

## Introduction

In 1949, when Communist China and Mao came into power, the regime quickly took control of their “territory,” which included Xinjiang province. This province makes up almost one sixth of overall Chinese land and shares borders with eight other states. The Uighur ethnic minority mainly lives in Xinjiang and identify as Muslim people who have close ties with multiple Central Asia countries. In a census from 2010, there were over ten million Uighur’s making up a little under 1% of the population and almost all practicing Islam {4}. Over the years, the Uighur and Han ethnic groups have had tension which has created the desire for separation within some of the Uighur ethnic group. Xinjiang is bordered by five Muslim countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which means that the Uighur people have close support for their differences from the rest of China. This was a concern for Mao, who when in power employed different policies in order to keep the Uighurs from seceding. In recent years the policies against minorities have increased in discriminatory behavior and become more directed towards the Uighur minority.

Since 9/11, the relationship between the Chinese government and the Uighur people has changed, due to the new identification of Uighurs as terrorists. This has increased national and local policies that directly affect the relations between the Uighur and Han ethnic groups. The new label has created a tense relationship between the two ethnic groups by giving one a false identity. The tension has increased, causing an increase in the strength of the separatist movement and occasional violent conflicts between both parties. The government has responded with policies that are unclear and many times contradictory.

## Methods

- Peer-reviewed articles and open-source documents
- Qualitative analysis of case studies.
- Limit: Past 10 years; Updating previously published work
- Case-study based approach which has many advantages in social sciences including “their potential for achieving high conceptual validity; their strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses; their value as a useful means to closely examine the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases; and their capacity for addressing causal complexity”{2}.
- Limitations: lack of specific information and quotes from a closed society; language abilities

## Results

### The Government’s Construction of Uighur Identity and its Effects

- **Number of Accused Terrorists by the Chinese Government in Xinjiang**
  - Officials within China reported that hundreds of individuals joined terrorist organizations without proof
  - Officials within Human Right’s Watch and World Uyghur Congress stated this was implausibly high; realistically only 20-30
- **2016 Counter-Terrorism Law**
  - Terrorism definition:
    - as “any proposition or activity—that, by means of violence, sabotage or threat, generates social panic, undermines public security, infringes on personal and property rights, and menaces government organs and international organizations—with the aim to realize certain political and ideological purposes” {5}
    - vague language; Minorities can now be prosecuted on broad charges
    - Number of convictions after this law of people associated with terrorism increased by almost double
- **Xinjiang Autonomous Terrorism Law of the People’s Republic of China August, 2016**
  - Less than a year after the 2016 Counter-Terrorism Law
  - Vague language and describes the specific behavior and actions that are identified as extremists
    - These specific descriptions clearly identify Islamic dress and behavior as extremist actions

## Results (Continued)

### Effects of Religious Policies

- **Banning of Uighurs from sports events in 2014**
  - Karamay City; Prefecture level city in North Xinjiang
    - Poster published creating a regulation on clothing and appearance features like beards and goatees
    - Ban retribution of a deadly attack carried out by extremists who happened to be Uighurs
- **Surrendering Religious Items**
  - In 2017 Muslims, specifically Uighurs in Xinjiang, had to start handing over Islam-related items like the Quran
    - “Officials in Xinjiang province have warned members of the Uyghur ethnic minority they must surrender religious items on pain of ‘harsh punishment’”{6}.
- **Naming Rules for Ethnic Minorities policy**
  - In 2015, policy was created to force Uighurs to register and receive approval of the name of their child.
  - If the government does not approve the name of the child, they will not be able to receive benefits of “hukou” from the government.

### Effects of Education Policies

- **Change of Language in schools**
  - Hotan in South-Western Xinjiang faces new education policy in 2017
    - The new policy “insists on fully popularizing the national common language and writing system according to law, and add the education of ethnic language under the bilingual education basic principle” {7}.
- **Extra points taken off of state exams**
  - Previously added points taken away from minorities who take the Gaokao, the Chinese university entrance exam, in Mandarin and not their native language
    - Was an incentive to learn Mandarin
    - Minorities have a longer graduation time and harder time finding jobs



Figure 2: Map of South-East Asia



Figure 1: Map of China’s Provinces

## Results (Continued)

### Effects of Labor Market Policies

- **Forced Labor or Hashars**
  - The government of China is using forced labor or hashars to not only help stop terrorism, but they are creating ‘re-education’ camps, forcing men who have been accused of helping individuals that are seen as terrorists to re-learn what is right and wrong in Chinese society.
  - The gap caused by these re-education camps have caused a lack of labor and the government has created forced labor policies to fill this gap, mostly on women. This is seen in Aksu and Toqsu towns in Xinjiang.
  - Yasin Raxman, the security chief in a town in Toqsu, said, “Hashar is not actually a response to the needs of production—its simply for the needs of stability” {3}.
- **Movement of Uighur Workers outside of Xinjiang**
  - In 2014, Guangdong promised to move over 5,000 workers out of Xinjiang in only three years.
  - This was supposed to improve their financial situation, increase on-the-job training, and give the Uighurs a change outside of the tension between Han majority in Xinjiang
  - After these workers were transported into Guangdong, similar labor disputed erupted where the Uighurs were places.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has added to research by analyzing the most recent policies in order to show the increase of tension and divide within Xinjiang. The analysis of these policies shows discriminatory tendencies that are directed towards the Uighur minority. These policies are very recent and not all effects have been seen, but through analysis and comparison with policies previously implemented, the divide between the Han and Uighur’s looks to be increasing and the discriminatory policies may create a backlash effect. Not only is this paper looking at the effects of Uighurs in Xinjiang, but this gets to ethnic integration all over the world and what states need to do to make sure they are not increasing the tension by using discriminatory policies.

For the future, the national government in China and other governments who may face this problem need to review their policies and their ultimate goals to see if they coincide or not. Specifically, with focusing on China, it must be noted that this type of authoritarian government has the ability to use any policies they see fit without any input from their citizens. For further research into the most recent discriminatory policies other scholars can add by traveling to Xinjiang and collecting personal data from survey’s and interviews. Ethnic relations in a region is important for a stable environment and the Chinese national government needs to decide whether their ultimate goal is to squash the Uighur identity or increase the positive relations between the Uighur and Han ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

## References

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