The Modern Chinese State and Strategies of Control over Uyghur Islam

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Abstract

Faithful to the principle of democratic centralism, the Chinese Communist Party does not tolerate alternative thinking or anti-colonial movements that contest its policies and its will to integrate Uyghur society into the Chinese nation-state. Over recent decades, it has implemented a wide range of policies aimed at eliminating any interpretation or instrumentalization of Islam that conflicts with its own policies. More recently, it has implemented a new set of rules through the "judiciarization" of religious activities. These rules are aimed at eradicating all forms of politicization of Islam in Uyghur mosques and the Koranic teaching system, and at defining the limits of"modern and patriotic Islam."

Keywords

Xinjiang – Uyghurs – Islam – Chinese state – religious policy – political Islam

Depending upon the political, ideological, and cultural configurations specific to each state, modernity is liable to trigger competition between the ideological systems it advances[1] and the religious systems promoted by traditionalist

1 Following Andrew Vincent, ideologies are to be understood as "bodies of concepts, values, and symbols which incorporate conception of human nature and thus indicate what is possible and impossible for humans to achieve; critical reflections on the nature of human interaction; the values which humans ought either to reject or aspire to; and the correct technical arrangements for social, economic, and political life which will meet the needs and

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elites.2 This was the case in the Xinjiang region of China during the twentieth century. Beginning in 1949, the Chinese Community Party (CCP) imposed its authority over the entirety of the Chinese territory. Like the Kuomintang before it, the CCP attempted to forge what Anthony Smith calls a "scientific national state."3 For the communists, this meant setting up an institutional system that optimized control over its populations and over their semiotic systems. This control, imposed through various systems of socialization, was key to the process of homogenizing representations by which the political and ideological legitimization of the new state could be guaranteed. In China the seizure of control required a presentation of the new political system, dubbed "new democracy" (*xin minzuzhuyi*), as the embodiment of the nation, the ultimate factor of legitimization of power. The CCP, as the embodiment of the new Chinese socialist nation, had to legitimize its monopoly of power and the ideological foundations of its project of social, economic, and cultural reform.

The CCP declared that the Chinese nation was born with the "will to live together," at once linked to a common history and a shared communist future. Its interpretation of the world was inscribed in socialist and atheist socioeconomic teleologies, but also within a rationale of revitalizing the great Chinese nation, one into which the majority of Qing Empire minorities had been integrated. The Chinese communist regime drove the modernization process through the political, social, economic, and cultural domination of the center. This framework carried multiple socio-psychological tensions for peripheral societies and generated ideological reactions and increasingly strong anti- colonial dynamics.4 The modernization and unification project went against

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interests of human beings." Andrew Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies* (Oxford, UK: Willey-Blackwell, 2010), 18.

2 By "religion" I mean "(1) a system of symbols which acts (2) to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90.

3 Anthony Smith uses the concept of "scientific state" to characterize the new forms of organization and of relation to the culture of states following the spread of modernity and its corollary, the concept of nation. See Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1971), 231.

4 On this question, see, for example, Dru C. Gladney, "Internal Colonialism and the Uyghur identity: Chinese Nationalism and its Subaltern Subjects," *cemoti*, no. 25 (January/June 1998): 47–63; Rémi Castets, "Nationalisme, Islam et opposition politique chez les Ouïghours du Xinjiang," *Les Etudes du ceri*, no. 11 (October 2004), http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/

both the semiotic systems and the socioeconomic models advocated by traditional Islamist elites and pan-Turkist, anti-colonial reformists. However, the persistence of economic inequalities along ethnic lines in Xinjiang,5 combined with Beijing's strict control over political institutions, tended to create an environment where the Uyghurs of Xinjiang regarded the Han-dominated government as a colonial regime. Some reforms were well received but this perception overshadowed the radiant tomorrows and promises of equality that might have given some Uyghur social groups greater tolerance for the pro- found dismantling of local sociocultural structures that accompanied the CCP's model of modernization.

The ongoing process of confronting and interacting with the state and the Han population generated frustrations among Uyghurs, adding to the initial defiance shown by the Uyghur noncommunist elites toward the CCP. The situation was further complicated by the fact that modern Uyghur identity was formed in the early twentieth century around claims to an ancestry rooted in a history separate from China's. The feeling of being heirs of once-powerful empires that had rivaled China, and the memory of several pro-independence efforts over the previous 50 years, caused Uyghurs to question this "common history" and the "ineluctable character of the integration of Xinjiang into the rest of China."6 In Xinjiang, this situation reinforced a "process of politicized *alterization*,"7 sprouting a desire for creating an autonomous identity separate from the Sino-modernization project imposed by Beijing. The anti-colonial political forces in Xinjiang turned to the symbolic reservoir of democratic nationalism, as well as reformist representations of Uyghur Islam, in a bid to advance an alternative modern socio-political order.

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publica/etude/etude110.pdf; Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs in Xinjiang: Strangers in their own land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

5 Rémi Castets, "Entre colonisation et développement du Grand ouest. Impact des stratégies de contrôle démographique et économique au Xinjiang," *Outre-Terre*, no. 16 (2006): 257–272.

6 "History and Development of Xinjiang," (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, May 2003), http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/ (accessed April 13, 2015).

7 On the "threat of the other," "resentment," and their sociopolitical repercussions, see, for example, Christophe Jaffrelot, "Pour une théorie du nationalisme," in Alain Dieckoff and Christophe Jaffrelot (eds), *Repenser le nationalisme. Théories et pratiques* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2006), 74–78; On the rendering of the phenomenon in Xinjiang, see "Attentat de Tiananmen: la piste djihadiste n'arrange pas la cause ouïgoure," *Le Monde* November 6, 2013, http://www.lemonde.fr/asie-pacifique/article/2013/11/06/attentat-de-tiananmen-la-piste-de-djihadistes-ouigours-marquerait-un-tournant_3509296_3216.html (accessed April 13, 2015).

The CCP's ideological framework prevented it from acknowledging a colonial element to its model of modernization. Therefore it sought to limit the dissemination of rival ideological/semiotic systems that challenged the legitimacy of its socioeconomic policies or the national model it was trying to spread among Uyghur society.

Ideological Competition in Xinjiang Prior to 1949

The propagation of modernity in Xinjiang brought about major changes in local attitudes. Opposition to Chinese sovereignty was given renewed vigor and existing modes of political legitimacy were overturned. The Sufi networks, which had held the keys to political legitimacy since the Khojas8 (Uygh. *Xoja*) supplanted the Islamized Mongol princes in the sixteenth century, were weak- ened. From the start of the twentieth century, they yielded little by little to a new type of political actor. The project to restore the former Sufi theocratic system vanished in favor of the establishment of modernizing, national republics.9

In Anthony Smith's model, the colonial state brings about modernity before indigenous elites reassert control. Turkic nationalism emerged in Xinjiang at the same time that the Qing began to modernize the old Chinese empire.10 In reality, the first forms of modern thought were imported into the Uyghur world from the Tatar and Russian worlds.11 The center's attempts at cultural homogenization engendered by the shift to direct administration in 1884, followed by attempts to Sinicize the education system at the turn of the twentieth century, produced the catalyzing effects described by Smith. The combined effects of colonization and the dissemination of modern ideologies brought the indigenous elites to a critical decision: would they accept modernity, and, if so, which version?

8 Political-religious Sufi leaders drew their legitimacy from genealogies (Uygh. *silsilä*) connecting them at once to the Prophet, to the great Sufi saints, and even to certain Genghis Khanite princes.

9 Rémi Castets, "Nationalisme, islam et politique: les trajectoires idéologiques de l'opposition politique ouïghoure," (PhD diss., Institute of Political Studies, Paris, 2013), 81–150.

10 As also happened in some western colonial empires.

11 Masami Hamada, "La transmission du mouvement nationaliste au Turkestan Oriental (Xinjiang)," *Central Asian Survey* 9, no. 1 (1990): 29–48.

The traditionalist Islamic elites, led by old notables and members of the Sufi networks, rejected modernity from the West. They tried to maintain a political role until the disappearance of their ally, Governor Yang Zhengxin, in 1928. As the decades wore on, their political influence declined as the expense of the modernists. In the 1930s, they formed an alliance with their erstwhile enemies, the Jadid reformists, in order to protect themselves against the rising influence of the atheist USSR. These strategies materialized in several uprisings, especially in the early 1930s. This type of alliance would prevail until the final insurrections against the CCP in southern Xinjiang in the 1950s. From this period on, traditionalist circles disappeared from the Uyghur political scene.

These elites emerged from the black hole of the Cultural Revolution decimated and marginalized. The religious arena was slowly reclaimed by clerics influenced by the Islamic reformism that had been disseminated in Central Asia at the start of the twentieth century. These clerics tried to reframe Islam within the path of modernity, not around Western values but around refined readings of Islam carried out by reform-minded Central Asian clerics. Beginning in the 1920s, reformist clerics such as Abdulqadir Damollah brought syncretisms to Xinjiang, drawing from Jadid reformism and elements of Salafi reformism. Followers of this current would, through the re-Islamicization movement of the 1980s, generate the ideological kernel of an Islam-based model of modernization that would give the reins of sociopolitical reforms to local Muslim Turkic speaking populations.

Nevertheless, it should be underscored here that the ideological matrix of contemporary Uyghur Islamism remained marginal. During the first years of its formation it was outshone by two ideological currents, whose proposed readings of modernity Anthony Smith's model again provides for. These mod- ern political forces proposed either to reform either to reduce sociocultural spaces controlled by Islam. In short, the first competition between traditionalists and modern ideologies predated CCP rule in 1949.

The Jadids were the first modernist-militant faction to emerge in Xinjiang. They put forward a project of socio-cultural reform designed to modernize their societies and Islam. As nationalists, they also espoused the development of Turkic national feeling in order to reinforce cohesion among local populations against Chinese occupation, and again later against the Soviet threat. For these Turkic nationalists/reformists, the discontent of local populations was interpreted through the prism of Chinese domination and the backwardness of local societies. Their cultural revitalization project was based on the notion of importing Western modernity to form a barrier against the state and Chinese culture without renouncing Islam. The Jadid movement faced the relative

monopoly held by the religious elites in the production of the prevailing semiotic systems in the Turkic-speaking sedentary societies of Xinjiang at the beginning of the twentieth century. As both anti-colonialists and pan-Turkists, they brought on themselves the wrath of both the provincial Chinese rulers and the Soviets. Moscow feared that eastern Turkestan would become a separatist camp that might destabilize western Turkestan.

The other ideological pole at this time was the Uyghur communist scene, which formed with the support of the USSR in the 1930s and 1940s. This group subscribed to a universalist view; it was secularized and tended to break loose from its original cultural substrate. To reprise Smith's expression, its adherents lost their religious faith in favor of "messianic faith in the birth of a cosmopolitan world, without oppression and injustice thanks to the triumph of reason and science."12 Marginal at the start, this faction gathered in strength each time a group of students returned from studying in the USSR. Moscow sought to instrumentalize this faction in order to influence its relations with the Kuomintang and thwart the Jadids. The policy of national recognition developed by the USSR and adapted by Sheng Shicai13 paradoxically created the concept of a Uyghur nation among these militants. Even if they believed in the project of the New Soviet Man14 and in the emergence of an internationalist socialist order that in the distant future would eventually transcend individual cultures, they readily seized this new identity, which provided them with a prestigious history and no cause to envy of the rest of the Turkic world.

With Soviet backing, between 1944 and 1949 they took control of the separatist Republic of Eastern Turkestan that the traditionalist and Jadid networks of the Ili Valley had established. For these militants, who lived in an ideological universe at the crossroads between internationalism, socialism, and anti- colonialism, class struggle was the dominant political concept. Despite the Sinophobia and anti-colonialism of these cadres, their ideological universe resembled that of the CCP. They sought a new social order that would break the inegalitarian socioeconomic order promoted by the Islamic and Jadid elites. The traditional culture and "feudal" social structures that prevailed in Xinjiang at the time were built upon a hierarchical system that had to be destroyed in order to build the egalitarian social order of which they dreamed. The march toward a more just order required class struggle and international solidarity. These new communist elites would help pave the way toward the

12 Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, 252.

13 The local governor, though originally from the ranks of the Kuomintang, broke with it during these years to get closer to Moscow in a bid to maintain his authority over Xinjiang.

14 Interviews with former militants who sought refuge in Central Asia, February 2005.

Chinese socialist order by weakening the influence of the traditional Islamic elites, much as Sheng Shicai had done in the rest of the province by attacking the clerks that were most hostile to him.15

Maoist Strategies to Control Islam and the Clergy

Thus, despite the mutual distrust that reigned in the north of Xinjiang, the CCP began by seeking support from the former pro-Soviet elites from the Republic of Eastern Turkestan. The situation was more complicated in the south. Even if the Jadid circles were neutralized after the arrival of the communist elites, the power of the traditionalist Islamic elites and of some reform-minded clergy members remained strong.

The CCP sought to avoid provoking any general mobilization in the name of Islam at a time when its control over the local communities was not yet assured. Indeed, since the Qing conquest of southern Xinjiang, Islam was used by the Khojas to justify the establishment of independent theocracies and, during the Republican period, it continued to be used in the south of Xinjiang by both the Islamic elites and the Jadid militants to legitimize the establishment of an anti-communist Islamic republic capable of giving the reins of power to Turkophones.16 Given what had transpired in western Turkestan some decades prior, these elites were profoundly antagonistic to a Party that they already knew would attempt to undermine the bases of their socioeconomic and symbolic domination. The CCP's arrival in power in Xinjiang after 1949 was, in fact, followed by social and political reforms that would help secularize the society, modify the range of tolerated religious activities, and transform the structure of religious life. In this regard, the communist state endorsed systems of ideo- logical representation and atheist values that undermined the order and systems of representation that had prevailed in the Muslim societies of Xinjiang. Confronted with policies that undermined their socioeconomic and symbolic base, some of the Islamic elites continued to contest, in the name of Islam, communist China's claim to the region. Beginning in 1950, the south of Xinjiang17 became a hotbed of unrest involving Sufi and reformist religious

15 Andrew D. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 128–163.

16 Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia*, 63–121.

17 A smaller scale uprising led by the so-called Turkic Islamic Great Party (*Chöng Türk Islamiy Partiyisi)* occurred in the north between 1950 and 1952 but it was rapidly crushed. See Castets, "Nationalisme, islam et politique," 310–311.

figures, as well as individuals close to the pan-Turkist networks of Mehmet Emin Bughra. They capitalized on the discontent generated among the nota- bles as a result of the push toward collectivization and rallied sections of the Sufi networks and of the Muslim masses. In the south of Xinjiang and, particularly in the region of Khotan between 1954 and 1957, they instigated uprisings and acts of guerilla warfare.18

In short, at the start of the 1950s, the CCP had to adopt a relatively conciliatory attitude vis-à-vis religion in order to muster enough popular support to establish its authority. Of course the overtly counter-revolutionary religious figures were purged during the Three-anti campaign and the Five-anti campaign (*sanfan* and *wufan*),19 but, as in the rest of China, the authorities still allowed Islamic education, and religious practices in the mosques.20

At the same time, they undermined the power of the Islamic elites and subdued them, so that the latter could not challenge the authority of the CCP. Fearing that Islam would again be instrumentalized to contest its project of sociocultural reform, the Party thus moved to gradually subjugate the religious arena.

At the start of the 1950s, the CCP implemented policies across China designed to break the ties of economic dependency that bound the masses to the religious elites. In fact, the Islamic elites played a key role in the life of the oases of Xinjiang thanks to the waqf (an Islamic endowment of property to be held in trust and used for a charitable or religious purpose) properties that they managed, the agricultural lands they possessed, and the taxes they collected. Beijing banned religious institutions from withholding taxes and progressively eliminated the economic power of the Islamic elites through measures aimed at redistributing property inheritance. With the Law on Agrarian Reform of June 1950, followed by collectivization in the mid-1950s, the waqf of the mosques, the *xaniqä* (Sufi hotel), the *mazar* (holy tombs or shrines), and the private goods of the local elites were redistributed and nationalized. A law to reform the management of the religions of national minorities came into force in 1958. It confirmed the dismantling of the system of autonomous mosques and of mortmain properties possessed by the clergy.21 Having lost

18 Ibid., 306–317.

19 Donald H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949–1977* (Boulder, co: Westview, 1979): 84–85, 113–116.

20 Interviews conducted in Xinjiang and among the milieus in exile, 1998–2007.

21 Zhu Peiming and Chen Hongyang, *Zhonguo gongchandang yu xinjiang minzu wenti* [Chinese Communist Party and national minorities issue in Xinjiang] (Urumchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2004), 55–65.

their sources of income, the religious elites lost their economic power and thereby their influence over persons whose income depended upon them. In turn, these elites became dependent on the benefits distributed by the Chinese state, and the state only compensated the most conciliatory clerics.

In order to control its territory better, the Party had to have greater control over people's minds. With Party cadres gaining control over the provincial school system, the media, and the progressive supervision of the local populations, the CCP was able to take control of the systems of socialization. Religious elites had already lost influence when Jadid schools and schools controlled by provincial authorities were introduced early in the twentieth century. Control of the school system, control of the media through censorship, and control of the public space allowed the Party to shape representations of the masses.

The communist authorities continued the Kuomintang's efforts to reinterpret local history. They aimed to link the destiny of the local populations to the Chinese nation while simultaneously discrediting historical figures, religious practices, or readings of Islam that went against the Party's modernization and nation-building efforts. Historical actors and events were viewed through a prism analyzing their "separatist/loyalist" or even "feudal/modernist" dimension. This approach to history led to a denunciation of religious currents that legitimated the authority of separatist figures and anyone who upheld the "reactionary order." Thus, official history assigned Sufism and the veneration of saints to the Khojas of the previous century, who were presented as the embodiment of fanatical separatism and a feudal and retrograde sociopolitical order.22 From the 1980s on, the publications of Chinese and Uyghur researchers expanded this critical discourse. Sufism and "superstitions" such as the veneration of saints were presented as distortions of Islam that had allowed the Khojas to hold onto their authority and their economic domination. The Chinese authorities concentrated their attacks on those forms of politicization of the religious and of "retrograde" or "superstitious" practices23 that they deemed incompatible with socialism. For example, the nomadic Sufi mystics were stigmatized (*qalandar*, *ashiq*). Their renunciation of the world made them "parasites" in a socialist society where work was a key value.24 Notably, the Khojas, the Ishans, and the clerics allied with the Jadids were reproached

22 Qi Qingshun and Qian Weijiang, *Zhongguo lishi zhongyang wangchao zhili xinjiang zhengce yanjiu* [Studies on the policies of administration of Xinjiang of the different Chinese central dynasties] (Urumchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2004), 161–168.

23 Such as the veneration of saints and the practices of "Shaman doctors."

24 Thierry Zarcone, "Le culte des saints de 1949 à nos jours," *Journal d'Histoire du Soufisme*, no. 3 (2001): 160–164.

for having made their disciples into fanatics and involving them in bloody conflicts.25 These critiques, spread through the schools, the media, and other new systems of communist socialization, helped alter the relationship between the elites and the urban populations educated in Sufi Islam.

The state also sought to gain control by coopting Muslims by setting up an Islamic Association of China (*Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui*—IAC). Created in May 1953, the IAC soon branched out into regions with majority-Muslim populations. A local branch was set up in Xinjiang in 1956 as part of a strategy to coopt Muslim figures who would simultaneously supervise clerics and transmit CCP policies. Nevertheless, due to the anti-religious movements that began in 1958, the IAC's activity was reduced and completely disbanded at the start of the Cultural Revolution, when the Party took over responsibility for religious affairs. In reality, even if the principle of religious freedom had been written into the constitution, between the end of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution, the Party, aware of Islam's subversive potential, oscillated between relative tolerance and the promotion of atheism. At the end of the 1950s, the policies implemented by the CCP were stricter. This tendency began in 1957 in the context of the anti-right movement (*fan youpai yundong*) subsequent to the Hundred Flowers Campaign (*bai hua yundong*).26 The attacks directed against the politicization of Islam or even retrograde practices gave way to the critique of Islam in itself. Simultaneously, the collectivization drive pushed along by the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960) fundamentally modified modes of life. The madrasas and places of worship were closed down one after the other. Islam henceforth became excluded from life within the people's communes (*renmin gongshe*). Despite a relative reprieve after the Great Leap Forward in some areas of Xinjiang, repression increased with the launch of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. This crackdown was largely linked to the loss of influence of the pragmatic cadres within the CCP to the benefit of radical Maoists, who endorsed the eradication of religion and the rapid assimilation of the national minorities. This repression reached its height during the campaign against the four olds (*po si jiu*).27 The promotion of atheism and the banning of Islam became the rule. The Red Guards destroyed many tombs, mosques, relics, and ancient texts.28 While religious practices within the family or in Sufi circles did not stop altogether, they became secret and were reduced to their strict minimum. Along with figures

25 Qi and Qian, *Zhongguo lishi zhongyang wangchao zhili xinjiang zhengce yanjiu*, 161–168.

26 McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang,* 90–100, 116–120.

27 That is to say, "the old ideas, the old culture, the old customs, and the old habits."

28 Interviews conducted in Xinjiang and among those that sought refuse in the diaspora, 2001–2013.

suspected of "local nationalism" (*difang minzuzhuyi*), many clerics, Shaykhs, Ishans, and their disciples were sent to work camps.29 Any person who put for- ward their religious beliefs or who had previously expressed a religious position henceforth risked being categorized as a counter-revolutionary. Sufi Islam, in particular, suffered from these long years of stigmatization and repression. The communist authorities interrupted the most easily detectable practices, and key shaykhs either died or were arrested, cutting the lines of transmission.

Religious Revitalization and the Politicization of Islam in the 1980s

After many long years of repression, the period of reform and opening (*gaige kai- fang*) laid the ground for a revitalization of Islam in China. With the start of the reform period in the 1980s, the CCP halted the forced atheization of society. The principle of freedom of religion was restored with Article 36 of the 1982 Constitution. Reformers such as Hu Yaobang also called for restoring trust in relations between the central state and the national minorities. Although it did not cease efforts to suppress ideas or activities threatening its political hegemony, the Party eased its control over society and Islam. In addition, the Party and the administration somewhat opened up membership and job recruitment to the minorities. Indeed, during the 1980s, as part of a rationale aiming at counter- balancing the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, the central authorities encouraged the recruitment of cadres from the minorities. These new cadres were less dogmatic and some held religious beliefs. According to an internal survey conducted at the start of the 1990s, more than a third of Party members in the Tarim Basin were practicing Muslims.30 They would often act as mediators between local government and believers.

In addition, the IAC was rehabilitated and the Xinjiang branch re-established. Its revival was part of a series of reforms intended to forge channels of dialogue between Muslims and the state and to create a climate of confidence and trust. The IAC's activities were reaffirmed by the Central Committee of the Party on March 31, 1982.31 While the new constitution solemnly declared

29 Ibid.

30 This rate rises to 50% in certain counties of the Khotan region (Zhu and Chen, *Zhonguo gongchandang yu xinjiang minzu wenti*, 223).

31 "Guanyu woguo shehuizhuyi shiqi zongjiao wenti de jiben guandian he jiben guance" [Basic view points and policies during our country socialist period] in Xu Yucheng, *zongjiao zhengce falü zhishi dawen* [Responses to questions about policy and law about religion] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1997), 287–305.

freedom of religious belief,32 without abandoning the promotion of atheism, the Central Committee fixed in its Title 7 a framework regulating relations between the state and religion after the long period of trouble:

> The basic task of these patriotic religious organizations is to assist the Party and the government to implement the policy of freedom of religious belief, to help the broad mass of religious believers and persons in religious circles to continually raise their patriotic and Socialist aware- ness, to represent the lawful rights and interest of religious circles, to organize normal religious activities, and to manage religious affairs well. All patriotic religious organizations should follow the Party's and government's leadership. Party and government cadres in turn should become adept in supporting and helping religious organizations to solve their own problems.

According to the official rhetoric, the IAC thus acted as a "bridge" (*qiaoliang*) and as a "link" (*niudai*) with the Muslim communities.33 The IAC was supposed to transmit the religious policies of the Party, and at the same time represent the Muslim masses. However, the Party's trust was not boundless. In Document 19, the Central Committee stipulated that places of worship were to remain under the dual supervision of the Religious Affairs bureaus34 (RAB) and the religious associations in charge of running them. Thus, through the RAB, the state maintained the direct right to oversee places of worship.

Among the minorities, this era was nevertheless perceived as a veritable breath of fresh air. At the time, without a precise legal codification of what constituted illegal religious activities, RAB surveillance was fairly lax, outside periods of tensions. Spurred by a quest for spirituality, some Muslim youth rediscovered Islam, and life in the mosques and the madrasas flourished again, particularly in the south of Xinjiang.

Mosques were rebuilt and grew in number thanks to funds from believers and foreign financing.35 The wave of rebuilding mosques in the prefecture of Kashgar reveals the extent of re-Islamization in the south. According to the

32 Article 35 of the Constitution from 1982.

33 Zhang Jingquan, Li Jinxin, and Wang Wei, "Shilun yisilanjiao xiehui de qiaoliang niudai zuoyong. Dui Xinjiang ge ji yisilanjiao xiehui de diaocha yu sikao" [Reflections on the bridging and linking role of the Islamic association. Cross-level survey on the IAC in Xinjiang and reflections], *Gansu shehui kexue*, no. 5 (2008): 252.

34 *Zongjiao shiwu ju*.

35 Notably thanks to wealthy Uyghurs in Saudi Arabia.

estimates of Michael Dillon,36 the prefecture of Kashgar had about 12,000 mosques in the 1950s. Their number fell to about 5,500 at the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. At the end of the Cultural Revolution, the prefecture had no more than 392 usable places of worship. Nevertheless, by the end of 1981, it again had around 4,700 and more than 9,600 in 1995.37

At the same time, Islamic education expanded thanks to the burgeoning of Koranic schools. With less interference from local authorities, Koranic schools thrived across Xinjiang (and the whole of China). According to an internal sur- vey conducted by the authorities following the discovery of politicized net- works of the Islamic Party of Eastern Turkestan,38 in 1990 Xinjiang had 938 Koranic schools with around 10,000 students.39 In many families, the young boys took courses in religion from old local imams.40 However, after being shuttered for more than 20 years, Koranic schools faced a shortage of texts and competent teachers.41 Moreover, after a rudimentary introduction in their local schools, many students would attempt to get into the most prestigious Koranic academies, often headed by clerics trained in the madrasas during the Republic period or else abroad.42

Before returning to the political and ideological structuring of the Islamo-nationalist circles of the 1980s–1990s, it is worth underlining that the renaissance of the Uyghur anti-colonial scene unfolded around two major ideological axes. On the campuses and in the intellectual milieus, notably in the north of Xinjiang, this rebirth centered around a nationalist and democratic line based on Western democracies. The old pro-Soviet nationalist networks declined and the ideological systems of the student youth of the 1980s mutated. Concepts such as class struggle, democratic centralism, or the dictatorship of the proletariat were replaced by democracy, the rule of law, and civil society. The

36 Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang-China's Muslim Far North West* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 28.

37 Gardner Bovingdon, "Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent," Washington, DC, East-West Center, Policy Studies, No. 11, 2004, 33.

38 In Uyghur: *Shärqiy Türkistan Islamiy Partiyisi.*

39 Zhu and Chen, *Zhonguo gongchandang yu xinjiang minzu wenti*, p. 222.

40 Interviews conducted with former students of religion, 2004–2013.

41 Ibid.

42 At the time the madrasas of Karghilik stood out. They were led by Abdul Hakim Makhsum, a reformist cleric who notably spread the teaching of Abdulqadir Damollah. Then vice-president of the IAC, he was freed after 20 years of imprisonment after having been implicated in the uprising in the south of Xinjiang in the 1950s. This cleric, who travelled through Saudi Arabia in his youth, was renowned for his erudition and the openness of his teachings. (Interviews conducted with former students of religion, 2004–2013.)

inability of Chinese leaders to establish an effective form of autonomy, the impact of policies of colonization, and economic inequalities that ran along ethnic lines all worked to mobilize the minorities on the campuses of Xinjiang.43

To minority students, it seemed that the process of reinforcing the Chinese nation-state was being instrumentalized by the Han to cement their political and cultural domination over the peripheries of China. The anti-colonial nationalist militants believed that this model ought to be revised and that they ought to take control of their own destiny. The Turkic speaking peoples of Xinjiang should be the hosts of the Han—not their subjects. In short, these intellectuals demanded a revision of the local political system. They wanted to secure genuine self-rule before the Han became a majority and the process of Sinicization broke apart the Uyghur nation. This viewpoint would dominate the militant scene in the north of Xinjiang until its advocates sought refuge in the diaspora in the 1990s.44

At the same time, a movement to politicize Islam began among the Talips (students in theology, i.e. Talibs), of south Xinjiang. There, the revitalization of systems of Islamic socialization, spurred on by the proponents of reformed Islam, such as Abdul Hakim Makhsum, would produce another, more marginal anti-colonial scene that mobilized around a different set of ideological systems. This re-Islamicized youth upheld a discourse that promoted the idea that Islam should provide the principles and values to organize the ideal sociopolitical order. This evolved into a militant scene that viewed the values and norms drawn from these madrasas as the foundation of a Uyghur society freed from the authority of the CCP and its values. The dismantling of Abdul Hakim Makhsum Coranic schools and the repressive stance adopted by CCP hard-liners after 1989 led some of his formers students to strucuture the East Turkestan Islamic Party (etip) in order to confront directly the Party with recourse to Jihad. One reading of this period, given in a report made after the uprising at Baren in 1990, is telling of the preoccupations that this phenomenon provoked within the authorities:

> In some places in Southern Xinjiang, a small number of ethnic separatists cloaked in religion are spreading separatism and fighting for ideological strongholds, grabbing grassroots political power, and the young generations, openly interfering with the administration, the judicial system, and marriage. The pressure of illegal and criminal religious activities on

43 Castets, "Entre colonisation et développement du Grand ouest," 257–272.

44 Castets, "Nationalisme, islam et politique," 221–229.

> village-level officials and residents is getting heavier and heavier. It has become a mental opium, mental terror, and mental shackle for people, but a mental weapon for the small number of ethnic separatists. Some prayer places have been transformed into places for separatist activities.
> … They use various methods to hurt patriotic religious figures, attempt to usurp the religious leadership, and cause some religious establishments to become stages for counter-revolutionary activities. In some places in southern Xinjiang (for example, in Baren town), outlawed religious practices such as *Oshne-Zakat* [religious charities] are being restored and further developed. The "almighty Allah" has taken the place of the communist ideals as the spiritual support and inspiration. Some people thank Allah instead of the Party's leadership and Party policy for the accomplishments of communist modernization and the improvement in living standards.45

Thus, at the end of the 1980s, when conservatives took control again of the central organs of the Party, they observed that the opening of a space of religious freedom was encouraging the formation of Islamo-nationalist opposition networks. The student demonstrations of 1985 and 1988, and then the anti-colonial turn taken by the demonstrations against a book titled *Xing fengsu*46 in Urumqi in 1989 persuaded the conservative circles that they had to reassert their control over the region. The discovery, in April 1990, that the Talips planned to revolt convinced the authorities beyond all doubt that the religious scene should be monitored.47

Juridicization of Religious Activities and Penalization of Illegal Activities

Between the end of the 1980s and the 1990s, regional authorities, with support from the central government, began paving the way for a system of judicial control designed to check Islam's rise.

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45 Zhang Yumo, "Xinjiang jiefang yilai fandui minzu fenliezhuyi de douzheng ji lishi jingyanti" [About the history of the fight against separatism in Xinjiang after liberation], in Yang Faren, *Fan Yisilan zhuyi, fan Tujue zhuyi yanjiu* [Research on Pan-Islamism and Pan-turkism], (Urumchi: Xinjiang shehui kexueyuan, 1994): 331–63.

46 A work containing denigrating remarks about Chinese Muslims.

47 Rémi Castets, "Uyghur Islam: Caught between foreign influences and domestic constraints," in Jean-François Huchet, Marlène Laruelle, Sébastien Peyrouse, and Bayram Balci (eds), *China, India and Central Asia: A New Great Game?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan/Presses de Sciences Po, 2010), 224.

The juridicization (*fazhihua*) of religious activities is one of the key axes of this strategy. During the Maoist period, the state relied on cadres and militants to launch campaigns of rectification. Until then the state's degree of control over society derived from the political instructions set by the Politburo of the CCP. Starting in the late 1980s, Xinjiang was used to test proposed policies prior to the adoption of national regulations at the behest of the central administration dealing with religious matters: the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA).

In 1988, the government of the Xinjiang enacted "Temporary Rules for the Management of Venues of Religious Activities." This was followed in October 1990, six months after the events of Baren, with "Temporary Rules for the Administration of Religious Personnel." In 1994, permanent regulations, called the Xinjiang Uyghur Auntonomous Region (XUAR) Religious Affairs Regulations, were enacted.48 They systematized the registration of places of worship and of the religious activities taking place within them.49 These regulations aimed to control more strictly places of worship and religious teaching through greater administrative control.

The multiplication of Islamo-nationalist terrorist cells in the 1990s, demonstrations by believers in Khotan in 1995, and riots linked to the banning of *mäshräp*, which rose up in Yining in 1997, reminded the central authorities of the need to establish systematic control. The main axes of this all-out strategy to take back control were formalized further to the major national campaign to "Strike hard" (*yanda*) launched in 1996. The political bureau of the central committee of the Party set orders50 that would contribute to legislative and juridical inflation throughout the region.51

In October 1998, instructions were officially given to the government of Xinjiang to tighten its control over religious activities. Among other things, Beijing recommended keeping systematic records on clerics. Amendments to the Xinjiang Regional People's Congress final document were elaborated in

48 They were also part of the National Regulations established by the Council of State Affairs on January 31, 1994.

49 Ying Fuk-Tsang, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: An Appraisal of Religious Legislation in China and the Regulations on Religious Affairs of 2005," *Religion, State, Society*, 34, no. 4 (2006): 347–373.

50 Political Bureau of the Standing Committee of the CCP, "Guanyu weihu Xinjiang wending de huiyi jiyao" [About the protection of Xinjiang's stability], March 19, 1996, http://www.taklamakan.org/guidebook/Doc7.htm.

51 For a "more governmental reading" of this legislation, see Ma Pinyan "Dang de zongjiao zhence zai Xinjiang de shijian" [Party's religious practice in Xinjiang], *Xinjiang shehui kexue*, no. 1 (2005): 49–55.

2001 and enacted in 2004. They worked to cast ever more narrowly the legal framework within which the clergy and the religious practices of the masses had to comply. In another effort to check the rise of subversive or radical dis- courses in clerical milieus, a campaign was launched in March 2001 for the "Patriotic Re-education of Imams." The imams, already placed under the strict surveillance of the local RAB had henceforth to take education courses in patriotism, in order to identify and reframe possible "deviant" behaviors."52 Those who refused to yield to these sessions exposed themselves to the loss of their accreditation. Handbooks for sermons with patriotic accents were published by the IAC. Controlled more and more strictly by the informants, religious personnel began to complain that they were confined to either reciting sermons laced with propaganda or reduced to announcing regulations without commenting them.53 Thus, the authorities carried out important work to inform the clergy and believers about these juridical apparatuses in training sessions and the publication of handbooks aimed at adults and at children. The goal of the IAC and of RAB was to make the imams, but also the mass of believers, aware of the sanctions to which they were exposed.

Since 2005, the central state has, via SARA, produced a series of regulations that in part reprise the measures established in the autonomous regions of Xinjiang and of Tibet in order to tighten state monitoring of religious activities. The objective of these texts is to fix a national legal framework to harmonize the profusion of local regulations that emerged in 1990s China. The reference text in the matter is Decree Number 426 of 2005 by the Council of State Affairs, which fixes the "Regulations on Religious Affairs" (RRA).54 It recalls the general conditions of religious practice:

> No organization or individual may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens, or interfere

52 Interviews conducted in Xinjiang and among the diaspora, 2001–2008.

53 Uyghur Human Rights Project (uhrp), "Sacred Rights Defiled: China's Iron-Fisted Repression of Uyghur Religious Freedom," March 2013, 31–32, http://docs.uyghuramerican.org/Sacred-Right-Defiled-Chinas-Iron-Fisted-Repression-of-Uyghur-Religious-Freedom.pdf.

54 Human Rights Watch (HRW), "Devastating Blows. Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang," *HRW Special Report*, 17, no. 2 (2005); Eric R. Carlson, "China's New Regulations on Religion: A Small Step, Not a Great Leap Forward," *BYU Law Review,* 5, no. 3 (2005), http://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2243&context=lawreview (accessed April 13, 2015); UHRP, "Sacred Rights Defiled."

with the educational system of the State, or in other activities that harmState or public interests, or citizens' lawful rights and interests.

Article 4 of the national regulations of 2005 states that religious institutions cannot be dependent on foreign entities. These general dispositions were qualified by amendments drafted by SARA and enacted in 2011. These amendments proscribe the dissemination of foreign publications on Chinese soil as well as proselytism by foreign preachers. Articles 7 and 42 provide for the very restrictive conditions of publication of religious materials, their conditions of circulation, as well as the sanctions in case these rules are not respected. It excludes the publication of all matter:

(1) that jeopardizes the harmonious co-existence between religious andnon-religious citizens;
(2) that jeopardizes the harmony between different religions or within a religion;
(3) that discriminates against or insult religious or non-religious citizens;
(4) that propagates religious extremism; or
(5) that contravenes the principle of independence and self-governance in respect of religions.55

Apart from their proliferating character, these juridical measures have had other effects that were difficult for some believers to accept. In fact, in Xinjiang a more and more restrictive dimension has become evident, one designed to prevent Islam from occupying the social field outside of the circle of mosques and homes. The measures in force determine the legality of religious activities according to whether they are (1) tied to one of the five official religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam), (2) headed by officially accredited religious personnel, (3) take place in a site registered by the national Religious Affairs Administration, (4) respect the doctrinal and canonical frames of each religion,56 and (5) adhere to the prerequisites for the maintenance of public order such as they are perceived by the administration and by the Party. On this point, Articles 39 and 40 of the RRA of 2005 vaguely refer to the notions of "interference with normal religious activities"

55 sara, "Guangyu xiuding zhonghua renmin gongheguo jingney waiguoren zongjiao huodong guanli guiding shixize" [Amendments to the People's Republic of China's Regulations on the Activities of Aliens in the PRC], (2010, December 2008), http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfg/bmgz/7369.htm (accessed April 13, 2015).

56 Article 12 of the Regulations on Religious Affairs.

and "violation of public security." Thus, depending upon the context, the profile of individuals, and the degree of appreciation of functionaries and of judges, it can be easy to label a religious activity or simple remarks with religious content as "subversive." The zeal of state functionaries and judges, who are often evaluated in accordance with set targets, leads them to apply heavy- handed measures, which is facilitated by the ample room for interpretation that the texts allow. Similarly, all religious activities that take place outside of officially accredited sites must apply for permission 30 days before they are scheduled to occur (Article 22 of the RRA of 2005). This is problematic for activities on the margins of orthodoxy or for those that take place outside of mosques, such as Sufi or saint veneration rituals.57

In every community, local religious groups must declare themselves or risk being banned. Simultaneously, however, they run the risk of being identified and of not having their practices recognized and thus becoming a target of the authorities and subject to sanctions.58 Since the 1980s, building permits and financial requirements have been imposed on efforts to construct new religious sites. New quotas regulating the pilgrimage to Mecca were introduced in 1995, based on the premise that Uyghurs may be exposed to subversive influences during the Hajj or may take advantage of it to emigrate. Individuals may now only make the Hajj as part of organized groups, the cost of which is often prohibitive for those in the poorest prefectures. In 2006, new and even more restrictive measures were set in place. The authorities established a policy of passport retention, making it possible to examine each person's dossier before his or her stay abroad. Only persons between 50 and 70 years of age have any real chance of being chosen. After their case has been studied, they must deposit a bond of about 20,000 RMB and to attend pre-travel patriotic education courses to raise their awareness of the possible subversive types to whom they could be exposed in Saudi Arabia.59

Other new regulations have been imposed on religious practices. In April 2005 SARA issued its "Measures for the Examination, Approval and Registration of the Establishment of Religious Activity Venues." These measures fix the framework of relations between places of worship and the administration tasked with monitoring them. Two more sets of regulations were released in December 2006. The "Measures for Filing Particulars of Religious Personnel" and the "Measures for Putting on File the Main Religious Personnel of Venues

57 UHRP, "Sacred Rights Defiled," 65.

58 Officiating clergy can, in certain cases, have their premises or their goods seized (article43 of RRA of 2005).

59 UHRP, "Sacred Rights Defiled," 41.

for Religious Activities" set a national framework concerning the registration process and how to record information about the clergy. These devices, as seen, already existed in Xinjiang but have since been refined.

Lastly, in November 2014, the Regional Assembly of Xuar adopted a bill to reform the regional regulations on religion issued since 1994. This new bill adds 18 articles to the preceding regulations in order to adapt them to the cur- rent context. It focuses on the fight against religious extremism60 and on gaining control over the new media through which religious or politico-religious contents can be disseminated. The bill proposes new tools for juridical characterization as well as sanctions that ramp up the fight against all religious or extremist contents that circulate via the Internet, social media, or video for- mats. These new media, in fact, present a new challenge for the state's policy of control. They open the door to anonymized and reticular modes of ideological propagation, especially as many Salafist sites are administrated from abroad. Despite the firewalls set up by the Chinese state to control the vast Chinese intranet, there are exit doors leading to the rest of the Internet. The issue here, then, is to try to dissuade Uyghur youths from surfing on these sites by showing that they risk heavy penalties.

The Shakeup of Religious Education in Xinjiang

Attempts to regulate religious activities have been accompanied by tightening the system of religious socialization. Here, too, the first regulations were enacted in Xinjiang in the early 1990s via regional regulations that foreshadowed national measures. The new legislation proscribes private Koranic schools or education lessons (*siban jingwen xuexiao / ban*). At the start of the 1990s, these schools were closed down, and any that survived underground saw their participants severely punished.61

Thus, without authorization imams are no longer able to give courses in "catechism," not even during the *mäshräp*, in which this kind of practice was nonetheless frequent. To become accredited, young imams must graduate from the official Islamic Institutes (*yisilanjiao jingxuexiao*; Uygh. *islam dini inistituti*). The national regulations for Religious Affairs of 2005 and the

60 This latter is defined as the "activities or comments that twist the doctrines of a religion and promote thoughts of extremism, violence and hatred." "Religious Extremism Law Imposes New Restrictions on China's Uyghurs," Radio Free Asia (rfa), October 12, 2014, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/religious-extremism-law-12102014160359.html?searchterm:utf8:ustring=extremism+xinjiang (accessed April 13, 2015).

61 "Uygur Held for Teaching the Koran," *South China Morning Post*, August 15, 2005.

"Measures for the Establishment of Religious Institutes," which came into force in September 2007, fix the operational framework for religious education bodies. The teaching of Islam is henceforth placed under the control of the IAC. Thus, as Article 8 of the RRA from 2005 underlines:

> For the establishment of an institute for religious education, an application shall be made by the national religious body to the religious affairs department of the State Council, or made by the religious body of the province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government to the religious affairs department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government of the place where such institute is to be located.62

In fact, there now are only two of these educational units in Xinjiang. The Islamic Institute of Urumqi was established in 1986; one in Kashgar was founded in 1991 and then expanded in 2002 (at the start of the 2000s it had around 150 students). The three-year course at the IAC is openly designed to train clerics who maintain respect for CCP policies. However, critics say that the course contents are too political, lack focus on religious questions, and enrollment is too limited.63 Thus, many young Uyghurs leave to study in inner China, even though Hui Koranic schools are dissuaded from taking them, or else they attempt to enroll abroad. In fact, the new regulations frame and delimit the contacts of young Uyghurs with outside religious circles. Religion students are allowed stays abroad so long as they register before departure and register with the embassy of the host country. In addition, it is now impossible for students that take religious courses abroad without prior permission to have their diplomas recognized locally.

Administrative Bodies Short-Circuit the IAC

Another consequence of this juridical inflation is the growing marginalization of the IAC in Xinjiang. As Jérôme Doyon underlines in his study on the IAC in Nankin, what must be taken into account are the variety of local configurations determining the relations of interdependence between the IAC and the administration:

62 Carlson, "China's New Regulations on Religion," 784–785.

63 Interviews with Imams who have undertaken a course at the Islamic Institute of Urumchi, 2007.

> The distribution of tasks [between the IAC and the administration] nevertheless remains rather theoretical. … It is necessary in addition not to forget the very important role in religious matters of the United Front Department (UFD), a Party institution whose goal it is to coordinate different groups of the population, including the religious communities, to create Party support and national unity. … The distribution of roles between the Religious Affairs Bureau and that of the National Minorities [*minzu shiwuju*] is notably quite unclear. Both offices are generally merged at the local level. …The associations are placed in a web of relations between the places of worship and the communities; the UFD; the RAB; and the National Minorities Affairs Bureau. The Public Security Bureau [BSP] can also play a controlling role vis-à-vis religion in the case of groups that the government does not recognize. This network brings into play a variety of relations of force and negotiation powers in accordance with the locality or the religion. Similarly, the superposition of roles and the competition that this induces between organizations changes from one configuration to another.64

Thus, the distribution of tasks and the effectiveness of the powers of each of the bodies involved varies by administrative district. On the one hand, beyond the fact that the IAC is itself also state financed,65 the interpenetration of staff between the different administrative structures often imposes constraints on its members and results in the IAC's de facto subordination to the other bodies. On the other hand, the political context in the region and state pressure on the RAB can lead to circumventing IAC when it comes to managing places of worship. Such has been the case in recent years in Xinjiang. Security preoccupations, and the Chinese authorities' distrust of the clergy, have led to the elaboration of new regulations that have marginalized the IAC since the 1990s. Thus the very state that, at the start of the 1980s, allowed the IAC considerable leeway has tended to consider that policy a failure. Instead, it has established both more docile and more zealous administrative structures.66

64 Jérôme Doyon, "La gestion de l'islam en Chine côtière," in Rémi Castets (ed.), *Musulmans d'Asie. Représentations et configurations socio-politiques en mouvement* (Bordeaux: University Press of Bordeaux, forthcoming).

65 And are therefore dependent on the latter.

66 This is despite the fact that they are sometimes more awkward and less enlightened, since they are often driven by functionaries who are "scarcely religious," who sometimes have poor knowledge of religious practice, and who do not necessarily grasp all the stakes they involve.

Where Document 19 entrusted the management of places of worship to the IAC, Article 5 of the Regulations of 2005 on the Regulation of Religious Affairs clearly recalled that places of worship were under state authority through the Office of Religious Affairs.

> The religious affairs department of the people's government at or above the county level shall, in accordance with the law, exercise the administration of religious affairs that involve State or public interests, and the other departments of the people's government at or above county level shall, in accordance with the law, be responsible for the administration of relevant affairs within the limits of their respective functions and duties.67

In pro-government circles and within the CCP, IAC cadres have long had the reputation in Xinjiang of being unreliable—dragging their feet when it comes to enacting unpopular state measures. Thus, in the communities where dis- trust between the administration and the IAC are both present, the former has been pushed to take over from the latter. For this reason, the RAB and even the BSP sometimes display extreme zealousness when taking up CCP directives or when punishing behavior deemed inadequate; inevitably, conflicts ensue.68 Given the tense context and tight monitoring of religious staff, it is today almost impossible for a Western researcher to conduct interviews in these milieus. It is therefore not possible to provide a comprehensive district-by-district analysis.

Nevertheless, the testimonies that have been collected in this study69 indicate that the configurations taken by this *modus vivendi* depend largely on the charisma of local IAC cadres, on their networks, or on their ability to prove their credentials. These accounts also bring to light a reality that is rather different from that observable in the "most pacified" zones of the Hui world, where the IAC is able to act as a mediator with greater ease.70 In Xinjiang, how- ever, the IAC is often strangely absent from the scene. The clerics there do not complain about pressure being exerted by the IAC but about harassment during periods of tension from the functionaries of BAR, BMAR, or the BSP. These latter bodies often enact prohibitions or even evictions of imams, actions that often tend to pour oil on the fire. There have been several demonstrations and

67 Carlson, "China's New Regulations on Religion," 783.

68 Zhang Jingquan et al., "Shilun yisilanjiao xiehui de qiaoliang niudai zuoyong," 252–255.

69 Interviews conducted in Xinjiang between 2001 and 2005.

70 Jérôme Doyon, *Négocier la Place de l'islam chinois. Les associations islamiques de nankin à l'ère des réformes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014).

even riots that have been sparked by the eviction of an imam or the temporary closure of a mosque. For example, the events that shook Khotan in 1995 were linked to the eviction of Abdul Kayum, a young charismatic imam who had denounced the arrest of two of his predecessors.71 Other elements are revealing of this increasingly tight surveillance by the administration. The fact that IAC branches in certain sensitive areas of Xinjiang operate with a ridiculously low budget, or the fact that their premises are squarely integrated within the DFU, or the bmar,72 is once again telling. Although they are situated in areas with a large Muslim majority, they have become secondary cogs, regarded as ineffective and subordinated to the DFU or BMAR.

Counterproductive Levels of Control

The Chinese authorities appear to believe that containing Uyghur Islam will make it possible to expunge all its subversive dimensions. They thus consider it essential to render local interpretations of Islam compatible with the principles and the values defended by the Chinese state. Nevertheless, the authorities' mistrust of Uyghur Islam is fuelling a juridical inflation that has become suffocating for marginal groups of practicing believers in the society. For example, it is currently forbidden for members of the administration, minors, and students to attend a mosque. A man sporting a beard or a woman wearing a veil is likely to be considered a threat to public order and to be banned not only within administration facilities but also within a growing number of public places.73

In reality, nation and Islam constitute reservoirs of meaning and of legitimacy that are being mobilized to distract from the Party's inability to resolve the root issues of discontent within Uyghur society. Rather than treating the cause of the harm, the CCP only treats the symptoms. High levels of surveil- lance and suspicion, incessant controls, and abusive punishments dished out by overzealous or corrupt functionaries, fuel the defiance of the Uyghurs. Moreover, the local bases of the Party and of the administration have been purged of their least "patriotic" elements and set under pressure. Many cadres or imams no longer dare to intervene in order to "smooth over the rough edges,"

71 "China: Gross violations of Human rights in the Xinjiang Uighur autonomous Region," *AmnestyInternational*,April1999,http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/asa17/018/1999/en/6eb116ed-e285–11dd-abce-695d390cceae/asa170181999en.html.

72 Zhang Jingquan et al., "Shilun yisilanjiao xiehui de qiaoliang niudai zuoyong," 252.

73 uhrp, "Sacred Rights Defiled," 66–76.

as was done in the 1980s. In short, the measures implemented are becoming counterproductive. These levels of frustration help fuel the increasing flashes of violence. These measures cement the idea that since the 1990s control has replaced dialogue in Xinjiang. As this control has become too suffocating and the punishments accompanying it too unjust or excessive, it has triggered a rise in episodes of violence such as has been seen in Xinjiang over the last two or three years.