetan culture was largely an “oral culture” where songs, poetry<sup>26</sup> and sermons (Buddhist) were instrumental in spreading the discourses on local heroes; which meant that the locals could easily subvert the propaganda of the government through spreading their own values and culture. Inherent to these dispersions of oral histories was the belief in history as an idea of inheritance; thus histories of resistance circulated orally acted as glue to the Tibetan past and the legacy from their forefathers. Deliberate *sinicisation* pushed the Tibetans to use unconventional strategies and birth of a plethora of grassroots and religious educational mediums, (for instance sending the children to Tibetan administered boarding schools in exile in India and Nepal) or started relying heavily on private schools (Macpherson and Beckett 2008).

Though the government White papers exhibited a sombre intention to preserve Tibetan language and culture, at a covert level Tibetan language was discouraged as the language of education or administration as the officials linked it with prompting Tibetan nationalism. There were consistent efforts to control the curriculum presenting a distorted version of Tibetan history (ICLT- A generation in Peril 2001). This was palpable in the reintroduction of Chinese Communist heroes in the new textbooks introduced in 2003-04, including stories about Mao himself and the story of Lei Fang, which had been removed from the textbooks in the 1990s. Attempts were made to disengage the association of Tibetan nationalism with its Buddhist inclinations.

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<sup>26</sup>Prominent works include the songs “On the Golden Hill of Beijing” and “Liberated Serfs Sing,” the song with actions “Strolling Around the New Town,” the song and dance combination “Washing Clothes,” dance epic with music “Emancipated Serfs Turn Toward the Sun,” drama “Princess Wen Cheng”.

The 2001 edition of Book one of the school curriculum textbooks deliberately omitted all pictures and imagery related to Buddhist traditions. In another lesson on *Nangsa Wen Bum*, a Buddhist religious opera, contrasting the virtues of self-sacrifice and humility with greed, the editors working under the guidelines of compositions to be formulated as “nationalist in form and socialist in content” reconstructed it as an abstract tale without any pictures or depictions of things identical to Buddhism. Stories depicting struggle between decrepit monks and poor Tibetans in which the latter emerged victorious over the earlier were propagated in an effort to weaken the hold of Buddhist monks in the society. Moreover, references to important religious figures such as the Dalai Lama and Desi Sangay Gyatso (builder of the Potala Palace) remodelled a ‘splittist chieftain’ in were completely removed from these texts. The only religious figure to have found positive mention in these school textbooks was the 7<sup>th</sup> century king Songtsen Gampo who married the Tang Dynasty Princess and hence was a part of the larger Chinese heritage as is claimed in the White Papers on Tibet published by the Central government (Castriona Bass, Op Cit, p.440). Such changes reflected what Foucault had termed as ‘subjugated knowledge’ which existed as “historical contents buried or disguised in a functionalist coherence” (Foucault 1980: 81-82).

Most of these attempts were largely determined by the State’s aim to propagate that Tibetan history and culture had always been a part of the larger Chinese history and culture and that Tibet would benefit from its association to the motherland. This aspiration was visible in Hu Jintao’s speech at Tibet’s Peaceful Liberation Anniversary Rally in 2001, where he emphasised that it was only under the guidance of the CCP and only by “embracing the motherland and firmly taking the socialist road with Chinese characteristics, that Tibet could enjoy prosperity and progress.” For this purpose the PLA garrisons and the PAPF units were beckoned to defend and preserve stability in Tibet. At the same time, he acknowledged the role of the ethnic groups of Tibet in making outstanding contributions in building a glorious culture of the Chinese nation (Xinhua News 2001).

The central government revived the patriotic education campaign in 2005 with even greater intensity. Two more books were added to the revised literature of the campaign titled “Handbook on Crushing the Separatists,” “Handbook of

Contemporary Policies,” “Handbook of Policies on Religion,” “Handbook on Law,” “Handbook on Ethics for the Masses,” “Handbook of History of Tibet”.

A major portion of the propaganda of the working committees spreading patriotic education involves reminding the Tibetan families about their new found wealth and being grateful to the Chinese government for the new prosperity in their region. The officials often resort to distribution of gifts and money and regurgitating the state’s official policy of “Tibet and China are inseparable siblings”. Alongside, there is an attempt at reassuring the local Tibetans that they are allowed to voice their grievances but within the confines of the arrangements meted out by the Chinese government. This was evident in Ye Xiaowen’s statement when he emphasised that “We should not expand religions, but strive to let existing religions do more for the motherland’s reunification, national unity, economic development and social stability” in 2008 (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Annual Report).

There was renewed emphasis on the propagation of the larger nationalist agendas of the government through its endorsement of patriotic education campaign by the local elites, especially, before the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The CPCCC in a circular released to the Party Organs urged its cadres in regions dominated by Tibetan population to be more vigilant and increase anti-secession education at the grassroots level (People’s Daily Online, 2008). In an attempt to appease the local and international audience the government reiterated that a new education with local characteristics will be doled out in Tibet.

The government issued yet another White paper in 2011 which reiterated the official rhetoric of Tibetan contribution to the unified evolvement of the Chinese nation and how the Tibetan and Han people and other ethnic groups were tied together through blood relationship, culture and economic-political aspects and that “the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui and Tibetan peoples were of one, and the five ethnic groups will be of one republic” (Sixty Years since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, The Information Office of the State Council). It affirmed that the Tibetan people would enjoy a better future only under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and by the combined effort of all ethnic groups and the entire nation.

At a meeting of the CPPCC in 2012, Basang Toinzhub, a local official, stressed the fact that it was a top priority to maintain stability and pledged to push forward patriotic and legal education among monks and nuns and at the same time strengthen the supervision of monasteries (Tibet's officials vow to strengthen management of monasteries, Xinhua, 09 January 2012). These directives were followed up by massive circulation of the articles reiterating the truth (Chinese version) about the 1959 Rebellion from the excerpts of the White papers published earlier by the State Council department (People's Daily 2008).

Another significant indicator of this trend was Qi Zhala's (Lhasa municipal secretary) speech, on 9 March 2013 at the 12th National People's Congress which reiterated Tibet's position at the core strategy of safeguarding the the blueprint of the national dream and China's great rejuvenation (People's Daily Online 2014).<sup>27</sup> He emphasised his commitment to implement the basic guidelines on religious affairs by intensifying "the six establishments", "six in one activities" and "9+5" projects targeted at the monasteries and push forward the legal and educational campaigns promoting core values of patriotism and ethnic solidarity. He also highlighted a systematic attempt at pushing forward culturally beneficent projects in the agricultural and pastoral regions along with the monasteries to broadcast the integrated development of the cultural and tourist innovation gardens. Towards this purpose, most of the successful live opera of Princess Wenchang which integrated Peking and Tibetan opera techniques were utilised, which was one of the best of the 'National Best Stage Art Project.' In addition, he delineated the dual strategy of "going out" and "bringing in" to fulfil the tasks of opening up Tibet to modernisation and reform.

The fact that he did not hesitate from criticising the Dalai Lama for instigating religious conflicts, racial hatred and social chaos is reflective of the relative success of the Chinese state in co-opting some sections of the elite into its nationalist paraphernalia. A report in 2014 enumerated how the "Prospering City by Culture" strategy was being implemented for re-education in Lhasa by carrying out the core

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<sup>27</sup>To Quote "During the long realization of the Chinese dream, people from various ethnicities of Lhasa will be jointly guided by the spirits of the third plenary session of the 18th People's Congress and ride with the great ship of our country, in order to push forward the construction development the beautiful homeland of Tibet, and to inscribe the Lhasa poem of the Chinese dream more brighter and gorgeous".



value education activities themed by ‘Patriotism, unification, harmony, development and civilisation’ and thematic education activities on engendering love for the party under the jargons of ‘Eight looks, One accounting, One disclosure and Four Enhancement’ (People’s Daily Online 2014).

Commenting on the discursive nature of the regulations (*tifa* - formulations or approved political formulae) brought out by the Chinese government from time to time, Robert Barnett emphasizes how the Tibetan governmental documents are more of forms of forceful utterances; they are generally read and understood according to what the readers immediately desire of fear or what he terms “power-reading” since the future of Tibetans depends on how accurately they are able to decipher the meanings behind those texts (Barnett 2008: 171-206). Moreover, the patriotic education campaigns have replaced the mass campaigns of earlier era with institutionalized mobilizations to coordinate with other relevant governments.

## **2.6. STRIKE HARD ON THE ANTI-NATIONAL**

In a more hard-line effort to sustain the nation’s political fabric and maintain solidarity within Tibet, the government employed the Strike hard campaigns to rid the unruly elements in Tibet who were considered detrimental to the interests of the state. The severity of repression under these operations was documented by several international NGOs and Tibetan Organizations working from exile. For instance, Amnesty International, which consistently followed the status of Tibetans under the CCP rule through the 1990s, observed in 1998 that “torture and ill-treatment of political detainees in prisons and labour camps remained widespread, sometimes resulting in death” (Amnesty International Report, 1998: 132). The TIN reported that in a series of clamp downs on the Drepung, Sera, Gyantse, Shalu, Sakya, Nechung, Samye and Sangog Palre monasteries around 111 people were arrested in 1996, while many monks left the monasteries on their own, choosing not to renounce their spiritual leader and deprecate the position of the current Panchen Lama. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) based in Dharamsala documented a total of 165 arrests and more than 2,800 cases of expulsion from monasteries and nunneries in 1996 and 1997; these numbers increased exponentially in the following years (TCHRD, 1997).

In the aftermath of the new Internet regulations in 2002, requiring censorship of all China based-websites, information on Xinjiang and Tibet was difficult to access. *Tibetan Culture*, a website run by the Xueyu Zangren Cultural Exchange Co. Ltd in Gansu Province was closed down and its editor-in-chief Tsewang Norbu subsequently vanished. Radio Free Asia, Voice of America and Voice of Tibet that broadcast in Tibetan are regularly jammed by Chinese authorities even today. Chinese officials also tend to immediately crackdown on sensitive cases in the neighbouring region of Nepal, such as the broadcasting of footage by Tibet Television 3 of the Tibetan national flag which led to re-education campaign of the head of the station and writing self-criticisms (Tibet: The gap between fact and fabrication: Op Cit).

In 2004 the TIN again reported that authorities had debarred Tibetan author Woesser's book, "Notes on Tibet" for being "sensitive" which also led to her termination from employment. Outlining the aims and visions of the Strike Hard on 4 November 2004, the State media China Tibet Information Centre ([www.tibetinfor.com](http://www.tibetinfor.com)) and Lhasa Evening daily reported that "the "Strike hard" campaign for the winter – 1 November to 30 December 2004 – in Lhasa, TAR, has begun. The current campaign aims to eliminate internal secret splittist groups, separatists based outside, influence on religion, terrorists and their activities, criminal activities, stability stiflers and exile returnees linked with splittist groups."

Several human rights organisations highlighted the mentally destabilising effects of these political indoctrinations on the monks and lay people in Tibet. A TCHRD report observed that the continuous political brainwashing of the clergy and forcing them to reiterate party principles led to huge extensive mental agony among the monks and nuns. At other times, monk and nuns who dared to refute the claims of 'Tibet is a part of China' were often deposed under mysterious circumstances (TCHRD 2005). The US Congressional-Executive Commission on China in its 2005 Annual Report observed that there was no advance in the religious milieu for Tibetan Buddhism as well as in the human rights conditions in China; instead, there were additional restrictions on local as well as Chinese citizens who went to worship in state-controlled venues or wrote for state-controlled publications (TCHRD 2005).

The resolve of the government was however unstoppable which could be seen later down the years when the Chinese government hurled a 42-day “strike hard” campaign in 2009, rounding up people around 5,766 suspects were from houses and cafes for questioning in relation to the 14 March 2008 protests as reported by the Lhasa Evening News (*Lasa Wan Bao*). In March 2010 another round of Strike Hard Campaign was carried out by the Lhasa City Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials across all seven prefectures and combat forces were deployed to and from Lhasa city. Though ostensibly done under the banner of maintaining stability, this was an astute attempt at pruning out politically active Tibetans before the upcoming 10 March Anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising.

Some of the Tibetan monks who managed to flee into exile shed light on the severely repressive nature of these patriotic education campaigns. Lobsang Samphel, born in Ngaba County in Amdo province recounted that “monks undergoing political education classes had to sit for exams every ten days, finding the correct answer for sensitive political questions such as ‘Is the Dalai clique responsible for ‘splitting’ the Chinese Motherland or not?’ Such derogatory remarks and baseless allegations against our root spiritual teacher filled our hearts with anguish and we felt as if our hearts have been wounded.”

Covertly, downsizing the strength of monasteries was perceptibly the foremost strategy that the Chinese authorities employed in the aftermath of any disruptive event witnessed in the vicinities of TAR; though the official rhetoric emphasised more on peaceful dispersion of such events. For instance, Gomang Monastery population was cut down to 370 from over 900 after the protests in 2008. Monks who returned after serving sentences in the prison were constantly systematically and intrusively patrolled and could leave the monasteries only with official authorization; and often faced numerous obstacles returning to a normal life. Similarly, the monks who returned to Tibet after having attended religious ceremonies in the exile also came under surveillance and at times taken under detention. Ugyen Lhundup, a farmer at Thangka Village in Kardze, Sichuan Province recounts that two nuns, Namgyal Lhamo and Tashi Choedon, lost their mental balance due to severe beatings and torture in the detention centres for staging peaceful protests. Several others are detained for copying and spreading the speeches of the Tibetan leaders in exile.

Restricting the internal movement of lay Tibetans also remained high on agenda and as a result many regulations making it compulsory to carry documents have been dispensed by PSB and government offices. Most of the times, the process for procuring these permissions is highly tedious as the Tibetans are required to make a formal undertaking not to join any protest activities in Lhasa or elsewhere in TAR and in cases of emergency leave someone as a guarantee for their return. The movement of Lhasa Tibetans (within TAR) is also constrained by the need to carry official documents whenever they move around in the city, failing which they can be immediately held captive.

In its attempt to counter what China perceived as effective propaganda by the Dalai Lama, the Chinese government tried to reassure the international community about its intent on maintaining the indigenous culture of Tibet:

“This white paper is published to give the international community a better understanding of the reality of the protection and development of Tibetan culture, citing facts to expose the lie about the “cultural genocide” in Tibet fabricated by the 14th Dalai Lama and his cohorts, exposing the deceptive nature of the “cultural autonomy of Tibet” they clamour for, and to further the protection and development of Tibetan culture.”

(White Paper 2008)

It outlined that literary work and publication in Tibetan language was respected and preserved. In 2008, there were nine publishing houses like the “China Tibetology Publishing House, Ethnic Publishing House, Tibet People’s Publishing House and Tibetan Ancient Books Publishing House.” In addition, the government decided to offer an annual holiday to the Tibetans on 28 March every year which would be celebrated as Serf’s Emancipation Day to mark the end of the oppressive feudal system in 2009 (Anand 2009: 30-31).

On the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, Duojiciren, Deputy Director of the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the TAR, reiterated the official religious policy in Tibet. He stated that

“respecting and protecting freedom of religious beliefs was a basic and long-term policy of the Chinese Government. Tibet had been fully implementing the policy of free religious beliefs sticking to the fundamental principles of separating

politics from religion, supporting self-development of lamasteries and religious personnel... The Central Government and the Tibet Autonomous Region had always regarded Tibetan Buddhist culture as an important part of traditional culture of the Chinese nation and provided effective protection under the condition of limited financial strength.”

Around 1,700 sites have been renovated for religious events, and 46,000 religious faculties are working towards progress in the underlined five aspects:

- 1 nearly 2,000 traditional Tibetan sutras such as Bstan-vgyur and Bkav-vgyur along with biographies have been reproduced to meet the requests from religious people and researchers
- 2 giving due importance to the repair and maintenance of lamasteries, especially, the three great cultural heritages of Potala Palace (phase 2), Norbu Linka and Sera Monastery 330 million Yuan have been earmarked and 570 million Yuan had been allocated to maintain and protect 22 cultural heritages in 2007,
- 3 the living Buddha Reincarnation System was progressing in order, especially after the Management Measures of Living Buddha Reincarnation System were issued by the state in 2007,
- 4 sutra learning system of Tibetan Buddhists was being improved constantly,
- 5 religious activities like celebrating festivals and sutra discussions were being conducted smoothly (Religion Policies in Tibet, 16/11/2011, China Daily)

Despite these tall claims made by the local leadership, it was quite evident that the Chinese state was able to manoeuvre through these regulations in pursuing its restrictive policies, or that these attestations were at best half-truths. The Chinese authorities tightened the control over Tibetan monasteries and their religious practices and propaganda under the ‘*Measures to determine Qualification and Employment of Religious instructors in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries*’ approved at the eighth council of Buddhist Association of China.<sup>28</sup> While some rumours were instigated about China’s reversal on the vilification campaign on the Dalai Lama by allowing his portraits as a religious leader to be displayed in the Tibetan monasteries outside TAR,

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<sup>28</sup> The Law of the People’s Republic of China on National Regional Autonomy stipulates: “Organs of self-government in ethnic regional autonomous areas protect the right to freedom of religious belief of the citizens of all ethnic groups.” But at the same time it reiterates that the Chinese government resolutely opposes attempts to split the country along ethnic lines, and any use of religious fanaticism to divide the people, split the country or harm the unity among all ethnic groups or engage in illegal activities and terrorist actions under the signboard of religion.

these reports were easily disbanded by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) in June 2013.<sup>29</sup>

It could be easily discerned that the government was attempting its best to streamline the international discourse in its favour. It even made several concessions towards this aim, the most significant being its inclusion of the Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai province as a part of its uniform policy for the TAR at the **Fifth Tibet Work Forum** (2010) which was a vital diggression from the previous position (TCHRD, 2013). The Politburo of the Standing committee of the CPC charted out a new approach to govern Tibet that stressed on four observances - “the leadership of the communist party; the socialism with Chinese characteristics; the Regional National Autonomy system and a development path with Chinese characteristics and Tibetan Traits.” Yet the discourse on striking at the Dalai clique remained prominent in the official rhetoric. Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao starkly positioned the goals to reinforce previous policies already in place like “accelerating economic development, increasing household income (especially in rural areas), improving social services, and protecting stability by striking at the separatist threat posed by the Dalai clique.”

The Chinese government has continued to approach the Tibetan issue with mostly hard-line policies. In 2013, it sent more than 18,000 troops to the Kham Driru area, compelling the Tibetan people to show their loyalty to the PRC and the CCP by flying the national flag of China. The Chinese police and the army clamped down severely on residents of the Mowa Township, some of whom dared to rewile the national flag by throwing it into the local river. In a similar incident 4 perished and many more detained in Driru, Nagchu. The resident quarters of the monks of Kham Drongna Monastery, Rabten Gonpa and Tarmoe Gonpa located in Kham Nagshoe Driru Dzong had been forced to shut down on several occasions. In 2013, Chen Quanguo, the Party Secretary of the TAR, even reprimanded that he would ‘ban the Tibetans from from hearing the Dalai Lama’s message.’ The monasteries are becoming a platform for the Chinese government to spread its propaganda readings and the Tibetans are being compelled to issue oaths and slander against the Dalai Lama to isolate him.

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<sup>29</sup> In September 2012, a public notice issued by Rebkong County authorities in Malho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu openly called for a strict ban on the sale of Dalai Lama’s photos .

The Human rights situation in Tibet has reached alarming proportions. The Freedom House Report ridiculed the state of affairs in Tibet calling it ‘worst of the worst’ in civil rights and political liberty (2013). According to the 2013 TCHRD Annual Report “the total number of Tibetans detained or jailed for carrying out political activities today stand at 920. In 2013 alone, 215 Tibetans were arrested on pretext of political activities and were sentenced.”

## **2.7. WESTERN DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN: BETWEEN THE TWIN-CLAIMANTS**

Just as the discourse on patriotism, the rhetoric on economic development was framed under the notions of Chinese benevolence in upgrading the technological and materialistic know-how of the Tibetan society which had fallen into decadence under the influence of Buddhism from the Chinese perspective and as a means of oppression from the Tibetan perspective. All natural resources (mountains, lakes, snow) were touted to be considered as a means of economic progress instead of considering them just as objects of reverence as propounded under precepts of Buddhism. A drive to boost economic development was conceived under the slogans of “allowing the other people to make money while we make progress” just as the the Fifteenth CCP Central Committee launched the famous ‘campaign’ to develop its western regions, which was a reflection of the State’s belief in modernisation through rapid economic development (Wang and Zhou 2003: 85). Two high-level working groups were established to administer policy deliverance in Tibet and Xinjiang in 1998. The Kosovo crisis in 1998 particularly alarmed the Chinese, who decided to prevent a similar scenario from stirring in Tibet or Xinjiang. On 9 June 1999, Jiang Zemin formally announced the target to quicken economic development in all five of SARs at the CCP Central Committee Meeting:

“In continuing to accelerate the development of the eastern coastal region, we should lose no opportunities to speed up the development of the central and western regions. From now on this should become a major strategic task for the party and the state should be placed in a more noticeable position.” (Du Ping et al, 2000: 27)<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The phrase Great Western Development program (*Xibu da Kaifa*) was adopted in the latter conference held on 17 June 1999.

Further in his new year Greeting Speech, Jiang Zemin identified that economic development is essential if China wants to avoid the humiliation it had experienced historically and thus there was an immediate need to boost its economy for protecting the Chinese nation (Esteban 2006: 181-214). The State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC) described GWDP as “the necessary choice for solving China’s nationality problems” and the program came into effect on 1 January 2001.

Along with this the Standing Committee of the NPC amended the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law on February 28, 2001, bringing it in tune with the new policies of economic development for western regions of China; the key word here was that the state decided to *prioritise* resource exploitation projects in the ethnic regions so as to allay any concerns that the international community would raise on environmental degradation. Later, Chen Dongsheng, one of China’s master planners for the GWDP, exposed that the aim of the scheme was to “warranty the sacredness” of the borders and “smash our enemies who want to use the poverty and the contradictions between races to create a Kosovo-style crisis in Asia” (SCMP 2000). A key strategy of this campaign was to choose areas (*zhongdian quyū*) with stable commercial bases and high population concentrations which would be well connected and could be replicated as engines of growth across the region. A more covert aim of the campaign included restoration of the ecological balance of the western regions through prevention of soil erosion and desertification.

Recounting the economic status, the 1998 white paper noted that the domestic GDP had increased to 7.35 billion RMB; and several airways and roadways had been repaired for instance - the Gonggar Airport in Lhasa and the Bamda Airport in Qamdo. It further stated that the bulk of goods transported through these highways increased manifolds and the number of highway passengers also amplified. The government claimed that as a part of its preferential policies the following concessions will be made,

“no levies had been imposed on the peasants and herdsmen in Tibet since 1980 and there was no compulsory state purchase of grain... The Central Government allocated 1.2 billion Yuan each year to Tibet as a financial subsidy, and other favourable measures were adopted, such as lightening its financial burdens, preferential investment, investment in skill training and an aid-the-poor program. From the early 1950s to 1997



the Central Government allocated more than 40 billion Yuan for Tibet, and from 1959 to 1996 allotted 6.74 million tons of materials... the average annual per capita income that urban residents used for living expenses was 5,030 yuan by 1996.”

As far as environmental impact of these developments was concerned the government claimed that the water-quality in general was good and till 1998 no such environment problem had occurred. To quote

“constructing a new Tibet with one heart and one mind. But since Tibet’s economic and social development, was hampered by unfavourable natural conditions, such as its exceptional elevation, frigid weather and lack of oxygen, Tibet remained economically and socially underdeveloped. As a result of which, the human rights enjoyed by the Tibetan people had yet to be further improved. The Central Government and Tibet’s local governments assured the people that at all levels, they would continue to make painstaking efforts to promote Tibet’s economic and social development, consistently improve the people’s lives and further promote the progress of human rights in Tibet.” (Ibid)

These claims in the White Paper not only reflected an attempt to provide a view on the economic developments taking place inside Tibet to the Tibetan people and thereby gaining their loyalty but also a deliberate attempt to justify to the international community that everything inside Tibet conformed to international standards prescribed on environment and human rights and there was no ecological threat to Tibet from the modernisation drive from the centre.

The centre decided to upgrade the road construction in 2000 by means of (i) construction and upgrading of eight national highways (*guodao*) (12600 kms), (ii) another set of local highways in the western provinces (2,10000 kms) and key eight interprovincial highways (15000 kms) and (iii) country roads in the west (1,50,000 kms) (Lai, Op cit: 452). Several scholars have argued that these developments were essentially sparked by China’s desire to modernize the west and “a real Chinese determination to absorb Tibet into the Chinese economy” (Lafitree 2001) and as a consequence into the Chinese nation. However, a major drawback of these attempts at assimilation remained that these development projects primarily benefited the urban Chinese and not the Tibetan inhabitants, contrary to the claims of the government and led to escalating differences between the local elites and Han immigrants. As a part of the overall modernisation drive, the government adopted several measures to provide

job opportunities for the Tibetans and decrease the unemployment ratios. For instance, job fairs and online recruitments were also encouraged (Postiglione, Jiao and Goldstein, Op Cit).

The **Fourth Tibet Work Forum** organised by the CCP and the State Council in Beijing from 25 to 27 June 2001 further reinforced the vision of accelerating the economic development of Tibet along with launching the campaigns of educating people on the “four outlooks” (based on Marxist theories of materialism and atheism). It decided to launch 117 projects totalling US\$ 3.7 billion and identified three key priorities: Development, Stability and Security. It was acknowledged that “Tibet’s stability was of utmost significance to the country’s reform, development and stability and the roots of its instability were present in the obstruction and sabotage by the Dalai clique.” It was noted that between 1994 and 2000, the GDP increased by 130 percent, changing the overall scenario in Tibet. Yet again the discourse addressed the twin audiences of the Tibetan people and the international community at large and emphasised the rhetoric of the civilized mission of the state in economically integrating Tibet into the Chinese nation.

There was, however, inherent contradiction between the reality and the state propaganda. Land redistribution and introduction of fence-farming for increased control over nomads and herders largely stimulated discontent among lay Tibetans who were already burdened by the financial hardship of the taxation system. Moreover, the Chinese government incessantly exaggerated and manipulated factual details to counter the propaganda of the local Tibetans, as pointed out by Gyaltsen Norbu, the former TAR Chairman in 1997.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, the government’s intention to use the development discourse has remained incorrigible through the years. But its official discourse on development and environmental protection which swanked about the impressive amounts of money that the government had invested in Tibet and its axiom of ‘aiding people by making them rich’ was contested heavily by the exiled Tibetan community as both sides claimed

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<sup>31</sup>Text of “Report on the work of the government” by Gyaltsen Norbu, Chairman of the “TAR”, Journal of Contemporary China (2003), 12 (36), August, 411, p.30.

legitimate governance of Tibet by possessing the right solution for protecting Tibet's environment and thereby a show of loyalties to the development of Tibet or what Emily T Yeh has called ecological nationalism (Yeh: 2009: 103-137). While the exiled Tibetan community claimed that Tibet had been more ecologically stable in prior times and environmental conservation was an essential component of daily life amongst Tibetans guided by the Buddhist beliefs prior to its "occupation by the Chinese." In its defense, the Chinese government presented its vision of making Tibet a protective screen for regional ecological security and insisted that though the Tibetan region was rich in mineral resources, preservation was still the highest agenda. The Tibetans however believed that the new developments fostered by the government were upsetting the *fengshui* in the countryside.

Another economic measure which became a bone of contention between the two sides was the introduction of the Comfortable Housing Programme (*anju gongcheng*) introduced by the regional government in 2006 for the farmers and herdsmen in Tibet. Under this scheme the government assented to give low rate loans to the villagers to reconstruct their old houses but under specific terms and conditions on the size and materials to be used for construction of the houses.<sup>32</sup> The government tried to steer clear of the criticisms by committing towards economic incentives in its 11<sup>th</sup> five year-plan, under its "people-first" approach to development (*yiren weiben*) and advanced several health insurance schemes to benefit poor Tibetans. Though commenced in good faith, the villagers now argue that the comfortable housing programme has led to more discomfort as the terms and conditions of the loans do not often work in their favour and the state largely uses inaccurate projections of these policies to highlight its magnanimity towards the Tibetan people (Goldstein: 57-75).

Several such programmes have been doled out over the past few years which are a part of its "internal" political strategy. This was also evident in the rhetoric used in the latest White Paper. Accounting for the leapfrog development in its White Paper released in 2015, the government propagandised that "Tibet's GDP soared from 327 million Yuan in 1965 to 92.08 billion Yuan in 2014, a 281-fold increase. Since 1994,

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<sup>32</sup>By the end of 2008, the region had invested more than seven billion yuan to help 200,000 families, or about one million farmers and herdsmen to build new houses.

the local GDP has grown at an annual rate of 12.4 percent on average, registering double-digit growth for 20 consecutive years. Local fiscal revenues increased from 22.39 million Yuan in 1965 to 16.475 billion Yuan in 2014, an average annual increase of 14.46 percent, further enhancing Tibet's self-development capabilities (White Paper 2015)”

“A comprehensive transportation system including roads, railways and aviation has been built, further facilitating Tibet's transportation... At the end of 2014, the total length of roads open to traffic reached 75,000 km, 8,891 km of which have sub-high-grade surfaces or better, accounting for 12.6 percent of the total. 65 or 88 percent of all 74 counties in Tibet had access to asphalt roads. As many as 690 townships and 5,408 administrative villages could be reached by road, respectively accounting for 99.7 percent and 99.2 percent of the total. The Golmud-Lhasa and Lhasa-Shigatse railways had opened to traffic, and the construction of the railway connecting Lhasa and Nyingchi started. Tibet Airlines was established, with five airports, and eight airlines operating in Tibet. An airport network has taken shape in Tibet, with Gongkar Airport in Lhasa as the main hub, and Bangda Airport in Qamdo, Menling Airport in Nyingchi, Gunsar Airport in Ngari and Heping Airport in Shigatse as the branches, catering to 48 domestic and international air routes that link Tibet with 33 cities in China and the rest of the world.” (Ibid)

Thus an argument of reverse discrimination of the Hans has also evolved fuelling ‘Greater nationality’ sentiments. Development as a state discourse developed largely in an attempt to transform the ethnic minorities but it only helped ethnic elites who could manoeuvre policies to exert pressure and constraints on the state (2008: 131-152). Moreover, the western development campaign encountered various economic, political and cultural obstacles in the form of corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, ethnic pulls and pressures (Lai 2002: 432-466). It was consistently derided in the discourses from the exile community who maintained “these development projects when completed will facilitate the immigration of China’s excess population onto the Tibetan plateau and this will further erode the ability of the Tibetan people to hold on to their distinct cultural heritage and ethnic identity.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Keynote Address of Mr. Pema Jungney, Chairman of the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies, at the European Parliament Forum on Tibet, on EU response to Sino-Tibetan Dialogue at the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, 12 November 2003 -Tibetan Government in Exile’s Policy Towards China.

However, to correctly place the discourse of the official Chinese rhetoric on Tibetan assimilation and anti-Tibetan nationalism it is significant to outline the counter-discourse of the Tibetan leadership and their claims to preservation of a Tibetan ethnicity that vies for loyalties of the Tibetan masses at large.

## **2.8. COUNTER-PROPAGANDA AND THE STRUGGLE FROM EXILE: PRESERVING THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE TIBETAN ‘NATION’**

The discourse of the Tibetan struggle for independence and later genuine autonomy was largely spearheaded by the Dalai Lama, who officially proclaimed the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) on 29 April 1959 (based at Mussoorie, later shifted to Dharamsala) and denied his acceptance of the ‘Seventeen Point Agreement’ (Roemer 2008: 65). Contesting Chinese notions on Tibet which were restricted to the TAR, the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGiE) was set up.

From its embryonic stage almost fifty years back, the Tibetan movement has today emerged as a successful case of activism from exile. It managed to gather sustenance from various countries over its period of growth which of course, harboured their own agendas to provide support. For instance, the CIA and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) helped publicize the cause of Tibetan resistance in the 1960s and 1980s respectively and India gave support under the rubric of protection of human rights. The struggle for self-determination of Tibet found support from international community and organisations, especially the US-(CIA) through which it was able to make its voice heard at international forums. The UN resolutions of 1961 and 1965 exposed that there were grave human rights abuses in Tibet and suppression of traditional cultural rights. Even the US supported claims of self-determination and Tibet’s status as an “autonomous country under China’s suzerainty”; but its own national interests which led to rapprochement with China in late 1960s and 1971 necessitated the demotion of Tibet’s position as an ‘autonomous region’ within the PRC.

The TGiE was, however, not by any means either an elaborate bureaucratic or a massive infrastructural set up; the entire apparatus was constructed within a reach of three to four kilometers and the establishment operated with an annual budget of approximately Rs.913 million (Phurbu Thinley, 'Tibetan government tables budget for 2010/2011 in Parliament,' 8 March 2010). Consequently, the political community was a close-knit unit where the same people indulged in myriad tasks. At operational levels the government had very limited powers. Its security forces could make no arrests; its tax office faced constraints in levying taxes and enforcing payments. And most significantly, its foreign affairs department has failed to establish formal diplomatic relations with any country (Johnson 2011: 127). The preservation of Tibetan culture and religion and devising long-term rehabilitation plans became their foremost priority.

The TGiE being the representative of the Tibetan struggle for self-determination, later genuine autonomy, faced the tremendous challenge to mobilise national loyalty and international support for the larger goal of its own survival as well as its effective return back home. For this purpose the TGiE employed several strategies: (Roemer: 125-172)

3. retaining Tibetans' unanimity in the form of Tibetan identity by dissuading them from taking Indian citizenship
4. fostering a Tibetan educational structure which helps in sustaining the Tibetan identity through preservation of language and culture
5. sustaining citizenship through issuing the 'Green Book' membership card by the CTA and identity certificate by the Government of India
6. upholding social status of individuals donating huge sums in the form of the voluntary freedom tax by conferring special honours and using the stamp method
7. distribution or denial of financial aid from international donors for scholarship to higher education

has also played an important role in imbibing Tibetan Nationalism along with the trend based on secular identity (Roemer: 140). The most common national symbols used for propagating the nationalist discourse by the TGiE included colourful flags, altars, images of the series of Dalai Lama and annual traditional religious

celebrations; which were ironically banned inside the TAR and helped to advance the ‘collective memory’ of the older generations in Tibet.

The financial potency of the movement was largely indigenous. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama had sold the parts of Tibetan state treasury in 1964, which had been kept in Sikkim since 1956 and invested in the CTA structure and several employment programs under the ‘Charitable Trust of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’(Roemer: 115).<sup>34</sup> In fact the CTA came to foster its own position as the representative of Tibetans in exile by monopolising these funds from international aid agencies and other organisations, in addition to its adherence to pre-exile political structures in Tibet and its unofficial acknowledgement including the host country of India.

The CTA made efforts to resolve the Tibetan issues at both bilateral – between China and Tibet and international levels. However, China vehemently denied the demand for self-determination was in view of the existential realities in Tibet and more so as the TGiE had extended the territorial claims to the traditional Cholka-Sum and not just to the TAR. In face of the Sino-US rapprochement in 1971 the Dalai Lama accepted the opportunity of dialogue with China after the Open door policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. He outlined in his annual 10 March 1973 statement in exile that his primary concern was “the happiness of 6 million Tibetans and if they were happy under the Chinese rule then there was no reason to argue otherwise” (Arpi Opcit: 29). He decided to follow a strategy of “securing a meaningful autonomy for Tibet” and not full independence so tha the option for dialogue would remain open. Around this time many Tibetans visited their relatives in exile and became convinced that the Chinese government’s negative propaganda about the Dalai Lama was a mere farce and reiterated their loyalties to the cause of Tibet and support to the Dalai Lama. Thus in the 1980s China was beginning to pay attention to its international reputation and hence was bothered about the international response and recognition of the Dalai Lama.

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<sup>34</sup>The largest external funding during these years came from the CIA which donated US\$ 180,000 annually to the Dalai Lama till 1974 as cited by Michael Backman in the New York Times in 1998. (Backman 2004: 208)

Meanwhile, Beijing doled out its five conditions that the Dalai Lama had to recognize for any future dialogue to take place between the two.<sup>35</sup> This placed the Dalai Lama under a serious conundrum of giving up the battle for a greater Tibet and its independence for once and all or to reject the possibility of his return under the Chinese auspices. Keeping this in mind, a second round of talks was initiated in 1984 (the 1982 talks were inconclusive as the Dalai Lama did not come up with a clear strategy to address the five-points presented by Beijing), where the Dalai Lama proposed ‘demilitarization of Tibet and complete internal political autonomy’. As expected these demands were unacceptable to the Chinese which led to a hiatus on the talks between the two sides.

Concerns on the struggle for Tibet’s autonomy and its dissolution after his death led the Dalai Lama to promulgate a discussion on the issue of an elected Tibetan leader in 1985. He wished to do so by renouncing his position as the head of the CTA, however the redrafting Committee denied this appeal and exhorted that the “traditionally determined loyalty to this institution is, in the opinion of the Constitution Redrafting Committee, equal to a democratically legitimized leadership” (Roemer: 97). The deadlock forced an introspection of strategy amongst both the sides, as a consequence, the Dalai Lama moved towards garnering international support for his ideas, while the Chinese authorities reinvigorated their efforts to reform Tibet internally. These events heralded a major shift in the propaganda structures of the Tibetans as so far the narrative had been configured in the rubrics of ‘Tibetan resistance against the Chinese state’ but hereafter the discourse changed to suit the requirements of changing realities which necessitated a climb-down of their official position to ‘religious

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<sup>35</sup>The 5 conditions being: 1. The Dalai Lama should be confident that China has entered a new stage of long-term political stability, steady economic growth and mutual help among all nationalities.

2. The Dalai Lama and his representatives should be frank and sincere with the central government, not beat around the bush. There should be no more quibbling over the events in 1959.

3. The central authorities sincerely welcome the Dalai Lama and his followers to come back to live. This is based on the hope that they will contribute to upholding China's unity and promoting solidarity between the Han and Tibetan nationalities, and among all nationalities, and the modernization program.

4. The Dalai Lama will enjoy the same political status and living conditions as he had before 1959. It is suggested that he not go to live in Tibet or hold local posts there. Of course, he may go back to Tibet from time to time. His followers need not worry about their jobs and living conditions. These will only be better than before.

5. When the Dalai Lama wishes to come back, he can issue a brief statement to the press. It is up to him to decide what he would like to say in the statement.



freedom and autonomy' for Tibet albeit the 'non-violent' form of resistance continued to be endorsed.

The official counter-propaganda began with the Dalai Lama's first political speech on the Question of Tibet before the US Congress, where he made a five-point proposal<sup>36</sup> for demilitarisation. His speech received favourable response from the US Congress as it coincided with the spontaneous riots of 1987 inside and outside Tibet (the first internationally reported protest against Chinese rule as claimed by the TGiE).

At once, the Chinese government blamed the Dalai Lama of instigating these protests and became perturbed by the internationalization of the Tibetan issue which was clear in Yang Minfu's memorandum to the Dalai Lama. The TGiE responded to this memo by pointing out the historical incongruity in the Chinese claims and highlighting the complexity of the Tibet issue. It strongly denied all allegations against the Dalai Lama:

"We have neither instigated nor planned the Lhasa demonstrations. As a matter of fact, there is no need for anyone to instigate them. The demonstrations are the manifestations of the Tibetan people's suffering. The direct provocation, however, was your attempt to misrepresent the Five Point Peace Plan and discredit His Holiness the Dalai Lama...We are clear in our determination to resolve the Tibetan issue through peaceful negotiations ..."

In April 1988, the Chinese authorities yet again offered the Dalai Lama return if he would be willing to give up the goal of complete independence. The Dalai Lama responded to this offer through the Strasbourg Proposal at the European Parliament

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<sup>36</sup>The five-point proposal included : 1. Transforming Tibet into a "Zone of Peace"—this would include ethnographic Tibet and would require the withdrawal of all Chinese troops and military installations.

2. Reversing the population transfer policy which he said threatened the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.

3. Respecting the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms— it asserted that "deprived of all basic democratic rights and freedoms, [Tibetans] exist under a colonial administration in which all real power is wielded by Chinese officials of the Communist Party and the army."

4. Restoring and protecting Tibet's natural environment and abandoning China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.

5. Beginning earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

(June 1988) which called for Tibet to be delineated as an ‘Autonomous Dominion’ and explained the Middle Way policy broadly. Though a more pertinent political tactic, this proposal was rejected by the Chinese authorities. This was followed by a four-day meeting in June 1988 (Dharamsala, India) presided by the Kashag attended by Tibetan People’s Deputies, public servants, NGOs and exiled Tibetans which consented to the adoption of the policy to carry forward Tibet’s struggle. Meanwhile, the Panchen Lama’s death on 28 January 1989 provided yet another opportunity for the Chinese to seek Dalai Lama’s return, but this opportunity was also lost as the leadership in exile felt that the Dalai Lama may be coerced into accepting a slightly compromised stance on Tibet if he went alone to negotiate with the Chinese authorities.

The Dalai Lama, however, managed to gather substantial international popularity after having toned down his position of total independence to genuine autonomy or the Middle Way approach which led to his international recognition as an ambassador of peace in 1989. Under this approach “the entire Tibetan people were to be governed under a single autonomous administration and non-violence was to become the only means by which to achieve these objectives... History should not be an obstacle in seeking a mutually beneficial common future within the People’s Republic of China” (DIIR). But the official Chinese stand proposed by Deng Xiaoping “everything except independence could be discussed” changed to “the PRC will not accept independence, semi-independence or independence in disguise.” It still does not recognize the parallel government in exile (TGiE/Kashag) as a legitimate representative of the Tibetan people.

A strong opposition also began to emerge from several Young Tibetan refugees who felt let down by the Dalai Lama’s position on genuine autonomy instead of demanding total independence. In the meantime, the historic path-breaking visit of the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to China in 1988 also led to political bonhomie. The Indian Prime Minister reassured that India believed that Tibet was an autonomous

region under the PRC and that no anti-Chinese political activities will be allowed on Indian soil.<sup>37</sup>

Notwithstanding, the Dalai Lama yet again offered to cooperate with the Chinese in 1991 after the death of the Panchen Lama to assist in finding the new one. This offer was also declined by the Chinese government which dissuaded any ‘outside interference’. Only a resolution passed by the Tibetan Parliament in exile on 23 January 1992 brought the Chinese back to the talking table, though its reservations against the Dalai Lama continued. His memorandum to the Deng Xiaoping handed over to the Chinese ambassador on September 1992 became a prime catalyst for the Chinese response on Tibet.

Anxiety on the future of political options required the Dalai Lama to call for opinion poll in his 10 March statements of 1996 and 1997, which acclaimed (64-66 percent)<sup>38</sup> the *Middle way Approach* that is keeping the status quo, at the same time, renewing negotiations with the PRC (Roemer: 83).

On 10 March 1996, in his speech the Dalai Lama lamented hardening of the Chinese stance on the issues of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Tibet:

“Within the context of this tense political atmosphere, Beijing has once again sought to impose its will on the Tibetan people by appointing a rival Panchen Lama. In doing so, it has chosen a course of total disregard both for the sentiments of the Tibetans in general and for Tibetan spiritual tradition in particular, despite my every effort to reach for some form of understanding and cooperation with the Chinese government.”

(Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Thirty-Seventh Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day)

The first direct presidential elections in Taiwan provided some hope to the Tibetans and realisation by the Chinese that peaceful negotiation was the only way forward. In

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<sup>37</sup>A policy move often criticized amongst Indian intelligentsia since there was no quid pro quo from the Chinese in terms of accepting Kashmir, Sikkim or Arunachal as a part of Indian Territory and also because it came at the wrong time for the Tibetans who had banked on the Strasbourg Proposal and undermined their position.

<sup>38</sup>At this time a cleavage between the elite exiles and the more humble exiles began to appear since they were divided on the goals and means of achieving independence vis-à-vis autonomy.

1997, the Dalai Lama emphasized the uncooperative attitude of the Chinese who under the Strike hard Campaign subjected Tibetans to increased torture and imprisonment for peacefully expressing their political aspirations.

The Middle Way approach came for vehement criticism by the Chinese authorities who totally discredited it:

“The “middle way,” also known as the “way of meditation on the mean,” is a Buddhist term. It is the Dalai group which has politicized it. Its claims can be summarized into five major points. First, it denies the fact that Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times; instead it claims that Tibet was “an independent state” which was “occupied by China in 1951,” and that “Tibetans have the right to independence from a historic perspective.” Second, it seeks to establish a “Greater Tibet” that has never existed at any time in history, claiming that the “Tibet issue” concerns 6 million Tibetans and that Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai and other areas that Tibetans and people of other ethnic minorities inhabit in compact communities should be incorporated into a unified administrative region. Third, it demands “a high degree of autonomy” that is not subject to any constraint whatsoever from the central government, denies the leadership of the central government and Tibet’s present social and political systems, and proposes to establish an “autonomous government” under which “Tibetans” (in truth the Dalai party) take full charge of all affairs other than diplomacy and national defense. Fourth, it opposes the central government to garrison troops in Tibet and, despite its superficial agreement that the central government holds the authority over national defense, it demands that the central government “withdraws all Chinese troops” to turn Tibet into an “international zone of peace.” And fifth, in total disregard of the fact that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has been a multi-ethnic region since ancient times, it denies the access of other ethnic groups to “Greater Tibet” and drives them out of regions where they have lived for generations.

(White Paper 2015)

In 1998 President Clinton’s request to sort out the Tibetan issue again brought out the issue in the open but did not yield any results as Beijing maintained its stance of the Dalai Lama playing tricks with them and not having a sincere intention to solve the issue. By 2000 Gyalo Thondup was informed that the central government would only discuss the conditions for the Dalai Lama’s return and not any more about the status of

Tibet, which the Dalai Lama was required to acknowledge as an integral part of China along with Taiwan. There was a good opportunity to encourage the Dalai Lama to bring his two decades of exile to an end in and around 2000 as Britain had just ceded control over Hong Kong to Beijing and China was hoping to join the WTO and win its bid for 2008 Olympics, which opened the gates for revival of the talks between the two sides (Roberts and Roberts 2011: 203-205).

Following the revival of contacts in 2002 the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetans that “taking into consideration the reality of the international situation, the position of the Chinese government and the aspiration of the Tibetan people articulated their desire or willingness to work towards resolving the problem of Tibet according to the constitutional provisions of the People’s Republic of China in a spirit of accommodation” (Middle Way Policy and All related Documents Op Cit: 9). Though some reservations were raised by the indigenous people over the merits and demerits of the WDC Programme and thus some amount of caution and reminder to the Chinese was needed on that account.

Extensive discussions were held between the envoys of the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the Central government of China since the renewal of talks in 2002, whereby the Tibetans regurgitated their belief in the Middle Way approach to secure genuine autonomy and find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue of Tibet. They also reiterated that he wishes to seek Tibet’s future within the framework of the Chinese constitution. The Dalai Lama is reported to have only demanded religious and cultural autonomy under the following terms: “the ability to live year round in the Potala Palace; to travel in and out of China and to all Tibetan areas; to have full control over the publication and editing of religious texts; and to have undisputed authority to appoint abbots of monasteries and supervise the choice of reincarnations of important Lamas” (He and Sautman 2006: 601-629).

The Kashag (parliament) however stuck to its position on ‘Greater Tibet’ till about 2003 when it emphasised that the sense of nationalism was elated amongst exiled Tibetans and the competence, courage and determination exhibited by the Tibetan officials and cadres in Tibet was exemplary. It further noted

“The 55 year old Tibet-China problem, though not one of conflicts between nationalities, is inextricably related to the nationality issue. For the major part of their long history, Tibet and China have been mutually supportive; more particularly, the choyon (teacher-patron) relationship that was forged in the 13th century served both the parties well. In future also, if Tibet were to achieve genuine self-rule, Tibetans will nurture cordial relations with the Chinese so that the two nationalities can co-exist in a spirit of mutual support and fraternity. This is the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way policy, a very humane concept transcending political considerations. If the Tibetan and Chinese people achieve this kind of relationship, it will be a giant step towards the realization of equality and unity among the nationalities, as enshrined in the constitution of the People’s Republic China, thus serving as the strongest foundation of peace and stability of the PRC. The Kashag sees this as an indispensable condition for the future of Tibet. It is, of course, not a pre-condition for negotiations. Rather, it is one of our ultimate goals.”

However, post 2003, the TGiE tried to reassure the Chinese leadership of its sincerity towards the resolution of the Tibetan imbroglio by requesting the Tibet Support Groups not to hold any agitations against Chinese leaders. It even banned the singing of songs that fuel nationalistic anger and anti-Chinese sentiments just to create conducive atmosphere during the time of the negotiations yet the Chinese response to TGiE’s overtures remained largely tepid. In fact, after 2006, the Chinese government actually reversed many of its leeways and yet again adopted a hard-line attitude. This reversal was apparently induced by the Dalai Lama’s messages during his speeches abroad on the non-use of environmentally damaging materials such as those made out of the skin and furs of the Tibetan Yaks.

The TGiE nevertheless, continued to inspire its people to fight for the cause of Tibet and in 2007, the Kashag devised an 11-point plan of action to be adopted by the Tibetans inside TAR and in exile to carry forward their agenda in educational, social, economic, political and cultural and religious realms. Despite consistent efforts of the leadership in the exile, an emerging trend of apolitical new generation posed another challenge to the leadership in exile. To curtail this tendency the leadership again and again urged the youth from being swayed away by materialistic pleasures and concentrate at the historic task at hand:

“Generally speaking, there is every reason to be optimistic regarding our cause. Nevertheless, we will do well to hope for the best and prepare for the worst, as His Holiness said. Even if our issue remains unresolved for a long time, we must persevere steadfastly; no matter how many generations it takes, to preserve our culture, spiritual tradition, ways of life, and our language, which is the foundation of our civilization. The movement of Tibet should not be dependent on a few individuals; every Tibetan must take responsibility in this matter. Presently, the Tibetan culture is suffering setback both in Tibet and in exile: in Tibet, due to the Chinese coercion and repression, and in exile, due to our own laxity and the pressure of modernization. I call upon all Tibetans to view this situation with utmost seriousness. More particularly, I would like to urge the Tibetan exiles to desist from pursuing the goal of migrating to western countries as the be-all and end-all of life. I urge them, instead, to shoulder their responsibility for the cause of our nation and people. On this momentous day, let us all do earnest soul-searching and re-dedicate ourselves to our national cause.”

(Statement of the Kashag on the 42nd Anniversary of the Tibetan People’s Uprising Day, 10 March 2002)

The Chinese government took several steps that proved detrimental to the interests of the Tibetan in the long run under the anxiety of the Beijing Olympics. It opened the Qinghai-Tibet railway in 2006, built with an investment of US\$ 2.3 billion ostensibly to accommodate the rising numbers of tourists travelling to Tibet, but it became a major channel of transporting Chinese immigrants over the years.<sup>39</sup> Some 70 guides were relocated to Tibet under its “Guides from Inland to Aid Tibet” program in 2006. In July 2007 the lower-plains of mainland China were flooded and it was largely accused that the people dislocated by the floods were resettled in Lhasa. Moreover, Beijing residents uprooted from demolished neighbourhoods to make room for construction of facilities for the 2008 Olympics were also settled in Tibet.

In August 2007, the Chinese authorities in Beijing roled out another campaign to demnounce the Dalai Lama and fired more than 50 Tibetan party secretaries in the Tibetan areas. For these reasons there was wide-spread anger that had built up amongst the Tibetans who found the 2008 Olympics an apt time to bring it to

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<sup>39</sup> In its 2007 Annual report, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy stated that in the first ten months of the year the railway transported 3.72 million passengers, a 50 percent increase in people travelling to Tibet over the previous year.

international attention. The sealing of the Drepung monastery in October 2007 set the stage for the March 2008 riots which have been extolled as a ‘Tibetan national uprising’ by many supporters of the Tibetan national movement.

The Chinese government felt hard-pressed to keep in check the flame of nationalist upsurge brimming inside Tibet in wake of the upcoming 2008 Olympics in Beijing. It issued the *Order No.5* through SARA, containing 14 articles on *Management Measures for the Reincarnation of “Living Buddhas” in Tibetan Buddhism*<sup>40</sup> and imposed heavy sentences of 3-10 years imprisonment on those speaking against the state.

Despite all these precautions, 15 monks unfurled the Tibetan national flag amid shouts for independence on 10 March 2008 at the Barkhor square, followed by protests staged by 500 monks from the Sera monastery on 11 March 2008 and Drepung monks on 14 March 2008 which called for a “Free Tibet.” These were yet again brutally suppressed by Zhang Qingli who ridiculed the Dalai Lama as “a monster with a human face” blaming him for planning and inciting “splittist” activities to divide Tibet from China and masterminding the 2008 riots.

Under growing international pressure and reactions to its torch relay in London and Paris, where people criticised China’s actions in Tibet and Darfur around the Olympic torch-bearers, the Chinese yet again opened way for dialogue with the Dalai Lama to save its international reputation on human rights and development. On 26 April 2008, Hu Jintao invited the Dalai Lama to send an envoy to discuss ground realities in Tibet. Lodi Gyari was sent as the envoy to Beijing to convey Dalai Lama’s demand of a ‘demilitarised Tibet’ but this was also not acceptable to the Chinese.

In response to Du Qinglin’s (CPPCC) requests for explicit suggestion from the Dalai Lama on the stability and development of Tibet, the Tibetan’s brought forth the *Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People* on 31 October 2008 during the eighth round of talk which delineated the demand for regional national

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<sup>40</sup>This was out rightly rejected by the TGiE as “a weapon employed by the Chinese government to undermine Tibetan Buddhism and to insult and oppress the Tibetan People.”



autonomy. It rejected both Han Chauvinism and local nationalism. It stresses the fact that though Tibet has a lot to benefit from working under the canopy of the larger Chinese paraphernalia and vice-versa, but the TGiE desires that the government respect the religious and cultural rights of its people (Fourth adherence being added in 2010).

The Chinese rejected the Memorandum dubbing it as attempt towards “semi-independence”, “independence in disguise” and even accusing the Tibetans of “ethnic cleansing” by “regulating the residence, settlement and employment or economic activities of persons who wish to move to Tibetan areas from the other parts of the PRC” (Middle Way Policy and All related Documents, Op Cit: 58). In the aftermath of the 2008 protests, China yet again blamed the Dalai Lama and his clique of abetting separatist activities and fomenting discontent against the Chinese government in Tibet. It is to be noted here, that though the Dalai Lama repeatedly insisted on a solution for Tibet within the Chinese constitution by peaceful means and even threatened to resign from his temporal duties, yet he praised them as a source of inspiration for others. On the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, he endorsed that

“Since last March widespread peaceful protests have erupted across the whole of Tibet. Most of the participants were youths born and brought up after 1959, who have not seen or experienced a free Tibet. However, the fact that they were driven by a firm conviction to serve the cause of Tibet that has continued from generation to generation is indeed a matter of pride. It will serve as a source of inspiration for those in the international community who take keen interest in the issue of Tibet. We pay tribute and offer our prayers for all those who died, were tortured and suffered tremendous hardships, including during the crisis last year, for the cause of Tibet since our struggle began.” (Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, 10 March 2009).

For its part, the TGiE emphatically called upon the Tibetans in exile to act with restraint and compassion to any such effort of the Chinese government to spread disunity among the population in exile and with the local population in Dharamsala. It further urged the clergy and lay Tibetans to show greater concern and make efforts to

protect ones' own land.<sup>41</sup> The Kashag, also tried to contain the violent streak of Tibetan nationalism by suggesting that it was greatly disappointed by such campaigns; which would not be helpful to the cause of Tibet in the long term as they propagate bad news about the Dalai Lama.

The 2008 riots were in a sense an eye-opener for the Tibetan government. It clearly exposed the Chinese government's claim that "apart from the few upper strata followers of the reactionary Dalai, all Tibetans in Tibet are loyal to the ideology and polity of the PRC" and its approach in handling the Tibetan issue when it announced that it "will wage a "life and death" struggle against, or resolutely crush, the on-going demonstrations in Tibet." (Statement of the Kashag 2008).

It drew much criticism from the international community which derided China's harsh attempts at quelling the rebellion. The Chinese government mobilized a substantial anti-splittist campaign and a backlash against the foreign media by invoking Chinese nationalism (mainland) through the dominant media. This not only dented the overall image of 'strong China' that the government wanted to showcase to the international community but also dashed all the hopes of any resolution of the Tibet issue through peaceful means in the near-term (Davis: 2008, pp. 125-128).

Nearly 600 representatives supported the charter of Exile Tibetans and expressed support for the Middle-way policy. This was yet again re-endorsed in March 2010 by the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile (Middle Way Policy and All related Documents, Op Cit, p.7) At the same time he lamented the large scale havoc that the Chinese government had created in Tibet since its takeover in 1959:

"These 50 years have brought untold suffering and destruction to the land and people of Tibet. Even today, Tibetans in Tibet live in constant fear and the Chinese authorities remain constantly suspicious of them. Today, the religion, culture, language and identity, which successive generations of Tibetans have considered more precious than their lives, are nearing extinction; in short, the Tibetan people are regarded like criminals deserving to be put to death...Even Hu Yaobang, the Communist Party Secretary, when he arrived in

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<sup>41</sup>Also see Statement of Kashag on the occasion of the 48th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, 10 March 2007.

Lhasa in 1980, clearly acknowledged these mistakes and asked the Tibetans for their forgiveness. Many infrastructural developments such as roads, airports, railways, and so forth, which seem to have brought progress to Tibetan areas, were really done with the political objective of sinicising Tibet at the huge cost of devastating the Tibetan environment and way of life.”

“We acknowledge the Central Government’s new decision taken at the Fifth Tibet Work Forum to implement their policies uniformly in all Tibetan areas to ensure future progress and development, which Premier Wen Jiabao also reiterated at the recent annual session of the National People’s Congress. This accords with our repeatedly expressed wish for a single administration for all those Tibetan areas. Similarly, we appreciate the development work that has taken place in Tibetan areas, particularly in the nomadic and farming regions. However, we must be vigilant that such progress does not damage our precious culture and language and the natural environment of the Tibetan plateau, which is linked to the well-being of the whole of Asia.” (Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the 51st Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, 10 March 2010)

In March 2010, the Kashag in its statement after the ninth round of Sino-Tibetan dialogue urged the Chinese to undertake an investigation into the real lives of the Tibetans in a manner where they are free to express their opinions (this request emanated in the backdrop of the claim by the Chinese government that Lhasa was the happiest city under the Chinese communist banner, (that too five times in a row up to 2012), as reported by the China Central Television (CCTV) in its ‘Economic Survey list of China’s happiest cities’) (Singh: IPCS, 2012).

However, the Dalai Lama believes that the situation of Tibetans in exile was comparatively much better: in terms of livelihood, political functioning and practicing personal beliefs (10 March 2009). Yet the Dalai Lama remained concerned about the regressive changes within the TAR. At the same time, he had been increasingly aware that given his aging leadership, the struggle for Tibet would have to be supplemented by other participants, later he announced that

“During the forthcoming eleventh session of the fourteenth Tibetan Parliament in Exile, which begins on 14th March, I will formally propose that the necessary amendments be made to the Charter for Tibetans in Exile, reflecting my decision to

devolve my formal authority to the elected leader.” (Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 2011)<sup>42</sup>

Pursuant to this belief, the Dalai Lama devolved his authority to the democratically elected Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay on 8 August 2011. However what constituted the reference to this ‘freedom’ is not explicitly clear especially since the Dalai Lama had condensed his terms and conditions to the establishment of ‘meaningful autonomy’ in Tibet instead of a full-fledged independent Tibet. He emerged as a natural choice for the Tibetans in exile given his expertise in international law. The most significant endorsement came from Tibetans inside Tibet through their songs, *thangkha* paintings and offerings of prayers.

He promised to adopt a track-II diplomacy approach to reach out to the mainland.<sup>43</sup> But as far as speaking to Lobsang on the future of Tibet is concerned, there is a clear absence of intent amongst the Chinese leadership. Notwithstanding the narrative from the exile community has been insistent in keeping the cause of Tibet alive. Lobsang Sangay reaffirmed his faith in the Tibetan struggle and expressed faith that the Tibetan struggle is a struggle for the preservation of the Tibetan identity and not against the Chinese as a State or the Chinese people. He further stressed that the developments in Tibet so far were not in conformity to the ‘socialist paradise’ that the Chinese had promised and that the Tibetan’s perseverance, will and courage would be truly tested in the coming times (Inaugural Speech of Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay, August 8, 2011).

In his letter on the occasion of completion of his one-year tenure as the Kalon Tripa, Lobsang noted that the Tibetans managed a smooth leadership transition in their

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<sup>42</sup>He explained that “No system of governance can ensure stability and progress if it depends solely on one person without the support and participation of the people in the political process. One man rule is both anachronistic and undesirable. We have made great efforts to strengthen our democratic institutions to serve the long-term interests of the six million Tibetans, not out of a wish to copy others, but because democracy is the most representative system of governance” in his message to the Fourteenth Assembly of the Tibetan People’s Deputies...” “If the implementation of such a system is delayed and a day comes when my leadership is suddenly unavailable, the consequent uncertainty might present an overwhelming challenge. Therefore, it is the duty of all Tibetans to make every effort to prevent such an eventuality.”

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Nominee Candidate for kalontripa, Mcleodganj, Dharamshala, 21 March 2011.

polity irrespective of the wave of Tibetans self-immolations<sup>44</sup> and made tremendous progress on several fronts; these included garnering international support and passing of resolutions in the US senate and the European parliament (Kalon Tripa Completes One Year in Office, August 8, 2012). The Kashag also called upon for 17th May to be declared as ‘Solidarity Day for Tibet’ in wake of the increasing number of self-immolations and launching of the ‘Solidarity with Tibet Campaign’ in 2013.<sup>45</sup> It also appreciated the comments made by Gary Locke, the US ambassador to China, who visited Tibetan areas in September 2012 and implored “the Chinese to really meet with the representatives of the Tibetan people to address and re-examine some of the policies that have led to some restrictions and the violence and the self-immolations” (Statement of Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay 2012)

The CTA further requested the international community including India in face of the increasing number of self-immolations<sup>46</sup> to thrust China to allow unfettered access to Tibet. Comparing the Tibetan issue with other arrangements of autonomy established by China, Lobsang lamented that “as per Article 31 of the PRC Constitution, China has created a separate institutional mechanism of one country, two systems for Hong Kong and Macau. The Chinese leadership has also displayed the political will by forming a cabinet level committee to deal with Taiwan (Republic of China). However, when it comes to Tibet, the Chinese leadership has neither employed the available constitutional mechanism at its disposal, nor has it shown the political will to resolve the issue peacefully.” He stressed on the fact that the core message that Tibetans wish to communicate are the three Ds: Devolution, Democracy and Dialogue.

The role of the youth in the Tibetan struggle is also becoming more prominent through varied means of political participation. In fact the Tibetan movement has gained substantially through its propagation via the medium of art and songs. Speaking in retrospect, collaboration between musician Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys and a 21 year old woman, Erin Potts most successfully raised awareness about

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<sup>44</sup> A total of 46 known incidents of self-immolations occurred in Tibet with all but one since March 2011.

<sup>45</sup> This campaign’s first major event took place in New York on 10 December 2012 with the release of the video on self-immolation, “What’s China doing in Tibet?”

<sup>46</sup> Lobsang Namgyal, a 37-year-old monk of Kirti Monastery set himself on fire in Ngaba, north-eastern Tibet, on 3 February 2013 becoming the 100th monk to display his acts of civil disobedience against the repressive policies in China.

Tibet among the younger generation through Freedom concerts and large-scale fundraising events that contributed to the Milarepa Fund during the late 1990s. It was tragic however that most of the international support that Tibetans gathered during the 1990s was revoked in the next decade (Kellam 190-214). Britain changed its official position from China's suzerainty to China's sovereignty over Tibet and even India acknowledged Tibet to be a part of China in A. B. Vajpayee's official visit in 2003.

There remains a certain amount of discrepancy in what the Chinese government preaches and practices. Despite its tall claims on development, it stations large numbers of troops all across Tibet. The TGIE has constantly opposed the treatment meted out to the Buddhist structures and practices as "these conditions make the monasteries function more like museums and are intended to deliberately annihilate Buddhism." In a statement made by the Prime Minister of the TGIE, Samdhong Rinpoche at the occasion of the 69<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of the Dalai Lama, he stressed the point that periodic White papers representing the internal conditions of Tibet undermine the efforts to promote mutual confidence and trust as they portray false reality. The Kashag also lamented the irrevocable damage done to the Tibetan culture by deliberate attempts at phasing out the use of local language as the medium of instruction in schools with a certain objective of annihilation of Tibetan identity (Statement of Kashag 2011).

In the final analysis, the struggle from exile has been largely truncated to a relatively sombre form due to the uncompromising stance of the Chinese government. Though the leadership of the Tibetan nationalist movement has tried to frame more pragmatic approaches considering ground realities, what is slightly ambiguous is the use of the words such as 'freedom struggle of Tibet' which comes to fore in the Dalai Lama's speeches addressed to the exile community and statements like "Tibetan and the Chinese people are neighbours and share close social, economic and commercial relations" (Statement of Kashag 2011) which may lead to some suspicion on the Chinese side. In addition, the regional affiliations have split the struggle into several trends. Some got involved within Tibetan organisations like the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) or students for a Free Tibet India (SFT India) others work as volunteers.

## **2.9. ALTERNATE VOICES FROM WITHIN: DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES FROM THE MAINLAND**

More recently, there has been a reappraisal of China's ethnic policies and the change in attitude of several of its policymakers towards the Tibetan issue. Several internet portals have cropped up which portray the real conditions of Tibetans in the TAR to the Chinese populations at large and try to voice their concerns.

In a petition entitled '*Twelve Suggestionfor Dealing with the Tibetan Situation*' intellectuals within China urged the government leaders to rethink their Tibet policy. These intellectuals pointed out that in reference to the 10 March 2008 incident where the protests spread all across Tibet, serious deterioration could be observed due to mistakes in the development work on part of the government in Tibet and that "the relevant government departments must conscientiously reflect upon this matter, examine their failures, and fundamentally change the failed nationality policies." They further emphasized that the language used to describe the Dalai Lama by the Chinese government should be toned down as the one-sided propaganda was stirring up anti-ethnic animosity and "aggravating an already tense situation."

Many Chinese scholars, democracy activists, media personalities and writers as well as many organizations have put forward a case for Tibet within China; "In recent years some 900 articles have been written by Chinese scholars in support of the Middle-Way Policy" (Middle way and related Documents).and several Sino-Tibetan friendship associations have been established in many places. In December 2008, the Dalai Lama acknowledged in front of the European parliament that

"in contrast to the continued extremely rigid attitude of the Chinese government towards Tibet, fortunately among the Chinese people – especially among the informed and educated Chinese circles – there is a growing understanding and sympathy for the plight of the Tibetan people...Chinese intellectuals openly criticized the harsh crackdown of Tibetan demonstrations by the Chinese government in March this year and called for restraint and dialogue in addressing the problems of Tibet. Chinese lawyers offered publicly to represent arrested Tibetan demonstrators at trials. Today there is growing understanding, sympathy, support and solidarity among our Chinese brothers and sisters for the difficult situation of the Tibetans and their legitimate aspirations. This

is most encouraging. I take this opportunity to thank the brave Chinese brothers and sisters for their solidarity” (Middle Way Policy and All Related Documents, p. 62)

Several bright Chinese intellectuals including Liu Xiaobo and Beijing based legal NGO, the *Gongmeng Constitutional Initiative*, signed a courageous open letter in 2008 expressing support for the Dalai Lama’s peace initiatives. In May 2009, the Open Constitution Initiative brought out a twenty-eight page study titled ‘*An Investigative Report into the social and economic causes of the 3.14 Incident in Tibetan areas*’ edited by Li Kun, Huang Li and Li Xiang which noted an acute sense of alienation among young Tibetans arising from the lack of economic opportunities and most of the business enterprises being monopolised by non-Tibetans. Government policies were leading to the hardening of perceptions that minority groups in the nation’s west were ‘remote and backward barbarians’. The report noted that repeated images of the riots in Lhasa in the state media led some Chinese to “form feelings of racist sentiment toward the Tibetan masses as a result” and the growing sense of patriotic nationalism would see any concession by the state as a sign weakness (Open Constitution Initiative, May 2009). Influential policy analysts like Ma Rong, Zhu Weiqun and Hu Angang have argued to end policies designed to “social engineer” the Tibetans to become Chinese.

In his autobiography *A Long Way to Equality and Unity*, Bapa Phuntso Wangye, the founder of Tibet’s Communist Party, urged the Beijing government to seek compromise with TGiE in Dharamsala, India, and allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet. (Boehler: SCMP 2014). Another figure who appears in the evolving Sino-Tibet relationship is Renji (Yabshi Pan Rinzinwangmo), colloquially referred to as Tuantuan or the princess of Tibet, daughter of the Tenth Panchen Lama, who is being posited by the state to shape the reincarnation of the next Panchen Lama and as a symbol of Tibetan-Han unity. However, most Tibetans in exile believe she may play a marginal role at best.



## 2.10. THE DRIFT IN IDENTITIES: TO BE TIBETAN NATIONALISTS OR CHINESE NATIONALISTS

Conspicuously the Tibetan national movement had been spearheaded by a single leader through his charismatic appeal all through the earlier phase of its conception. The Dalai Lama was not only able to claim religious and moral sanctity and legitimacy but also astutely advanced international support for the Tibetan cause. He managed to carve out an identity without the precondition of a defined territory for the Tibetan people based on the concepts of *non-violence* and *satyagraha* under the Buddhist precepts. The Dalai Lama's decision to step down in favour of a democratically elected leadership has been perhaps one of the most significant decisions that will shape the future of this nationalist struggle.

In face of China's inability to honour the basic provisions, rights, autonomy and legal protections for Tibetan minorities, the Tibetan nationalism movement will find it increasingly difficult to sustain the momentum. There is increased ethnic profiling and discrimination that is creeping into the Chinese notions of dealing with the Tibetan population, often dubbed as increasing instances of Han chauvinism. Some scholars believe that ever since the implementation of Mao's policy of delineation of the ethnic nationalities for the purpose of consolidating the Chinese state, the public opinion on identity in China has been shaped by ambiguous and imprecise definitions of nationalities and race; though most of them identified with a single 'yellow race' before this classification, most Han Chinese see Tibetans as ethnically and racially different from themselves and not paltry to leadership positions in the CCP and other government machinery. Explaining this phenomenon, Gary Tuttle exhorts that

“Han elites came to see Tibetans and other non-Han people as at best junior partners in the project of Chinese nation building. In the future, most Han elites assumed, such groups would be subsumed by the dominant culture and would cease to exist in any meaningful way; this view was partly the result of Maoist tenets that saw class consciousness as a more powerful force than ethnic solidarity.”

- (Tuttle: Foreign Affairs, May/June 2015)

Unlike the civil rights movement in the US that helped to eliminate all racial distinctions to melt all ethnicities into a single fabric of the nation, the laws and

practices in China fail to assimilate the minorities as a part of a single whole. The official discourse highlights the deplorable state of these ethnicities before they were brought under the canopy of the Chinese state and attempts at projecting to the larger Han population a view tainted with racist characteristics. Other official efforts that lead to inculcation of racist views include museums that showcase distorted past, depicting Tibet as a “hell on earth” and portraying Tibetans as a savage, backward people who need to be redeemed. While Andrew Fischer has drawn attention to the concept of ‘disempowered development’ to explain the negative impact of the state sponsored development in these regions, the Han majority rather see the Tibetans as lazy, unproductive and incapable people living off the state’s royalties and gifts as pointed out by Emily Yeh. This was evident in the jingoistic appeals of thwarting all attempts by Tibetan rioters to destabilise China’s international image around the time of the Beijing Olympics in 2008 fuelling accusations from critics that China was encouraging racial hatred (Yardley, *The New York Times* 2008).<sup>47</sup> Grey Tuttle, a professor at Columbia University asserts that the central authority’s hardline policies are a manifestation of ethnic prejudices at the core of contemporary Chinese society.

But as mentioned above the debate on Tibetan nationalism versus Han Chinese nationalism is just not confined to the rubrics of economic modernisation or marginalisation, but it has an in-built religious tangent to it. As the Tibetan identity has been based on commonly shared ethnicity, culture, territory, China’s assimilationist policies showcasing to Tibetans that it is in their long-term and short-term interests, have found it difficult to penetrate the identity structures fostered by the Dalai Lama, monastic institutions and the Tibetan People themselves (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdai 2010: 62-75).

The scuffle to control representations of history has been as intense as the tussle to govern the territory (to reclaim on the Tibetan part). This was evident in the projections made to the international audience around the time of the Beijing Olympics. Part of this extravaganza was the new museum built about Tibet by Chinese authorities in a prime location close to the National Stadium, (which the

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<sup>47</sup>Slogans like “We couldn’t believe our government was being so weak and cowardly,” “The Dalai Lama is trying to separate China, and it is not acceptable at all. We must crack down on the rioters.” were commonplace.

author had an opportunity to visit personally as part of the Indian Youth Delegation in 2008). It was set up by the China Tibetology Research Centre with a single-minded purpose of positing Tibet as an integral part of China and showcasing the tremendous developments that had taken place inside it under the CCP. It displayed reproductions of documents, antiquities and records from Chinese dynasties but with rare mentions of the Dalai Lama, especially after 1959. It was an effective medium to twist the discourse of Tibetan development in its favour and reinstating the image of a feudal serfdom before its peaceful liberation by the PRC.

The state feels immensely threatened by religious revivalism<sup>48</sup> which employs display of religious artefacts as a symbol of opposition to the State and thus, manipulation of religious symbols and concepts is becoming commonplace in an attempt to co-opt religious practices towards the state's nationalist agenda. This explains the growing number of monk-businessmen interactions all over China who apparently patronise proliferation of Buddhist scriptures to earn blessings and merit of *karma*. It is also reflected in the official rhetoric used by the political leaders of late, who now stress on the amalgamation of other practices from Confucianism and Taoism with the Buddhist religious practices to form a new kind of Buddhism with Chinese characteristics and seek to project a more accepting and harmonious China where religion can act as the glue to bond people under the Chinese dream (Lijun: People's Daily: 2015).

Yet the growing numbers of Tibetan self-immolations, which the Chinese media calls 'the copy-cat suicides' within China reflect the gap between the state and the aspirations of these monks and nuns. For these young monks the traditional political notions of acceptable political action to defend religion have been infused by the new meanings and promises of western values of universal human rights (Glodstein, pp.15-52). Simultaneously, the repressive practices of the state have forced the religious

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<sup>48</sup> Religious revival in Tibet gained momentum around the early 1980s when after Hu Yaobang's efforts several religious practices were revived and reinstated. There was a strong local current of new religio-nationalistic belief that Tibetan religion (Buddhism) was the basis of greatness of the Tibetan nationality, should be revived to its former greatness; though most of these revivalist efforts such as in the Drepung Monastery, were brought into practice keeping in mind the sensitivities of the Chinese Government and most recruitments of the monks by the Democratic Management Committee (DMC/replaced by the Management Committee after 1996) required approval from higher authorities in Beijing.

entities to adopt a more violent form of protest which is intrinsically dormant though not prohibited, in their traditional beliefs and structures of a pacifist style of life, stemming from their despondency on the remote possibility of the Dalai Lama being allowed to visit Tibet in the near-term.

Though the Chinese state blames these immolations on mundane issues of personal concern, such as unemployment and incompatible domestic relationships, leading some sections of youth to be misguided into becoming ‘heroes’ or ‘Tibetan martyrs’, it is easy to see through the incongruence in such claims (Xinhua 2013). Ashild Kolås has identified this change of strategy with a morbid form of extension of the notion of the enlightened altruistic Boddhisatva, and thus with the search for non-conventional forms of representing Tibetan nationalism. The roots of this reversed strategy can be attributed to the ‘kadam’ tradition of Tibetan Buddhism that was founded by Lama Dron Tonpa in the 11<sup>th</sup> century of which the Dalai Lama is an ardent follower. Its doctrine of the *Lo-jong*, which literally means mental transformation and emphasizes on a compassionate and altruistic mind, was highly revered and taught by the Dalai Lama’s (Puri 2002: 3500-3503). The current spate of immolations thus reflect an altruistic notion of sacrifice for the greater cause for Tibetan nationalism stemming from their frustrations against the Chinese state or rather the anomie from lack of definitions on legitimate aspirations within a framework of desirable social ethics.<sup>49</sup>

It is not a remote possibility that the Chinese argument that these immolations are instigated by the Dalai Lama’s teachings may be true, though not intentionally but as a consequence of their show of solidarity with their spiritual leader; as often the discourse and ideas travel fast among the Tibetans travelling to and fro from India, which includes the teachings of the Kadam tradition and its idea of self-sacrifice for the greater good.

The clash between the humanistic values of Buddhism with more abstract values of democracy and human rights propagated by the west and even ostensibly co-opted by the Chinese discourse on modernizing Tibet also plays a major role and is more

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<sup>49</sup> For an explanatory version see author’s article titled *Self-Immolations in Tibet-III: Altruism, Fatalism or Anomie?*, The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), Article No. 3709, 23 August 2012.

apparent when construed under the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* – groups with affective loyalty (the social position and identity of a Tibetan Buddhist) and *Gesellschaft* – groups with contractual loyalties (the social position and identity of a ‘Chinese Tibetan’ lured by the promises of modernization or the promises of the ‘China Dream’) extrapolated by Ferdinand Tönnies and later popularized by Weber and Eric Hobsbawm.<sup>50</sup> Acculturation of Tibetan monks and lay people have been restricted largely due to *Gemeinschaft* associations, which has ensured the continuity of their traditional style of living and thereby ensuring loyalties to Buddhist morals and values. The notions of accumulating merit (as mentioned before) and the concept of beneficial action (*phan thogs*) are highly important for most Tibetans and references to sentences like “telling this or that history will not be beneficial” are very common (McGranahan 2005: 570-600).

The representations in the 12 books of the school curriculum where the lessons propagate apolitical moral purpose and those adhering to Chinese socialist morality explain this phenomenon even further. The resurrection of Tibetan religio-political-ethnic nationalism is perhaps then a reflection of this pull in social change in the Tibetan society which the Chinese state has completely failed to comprehend or is unwilling to adapt to. The changing concepts of honour and prestige reflected in the recognition of education from the *neidi* schools as more desirable and prestigious in comparison to the traditional Buddhist schools and a reversal of the same process of late, demonstrate the flux in changing social norms and values; and the resolute hold of Buddhist tenets amongst Tibetans.

In addition to the appeal of a charismatic religious leader, the resilience of Tibetan language as a primary medium for dissemination of information worldwide, especially through CTA’s consistent efforts to publish elementary language textbooks for higher school education for Tibetans in the US and Canada and its websites like the bodyiglobjong.com has bolstered Tibetan nationalist sentiments. The second generation Tibetans (born in exile), who mostly constitute the discourse on Tibetan

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<sup>50</sup> Eric Hobsbawm argued that as globalization turns the entire planet into an increasingly remote kind of *Gesellschaft*, so too collective identity politics seeks for a fictitious remaking of the qualities of *Gemeinschaft* by artificially reforming group bonds and identities

identity from exile, highlight the significance of language as an integral part of ‘Tibetan self-understanding’ (Lauer: 2015, 167-192).

Marriage practices represent another indicator of the preservation of identity as most Tibetans prefer to marry within community and maintain distance from the host communities, while those who stray are not integrated easily. However, on the flipside, many of these Tibetans use their identity as a means to gain foreign sponsorships for education which renders their loyalty to the preservation of their culture highly superficial. It operates rather as a self-defense mechanism or a survival strategy when pitted against the host communities which would otherwise expose the disunity amongst Tibetan émigrés and is challenged by their pulls between duty and desire. Food practices are another arena where the struggle for preservation of traditional cuisines over Chinese dishes plays out. For instance, the Chinese generally consider barley meal as primitive and backward but the Tibetans cling more tightly to *tsampa* as a symbol of their identity as it is also an essential part of their marriage and birthday celebrations as well as at funerals (Tim Johnson: 33).

Most hard-liners in the Chinese government believe that the strategic leniency allowed in revival of monastic institutions in the early 1980s turned out to be a poor policy from the outset, being corrected by a gradual withdrawal of support from the Buddhist institutions in the recent years. The influx of Han migrants who were supposed to provide the role models for Tibetans to become truly Chinese has not worked to the Chinese government’s expectation. Not only have the Tibetans refused to emulate their thinking and behavior in a drive towards modernization but they have in substance rejected the values propagated by the consumerist culture that is perceptibly antithetical to their Buddhist values. In her research based on extensive interviews with Tibetan community in exile, Tina Lauer suggested that ‘visual markers of difference based on ethnic characteristics often constituted what makes Tibetan a Tibetan’. Recent events indicate that the ‘chosen trauma’ (Wang 2008: 783-806)<sup>51</sup> of Tibetan Buddhists, women and other lay people (of their repression by the state) has emerged as the more powerful memory/narrative amongst Tibetans as

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<sup>51</sup>Wang points out an overall trend of replacement of the ‘victor narrative’ of Mao Zedong (China has won independence) by the ‘victim narrative’ of the West as a perpetrator of China’s humiliation in the school history text books.

compared to the ‘chosen glories’ of Sino-Tibetan friendship and mutual coexistence propagated by the State. The policies adopted in the last decade have particularly reflected the ‘Torture’ aspect of China’s human rights digressions, especially post-2008 Olympics, thereby strengthening the collective memory of victimization at the hands of the Chinese state which are narrated through a series of publication by the TGiE like ‘*A Sequence of Tortures: A Diary of interrogations*’ by Jamyang Kyi released by the Tibetan Women’s Association.

At the core of the discursive war between the Tibetans and the Chinese state and their respective pulls of loyalty, is this fundamental social process that is groping for mediums of expression via both violent and non-violent means, which is likely to shape the future of Chinese and Tibetan nationalism at the micro and macro level. There have been deliberate representations as well as misrepresentations of both historical and contemporary narratives from both the sides. With the stalemate resulting from loss of policy options to deal with the TGiE and the Dalai Lama, the Chinese government has relied more and more on economic nationalism to link Tibet inextricably with China and inculcate loyalties amongst the Tibetans towards the motherland, while the TGiE and the Dalai Lama have sought international support for the same goal.

## **2.11. LIMITS OF TIBETAN NATIONALISM & IMPENDING INTEGRATION: POSSIBLE LEGALITIES**

Though the TGiE continues to posit adversarial strategies to strengthen its support from international players in an attempt to coerce China into yielding to their demands, it is evident that their appeals are falling on deaf ears. Also, the TGiE relies on some institutional in addition to the Privy Purse of the Dalai Lama for funding. There are already controversies sparking up on the funding of the TGiE activities and siphoning off funds by the local elites, especially in the post-Dalai Lama scenario.

“The fourteenth Dalai Lama’s eventual death will mark a watershed, ridding China’s ruling party of a prominent global critic beloved in many parts of the world, but also potentially radicalizing Tibetans despairing over their lack of a freer homeland” (Johnson 2011: 4.) Even though the Dalai Lama has mulled over several possibilities

of the Tibetan struggle being headed by the Karmapa or the Fifteenth reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, who could be born either inside or outside of China through the mystical process of *madey tulku*, in the provisional time he has settled for a democratic transition of the leadership through elections to the next generation of Tibetans in exile thereby transferring authority from a charismatic leader to a legal-rational set up. But how far will the new leader be able to maintain the impetus of Tibetan struggle built by the Dalai Lama on the basis of his charismatic appeal is a question likely to be answered only with time.

Simultaneously, the Tibetan youth is increasingly more concerned about losing their culture and identity education sector. The conservation of their language and culture is challenged by the needs of modern-day industries or the pressure of modernisation. The leadership-in-exile for its part continues to keep the inspiration alive amongst the local populace by various allegorical references: “The Tibetan people have risen time after time to overcome great adversities in the long history of our civilization. Today, our sense of identity, solidarity, and dignity is deeper than ever. If we remain united, and bring the rich traditions of the elders to interplay with the innovation and dynamism of the younger generation, the Chinese government will have no choice but to address our aspirations” ( Statement of Lobsang Sangay 2014). These reiterations are extremely imperative if the Tibetan nationalist movement has to keep forward its momentum, as Smith (1999, 9) postulated “what gives nationalism its power are myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritage and the way in which a popular living past has been, and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias.”

While speculation abounds as to who will be the next Dalai Lama – whether it will be a male or female; or whether there will be a Dalai Lama at all, or he will be born inside China or outside China – there is no definite answer within the Tibetan community. An interesting prophecy made by the 13th Dalai Lama about the end of the institution lies carefully documented as one prunes through the exhibits of the Tibet Museum in McLeodganj, Dharamshala which may have been deliberately kept in abeyance to avoid speculation and panic- it states: “Very soon in this land (with a harmonious blend of religion and politics) deceptive acts may occur from without and within. At that time, if we do not dare to protect our territory, our spiritual personalities



including the Victorious Father and Son (Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama) may be exterminated without trace, the property and authority of our Lakangs (residences of reincarnated lamas) and monks may be taken away. Moreover, our political system, developed by the Three Great Dharma Kings (Tri Songtsen Gampo, Tri Songdetsen and Tri Ralpachen) will vanish without anything remaining. The property of all people, high and low, will be seized and the people forced to become slaves. All living beings will have to endure endless days of suffering and will be stricken with fear. Such a time will come.”

So far Tibetan exiles are basing their expectations on what unfolds in the Chinese territories in the near future. Several Tibetans in exile who have migrated to the US openly showcase their disappointment with the Tibetan struggle for freedom in exile. Mila Rangzen in his article *‘Is migrating to a ‘New Tibet’ the solution?’* openly criticises the failure of the Middle-way approach to derive anything substantive from the Chinese and instead proposes a demand for a new Tibet which is a much truncated form of the original Tibet (100,000 sq km of land mass around Kongpo) in which Tibetans from different parts of the Tsenpo-era Tibet can be relocated and yet maintain a diplomatic relationship with the PRC (Rangzen: 2013: Tibet Sun Network). He recognizes that with China’s ascending political power Tibet’s future will not remain in the hands of neither *umavas* nor *rangzenpas* (proponents of autonomy within China, and Tibetan independence, respectively) but in the hands of the CCP.



Another challenge that is currently emerging for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans-in-exile is the growing support that China has thrown behind the Shugden devotees who feel in a way shunned by the Dalai Lama. Dodin, director of the website TibetInfoNet observes that “There’s a massive drive to keep the remaining Shugden strongholds alive with a lot of support from the party.” Beijing has also been sponsoring the visit of several Lamas abroad with an intention to encourage proliferation of Buddhism and more specifically Dorje Shudgen’s practice (Lague: 2015).

Fifty years have passed since the UN Tibet resolutions of 1961 and 1965 had recognised Tibet’s right to self-determination under international Law and yet found it difficult to make China comply by it. Under the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous People (September 2007), the rights of the indigenous people be treated as ‘equal’ to all other peoples, be recognised as different and respected as such, be free from any kind of discrimination, not be subjected to racial inferiority or any kind of policies that exhibit such kind of connotations have been reiterated. They are by virtue of the declaration free to pursue their own economic, social, cultural development and determine their political status. Though China has voted for this declaration, it has denied the existence of indigenous people in its territory, which is reflective of its non-compliance to such agreements (Davis 2008: 125-128).

The Dalai Lama often suggests in his various international speeches that if China is possibly successful in building a “harmonious, or a democratic or a integrative society as well as very “respectable superpower, then we Tibetans feel more proud to remain part of that” (Johnson, p.10 and Tibetan Bulletin 2003). On the other hand he always mentions the Tibetan struggle as a “Freedom struggle” in his statements to the Tibetans in exile. The leadership in exile continues to provide hope to the Tibetans inside Tibet by acknowledging the sacrifices that the elder generations have made and the efforts of the new generation that has taken over the responsibility to strive for their mission. Yet the position of the exiled community has been largely shifting on the future of their struggle. While the Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile, adopted in 1991, states, “The future Tibetan polity shall uphold the principle of non-violence and shall endeavor to promote the freedom of the individual and the welfare of the society through the dual system of government based on a Federal Democratic Republic,” the Guidelines for Future Tibet’s Polity and Basic Features of Its Constitution,

promulgated in 1992, invokes “spiritual values.” Whereas the Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile, amended in 2011, stipulated that the future polity of Tibet would be “a combination of political and religious power.” This reflects that they are constantly renewing their own understanding and capacity to deal with the Chinese government and seem slightly unsure about the future of their struggle.

Though economic growth and development have been consistently employed as tools to gain further political control, that is, to check and curb Tibetan nationalism and further sinicisation of Tibet, it is the limited reach of these economic incentives that has led to greater disaffection against the government. Local bureaucrats and elites siphon off major portions of these aids from the government and exacerbate the existing tussle between the government and the locals instead of helping to resolve the issues amicably. The changing face of Tibetan nationalism witnessed in the recent spate of self-immolations showcases urgency for change and reform within the TAR. Most scholars believe that for its own advantage Beijing needs to bring to a conclusion decades of negotiations on Tibetan self-determination, as “when the Dalai Lama departs from the scene, neither Beijing nor the new generation Tibetan leaders will be able to rein in the spectre of nationalism, which could fuel a mutually destructive conflict.”(Tenzin Norgay, *The Diplomat* 2015)

Besides, the Chinese government needs to come out of its state of denial if it really intends to assimilate the Tibetans in its overall political fabric and realise what Xi Jinping has envisioned for China’s great national renewal. A beginning in this direction could be made by increasing the numbers of Communist Party and government officials of Tibetan descent; putting Tibetans in real positions of power. Though the original intention might have been to assimilate the Tibetans through a successful case of promotion of ethnic unity or by “correctly handling the contradictions” amongst the locals and the Han as it projects in its White papers (1992, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2015– the largest number so far), the Chinese government has perceptibly failed at it as tensions remain dormant in its social fabric. Without a true grievance redressal it is difficult to hope that the national fabric could be woven into a single whole, with the Tibetans being an integral part of it.

The Tibet question has been after all, as postulated by Melvyn C Goldstein, essentially a conflict about its nationalism that has pit the to fight for Tibet's self-rule against the overarching need of the state to maintain territorial integrity. And for the same reason, in case of a political turmoil within the Chinese state, Tibet as an autonomous region has a serious potential of secessionism when compared to the other politico-ethnic/self-determination movements. The current policy options are seriously constrained; the government remains highly sceptical about adopting a lenient policy, given that its softer approach had not yielded any substantial rewards both the times it was implemented (right after the peaceful liberation of Tibet by Mao and later by Hu Yaobang in the 1980s). In terms of the discursive war, the Chinese government continues to insist that the Dalai Lama accept its version which he believes are highly inaccurate and cannot be accepted, though he admits that China's current sovereignty over Tibet is an undeniable reality. It can be said with significant certainty that when it comes to protecting its national interests and territorial integrity, Beijing will not refrain from using force against non-violent or violent/altruistic strategies the Tibetans may adopt, notwithstanding any accusations of human rights violations or compromise on democratic values to make its nationalist enterprise in Tibet a success. However, the constant negotiations by the local elites and leadership in exile and their strand of nationalism make the process of nation-building a big challenge for Chinese authorities.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **CHINA'S NATIONALIST ENTERPRISE IN XINJIANG: YET ANOTHER DISCURSIVE WAR**

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) was established with great fanfare in October 1955. While the Xinjiang Party officials had proposed to set up autonomies “from the top down” but the Central Committee in Beijing decreed that the order should proceed from “small to large” (Wang Shuanqian 1999: 249). The division of Xinjiang into a number of smaller autonomies has been hailed as a stroke of administrative genius in retrospect as it lessened the possibilities of inherent Turkic nationalism and made the case of the central government stronger. However, akin to the case of Tibet, enormous investments, incessant political tirades coupled with high octane propaganda have completely failed to bring the ‘harmonious’, ‘stable’ and ‘integrative’ development in Xinjiang and as a corollary, its integration into the Chinese nation. While national interests dictate that the region be completely integrated into the larger Chinese polity, indigenous sub-nationalism or Uyghur nationalism has been counter-productive to this endeavour. While early studies of politics in Xinjiang claimed that Uyghurs ethnic origins were clear, more recent works have demonstrated that Uyghur identities had emerged quite recently and were mobilized and shaped by political elites. In fact at times Uyghur nationalist intellectuals have tended to reinforce the old divisions by vying to constitute authentic Uyghur identity according to regional dictates (Bovingdon 2010: 12).

However, unlike the Tibetan struggle which is a highly peaceful movement given its Buddhist inclinations, the Xinjiang movement has a substantive terrorism element attached to it and a larger role for international players as it shares boundary with Central Asia. The dissimilarity in the government’s approach in dealing with this region also lies in the fact that there are significant differences in the demographic compositions of these two border regions (Zhu and Blachford: 2012: 719). Beginning with the Baren Uprising in 1990, the last two decades have witnessed recurrent instances of radical extremism, precarious political scare-mongering, ethnic divergence and re-crystallization of identities along faultlines created by the dissemination (or not) of the benefits of development in Xinjiang.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>It is the largest political unit covering 1.6 million square kilometers, that is, one-sixth of China’s total area. It has huge amounts of oil reserves and is China’s largest natural-gas producing region.

The pan-Islamic linkages with the Central Asian countries contiguous to Xinjiang have been instrumental in engendering this fierce struggle for consolidation of ethno-religious identity striving towards self-determination as a nation to a large extent. The three evils of ‘extremism, terrorism and separatism/splittism’ (*Xinjiang de san ge zhuyi - jiduan zhuyi, fenli zhuyi, kongbu zhuyi*)<sup>53</sup> as alleged by the Chinese government have further deterred China’s attempts at successful integration of this region. In this backdrop, it is imperative to gauge the discourse and the attempts made by the Chinese government as well as the counter-reactions amongst the indigenous ethnic communities to ascertain the direction in which the dynamics of this region are headed and what it portends for the larger state nationalism vis-à-vis local ethnic nationalism.

### **3.2. HISTORICAL CLAIMS AND THE DISCOURSE OF BELONGINGNESS**

The Chinese government incessantly holds that this far western region of Xinjiang has historically belonged to the PRC. On the other hand, the Uyghurs claim Xinjiang to be a historical Uyghur nation which has been weakened deliberately over centuries by the Chinese state. In its White Paper released in 2003, the Chinese government declared that the Han Empire was amongst the first of the settlers in this region. Ever since the establishment of the Western Regions Frontier Command (WRFC) in 60 B.C., the region witnessed an increased influx of the Han people including the merchants, officials and even soldiers (*White Paper* ., Part I, May 2003).<sup>54</sup>

The claim is based largely on the acceptance of the official seals from the court of the Han dynasty by local chieftains and rulers which indicated their allegiance to state-sovereignty. It is extended also on pretext of Genghis Khan, China’s historical national icon, who invaded Xinjiang in 13<sup>th</sup> century and conquered Khotans and Mongols into this predominantly Uyghur region. To discredit the argument of a

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<sup>53</sup>Also referred to as – ‘*san gu shi li*: ethnic splittist forces, violent terrorist forces and religious extremist forces.’

<sup>54</sup>The use of the word “seeking alliances” (Part III) with the region is however quite significant which demonstrates that a frontier- province kind of set existed between the two regions.

primeval ‘Uyghur nation’ and their absolute hold on the region the paper also makes a case for the co-existence of various ethnic groups historically: “By the end of the 19th century, Xinjiang had 13 ethnic groups, namely, Uyghur, Han, Kazak, Mongolian, Hui, Kirgiz, Manchu, Xibe, Tajik, Daur, Ozbek, Tatar and Russian. The Uyghurs formed the majority, as they do today.”

The Chinese government argues that the ‘Central Plains’ exercised control over Xinjiang through establishment of garrison commands. They appointed the heads of the leading families in the region to look after the administrative and military affairs (a continuity in structures apparent in the the *bingtuan*,<sup>55</sup> a semi-military governmental organisation performing similar functions today). Quite unabashedly, the paper states that the policy of disparate treatment to the Hans and the indigenous people bears historical precedents from the Tang era and hence is not a newly initiated discriminative practice:

“The Tang central government instituted a system of separate administrations for the Han and the people of the other ethnic groups in the Western Regions. That is, it adopted the same administrative system of prefecture, sub-prefecture, county, township and li (neighbourhood or village) as in the inland areas in Yizhou, Xizhou and Tingzhou, where most Han were concentrated. In addition, the equal-field system (the farmland system of the Tang Dynasty) and taxation system of payment

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<sup>55</sup>Founded in 1954 by Wang Zhen under Mao’s commands, this body has administrative authority over several medium-sized cities as well as settlements and farms all across Xinjiang. It has its own administrative structure which is responsible for healthcare and education in the areas under its jurisdiction, developing frontier regions, promoting economic development, ensuring social stability and ethnic harmony, and consolidation of border defense. The Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region does not interfere in the administration of these areas. “In the mid-1960s the XPCC appropriated a special fund of more than RMB 8 million each year to aid local areas in farmland planning and construction. After its reinstatement in the early 1980s, the XPCC invested more than RMB 90 million over five consecutive years to support Kashgar and Tacheng’s establishment of irrigation and water conservancy projects, and co-built with local governments more than 400 model institutions. Since the 1990s the XPCC has helped local governments to build bilingual kindergartens and schools and train bilingual teachers. Since 1999, 57 regimental farms under seven divisions in northern Xinjiang have provided training sessions and temporary posts to 15 groups of 2,156 grassroots ethnic minority officials from 32 counties (cities) in four prefectures in southern Xinjiang. Since the turn of the century, the XPCC has vigorously promoted “convergenomics,” working together with the local communities in building 87 economic complexes and engaging in more than 200 cooperative projects. Throughout each year it has also assigned scientific and technological personnel to hold various training sessions on farming, animal husbandry, and agricultural machinery, and to promote a broad range of advanced technologies among local farmers and herdsmen of all ethnic groups. Mutual support and integrated development between the XPCC and local governments have promoted contact and exchanges among all ethnic groups.” White paper, 2014.



in kind and labour were adopted, as well as the system of prefectural military commands. In the areas inhabited by other ethnic groups, the Tang rulers governed through the traditional chiefs and headmen, who were granted civil and military titles but allowed to manage local affairs according to their own customs. At the same time, the central government stationed garrisons in *Qiuci(Kucha)*, *Yutian(Hotan)*, *Shule(Kashgar)* and *Suiye(Suyab)*, which were known as the “four garrison commands of Anxi.”

(*White Paper* May 2003)

To further dilute the claims of the Uyghur national identity, the White paper mentions that Tsarist Russia had occupied several places in these western regions at the time of the Opium Wars in 1840s, which were restored only in the 1880s; till then these were mere ‘oasis communities’. Only after that, the Chinese government slowly began to hedge the Soviet influence in this region. The Qing government recovered Ili around February 1881. The Tsarist Russia illegally occupied Ili for 11 years until China officially created a province in the Western Region and rechristened as Xinjiang which literally means “New Frontier” in 1884. The Chinese government however, argues that in reality it is meant to signify - “old territory returned to the motherland (Ibid)”. It was also at this time that the military and administrative centre of Xinjiang was moved from Ili to Urumqi (Dihua).

This version of establishment of Xinjiang is also confirmed from some Russian sources which give extensive description of the administration of the “Native” districts during early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. The Russian student Interpreters of the Imperial Russian Legation, Peiping discovered that

“The province of Hsin Chiang (Xinjiang), New Dominion of Kansu also called Eastern or Chinese Turkestan, formerly called His Yu/Western Border was formed in 1884 from the territory situated on the slopes of the two Tien Shan and is governed on lines similar to those of the remaining 18 provinces of China proper and those of Manchuria, in that the administrative head is the governor. Some peculiarities however exist in its governmental system, which are explained by its population by Turkish, Mongolian and Manchurian races. The Mussulman population of Hsinchiang is ruled by generic chieftains the so called Beks who are graded according to their importance in six classes: Akim Bek or the Local Governor; Ishhan Bek or the Assistant Governor; Shang Bek or the Collector of Revenues; Katsonatchi Bek, yet

another Collector of Revenues; Hatsze Beg or the Judge; and Mirabu Beg or the Superintendent of Agriculture...”

- (Brunnert and Hagelstorm: USA and Canada, 1912: 439-440)

Clearly, this view put forward by the Chinese government is highly contested by Uyghur intellectuals and the indigenous leadership (some dates are congruent while others are highly contentious). They believe that for the first time the Manchus were able to conquer parts of Xinjiang only in 1760 and ruled off and on for almost one hundred years. “Yakub Beg was the last of the Uyghur heroes who led a movement for independence in 1867, despite which the Manchu Empire was able to assimilate the ‘wild west’ as ‘Xinjiang’ meaning the ‘New Territory’ in 1876” (Kadeer with Cavelius: 2009: 9). Moreover, they maintain that the relatively loose affiliation of Xinjiang with the rest of China was recognised by Mao Zedong when he established it as a part of the PRC in 1955 as an autonomous region instead of a fully integrated province. In this particular context, it has been argued by many scholars that the semblance of autonomy granted by the Centre has in itself yielded a peripheral tendency to the region.

The complexity of Xinjiang’s ethnic composition hardly makes it a distinct territory with homogenous socio-cultural identity (Millward and Perdue: 48). Most scholars agree that China has resorted to repetitive use of similar kind of strategies, which involve intimidation, trade benefits and the vigorous support to promote in-migration settlement, since ancient times to promote integration of this region in the Chinese motherland (Millward and Perdue: 57). Despite such claims and rebuttals on the belongingness of Xinjiang to China, it has been strictly governed as a de facto province since it was “peacefully liberated” on 25 September 1949 by Mao Zedong and his army and more so since 1955 when it was established as an autonomous region. The modern resurgence of the Uyghur identity is however, driven by the nature of interaction between the state and the Uyghur people where the minorities are often depicted as exotic and in a sense inferior. As pointed out by Dru C Gladney, “ethnicity cannot be reduced to a purely primordial action but must involve dialectic interaction of the two main aspects of ethnicity: culturally defined notions of descent and socio-political circumstance” (Gladney 2010: 227). Thus, the consolidation of Uyghur identity has been shaped by its interaction with the Chinese government at two consecutive levels: at the provincial level and at the central level and as averred

by Nabijan Tursan, Uyghur historiography has been “the site of an ideological battle between the competing nationalist projects of the Uyghurs and the Chinese state” (Tursun 2008: 87).

### **3.3. THE STRUGGLE FOR XINJIANG’S ‘POLITICAL IDENTITY’: MANIPULATION AND CONTROL**

The geopolitical vicissitudes of Xinjiang posited it at the pivot of Asia (Lattimore 1950: 3) and extendedly at a pivot of centrifugal pressures or what has been termed as the ‘Great Game’ by many scholars. Xinjiang shares its international land borders with, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Internal, it is contiguous to the provinces of Tibet, Qinghai and Gansu. Given its landlocked terrain, several neighbouring powers tried to assert their authority over the region, most prominently Russia. And to a large extent these interferences have shaped the present day relationship between Xinjiang and the Central government at Beijing. The biggest hurdle for the project of assimilation of Xinjiang into the PRC and the nationalist discourse has been the act of aggression on Xinjiang from external powers which prevented a smooth absorption of this region into the central apparatus during the early twentieth century. Due to this, countering external intervention and quelling internal rebellion have remained the topmost priority for the respective Chinese government.

In fact, the revival of the term ‘East Turkestan’<sup>56</sup> itself, which had already fallen into disuse by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is attributed to a Russian scholar Timkovsky who used this term in his report prepared as part of his diplomatic mission in 1805 to denote the geographical area of Tarim Basin and Central Asia in the Southern most of part of Xingjian.(White paper on Xinjiang, Part IV, Origin of the “East Turkestan Issue). Thereafter Russian intervention was quite noticeable. Russia attempted to confiscate several territories in the region given the huge resource pool of the region, especially the Ili prefecture.

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<sup>56</sup>The term “Turkistan” appeared in Arabic geographical works in the Middle Ages and largely denoted a geographical concept referring to “the region of the Turks” in areas north of the Sir River in Central Asia and adjoining areas to the east of the river. Later, the modern ethnic groups in Central Asia were established one after another. By the 18th century, the geographical concept of “Turkistan” was already very vague, and very few scholars used it again in the historical records of the time.

These attempts were thwarted by the Chinese government and it also clamped down on the two indigenous revolts in the 1930s and 1940s. Notably, first revolt by Sabit Damolla in November 1933 and others who established the “East Turkistan Islamic Republic” in Kashgar, which lasted only for three months, and second in 1944 the “Revolution of the Three Regions” (Ili, Tacheng and Altay) by Elihan Torae who founded the “Republic of East Turkistan” in Yining. The ideological posture of the momentary ETR government was really the non-theocratic. The progressive policy of the jadidists is mired with identity issues, debating whether to redefine itself as “Uyghuristan” until to be referred as “East Turkistan Republic” and “East Turkistan Islamic Republic” in official documents. These revolts had two-fold effects: while for the Chinese government these incidences helped to quell the larger Soviet threat in the region (which hesitantly gave up its claims on the Ili prefecture), on the other hand, these two instances are often adduced by Uyghur leaders to argue in favour of their case of independent rule from China. These brief experiences of statehood are believed to have produced a proto-national identity for Xinjiang (Bhattacharya, 2003). More significantly, the modern day constructs of the Uyghur identity are cemented around their aspiration for an East Turkestan based on these experiences.

The accession of Xinjiang to the PRC was facilitated by the surrender of the Guomindang in the South and the subsequent purging of the ETR leadership in a strange plane accident (Millward: 2004, Policy Studies 6). Mao remained under constant pressure to prevent Soviet interference in the region during the late twentieth century. Considering the immediate threats and the fact that China was not as strong a power in comparison to Russia, Mao signed a cooperative agreement with Soviet General Secretary Joseph Stalin in Moscow in 1950 whereby in exchange for arms shipments to China, the resources of the Xinjiang region were to be collaboratively exploited. The Chinese and Russians even agreed to share the use of mineral resources in Xinjiang. Mao asked for Soviet assistance in building air transportation routes as well as equipment and technology for mining of the minerals.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The following are selected conversations between Mao and Stalin accessed from the Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issues 6-7, (Winter 1995-1996) Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C. (p.6) – Record of the conversation between Comrade I. V. Stalin and Chairman of the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China Mao Zedong on 16 December 1949. “Comrade Mao Zedong- we would like to decide on the question of Soviet credit to

Mao's attempt to retain the province by including it as an autonomous region only managed to stave off 'legitimate' Soviet control and the more prominent threat of US intervention. For the Soviet Union had paradoxically become both its role-model and a threat from which China was learning to bide time as well as to build capacities. At the time of negotiations Mao seemed unsure about the kind of political and administrative set up that would ensue in Xinjiang. In response to Stalin's question on whether Soviet Union would be signing a single agreement with the Central government or with other provinces including Xinjiang and Manchuria separately, he fumbled that "we would like to have a single agreement, but in time Xinjiang may have a separate agreement."<sup>58</sup> Stalin however, suggested that the agreement should be made with the central government since a provincial government may not be adequately empowered to handle economic agreements of such scale. This decision was driven more out of self-interest than any benign gesture towards the Central government, yet in retrospect it proved beneficial to the central authorities at Beijing.

The local communities were however, dissatisfied by the arrangements under the Central rule. In fact, it was during this time that the identity of the ethnic communities, especially the Uyghurs who were in the majority in Xinjiang, began to solidify. The reasons for this trend as believed by Uyghurs were manifold (Kadeer, Op Cit):

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China, this is to draw up a credit agreement for US \$30,00,00,000 between the governments of the USSR and China.

Comrade Stalin- This can be done. If you would like to formalize this agreement now, we can.

Comrade Mao Zedong – Yes exactly now, as this would resonate well in China. At the same time it is necessary to resolve the question of trade, especially between the USSR and Xinjiang (Sinkiang), though at present we cannot present a specific trade operations plan for this region...

Comrade Mao Zedong - We would very much like to receive assistance from the USSR in creating air transportation routes.

Comrade Stalin – We are ready to render such assistance. Air routes can be established over Xinjiang and the MPR (Mongolian People's Republic). We have specialists, we will give you assistance.

Comrade Mao Zedong - We would also like to receive your assistance in creating a naval force...

Comrade Stalin- It is important to increase the mining of minerals especially of petroleum. You could build an oil pipeline from western Lanzhou to Chengdu and then transport fuel by ship."

<sup>58</sup>Cold war International History Project Bulletin, Record of Conversation between Comrade I. V. Stalin and Chairman of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China Mao Zedong on 22 January 1950, p.9.

- The lip-service given to autonomy did not manifest in practice.<sup>59</sup>
- The leaders of the local communities were not involved in the agreements signed between China and Russia.
- Around the same time, the Kazak freedom fighter Osman Batur was executed in Urumqi as a counter-revolutionary by General Wang Zhen.
- Local communities were irked by the huge immigration into the region.<sup>60</sup>
- There was hardly any compensation for the land that was redistributed.<sup>61</sup>

The local communities remained constantly in a state of flux driven by internal pressures. The scenario did not change much during the 1950s and intra-region migration remains a hotly debated issue even today. A significant aspect of Xinjiang's 'becoming' into a province of China relates to the transition of China's conception from that of a frontier state to a nation-state as stipulated under the Westphalian norms. And despite the self-determination argument by several Uyghur leaders, the Xinjiang region has been an integral part of the Chinese nation largely due to a systematic attempt by the Chinese government to co-opt local elites, dole out economic reforms and popularise state perspectives reflected in the speech of local leaderships like the CPPCC Vice-Chairman and Xinjiang Advisory Commission chairman Wang Enmao on 29 June 1988:

“Upholding nationality solidarity is the sacred responsibility of the people of all nationalities, and every person must uphold it. We must support those who preserve nationality solidarity and oppose and wage struggle against those who undermine it...Some people say that those who oppose the Hans are heroes and those who seek close unity with the Hans

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<sup>59</sup> At the time when Xinjiang was formally declared part of China in 1955, Mao made statements about the rights of self-determination for the Uyghur nation, including right to secede from the Chinese alliance, this right to secede was later abolished under the National Regional Autonomy Law.

<sup>60</sup> In March 1950 Mao ordered the first and most substantial program for mass immigration of Han Chinese into Xinjiang. Local landowners, moneylenders and religious leaders were designated as “sheep” and “goats”; sheep were considered to be elite enemies of the middle classes, but in some instances, sheep also belonged to the subcategory “friends”, who were viewed as innocent proletarians. While ‘goats’ were comprised of two tiers: upper one – landowners as well as those with the rights of inheritance who were killed automatically and second - such as estate owners or small farmers, who lost their property, but at least kept their lives.

<sup>61</sup>Rebiya Kadeer, p. 63 - “Before the Chinese had sprawled across our Uyghur nation, every family in the area had their own orchard in which to grow food. But after the Chinese occupation, the government took over all of the orchards. They stole from us, they robbed us. And there was no compensation.”

are traitors. This view is not only absurd but also highly reactionary...there are also a very small number of people who say: we minority nationalities are still slaves of others. This is even more flying in the face of facts and is extremely absurd and reactionary. The situation in nationality solidarity is very good now. However there are also a very small number of people who engage in activities to undermine the solidarity of the motherland and nationality solidarity. We must pay attention to this and struggle against such activities the moment they are discovered, and must not allow them to make trouble. (SWB FE/0210 B2/3 22 Jul 1988)”

Amudun Niaz, the deputy secretary of the Xinjiang regional party committee and Chairman of the regional people’s Congress standing committee also made similar appeals. In March 1992, Tomur Dawamat, the chairman of the XUAR government urged to safeguard political and social stability by perfection of the army, police, people and militia four-in-one joint defence system to resist against sabotage by international and domestic hostile forces while speaking at the fifth session of the seventh Autonomous Regional People’s Congress (SWB FE/1333 B2/1 19 March 1992).

The 1990s in a sense represented the maturing of the ethnic movement in Xinjiang as it was largely the period when they got exposure to the outside world. A host of events were responsible for this. For instance, in December 1995, members of the government gathered together to discuss the history and literature of the region. Later on, in 1996, the “Strike hard” campaign was launched during the release of the Party Document Number Seven. And, in 1997 Hong Kong was returned to China. There was a general tightening of government control over the cultural arena which included inspections by the party work teams and restrictions on the number of permits granted to people applying to going to the Hajj.

The government called for a “rigorous fight against any form of separatism and all religious intrigue.” All religious books and audio recordings came under official scanner and even general literature about Uyghur history and culture was subject to censorship and approval by the government. Many books on Uyghur histories by German and Swedish scholars were banned along with works of famous Uyghur writers like Turghun Almas (author of *Uyghurlar- a contested historiography of the*

*Uyghurs*), who had been criticised in a public campaign and put under house arrest in 1991 for publishing a series of articles and books limning a “national” history for Uyghurs completely different from the state version (Kadeer: 269-270). Party secretaries led criticisms of his books in work units throughout Xinjiang while agents of News and publication Bureau cleared his books from shops and burned them. Yet Uyghur identity became prominence only among a section of Xinjiang society through involvement in various organisations reflected in the actions and attitudes of Uyghur intellectuals (Schluessel: 2009: 383-402). The articulation of this identity was done by the secular elite who preserved their memories of ethnic distinction and apparent independence. Uyghurs tried to claim their distinctive culture-religious identity through display of modern artwork and artefacts and portraits of folklore heroes like Mahmud Kashkiri and Yusup Khas Hajib in prominent places and spreading their cultural beliefs through production of songs, music and films and establishing Uyghur language schools (Rudelson 1997, Baranovitch 2003).

As far as the overall system of linguistic education in Xinjiang is concerned, it had been based on the bilingual education and teacher training promoted by the regional Party leadership and the Education Commission primarily in 1987 designed to “swell the ranks of primary and secondary language teachers,” which remained a big hurdle in the consolidation of this identity. After 2002 the Chinese government declared that except for Uyghur literature all other classes would be taught in Chinese indicating a heavier reliance on the Chinese language (Millward: 345). The Uyghurs saw this dependence on *Putonghua* as a cultural attack and attempt to subdue their ethnic identity. Besides increasing acclimatization to English which provided better employment opportunities and international exposure became another source for weakening the crystallization of Uyghur ethnic identity.

In an attempt to raise the cultural quality of the Xinjiang people, the Ministry of education in July 2004 announced the gradual adoption of type two bilingual education or the choice between *minkao han* and *minkao min* education (*han kao han* system is prevalent for the Han students), in seven regions namely Qaramay, Urumqi-Changji, Chochak, Korla, Ghulja, Khotan, and Turpan. At the time of its introduction, it was widely argued that this system was highly impractical as the amount and quality of teachers required for establishing such a system were not available, yet the



announcement struck a chord of discontent amongst the Uyghurs as it prompted the collapse of the traditional school system. Availability of mother-tongue education influences could reinforce their homogenous patterns of settlement and social interaction thereby consolidating their identity; this system of education was perceived as direct threat to it.<sup>62</sup> Since 2006, the state has provided increased subsidies to Mandarin-only schools which are not facilitated for the bilingual schools. Also, it has benefitted from the internal schisms between the Uyghurs and other communities like Kazaks who prefer their wards to study in Chinese language schools rather than schools run by Uyghur

The state's attempts at promoting assimilation have been however challenged by *minban* private education which became manifest in terms of charitable and technical schools. For instance, the Nurtay Haji Orphan school, which was established in 1996 in Ghulja for children belongs to non-Hans of the area and development of the 'native' economy, society and culture, promoting the consolidation of Uyghur identity. The state's approach towards such schools was initially lenient as it tried to coopt the local elites, in this case Nurtay Haji Iskandar by declaring him to be the first 'Zhonghua Charity Star' as the state needed their help to consolidate its grip in the region. But as times progressed, the state has argued for less reliance on these schools.

One of the main reasons why ethnic schools were more popular than the state promoted bilingual schools was due to the fee structure of these institutions. Differences of income along ethnic lines led to differentiation in the education sector whereby the Uyghurs were unable to finance their children's schooling perpetuating linguistic handicaps and discriminatory job recruitment system. Yet the state continued with systematic efforts to manoeuvre the public discourse and rhetoric by controlling media and publications. It propagated its own version of history; the *Kashgar Daily* officially published a list of 330 banned books in 2002 which were collected and burned under instructions from the centre (Cindy Sui, 'China orders End to Instruction in Uyghur at Top Xinjiang University', AFP, 28 May). Pursuant to the

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<sup>62</sup>Schluessel points out that it has been common for minority parents, who are allowed at more than one children according to preferential family planning policies, to send "one child, usually a son, to the Mandarin-medium school in order to gain the economic advantages brought by Mandarin and another, usually a daughter, to the mother-tongue school, that he or she may act as a carrier of culture."

Chinese authorities' systematic policy of sinocization of the Uyghur language huge number of Chinese words were adopted into Uyghur vocabulary while a few thousand existing Uyghur words in Uyghur vocabulary were expelled for reasons, for example, "not favourable to the socialist construction", "national unity" and replaced by Chinese terms.

Just as the *neidiban* schools in case of Tibet, the Xinjiang classes<sup>63</sup> in mainland China operated as an effective tool of reverse assimilation into the larger political structure of the Chinese state. These classes operated under the larger state goal of 'political thought training' as was admitted by the XUAR Party Secretary, Wang Lequan, who affirmed that scholarly planning, was not the central objective of these classes but they were instituted as "a way to deepen national feelings" and "strengthen correct political attitudes as part of a long term important strategic policy decision... to protect the unity of the motherland and safeguard the nation's long and peaceful order. (Uyghur language under attack, UHRP 2007: 6)"

However, these schools face a constant threat of minority-Han clashes as the authorities struggle to keep the simmering discontent under check, which has largely come to be described as the 'safety first and study second approach' (Chen 2008). Uyghurs constantly challenge the notions of national unity or ethnic unity in these schools by maintaining a strong linguistic social condition enforcing community bondages identified in the following manner: prevalence of Uyghur spoken language after classes, gendered greeting rituals and persistence of ethnic dressing customs. The presence of the ethnic canteen distinguished by the complete absence of pork products and serving a combination of rice as well as wheat as staple food to the Uyghur students and rejection of Hui cooks is reflective of the preservation of ethnic dining culture as a response to ethnically segregated schools (Chen and Postiglione: 2009: 287-309).

The emphasis on assimilation through patriotic education of minorities is also visible in Zhang Chunxian's view that religious leaders should don the mantle of sinicization

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<sup>63</sup>Established in Xinjiang in 1996 "Xinjiang classes" remove top minority students in East Turkestan from their cultural environment and enrol them in classes with Chinese language instruction in high schools in large inland Chinese cities.

to ensure social stability thwarting the hostile forces that were seeping into the restive region (Xinjiang Party Chief Calls for the ‘Sinicization’ of Religion, China Digital Times, 16 June 2015). According to the 2015 White Paper on *Historical Witness to Ethnic Equality, Unity and Development in Xinjiang* in 2014, a sum of 269,400 Xinjiang understudies - from pre-school to secondary school - were getting bilingual training, and the inclusion of bilingual instruction in different structures achieved 100 percent.

Patriotic education of ethnicities in Xinjiang has witnessed renewed vigour of late, as most schools in Xinjiang have been propagandising “love for the motherland” and Chinese flags hang at the front of every classroom between covered photographs of the late pioneers Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping (The Economist 2015).<sup>64</sup> The emphasis on bilingual education, albeit with more stress on Chinese language, has been in line with Xi Jinping’s emphasis on quality education as critical to the region’s long-term stability. As against the dominant argument that Hans are flooding the cities in Xinjiang, the government is actually facing a crisis in drawing qualified teachers who can speak both Chinese and Uyghur languages for education in Xinjiang.

### **3.4. STRIKE HARD AS A NATIONALIST TOOL**

The Permanent Committee of the Politburo of the CCP, under Strike Hard campaign, issued a comprehensive list of directives at fixing control over Xinjiang by annihilating any subversive activities. Many scholars argue that the campaign was not directed against people who could be legally labelled as criminals but at the “thinking people” – intellectuals and dissidents to “build a great wall of steel” against separatists in Xinjiang. The Chinese Communist Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Wang Lequan, supported this policy by declaring that: “If we have condemned one-hundred people to death and there is only one among them who is guilty, then ninety-nine were forced to die for him.”

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<sup>64</sup>Slogans such as “I am Chinese. Beijing is my country’s capital, I love China. I love the motherland, I love the Great Wall. I love my father, mother, teacher, classmates, but most of all I love my motherland” are commonplace in cities in Xinjiang.

The Strike hard drive was largely an outcome of the protests and bombings witnessed in Xinjiang since 1996.

A List of Incidents in the Xinjiang Province based on data presented in the 2019 White Paper by the Chinese government<sup>65</sup>

Date	Place	Nature of Attack	Fatalities
5 April 1990	Baren Township, Akto County	Riots	10 kidnapped, 6 killed
5 February 1992	Urumqi	Terrorist (bombs on No.52 and No. 30 bus)	3 killed and 23 injured
24 August 1993	Kashgar	Assassination	Senior Mullah Abulizi of Great Mosque in Yecheng County
22 March 1996	Aksu	Assassination	Akemusidike Aji, Vice-president of the Islamic Association of Xinhe County
5-8 February 1997	Yining	Riots	7 killed and 198 injured
25 February 1997	Urumqi	Terrorist (explosions on 3 buses)	9 killed and 68 injured
6 November 1997	Baicheng, Aksu	Assassination	Senior Mullah Younusi Sidike, President of Aksu Islamic Association
27 January 1998	Baicheng, Aksu	Assassination	Abulizi Aji, Imam of Great Mosque
23 May 1998	Urumqi	Endangering Public security	15 arson cases
7 March 2008	Hotan to Urumqi	Kidnapping	Flight CZ6901
5 July 2009	Urumqi	Riots	197 killed and 1700 injured (smashing 331 stores and 1325 vehicles)
30 July 2011	Kashgar	Terrorist	8 killed and 27 injured on Day 1 and 6 killed and 15 injured on Day 2

<sup>65</sup> For a more detailed description see Garner Bovington's *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1893, Appendix- pp.174-190.

28 February 2012	Kashgar	Terrorist	15 killed and 20 injured
29 June 2012	Hotan to Urumqi	Kidnapping	Flight GS7554
28 October 2013	Beijing	Jeep attack	2 killed and 40 injured
1 March 2014	Kunming	Terrorist	31 killed and 141 injured
30 April 2014	Urumqi	Terrorist	3 killed and 79 injured
22 May 2014	Urumqi	Terrorist	39 killed and 94 injured
30 July 2014	Urumqi	Assassination	Senior Mullah Juma Tayier, vice-president of Xinjiang Islamic Association
18 September 2015	Aksu	Terrorist	16 killed and 18 injured
		Attacking government organs	Besides several instances of attacking government organs have ben witnessed on 27 August 1996, 24 October 1999, 4 August 2008, 23 April 2013, 26 June 2013, 28 July 2014, 21 September 2014, 28 December 2016

To curtail the separatist menace, the Chinese government also entered into a treaty with Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyztan and Tajikistan, under the Shanghai-Five mechanism on 26 April 1996 to mutually enhance security of the region as well as to defuse any tensions in their relationship. In 1997, the outbreak of the Ghulja rebellion in February along with three bomb explosions in Urumqi led the Chinese government to reconsider its strategies and clampdown with intensified rigour on the Islamic rebellious forces. There were a series of crackdowns following these instructions, for instance, the special 100-day concentrated effort from January to March 1999, the “General Campaign against Terrorism” (April to June 1999) in which China executed 200 Uyghurs for participating in the Ghulja riots the new campaign “Strike hard” from April 2001 onwards, the drive against separatism in October 2000 and so on.

These campaigns led to severe strains on the relationship between the Chinese and the Uyghurs who saw these attempts as an attack on their identity.

Post 9/11, the Chinese government distinctly linked East Turkistan terrorists to international Islamist terrorism. The PRC State Council Information Office in 2002 highlighted this in its document entitled “East Turkistan” Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity’. In January 2005, the Chinese security agents detained Sitiwaldi Tilivaldi for his interview to a reporter Serene Fang for the PBS program “China Silenced” where she tried to uncover China’s oppression of the Uyghur people for the past 50 years, though he was neither an officially proclaimed dissident nor a human rights activist (WUC 2005). According to a report by the Amnesty International, 3000 Uyghurs had been arrested since 9/11 and more than 200 Uyghurs had been executed for the so-called terrorist and separatist activities (Open Letter to H.E. Gerhard Schroeder, 9 November 2005, WUC). Among those detained were scholars such as Tohti Tunyaz, and Nurmammed Yasin; journalists and editors such as Abdulgani Memetemin and Koresh Huseyin. On November 2005, Reporters Without Borders condemned the three-year jail sentence passed by a court in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Locale, denouncing Koresh Huseyin for distributing a tale evidently insinuating to the region’s cruel laws.

Most asylum seekers returned by host countries also faced severe repression as choosing to flee abroad was considered as a potentially serious political crime by the Chinese authorities; even illegally crossing over into the Central Asian Republics could lead to a one year prison sentence under China’s Criminal Law for attempting to split the Chinese motherland (Suicide underlines plight of Uyghur refugees, 30 December 2005, WUC).

In further intensifying the Strike hard, more than 18,000 Uyghur Muslims were detained under the pretext of being “separatists”, “religious extremists” or “terrorists” in the year 2005 alone, as reported by Reuters (citing Xinjiang Daily) on 21 January 2006 (Letter to Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), 7 February 2006, WUC). Prominent among them was the case of Ismail Semed, where the Urumqi Intermediate People’s Court on 31 October 2005 convicted him under the charges of “attempting to split the motherland” and possession of firearms and explosives. Moreover, in 2005, Nurmemet Yasin, a well-known Uyghur author, was sentenced to ten years

imprisonment for composing “Wild Pigeon,” a anecdotal story about a pigeon that commits suicide since it is unable to escape its cage and the chief editor of the Kashgar Literature Journal - Kuresh Huseyin, was sentenced to three years jail. (RFA, China Court Jails Uyghur Editor for Publishing Veiled Dissent, November 10, 2005). In July 2008 the state media reported the killing of five Uyghurs in Urumqi and several others injured and nabbed who reportedly training for “holy war” and wielded knives were injuring a policeman (Nabbed suspects in Xinjiang trained for ‘holy war’, Xinhua News Agency). However, these reports were contested by the diaspora leadership who argued that these people had only peacefully gathered and China was ratcheting up claims of Uyghur terrorism and religious extremism in the wake of the upcoming Beijing Olympics.

The authorities utilised all apparatuses of the government machinery to monitor the activities of the dissidents. The US State Department annual country report points out that the Chinese government effectively used the legal system as a tool of suppression against Uyghurs (HRC: The Status of Human Rights in East Turkestan, 13 March 2009, WUC). The diaspora leadership even claimed that the state’s policies were creating a backlash amongst the Uyghur community which had led to the escalation of inter-ethnic tension in the region. Universities became another target for weeding out stressful elements. The Xinjiang University police arrested Miradil Yasin and Mutellip Teyipin December 2008 for handing-out pamphlets in the campus inviting students to join in a peaceful protest. The university authority felicitated those police officers for their exemplary work in preventing the potential protests.

Yet again in 2009, the 5 July riots provided an occasion for the central as well as regional government to tighten up their hold on Uyghur and other local residents. Nur Bekri, the chairman of the Xinjiang regional government accused the overseas separatist forces for taking benefit of the Shaoguan incident “to instigate Sunday’s unrest and undermine the ethnic unity and social stability (Civilians, officer killed in Urumqi unrest, China Daily, Xinhua, 6 July 2009).” The government was successful in quelling the mass protests by 8 July but at the same time, it continued to cordon off large-scale gatherings which could prove dangerous for ‘public safety’. According to BBC reports, the government arrested more than 1500 people in connection with these riots (Xinjiang arrests ‘now over 1,500’, BBC News, 3 August 2009). The WUC

reported that thousands of Uyghurs had been swept up in “enforced disappearances” in Urumqi, Kashgar and other cities, while some managed to avoid arrest by fleeing abroad.

In September, the Chinese authorities launched a 100-day campaign to arrest suspects of the July 2009 events. The military hierarchy in East Turkestan was also reshuffled with the aim to crack down on Xinjiang independence. The authorities also arrested Minzu University Professor Ilham Tohti, for instigating demonstrations and violence in Urumqi, and closed down his personal website the *Uyghur Online* for inciting separatism. Till six months after the incident, the entire province remained blocked from internet and social communications with the outside world. The following year saw a tremendous increase in the security budget for East Turkestan. Expressing concern about this increase Rebiya Kadeer noted that “Chinese authorities know only how to crack down with an iron fist on the Uyghur people; they carry out executions, mass detentions, and “Strike Hard” campaigns in an effort to intimidate the Uyghur population into absolute silence” (WUC 2010).”

In relation to these efforts, the regional government enacted a "national unity" law mandating "ethnic unity education in Xinjiang" to stifle the spread of any opinions that run counter to government policy. Students from Uyghur University in Beijing were needed to attend intensive courses to "educate" them about what occurred during the disturbances in July (WUC 2010).

The government came down heavily on Uyghur activists who apparently used cell phones for sending text messages containing “harmful information” (which includes fabricating rumours or committing slander) and affecting “ethnic unity” as reported on Tianshan.net, a state media outlet focused on East Turkestan. Uyghur journalist and webmaster Gheyret Niyaz was detained on the charges of “endangering state security” and sentenced to 15 years in prison, while Mehbube Ablesh, working at the Xinjiang People’s Radio Station in Urumqi, was dismissed from her post in August 2008 and arrested subsequently for posting articles critical of the government online.

In a court trial of 376 cases in relation to crimes against national security in January 2011, a Xinjiang Higher People’s Court president Rozi Ismail (Simayi) stated that



“the people’s courts at all various levels in Xinjiang will put the crackdown on terrorism as its top priority for the criminal courts (China tried 376 defendants in 2010 for Xinjiang unrest, Reuters, 17 January 2011).” This heightened drive was apparently witnessed in the wake of the Chinese New Year which falls in February as the state carries out significant number of executions at this time in East Turkestan. Several human rights organisations pointed out that the state yet again denied any legal counsel to these detainees and they were not allowed to meet their families since detention as most of them were alleged to be a part of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

The same year in March the Chinese government deployed fire engines and armoured vehicles in Xinjiang when there was a clamour for Jasmine Revolution<sup>66</sup> in the Chinese cities. The state left no stones unturned in its attempt to ban and confiscate the CDs of the “Ten Conditions of Love,”<sup>67</sup> a movie that focussed on the life and struggles of Rebiya Kadeer and other counterrevolutionary propaganda DVDs. Arrests of local people based on allegations of “obstruction of public business” and “disturbing public order” proliferated quickly and several foreign journalists were also beaten and detained. Amid tensions on ethnic ground, the state stepped up curbs by denying permission to apply for passports (Radio Free Asia 2011)

In terms of policy level analysis, these attempts by the Chinese government reflected its anxiety over the possible spread of unrests that had toppled authoritarian rulers as witnessed in the case of Tunisia and Egypt. The government was quite sceptical of their repercussions on its own citizens and resorted to heavy online censorship both in Xinjiang as well as throughout its other provinces ( The New York Times 2011). Though unintentionally, these measures taken by the government also led to several positive outcomes as far as the Han-Uyghur ethnic relations are concerned, as both the communities complained that business was severely hampered by the media and internet blackout engendered by the authorities, thus giving them a common ground to rally against the policies of the state. This was also expressive of the fact that not all Uyghurs saw Chinese as unwanted occupiers, there is a sizeable section of community

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<sup>66</sup>An intensive campaign of civil resistance that took place in Tunisia.

<sup>67</sup>This documentary film was produced by Jeff Daniels in 2009 and was scheduled to be premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival, which faced severe protests by the Chinese government as several Chinese directors pulled out of the event and the festival website was also hacked.

that wants to achieve equality while riding the Han economic juggernaut, sometimes even at the cost of losing Uyghur language and identity (Johnson: 61).

The clashes at Hotan and Kashgar later in 2011 were again dealt with a tough hand by the Chinese authorities who dubbed them as “terrorist attacks” by religious extremists and used brute force on the instigators of Turkestan independence. Citing the Xinjiang government website, Radio Free Asia on 16 August 2011 reported that the government planned to set up 39 security checkpoints in Urumqi under the Strike Hard campaign, and to impose harsher penalties during the campaign for crimes ranging from theft to “endangering state security.” 8000 Police officers have been hired to "beef-up security in the rural areas" and "crackdown on illegal religious activity." In fact, according to an Amnesty International Report, China topped the list of states with highest number of executions worldwide in 2011. These attempts were seen by the Uyghurs as a cyclic process of politicizing Uyghur activities and aggressive efforts to criminalize their ethnic associations, leading to further distress against the state.

When unrests broke out between the police and locals in Kargilik in February 2012, the authorities yet again imposed martial law recalling the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism and blocked all traffic to and from the city. Several residents of Kargilik County interviewed by Radio Free Asia (RFA) on 29 February stated economic discrimination of the Uyghur population as the primary cause for the outburst of Uyghur discontent against the massive influx of Han Chinese into East Turkestan (WUC Firmly Rejects Beijing’s Accusations regarding Kargilik Incident, 01 March 2012, WUC). Making a note about the incidents in 2011 and 2012, Zhang Chunxian (known for his velvet style of administration) noted at the Fifth Session of the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC) that

“these incidents were not religious and ethnic issues, the basic symbol of these incidents are anti-humanity. One should not practice benevolent policy toward the violent terrorists... the 18 July, 30 July, 31 July, and 28 February terror incidents that occurred last year and lately could have direct and indirect relations with the international background, the infiltration of the “three evil forces,” situation in peripheral areas, and the world’s anti-terror situation”

- (Yu, 9 March 2012, OSC Translated Text)

Arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances continue as the state relies heavily on this strategy to silence all forms of dissent. Any act of subversion of state interest is dealt with a heavy hand. In its larger effort to control violence as a means of expression amongst Uyghurs, the state has relied largely on its discourse of countering ‘separatism, terrorism and extremism’ along with the appropriation of the discourse on the ‘global war on terror’ which often involves branding of the detainees as part of larger terrorist networks like the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) designated by the authorities as the most “direct and real security threat that China faces (WUC Extremely Concerned about Latest Chinese “Terrorist List”, 06 April 2012, WUC).” The brutality of these operations can be visualised from the fact that the Chinese state does not restrain itself from raiding the premises of religious schools, (mostly operated underground as the state prohibits religious learning outside a parochial state-controlled structure which forbids teenagers from reading, workshopping or even practicing religion) in one of the instances 12 Uyghur children being injured in Hotan in 2012 in such a clamp down.<sup>68</sup>

Unrests were reported in Hotan and Urumqi again in early 2013 in which nearly 100 people were killed and several others were injured, followed by detentions by the public security bureau of Xinjiang; the pretext again included rhetoric of terrorism and spread of separatist messages through media and internet. In December the same year, the Chinese authorities shot down eight Uyghur demonstrators in Yarkant County next to Kashgar allegedly for terrorist attacks. What is noteworthy in these instances was that the Uyghur ‘thugs’ convicted or killed for serious crimes against the state generally wielded only knife and smaller arms and weapons as compared to the massive scale of instruments generally used by terrorists.

In January 2014, the Chinese authorities in one of the most high profile arrests in the region, detained prominent Beijing-based Uyghur socio-economic and cultural rights activist, Ilham Tohti on charges of breaking the law, as revealed by his wife Guzali Nu’er, on the website uighurbiz.net. In May 2014, the government trailed 81 Uyghurs

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<sup>68</sup> Raid on Hotan religious school reflects brutality of official Chinese policies amid crackdown on religion in East Turkestan, 6 June 2012, WUC. The state increased its security presence in Xinjiang and launched a full-fledged campaign against illegal religious education in wake of the Third anniversary of the July 2009 attacks.

for participating in terrorist organizations under its "one year campaign against terrorism". The charges include homicide, inciting arson, manufacture, possession and transfer of illegal arms and explosives, spreading ethnic hatred and discrimination through audio and video visuals.. Extra-judicial killings and mass arrests were reported in Elishku Township, Yarkent County in July 2014, perpetrated on the account of illegal community praying by some women who were celebrating the end of Ramadan and arrival of Eid.

A report by the UHRP (Uyghur Human Rights Project) titled *Trapped in a Virtual Cage: Chinese State Repression of Uyghurs Online* documents how the internet has been used by state as a propaganda tool as well as a medium to suppress the opposition instead of countering the narratives of widespread dissatisfaction with government policies amongst Uyghurs. Ever since the 2009 riots, the social media has been highly censored with the regulations of popular Chinese sites like Sina Weibo, Wechat Renren deleting 50 percent of social media posts in East Turkestan as compared to 10 percent of posts in Beijing. Websites such as the *Diyarim*, *Salkin* and *Xabnam* have been shut down where millions of BBS posts by Uyghurs. In contrast to the censorship of Uyghur activities, the Chinese censors would hardly delete overtly racist and bigoted posts by Chinese Internet users aimed at Uyghurs. The report also highlights increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks within China targeting websites of overseas Uyghur groups. The security narrative of anti-separatism has dominated China's rhetoric in the clamp down over internet and media websites.

Fear of resurgence of riots like that in Urumqi in 2009 has continued to shape its policies against secessionism under laws such as the *Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Informatization Promotion Regulation* brought into force on 1 December 2009.<sup>69</sup> Government websites have been issuing notices offering to reward locals who provide information on residents indulging in proscribed behaviours (Uyghur

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<sup>69</sup>This regulation prohibits activities that endanger state security or harm national and social interests, destroy ethnic unity, incite ethnic separatism, or endanger social stability, endanger the safety of the Internet and information systems, violate intellectual property rights, trade secrets, or the lawful rights and interests of individual privacy, citizens, corporations, or other groups; furnish, produce, or disseminate false or harmful information, produce or disseminate information that is obscene, pornographic, violent, terrorist, homicidal, or that instigates crime; carry out other acts prohibited in laws and regulations. For more see Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2008, December 8). Xinjiang Government Issues Internet Regulation, Keeps Strict Controls on Information.

Human Rights Project, 8 May 2014). When Mr.Hua Chunyin, the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson apprised media that social media posting has become one of the major causes for the rising number of terrorist attacks in China. However, the Xinjiang Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian stepped up his efforts to curtail the spread of separatist and terrorist activities in the region. The provincial authorities issued an ‘Information Promotion Bill’ in 2010 which made discussion of ‘separatism’ online is a criminal offence (Xinjiang bans separatist discussions on the Internet, 28 September 2009, AFP).

It is evident that the strike hard policies are nothing but the state’s persistent non-acceptance of dissent. Any violation of the Act or its notions of the motherland, i.e. Chinese motherland, would invite administrative punishments without trial and detentions in China’s notorious “Re-education Through Labour (RTL) Program. The program is thus effectively utilised to curb dissent as and when necessary/cyclically or in response to emergencies.

### **3.5. THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN: DEVELOPMENT AS AN ANTIDOTE**

While development is not the only tool for integration and assimilation of the communities in Xinjiang into the nation-building process of China, yet the reliance of the authorities on this medium has been fairly high. It makes no pretence of modesty when portraying the benefits of development accruing from its ‘benevolent policies’ in the region. The discourse is primarily constructed within the comparative realm of pre-1949 and post-1949 scenarios.

“Before the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the economy of Xinjiang was a natural economy, with farming and livestock breeding as the mainstay. Industry was underdeveloped, and there were no railways or up-to-the-mark factories or mines. Famines were frequent in some areas, and the people were impoverished... In the past half century, Xinjiang’s economy and social undertakings have advanced by leaps and bounds... The per-capita GDP rose from 166 Yuan (RMB) in 1952 to 7,913 Yuan (RMB) in 2001...primary, secondary and tertiary industries accounted for 19.4 percent, 42.4 percent and 38.2 percent of the GDP in 2001, respectively (Part V, The Economic Development of Xinjiang after the founding of New China).”

This was revised to 16.4 percent, 49.7 percent and 33.9 percent respectively of the local GDP in the White paper released in 2008 (Part I, Swift Economic Development). Interestingly, the net per-capita income of farmers in Xinjiang rose to 3,503 Yuan in 2008. This is 28 times higher than that of in the year 1978, but 1.2 times more than that of the year 2000, when the western development campaign was launched (Part II, Remarkable Improvement in People's lives). The consumption patterns have also changed exhibiting a more consumerist trend with an emphasis on luxury commodities. The new cooperative medical care system set up in 2003 encompasses 94.5 percent of the rural population today. The development of infrastructure has been held on high priority in this regard. The first railway opened to Xinjiang was the Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway in 1962. The western most part of the Southern Xinjiang Railway from Turpan to Korla (476-km-long) was opened in 1984. Though the Chinese government today successfully capitalises on this railway for its discourse on development as a means of integration, it should be noted here that the emphasis for building railway connectivity in this region was actually highlighted by the Soviet Union for tapping the oil reserves in the region which again leads to the debate on exploitation versus development.<sup>70</sup> The railway was further developed in 1990 Urumqi to join with the Alatau Pass, which is the second Eurasian continental bridge.

By 2001, the operating railway lines in Xinjiang spanned a length of 3,010.4 km. Similarly, while Xinjiang had mere 3,361 km rough built highways in 1949. But by 2001, the highways had been extended upto 80,900 km and further stretched it up to

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<sup>70</sup> CWIHPB – Record of Conversation between Comrade I V Stalin and Zhou Enlai on 20 August 1952 (p.10). Stalin asked Zhou Enlai if China would be interested in the construction of the railway from Ulan-Bator to the Sino-Mongol border. To this Zhou Enlai replied – “a railway to Xinjiang would be of greater importance. But that would be a complicated and difficult construction project. The Chinese government is intent on first building a railroad to Mongolia which could then connect to Soviet Union... Such a railroad serves Chinese interests as it opens a means of direct rail communication with Soviet Union and eases the receipt of industrial equipment from the USSR to China and the export of Chinese goods to Soviet Union.” Stalin responded that “a railway to Xinjiang is very important in the long term, and that we could help China build this railway. But this is indeed a long project... however we believe that one cannot lose sight of a Xinjiang railway since this would be a very important railway which would pass through regions rich in oil. There should be oil there, Mongolia does not have much of it.”

Zhou Enlai notes that there are large deposits of iron ore in the Pinditsuan region, and that it will become the center of the railroad and steel industries. In the course of the first five year plan a railway will be constructed from Lanzhou to Khami. In the second five-year plan railroad will be built from Khami to the USSR border.

Stalin approved it but reiterated the significance of a Xinjiang railway with respect to prospective oil mining.

1,47,000 km by 2008. On comparison with the White paper in 2009, it is discernible that the development of railways staggered and remained at approximately 3000 km even in 2008. The Tarim river development project was also completed in 2008 with a total investment of 10 billion Yuan. The 2009 White paper also recognised Xinjiang as an important passageway on the Eurasian Continental Bridge, acknowledging its vast potential for growth and connectivity.

Most of the development is credited to the XPCC/*bingtuan* which has been instrumental in construction projects in the region. Initially, the XPCC started with processed agro and its allied products and then created modern industries with a multi-sector industrial system for light and textile industries. Later on, more new industries such as iron and steel, coal, building materials, electricity, chemicals and machinery industries were developed. Yet, the XPCC was dissolved in 1975 due to the negative response from the indigenous communities and was revived only in December 1981. By 2001, the XPCC had almost established a network of irrigation projects, sand breaks and forest reserves. New towns such, as Shihezi and Wujiaqu were created and reaped 13.2 percent GDP from the autonomous region itself (Part IX, Establishment, Development and Role of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps). It was also lauded by the central government as a special and irreplaceable entity by virtue of its role in “accelerating the economic development of Xinjiang, promoting unity among ethnic groups, maintaining social stability, consolidating border defense, smashing and resisting internal and external separatists’ attempts at sabotage and infiltration, and shoring up the unification of the motherland.”

Contradicting views exist on the institution of the XPCC, while Rémi Castets argues that “its socio-economic repercussions, together with Beijing’s domineering attitude towards the regional political system, have generated a malaise that has lent new vigour in recent years to Uyghur nationalism and separatism”. Yitzhak Shichor argues that the turbulence in Xinjiang is more due to lack of presence of the XPCC rather than its presence. According to 2002 statistics, the ethnic composition of XPCC is in favour of the Hans, who represent almost 88 percent of it. This estimate is entirely in contradiction with the official Chinese claim that XPCC comprises a mosaic of more than 37 ethnic groups including the Uyghur, Kazakh, Hui, Han, and Mongols. undoubtedly, the Hans, therefore are able to reap most of the benefits through the

XPCC as they naturally dominate the decision-making. Besides, there is strong resistance from the grass roots over the issue of low wages which, it is claimed, have not increased in the last 20 years (Singh EPW 2012: 27-29).

Another principal structure by which the government recruited graduates and professionals outside Xinjiang to state sector jobs was the centrally coordinated campaign of “Partnership assistance for Xinjiang” (Duikou yuan Jiang or Duikou zhiyuan) first launched in 1996 and then in 2010 through the “National Conference for the Work Concerning Pairing Assistance to Xinjiang” in Beijing (Joniak-Lüthi: 2013, pp. 155-174).

In order to improve the livelihood of the people in Xinjiang, the policy stated that all 19 provinces and cities within the country would enable pairing assistance to 82 counties (cities) under 12 prefectures along with 12 divisions under the XPCC. The policy works under the larger goal of creating economic linkages between the cities in Xinjiang and the interior cities of mainland China.

With the implementation of the Great Western Development Strategy/*xibu da kaifa* in 1999-2000, the customary financial subsidies to Xinjiang increased progressively from 1996 – 2001 (see table). The Chinese government also increased its funding support through special financial transfer payment under the preferential policy for ethnic minorities. It also maintained that the rapid expansion of oil, natural gas and petrochemical industries has been beneficial to Xinjiang’s economic development and met its requirement for energy and petrochemicals and a strong impetus to employment generation. There is a strong emphasis to prove that the resources of the region have been invested in its own development. For instance, the 2003 White paper on Xinjiang states that –

“the large oilfields in Xinjiang, such as Karamay, Tuha and Tarim, and major petrochemical enterprises in Zepu, Dushanzi, Urumqi and Karamay, fully using their human resources and financial and technological advantages, have aided local enterprises and invested in local construction. The Desert Petroleum Highway, which runs from north to south across the Taklimakan Desert, was built with an investment of 785 million yuan from the Tarim Oilfield.”

In 2001, the Chinese government issued the “Notice of Opinions on the Implementation of Some Policies and Measures for the Great Development of China’s



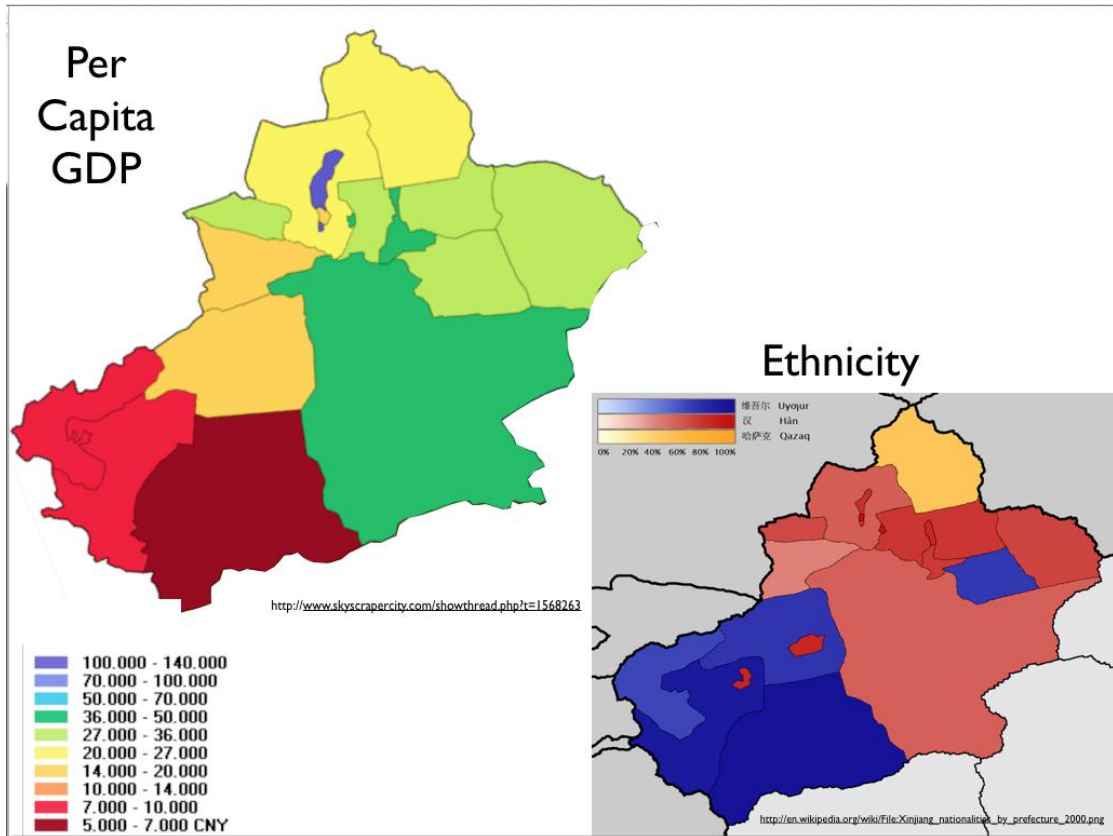
West,” which rendered 68 tangible preferential policies in 18 different aspects. Based on these provisions, “the government of the autonomous region formulated and promulgated the ‘Suggestions of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Issues Concerning the Preferential Tax Policy in the Great Development of China’s West,’ providing 10 concrete preferential tax policies to attract domestic and international enterprises, as well as farmers and herdsmen to invest in and operating projects concerning Xinjiang’s social infrastructure, eco-environmental protection, high-tech industry and industries with special potentials and local characteristics” (White Paper on Xinjiang 2003).

The government also realised that the pattern of development of the entire province was not equitable and hence it promulgated the labour-export programme in 2006 in the southern city of Jiashi. Under the programme, the rural residents can apply for employment in mainland companies after attending training courses that enable them with required qualifications. This policy enabled the migrant labourers to enhance their earnings to an average PCI of 7000 Yuan.

The state rhetoric on development in the above-stated terms however failed to allay concerns of Han chauvinism in Xinjiang. Through the early 2000s most foreign observers and expatriate Uyghurs used to believe that the one of the aims of the Western Development Campaign was precisely to promote Han immigration. Citing Becquelin article, Li Dezhu, head of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, linked Han migration to Xinjiang with the Great Development of the West Campaign (The Peacock Flying West, *Kongque xibu fei*). He also argued that “a westward flow of population would result in a decline in the relative population of non-Han groups in western cities and thus could cause ethnic contradictions and friction”, (Millward 2007: 309). However, he pointed out that “this campaign would turn the entire nation into ‘a single market’ and that, in turn, would increase the ‘centripetal and cohesive force’ (*xiangxinli he ningjuli*) of each ethnic groups to assimilate into the greater ‘Chinese’ nation (*Zhonghua minzu*).

The comfortable housing project initiated in 2004 offering earthquake resistant houses is yet again another bone of contention between the locals and the government. In an overall analysis of the impact of this campaign on Uyghur and Han settlements, it is

palpable that most Han Chinese are concentrated in cities of northern and north-eastern Xinjiang while Uyghurs are settled in Southern Xinjiang. According to an attitude survey conducted in 2000 by a scholar from Hong Kong University, some 47 percent of Uyghurs sampled in Urumqi believed their standard of living under the reforms had risen as fast as that of Han, and 38 percent thought it had increased more slowly (Millward 2003: 304).



Source: <http://geocurrents.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Xinjiang-GDP-and-Ethnicity-map.png>

The above map elucidates a strong correlation between Uyghur ethnicity and low per capita GDP, especially in south-east Turkestan. In a seminal study between 2005 and 2008 in Urumqi, Xiaowei Zang observed the Han-Uyghur earning differentials based on their total monthly incomes. Moreover, it was found that “Uyghurs were less likely than Hans to work in the public sector (59.7 per cent vs. 76.3 percent), and to join the CCP (13 percent vs. 30 percent) or even to have a father who is a state worker (32.2 percent vs. 49.3 percent)”, (Zang 2011: 141-155). Overall, the income difference between the two groups was 21.8 percent and women were largely discriminated in terms of pay in the informal private sectors than in the public sectors.

Government policies implemented under the western development campaign as well as the Xinjiang Work Forums have had limited impact on Uyghur populations as majority benefits tend to accrue to the Hans. Yet the increasing attention being showered by the state on the region demonstrates its growing importance in the Chinese polity. For instance, “Xi Jinping has chaired seven Politburo meetings on Xinjiang, while issuing over thirty directives on Xinjiang work since the 18th Party Congress in November 2012” (Xinjingbao, May 30; Xinhua, May 3) stressing that “Xinjiang work possesses a position of special strategic significance in the work of the Party and the state” and “the long-term stability of the autonomous region is vital to the whole country's reform, development and stability, as well as to national unity, ethnic harmony and national security.” Moreover, Yu Zhengsheng, Politburo Standing Committee member and the Party’s point man on ethnic and religious issues, “has made four official visits to Xinjiang, compared to only one to the Tibetan Autonomous Region”(Leibold: 2014). The fact that the second Xinjiang Forum comes within four years of the first one indicates the pressing nature of the issue. More formidably, the state has made tremendous efforts in the last five years to make the development of north Xinjiang and south Xinjiang more equitable.

In this regard the White Paper on Xinjiang released in 2015 notes that “Since 2010 in particular, Xinjiang has actively encouraged the development of the southern Xinjiang petroleum, natural gas and chemical industry belt and made strenuous effort to support the development of poverty-stricken areas there by giving them a high priority in funding and projects.”<sup>71</sup> From 2009 to 2014, the average rate of economic growth in the southern Xinjiang including Hotan, Aksu and Kashi prefectures, and Kizilsu Kirgiz autonomous prefecture increased from 10.5 percent to 11.2 percent respectively. In an interview with Prof. Wang Xin,<sup>72</sup> whose primary area of research is economic developments in Xinjiang, it was highlighted that the government has made huge investments in the connectivity and basic infrastructure and energy areas of this region in the recent years which has resulted in the change of landscapes in places like Urumqi and Hotan. “While it used to take 5 days to travel from Xian to

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<sup>71</sup>Constantly Strengthening the Foundations of Development, Historical Witness to Ethnic Equality, Unity and Development in Xinjiang, Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Sept.24, 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Interview at the Institute for Western Frontier Region of China at the Shaanxi Normal University, Xian on 17/9/2016.

Urumqi earlier it only takes one day now. But at the same time it has also resulted in the problem of excess production or overdue capacity; the products have been saved in warehouses across the borders in Xinjiang to be exported to nearby Central Asian countries.” According to Wang Xin, the discourse on ethnic problems in Xinjiang has been highly sensationalised. He believes that the relationship between Hans and Uyghurs and the other ethnicities is largely harmonious and it’s more the impact of social problems which needs to be delved into – education and medical care being the two most prominent issues. For this the divisive discourse on ethnicities needs to be toned down by decreasing the reliance on identity as a feature of association and the peaceful and harmonious society discourse should be disseminated to integrate the ethnic minorities into the larger single whole. This could be done by sharing perceptions on the diversity of cultures and realizing new economic opportunities.<sup>73</sup>

There is a gradual shift in the discourse from a heavy reliance on economic measures to a more comprehensive approach which is visible in the party’s new strategic intent of working towards the eradication of ethnic differences, the elimination of obstacles to open “mingling” (jiaorong) of Chinese citizens to forge a common national identity as stated at the Second Work Forum on Xinjiang. On several occasions the leadership has emphasised the significance of four identifications – “identification with the motherland, with the Chinese nation/race, with Chinese culture and with the socialist road with Chinese characteristics.” Yet many scholars highlight that these attempts to encourage intermingling between ethnic minorities and Han majority fail to address the racial discrimination in Chinese society. Party-defined pluralism fails to accommodate the religious and cultural practices of the Uyghurs, who are stereotyped as dangerous criminals and thieves in the eyes of the Han. While the Uyghurs considered Hans as filthy, untrustworthy and. These mutual distrusts remain a major barrier to their intermingling with each other.

Nevertheless, it is important not to suggest that the “Hans constitute a homogenous category of participants in a grand state project to establish control over the borderlands” (Joniak-Lüthi: 2013, pp. 155-174). The Han follow their own strategies and their own ability to relate to the region and integrate with the local communities

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<sup>73</sup>Interview at the Institute for Western Frontier Region of China at the Shaanxi Normal University, Xian on 17/9/2016.

decides how far they shape political imperatives and perceptions of the government. Some of these immigrants are merely a part of the floating population of Xinjiang who came to escape from repressive conditions of poverty or famine or had been stigmatised as petty bourgeoisie and were discriminated in terms of restricted access to education. Though Han immigration to Xinjiang has increased over the years, those who have actually transferred their *hukou* to Xinjiang has decreased from 40.57 percent to 40.48 percent between 2000 and 2010 (Ibid.p.168). Most of them reside in concentrated areas forming micro national enclaves. Moreover, the evolving market forces have to be given more agency in determining the Han-Uyghur relationships as they compete with each other in the labour market instead of pinning the blame on the policies of the central government.

Yet the development approach has not been without its limitations. The outcomes of the forced development or modernisation of cities on the Silk Road belt have been detrimental for the cultural heritage of Uyghurs. For instance, “China’s drive to declare Kashgar as an SEZ to become a regional logistics centre, a financial and trading hub, and a key processing centre for internationally traded goods in 2009”, (Horgos, a China-Kazakastan border town was also identified as another SEZ to focus on chemicals, farm products, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy), though envisioned under beneficent motives to turn it into a regional commercial hub by providing financial subsidies between 2011 and 2015, have led to strong resentment on part of the Uyghurs who loathe the destruction of traditional cultural heritage of the city and loss of traditional forms of employment. The social fabric of the city also faces severe pressure as wealth shifts from the hands of the traditional communities to the new migrants into the city. The diaspora leadership highlighted the angst amongst locals and the international attention being showered upon such ‘destructive’ transformation of cities in Xinjiang endorsing the European Union’s Urgency Resolution on safeguarding Kashgar in the following terms:

“despite Chinese government’s attempts to hide the real purpose of Kashgar’s demolition, the European Parliament has seen through Beijing’s intentions and told the world: Kashgar must be saved and protected! We are deeply grateful for this support which is crucial for our work and our people” (World Uyghur Congress Applauds European Parliament’s Urgency Resolution on Safeguarding Kashgar, 10 March 2011, WUC)

The Uyghur Human Rights Project reported how the Chinese state's destruction of Uyghur communities resulted in loss of homes, commercial establishments and religious sites. It is observed that the traditional Uyghur life-style cannot be reinvented in the highly modernised Chinese style residential blocks where most of the displaced are forcibly relocated. Moreover there is a lack of will by the Chinese state to engage in meaningful consultation with the Uyghurs about their prospective roles in the transformation of the Uyghur communities (WUC 2012).

Just as the discourse on ecological nationalism is palpable in the Tibetan case, there is a conflict between the Uyghur leadership and the Chinese authorities on how profitable the state policies are for environment and the population of Xinjiang. The 2015 White Paper notes that “major projects for ecological conservation have been launched such as the Million Ecological Economic Forest Project in Ili Valley and the Project for Prevention and Control of Desertification around Tarim Basin, restoring a total of 24.6 million (1.64 million ha) of degraded lands and enclosing 51.6 million (3.4 million ha) of grassland to prevent grazing and reduce pollution.” Of particular attention is China's effort to divert water from Lake Bosten, one of its major fresh water lakes, to the dry lower reaches of the Tarim River, which had dried up in 1972 as an effect of the reservoir built on Lake Taitema, its source of origin. Since 2000 it had diverted water to irrigate the cotton producing areas of southern Xinjiang four times (China: Project to divert water to Xinjiang said successful, 22/11/2002, Xinhua news agency, Beijing). This claim is obviously contested by the diaspora leadership who argue that the state project of development is aimed at extraction of resources irrespective of the cost to the environment.

Both the Xinjiang Work Forums conducted in 2010 and 2014 emphasised the role of economic development in promoting social and political stability and reinstated Xi Jinping's vision of grasping and utilizing the historical opportunity for accomplishing leap-frog development in Xinjiang. The vision to assimilate the region through economic investments was also clear from the speech of the Zhou Yongkang, the member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the CPC Central Political and Legislative Affairs Committee (CPLAC) in a conference held in Beijing on 29 March 2012 to promote the construction of Xinjiang's key projects. He outlined

“We must deepen implementation of the spirit of the central forum on work in Xinjiang and the Outline of the 12th Five-Year Program; fully aware of the extraordinary importance and urgency of the construction of water, road, electricity, gas and other key projects from an overall and strategic perspective; and move forward with concerted efforts in a down-to-earth manner as if we were racing against time in order to provide strong support and safeguards for accelerating the building of a prosperous, affluent, harmonious and stable new Xinjiang...All relevant parties should work actively in line with the expectations of the masses of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, achieve unity in thinking, coordinate their action, increase their support, speed up the process of appraising and approving new projects as well as the pace of construction” (Xinhua Domestic Service, 7 April 2012)

Along with the leadership in the Xinjiang government and the principal persons from the ‘Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC)’, the government has roped in key agencies such as the State Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Water Resources, People’s Bank of China, State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) of the State Council, China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) and other departments, as well as some central enterprises and commercial banks in its attempt to achieve its vision of self-development capability of Xinjiang’s economy and push forward Xinjiang’s sound and faster economic and social development. Besides the above mentioned strategies of reliance on economic development, patriotic education campaign and the Strike Hard, the state also makes more subtle attempts at cooptation through appeasement of local elites which is being discussed in the section below.

### **3.6. LOCAL ELITES AND THE POLITICS OF APPEASEMENT AND REPRESSION**

The government claims that constitutionally that all kinds of cultural and literary autonomy are safeguarded and granted to the ethnic communities by making provisions for their study and cadre-training to train and fostering a body of administratively skilled ethnic minority professionals. The Xinjiang Communist Party boasted 37.3 percent of its members were drawn from the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang in 1997, though this underrepresented their overall population and most of these were low-rank positions (Mackerras: 290).

The government of the autonomous region promulgated, in 1988 and 1993 respectively, the “Provisional Regulations of Administration for the Use of Ethnic Languages in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region” and the “Regulations for Work Concerning Spoken and Written Languages in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region,” which was meant to “reemphasise the freedom and right of ethnic minorities to use and develop their own spoken and written languages” (White Paper on Xinjiang, 2003). The Xinjiang People’s Broadcasting Station is permitted to use five languages, namely, Uygur, Han, Kazak, Mongolian and Kirgiz, while the Xinjiang Television Station broadcasts in Uygur, Han and Kazak languages.

The efforts at appeasement by the government are also engendered through the preservation of the traditional literature and customs. The state of education, medicine, culture and art has also improved. Theatrical troupes, libraries, museums have mushroomed tremendously in the region. For instance, “*The Rainbow of the Tianshan Mountains, Pioneers of Muqam* and other outstanding artworks have become popular and won national awards” (White paper on Xinjiang, 2003). The complete song-and-dance band “*Bravo Xinjiang*” caused a great impact throughout the country. In addition, the circulation of newspapers has also increased over time.

The Chinese government claimed that “since 1984, the regional office in charge of the collection and publishing of ethnic minorities’ ancient books has collected more than 5,000 titles of minority works, edited and published more than 100 titles” (cite source). Two colossal works namely *Kutadgu Bilig (Wisdom of Fortune and Joy)* and *A Comprehensive Turki Dictionary*, belongs to the kingdom of Karahan during 11th century would have been vanished had it not been translated and published into Uygur language and later into the Han language in 1980s. Two of the three important epics of ethnic minorities the *Janger* of the Mongolians and the *Manas* of the Kirgiz have also been published. The *Twelve Muqams* opera, a classical musical treasure of the Uygur people has been rescued and efforts are being mobilised by the provincial government of Xinjiang for compiling and editing works of this genre (White paper on Xinjiang, 2003). More than 63 elusive cultural heritage projects such as Kirgiz epic *Manas*, Mongolian epic *Janger* and Kazak *Aytes*, were shortlisted as the first and second categories of national intangible cultural heritage in 2006 and 2008.



In a further attempt to co-opt and appease locals the government sought to highlight the effectiveness of local leadership in handling inter-ethnic issues and praised those who endorsed government's policies. According to China's Central Television (CCTV) report, "Ismail Televaldi, governor of 'Xinjiang', in an exclusive interview with the station on 20 July 2004 praised the success of China's autonomy arrangement and thanked the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for its support and guidance in 'Xinjiang' in the past 50 years: "Without the sincere support of CCP, the State Cabinet, and the peoples of all nationalities, 'Xinjiang' would not have achieved such remarkable prosperity, stability, unity, and change" (China's Autonomy: Means to Deprive the Uyghur People's Political Rights, Released 21 July 2004, WUC). In 2007, the government also launched two state-sponsored cultural programmes - the *East Wind Project* (to give books and publications free of charge) and the *Rural Library Project* (to provide farmers with books, periodicals, newspapers and audio and video products) to assure the locals of its intentions to preserve indigenous culture.

At a more propaganda level, the attempt to co-opt Uyghur minorities was visible in the imagery and representation of Uyghur-Han bonhomie in the *Tianshan pictorial* which present the readers with lavish feasts attended by members of differing ethnicities and widely divergent political camps (Jacobs 2008: 545-591(563). Even cinematic representations were considered a forum for China's minorities to be projected as 'valuable resources for Chinese national rejuvenation.' Several descriptions and remarks on past events and popular characters have also been changed. For instance, "the depiction of General Tso (Zhuo) of the Qing Dynasty in the new textbooks, is no longer as a devil who suppressed the Taiping Rebellion, but as a national hero because he also defeated the Russian invasions in Xinjiang", (Wang 2008: 783-806).

Nevertheless, the government's claim is countered on several behalves: first the names of the cities in Xinjiang were constantly renamed by the central government much in opposition to the indigenous mood. Most of the Uyghur intellectuals who tried to develop a local discourse on history were either imprisoned or their works were banned or the literature destroyed. Even the lessons in the universities were monitored with phrases praising the Communist Party being impinged into the

lectures. Mostly the content of the lessons taught revolves around “History of the Communist Party” and “Socialist Politics in the Colonial Education System” which is of no practical help to the local students (Problems facing Uyghur Youth by Sidik Haji Rouzi, Radio Free Asia (RFA) Unplugged, 5 November 2007).

The content in the newspapers is often regulated and a reference to a separatist history elicits severe retribution. For instance, when Sidik Haji Rouzi, wrote in an evening newspaper that “in the years 745 to 840, the old Turkic Uyghurs dominated large parts of Central Asia; in the following centuries, it was mostly Turkic and Mongolian Khans who controlled the trading centres along the Silk Road. In actuality, China never had a lot of influence in this region,” the editor-in-chief of this newspaper was punished and imposed a fine of 3000 Yuan for printing Sidik’s articles and was suspended in 1996 (Kadeer, pp.259-260). Uyghur communities all over Xinjiang used the Uyghur radio as another mechanism to consolidate the memories of its broadly local imagined community (Dautcher: 2009). Uyghur ethnicity and culture were largely advertised and propagated through this medium in comparison to the aphorisms made by the state on the Chinese language radio.

In yet another instance when Sidik Haji Rouzi wrote on the condition of women – ‘A Plea to Our daughters and Mothers’ (See Xinjiang Economic Report, Rural Xinjiang Uyghur Girls in Tianjin, May 15, 2007) where he explained how young women were being used as sexual fodder under the central government scheme of “Gaining Work experience” and that the employment Bureau and their coordinators responsible for the recruitment of these young Uyghur girls were nothing more than human traffickers the government dismissed such reports as rumours and asked people to not believe in such accusations. These reports stymied such activities for some time before resumption in 2006 when the Chinese provincial leaders in Kashgar proudly proclaimed on their website that forty-thousand Uyghur girls in Yarkand had been recruited to work in the Chinese interior. The policy is streamlined to target girls between the age of 16-25 years from south-eastern Turkestan by promising attractive salaries and transportation facilities.

Official propaganda has intensively highlighted this program as an effort by the government to integrate the Uyghur women into the larger “socialist family” of the

Chinese motherland.<sup>74</sup> Several instances of such transfers ostensibly for better work experience have been documented by the Uyghur Human Rights Project from Kashgar and Yarkand and other places in Xinjiang to the interior of China.<sup>75</sup> The recruitment is sometimes done on grounds of threat as well as deception, for instance by denying them marriage certificates and confiscation of their resident registration cards. Opposition to the policy is discouraged and local leaders endorse it in unequivocal terms. For instance, in April 2007, Shi Dagang, Communist Party Secretary of Kashgar Prefecture, stated, “Transferring the rural labour force is an all-inclusive and major directional policy, closely tied to the future development of our region...Whomever obstructs the Uyghur public from working in the exterior will become the criminal of Kashgar and the criminal of the Uyghur people.”<sup>76</sup> This policy apparently has a two-fold affect on Uyghurs: first, it curbs the growth-rate of the Uyghur population by decreasing the timeframe available to Uyghur women for reproduction; second, by delinking the womenfolk from their traditional community patterns, the preservation of Uyghur culture is rendered disjunct.

In the religious and personal sphere, the government exhorts that it allows complete religious freedom abetting the preservation and renovation of the key mosques, monasteries and churches. For instance, “in 1999 alone, 7.6 million Yuan was allocated by the central government for the reconstruction of the Yanghang Mosque in Urumqi, the Baytulla Mosque in Yining and the Jamae Mosque in Hotan”. And many of these religious personages are appointed in People’s Congresses and Committees of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at all levels. In fact in their quest to eliminate Uyghur separatism and bind Xinjiang fully to China, officials have depended heavily on ideological work (*sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo*). The estate persistently inculcates the idea of culturally plural Chinese nation and minzu solidarity arguing that Uyghurs and Hans are bound together by strong ties of mutual affection, class, and patriotism. Most imams are screened and mentored by the government. The management of the discourse through manipulation by using

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<sup>75</sup> For details see Deception, Pressure, and Threats: The Transfer of Young Uyghur Women to Eastern China, 8 February 2008, <http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/wp-content/uploads/08-02-2008-Uyghur-Women.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> Kashgar Prefecture Economic News Center, Xinjiang, Kashgar Speeches at the Tianjin Labor Leading Cadres Symposium (Excerpts), April 17, 2007. Cited from UHRP.

indigenous imams is commonplace, such as in case of Harunhan, who is believed to have generally complained to delegations from outside countries about the radicalism and ignorance of Uyghurs and their inability to handle their religious freedom accurately (Kadeer, 256).

The government has monitored religious activities through an intensive political programme of compulsory education classes since 2001, which last for almost 10 days, for the imams of the prominent mosques to give them “a clearer understanding of the party’s ethnic and religious policies” and to guide religion in adapting to the socialist society and maintaining lasting political stability in Xinjiang”, (Anti-terrorism legislation and repression in XUAR, Amnesty International March 2002, AI Index: ASA 17/010/2002). Uyghurs, however, make good use of the Chinese social media to assert their ethnic identities. For instance, after 2009, the Uyghurs celebrated *doppa* festival every year on 5th May to promote their culture, which would be broadcasted through the social media websites.

In the aftermath of the 5th July riots in Urumqi, which the government again blamed on the separatist activities of Rebiya Kadeer and her supporters, the government was quick to mobilise local support for its own agenda. It is argued that the local people were disappointed that one of their old school friend, Rebiya Kadeer and her husband Sidik Haji Rouzi were exiled. For instance in Ashitu city, Abudulareheman Aisha, 67, who was middle schoolmate of Sidik grieved the losses to his income from fruit crop caused by the riot in Urumqi, which left 192 people dead. “Since the riot, the price for 100 figs has fallen to 25 Yuan from 100 Yuan,” he said. “I have lost thousands of Yuan” (Xinhua, 16 July 2009)<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>“It is hard to imagine Sidik would turn out to be a separatist and conspirator. The man has been making troubles and is a shame to our village.” Abudulareheman said the villagers were quite happy with their lives, enjoying medical insurance and free education. His six children were all employed. “I see no reason for Sidik and Rebiya to make trouble for us.” Another Uyghur Aimieraimaiti Haji, 65, who knew Sidik when he was a young boy said “That was an attack against the innocent, Sidik and his wife should be punished...., they should open their eyes wide to see the facts, and stop libelling the authorities or hurting the people.” Aisikar Kawuli, the chief of local Forestry Bureau, said Ashitu grew about 133 hectares of figs and 3,333 hectares of grapes that contribute about 200 million Yuan annually to the local economy. He worried that the riot would badly affect fruit production, since the bulk purchases come from dealers outside Xinjiang.

In a highly strategic move by the Chinese government in November 2010, it nominated Uyghur *Meshrep*<sup>78</sup> to be included in the “UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage in need of Urgent Safeguarding”, (Uyghur muqam had been included in 2008). The rationale behind this move seemed largely begetting international appreciation for China’s Uyghur policy in the region and appeasing the local leadership by showcasing China’s concern for Uyghur cultural practices and traditions. Ironically *meshrep* had been banned throughout Xinjiang and was revived in 1996 in Ghulja to tackle the drug abuse amongst Uyghurs that had become widespread amongst Uyghurs by spreading awareness of Islamic traditions and morals and values that prohibited drinking, only to be banned again after the Ghulja riots. The few *meshreps* that remain today are largely state-organised. Their disappearance could largely be ascribed to the twin-factors: “shift to Chinese language as the prominent medium of teaching in schools as well as local restrictions on a range of community-based religious activities and public gatherings” (World Uyghur Congress, 19 November 2010).

Religious restrictions have of late become more rigorous and racist in character. Under its country wide campaign to “*Sweep Away Pornography and Strike*” Down *illegal Publications* widespread censorship campaigns were launched in 2010 and 2011, especially religious and political items and ‘reactionary’ materials.

With the commencement of Xi Jinping’s one year campaign against terror, the officials came down heavily on local residents in Xinjiang. In August 2014, the Karamay Daily, reported that “residents in Karamay city were banned from displaying at least one of five types of appearances including Jilbab, head-covering scarf, veils, young people with large beards and clothing displaying the crescent moon and star with fines amounting to US\$353 for wearing headscarves in public and were advised against boarding buses”, (Bus ban in Karamay treats Uyghurs as second class citizens and demonstrates open discrimination, 5 August 2014, WUC). Uyghur students face the risk of being expelled if caught going to mosque, and government servants including teachers and civil servants are at risk of losing their employment and criminal prosecution if found in violation of norms (Long-standing Uighur grievances

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<sup>78</sup>Traditional social gatherings where attendees play music, sing songs, or recite poems.

behind repeated protests must be addressed, Amnesty International, ASA 17/006/2011, 4 February 2011). Meanwhile, “the intense suppression of Uyghur authors by allowing only mainland Chinese authors to deliberate on the situation has infuriated the locals, who have resorted to exaggerated versions of religio-cultural differences to show their disappointment”, (Joanne N. Smith, “Making Culture matter: Symbolic spatial and social boundaries between Uyghurs and Han Chinese,” *Asian Ethnicity*, September, 2002, 3 (2) 155.)

### **3.7. INDIGENOUS VOICES AND THE STRUGGLE FROM EXILE**

Despite the mounting impression of integration of the Uyghurs into the Chinese mainland, they have never been drawn to the idea of a common destiny with the Chinese people.<sup>79</sup> Several international organisations founded by ethnic Uyghurs with support from locals abroad have waged struggles to highlight the conditions of Uyghurs under the PRC like the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), the Uyghur American Association (UAA, established in 1998), Uyghur Information Agency (UIA) and the Government-in exile of East Turkistan, and several others are based in places such as Istanbul, Munich, Melbourne, New York and Washington, DC. These organisations claim to disseminate accurate and timely information about the Uyghur people and East Turkistan movement for the purpose of keeping their nationalist struggle alive.

However, it is to be noted that besides these organisations that have sprouted up in the recent times, the struggle for an independent Turkestan had been cultivated by resistance movements amongst Uyghurs and Kazaks through the 1950s into the current era, prominently by Osamn Batur and Yolbars Khan. Yolbars Khan set up the Xinjiang Provincial Government in Taiwan to continue to lay claims to the non-Han lands and people in north-western China and continued to lead it till his death in 1971. Many Kazaks eventually relocated to Turkey from Kashmir and continued their propaganda to win the loyalties of Uyghur and Kazak refugees (Jacobs, CWIHP e-Dossier No. 73).

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<sup>79</sup> Rémi Castets, *The Uyghurs in Xinjiang – The Malaise Grows*, *The China Perspectives*, Online web URL: <https://chinaperspectives.revues.org/648>

The current struggle for the East Turkistan movement from abroad has been very much inspired by the Tibetan example and the championing of their cause by the Dalai Lama. As admitted by Rebiya Kadeer who cited as a part of the official Chinese delegation to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 that the heroic struggle of the Tibetans was a source of inspiration for her:

“three Tibetan women bound themselves hand and foot in front of the conference building to protest their Chinese oppressors. I listened with fascination to the Tibetan women as they fearlessly described the problems in their land. All of the foreign journalists followed their story with great interest, but no one from abroad reported on virtually the same Chinese oppression of the Uyghur population. Why I thought are we Uyghurs not allowed to speak about the difficulties in our own homeland? Why am I not allowed to talk about the suffering of our people? At that moment, a thought sparked inside of me. I would have to go abroad to be allowed to talk freely. Only then would I be able to represent Uyghur interests (Kadeer, Op Cit, pp.265-266)”

She lamented her inability to deliver her duty to represent the voice of her community despite being in the top rungs of the government as one of the main reasons why she opted to take the struggle abroad.<sup>80</sup> She has been largely acclaimed as the ‘Leader and the Spiritual Mother’ of the Uyghurs for her contribution as part of the WUC, Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation and the Uyghur American Association. The key purpose of the WUC has been to ”support the right of the Uyghur people to use ‘peaceful, democratic and non-violent means to determine the political future of East Turkistan”, (World Uyghur Congress calls for Peaceful Resolution in East Turkestan, 19 April 2004, Munich, Germany). It consistently lauded efforts made by the international community in attempting to keep a check on China’s repression over Uyghurs. For instance, it lauded the US government’s decision to not return the 22 Uyghurs detained at the Guantanamo Bay since 2002 after their capture in Afghanistan (The World Uyghur Congress Welcomes the U.S. Decision on Uyghur Detainees, August 13, 2004, WUC) and urged the EU not to lift the arms embargo against China to enforce its compliance to Human Rights dictums.

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<sup>80</sup> “My duty as a delegate consisted of expressing the wishes of our population to the government. But because the rulers negated the wishes of our people, in actuality delegates were simply there to pacify their fellow citizens.” p.186.

The larger discourse however, has been the rhetoric of China's misappropriation of the discourse on international terrorism as an excuse to launch a massive crackdown on Uyghurs and highlighting the life and death struggle that the Uyghurs are facing in Xinjiang. It mostly relied on workshops and conferences as a medium to spread their message and also serve as a source of information for their own people in Xinjiang. For instance, it hosted the conference on 'East Turkistan: 60 years under Communist Chinese rule' to assess the past and present conditions of Uyghurs under the rule of the CCP.

These organisations also protest the inability of the Chinese government to protect Uyghurs from the racist mob attacks which are instigated on various pretexts. Most significantly, the UAA strongly condemned the mob killing of two Uyghur workers and injuring of several other workers at the Xuri Toy factory in Guangdong province on 28 June 2009 which was allegedly an outcome of a misplaced complaint about the sexual harassment of Chinese females by Uyghur workers in the factory. The UAA called for a thorough investigation of the Shaoguan incident and demanded compensation for the families of the two Uyghurs killed (UAA condemns killing of Uyghur workers at Guangdong factory, 29 June 2009, Uyghur American Association). This incident further led to a series of protests in Xinjiang in July and September 2009 which were again handled very repressively by the state. The WUC in its statement vehemently condemned these incidences and the propensity of the government to blame it on the diaspora leadership:

It is argued that "the Cause of this protest is the Chinese Government, not WUC and Mrs. Rebiya Kadeer. The World Uyghur Congress categorically rejects China's accusation that the peaceful protest was "masterminded by the World Uyghur Congress led by Rebiya Kadeer." (WUC 2009)

The statement<sup>81</sup> drew attention to the fact that the Uyghurs were holding Chinese flags and demanded only fair investigations into the Han-Uyghur disturbances in

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<sup>81</sup> "Xinjiang, which we call East Turkistan, is the home of about 10-15 million Uyghurs. We, like the Tibetans have been suffering vicious political and religious persecution, ethnic discrimination and cultural genocide ever since the Chinese communists invaded our homeland in 1949. There was less than 7percent Chinese in East Turkistan in 1949 now the immigrant Chinese consists more than 50



Shaoguan, they did not indulge in sloganeering for any separatist demands. Rather the counter-reaction of the Han Chinese to the several videos posted online exhibited racist attitude by hailing the attackers as national heroes. This increased animosity between the two communities could be adduced to the constant projection of the Uyghurs as terrorists by the government. In fact the media representations have often projected Uyghurs in derogatory terms as palpable in the 2007 film *A Boy from Yalkuntagh* (Yalkun tagdin kalgan dapqi) and the 2012 serial drama *Anarhan*.

The year 2009 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the PRC and the diaspora leadership used this occasion to highlight the anguish and misery of the Uyghur people and the fact that the Chinese government had abandoned its promises of regional autonomy and self-determination. To quote:

“The Uyghur people mourn their dead, victims of the Chinese Communist power hell-bent on control without regard for the Uyghur people. The Uyghur people mourn the loss of their history and heritage, criminalized and outlawed by their occupiers. The Uyghur people mourn the loss of their freedom and pray that one day that freedom and democracy will return” (East Turkestan: A Land and its People in Mourning, 1 October 2009, For immediate release, WUC)

A significant impact of the reiteration of the ethnic discourse by these organisations is the revival of the memory of their sacrifices and their deplorable treatment at the hands of the Chinese authorities. For instance, the WUC under the leadership of Rebiya Kadeer commemorated the One-year Anniversary (repeated every year since then) of the Urumqi tragedy restating the alarming condition of the Uyghur people under the PRC:

“My people have been suffering tremendously at the hands of the Chinese authorities for decades and since July 5, 2009, that suffering has even reached new heights... We hope that more governments and more individuals around the world will respond to our calls for help and that their compassion and

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percent of the population because of influx of the Chinese immigrants. The Chinese Communist government have flooded our homeland with Chinese immigrants and marginalized the Uyghur people. The recent economic development in the area benefits mainly the Chinese immigrants, not the Uyghurs and other ethnic groups. We, the World Uyghur Congress, call on the Chinese government to cease the brutal crackdown on the peaceful Uyghur protesters; to release those arrested in relation to this protest; and return all Uyghurs who killed and taken away by armed police to families so that they can proceed ceremonies according to the Uyghur cultural and religious tradition.”

humanity will not be compromised by our oppressor's economic and political power. We hope that the actions that we are organizing for the one-year anniversary of July 5th will help to educate the world about the magnitude of our plight" (Uyghur Exiles and their Supporters Worldwide to Commemorate the One-Year Anniversary of Urumchi Tragedy, 29 June 2010, WUC)

In addition, holding workshops help to provide the Uyghur community with the knowledge and experience to raise awareness about the Uyghur question as well as build capacity in the field of human rights and democratization efforts. In view of the Kashgar and Hotan incidences in 2011, the WUC leadership again questioned the ongoing immigration and economic policies of the Chinese government and urged the international community to press for justice and improvement of human rights conditions for Uyghurs:

"I do not support violence. I am saddened that Han Chinese and Uyghurs have lost their lives. At the same time, I cannot blame the Uyghurs who carry out such attacks for they have been pushed to despair by Chinese policies. I condemn the Chinese government for the incident. The Chinese government has created an environment of hopelessness that means it must take responsibility for civilian deaths and injuries caused by their discriminatory policies." (Statement by WUC President Rebiya Kadeer about Kashgar attacks, 01 August 2011, WUC)

Not only does the discourse voices concern over lack of transparency in trials and allegations of the Chinese government and lack of rule of law but also about the future of East Turkestan as a nation.<sup>82</sup> These organisations also highlight the fact that China's effort to link Uyghurs resistance with terrorism has resulted in communal discrimination against the Uyghur people.

Opposing China's attempts to whitewash Uyghur history, as in the case of the White Paper released in 2015, the leadership in exile has often demanded that the CCP

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<sup>82</sup>World Uyghur Congress urges calm and caution after Beijing incident on October 28, 2013, 29 October 2013, WUC, "Today, I fear for the future of East Turkestan and the Uyghur people more than I ever have," said World Uyghur Congress president and Uyghur democracy leader, Rebiya Kadeer in a statement from Washington, DC.

changes its repressive policies in Xinjiang and apologize for the terrible treatment of the Uyghur people allowing them right to self-determination rather than constructing an artificial empire (Statement by the World Uyghur Congress: China Whitewashes the Historical and Current Political Reality of Uyghur People in Its 60th Anniversary White Paper on East Turkestan, 30 September 2015, WUC).

Though as a leader Rebiya has been able to uphold the cause of the Uyghurs abroad, she faces constant opposition from Beijing. The Chinese government has for its part derided the efforts of the WUC and the UAA and exhorted that “to call Rebiya the Mother of all Uyghurs is absolutely preposterous”; she is merely “an ironclad separatist colluding with the terrorists and fanning unrest within and outside of China,” (Johnson, 16 May 2007) and the WUC has been dubbed to pursue secessionism through terrorist actions and fanning the flames of religious fanaticism. The Chinese government consistently issues statements directing foreign governments to avoid contacts with these organisations and personalities.

The Government-in-exile of the Republic of East Turkistan (G-i-E of RET) is another claimant of the Uyghur struggle for freedom and rights to practice their own faith and religion. Anwar Yusuf Turani (Prime Minister) set up the East Turkistani Government-In-Exile in Capitol, Washington, US on 14 September 2004<sup>83</sup> with the following declaration

“Fifty years ago (August 27, 1949), a plane carrying the leaders of the Republic of East Turkistan crashed under mysterious circumstances. When the news reached Beijing, Mao Zedong sent in the Communist military, and the occupation of East Turkistan began. Throughout the intervening years, many have come to the aid and comfort the oppressed, and tried to spread their message of pain and anguish, salved by the hope of freedom and independence for what was once a flourishing civilization. However, the Communists continually, and brutally, snuffed out every candle, silenced every voice, and killed any flower of hope they could find. For years, the people of East Turkistan have wondered: does anyone hear them? Is there a voice abroad for

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<sup>83</sup>He had previously interacted with the Dalai Lama (1996) and the Taiwanese President Chen Shui-Bian (1998) which possibly had significant influence over his struggle for freedom and establishment of an Uyghur Nation.

East Turkistan? Is there any entity, a government, an authority that speaks for them?

That wondering: that longing has ended. East Turkistan has found its voice one again.”

Besides highlighting the discriminative practices of China and its attempts at de facto assimilation of Xinjiang through immigration policies, he laid emphasis on the environmental impact of China’s nuclear policies and reduction of East Turkistan as a dumping ground for nuclear Waste and sought US intervention to pressurise China into recognising the rights of the local people in Xinjiang. He also drew upon ethnic linkages to the Turkish nation to assert the case that Uyghurs were more bound to the Central Asian countries than to China.<sup>84</sup> The dominant theme in their discourse was the representation of the Chinese as savages who had destroyed the Uyghur culture<sup>85</sup> and hence the Uyghurs were to be mobilised under ‘National Freedom Groups’ as a counter-weight to protest the cultural degeneration engendered by Chinese policies.

As expected the Chinese reaction to the announcement of the formation of this group was to brand it as a terrorist organisation and since it had sprouted up in the US, China urged the US government to take its concerns seriously (The Chosun Ilbo, 22 September 2004). As a part of the larger struggle of the Uyghur diaspora community, Turani continues to issue press releases on the various issues affecting Uyghur people in Xinjiang as well as abroad and also for educating the Uyghurs about their history, culture and current situation. For this he has increasingly relied on the World Wide Web through several youtube channels.

Another popular site amongst the Uyghurs is Meshrep.com which helps to spread Uyghur culture, art, music, jokes and songs to a larger western audience. It hosts

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<sup>84</sup> “The root of our nation and soul is not in China, but in Central Asia, in Kazakistan, Kirghizistan, Uzbekistan, and Tataristan. Our native place is East Turkistan; we are the eastern branch and part of the race—bound to us by blood relationship—the other parts of which lie within the Soviet Union; we are the part that is fighting.”

<sup>85</sup> “You must not forget how our country flourished of old under the leadership of such heroes of our race as Sultan Sokushbora Khan, Harun Khan, Abdul Raschid Khan, Mohamet Khan, Sudduk Khan, and Osman Khan. During the times of these great men we were master of our territory and maintained the luster of our culture equal to any others. Within the last two hundred years we have lost our bright-right and live like animals under the cruel sway of the Chinese who are filthy and barbarous.” “Struggle for the Motherland” (Later Rebel Pamphlet) U.S. Department of State, Division of Chinese Affairs, “Signs of Unrest in Tihwa,” American Consul J. Hall Paxton to the Secretary of State, Urumqi, January 13, 1947, enclosure no. 2.

“heated debates among Uyghurs and Uyghur organisations from different parts of the world” (Kanat: 2005) and also provides a calendar of important events in Uyghur history, helping the Uyghurs to mobilise vicarious associations for the Uyghur cause.

Unfortunately, the struggle from exile in case of the Uyghurs presents a rather disparaging example of divided leadership as these organisations deter each other’s efforts in the race to represent themselves as the more legitimate form of government. It lacks the stature that the struggle for Tibet from exile in Dharamsala holds internationally. One of the significant reasons for this is the bifurcation of their leadership into too many strands and the consistent efforts made by Beijing to discredit their leadership. The Chinese government blames Rebiya Kadeer to be an integral part of the East Turkistan Islamic movement (ETIM), which has been listed as a terrorist organisation by the US and the UN, when she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize to prevent the internationalization of the Uyghur issue and practically denies the existence of any Turkestan government in exile.

As articulated by Kristian Petersen “if there were to be any prospects of development of an independent Uyghur nation, it will be necessary for the Uyghurs to have a unified group identity representative of the goals of the majority community based on allegiance and citizenship to a native land” (Petersen, 2006).

### **3.8. RELIGION IN UYGHUR IDENTITY AND NATIONALISM**

While Buddhism plays a predominant role in the Tibetan case, Islam is a determining factor when it comes to the Uyghur question for China, though some of them do have Buddhist associations (believers of Shamanism, Manichaesim and Christianity also exist) and at times there is cross-cultural exchange between the practices of the two religions<sup>86</sup>. Most Uyghurs are ethno-nationalist in their approach, and strong associations with Pan-Turkic and pan-Islamist ideologies of the adjacent neighbouring countries, however this does not automatically render them as separatists.<sup>87</sup> According

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<sup>86</sup>For instance even today Uyghurs are not allowed to step on ants, as they may be reincarnations of human beings.

<sup>87</sup>Traditionally, Xinjiang has been a congregation for mostly Turkic Uyghur People along with the Kirghiz, the Kazaks, the Uzbeks and other ethnic minorities.

to the 1990 census statistics a Muslim population of over 17 million lives in China, most of who adhere to the Sunni belief and follow Hanafi School of law, some exceptions being the Tajiks in Xinjiang who are followers of the Shia Islamic sect and some sects under the Sufi influence (Dillon 2009: 32-33). Amongst these according to the 2000 national census, there were around “8 million 345 thousand Uyghurs living in the PRC, most of them inhabiting the territories of Xinjiang where they constitute 45.2 percent of the total Xinjiang population.”

It is significant to note that the history of Muslim cooptation into the larger Chinese mosaic is characterized by extreme turbulence, though the general approach to religion as such has been changing in the recent years as discussed in the previous chapter. While the PRC constitution guarantees freedom of religion via Article 36 of the constitution, the approach to people belonging to the Muslim community in Xinjiang has been primarily guided by the state’s insecurities on national integration and thwarting external influences in its bordering regions as well as containing terrorism, which propels the state to adopt a confrontationist approach towards its minorities. Dru C Gladney brings attention to the fact that despite the miniscule percentage of Muslims in China (less than 2 percent of China’s 1.1 billion population), they play a key role ‘disproportionate to their numbers in influencing China’s domestic and international politics (Gladney: 677-691).

The Uyghur identity itself has consolidated over time from myriad groups within Xinjiang. Prior to its consolidation along the Uyghur lines of the *yarlik*- ‘of this land’, it was commonplace to find people aligned along sub-regional identities for instance people that identified themselves as ‘Kashgari’ and ‘Hotani’ or along oasis identities. Most local newspapers published in a form of literary Turkic accessible to all Turkic-speaking groups in the area - a simple language that all Muslims could understand. Historical references to the crystallisation of Uyghur identity evince how “gradual sedentarization of the Uyghur population and their defeat of the Turkish khanate occurred precisely as trade with the unified Tang state became lucrative along the Silk Road, to the extent that the Uyghurs adopted several Chinese customs, traditions, apparel and agricultural practices”, (Gladney 2003: 451-467). Socio-economic exchanges between the Uyghurs and the mainland Chinese were extremely lucrative enhancing the gradual adaptation of the two communities to each other, which no

longer seems to be the case as the discourse has shifted from ‘lucrative incentives’ to ‘plunder and loot’ of the region’s economic resources. At one given time the Chinese were demonstrably in awe of the wealthy Uyghur Empire, but in a pursuit of this wealth the Chinese state has tended to ignore the aspirations and integrity of the local ethnic communities earning their displeasure.

The original application of the ethnonym “Uyghur” has now become an important symbol for the leaders of the Uyghur community who wish to spearhead the cause of East Turkistan independence. Instrumental to this identity formation are the musical compositions in the mid 1990s by the Urumqi based singers and instrumentalists and also by Beijing based cross-over star singer Askar (lead star of the band *Hui Lang* or Grey Wolf which is a famous symbol of Uyghur nationalism) who sings both in Uyghur and for the wider market in Chinese. Of late several rock bands have been operating from Kazakhstan and inland cities of Beijing.

Uyghur identity is being substantially constructed also by the Uyghur elite in Beijing who articulate identity issues and challenge the orthodox representations of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and their marginalisation at the national and international level (Baranovitch: 726-750). This has led to exoticisation of Uyghur music and dance and sprouting of several Xinjiang restaurants all over Xinjiang and around Beijing. Those around Beijing are moulded through renewed construction of identities, for instance, “in the case of Askar and his rock music, his presence in Beijing provided not only the awareness about modern musical style but also bestowed a powerful ideology of resistance and the means to express and inspire others”,(Ibid: 749). In his song *Blessing*, he articulates the common complaint amongst educated Uyghurs that the Chinese government is deliberately omitting references to Uyghur history in the textbooks and making them forget their past and turning them into sleeping sheep – expressed in his song called *Eagle* (Ying).

In yet another instance of identities gaining strength from disassociation from the mainstream in Beijing, Anwar Muhammad, editor in the Uyghur department of China’s Muslims (*Zhungguo Musilin*), the most authoritative journal in China on Islamic issues published by the Chinese Islamic Association, constantly brings forward his feelings of alienation and estrangement from the deep-seated prejudice of

the Beijing people for *Xinjiang ren*. These were articulated in the many short-stories and books that he published in literary journal *sin Xinjiang*. In 1999, “a collection of three of his short-stories were published as a book titled *The Fire of Desire*, and in 2005, two more books titled *Life of Drinking Muddy Water* and *Every Mind has its own Thought*”, (Baranovitchn 2007: 462-504).

These faultiness become emphasised by the attitude of the central government which does not hesitate from demolishing Uyghur neighbourhoods in the capital city of Beijing. While the Xinjiang Village at Weigongcun was demolished in 2001, the Xinjiang Village in the Ganjiakou neighbourhood of west Beijing was demolished in 2002, citing various reasons like the neighbourhood layout impeded traffic and created other nuisances. Most *Xinjiang ren* are not allowed access to apartment blocks that are the standard type of Beijing housing and have to often relocate to neighbourhoods like the Changping, a suburb north of the central city. Though higher officials such as the director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences’ Xinjiang research centre argue that ‘Beijing’ Uyghurs were not seen as potential terrorists’ this high-handed approach to their everyday living makes the inter-community relationship between the Hans and Uyghurs highly uncomfortable (China plans to demolish capital’s Uyghur district, 26/11/2002, South China Morning Post, Hong Kong). According to Rudelson (2002) some intellectuals in Urumqi have even advocated blowing up all of Xinjiang’s mosques so that Uyghur wealth can be diverted from mosques to schools, since religious identification of which Islam is the major religion practiced by Uyghurs, serves as a symbol of cultural solidarity and ethnic identity.

At the same time, the transitional linguistic solidarities amongst Uyghurs with Central Asia pose a big challenge to the concept of nationhood for China. The state believes that the rise of Muslim separatism is abetted by the backing that Chinese Islam garners from its larger constituency which reinforces Chinese Muslim’s resistance to any attempts at obliterating their separate identity. On the other hand, the Muslim communities in Xinjiang continue to challenge the state’s stance which they believe to be unnecessarily intervening and restricting their religious practices. However, besides the small number of extremists who demand independence from China, there are others who do not adhere to the splittist notions but desire political and social reform. They are largely bifurcated into two streams, one who visualize the benefits



from adapting to the larger paraphernalia of the Chinese state. And second, who believe that acculturation should not be on the expense of their own language belief and customs (Dwyer: 68). Many Uyghurs espouse a tempered syncretic Sufism (Dwyer: 2005: 4).

By and large, there has been an evident shift of strategy as far as the Chinese government's position on Islam in Xinjiang is concerned. While the government had been willing to discuss and operate on these issues in a more open manner in the 1980s,<sup>88</sup> the last two decades have witnessed a more overbearing presence of the Chinese state which seemed to be instigated by the 1993 bombing of a government building by Uyghur separatists militating for an 'independent Turkestan'.

Religious affairs have been strictly governed by the Islamic Association of China (Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui), a government-funded national religious association headquartered in Beijing which regulates the content and curriculum of the madrassah and institutes for study of religion, for instance, there is only one officially sanctioned madrassah for training religious professionals in all of Xinjiang, the Institute for the Study of Islamic Texts (Yisilanjian Jingxueyuan) in Urumchi. The Ulema's Islamic training is strictly governed by the state and only graduates of the above-mentioned institute can become official imams in the region and yet they are expected to conform to state policies and pronouncements in order to keep their freedom and jobs (Beyond Islam: Understanding the Muslim World Curriculum—World Affairs Council, 2005: 8).

While the Muslim community from its adjacent Islamic world had been largely apprehensive about the gradual persecution of Muslims in China and the state of their religious practices earlier, it has demonstrated a more silent approach, especially after the 9/11 incident which prompted China to adopt a proactive stance on terrorism by declaring a 'war on terror'. China has effectively utilised the SCO organisation to

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<sup>88</sup> In 1980, the Chinese Islamic Association sent a delegation to international Islamic conference in Pakistan, where a paper was presented on Islam in China. This showed the willingness of the state to have an open discourse on issues which were hitherto considered 'sensitive'. Also in 1980, the Chinese Islamic Association convened the Fourth National Conference in Beijing and announced the publication of Quran and other Islamic classics, resumption of periodical Muslims in China and revival of the Chinese Institute of Theology. The first regional conference in Xinjiang was convened in 1980.

barter economic gains with the silence of the Central Asian countries and its other neighbours including Pakistan on the religious and ethnic aspects of Xinjiang.

In addition to economic measures it has also relied on appeasement of religious elites in these countries to solicit their support against separatism in China. For instance, in February 2009, the head of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Qazi Hussain Ahmed visited China at the invitation of the Communist Party of China (CPC). It was speculated by The Times of India that during the visit China concluded an informal agreement with the JI that the latter would not support the separatists in Xinjiang. In April 2010, again the CPC invited a delegation of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), an even more conservative religious party of Pakistan. It is believed that the CPC has signed party-level Memorandum of Understandings with both these parties (Ali, 2010). The Peace Mission 2010 (Heping Shiming) aimed at improving the joint anti-terrorism combat readiness level of the law enforcement security departments and the “Tianshan-2-2011” exercise in Kashgar, Xinjiang on 6 May 2011 have proved immensely successful towards achieving China’s goals in Xinjiang.

In addition, the Chinese government has resorted to a covert policy of social alienation between the Pakistani businessmen settled in Xinjiang and the Uyghurs by playing on the differences of their notions of religiousness and piety. Most Pakistanis address Hans as *Kafirs* or heathens to demonstrate their lack of empathy to non-believers of Islam and believe even the Uyghurs are insufficiently pious (Haider 2005: 522-545). China has also resorted to making positive gestures through its military establishments at the border, especially in case of Kyrgyzstan, where 10 external publicity boards, 30 Chinese calligraphy and painting works and more than 200 photographic works created by the officers of the Turcart border station of the Kizilsu Military Sub-Command under the Xinjiang Military Area Command (MAC) of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA), were displayed in the Turcart border station for talks and discussions with the visiting Kyrgyzstan border defense servicemen, in a larger attempt to showcase a peace-loving and friendly image of the Chinese military during external contacts.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Sun Xingwei and Wang Yutang: “Officers, Men of Kizilsu Military Sub-Command Compete To Strengthen Border Defense”, Jiefangjun Bao Online, 23 March 2012, Dialog® File Number 985 Accession Number 333550265, World News Connection.

Unlike the Tibetans who are being assimilated into the larger national fabric by accommodation of their religious practices as well as development and positive discrimination, the Uyghurs remain more nationalistic and least assimilated in China's national fabric (Mamet, Jacobson and Heaton 2005: 191). Some scholars have pointed out the fact that their assimilation or not has been largely affected by the generational influences of separatist and accommodation policies. The elderly generations seems content with the recent developments and are grateful to the government; the middle-aged Uyghurs who suffered persecution during the Cultural Revolution fear a return of Maoist ideology; while the younger generation motivated by the Islamic fundamentalist movements world-wide exhibits more militant aspirations of independence (Smith 2000: 195-224).

Many scholars today argue that if the 'war on terrorism' widens to divide the west and China against Muslim communities in general, one can expect the Muslims in China to be regarded as a threat to social integration and the state as such (Gladney, Op Cit: 467). This increased reliance on militant fundamentalist Islam seems to be stemming from the feelings of alienation, resentment and distress at home, perpetrated in the form of the ETIM, the Party of Islamic reformers, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party of God and others that combine nationalism and Islam.

Also, it is significant to note that the identity of ethnic groups in Xinjiang as a single majority is quite questionable in itself. The Qazaqs of the northern prefectures have at various times demand a return to the Republic of Qazakastan, Uyghurs prefer to battle for the establishment of an authoritative Uyghuristan and rejecting the usage of the term East Turkestan as they believe that they no longer substantially identify themselves as Turks (Smith, Op Cit: 217). There is an apparent divide amongst the northern and southern *Xinjiang ren* with northerners believe themselves to be more secular and modern, looking down upon southerners as backward, orthodox and primitive in approach, thereby prohibiting marriages within the two communities. Meanwhile the Chinese continue to insist on a multiethnic history in the region so as to delegitimize Uyghur claims to titular national historical landscape. This is evident from the attempt to situate 11<sup>th</sup> century Uyghur linguist and cartographer Mahmud al-Kashgari's tomb as a subject of the Song dynasty which is historically incongruent as the maps of Song dynasty do not extend far west. In fact his identity and works are

themselves subject to much contestation as both Uyghurs and Uzbeks claim him to their respective ethnic groups (Caster, 2014).

### **3.9. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

Contrary to the relatively non-violent movement in Tibet, the response to any attempt at separatism in Xinjiang by the Central government has been articulated aggressively. While the indigenous leadership has claimed that their insistence on self-determination is largely to be seen under the rubrics of greater autonomy, the Chinese government has made it amply clear that any reference to terms dealing with secession from China will be considered acts of defection and that it has already granted whatever semblance of autonomy it could under the present constitution. Contrary to this several scholars argue that the self-rule claimed by Beijing in terms of its autonomous regions is a flawed argument. They believe that the ‘*minzu* regional autonomy’ provides little actual autonomy, while some have dubbed it as ‘regional detention’ due to the nature of confinement of the indigenous people in this region (Bovingdon: 2004). Gladney and Bachman even suggested that the administration has several traits that are colonial. Many other scholars adhere to this viewpoint in making the assertion that socio-economic and political stratification in Xinjiang has led Uyghurs to regard themselves as the inferior and the exploited category in comparison with the Hans thereby engendering anti-colonial nationalism.

The racist attitudes of the central government are visible in common perceptions of Han-Uyghur socio-cultural distance, as the Hans considered the Uyghurs as being rude in nature and judgemental statements like ‘the minorities I have seen at the train station conduct their business in underhanded ways’ are commonplace (Hopper and Webber 2009: 173-203). Just as amongst the Tibetans, the Uyghurs also showed strong disapproval of inter-community marriages.

Generally, the Uyghur-Han relationship could be considered from the perspective of the world systems theory on core and periphery propounded by Immanuel Wallerstein, as in the case of China’s other frontier regions. As argued by Thomas cliff, the Han mainstream in Xinjiang has acted more as a ‘partner for stability’ or as “constructors” or “border supporters” for the Chinese government, or as Gaubatz calls

a 'frontier of control' to a 'frontier of settlement'. While the non-threatening aspects of Uyghur culture such as dance and music are celebrated in film, television and advertising and also part of acrobatic troupes that are part of officially sponsored international tours and propaganda mechanism for diplomatic visiting delegations, the threatening aspects such as language and religion are strictly controlled.<sup>90</sup>

However, undeniably the idea of independent secular state of Uyghuristan prevails among the groups located in Dzhungariya in the north of Xinjiang, which borders on Kazakhstan and the idea of forming an Islamic State of Eastern Turkestan is predominant in the south, in Kashgariya, bordering on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. While most adhere to the dream of a state within the boundaries of the XUAR, some others think that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan should give up territory in addition to China. Two of the separatist movements are actually based in Kazakhstan, namely, the Uyghuristan Liberation Organization founded in the early 1990s, and the United Revolutionary Front of East Turkestan led by Yusupbek Mukhlisi, which the country's leadership intends to use a trump card in case China tries to destabilise the political establishment in Kazakhstan (Xinhua news agency domestic service, Beijing, 2002). A case for Chinese intervention in creating some of these separatist groups is also being made in order to split the ranks of the fighters for an independent Uyghuristan away from extremism, using agents provocateurs, a policy that seems to bearing fruit in the recent years as the unity of the separatist movement of the Uyghur community is weakened. Simultaneously the Chinese government unrestrainedly continues to popularise its own set of discourses most preferably through the White papers projecting the Uyghurs as a part of unitary apparatus and highlighting their role as active participants to the process of integration of Xinjiang into the PRC – "to sum up, since the Han Dynasty established the Western Regions Frontier Command in Xinjiang in 60 B.C., the Chinese central governments of all historical periods exercised military and administrative jurisdiction over Xinjiang. The jurisdiction of the central governments over the Xinjiang region was at times strong and at other times weak, depending on the stability of the period. The people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang

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<sup>90</sup>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Uyghurs of East Turkestan (also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or XUAR, People's Republic of China), A Report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project Washington, D.C., p.24.

actively safeguarded their relations with the central governments, thus making their own contributions to the formation and consolidation of the great family of the Chinese nation” (White Paper on Xinjiang 2003).

As far as ethnic relationships are concerned though contacts between Han and Uyghurs are frequent ethnic barriers prevail for instance dietary habits, religious beliefs and lifestyles. In fact the political value of languages spoken in China for the construction of the Chinese state and the need for the minority communities in Xinjiang to be socially and linguistically competitive has been snowballing in Xinjiang (Cabras 2017: 41-47).

In conclusion, the state has deemed it unacceptable to observe any form of protest to state sovereignty and to accept any forms of protest or public dissent in terms of “splittism”. And towards this purpose it has resorted to massive repression as well as economic incentives to curtail the menace of continuing Uyghur discontent. China has managed to garner international support against the terrorist elements through its official discourse supporting the “global war on terror” and against other anti-state actors reducing the source of weapons, the spread of propaganda and other sources for support for activities in Xinjiang. In addition to economic strategies the Chinese state continues to demonise those harbouring separatist intentions by accusing them of secret secessionist aims and condemning Uyghur diaspora for using democracy and human rights as pretexts. The state has also used concessions to local elite, for instance, it allowed Erkin Alptekin, son of Isa Yusuf Alptekin, who had settled in Turkey, to return to Xinjiang after an exile of thirty-two years. Most recently China has also introduced efforts towards de-radicalisation to nip the radical groups’ from the preliminary stages itself. These instances show the variant strategies adopted by the Chinese state to bring the ethnic minorities in Xinjinag within the fold of the national fabric, even as the discursive war continues to bloom amongst the two opposing sides.



Coat of Arms of East Turkistan Republic



Sabir Jamiliny Abduqadir (1863 - 1933)



Leaders of East Turkistan Islamic Republic (1933 - 1934)



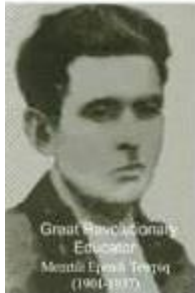
Uyghur Fighters in 1930s



General Mahmud Muhtir (1897 - 1945) Minister of Defence of ETIR (1933 - 1934)



General Abdul Niyaz Yarkent (1930s)



Great Revolutionary Educator Molla Eysa Yezirli (1901-1937)

# EAST TURKISTAN



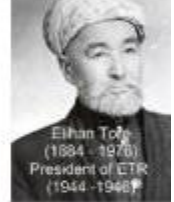
Government Officials of the East Turkistan Republic, Ghulja, 1946  
Ahmedjan Qasim: President of the Republic (fourth from left, first row)



National Flag of East Turkistan Republic



President Qasim of Turkistan Islamic Republic (1895 - 1934)



Elhan Toka (1884 - 1976) President of ETR (1944 - 1948)



Ahmedjan Qasim (1914 - 1944) Vice Chairman of the ET Provincial Coalition Government (1946 - 1949)



Abdul Aziz Mahsum (1899-1982) Great Religious Figure and Freedom Fighter Who Spent 50 Years in Jail



Anwar Yusuf Turani Founder of East Turkistan Government in Exile 09 - 14 - 2004

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Located in Central Asia, East Turkistan, also known as Xinjiang (pronounced Shinjang, written 新疆 which means New Frontier in Chinese) has been under the occupation of communist China, since 1949.

**National Flag:** Blue Flag with Crescent Moon and Star  
**Size:** 1,828,418 square kilometers (about the size of Western Europe or Texas)

### Desert, Mountains, and Rivers, and Lakes:

Taklamakan Desert, Tangri Mountains, Pamir Mountains, Kunlun Mountains, Qaraqurum Mountains; and Tarim River, Yarkent River, Manas River, Ili River, Ayding Lake, Sayram Lake, Bughda Lake.

**Resources:** Abundance of oil, coal, gas, gold, diamond, uranium, jade, and various minerals.

**Population:** 35 million, excluding the Han Chinese  
**Capital:** Urumchi

**Independence Day:** November 12

**Religion:** Islam (Sunni Muslim)

**People:** Turks (Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz), Tajiks, and Mongols.

**Major States/Cities:** Kashgar, Yarkent, Khotan, Atush, Aqsu, Kucha, Qumul, Turfan, Urumchi, Ghulja, Altay, Chochek.

Please, contact Aydin Anwar @ 571-344-3885



[www.facebook.com/aydin.anwar](http://www.facebook.com/aydin.anwar) for more information.



A scene of a religious gathering in front of Kashgar Idkar Mosque







An aborted Uyghur child for violation of the Chinese birth control policy



# EAST TURKISTAN

THE LAND TURNED INTO A DUNGEON  
-UYGHUR MUSLIM AWARENESS DAY-



Detained Uyghur women with their children for wearing hijab

BY EAST TURKISTAN NATIONAL FREEDOM CENTER  
SPEAKER: ANWAR YUSUF TURANI, PRIME MINISTER OF  
EAST TURKISTAN GOVERNMENT-IN- EXILE  
www.eastturkistangovernmentinexile.us



www.facebook.com/etgie



www.youtube.com/user/STJSH

Please, see the bottom of this page for the date, time, location, and contact information about this event.



Abdulkarim Abdullwali Damolla  
A Well-Known Religious Figure

Jail Form 1 No. 4598 2014  
88 Dussanli St Prison



A scene from Ilham Tohti's public trial  
for separatism on September 24, 2014

## HISTORY OF THE CHINESE PERSECUTION IN EAST TURKISTAN

As a part of Great Turkistan stretches from China's Great Wall to Caspian Sea (from east to west) and from Siberia to Kunlun Mountains (from North to South), East Turkistan (also known as Xinjiang in Chinese) had remained as an independent state for centuries throughout the history till its annexation by Ching -- Manchu Empire (1644 -1912) in 1759. The official Chinese invasion of East Turkistan began in 1912 with the establishment of the Republic of China, after the collapse of the Manchu Empire. Since then the vast territory has become a dungeon for its indigenous people, due to China's iron-handed rule of East Turkistan.

Till today millions of East Turkistanis, particularly the Muslim Uyghurs, considered to be the main ethnic group in East Turkistan, were executed in the past 102 years by the various Chinese authorities in East Turkistan; and still thousands of innocent Uyghurs are being killed, arrested, harassed, imprisoned, and tortured every single day. For instance, at least three thousand (3000) innocent Uyghur men and women including children have been massacred alone at the end of last Ramadan in Yarkent by the communist Chinese authorities in the pretext of terrorists, extremists, and separatists.

Moreover, thousands of unborn children are aborted against the will of their mothers; anybody who is under eighteen and all government employees are not allowed to practice their religion; any woman wearing hijab (veil) and any man growing a beard are subject to be persecuted for extremism; the Uyghur language has been gradually removed from the curriculum of East Turkistan's schools; Uyghurs are either denied or discriminated from job opportunities and as a result, the mass majority of Uyghurs live under the poverty line. Furthermore, Uyghur's land has been used as the testing ground for nuclear weapons. Anyone who speaks up against any of these injustices is subject to be silenced by any means, ranging from death to life imprisonment.

As seen from the top of this page, the prominent Uyghur religious figure Abdulkarim Abdullwali, sentenced to life imprisonment 24 years ago for preaching Quran, and the well-known moderate Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, also sentenced to life imprisonment for separatism several days ago, and the hundreds of death penalties carried out by the Chinese authorities every week across East Turkistan are the few examples of the Chinese genocide in East Turkistan. And we will tell you **MORE ABOUT WHY THE CHINESE COMMIT SUCH INHUMANE ACTS AGAINST MUSLIM UYGHURS, WHO THE REAL TERRORISTS ARE, AND HOW THE MUSLIMS LIVE UNDER THE RULE OF COMMUNIST CHINA. PLEASE, JOIN US FOR THE UPCOMING EVENT:**

**"EAST TURKISTAN AWARENESS DAY" ON OCTOBER 11, 2014, FROM 2PM TO 5PM AT POHICK REGIONAL LIBRARY  
LOCATED: 6450 SYDENSTRICKER ROAD, BURKE, VIRGINIA, 22015. Contact: Aydin @ 571-344-3885 for more information.**



The meaning of the Chinese propaganda: "Unity and security lead to happiness. Separatism and destruction lead to disaster."



A scene from the 2009 Urumchi Uprising against the Chinese repression in East Turkistan

Source: [http://www.eastturkistangovernmentinexile.us/et\\_photo\\_gallery.html](http://www.eastturkistangovernmentinexile.us/et_photo_gallery.html)



## **CHAPTER 4**

# **COMPETING DISCOURSES ON INNER MONGOLIA: ASSIMILATION OR ANOMIE?**

## 4.1. INTRODUCTION

Unlike the case of Tibet and Xinjiang, the Chinese state's attempts at integrating the Inner Mongolian Autonomous region (IMAR) have been relatively more successful considering its media obscurity. This is evident in the reduced number of secessionist or separatist attempts by the Inner Mongolian people over the six decades of its establishment as a province of the People's Republic of China. Despite the expressed ambitions of a minority population of ethnic Mongolians to reunite the Chinese controlled territory with Mongolia, Inner Mongolia seems to be a quite backwater and has been comparatively less restive. Beijing often upholds the IMAR as a model of ethnic harmony between the locals and the immigrants. This is not to say that the centre-periphery relationship enjoys a complete bonhomie as far as this province is concerned and that the Inner Mongolian nationalism is dead; rather, the motives and attempts of the state at assimilation are as strong as in the other autonomous regions and are continuously remoulded as and when necessitated by local and regional circumstances. Traces of ethnic nationalism linger as demands for an independent state or occasionally autonomous governance structures, continues to be raised in political spheres. Notably, the history of provincial assimilation into the larger Chinese polity has been dabbled of political and cultural suppression which has kept the regional identity intact.

Traditionally, it has been argued, that the centre usually controlled the borderlands in a paternalistic one-way relationship, seen as benevolent in nature and received appreciatively by the border people, once referred to as the barbarians but now referred to as the national minorities (Harell: 1995). However, a linear argument of strong borders is contested by many scholars, who in their recent studies have demonstrated that the control of the Chinese state on the border was quite transitory and China's borders were never really marked until quite recent times. There were merely periodic incursions restrained by the fear of 'imperial overreach' which became the basis for their claim to sovereignty over these areas once the PRC was established (Lary 2007:1).

Notwithstanding, waves of unrestrained Chinese migration have been discerned historically as a means of officially reclaiming the Inner Mongolian pastures for

agricultural development in order to raise funds for use by the imperial court under the Qing culminating later into a host of Mongolian rebellions. Though some Mongolian princes tried to join the independence movement initiated by Inner Mongolia in 1911, China countered their ambition as early as 1914 by setting up 'special administrative regions' of Suiyuan, Chahar, and Rehe to incorporate the region. The establishment of the provincial administration and the abolition of the banner and league systems were predicated on the principle of destroying Mongolian feudalism thereby provoking violent resistance and fanning Inner Mongolian nationalism with an ultimate objective of 'restoration' of lost Mongol territory. As early as the 1920s, many scholars attempted comparative studies of Chinese chauvinistic outlook on Inner Mongolia against the background of Outer Mongolian nationalism supported by the Soviet Union. Ma Hetain, a high ranking member of the Chinese Nationalist Party argued in favour of the Chinese government's policy in his book *Nei Wai Menggu Kaocha Riji* (1932).

It was Mao's historic decision to return Inner Mongolia to the Mongols in calling them to join against the common struggle against the Japanese and the Chinese nationalists in December 1935 that attracted the Inner Mongolian leadership to the CCP fold. Ironically the Mongols' ambition to 'recover' the Inner Mongolian territory resulted in closer integration with the Chinese polity through setting up of various territorial administrative demarcations. The inundation of the province by Chinese settlers which had increased when Chiang kai-shek unified China in 1928 continued further and by 1947 Chinese had become the overwhelming majority, constituting 85 per cent of the total population. Autonomous rights were further compromised as the Party went about its program of land reforms, agricultural collectivization and nationalisation of industry throughout China in the 50's and 60's with Soviet aid, though some efforts were made to retain environmentally sustainable pastoralism.

The main approach therefore, before and during the early decades of its establishment, had been to deal with Inner Mongolia as a frontier region which needed to be assimilated but also be controlled at the same time. The "Programme for the Implementation of Ethnic Regional Autonomy of the PRC" issued on 8 August 1952 set out the overall provisions for the implementation of regional autonomy for national minorities. Some analysts believe that in the early years very few Hans were actually sent to the frontier regions since the capacity of the land to sustain people

was quite less (Schwarz: 1963: pp.61-74). Even afterwards, the Party mainly considered a phase-by-phase settlement of the Hans in the region since the major rationale was that the frontier regions had not really ‘leapt’ as the other regions had during the Great Leap Forward.<sup>91</sup> Many a times the people who were sent were the ones who had been banished from the mainland (in this sense, political banishment and land reclamation became a congruent practice).

Over the years, several Mongol females were shaped into major icons, while the Chinese icons were exclusively males; it has been proposed that this gender and ethnicity incongruence was highlighted as ethnic minorities were more often feminised by majority Han (Gladney 1994: 92-123). On the contrary, Uradyn E Bulag suggests that it was a deliberate political strategy of the Mongols to depict their flock as posing no threat to the Chinese in contrast to the reminiscences that Genghis Khan’s image arouses. Arguing that most exemplars of the later Mongol-Chinese co-existence maintained a kind of resistance-within-collaboration kind of arrangement, he shows how Ulanhu’s understanding of the role of Mongols within China depicted a counter-position to Mao’s conception that “nationality struggle, in the last analysis, is class struggle.”

Demands of autonomy from the Inner Mongolian communists were repressed severely by dubbing them treasonous to Chinese national unity and more than twenty thousand Mongols were killed and more than three hundred thousand injured for conspiring to create a pan-Mongolian state during the turmoil in Inner Mongolia from 1967 to 1969; the highest number of officially acknowledged casualties among a single ethnic group during the Cultural revolution. The local groups were further antagonised due to the large scale annihilation of artefacts, Tibetan-Buddhist temples and catholic Churches in cities like Hohhot and the detainment and torturing of high-ranking Mongolian officials during the Cultural Revolution and thereafter, the memories of which have lingered on till today (Jankowiak 1988: 273). During the Cultural Revolution Maoist theories were denounced by the Mongols under the garb of ethnic-nationalism since Maoists had accused Mongol party figures of turning the

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid. According to the author’s calculations, 271,643 Chinese migrated to the North-West from 1955 to 1959.

“four cleans movement” into a struggle against ‘Great Hanism’ (Hyer and Heaton 1968: 114-128). Several scholars believe it to be a major changing point in the centre-state relationship as it was primarily after the Cultural Revolution, they argue, that ethnic lines were redrawn in Inner Mongolia having a devastating impact on the inter-personal community relationships.

The Mongols regained power and controlled some key areas such as finance, planning and education areas briefly in the 1980s (those Mongol officials who escaped the purge of the Cultural Revolution) and tried to oppose excessive immigration of Chinese into the region by means of opposing the document 28, a central-government ordinance that promoted increase in the number of Chinese immigrants in Inner Mongolia, but were unsuccessful.<sup>92</sup> Nonetheless, the sacking of student leaders and Mongol officials prompted the drafting of the Law on Regional National Autonomy to legally protect minority rights. Representation rights to the minority communities were included in the constitution of the PRC and the Nationality Region Autonomy Law (NRAL) enacted in 1984 (Amended in 2001)<sup>93</sup> provided that

“the national autonomous areas be given effective guarantees for implementing state laws and policies in the light of existing local conditions; that large numbers of cadres at various levels and specialized personnel and skilled workers of various professions and trades be trained from among the minority nationalities; that the national autonomous areas strive to promote local socialist construction in the spirit of self-reliance and hard work and contribute to the nation’s construction as a whole; and that the state strive to help the national autonomous areas speed up their economic and cultural development in accordance with the plans for national economic and social development.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> In addition to criticising the government directive, the Mongol students issued (8) demands: Save our motherland,

- ii. Stop the immigration of Hans,
- iii. Promote minority population interest by increasing the quota of minority students from 25 percent to 90 percent.
- iv. Increase the proportion of Mongol officials
- v. Han experts to be employed for a short-while and obliged to return thereafter.
- vi. The Party Secretary and the regional commander must be Mongolian
- vii. Return to Ulanfu’s policy of promoting livestock first, (eighth - unavailable)

<sup>93</sup> Refer Annexure I for detailed provisions.

<sup>94</sup> Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy, Adopted at the Second Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress, promulgated by Order No. 13 of the President of the People’s Republic of China on May 31, 1984, and effective as of October 1, 1984)

Thus Beijing attempted to reconcile by pledging its support to the idea of an autonomous provincial government. Earlier in 1977 the government had reunited all the alliances that had fallen apart during Cultural Revolution. Next, the government doled out several policy measures to allay the fears of the minority communities in the nationality areas (*minzu quyu*). Overall, 6000 Mongolian students demonstrated on the streets of Hohhot in 1981 expressing the lingering wounds of Cultural Revolution, which the Mongols denote as the period of Great Sorrow (*da Ku*). As a response to these demonstrations in 1983, Buhe and Zhou Hui (the governor of IMAR and the party Secretary respectively) issued a joint decree that Beijing's de-collectivisation policy would be implemented in the IMAR and thus land would be divided among herders (the original holders).

To implement these provisions the government established several Minority Cadre schools (*minzu ganbu xuexiao*) and nationalities institutes (*minzu xueyuan*) over the previous four decades which have recently been promoted to the status of universities (*minzu daxue*) to display its eagerness to work collectively with the minorities. The state's attempts to rectify the affronts of the Cultural Revolution through symbolic means also led to the reinterpretation of its minority policies such as birth control, which gave the leeway for Mongols to have unrestricted number of children till 1986. Later, however this policy led to a backlash by migrated Hans as they bore the consequences of unfair preferential treatment to local Mongols.

The grasslands, over which the Mongols struggled with the central government, began to be opened up in the late 1990s. Lured by short-term benefits officials at various levels sold and leased several thousand *mu* of grasslands to developers without even compensating the evicted residents. Ethnic conflicts were not limited to Chinese and Mongols but also stretched to neighbouring communities from Ningxia Hui Autonomous region. An evident schism emerged in the pastoral industry along ethnic lines as Mongols became the providers of raw materials such as cashmere and wool while the Chinese began controlling the industrial plants that process the materials thus weakening the indigenous communities and leading to severe degradation of grasslands. At the same time, many Mongols accused the local leaders of betraying the community interests and not standing up to the Chinese as demands of autonomy from outside the party were severely repressed by the CCP. In 1991, two cultural

organisations in Ordos were criminalised and their leaders imprisoned for several years. In 1996, a Mongol democratic organisation was crushed and two of its leaders were sentenced to imprisonment on charges of secessionism.

Cultural repression also became palpable as more and more Mongols stopped public endorsement of indigenous literature, especially, the two epic poems (*Gada Meiren*) in the presence of Chinese and local Ordos revolutionary histories, particularly regarding the Sine Lama and his Duguilong campaign, became top national secrets. The available contemporary literature is imprinted with a vigilant effort by the central government to mould the discourse favourably towards the administration. However the locals tend to challenge the official narratives by supporting the Mongol versions of historical events, for instance, instead of imbibing the intended propaganda in the Selected Works of Ulanhu<sup>95</sup> that he helped Inner Mongolia become a part of China, Mongols tend to popularise that he protected Mongolian interests against encroachment.

Ethnic tensions started to aggravate when the western development campaign came into effect after 2000. Mongol herders staged organised protests when some developers in Ejen Horoo bulldozed a large stretch of fertile grassland for cultivation close to the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum, which turned out to be a Mongol cemetery. To placate the herders, the banner administration paid Yuan 1 million to a Mongol Lama from Kumbum monastery to build a Stupa in the middle of that cemetery while the surrounding land was given up for a theme park and airport. Though these measures temporarily allayed their insecurities the Mongols continue to deride any possibility of being evicted from their historic homeland. Of late the Mongols have become fragmented internally due to growing demographic disparity and have become more integrated with Hans instead of forming a strong *minzu*. The alacrity of the Chinese state to criminalise the assertion of ethnic identity has given rise to sentiments of the Mongols being a diaspora in their own homeland. Though they often

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<sup>95</sup>A non-Mongolian speaking Mongol communist anti-Japanese activist of the 1940s who became one of the rare minority person to hold even alternate membership in the policy-making Political Bureau of the Communist Party to reach the highest echelons of government circles to have national policy influence. He was party Secretary, governor, military commander, and PLA political Commissar of Inner Mongolia and Vice-Chairman of the People's Republic and Vice-chair of the National People's Congress.

look up to Mongolia for cultural inspiration but they are looked down upon as being a source of cultural pollution and a frosty relationship has thus ensued between the two groups leading many disillusioned Mongols to immigrate to the West and the growth of a nationalism that agitates for farther reaching objectives including full nationhood for the Inner Mongolian region.

Unlike the Tibetan case, Buddhism did not substantially influence the formation of an Inner Mongolian identity. Indeed Inner Mongolian nationalism has been adversative of Buddhism holding it responsible for reducing Mongolian prowess (Bulag, Op Cit). The narratives of local discourse also failed to capitalise on their famous historical icons who have been instead coopted by the Chinese state, for instance, Chinghis Khan has been adopted as a historical figure whose military achievements have brought glory to the entire Chinese nation. Several novels and movies have been made depicting him as the only Chinese to have defeated the Europeans and in 2000, the Chinese state even declared that it had found the tomb of Chinghis Khan in Xinjiang thereby sabotaging Mongolian efforts to find his tomb in Mongol territory. The state continues to exercise strict control over the content of worship around the Masoleum by replacing the Darhad Mongols (the priestly people who officiate in the rituals dedicated to Chinghis Khan at the Masoleum) with its own officials in an attempt to convert the site into a world-class tourist destination.

In this growing tussle between the locals and the Chinese government to capitalise on traditional legacies and coopt or destroy traditional institutions, the Inner Mongolian nationalism has come to be redefined by elite understandings of the growing schism between the perceptions of the locals and the immigrants. The 2001 amendment repudiated the notions of “ethnic autonomy” (*minzu zizhi*), and local autonomy (*difang zizhi*) and federalism restricting the grant of autonomy to subjects like culture and education. The severe responses from the government combined with heavy influx of outsiders into the province continue to fuel discontent and attempts from the central government have barely helped to resolve the dormant crisis. Despite Jiang Zemin’s identification of the system of regional ethnic autonomy as the basis of rapprochement with the state in 2004 (Xinhua, 11 October 2004) and consecutive Chinese leadership’s reiteration of commitment to assimilate the Inner Mongolian minorities into the national architecture, the seeds of discontent continue to burgeon



as the local inhabitants believe that instead of making sincere attempts at reconciliation these laws provide limited autonomy at best. The following section makes a detailed scrutiny of the discrepancies between the local and central perceptions and the articulation of Inner Mongolian nationalism through the discourse of its elites.

## **4.2. SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF THE INNER MONGOLIAN STATE THROUGH ELITE NATIONALISM**

Within the larger apparatus of the Chinese state the Mongols have found themselves torn between two conflicting needs, that is, the need to be recognised as citizens and the need to maintain their *minzu* identity. While hopes of outright independence have been dashed, the Inner Mongolian leadership continues to aspire for the maintenance of a viable community. It would be difficult to dichotomize the understanding of the Chinese state as a *minzu* destroyer or *minzu* builder as the Mongols insist on the Chinese honouring their promise to uphold minority autonomy even as the Chinese attempt to undermine Mongolian autonomy. The discourse is today being shaped by the community elders or the cream or elite (*jinghua*) who remain powerful and have a respected status in the society despite not holding real political power. These *rencai* (talented individuals) contribute by patronizing monumental publishing projects like series of Mongolian literary classics and encyclopaedia of the Mongols, and guide young people to devote their energy to academic study and to take pride in achieving excellence and win glory for the Mongol community. Since they belong to the respected community of intellectuals and scientist they cannot be denounced as ‘ethnic splittists’ thereby providing leeway for moulding the thought processes of the youth.

Thus, these elites are able to protect their interests by indicating the similarities between their traditional approach and the state’s ideology and thereby benefitting the state by cooptation of local elite through the use of norms that are thought to be internalised. Bumochir Dulam (2009), in his case study on the “Deed Mongols in the Qinghai province,” argues that the Mongols experience two simultaneous realities of state which are clearly distinct from each other: one is the push and pulls of the state

with its everyday processes and structures and the other reality is the Imperial Mongol state and its local variations which operate in the social imagination.

The local elites repetitively deconstruct and reconstruct the notions of a Mongol state to express the social process which conglomerates the glories of the past and the decline in their power and identity in the present. However, these reminiscences and pride in the past do not guarantee the Mongols a viable identity in terms of political or symbolic capital. Notwithstanding, the local wise men (*medlegtei hun*) and the elders (*nastan*) are responsible for popularising traditional historical narratives on legendary characters especially Chinggis Khan and the ‘enlightened’ Gush Khan through print media. At the same time, folk narratives and proverbs from the past representing the state as a caring and protecting entity are used to align and cultivate ‘respect of the state’.

### **4.3. INFLUENCE OF HAN-NATIONALIST GOALS AND BORDER CONCEPTIONS**

These goals and the impact of the Party’s policies in the region can be judged based on: the overall perception of the minority community, the perception of the migrants to the region and how their interest align with that of the Party’s, and the relationship between the two communities at the ground level as well as their level of cooperation or outright resistance to the policies of the centre. Till the formal initiation into the PRC the border regions were identified as microcosmic societies which developed their own set of customs and interests, quite different from those of the central government. In this regard, Owen Lattimore’s frontier thesis was a pioneering effort to explain the dynamics of Chinese interaction, specifically the Manchus’ attempts, at assimilating people from the frontier regions for the expansion of political space and ambitions of the founders of the Manchu dynasty and also in context of the Sino-Japanese struggle to gain a firm hold in the region which he essentially alleged had the signs of a ‘secondary imperialism’ (Lattimore 1937: 64-71).

The establishment of the IMAR in 1947 bore several historical imprints, especially that of the Qing division of Inner Mongolia from Outer Mongolia, Nationalists efforts to integrate Mongolia, and the alliance of the Communist Mongols under Ulanhu<sup>96</sup> with the Chinese Communist revolutionary base at Yanan at the outset (Bulag 2002). There were perceived differences in the basic characteristics of the Mongolian and Manchurian economies, the first being more pastoral and the latter more ‘mixed’ which continue to be apparent even today. At this time, the actual economic strength, was apparently, derived from the political leader’s ability to exploit trading opportunities with the peripheral regions as well as the centre. There was also the pull of the Outer Mongolian/Mongolian People’s Republic nationalism and the older question of staying within the Chinese umbrella or to join outside forces like the Russians or the Japanese, which was previously evident in the birth of the Inner Mongolian Revolutionary Party (*Nei ren dang*) in 1925 to form a new independent nation.

Initially, it led to much resentment amongst the Mongolians over Han migrants who were reinforced by local rulers in this ‘theft’ which was seen to destroy the ‘independent lifestyle of the Mongolians tied to the land and its natural resources’ (Frisna 1996: 206-207). A strong hostility built up against perceived Han chauvinism which was seen to be moulding the ethnic composition of the province and its bureaucracy by invoking principles such as majority representation under the Constitution of the PRC.

#### **4.4. ROLE OF THE CCP AND ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

As reflected above, regardless of the provisions in the constitution and the commitments made in its White papers, China’s minority policy has remained inherently oxymoronic. To begin with, the government promulgated a policy stating observance of equality and unity among various ethnic groups, which essentially meant that

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“regardless of their population size, their level of economic and social development, the difference of their folkways, customs and religious beliefs, every ethnic group was/is a part of the Chinese nation, having equal status, enjoying the same rights and performing the same duties in every aspect of political and social life according to law, and ethnic oppression or discrimination of any form was/is firmly opposed.” (White Paper on the National Minorities Policy and its practice in China)

On the other hand, the relatively sluggish growth in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous region before the 1980s necessitated that the state offer certain preferential treatments to bring it in consonance with the level of development in other provinces. Thus the state endorsed a preferential policy on investments to guide more foreign investments to this area to assist in development of a more diversified industry. The Baotou Iron and Steel Base in Inner Mongolia was a prime example of this approach.

Hereafter, the government provided ownership rights, free farming tools and production capital, and various kinds of exemptions and loans to support the growth of agriculture and animal husbandry in the minority areas. It adopted a policy of ‘population expansion’ as opposed to ‘planned parenthood’ for gradual growth in population. However, such measures simultaneously resulted in increased prices of food commodities and housing which gave rise to resentment against the government (Food Expenditure and house prices rise in Inner Mongolia, SWB, FE/W0035 A/3, 20 July 1988). The central government also established the Inner Mongolian oil refinery and the Inner Mongolian chemical fertiliser plant in Badai township which were to go into operation by 1992 (Inner Mongolia’s Key construction projects, SWB FE/W0036 A/3 27 July 1988). The economic boom, however, also encouraged smuggling and criminal activities related to traffic in narcotics along the border regions (Conference on Border Security, Xinhua, 18 July 1988, SWB FE/0210 B2/3 22 July 1988).

Yet the Chinese state continued its efforts to integrate the region with the centre using strategies like tourist fairs. IMAR’s first tourist fair, or “Nadamu” opened in Hohhot on 20 July 1988 where more than 50,000 Chinese and 2000 foreigners took part in activities like horse-riding, visiting Mongolian yurts (herder’s homes) and bonfires (Tourist fair in Inner Mongolia, SWB FE/0211 B2/5 23 July 1988).

As the main discourse shifted to ‘scientific and technological development’ for the advancement of national interest in the 1980s several policy changes were effected in minority education by the centre. In March 1992, Li Tieying, Vice-chairman of the standing committee of the National People’s Congress of China, appealed for a vigorously reformed and developed education for the minority nationalities. Acknowledging the slow pace of education in remote mountainous and pastoral areas he said:

“We should seize the present opportunity to accelerate the pace of reform and opening to the outside world and based on existing achievements, work hard to open up a new prospect for nationality education... proper administration of nationality education can be summed up as persistently proceeding from the characteristics of minority nationalities and the reality of minority nationality areas to develop minority education based on the integrative implementation of both the unified education policy and the nationality policy of the party and the state.”

(Li Tieying on Importance of Nationality education for reform and opening, Xinhua, 15 March 1992, SWB FE/1331 B2/5)

Scholars were encouraged to develop various sociological surveys under its attempt to show solidarity with the cause of preservation of regional cultures. The Chinese government attempted to equally patronise all ethnic minorities besides the Mongols in this region. Bai Lin, from the Oroqen nationality in Inner Mongolia became a famous sociological scholar who developed first-hand accounts of her nationality in the seminal works like ‘The Oroqen Nationality’ and ‘A charming Hunting Village.’ She was also promoted to the membership of the People’s Political consultative Conference of Inner Mongolia (Profile of Extraordinary ‘Oroqen scholar’ Xinhua 14 March 1992, SWB FE/1339 B2/5 26 March 1992).

In 1997, the Chinese government announced the Western Development Strategy (which came into application in 2002) which was slated to boost the economy to unprecedented levels. Around the same time, it also promulgated similar prerogatives for the Inner Mongolian province which reflected its desire to maintain equitable growth. By 1998, 62 percent of the financial investment by the centre was capitalised in central and western China, 4.6 times their strength in 1952 (White Paper on the National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China, June 2000).

The provincial government invested two billion RMB in eight banner cities in Hulunbeier during 2002 to 2004. Furthermore, in 2004, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Regional Ethnic Affairs Commission and Poverty Alleviation Office jointly selected 10 smaller population ethnic minority poverty villages in Hulunbeier to conduct poverty alleviation work (Reports on Ethnic Stability Issues in PRC Provinces between 5 Jun-27 Aug 2005, 18 November 2005). The crops output in Inner Mongolia amounted to 17.0494 million tons in 2006 making it one of the 7 provinces that export crops, while the total number of livestock amounted to 110.5115 million; the output of milk, mutton and cashmere was also above national average. The total value of the import and export of foreign trade was US\$5.947 billion in the same year (Wang, Accession Number 247750273).

The nominal GDP of Inner Mongolia leaped from 110 RMB billion in 1997 to 609 RMB billion in 2007, growing 17 percent annually on average between 2001 and 2011. In fact, over the last decade IMAR recorded the fastest GDP growth in China. Inner Mongolia became China's largest producer of coal in 2009 as the coal bed around Xilinhot contains 38 percent of global reserves of germanium - a rare earth which is used in the making of circuitry for solar cells and wind turbines (The Economist 2012).

The manufacturing industry has become the major driver for economy contributing 45 per cent of the total GDP (Inner Mongolia demographic analysis and economy overview, Starmass Analysis). The state has promoted tourism intensively in inner cities of Inner Mongolia like Ordos which boasts of the Genghis Khan Mausoleum, Kubuqi desert, impressive new buildings and malls, grassland culture and the singing sands ravine in the vicinity as major centres of tourist attractions. The city is also becoming attractive destination for national and international events such as the Nadam Games and the Miss World contests (Xinhua 2010). Meanwhile, local entrepreneurs are taking up environmental causes by building immense capacities in clean energy industries. Wang Wenbiao, is being commended for his efforts towards this cause which has also turned out to be a multi-billion conglomerate for him, Elion Resources Group (he was awarded with 'special contribution' to the world's anti-desertification drive by the UN in June 2012) (Xinhua 2012).

However, these developments have also annoyed the people given the destruction of local environment and pasture lands which were till a few years back quite pristine. Land disputes between miners and the local herders have become profuse. While the *hukou* system was largely believed to have led to overgrazing on allocated lands while other lands remained unavailable, recent studies indicate that the life chances for indigenous communities would still not improve despite the abolition of the *hukou* system. Based on an empirical investigation of migrant workers, Shaohua Zhan argues that the prominence of *hukou* has declined substantially and rather, it is social exclusion and the market which limit migrant workers' life chances (Zhan 2011: 243-285). Parallely, illicit mining companies have cropped up and the legal ones are producing much beyond the sustainable capacities.

The local herders also suffer from underemployment and unemployment as most opportunities are grabbed by outsiders. Traffic congestion augmented by coal-transferring Lorries is a cause of concern as jams as long as 10 days stretching to 180 kms are becoming commonplace (Xinhua 2010). The government intends to broaden these highways as a means of relaxing the traffic congestion since they form an intrinsic part of the larger project of Beijing-Tibet Freeway and Beijing-Xinjiang freeway. Moreover, the development in the region has been highly uneven. While Erdos, Baotou, Hohhot, Alashan league and Wuhai have a higher level of economic development, on the other hand, Xilinguole League, Hulunbeier Bayannaor, Wulanchabu, Chifeng, Tongliao and Xingan league continue to lag behind. The following section delves deeper into the issues of concerns and resentment amongst the Inner Mongolians and the dynamics of their relationship with the state.

#### **4.5. ISSUES OF DIVERGENCE AND PERCEPTIVE CONFLICTS**

Notwithstanding the state's rhetoric on reasonable treatment of all nationalities, issues of divergence have surfaced due to the asymmetry in relations between the different ethnicities. On the one hand, it promoted Han immigration thereby endangering indigenous cultural moorings; concurrently it reaffirmed its commitment to the principle of economic and cultural advancement of all ethnic groups. According to some statistics there were 1,200, 000 Mongols in Inner Mongolia while only about 800,000 Hans in 1947. On the other hand, according to the 2000 census, Inner

Mongolia is constituted of 79.17 percent Hans while only 17.13 percent Mongols reside in the province; the other ethnicities being Manchus, Hui, Daur, Evenks, Koreans and Russians (Tabulation on Nationalities of 2000 Population Census of China, 2 vols. 2003). A key complaint of the ethnic Mongols is that the Chinese Communists never even considered themselves guilty of expropriating Mongolian land (Mackerras 1983: 17-38).

However, to assume that all ethnic minorities are in opposition to the state would be an oversimplification. There is a section of elites amongst the Mongolians who do believe that the policies of the government have actually helped (Ibid). They also suggest that the relationship between Hans and Mongolians is based on influence and not compulsion. Stretching the argument further, they have even exhorted that there was no Han surge washing away the Mongolian culture.

It is also argued that nature of economic progress or exploitation has been a consequence of not so much the Chinese intervention but the way progress has become manifest. But these voices are relatively in a small minority. As far as the opinions of the majority Han residents are concerned, they are also bifurcated along two main streams of thought: first, a group which protests the advantages given to the ethnic groups under affirmative action dubbing it as undue generosity of the state and second, those who support the state's policies towards the minorities. However, there are substantial issues of concern at the ground level which the government has been pressed to address despite or support of these divergent groups.

Firstly, the state has failed to check the nexus of illegal drug trafficking around the border areas which are prone to such activities being at the edge of the state. The threat is more pronounced since the state is heavily promoting border tourism as one of its main policy. The city of Manzhouli for instance, is a major land port for traders and tourists from Russia, Mongolia and also the Chinese citizens from other provinces and is prone to such hazards (Xinhua 2012). There are also lingering streams of traffic in opium from the Moslem northwest, which come around to Shansi through Inner Mongolia, in order to escape taxes (Lattimore 1937: 70). Xi Haimen, President of the Inner Mongolian League for Defense on Human Rights highlights how government's thirst for resources is leading to the plunder of resources through a nexus between



government and businessmen. Adding to that is the fact the most powerful positions are occupied by the Hans and even if the top most leader of the provincial government belongs to the minority nationality, he is virtually controlled and manoeuvred by the centre.

Another issue of major concern is the use of frontier regions as testing grounds of China's new technology. Inner Mongolia is a much-preferred location for space-related research activities such as the launch of the Shenzhou-9 (some earlier versions as well) and the recent agreement between the Chinese meteorological administration and the Inner Mongolian Regional government. Though such agreements bring benefits to the region in terms of disaster-prevention and -reduction construction systems, they also generate feelings of animosity to the government which is seen as apathetic to the sensitivities of the displaced communities (Xinhua 2011). Most developments are aligned to the benefits of the centre through sustained intervention in terms of assessment by the working party committees.

Politically, the rise of Inner Mongolians to positions of power has also been a canned phenomenon. Though the NPC has consistently seen a rise in the number of minorities in its overall composition, yet very few cases like that of Uyunqing, a Mongolian born in the province of Liaoning who became a member of the 17<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee and Vice-chairman of the 11<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee of the NPC and Chairman of the IMAR are to be seen. This is primarily due to the fact that the knowledge of mandarin is essential for most minorities to rise in the party echelons. From the year 1954 when the first NPC was held to 2002, the number of minority deputies in the NPC has risen to 414 from 178. On the other hand, many successful Chinese leaders have served in the autonomous region which has assured their gradual climb up since these restive areas have come to be considered as testing grounds of strategic talent. A case in point being Hu Chunhua also referred commonly as "Little Hu."

On the cultural front, lingering ethnic linkages are manifest in the popularity of older legends such as Gada Meilin, the ethnic hero who first stood up against the usurpation of the Mongolian land and is a major figure in the local folksongs. Even more problematic is the approach towards the legal system at the provincial level. Attempts

at cultural assimilation as are seen with much scepticism as the propagandist elements in the party's approach are most perceptible. Though Mongols prefer to use constitutional means to put forward their demands on measures to protect herder's rights, the slightest instance of opposition is dealt with severe-handed manner by the centre and Party representatives, akin to the case of Tibet and Xinjiang.

The IMAR has distinctly shown a trend of student demonstrations which are mostly subdued by the state either by ignoring their demands or through threat of use of force. Mongolian activists often undergo illegal detentions as in the case of Mr. Hada, the leader of the South Mongolia Democratic Coalition and also a writer from South Mongolia, who was released in 2010 after serving a 15-year sentence in prison allegedly for spying and 'separatist activities' and who still continues to be under strict vigil. His release had given an opportunity for the people to regroup and voice their discontent as was seen in the case of the riots on 10 May 2011 in Shilingol prefecture of IMAR.

These 'subversive activities' witnessed severe clampdown by the state but at the same time, the leadership in the province headed by Mr. Hu Chunhua, the youngest party secretary of the region, resorted to a much conciliatory approach by not continuing to harp on the issue in terms of separatism or sabotage in the media, though they did believe that some of these protest could have been inspired by the 2008 riots in Tibet and 2009 riots in Xinjiang. Hu Chunhua also went to schools to meet students and teachers reassuring them that the rioters will be dealt with punitive action.

#### **4.6. CHINA'S MINORITY CONUNDRUM: PROPAGANDA, DIVERGENCE OR RECONCILIATION?**

After the protests in 2001 and in 2011, the government was forced to reconsider its strategy and Premier Wen Jiabao announced eight specific measures to reduce environmental degradation, especially desertification and soil erosion and resource extraction and enhance efforts for afforestation (Xue and Mingyu 2011). In yet another move, the government has recently shut down nearly 900 coal mines and 2,000 non-coal mines in an overhaul effort to better preserve resources and protect the local environment (Xinhua 2012). A case for this measure being forced by the recent

economic downturn can be made; nonetheless it cannot be established with much surety. However, it significantly attempts at allaying their fears resulting from non-adequate compensation for the loss of lives from mining blasts.

The state's commitment to preserve cultural rights for minorities through initiatives like the National ethnic games is becoming manifest prominently. Sometimes along with the centre the local elites who are being co-opted by the centre also act as elements furthering the centre's agenda. For instance, Chen Guanglin, deputy secretary of the IMAR Party Committee, endorsed the centre's policy by stating that "the autonomous region must properly analyze the CPC Central Committee's policies on supporting developments in ethnic minority areas and actively incorporate them into the region's ethnic work" and asking "the region's news and propaganda departments to play their part in sparking enthusiasm in implementation of the Central Committee's policies on ethnic work" as quoted in the *Neimenggu Ribao* (World News Connection 2005). Thus, the centre is trying to build institutional and manpower capacities which can assist in furthering strong cultural economic and political linkages between the centre and the state.

However, the divide is deep-seated since the reasons for extant cleavages between the centre and the minorities in Inner Mongolia are embedded in the struggle for appropriation of economic resources deriving from local economies thriving on either traditional forms of trade or trans-border mechanisms. The state's oft-repeated commitment to development and cooptation of ethnic minorities through progressive measures is at best seen as pretence by the minorities. The benefits of development have accrued to a small section of elites who have become cohorts of government functionaries, while majority population continues to strive for equitable distribution of the fruits of economic development.

Issues of allegiances infringe on the normalisation of relations as the state often stokes ethnic nationalism or anti-foreign nationalism to serve its goals. This was reflected in the recent demonstrations in Inner Mongolia by almost 10,000 people in Hohhot and Baotou, who demonstrated solidarity with the centre by proclaiming statements like - "that the Diaoyu Islands belong to China and nothing can stop us from defending our

sovereignty” (Xinhua 2012). Besides preserving their cultural and ethnic identities in face of influx of the Han culture remains their main concern at large.

It is also pertinent to mention here that the pull of the unification with the Mongolian nation also remains at the core of the national question in Inner Mongolia. Massive surveys conducted in the region at the time of the establishment of the PRC had indicated that the Inner Mongolian wished to join the Mongolian People’s Republic. But at that time the international communist powers (Soviet) ensured there was no reunification. In the recent years China’s growing economic influence in this neighbouring country has ensured that these latent ties do not surface again.

Nonetheless, the larger goal of maintaining unity and stability continues to be the guiding principle in China’s aspiration to assimilate minority regions. The change in perceptions at the centre which no longer looks at Inner Mongolia as a peripheral ‘frontier’ but rather as an integral part of its virtual economy is a much welcome stance. Elements of propaganda would continue to be an integral part of the government’s approach since it forms an important part of its political culture, the challenge therefore lies in developing ideological apparatuses which can help tame the divergence and promote a convergence of interests and values, which in turn can help the Inner Mongolian minority nationalities to integrate with the mainland in a much inclusive manner.

On a comparative note, the CCP leadership has done well so far in comparison to the TAR and the XUAR, the IMAR has experienced relative calm. Better governance and sensible leadership has meant sensitive issues have stayed under the carpet but with a repressive tinge. Religious cleavages have not become prominent due to less intervention and emphasis on ethnic discourse. But with more and more resource hunger and with people becoming more and more aware of their identities and interests it is highly questionable whether the Central government will be able to maintain the status quo. Nonetheless, the events in Inner Mongolia suggest that the Mongols have not been strictly assimilated into the ‘Great Family of Nationalities’ while the means are the same as in the other two regions.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **TAIWAN, HONG KONG AND MACAO AND CHINA'S CLAIMS**

## 5.1. CHINESE NATIONALISM AND THE ‘PURSUIT’ OF TAIWAN

Ever since the diplomatic switchover of the legitimate representation of China to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1971 in the United Nations, Taiwan has found it extremely difficult to establish a sovereign identity on its own merit at the global stage. The current status quo of ‘no unification and no independence’ reflects the chaotic sense of identity amongst renegade Taiwanese. Despite utmost priority given to the task of reunification in its constitution, the PRC has not been able to assimilate this ‘sacred territory’ into its United Front. As of 2018, 18 countries out of the world’s 195 sovereign states recognize Taiwan/ROC<sup>97</sup> and 177 recognize the PRC as the “sole legitimate government of China” (if both the PRC and Bhutan are included). Meanwhile, the ROC maintains membership in several government-to-government organisations as an Observer, Associate member or cooperating member/non-member for the purpose of conducting economic exchanges and uses different names to represent itself abroad for instance ROC, Taiwan, Taipei China, Chinese Taipei, Chinese Taipei and Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre in India.

However, in view of the 1992 consensus<sup>98</sup> that established ‘One-China principle’,<sup>99</sup> the two sides have continued to hold negotiations under the term “Cross-strait relationship.” The ROC government has also given up its bid ‘to participate in’ or ‘rejoin’ or to apply for a new membership in the United Nations (since 1993, though there were unsuccessful attempts around 2005). It continues to have some interaction with special agencies under the UN umbrella for example the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Civil

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<sup>97</sup>These include 17 UN member states and the Holy See.

<sup>98</sup> There is a debate within Taiwan on the authenticity of the term 1992 Consensus as Su Chi, the Chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council at that time revealed in 2006 that the term was largely made up for the purposes of resumption of cross-strait negotiations and it would rather be more appropriate to term it as the 1992 Meeting in Hong Kong. Please refer: Shih Hsiu-chuan, Su Chi admits the ‘1992 consensus’ was made up, Taipei Times, Online URL: <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2006/02/22/2003294106>. This debate in Taiwanese media was however refuted by Mainland Chinese media, which argued that the 1992 consensus was a ‘historical truth’ through which Vice Premier Qian Qichen on 24 January 1992 had advocated for the reopening of the ARATS and SEF dialogue to break the political deadlock and resolve differences through peaceful negotiations, “1992 consensus” historical truth, 5 April 2006, Xinhua News, Online URL: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2006-04/05/content\\_4385932.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2006-04/05/content_4385932.htm)

<sup>99</sup>Though there remains a disagreement on their respective meanings of China as the SEF believed that one China meant ROC whose sovereignty and territory extended to the mainland and the ARATS could not accept the formula of ‘one China with different expressions’

Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Nevertheless, the Taiwanese intelligentsia has often expressed its desire that Beijing should display goodwill at opportune moments to facilitate Taipei's admission with a special observer status to non-political international organisations under the UN umbrella for the purpose of normalizing cross-straits relationship (Chang 2011: 18).

China's Taiwan policy is largely driven by its international strategic dynamics. Till 1979, a military solution to the problem had dominated the minds of the leadership. But their official policy of "liberating Taiwan" did not materialize into any operative plans after the US deployed its 7<sup>th</sup> fleet in the straits. Following the Korean War in 1950, when the PLA terminated an attack against Taiwan (1950), Beijing has avoided using military means. In fact it has been argued that Mao's vision became more and more strategic as his central worry was how to play the Taiwan card in the international arena and not merely emphasising on reunification (Ji 2011: 165-198). The strategy that has since been followed is a strategy of protracted confrontation'. Taiwan remains at the heart of China's unification problem.

Though popular sentiments in China exhibit nationalistic trends often deriding the Taiwanese for their lack of love for the motherland/mother country, popular Taiwanese sentiments tend to oscillate between pro-independence and pro-mainland activists; also reflected in the bifurcated leadership between Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) insisting on "Taiwan independence" and the Kuomintang (KMT) opting for "no unification and no independence" formula. Understandably the current Chinese leadership hopes to boost cross-straits economic cooperation under the concept of 'one family' for "the great renewal of the Chinese nation" and is making tremendous efforts in pursuit of integrating Taiwan. In his speech at the 19<sup>th</sup> CPC National Congress, Xi Jinping categorically stated that "we will unite the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and lead them to decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and in the drive to secure the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era" demonstrating his improved resolve. Yet historical experiences remain a big hindrance to this goal as demonstrated below.

## 5.2. CONSOLIDATION OF A 'TAIWANESE' IDENTITY

Historically, Taiwan had been a part of the Chinese mainland through geographical proximity. In the period of the three kingdoms, Sun Quan sent Wei Wen at the head of a ten-thousand-man army to Yi Zhou (Taiwan). The Han, Tang, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties all rose to power by the virtue of first unifying China. From early times the Chinese considered Taiwan as a base for expeditions and commerce. In 1661, the national hero Zheng Chenggong led troops to take back Taiwan and the following year expelled the Dutch, in 1683, Emperor Kangxi dispatched troops led by Shi Lang that defeated Zheng Chenggong's army and realised the unification of Taiwan with the mainland. Taiwan was forced to be ceded to Japan when it defeated China in the Sino-Japanese war (1895), but returned to China after the 1943 agreement between Chiang Kai Shek and president Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In 1954, the United States signed a mutual defence treaty with Chiang Kai-Shek's government that marked the element of separatism in Taiwanese-Chinese relationship.

The creation of a separate Taiwanese identity was driven by its historical memories of return to the mainland after almost 50 years of Japanese colonial rule. The 228 incident of 1947, where the KMT brutally suppressed an indigenous uprising became the cornerstone of Taiwanese identity, which in turn legitimised the quest for an independent Taiwanese nation. The incident has been reinterpreted several times over the last decades in an attempt to appropriate its legacies for political purposes by the two major political parties in Taiwan, especially reviving the 228 hand-in-hand rallies all over the island. This incident can be considered as a watershed which marked the differentiation of the Taiwanese as "we" and the Chinese as the significant "Other" thus establishing and sustaining boundaries between the two. The incident evoked a sense of common suffering and discrimination due to lack of political representation and became the fulcrum for the formation of Taiwanese identity and continues to serve the same purpose even today (Fleischauer 2007: 373-401). It aided the birth of the Taiwanese independence movement whose activists wanted to avenge the martyrs of the uprising.

Later however, as the geopolitical vicissitudes changed, there were attempts by the political leadership to change the discourse of the 228 incident from those originating



from an ethnic clash to a political issue considering that many mainlanders had also been victims of the incident and the martial law of 1987 had been suspended. The “228 Peace Day Association” has held several commemorative events revolving around the incident, the legacy of which is being largely co-opted by the DPP by resorting to the tactics of “delegitimization by shame” of the other party. The KMT has relented to the demands of the “228 movement” (Ziyou Ribao 1988, 3). By 1997, most demands of the movement had been met and 28 February had been declared as a “national day of remembrance.”

The concept of the “*New Taiwanese*” based on the inhabitants of the island of Taiwan became more prominent hereafter, which recognized that all “ethnic subgroups of Taiwan were to be regarded as equally sharing a Taiwanese identity based on a subjective identification with and love for Taiwan” (Corcuff: 188). This was also abetted by Li Denghui’s push for Taiwan’s return to the UN and his ‘educational reforms’ with a 10-year programme to construct a “Taiwan ethnic and cultural identity and a new nation-state building project under the concentric circle concept of history. In 1999, he introduced the “special state to state relationship” setting off high cross-strait tensions leading to the abrupt halt of the Straits Exchange Foundation – Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits (SEF-ARATS) contacts. While both major parties continued building narratives of collective memories around the “228 incident” and other discourses, the Taiwanese identity has exhibited a phase of consolidation in the last two decades.

When compared to the five conditions put by Anthony Smith, modern Taiwan exhibits most of the qualities that form a national entity that is, social ties, shared myths and beliefs, a sense of common history and destiny, modern state apparatus, an intellectual tradition (Wong 2001: 175-206). A survey by the Global Views Magazine in October 2008 showed that 95.9 percent of those surveyed identified themselves as “Taiwanese” whereas 5.4 percent considered themselves of the “Chinese people”. However only 46.6 percent considered themselves “Chinese (from China)”, lower than those regarding themselves as “Asian” (73.5 percent) or “ethnic Chinese” (67.3 percent) (Chang, Op cit, p.19). The Global Views Monthly found that during the five years from 2004 to 2009, Taiwanese who felt that there was no need to unify with the mainland increased by about 30 percent, indicating that more Taiwanese people were

losing the so-called “motherland sentiment” which reflected a rejection of the mainland China’s appeals to support peaceful reunification of Taiwan. (Some graphs at the end of the Chapter illustrate the point better).

### **5.3. ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AS CHINESE ANTIDOTE TO TAIWANESE NATIONALISM**

Despite the above challenge Beijing continues to adhere to the “one country two systems” and advocates the use of functional cooperation as a strategy for integration, as the neo-functionalists believe that economic integration will gradually lead to political integration (Zhao 1997: 177-197). Towards this goal, China’s primary strategy for integrating this renegade province is doled out in economic terms or what has been termed as the political patronage policy whereby Beijing targets the businessmen which is to a certain extent in line with Ma Ying-jeou’s propositions of ‘economy first and politics later’.

In general, ‘harmonious development’ has been its mantra since 2004. With the ascendance of the ‘fourth generation’ leaders, Jiang Zemin’s policy of ‘non-contact’ was done away with and supplanted by engagement as Jiang’s timetable for reunification was dropped. Consequently, in the mid-2000s several trade concessions were given; though not hailed by the DPP which dreaded that trade concessions would entice Taiwanese to elect KMT.

Nonetheless, a forward push to Beijing’s strategy on Taiwan was provided by KMT’s return to power in 2008, which endorsed the ‘Five Points Common Vision’. Based on the ‘1992 consensus’ both sides narrowed down on 23 agreements via the ARATS and the SEF, which included the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) inked between Chen Yunlin, President of the mainland’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits, and Chiang Pin-kung, Chairman of Taiwan’s Straits Exchange Foundation and the Service Trade Agreement. In effect the signing of ECFA was supposed to usher in a new era for both sides as well as on stability of East Asia. It was not only meant to enable Taiwan to recover from the financial crisis, but also symbolise a response from both sides to pursue a more integrated regional economic model of development. Perceptions were however divided on whether such

agreement was solely oriented towards unification or allowing two systems (*liangan yi jiazi*).<sup>100</sup>

Broadly speaking the economic engagements under President Ma Ying-jeou, especially under the arrangements of ECFA, were meant to augur a more pro-China stance, but these benefits came to be questioned during his second term in the office. The DPP especially interpreted Beijing's beneficiary treatment of Taiwan as "bullying or bribing" tactics with the ultimate goal of annexing Taiwan. Skeptics called the ECFA a 'trap', (Hickey 2011: 243). Even mainland analysts conceded that the ECFA was more favourable to the interests of the mainland-

"The business opportunities and benefits created by the ECFA will keep Taiwan's public more positive about the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and deter "Taiwan independence" activities of the Democratic Progressive Party and the Taiwan Solidarity Union, which have organized street demonstrations and taken legislative measures in attempt to block the approval of the ECFA." (Yunguang & Xin 2016)

These reservations seemed to have some credence of late. The growing economic antagonism is visible in the popular backlash for instance to that of the CSSTA, leading to widespread protests in 2014. The incident was allegedly a reaction to the article published in the *Global Times* on 21 February 2014 titled '*Beijing's strategy to Buy Taiwan: coerced unification without firing a shot*'. The growing anxiety amongst Taiwanese over the rise of the mainland China and Taiwan's economic dependence on it was visible in the manifestation of movements like the Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan in May 2014 (Zhong 2016: 336-352). New reports reveal that Taiwanese businesses were getting hampered as a result of the advance of Chinese state-owned enterprises and other local private firms (Yi-wen Yu et al, Ibid) and the business's property of these traders was also attacked.

Beijing for its part has continued to offer generous loans to Taiwanese businessmen but when perceived against the indirect pressures that the locals create it seems to be a

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<sup>100</sup>For more information see Xin Qi, 'Bawo jiyu, cujin liangan guanxi heping fazhan' (catching the opportunity and promoting peaceful development of cross-strait relations) paper presented at a symposium on Peaceful Development of Cross-Strait Relations and Opportunity Management, Beijing, 31 August 2009; Zhu Weidong, 'Guanyu liangan heping xieyi de jiben neirong' (On the basic contents of cross-strait peace agreement), paper presented at the First Forum of Cross-Strait Peace, Shanghai, 11-12 October 2013.

hindrance for the Taiwanese (Brown 2005: 83-90). Some scholars like Lee Chun Yi believe that the business community (TBAs) exerts some influence in shaping the decisions of local governments through a vibrant relationship with local government authorities, others argue that they are not so influential (Schubert 2013: 51-79). There are no substantial indications on how effectively these organisations influence the domestic discourse on cross-Straits relationship either.

#### **5.4. LEADERSHIP DILEMMA AND THE INTERNAL STRUGGLE IN TAIWAN**

Though it's an established fact that Mao lost the opportunity to assimilate Taiwan right in the beginning, 1979 onwards mainland has declared its strict resolve to observe the 'One country, two systems' policy. Consequently, there have been responses from the Taiwanese leadership. In 1987 Chiang Ching-kuo opened opportunities for Taiwanese to visit relatives in mainland, in 1991 Taiwan issued a set of guiding principles for unification stating the position that both sides belong to one China and laid out a three-stage policy – short-term, medium-term and long-term for achieving reunification. Ever since, regular meetings between SEF and ARATS have been taking place.

New challenges emerged as the DPP, which advocates independence came to power on 20 May 2000. Though initially Chen Shui-bian tried to reconcile with the Chinese government by announcing his "Four Never and One No" policy<sup>101</sup>, he later retracted as he felt more secure in power and was ready to initiate more extreme policies. He became complicit in pro-independence plots by deliberately seeking to de-emphasize Taiwan's Chinese roots and peddled Lee Teng Hui's line, "China is China and Taiwan is Taiwan".

Cooperative relations resumed again after 2008, following the Nationalists return to power. Taiwanese investment in mainland jettisoned to US\$13.3 billion in 2010 alone

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<sup>101</sup> The constitution will never contain a clause promising a referendum on Taiwanese independence, The name of Republic of China will never be changed and the policy of unification will never be abrogated, if the mainland does not use force against it, Taiwan will never declare independence, in light of the tension aroused by Lee Teng Hui's two states theory, the government will avoid making any more trouble.

(Elleman 2013: 276). And even though they continued to tussle over the Spratlys, they came together to establish a “united front” against any other claimants to the region stating that “historically, there is no question that the Paracels and Spratlys did not belong to China.” In May 2012, both sides agreed on the same map to define Chinese territories published by the Nationalist Government. Relations remained cooperative on other issues but a new reason for tension now has been the immigrant population that creates antagonism based on ethnic policies. Though ethnic clashes remained high on agenda even earlier, these exacerbated with the renewed waves of migration.<sup>102</sup> Even marriages with mainland Chinese are a matter of discord. Ethnic dispositions are often harmful as the Taiwanese remain prejudiced against the mainlanders, Chinese Communist party, cross-strait investment or even made-in-China products (Chang Tsai 2011: 243-268).

These ethnic divisions are most perceptible in the history textbooks for Taiwan’s schools which have tended to be divided along the Blue/Green lines – the former indicating orthodox KMT nationalism, the latter kind of pro-independence stance associated with the DPP. The KMT account still adheres largely to the official CCP account which assumes the cultural superiority of mainstream Han China that enabled it to grow through the charismatic appeal of its culture and civilisation. The KMT tends to evince little interest in Taiwan’s history prior to the seventeenth century or in the cultures of the indigenous tribes. In contrast, the Green camp has emphasised all those aspects of the islands’ past that serve to diminish the importance of the Chinese connection (Vickers: 2008, pp. 65-86) and developing a rhetoric that centres around ‘Knowing Taiwan’ (‘Renshi Taiwan’) and its multicultural nature. Even the KMT is represented as worse than the Japanese colonialists who preceded them.

## **5.5. MILITARY BUILD-UP AND THE PROSPECTS OF INTEGRATION**

During the Mao era, the primary aim for military entanglement was to counter blockade warfare or use sabotage, but the cost was extremely high. In 1962, Taiwan’s

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<sup>102</sup> The majority of Han Chinese living in Taiwan are part of the Hokkein ethnic group, whose ancestors came from the Fujian Province. Another wave of Hakka moved to Taiwan from Guangdong province.

surveillance blockade was extended to all the SLOCs surrounding the East and South China Seas. Several armed conflicts were recorded off the coast resulting in counter-blockades (Ji 2011: 163-197). In 1979, “peaceful reunification” was favoured as a strategy in place of liberation. Chiang’s “no-contact” policy officially ended in 1983 marking the beginning of negotiations. Besides the 1992 consensus, Jiang’s Eight-point Declaration (1995) was taken as a reference point for Taiwan policy based on “peace inducement.” This drastically reduced the military option as the message was sent out that “Chinese do not fight the Chinese” and reflected Jiang’s realisation that military means would estrange the local people.

Nonetheless, two incidents in 1999 led to the altering of this approach. First, the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was bombed and secondly, Lee Teng Hui announced his support for the two-state thesis. Tensions heightened in 2004-05 boosting military preparedness though neither side was equipped sufficiently. Nevertheless, both becoming rich as well as military preparedness achieved significance in policy-making after this stark realisation. S-300 missiles were deployed against a perceived threat from Taiwan and air-raid exercises were conducted in 2002. Moreover, the Anti-secession law was passed under Hu’s initiative to counter the threat of *de jure* independence which highlighted three principles: “peaceful negotiation should be sought, preparation for war should continue and patience should be exercised.”

Considering the fact that war was considered the last option a strategy of de-warization was adopted to reduce the level of militarization in the Straits. Beijing hoped to establish minimum mutually assured destruction (MAD) capabilities anticipating American intervention in Taiwan. Only occasionally voices were raised on US arms sale to Taiwan. Despite the fact that in 1954, the United States signed a so-called mutual defence treaty with Chiang Kai-shek’s government, and thereafter has signed three Joint Communiques in 1972, 1978, 1982 and the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, US official position has been “that there is only one China and that Taiwan is a part of China and the PRC is the only legal government of China.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> US maintains a non-government relationship with Taiwan (a formal embassy has recently been opened under The Trump administration), US will reduce the quantity and quality of its weapons sale to Taiwan step by step, US believes that differences between the two sides should be resolved peacefully.

Notwithstanding, a report of the US office of the Secretary of Defence noted that “by December 2009, the PLA had deployed between 1050 and 1150 CSS-6 and CSS-7 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) to units stationed opposite to Taiwan” (US Department of Defence 2010). Currently the number would near 1400 missiles. Several long-range cruise missiles had been deployed along with launch vehicles. Taiwanese sources indicated that in April 2010 the PLAN conducted an annual exercise across the Taiwan Strait and practiced a simulated invasion against Taiwan. China in any response to military conflict has the capability to combine a mix of strategies like “military intimidation, blockade, surgical strikes, asymmetric warfare and amphibious invasion (Cheng 2012).” China has several airfields and operating locations for instance in the Nanjing Military Region alone it has more than 40 airfields with airways longer than 7000 feet supporting fighter and aircraft facilities.

Taiwan on the other hand has 12 airbases with more than 23 runways. To counter capabilities of the mainland, Taiwan deploys LACMS and hence total de-warization is not possible. In fact Taiwan under Tsai has responded to China’s military build-up by developing missiles and interceptors of its own that could reduce Beijing’s military advantage. Though Taiwan’s capabilities remain asymmetrical, yet Hsiung Feng IIE missiles built in Taiwan have been deployed to hit military bases in China up to 1,500km (932 miles) away and stepped up production of its indigenous Wan Chien air-to-ground cruise missiles to more than 100. It has also backed up interception missiles and its early warning radar system. Taiwan is also hoping to get diesel-electric submarine technology from the US which could enhance its capabilities against the missile arsenal placed by China (Associated Press 2018).

## **5.6. PROSPECTS OF INTEGRATION**

In his talks with Xiao Wanchang, Chairman of the Cross-Straits Common Market Foundation of Taiwan, Xi Jinping emphasised that “All of us whether from the mainland or Taiwan, are members of the Chinese nation, and both economies are that of the Chinese nation. Giving more consideration to the needs and interests of our Taiwan compatriots, we will offer the same treatment to Taiwan enterprises as to the mainland enterprises in the fields of investment and economic cooperation sooner rather than later, and provide greater scope for enhancing cross-straits economic

cooperation” (Xi Jinping 2014: 252-255). This statement reflects a continuity of approach as far as the national goals of the leadership are concerned.

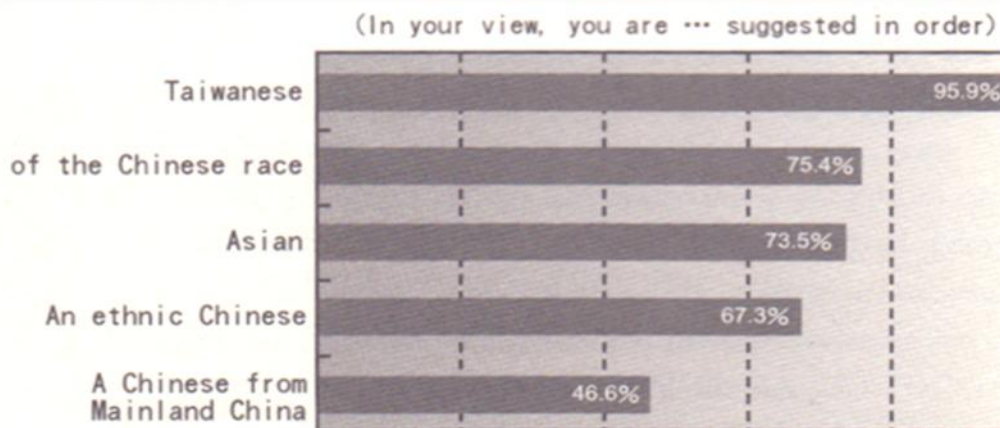
Under the larger historic mission of the “reunification of the motherland,” the leadership has made stringent efforts to maintain peaceful growth of cross-Straits relations to benefit both sides (Xi Jinping 2013: 40-46). In addition, Xi Jinping in his meetings with officials and delegations from Taiwan has used terms such as ‘two shores, one close family’ (*liangan yijia qin*) and ‘both sides effecting the Chinese dream’ (*gongyuan zhongguo meng*) to convey the priority that he gives to this task. Even his predecessor Hu Jintao had laid top priority on “building mutual trust” for the purpose of gradual integration of the Taiwan province recognising that the fundamental national security interests of China were involved. In his ‘Six point Proposal’ Hu emphasised the need for more political dialogue and ways to accommodate Taiwan’s aspiration to international space (Hu 2012: 31-50). The need to rein in the autonomy of the island has been ever greater since China does not want it to be used as an ‘unsinkable aircraft carrier’ (Nathan 1996: 87-93) as in the past.

Though Ma Ying-jeou had emphasised the need for respecting reality, DPP’s ideology (though difference of opinion exists within the Party) lays heavy emphasis on Taiwanese nationalism and the notion of Taiwan that is culturally and politically distinct from mainland China. President Tsai Ing-wen is well aware of the extant perplexities in handling the Mainland affairs as she had previously admitted that the party’s unworkable mainland policy, especially under Chen Shui-bian which included a referendum on joining the United Nations and revision of textbooks to indicate separation of Chinese and Taiwanese history, was one of the main reasons that prevented electoral victory in the two-in-one 2012 elections, since he chastised Beijing’s gestures as united front tactics (Gang Lin 2016: 321-335). So of late President Tsai has tried to reassure Beijing and the international community of her support for a sustainable relationship based between the two sides which reflects existing realities (Casey 2016) and called for responsibility from both sides “to do their utmost to find mutually acceptable ways to interact ... and ensure no provocation and no surprises” (Hunt and Stout: 17 January 2016).



However, the Chinese keeps stoking nationalist flames which present a difficult challenge to the current leadership. In addition, the internet is teeming with instances of popular nationalism in China. For instance, since January 2016, the group members of 'Little Pink' have been bombarding social media en masse against pop-singer Chou Tzu-yu, for his audacity to hold the Taiwanese national flag on a television show, a demeanour that Beijing considered treasonous and accused her of supporting Taiwanese independence. Chinese netizens also bombarded Tsai Ing-wen's Facebook page using derogatory terms like 'pro-independence dogs' to ridicule her political stand (Ruan: 2016).

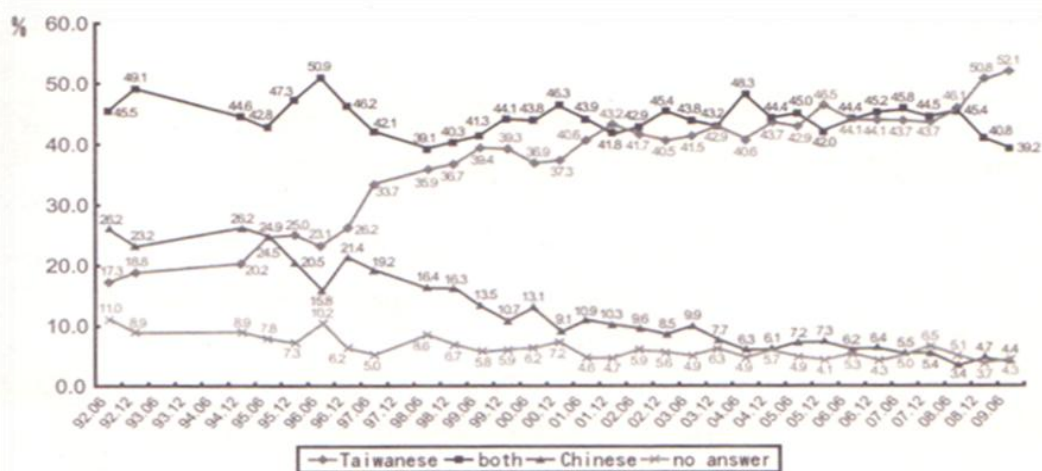
Thousands of weibo posts also rebuked Leon Dai for supporting Taiwanese and Hong Kong independence and leading the youth astray. Popular statements reflect that the common perceptions support the Party's understanding on assimilation of the province while maintaining placid people-to-people relations. However this is not to convey that Chinese nationalism subsumes all sections of thought in the Chinese society, most people still endorse it as a policy for which they have no other option or what some media analysts call the birdcage generation which is unable to escape from state control. The DPP's pro-independence stance may remain a cause for concern for the Chinese leadership as it tries to constrict Taiwan out of the international arena, especially given China's international stature as well as Xi's strong leadership. For now the two main aims remain winning the majority support of the local people in Taiwan for peaceful reunification and reducing Taiwan's dependence on the US. The new strategic realignment in the Indo-pacific region and China's policy of peaceful development will shape the future of Taiwan (Singh 2017)



Source: Survey Center, Global Views Monthly

Graph 1: Taiwan people's self-identification

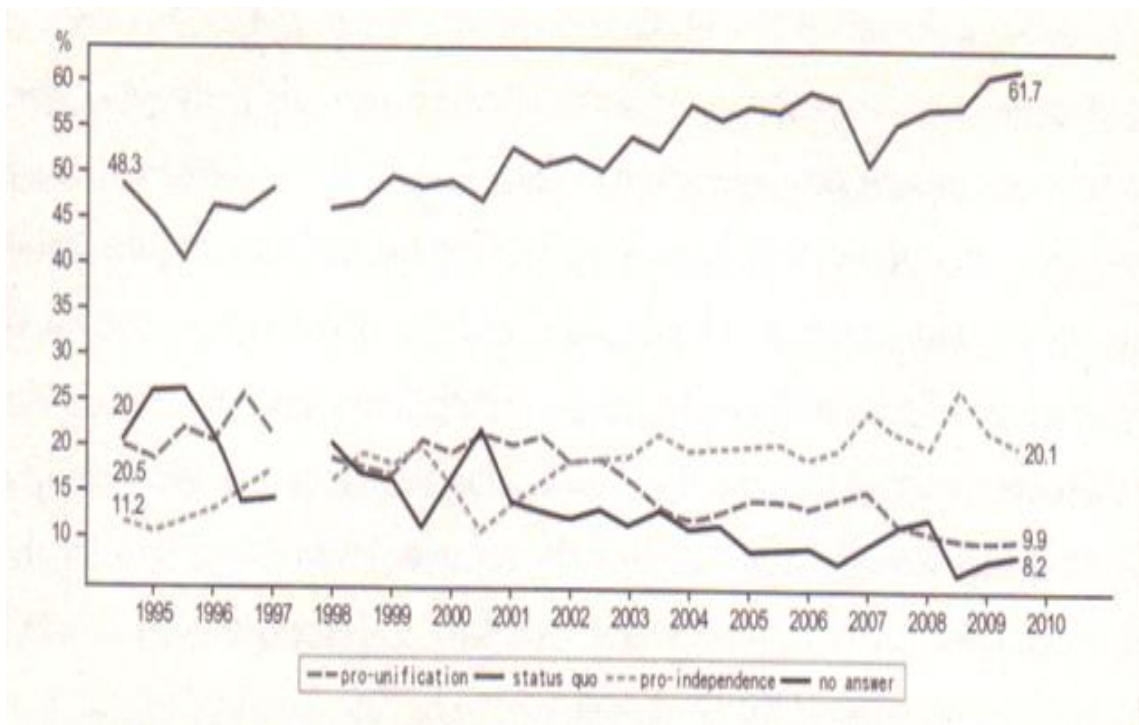
GRAPH 1: Global Views Magazine 2008, Source: Far Eastern Group White Paper



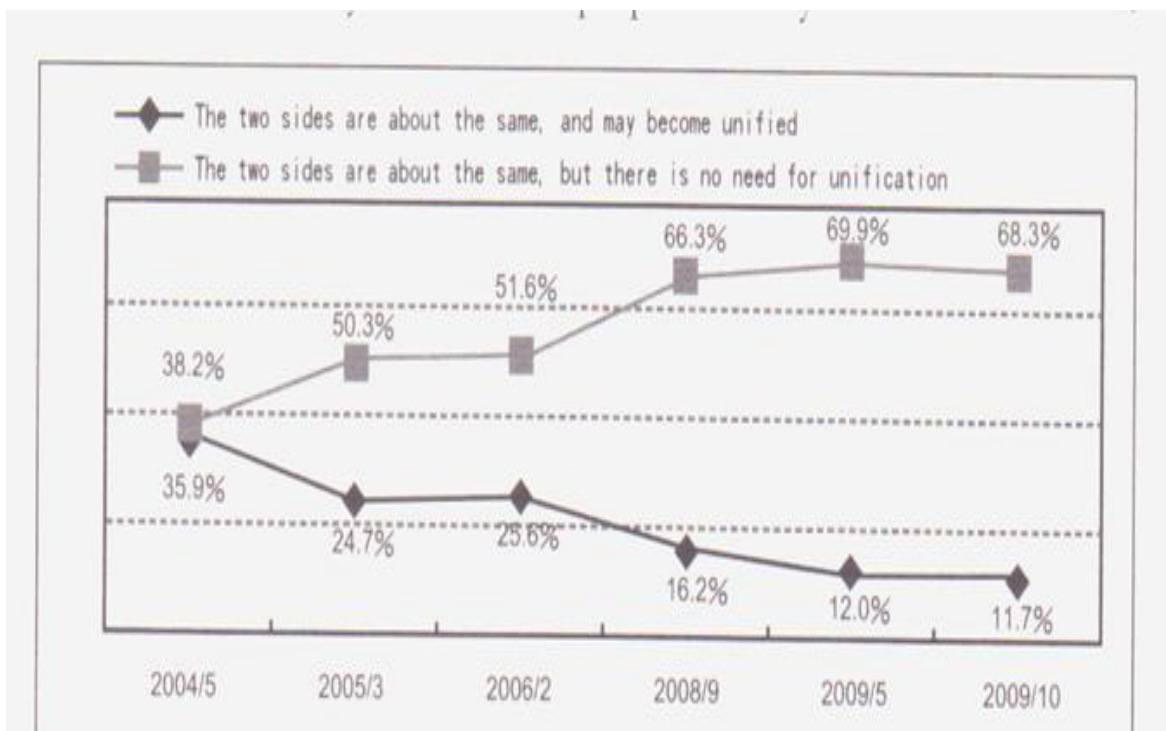
Source: The Election Study Center of National Chengchi University, on maior political attitudes

Graph 2: Taiwan people's identification as Taiwanese or Chinese: trend (1992-2009.05)

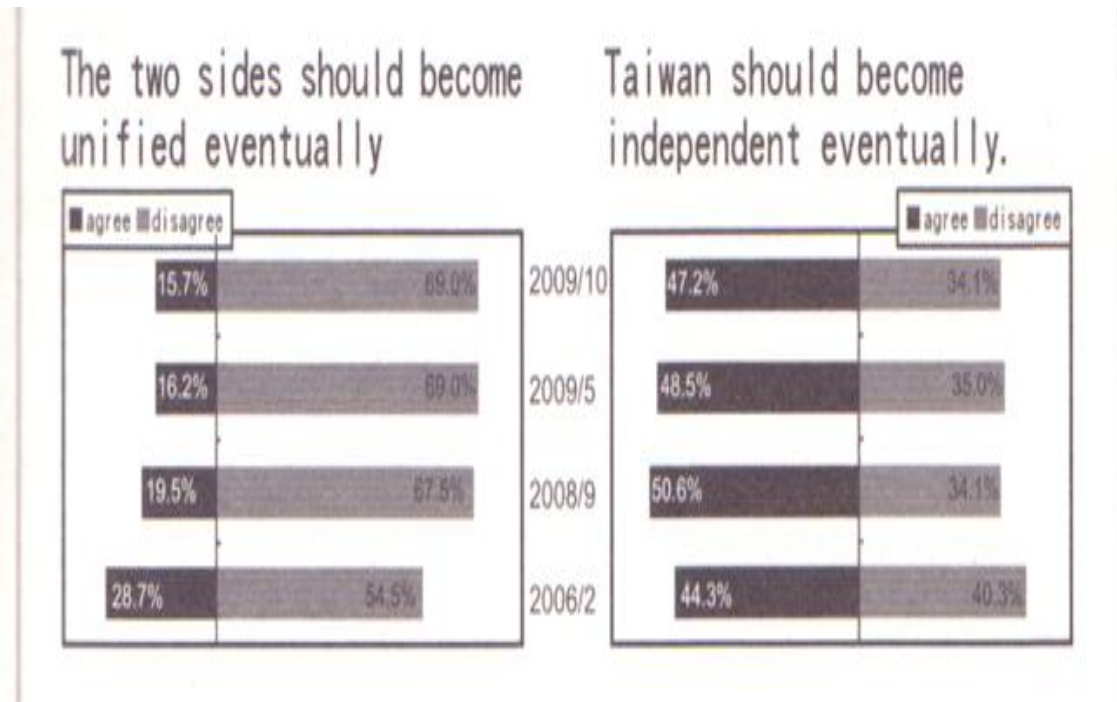
GRAPH 2: Far Eastern Group White Paper



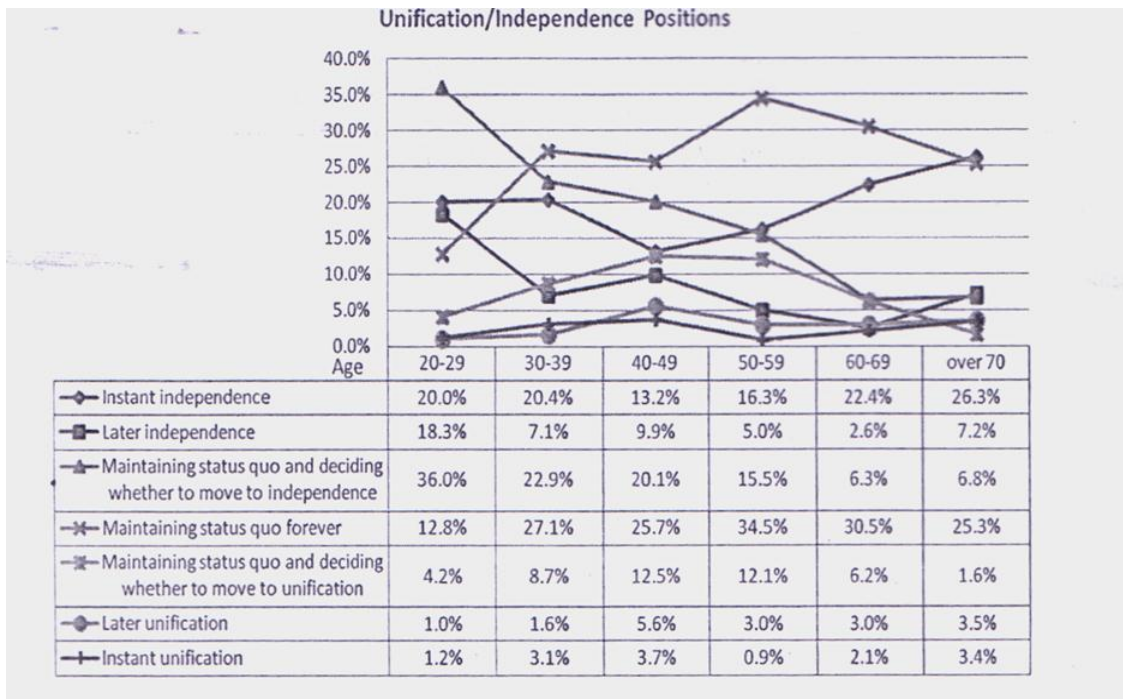
Graph 3: Taiwan's people's position on unification and independence (1994-2009),  
 Source: Election Study Center of National Chengchi University



GRAPH 4 : Taiwan's people consider unification necessary or not, Source: Survey Center, Global Views Monthly



Graph 5: Taiwan's people's views on future of the two sides, Source: Survey, Global Views Monthly



GRAPH 6: Database of Center for Taiwan Studies, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

## PART II

### 5.7. INTEGRATING HONG KONG AND MACAU AND CHINA'S DISCURSIVE EXPERIENCE

A nation's experience with its history and narrativization of its culture are often highly contested as they describe very explicitly what a nation considers as acceptable norms and what a nation considers impingements on its sovereignty. In the Chinese case the attempts at history writing have been severely hampered by its semi-colonial experiences during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and by the propagation of largely western narratives and later even domestic imperatives of nation-building. In recent times there has been a revival of attempts by various Chinese scholars to present the world with an indigenous version of the country's experiences with the West as well as the rest of the world; an attempt to claim their discursive rights largely described as the *hanyu quan* (Gao 2018: 1). It represents both the right to knowledge as well as the right to production of knowledge to a country. This makeover of history is especially relevant in the Case of Hong Kong and Macao where identity issues have traditionally manifested themselves in a complex relationship between colonialism, Chinese nationalism and local identity characterised by hybrid elite associations.

Hong Kong and Macao's geographical location at the political and cultural edge of two colonial empires fostered a unique cooperation between the bourgeoisie and the colonial government which continue to define their relationship with the mainland even after the PRC was established (Carroll 2005: 146-164). The special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau were officially transferred to the PRC under the "One country, two systems" outlined by Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984<sup>104</sup> and the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration in 1999 respectively. The Chinese government openly negated the three unequal treaties and maintained that "Hong Kong and Macao had always been a part of China." Instead of forced suppression of their existing political systems, the central government allowed the two to preserve its own economic and political systems and adopt special policies for a

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<sup>104</sup>On 18 September 1984 after 22 rounds of talks, an agreement on the Hong Kong question was initiated and duly signed on 19 December 1984. The agreement includes a main document and three annexes. The Sino-British Joint declaration came into effect on 27 May 1985 when the two governments exchanged their instruments of ratification in Beijing.

considerable period of time (till 2047) from 1 July 1997 onwards (Diplomacy of Contemporary China, 1940: 465). This meant that Hong Kong was allowed to retain the Hong Kong Dollar and traditional Chinese characters. The Chinese government claimed that it gave due regard to the legitimate interests of the parties concerned based on the principles of seeking truth from fact. The Joint Declaration invested the HKSAR with “executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication.”<sup>105</sup> Hong Kong provided a role model for settling the question of Macao, including the Taipa Island and Coloane Island that used to be under the jurisdiction of Xiangshan County, Guangdong province. The Portuguese President Antonio dos Santos Ramalho Earnes paid a visit to China in 1985, during which China and the Portugal agreed to hold negotiations in the near future for resolving the question of Macao.

The societal division between those who supported the Hong Kong’s assimilation into mainland China and those who left in huge numbers to find a new home due to their allegiance to values of democracy and free speech continues to this day. Most scholars argue that difference in cultures confine Hong Kong and hamper Chinese nationalism; instead local nationalism based on a sense of superiority for their own culture pervades amongst the locals denoted by the term *heunggongyahn* (Honkongese as contrasted to the term *junggwokyah*n/Chinese) which is also posited against the ‘others’ of the local colonial European elite. However, the development of a local Hong Kong identity can be deduced since colonial times when mutability of the border with the mainland often reinforced local identity. This was further consolidated during crucial times like the 1967 riots, when the locals buttressed the colonial government against mainlanders. At the same time several cases arguing in favour of dual allegiances to both Hong Kong and Mainland China have also come to fore, for instance, in the case of Ho Kai who participated in the 1911 Revolution, has often been dubbed a “collaborationist patriot” or a conditional revolutionary or a ‘curious mixture of a Chinese nationalist and a running dog of Western imperialism.’

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<sup>105</sup> The government of the HKSAR would be composed by local inhabitants. The chief executive was to be appointed by the Central People’s Government on the basis of the results of the election or consultations held locally.

The ironical relationship between colonial education and the emphasis on citizenship was starkly visible in his case as his grooming into western education actually aided the goals of Chinese nationalism.<sup>106</sup> Hong Kong Chinese played a key role in the 1911 as they provided through their media perhaps the first open message of nationalism to the Chinese people. It has also been contended elsewhere in the thesis that though the decades between the 1960s and the 1990s saw massive changes in the education system to curtail social unpredictability; the school curriculum was not tampered with. Reform was seldom pursued with any determination since it would have invited disapproval that could seriously humble the government (Vickers, Kan and Morris: 2003: 95-111).

Some scholars have also revealed the racial discrimination between the foreigners and the Chinese; while the Western narratives uphold that the Chinese endorsed a 'clannish exclusivism' which meant that they were not interested in the activities of the outsiders in Hong Kong and mostly stayed away from the European social and cultural activities, the Chinese have on the contrary claimed that humiliated by European oppression the Chinese continuously strove to break down the racial barriers between themselves and the Europeans (Welsh 1993: 382). By the 1980s and 1990s the emphasis on skill oriented approaches had a critical impact on the study of history as data based questions were introduced and politically controversial questions were avoided; though the nature of 'controversial content' was redefined.

Largely a Hong Kong identity began to crystalize around the 1970s given three crucial events: first a new generation of Hong-Kong born generation matured who despite their initial inhibitions to associate with the mainland, they were forcefully accommodated post Cultural Revolution. Second, Governor MacLehose granted more social rights to Hong Kong residents, including - public housing, instituting labour laws to make productions processes more consistent with international labour

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<sup>106</sup>He was quoted to have mentioned his concerns for his motherland in a letter to the editor of the Hong Kong *China Mail* in 1887, "I deeply sympathise with China in every wrong which she has suffered and I long with every true-hearted China-man for the time to come when China shall take her place among the foremost nations and her people be welcomed and esteemed everywhere." He exercised great influence over the ideas of Sun Yatsen and participated in the Chinese revolutionary movement by founding the Revive China society (Xingzhonghui). Yet his contribution is not lauded domestically since his collaboration with the British in favour of his comprador interest eventually won.



conventions, increasing welfare expenditure and expanded free education for all till nine years. The third crucial factor was a new wave of migrants from the inland. The mass media, especially popular TV dramas, played an important role in portraying the “old” Hong Kong residents as urban, hardworking, upwardly mobile and intelligent while stereotyping the new immigrants from mainland China as rural, undisciplined, unmotivated and ignorant.

Local commentaries comparing the love for Chinese tradition and fears of mainland foods coming into Hong Kong with their substandard ingredients have vocalised the divide between Hong Kong’s “First World” status against “Third World” China (Mathews, Ma and Lui, 2008: 3). The “Hong Kong man” of the 1980s was a phase when residents of Hong Kong were incited into political consciousness by the 4 June 1989 Beijing massacre. The people of Hong Kong thus developed a sense of identity and democratization in early 1990s (Rogers Louis 1997: 1052-1084). Despite seventeen years of attempts at assimilation into the Chinese mainland territory, only 31 per cent consider themselves part of the mainland; while 67 per cent prefer to relate to Hong Kong (poll survey on ethnic identity).

Hong Kong still continues to bear the characteristics of the China’s port system that it inherited initially. In wake of the recent events like the 2014 Umbrella revolution, which are a reflection of the local Hongkongese nationalism based on the cry for democracy as opposed to the authoritarian Chinese nationalism, it is significant to probe how successful the assimilation of these two regions has been and whether the Chinese state has succeeded in inculcating Chinese identity amongst the Hong Kong and Macao citizens and whether transnationalism has been a source of challenge to them.

## **5.8. HISTORICAL IMPRINTS OF THE BRITISH LEGACY**

As soon as the PRC gained independence, there was no attempt made to liberate Hong Kong and Macao. Robert Black, reflectd on the independence time that “there has been no suggestion of an intention to ‘liberate’ Hong Kong at an early date.” In fact according to a confidential report it was mentioned that the Chinese retrieval of Hong Kong would happen after the “liberation of Tibet and Taiwan” (J. F. Nicoll, Top



Secret, No.23, July 17, 1950, H K secretariat 5/1162/46). UN intervention was considered but China realised it had not much to gain from the internationalisation of the issue. What has been highlighted often in historical accounts is China's confidence that History was on its side (Louis 1997: 1084). The Chinese government trusted on bonds of ethnicity, an approach they still seem to be maintaining in case of present day Taiwan.

At the time of the 1980s when a crisis of legitimacy struck the CCP, the Hong Kong colonial government held steadfast onto the administration. While the state in the mainland adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology to encourage patriotism which was extended to schools under the Patriotic education campaign, the Hong Kong government adopted an approach of 'de-politicisation' restricting dialogue on politics (Fairbrother 2003: 605).

No major incident of opposition surfaced till the 1990s. This has been credited to state-building practices through inculcation of political attitudes, though Fairbrother has argued two simultaneous trends existed in Hong Kong: "the mainland state desired students to be patriotic and nationalistic, while the Hong Kong colonial regime preferred students whose sentiments toward the nation were weak." The Chinese government showed an extremely sensitive attitude to history textbooks with revisions and deletions being made systematically. Largely, the perceived indoctrination by the state emphasised on demonstrating love for the party above and beyond the love for the nation.

## **5.9. RETURN TO THE MOTHERLAND**

Just as with most other colonial territories, the transfer of Hong Kong was preceded by a gamut of legal and populist measures to ensure a smooth transition under the 'one country two systems' formula. Host of official transmissions in 1995 and 1996 projected a heavy sense of nationalism pronouncing Hong Kong as a part of China. Summarizing the evaluations of six hundred of Hong Kong's existing laws, the Legal sub-group of the Preliminary Working Committee for setting up the preparatory of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was depicted as on a course of glory and responsibility (Lee 2000: 233). The larger rhetoric emphasised the notion of the

‘return to the motherland’ as opposed to the ‘handover’ of its territory and popular daily’s like Xinhua carried plethora of articles disassociating its cultural and economic progress from its colonial lineage exhorting that since the 1970s forces pushing Hong Kong’s economic development have come mainly from the Chinese interior.<sup>107</sup> Most mainstream media articles portrayed the removal of British rule as a blessing for Hong Kong and depicted the assimilation as an opportunity for ethnic unity and expression of the self-reliance and self-strengthening of the Chinese (Ibid). Notable in this regard was Jiang Zemin’s speech in 1997 where he recounted the experience of the return of Hong Kong as a “major event that is forever worth commemorating in the history of the development of the Chinese nation as the people of Hong Kong have been subjected to the test of changing times and gotten accustomed to the changes despite the Asian financial crisis due to their deep love for the motherland” (China Daily 2007). He expressed the delight of the central government in Deng Xiaoping’s words that “Hong Kong people can administer Hong Kong well” and that “Hong Kong compatriots were adept at carrying out the glorious traditions of loving the motherland and fulfilling their sacred rights and responsibilities of upholding the dignity of their motherland by supporting the ‘one country two systems’ arrangement and the Basic Law of Hong Kong.” Jiang zemin also highlighted how Hong Kong’s destiny was closely linked to the motherland and the Chinese government went all out in supporting the HKSAR government in its counter-measures, particularly in its efforts to maintain the currency peg and the overall stability in Hong Kong. He further expressed hope for a bright future of Hong Kong as China’s pearl in the lap of the South China Sea.

At the same time, some local media coverage in Hong Kong also presented a picture of national belonging as succumbing to state propaganda by the Hong Kong citizens. The struggle for legitimacy has become manifest in the two streams of histories being presented to the local citizens of Hong Kong over the last decade. Students are forced to learn about both their historical global identity as well as the recent national history

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<sup>107</sup>This sentiment was also vocalised in the Chinese government’s White Paper on Hong Kong which articulated that under the ‘one country two systems, the Chinese government successfully solved the question of Hong Kong through diplomatic negotiations and resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1 1997 fulfilling the common aspiration of the Chinese people for the recovery of Hong Kong...Hong Kong’s return to the motherland turned “one country two systems” from a scientific concept into vivid reality.

(Dobbs: 2014). Education in schools and universities remains at the heart of this tussle between national and regional historiography. On 1 July 2003, 500,000 people in Hong Kong protested against the Hong Kong regional government, a step that was essentially aimed against the Sinification of Hong Kong and such instances were repeated again in 2012.

## **5.10. CRYSTALLIZATION OF THE SINO-HONGKONGESE IDENTITY**

Hong Kong's geographical position has provided it an edge in dealing with the mainland as it has been seen as one of the most reclusive parts of the Chinese territorial empire. And though it has remained as one of the most crucial elements of China's relationship with Japan, the Chinese attitude could be summed up by Mao's negligent approach (Roger Louis, Op Cit). A complex but often under-estimated relationship exists between Hong Kong and Japan. The Japanese have historically influenced Hong Kong due to economic and cultural exchange during the colonial period. In light of this, the state has retained the local dynamics under 'de-politicisation' so that historical memories do not mar an environment conducive to economic activity and keeping the Japanese reference out of the school curriculum.

The dichotomy that was generated during the past few decades due to Hong Kong's global access and the pulls of nationalism continues to manifest itself in resistance to state supremacy. In a survey conducted by Gregory P. Fairbrother on the "Effects of Political Education and critical Thinking on Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese University Students' National Attitudes" it was found that "with the idea of the mainland state desiring the younger generation to form patriotic attitudes and the Hong Kong colonial state wishing students to hold neutral sentiment toward their nation, the mean scores of the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese groups on the patriotism and nationalism scales were indicative that, on an average, attitudes were the most part as the respective states would have desired. As presented below in the table, on a scale from one to five, the Hong Kong group average on the patriotism scale was 3.04, just above neutral and on the nationalism scale was 2.93, just below neutral" (Fairbrother 2003: 605-620).

TABLE I. Descriptive statistics and descriptions of dependent variables<sup>a</sup>

National attitude scales	Hong Kong	Mainland China	Descriptions
Patriotism** ( $\alpha = 0.94\pm 2$ )	3.04 (0.40)	3.05 (0.51)	Attitudes toward the nation without reference to other nations
Nationalism*** ( $\alpha = 0.8312$ )	2.93 (0.44)	3.34 (0.38)	Attitudes toward the nation with reference to other nations
Chinese people*** ( $\alpha = 0.7760$ )	2.80 (0.44)	3.42 (0.66)	A favourable impression of the Chinese people
Emotions*** ( $\alpha = 0.8888$ )	3.15 (0.51)	4.41 (0.50)	An emotional attachment to the nation and its symbols
Duty*** ( $\alpha = 0.8774$ )	3.34 (0.50)	4.30 (0.54)	A sense of duty toward the nation
Nation first*** ( $\alpha = 0.8168$ )	2.81 (0.45)	3.77 (0.58)	A perception that the nation's interests come before local or individual interests
Nation better* ( $\alpha = 0.8108$ )	2.92 (0.56)	3.05 (0.77)	A perception that China is superior to other nations
National power*** ( $\alpha = 0.8291$ )	3.56 (0.48)	4.12 (0.53)	A desire for China to be more powerful
Internationalism*** ( $\alpha = 0.7053$ )	2.89 (0.40)	3.46 (0.61)	A perception that patriotism should come before internationalism
<i>n</i>	250	275	

\* Means are on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high); standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> Cronbach alpha reliability statistics shown for national attitude scales. Differences between Hong Kong and Mainland groups significant at \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  (two-tailed).

This feeds into the argument made by several scholars who have called Hong Kong as the anachronism in the modern world. Even previously Jiang Zemin had called for the correct guidance of the Hong Kong Diaoyutai movement in October 1996. Expressions of protest against Japan on historical and territorial issues were covertly encouraged in Hong Kong as a way of both cultivating “nationalism” and “patriotism” in Hong Kong and at the same time keeping the Japanese on edge.

The emphasis on nation-building has continued with Xi Jinping emphatically asserting that the central government would continue to implement the policy of “one country, two systems” in conformity with the Basic Law.<sup>108</sup> He even praised Leung Chun-ying for being both ingenious and realistic and assured that there would be no change in the policy of the central government’s tenacity to stand with the chief executive and the HKSAR government. Similarly, in the case of Macao, Xi Jinping conveyed a similar message to Fernando Chui Sai. He further emphasised that HKSAR and MSAR are closely related by destiny to the Chinese mainland and are fundamental to the project of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and that he hopes to build consensus through qualitative discussions and adhere to the norms of universal suffrage for the election of the chief executive and other members of the local government (Xi Jinping 2014: 247-251).

The central leadership has been cognisant of the fact that Hong Kong’s mass media’s turn to China is less due to the mandates of the state than to the pull and lure of the market, both being congruent at the same time. Mass media development in Hong Kong television include the increasing export of Hong Kong television programs to other East Asian countries and within China which has seen increasing dependence of the commercial Hong Kong TV stations on the mainland Chinese market for their present and anticipated future profits. With serials like the “The Hong Kong Legend” and the “Great Times” the distinction between mainlanders and Hongkongers has been weakened by a process of selective representation. Such serial and dramas have

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<sup>108</sup>The HKSAR exercises a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the law, and is vested with executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication under Article 31. The previous capitalist system and way of life remain unchanged and most laws continue to apply. See Full Text: Chinese State Council White Paper on ‘One Country, two systems’ policy in Hong Kong.

been utilised to depict a sharp Sino-Hong Kong identity and suppressing politically incorrect viewpoints.

The last two decades have witnessed what is termed as “the mediated re-sinicization of Hong Kong identity” reminiscing and rediscovering historical and cultural ties in an effort to make Hong Kong’s market mentality congruent with China’s socialism. The dilemmas are evident in the discrepancy between the images of Maoist protesters and the apolitical narration invoked in the media narratives. Of even more terrific impact has been the invocation of nationalism through a televised daily on the Chinese national day on 1 October 2004 of the Chinese national anthem with explicit patriotic content,<sup>109</sup> made by the “Committee on the Promotion of civic education”.

Nevertheless, Hong Kong discourses of the nation have been multifarious in the mass media; the changing configurations of this imagined community can be traced from a clear Hong Kong-mainland separation in the 1980s to a curbed expression of the desire for reunification in the 1990s to a complicated reassessment post-2000 (Mathews, Op Cit). A careful Sino-Hong Kongese identity has been calibrated through the education system, for instance, the 1996 Guidelines on Civic education which linked civic identity to national identity emphasised the importance of instruction in national identity. Textbooks at both secondary and primary school levels now focus on China much more than in the past in a wide range of subjects. In a survey conducted on the comparison of responses of the Hong Kongese people in their acceptance of education into national identity in 1998 and again in 2005, named as the Hong Kong Transition Project, it was found that 43 per cent felt that there should be patriotic school plays or lessons and 20 per cent felt that the flag should be raised and the national anthem sung every day in school. In 2005 these percentages were 75 per cent and 31 per cent respectively. Despite the emphasis in much of the mass media on Hong Kong as a seamless part of China, there does remain a visible and distinctive Sino-Hong Kong identity metamorphosis, leading to occasional outbursts of local nationalism demonstrating strong local loyalties.

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<sup>109</sup>This forty-five second announcement is a visual that starts with an aerial panoramic shot of the great wall, impressing the audience with this most prominent historical icon of the Chinese nation. Subsequent shots feature children playing on a grass lawn, a teenage choir singing the national anthem, Hong Kong and Chinese youth teaming up and smiling children hoisting the Chinese and Hong Kong flags.

## 5.11. THE 2014 UMBRELLA REVOLUTION: SPARKS OF LOCAL NATIONALISM

Hong Kong nationalism had never been dealt as a topic publicly before the 2014 incident. Previous Polls steered by the University of Hong Kong showed that the percentage of locals identifying themselves as Chinese increased from 2000 to 2008, whereas the percentage that identified themselves as Hongkongers decreased during the same period (So 2015: 8). This change in dynamics was reversed in 2017 when thousands of pro-democracy protestors pleaded the government to keep its promises of sustaining a liberal set up. Negligence by the government sparked dissent amongst Hongkongers, especially students, who called for “building a Hong Kong state” and that “Hong Kong must be independent,” some even vented out anger by claiming that “Hong Kong had never been a part of China.” The clash of identity is visible between national identity based on ethnicity and local identity based on liberal principles in Hong Kong. The clash also derives from the contradiction in practice and the promises of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China which promised 50 years of capitalist system and way of life after 1997.<sup>110</sup> But this law has been interpreted on five occasions as of 7 November 2016, demonstrating central intervention in the legislative and economic systems of Hong Kong thereby instigating dissent. It had tried to amend certain provisions through a policy report in 10 June 2014, by stating that the interests of China (“one country”) should prevail over Hong Kong’s constitutional autonomy (“two systems”). The situation was further accentuated by the fact that the White paper issued by the government in 2014 reemphasised such claims driving local resentment.

The discourse on localism gained ground since the early 2000s when the new *Individual Traveller’s Scheme* was introduced in 2003 for bringing about integration. While the anger against mainlanders was rising due to the property bubble that resulted from the middle class professionals migrating into Hong Kong pushing prices to record levels. The neoliberal policies of the HKSAR government further added to their woes. Hong Kong’s Gini Coefficient rose to 0.537 in 2011, highest since 1970s.

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<sup>110</sup> See Annexure III.

These feelings of relative dispossession were vocalised through the formation of new “localist” organisations whose aim was to defend the indigenous way of life. For instance the “Hong Kong First, Hong Kong Resurgence, Hong Kong Autonomy movement, Populations policy concern group, the North district Parallel Imports concern group and the Proletariat Political Institute etc.” These new modes of political organisation resulted in “anti-locust” protests against the mainlanders, who were believed to be ruining Hong Kong’s way of life and their socio-economic status. This debate continues to simmer on many fronts today prompting the question whether Hong Kong is fundamentally Chinese or is Hong Kong a world city encouraging energetic and talented people from across the world to feel it to be their home.

In 2015 Leung Chun-ying, the chief executive of Hong Kong, accused undergrad students of creating trouble in the university by demanding liberation in their Student Union official magazine which was brought to light in a book published under the title *Xiangang minzu zhuyi* (Hong Kong Nationalism), thereby unwittingly sparking a discussion on local nationalism. The student editors flatly denied charges that the magazine was advocating Hong Kong independence and said they were only insisting on what Beijing had long promised in the “One country, Two systems” model which stipulates more self-rule. The motives of his action are still undeciphered but most assume that it was a political ploy for coming back to power in the elections and helped to move Hong Kong nationalism from the fringes to the mainstream. It was also perhaps employed to scare away the students from attempting anything like the second Umbrella movement.

Consequently, there has been a growing demand locally for Hong Kong to regain authority over screening migrants from the mainland so that such incidents could be avoided in future. There was also a palpable shift in the discourse on Hong Kong identity from an elitist perspective to that of populist perspective so as to appeal to a wider constituency including the working class and tapping into grassroots resentment. Mathews compares the attitudes of students from Hong Kong and mainland China as well as American Students in three significant ways. First, while Chinese and American students take largely for granted that they belong to a nation and should love or at least “really like” their country, many Hong Kong students although there is a wide range of views are hesitant in feeling such love. Secondly,



Chinese students tend to identify with the homeland as intimate body deserving their unrestricted love, Hong Kong students, on the other hand, either claim that the Chinese state does not embody the values of a family and it is simply a metaphor or argue that it does not deserve to be loved if it does not behave properly towards its citizens. Third, while American and Chinese students conceive of the state on its own discursive terms apart from the mentality of the market, many Hong Kong students judge the symbols of the Chinese state in terms of the market, seeing the Chinese flag and national anthem as “old fashioned and thus unworthy which in turn infuriates others Hong Kong students, who insists that the country is not a matter of fashion – the state should not be judged by the principles of the market (Mathews et al: 129). Mostly, however the Hong Kong people are still in the process of defining their identify and revising their understanding of nationhood. In the recent times the narrative of the re-nationalization or based on “pragmatic nationalism” has been gaining ground in an effort to describe Hong Kong’s sui generis situation.

## **5.12. CHALLENGES TO THE INTEGRATION OF HONG KONG**

The ideas of nation-state building often assume a trickling down approach of exercising power while mobilising common myths and producing social consent to strengthen its hold as identified by Gellner. However what is more significant is the way that the nation creates and recreates itself in the everyday life of the citizens. The nation has however entered into popular imagination by way of its comparisons to the demerits of globalisation as the key component of its distinctiveness is still based on economic success.

Though integration has been sought under the HKSAR initiative with the Pearl River delta economy since 2003, the people of Hong Kong are still struggling to overcome the sharp boundaries once drawn vis-à-vis their Chinese neighbours. First is the challenge of Transnationalism or the pull of globalisation making the Hong Kong people more monetary-driven in their approach. Second is the difficulty of creating an emotional sense of belonging to one’s country as national identity remains fragile and the idea of China as one’s beloved country is yet to fully take root.

Though the HongKongese show reverence for national symbols like the Great wall, Confucius, Chinese tradition and literature and ethnicity but not the state and the communist government. Their habit of taking western names, as if to deny their own Chineseness bears imprints of the Hong Kong's colonial past. The fact that as Hong Kong residents they still have to pass border controls when going into mainland China reemphasises their identity as outlanders to the mainland.

However inexplicably, Hongkongers generally identify themselves as HongKongese when travelling abroad and not belonging to "China, Hong Kong." Jeremy Ha ascribes this proclivity of difference in the language to their non-receptivity to Putonghua as Hong Kong remains a Cantonese-speaking area. Most HongKongese remain sceptical of assertions of ethnic nationalism while preferring the alternative discourse of civic or multicultural nationalism which have been so far suppressed in the mass media by regularly assertions that Chinese ethnicity and the Chinese country are one and the same. And yet Hong Kong does exhibit distinctly nation-crazed tendencies every then and now. For instance, in 1996, Hong Kong experienced a wave of protests over the Japanese occupation of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, when even normally non-nationalistic Hong Kong students swept up in anti-Japanese fervour, furiously excoriating Japan and Japanese people in the name of China. Most of the audiences at the flag raising ceremonies in Hong Kong continue to be from amongst mainland tourist more than the Hong Kong residents. Considering the Japanese imperialistic tendencies the Chinese leadership still maintains 7000 soldiers in Hong Kong under the control of the Guangzhou Military Region to defend Hong Kong in case of any external conflict.

### **5.13. THE CASE OF MACAO**

Due to the strong influence of various instruments of the state, autonomy outlined under the "one-country two-system" policy, does not lessen Beijing's hold over Macao. Organised resistance against the government is almost insignificant. And though Beijing has the absolute authority to override the Macao government's decisions, it refrains from exercising that authority. There have been no incidences on violating human rights in the case of Macao providing little reason for intervention from the central authority in local governance.

Just as in case of Hong Kong, Macao is also entrusted with the right of interpret its basic laws (except two: those related to its relations with the center and the cases that fall under national dominion); and the Chief executive is elected by local citizens through elections. It is allowed to manage its income and revenue resources and formulate its own policies (Chou: 2011, pp.225-252). The peculiar arrangements over Macao provide it even more autonomy than Hong Kong. Portuguese continues to be used as an official language alongside Mandarin demonstrating the leeway given by the state. Macao citizens have also been allowed to retain their Portuguese passports unlike Hong Kong residents who were banned from having dual citizenship. At the same time, the center withholds several modalities that make its autonomy seem merely symbolic. For instance, it can exercise its will on the configuration of the election committee thereby influencing outcome of elections. In addition the principal posts are directly under the supervision of the center and therefore only candidates ratified by Beijing can occupy decision-making processes, except for the Chief executive who is always a Macao citizen. Economic incentives for integration involve consumption supplies as well as electricity supply. Most Macao people have been observed to be satisfied with the practice of one country two systems in their relations with the mainland and have avoided vocalising their opposition in violent forms. This is probably the reason that most Macao citizens are allowed to cross the borders freely. Control of media and press is also lesser in comparison to Hong Kong.

Beijing tends to maintain Macao as a Chinese city with Portuguese characteristics and a Mediterranean flavour so that it can serve as an attractive entertainment and tourist resort and more importantly a bridge to the Portuguese-speaking world (Wai: 2013, p.226). Since the Chinese government has forbidden its people to gamble in the casinos of neighbouring countries, there is a massive flow of Chinese tourists into Macao bringing prosperity to the SAR. However, China is most stern on the issue of foreign involvement in its two SARs. It derides US involvement through the United-states-Macau Policy Act and a similar arrangement with Hong Kong. One of the reasons for US involvement in this SAR has been the mushrooming of legal and illegal casinos in Macao as well as neighbouring countries, where gambling and associated problems of drug trafficking have come about as a consequence of China's roaring economy. The US has been keeping a close eye on the situation as Macao is ostensibly a base for a company owned by the Pyongyang government and a place to

buy luxurious products for party elites in North Korea. In 2005, when the misdeeds of Banco Delta Asia were uncovered, the Macao government immediately started an investigation and took control of the bank.

The Macao case is however an example of the fact that local devolution of power does not always mean loss of political governance. However, not much lessons can be drawn from the HKSAR case as in case of Tibet or Xinjiang, China claims that this policy would not apply as it was used to govern areas that were separated from China by imperialist aggression, while the Tibet and Xinjinag have been always a part of China.

# **CHAPTER 6**

# **CONCLUSIONS**

## 6.1. SUMMARY

This research work began with the aim of understanding the various actors, growth, response and counter-response of the phenomenon of ethno-nationalism in the Chinese society. For the purpose of the time-frame the period post-1997 was chosen. On the basis of the previous five chapters, certain observations will be demarcated in this chapter. This chapter will also assess the future implications of nationalist behaviour by the Chinese state towards its ethnic minorities especially in the regions dwelt upon in the previous chapters, in the near future, and in return their response to the state. To further draw inferences to the present this chapter will particularly look at nationalistic impulses under the current leader Xi Jinping.

### Summary

The struggle for more local autonomy amongst China's regional provinces remains an antagonism to the assimilationist designs of the state. While it is argued from time to time that reasonable self-autonomy can be a workable compromise between complete independence and status-quo, the government is not in favour of loosening its hold. Though initially the state had recognised the merits of local autonomy by establishing five autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, 120 autonomous counties and over 1000 autonomous townships in regions with high concentrations of ethnic minorities, unity remains a high priority for the current Chinese leadership. The integration of its autonomous and special administrative regions is seen as matter of fulfilling a Heaven-mandated destiny under the traditional nationalist narrative that speaks of the 'unification' (*tongyi*) rather than conquest (*zhengfu*) of territories (Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet) that were somehow rightfully Chinese. The struggle for controlling the narrativization continues as each of the prominent actors aspires to proliferate their respective versions.

Just as Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao had relied extensively on the banner of nationalism as a consistent way to obtain the Chinese people's loyalty, China under Xi Jinping has found it a convenient instrument to replace the declining communist ideology in post-Mao years. The continuing practices of extensive propaganda campaigns launched in the early 1990s and their extension to all

autonomous regions shows the alacrity of the state in educating its people about patriotism. The patriotic education campaign continues to rely extensively on appeals to nationalism to ensure loyalty among a population. Even now the core of the patriotic education campaign remains *guoqing jiaoyu* (education in national conditions) which unequivocally holds that China's national conditions are unique and that the country is not ready to adopt a Western-style liberal democracy. Subservience and loyalty to state and party is demanded as a precondition for economic development and deriving benefits from the state as seen from the chapters above. The appeal to nationalist sentiments is even handier when China faces threats to its sovereignty from foreign powers as argued by Peter Gries that China's new nationalism "empowered by victim narratives is beginning to influence the making of Chinese foreign policy".

It is also evident from the previous chapters that state nationalism always gained priority over ethnic nationalism and in fact when dealing with its autonomous regions the state tended to highlight development as an antidote to grievances instead of fanning sentiments that made a demarcation between different ethnic groups. Silencing opposition by coopting elites in various strata of society remained a dominant theme as far as their interaction with the Autonomous regions and the SARs is concerned. Still opposition remains high as the Uyghurs and Tibetans in western China see China's highly touted "Great Western Development Program" as a "Great Western rip-off". They continue to believe that wide-scale extraction of oil, gas and mineral resources in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia is fuelling the eastern coastal economic boom, while large parts of the population in these regions continue to struggle under abject poverty (Tibet: The Gap between Fact and Fiction: 117).

The year 2008 had especially been an eye-opener for the state as far as national integration is concerned. The 2008 Tibetan riots followed by the 2009 Urumqi riots and in Inner Mongolia in 2011 brought to fore the intensity of the issue. Both these uprisings were a response to perceived threats to their identity from Chinese policies of migration and cultural influences. China's attempt at controlling all aspects of day-to-day life and its attempts at "Han migration, lack of religious freedom, dilution of ethnic culture and identity, provocative propaganda in the media" were listed as main reasons for disenchantment and met with heavy resistance. Consequently China listed

Tibet, Taiwan, Xinjiang and the South China Sea as ‘core interests’. The duelling nationalisms thus continued to reinforce the insecurity dilemma. From allegations and counter-allegations on the local elites to name-slaming prominent religious heads, Beijing shaped popular perception through a nationalist counter-backlash against the ethnic minorities and used all means including military as with the case of the *bingtuan* to cultivate and guard its border areas. Even the White Paper published as recently as 2019 continues to maintain the government stance that “Xinjiang has been an inseparable part of the Chinese territory.” It in fact mentions as a contravention that Uyghurs were not originally Turks and therefore resisted their oppression. These assertions indicate that the Chinese government wants to deliberately portray officially that the Chinese Uyghurs do not have historical linkages with the Turks in the region. And since 13 ethnic groups are settled in the Xinjiang region, multi-ethnic policies constitute a major portion of Chinese national integrative vision.

There was no conceding even under consecutive leaderships. At the very beginning of his rule Xi Jinping stated that the most significant goal for his leadership was to work for the three historic missions of “modernization, reunification of the motherland and world peace and the common development of all nations.” To achieve his twin goals of moderately prosperous society by 2021 and harmonious modern socialist country by 2049, Xi Jinping gave the clarion call of achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese dream by integrating Taiwan by healing the historical trauma and consolidating his hold over Hong Kong and Macao.<sup>111</sup> One can argue that the sense of his vision is more positive and development oriented as compared to the previous leaders who invoked the siren song of “centuries of humiliation” for the purpose of driving nationalist sentiments. Yet the rhetoric of traditional Sino-centric vision and aspirations for a great-power status remain of utmost priority reflected in the strategic thinking of his times. China’s economic growth had been on an upward trajectory for the last two decades and hence it was competent for the leadership to deal with economic reform, though not without its stresses and challenges. Xi Jinping has

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<sup>111</sup> “Our compatriots in the Special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macao should put the overall interests of the country and their regions first, and uphold and promote long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao. Our compatriots in Taiwan and on the mainland should join hands in supporting, maintaining and promoting the peaceful growth of cross-straits relations, improving the people’s lives on both sides of the Taiwan Straits and creating a new future for the Chinese nation”. Address to the First Session of the 12<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress, 17 March, 2013.



tended to endorse pragmatic nationalism which sets peace and development as its fundamental ideals. While economic prosperity is seen as a way to legitimize the CCP hold on power and also as the foundation for China's rising international aspirations (Zhao 2013: 239).

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> party Congress, the Party Central Committee convened several forums on ethnic minority work, especially Tibet and Xinjiang, in rapid succession where Xi warned against challenges to China's sovereignty and declaring publicly that "all manoeuvres and tricks to split the motherland are sure to fail and not one inch of the territory of the great motherland can be carved off from China" (Buckley, *The New York Times*: 2018). Under a Maoist sort of revivalism, he launched a program of ideological tightening and nationalist propaganda. It has to be acknowledged though that as far as legitimacy is concerned, China's claim to Tibet has been the most problematic than for other ethnic areas currently part of China.

Yet the Xi Jinping leadership faces significant and enduring domestic problems, which challenge the leadership's ability to constrain popular nationalism. It could even contribute to repeated episodes of deterioration of relations between China and its East Asian neighbours. Moreover, despite the fact that he has been able to articulate a grand strategy for state prosperity, collective pride and collective happiness, neither the internal nor the external environments are favourable for a smooth implementation of Xi's grand strategy.

The "One-China principle" constitutes Beijing's bottom line as far as Taiwan is concerned as demonstrated in Chapter 5. Under a strict time frame, Beijing would have easily manoeuvred a space for tactical advance but since the leaders did not define a time frame from the earliest, this has become a problem for the successive generation of leaders. Jiang Zemin was particularly explicit that there should not be any specific schedule for reunification as a timetable would expedite the centrality of a military solution of the Taiwan challenge and disrupt China's "economics-in-command" strategy. Beijing's Taiwan policy has been since dominated by political considerations aligned on maintaining domestic stability and reducing international backlashes. Originally, the military option would have reflected a genuine desire to achieve reintegration by force but gradually this option has been reduced (Ji 2011:

190). As long as Taiwan does not openly tilt towards the US, the CCP leaders are less inclined towards use of force, however, given Xi Jinping's aim to achieve national rejuvenation by 2049, the Taiwan issue is likely to hot up every now and then. China would want to minimise the US influence so that Taiwan can be integrated through economic and political means.

Considering that no great Powers have ascended without political unification at the same time, Xi Jinping is likely to keep a tight-fisted control over Taiwan through economic means. However, reunification of Taiwan with the mainland is still the key to restoring China's Greatness. Will this translate into military takeover still remains to be seen. Some scholars have even suggested that Taiwan should become a special administrative region just as the two other SARs (Ye, 2013: 223-263).

Hong Kong and Macao, on their part, are best developed in terms of their economies and remain special areas as their rule-of-law tradition and cultural heritages allow them to integrate and function with the global economy. Built on strong economic successes, Hong Kong and Macao pride themselves on a thriving pop culture and good governance practices. Hong Kong facilitates China's proactive engagement with the international system and also provides badly needed capital for the mainland through raising funds by Chinese enterprises in the Hong Kong capital market. It is keen to participate in the Pan-Pearl River Delta economic cooperation project, which involves nine southern provinces and Macao. Hong Kong was also a crucial link between China and Taiwan when the three direct linkages (*San tong* – direct transport, direct mail, and direct trade) were suspended. While Macao had been eclipsed in significance by Hong Kong, and could hardly foster a sense of local identity, it has been more calm and cooperative as far integrative measures are concerned. The Macao government has used the money coming from Chinese tourists to create many new programs, including a free fifteen year education for all children.

Overall, the respective struggles of the Tibetans, Uyghurs and Inner Mongolians remain presently movements in isolation driven by their regional perspectives. There is no concerted effort on part of these three minority regions to coalesce into one particular movement of sub-national separatism which if realised, could destabilize

the Chinese state completely. Rather the state is making all-out attempts to prevent it from becoming so. In the words of Minxin Pei (Tibet Telegraph: 2014)

“Despite the vast differences that set Hong Kong apart from Tibet and Xinjiang, we can find one plausible common explanation for the unrest in all three places: Beijing’s policy of assimilation has, contrary to the wishes of the Chinese government, greatly strengthened the local identities, sharpened the sense of alienation and grievance felt by the targeted groups, and radicalized the activists among them.”(2014, Tibet Telegraph)

The ploy for the state would then be to create a balance between a sense of marginalisation and the desire for expression among ethnic minorities. However not all is driven by the authoritative vision of the Chinese leadership as one would expect. There is a growing trend of liberal nationalists who are questioning the rights and methods of the state. For instance, Wang Xiaodong, an intellectual and popular nationalist spoke critically on the failure of the state-controlled Chinese media to report incidents that have proven disastrous for China on outside territories thereby not adequately defending the interests of the Chinese nation. Similar critiques have been voiced by Ma Rong, who has become increasingly vociferous in his calls for scrapping autonomy and preferential policies in the outer provinces, suggesting that the “systematic segregation of ethnic groups has rendered the Chinese nation an empty concept, and that Hanification of minorities is an inevitable process of modernization.” Without such amendments he believes that the political leadership would never genuinely give an opportunity for the cadres of the ethnic minorities to reach higher positions in the echelons of leadership thereby minorities remaining at the fringes of development.

Similarly in 2011, Hu Angang a professor at the Tsinghua University called for a “second generation of ethnic policies.” Hu recommended individualisation of political rights, fostering greater economic intercourse, cultural assimilation, cross-border social mobility and inter-marriage among different ethnic groups. Such responses were a result of the global criticism that China has drawn on human rights, existing ethnic autonomy system and mass incidents. In 2010, there were some 180,000 mass incidents (Liping: 2011) and also a fear among the new left that the mainstream has abandoned socialist values in favour of pursuing capitalism and entanglement in the international financial system. Even Zhu Weiqun, Executive Director of the United

Front Department, made a rare admission of serious problems in the Party's ethnic and religious work and suggested the removal of ethnic status from identification cards. However, there is not much evidence that these voices of opposition have had any impact on the decision-making processes of the government who claim that the existing policies have worked well.

On the other hand, the desire to bolster domestic legitimacy and the increasing nationalism of the governing elite may constrict the space China has for adjusting its foreign policy (Fewsmith, 2013: 111). Not only would the challenges of globalisation put a strain on China's nationalist designs but also now that the Belt and Road Initiative outlined by Xi Jinping is taking shape, most of the ethnic communities involved in trade and cultural exchanges would present tremendous challenges to the Central government. Moreover not all Chinese people support the ultra-nationalist hysteria or radicalism of the above intellectuals and scholars. Most policy-makers and strategists have called for a fundamental reform of the failed nationality policy, suggesting a more inclusive approach to nation-building. One could also be witnessing a customary revival of the Tributary-state relationship. Nevertheless, the two main hypothesis suggesting the discourse of development as primary driver of China's nationalism and authoritarian discourses driving China's domestic legitimacy issues, stand validated.

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# **ANNEXURES**

## ANNEXURE I

Article 113	Provides for appropriate representation at the local people's congresses for nationalities inhabiting a minority autonomous region, prefecture, or county but not being members of the nationalities in whose name the area is designated.
Article 114	Requires that the chair and at least one vice-chair of the autonomous area People's Standing committee be held by a member of the local nationality and that the administrative head of the area be from a local nationality.
Article 115	Affirms the functions and powers of local governance organs but qualifies these by the limitations of the constitution
Article 117-119	Extend significant authority to local autonomous area governments in areas of financial management, education, science, culture, public health, and physical culture.
Article 120	Potential for state intrusion is underscored on security matters which allow local government to organise local public security forces to respond to concrete local needs in accordance with the state military system and subject to State Council approval.
Article 121	Addresses issues of local language usage in governance activities. (However, the revised Nationality Region Autonomy Law in 2001 lowered the age at which Chinese must be taught in minority areas, thus underscoring the potential for displacement of local languages.)
Article 122	Commits the central government to providing financial, material and technical assistance to autonomous areas and assisting with training local minority cadres.

- **Source: Constitution of the People's Republic of China.**



## **ANNEXURE II**

### **17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet**

Seventeen-Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (1951)

The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet

23 May, 1951

The Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history within the boundaries of China and, like many other nationalities, it has done its glorious duty in the course of the creation and development of the great motherland. But over the last hundred years and more, imperialist forces penetrated into China, and in consequence, also penetrated into the Tibetan region and carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations. Like previous reactionary Governments, the KMT [Kuomintang] reactionary government continued to carry out a policy of oppression and sowing dissension among the nationalities, causing division and disunity among the Tibetan people. The Local Government of Tibet did not oppose imperialist deception and provocations, but adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great motherland. Under such conditions, the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering. In 1949, basic victory was achieved on a nation-wide scale in the Chinese people's war of liberation; the common domestic enemy of all nationalities--the KMT reactionary government—was overthrown; and the common foreign enemy of all nationalities--the aggressive imperialist forces--was driven out. On this basis, the founding of the People's Republic of China and of the Central People's Government was announced. In accordance with the Common Programme passed by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Central People's Government declared that all nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal, and that they shall establish unity and mutual aid and oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China may become one big family of fraternity and cooperation, composed of all its nationalities. Within this big family of nationalities of the People's Republic of China, national regional autonomy is to be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated, and all national minorities are to have freedom to develop their spoken

and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits, and religious beliefs, and the Central People's Government will assist all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational construction work. Since then, all nationalities within the country, with the exception of those in the areas of Tibet and Taiwan, have gained liberation. Under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government and the direct leadership of the higher levels of People's Governments, all national minorities have fully enjoyed the right of national equality and have exercised, or are exercising, national regional autonomy. In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet may be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the People's Republic of China accomplished, and national defence safeguarded; in order that the Tibetan nationality and people may be freed and return to the big family of the People's Republic of China to enjoy the same rights of national equality as all other nationalities in the country and develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational work, the Central People's Government, when it ordered the People's Liberation Army to march into Tibet, notified the local government of Tibet to send delegates to the Central Authorities to hold talks for the conclusion of an agreement on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. At the latter part of April, 1951, the delegates with full powers from the Local Government of Tibet arrived in Peking. The Central People's Government appointed representatives with full powers to conduct talks on a friendly basis with the delegates of the Local Government of Tibet. The result of the talks is that both parties have agreed to establish this agreement and ensure that it be carried into effect.

1. The Tibetan people shall be united and drive out the imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; that the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the motherland--the People's Republic of China.

2. The Local Government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defences.

3. In accordance with the policy towards nationalities laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government.

4. The Central Authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The Central Authorities also will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual.
5. The established status, functions, and powers of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni [Panchen Lama] shall be maintained.
6. By the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni is meant the status, functions and powers of the 13th Dalai Lama and of the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Ngoerhtehni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other.
7. The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference will be protected. The Central Authorities will not effect any change in the income of the monasteries.
8. The Tibetan troops will be reorganised step by step into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defence forces of the Central People's Government.
9. The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality will be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.
10. Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry and commerce will be developed step by step, and the people's livelihood shall be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.
11. In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the Central Authorities. The Local Government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people raise demands for reform, they must be settled through consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.
12. In so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-KMT officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the KMT and do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past.
13. The People's Liberation Army entering Tibet will abide by the above-mentioned policies and will also be fair in all buying and selling and will not arbitrarily take even a needle or a thread from the people.

14. The Central People's Government will handle all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful co-existence with neighboring countries and the establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.

15. In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People's Government will set up a military and administrative committee and a military area headquarters in Tibet, and apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People's Government it will absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work. Local Tibetan personnel taking part in the military and administrative committee may include patriotic elements from the Local Government of Tibet, various district and various principal monasteries; the name list is to be prepared after consultation between the representatives designated by the Central People's Government and various quarters concerned, and is to be submitted to the Central People's Government for approval.

16. Funds needed by the military and administrative committee, the military area headquarters and the People's Liberation Army entering Tibet will be provided by the Central People's Government. The Local Government of Tibet should assist the People's Liberation Army in the purchases and transportation of food, fodder, and other daily necessities.

17. This agreement shall come into force immediately after signatures and seals are affixed to it. Signed and sealed by delegates of the Central People's Government with full powers:

Chief Delegate: Li Wei-han (Chairman of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs)

Delegates: Chang Ching-wu, Chang Kuo-hua, Sun Chih-yuan

Delegates with full powers of the Local Government of Tibet:

Chief Delegate: Kaloon Ngabou Ngawang Jigme (Ngabo Shape)

Delegates: Dzasak Khemey Sonam Wangdi, Khentrung Thuptan, Tenthar, Khenchung Thuptan Lekmuun Rimshi, Samposey Tenzin Thondup

## **ANNEXURE III**

### **Text of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is part of the People's Republic of China.

The region has a high degree of autonomy and enjoys executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. This means that the former judicial recourse by appealing to the United Kingdom's Judicial Committee of the Privy Council would no longer be available. Instead, the Court of Final Appeal was established within the HKSAR to take up the role.

The executive authorities and legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be composed of permanent residents of Hong Kong in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law.

The socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years.

The laws previously in force in Hong Kong, that is, the common law, rules of equity, ordinances, subordinate legislation and customary law (such as Chinese clan law) shall be maintained, except for any that contravene the Basic Law and subject to any amendment by the legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall protect the right of ownership of private property in accordance with law.

#### **Relationship with central government**

The laws in force in Hong Kong shall be the Basic Law, the laws previously in force in Hong Kong as provided by Article 8, and the laws enacted by the legislature. National laws shall not be applied in Hong Kong unless listed in Annex III and applied locally by promulgation or legislation.

#### **Fundamental rights and duties**

All Hong Kong residents shall be equal before the law. Permanent residents of the HKSAR shall have the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law.

Hong Kong residents shall have, among other things, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and of publication; freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of procession, of demonstration, of communication, of movement, of conscience, of religious belief, and of marriage; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike.

The freedom of the person of Hong Kong residents shall be inviolable. No Hong Kong resident shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful arrest, detention or imprisonment. Arbitrary or unlawful search of the body of any resident or deprivation or restriction of the freedom of the person shall be prohibited. Torture of any resident or arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of the life of any resident shall be prohibited.

The provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and international labour conventions as applied to Hong Kong shall remain in force and shall be implemented through the laws of the HKSAR.

### **Political structure**

Chief Executive and members of the legislature is to be ultimately selected by universal suffrage upon nomination by a nomination committee.

### **External affairs**

Although the PRC is responsible for Hong Kong's foreign affairs and defence, Hong Kong is permitted to participate in international organisations or conferences in certain fields limited to states and directly affecting the HKSAR. It may attend in such other capacity as may be permitted by the PRC government and the international organisation or conference concerned, and may express their views, using the name "Hong Kong, China". The HKSAR may also, using the name "Hong Kong, China", participate in international organisations and conferences not limited to states. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may on its own maintain and develop relations and conclude and implement agreements with foreign states and regions and relevant international organizations in the appropriate fields, including the economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural and sports fields.(Articles 13–14, 150–157)

## ANNEXURE IV

### **Statistics of Exchanges and Cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong**

1. The mainland is the largest trading partner of Hong Kong. According to Hong Kong statistics, in 2013 the trade volume between Hong Kong and the mainland reached HK\$3.8913 trillion, 3.49 times over 1997 and accounting for 51.1 percent of Hong Kong's external trade.

2. Hong Kong is the most important trading partner of the mainland and one of the mainland's major export markets. According to the data from the General Administration of Customs, the mainland's exports to Hong Kong in 2013 totaled US\$384.79 billion, constituting 17.4 percent of the mainland's total exports.

3. The mainland is the largest source of overseas direct investment for Hong Kong. By the end of 2013, direct investment from the mainland to Hong Kong had exceeded US\$358.8 billion, accounting for nearly 60 percent of the mainland's total outbound direct investment.

4. Hong Kong is also the mainland's largest source of overseas direct investment. According to the data from the Ministry of Commerce, the mainland had approved nearly 360,000 projects with Hong Kong investment by the end of 2013, with US\$665.67 billion paid-in investment, accounting for 47.7 percent of the total overseas investment in the mainland. Hong Kong is the largest recipient of the mainland's overseas investment as well as the mainland's largest financing center. By the end of 2013, the mainland's non-financial direct investment in Hong Kong had reached US\$338.669 billion, taking up 59 percent of the mainland's total outbound non-financial direct investment.

5. By the end of 2013, the number of mainland enterprises listed in Hong Kong had reached 797, accounting for 48.5 percent of the total number of companies listed in Hong Kong. Their total market value had reached HK\$13.7 trillion, accounting for 56.9 percent of the total value of the Hong Kong stock market.

6. By the end of 2013, RMB deposits and depository receipts in Hong Kong amounted to RMB1.05 trillion, an increase of 46 percent over 2012. RMB loans totaled RMB115.6 billion, and outstanding RMB bonds totaled RMB310 billion.

7. The Mainland/Hong Kong Science and Technology Co-operation Committee has, with the support of institutions of higher learning, research institutes and Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks, established 16 Partner State Key Laboratories, one Hong Kong branch of the Chinese National Engineering Research Center, and two National High-tech Industrialization Bases in Hong Kong. The Committee supports Hong Kong's institutions of higher learning in setting up research institutes in Shenzhen, Hong Kong's neighboring city on the mainland, and encourages Hong Kong's participation in key national science and technology programs.

8. Since 2010, four projects under the national 973 Program have been undertaken by Hong Kong's science and technology professionals and institutes, and have received total research and development funding of RMB160 million.

9. China's Chang'e-3 lunar lander and its Yutu rover landed on the moon in December 2013. The camera pointing system on Yutu was developed by experts from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

10. By the end of 2013, the number of academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering from Hong Kong had reached 39, including foreign nationals. In addition, 88 Hong Kong scientists had won 44 state science and technology awards, including the State Natural Science Award, State Scientific and Technological Progress Award and State Technological Invention Award.

11. Mainland students studying at institutions of higher learning in Hong Kong numbered 22,000 in the 2012/13 academic year. By October 2013, the number of Hong Kong students studying at institutions of higher learning in the mainland topped 14,000.

12. The University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong Baptist University and City University of Hong



Kong have worked with mainland universities in jointly holding academic programs and running institutions of higher learning. Universities in cities and provinces of Guangdong, Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang, and Fujian on the mainland have established over 400 pairs of sister-school partnerships with Hong Kong universities.

13. In 2009, Yueju opera, jointly nominated by Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong Province, was officially inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

14. In September 2011, with the support of the central government, Hong Kong Global Geopark was listed by UNESCO as part of its Global Geoparks Network.

15. Since the mainland and Hong Kong signed the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) in 2003, Hong Kong and the mainland have worked together in producing 322 films, accounting for 70 percent of mainland's total in such area. Moreover, 61 of the 322 co-productions topped RMB100 million each in box office receipts.