Asian Ethnicity, Volume 3, Number 2, September 2002

'Making Culture Matter': Symbolic, Spatial and Social Boundaries betwee Uyghurs and Han Chinese

JOANNE N. SMITH

(University of Newcastle, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK)

This article illustrates how Uyghurs in the 1990s defined and reinforced cont Uyghur national identity in relation to Xinjiang's growing Han Chinese pc Adopting Barth's theory of fluid and negotiable ethnic boundaries, it focuses on t of change. While Uyghurs are currently activating and exaggerating certain religic differences—in particular the avoidance of pork—as a means of ensuring symboli and social segregation from the Han, those criteria did not prevent interaction to extent in the past; nor do they prevent Uyghurs from making concessions when i them to do so. It is argued that it is not religio-cultural differences per se *that l root of increased tensions between Uyghurs and Han Chinese, but changing social, and economic contexts: on the one hand, growing Uyghur perceptions of socio-e inequalities between themselves and the Han (the 'internal factor') and, on the o vast changes within the international political arena since the late 1980s (the factor').*

Introduction

In 1989–90, Justin Rudelson carried out the first prolonged anthropological fieldw to be conducted among the Uyghurs[1] of Xinjiang. Since that time and particularly f mid-1990s on, a number of scholars have been able to conduct long-term researc region, and the fruits of their efforts are now beginning to appear.[2] Some existing

1 The system employed by Reinhard Hahn in *Spoken Uyghur* (University of Washington Press, Seattle adopted to transliterate Uyghur terms, as I consider this to be closest to local pronunciation. Howeve two changes: the consonant 'ğ' is replaced with 'gh', and the consonant 'č' with 'ch'.

2 Published articles include Dru Gladney, 'Relational Alterity: Constructing Dungan (Hui), Uygur, an Identities Across China, Central Asia, and Turkey', *History and Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1996), pp Sean R. Roberts, 'Negotiating Locality, Islam, and National Culture in a Changing Borderlands: The F the Mäshräp Ritual among Young Uighur Men in the Ili Valley', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 17, no. pp. 673–99; Ildikó Bellér-Hann, 'The Peasant Condition in Xinjiang', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vc 4 (1997), pp. 87–112; Ildikó Bellér-Hann, 'Crafts, Entrepreneurship and Gendered Economic Rel Southern Xinjiang in the Era of "Socialist Commodity Economy" ', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 17, no. pp. 701–18; Ildikó Bellér-Hann, ' 'Making the Oil Fragrant': Dealings with the Supernatural among the in Xinjiang', *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 2, no. 1 (March 2001), pp. 9–23; Ildikó Bellér-Hann, 'Rivalry and S among Uyghur Healers in Kazakhstan', *Inner Asia*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2001), pp. 73–98; Joanne N. Smi Generations of Uyghurs: The Shift towards Ethno-political Ideologies among Xinjiang's Youth', *Inner* 2, no. 2 (2000), pp. 195–224, and M. Cristina Cesaro, 'Consuming Identities: Food and Resistance a Uyghur in Contemporary Xinjiang', *Inner Asia*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2000), pp. 225–38. Scholars who have completed (or are on the verge of completing) PhD theses based on fieldwork in Xinjiang include Rach 'Music, Identity and Representation: Ethnic Minority Music in Xinjiang, China' (School of Oriental an Studies, London University, UK, 1998), Joanne N. Smith, 'Changing Uyghur Identities in Xinjiang in th (University of Leeds, UK, 1999), Jay Dautcher, 'Folklore and Identity in a Uighur Community in 1990s China' (University of California, Berkeley, USA, 1999), M. Cristinacesaro and Gardner Bovingdon.

ISSN 1463-1369 print; 1469-2953 online/02/020153-22 © 2002 Taylor & Francis Ltd

focus on specific aspects of identity expression among Uyghurs in certain regions of Xinjiang.[3] Other more general studies stress the relative nature of Uyghur discourse on identity, and argue that notions of an 'imagined common history'(or indigeneity) form the basis of contemporary Uyghur national identity, which is constructed with reference to the Chinese state and Han Chinese hegemony.[4] It has further been shown how this sense of national identity disappears among Uyghurs born into an émigré community.[5]

By contrast, this article seeks to illustrate how Uyghurs define and reinforce contemporary Uyghur national identity in relation not to the Chinese state but to Xinjiang's growing Han Chinese immigrant population. In the following sections, I explore the cultural criteria selected and employed by Uyghurs to demarcate and maintain symbolic, spatial and social ethnic boundaries between themselves and Han Chinese in Xinjiang in the 1990s.[6] It is shown how these boundaries are negotiated such that they dictate the conditions under which Uyghurs and Han may interact and ensure segregation in situations where they should not. Finally, the underlying factors influencing the current reinforcement of symbolic, spatial and social boundaries will be analysed. One year was spent in Xinjiang between September 1995 and September 1996 conducting fieldwork mainly among Uyghurs in Ürümchi, in addition to short-term periods in Kucha, Aqsu, Qäšqär and Xotän. An ethnographic approach was adopted in order to gather information 'straight from the horse's mouth'. During the first six months of the fieldwork period, I learnt Uyghur so that I might hold conversations with respondents in their mother tongue. The core of the empirical data comprises informal conversations with Uyghurs of both sexes, of various ages and social groups, and from various localities. It also includes qualitative observations of practices and interactions among Uyghurs, as well as interactions between Uyghurs, Han Chinese and other minority nationalities in Xinjiang.[7]

Self-Ascription and Relativity ('Us and Them')

Throughout this paper, a number of theoretical assumptions are made. First, I adopt the central notion that ethnic identities (and symbols of those identities) must be selected by

3 See Bellér-Hann, 'The Peasant Condition in Xinjiang' on Uyghur peasants, 'Crafts, Entrepreneurship and Gendered Economic Relations in Southern Xinjiang'on gendered economic relations, and ' "Making the Oil Fragrant" ' on the veneration of the dead in southern Xinjiang; Roberts, 'Negotiating Locality, Islam, and National Culture in a Changing Borderlands' on the *mäšräp* ritual in the Ili valley; Smith, 'Four Generations of Uyghurs' on ethno-political ideologies among Xinjiang's urban youth; and Cesaro 'Consuming Identities' on food and identity in Ürümchi.

4 Dru C. Gladney, 'The Ethnogenesis of the Uighur', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1990), pp. 1–28; Gladney, 'Relational Alterity: Constructing Dungan (Hui), Uygur, and Kazakh Identities'; Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uighur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1997).

5 Gladney, 'Relational Alterity: Constructing Dungan (Hui), Uygur, and Kazakh Identities'.

6 Since this article was submitted and accepted for publication in July 2001, I have had the good fortune finally to meet Ildikó Bellér-Hann. In our subsequent communications, I became aware of her (then forthcoming) chapter on Uyghur-Han relations, also dealing with strategies employed by Uyghur to reproduce ethnic boundaries *vis-à-vis* the Han: Ildikó Bellér-Hann, 'Temperamental Neighbours: Uighur-Han Relations in Xinjiang, Northwest China', in G. Schlee (ed.), *Imagined Difference: Hatred and the Construction of Identity* (LIT Verlag, Münster, Hamburg, London, 2001). With regard to similarities between our data and the theoretical frameworks we adopt to express those data, I would note that we carried out fieldwork at the same time in Xinjiang independently of one another and wrote our respective pieces unaware of the other's work. Coincidental similarities in approach may therefore be considered mutual validation of our assessment of ethnic relations in Xinjiang. Indeed, the two articles can be treated as complementary, since my ethnographic material is based mainly on fieldwork in Ürümchi (population 90 per cent Han, 10 per cent Uyghur), while that of Bellér-Hann focuses on a small oasis town in southern Xinjiang (population 40 per cent Han, 60 per cent Uyghur). This difference in geographical focus and population composition accounts, I believe, for certain differences in our interpretations.

7 The material presented here first appeared in Chapters 9 and 10 of my as yet unpublished PhD thesis 'Changing Uyghur Identities in Xinjiang in the 1990s'. Funding for postgraduate study was kindly provided by the Economic and Social Research Council, Swindon, UK.

group members themselves, this process being called self-ascription. An ethni only be defined and structured from within, and only those 'objective' diff sidered significant by the actors themselves are taken into account.[8] De Vos p of potential criteria for cultural difference, including racial uniqueness (so genetically inherited difference), place of origin, economic independence community organisation within the plural society), religious beliefs and practic cultural forms (e.g. food, dress, dance) and language. In choosing some or criteria as symbols of identity, group members define the way in which they themselves from other groups.[9] This set of cultural criteria is rarely maint entirety through time and space. Most ethnic groups include cultural forms in are clearly excluded in the present. Similarly, while a group spread over varying territory will display regional diversities of cultural practice, self-ider a group member may nonetheless continue.[10]

The second assumption made is that ethnicity is not isolated (i.e. ab primordial sense), but relative. In other words, ethnic distinctions cannot ex vacuum of contact and information, but rather entail social processes of ex incorporation embodied in the construction and maintenance of ethnic bounda can only be 'insiders' where there are also perceived to be 'outsiders'. E therefore only develop if an ethnic group is in regular contact with another gro from whom it considers itself substantially different (or against whom it has re to differentiate itself): '*I* identify myself with a collective *we* which is then cor some *other* ... What *we* are, or what the *other* is will depend upon conte boundaries—like ethnic identities themselves—are fluid and negotiable and change shape and vanish in relation to changing social, political and econom Accordingly, group members may employ different cultural criteria at differ order to define themselves against different groups.[13]

This theoretical framework is particularly useful when considering the Uyghur of Xinjiang, because it takes account of the notion of change. Central t is the idea that while Uyghurs are currently employing certain religio-cultural in order to dictate and control patterns of interaction with the Han Chinese, differences apparently did not prevent Uyghurs from interacting with the Han (in a different socio-economic context). Nor do those differences stop Uy interacting with Han Chinese in the present context *when it suits them to do so*. on Uyghur–Han relations of the vast socio-economic changes occurring in Xinji

8 See Fredrik Barth, 'Introduction', in Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Socia of Cultural Difference* (Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1969), pp. 10, 14; George De Vos, 'Ethnic Plur and Accommodation', in George DeVos and Lola Romanucci-Ross (eds), *Ethnic Identity: Cultur and Change* (Mayfield, Palo Alto, California, 1975), p. 9; Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity an Anthropological Perspectives* (Pluto Press, London, 1993). p. 37.

9 De Vos, 'Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation', p. 16.

10 Barth, 'Introduction', p. 12.

11 Barth, 'Introduction', p. 9; Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, pp. 10–12, 35.

12 Edmund Leach, *A Runaway World* (Oxford University Press, London, 1967), cited in A.L. *and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity* (Tavistock, London, 1978), p. 100. Cf. Sartre's theory of 'we-hood', see Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (Gallimard, Paris, 1943), cited in Eriksen, *Nationalism*, p. 67.

13 Gladney, 'Relational Alterity: Constructing Dungan (Hui), Uygur, and Kazakh Identities' has deve model–which he calls 'relational alterity'–to deal with the question of transnational Hui, Uygu identities, arguing that 'people subscribe to certain identities under certain highly contextualised mo relation'. Locating the emergence of national identities in Central Asia within this field of con historical social relations, he draws attention to the 'shifting simultaneity of identity', and shows identities are constructed in different social contexts *vis-à-vis* a number of different 'opposites'.

past ten to fifteen years has hitherto been given insufficient attention in the anthropological and sociological literature. This paper will argue that Uyghurs in the mid-to-late-1990s are activating and exaggerating religio-cultural differences between themselves and the Han as a means of demarcating a unified ethnic identity in relation (or in reaction) to increased competition from Han immigrants in the spheres of education and work and growing perceptions of socio-economic inequalities.

Emergence of 'Us and Them' Dichotomy and Eclipse of Oasis Identities

It is crucial next to outline the background to the present 'local situation' in Xinjiang. Over the past century, the region Westerners once called East Turkestan has been formally incorporated into China, and the resulting increased Uyghur interaction with the Chinese state and the Han Chinese people has played a significant role in shaping modern Uyghur identities. Following the conversion to Islam of the last remaining Buddhist Uyghurs of Gaochang in the mid-1400s, the ethnonym 'Uyghur' was abandoned and for the next 500 years Uyghurs identified themselves using terms denoting social group (e.g. 'merchant') or oasis origin (reflecting the geographical isolation of the region's disparate oases).[14] It was only in 1821, when the Qing dynasty began to encourage mass Han immigration to the region in an effort to incorporate it into the Han Chinese realm, that Uyghurs began to unite against the perceived dominant hegemony.[15] Yet the ethnonym 'Uyghur' did not reappear until 1921, when Soviet advisors at a conference in Taškänt proposed that the name 'Uyghur' be used to designate all those people hitherto known by names denoting oasis origin. This proposal was duly adopted in 1934 by the then Xinjiang provincial government.[16]

Drawing on fieldwork carried out in 1989–90, Rudelson has emphasised the continued predominance of local oasis and social group identities over other identities in Xinjiang.[17] Yet my fieldwork data of 1995–96 suggest that, since the time that Rudelson was conducting research in Turpan, contemporary Uyghur identity has undergone significant changes, in response both to changing international politics (the collapse of Eastern European Marxist–Leninist parties in 1989, the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 and the subsequent formation of the republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS) and to changing socio-economic circumstances within Xinjiang itself. Certainly, Uyghurs in the 1990s and beyond like to distinguish between the unique features of different oases, and these differences evoke a certain atmosphere of local competition. For instance, all Uyghurs prefer their particular hometown, and insist that it is better than the others. However, such assertions rarely take the form of an attack and do not seem to stem from some powerful ethnic sentiment. Uyghur attitudes towards Han immigrants are by contrast characterised by disgust, anger, bitterness, passion and a strong sense of injustice. This paper argues that traditional oasis rivalries may now have been largely (but perhaps temporarily) eclipsed by a new religio-cultural and socio-economic threat: Xinjiang's Han Chinese immigrant population. If we follow this theory, then oasis differences such as regional foods, styles of dress or wedding practices become less significant when confronted by alien cultural practices and economic competition from without. The fact that the vast majority of criticisms made to me by Uyghurs were levelled not at Uyghurs from other oases but at Han Chinese immigrants is indicative of the emergence of just such a new ethnic dichotomy in Xinjiang.

14 Juten Oda, 'Uighuristan', *Acta Asiatica*. 34 (1978), p. 42.
15 Gladney, 'The Ethnogenesis of the Uighur', p. 10.
16 Ibid., p. 4.
17 Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*.

The present consolidation of Uyghur identity across the region and reinforcement of ethnic boundaries *vis-à-vis* the Han can be attributed in 'internal factors' (in addition to changes in the international political arena— factors'). These are:

(a) the Chinese government's policy of mass Han Chinese immigration to X
(b) the *de facto* institutionalisation of the Chinese language; and
(c) (perceived) Han Chinese exploitation of Xinjiang's natural resources.

I shall examine each in turn, beginning with immigration policy. Like the the Chinese Nationalists, the Chinese Communists have consistently advocat Chinese immigration to Xinjiang, largely as an attempt to stabilise this imp region. Immigration to the northwest has been facilitated over the past half c extension of the railway first from Lanzhou to Ürümchi, and then from Ürün and on to Qäšqär. Many new roads have been constructed in the region, i Ürümchi–Xotän desert highway, which was completed in recent years and be road to cross the hostile Taqlamaqan desert. These improvements in communic with Han development of Xinjiang into a territory suitable for large-scale sett greatly speeded the immigration process. As a result, the number of I immigrants in Xinjiang has drawn gradually closer to the number of local

Continued Han immigration to Xinjiang has had three visible effects o region. First, as the number of Han Chinese has grown, pressure on t boundaries has increased, making religio-cultural differences harder to manage Han Chinese settled in areas separate from Uyghur 'Old Towns', and contact immigrants and local people was limited. More recently, however, they have b not only in urban areas (Ürümchi and Han Chinese 'New Towns') but also i Furthermore, Uyghurs have themselves begun to move into Han-dominated s by new opportunities in education, employment and trade. The result is a hi of (intentional or unintentional) boundary crossing. Second, the increase in I has led to growing Uyghur perceptions of socio-economic inequalities be groups in Xinjiang (such that the unemployment rate among Uyghurs, for blamed on the increase in Han immigrants). Finally, the growth of the Ha population has had a profound effect on the immigrants themselves. Finding th numerical majority in some urban areas of Xinjiang (notably, Ürümchi and Chinese are now unwilling to adapt to Uyghur culture and, instead, expect Uyg to Han culture. This has led Uyghurs to complain of Great Han chauvinism discrimination.

The second internal factor contributing to the present consolidation of Uy *vis-à-vis* the Han is the *de facto* imposition of the Chinese language. O

18 Between 1949 and 1970 alone, the percentage of Han Chinese in Xinjiang increased from 5 staggering 40 per cent. See Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang: Ethnicity, Separatism and Control in Chin* (Durham University East Asian Papers No. 1, Durham, 1995), p. 31). A census carried out in 19 by that year, there were 5,695,626 Han Chinese in the region (37.57 per cent of the total popul with 7,194,675 Uyghurs (Thomas Hoppe, 'Die chinesische Position in Ost-Turkestan/Xinjiang (June 1992). p. 360, cited in Dillon, *Xinjiang*, p. 48). According to estimates based on an official of population change carried out in Xinjiang in 1996, Han Chinese totalled 6,424,400 persons c of the total population, while local nationalities (including Uyghur) totalled 10,468,500 persons ((Xinjiang statistical communiqué for 1996. See *Xinjiang ribao* (*Xinjiang Daily*), Ürümchi, 14 Ma Monitoring: Summary of World Broadcasts (Asia Pacific), 7 May 1997, FEW/0485 WS2/8). Th that, although minorities in Xinjiang (like minorities elsewhere in China) have enjoyed preferential since the introduction of the one-child policy in the early 1980s, the proportion of Han Chines total population has remained stable at around 38–40 per cent. This seems to corroborate Uyghu flow of Han immigrants to Xinjiang continues.
19 Attitudes of Han racial and cultural superiority.

half-century, the Chinese language has been all but institutionalised in the spheres that matter: education, work and regional administration. As a result, urban Uyghurs find themselves increasingly caught in a web of socio-economic discrimination. To have a good chance to become fluent in Chinese and so be able to survive a university course, Uyghur children must normally go to a Han Chinese school.[20] Uyghurs who fail to reach university (usually *minkaomin*[21])—and even *minkaomin* who have been through university—are discriminated against by Han-dominated work units and companies who prefer to hire employees fluent in the Chinese language and well versed in Han culture (i.e. Han immigrants or *minkaohan*[22]). This has led to a higher unemployment rate among Uyghurs than Han, and increasingly bitter perceptions among Uyghurs that high-status, white-collar posts are all held by Han immigrants. The situation is worsened by the fact that many Uyghur parents are either afraid or unwilling to send their children to Han schools. On the one hand, Uyghur children often suffer ethnic discrimination at the hands of Han Chinese classmates. On the other, many parents wish to try to preserve Uyghur culture through Uyghur education. Uyghur resentment of the Han, then, emanates partly from a growing awareness that the *de facto* institutionalisation of the Chinese language has led to their effective marginalisation in a new urban social hierarchy created by Han Chinese for Han Chinese in developed urban areas.[23]

Finally, Uyghur perceptions of Han Chinese exploitation of Xinjiang's natural resources play a salient role in the current reinforcement of ethnic boundaries. The depth of Uyghur feeling regarding the issues of discrimination in the urban labour market and Han exploitation of the region's oil, coal and other deposits is reflected in the evidently strong desire to bring these issues up, often at the first meeting. For many young urban males, notions of control of Xinjiang's natural resources and of political independence from the People's Republic of China go hand in hand. They feel that Han Chinese can be allowed to stay on one condition only: that they help Uyghurs to develop on an equal basis with Han Chinese immigrants.

Boundary Dynamics (Symbolic, Spatial, Social)

Having provided the background to the local situation in Xinjiang, I shall now explore the dynamics of boundary maintenance between the two groups. This section examines those criteria for cultural difference that are 'made to matter', that is, employed by Uyghurs to emphasise their contrastive ethnic identities through the demarcation of a complex system of ethnic boundaries. Some of these boundaries are symbolic (cultural differences that are given symbolic meaning in patterns of interaction); others are more concrete (ensuring

20 Some Uyghurs educated at Uyghur schools do reach university, and this number is likely to grow as a result of the implementation of the self-paid school system. However, these students generally struggle with academic texts (which are printed in Chinese) once there, and may take more years to graduate.

21 The term used by both Han Chinese and minority nationalities for a member of a minority nationality educated in their mother tongue at a minority nationality school.

22 The term used for a member of a minority nationality educated in the Chinese language at a Han Chinese school.

23 The same issues seem to be relevant in Tibet. Tsering Shakya identifies Tibetan awareness that they have not benefited from economic reforms and will always be marginalised *vis-à-vis* Han immigrants as the impetus for post-1987 demonstrations by young urban Tibetans ('China–Tibet: Further Dialogue?' East Asia Research Seminar, Leeds University, UK, 17 February 1999). Rural Uyghurs, on the other hand, have so far been relatively unaffected by Han chauvinist attitudes and Han competition for education and work, owing to the smaller number of Han immigrants in the countryside. They claim to have experienced an improvement in their standard of living since Deng Xiaoping's Open Door policy took effect in the mid-1980s. Furthermore, they do not feel that their native language has been marginalised in their rural environment, where government decrees are still issued in Uyghur. These factors help to explain why the proliferation of ethno-political ideologies in Xinjiang has so far been a predominantly urban phenomenon.

spatial and social segregation). Uyghurs across the region currently link m criticisms of the Han Chinese directly to the fact that Han are non-Muslims. ingly, many of the cultural differences chosen to demarcate boundaries betwee and the Han have their roots in Islam. In particular, Islamic avoidance of pork at the present time to enforce spatial and social segregation.[24]

Symbolic

The first symbolic boundary is constructed through language. Most Uyghurs preference for the Uyghur language by making clear distinctions betwee environment and 'the outside', corresponding to times when they speak Uygh when they consent to speak Chinese. Although many urban Uyghurs, particula liks, are fluent in or can speak a certain amount of Chinese, most emphasise is a language of practical convenience only. Tömür (a *minkaohan* in his forties) by a Han Chinese work unit in Ürümchi.[25] He became very excited when I aske language he generally used, and outlined the boundaries of the respective lan 'Oh, we may speak Chinese outside ... but we all speak Uyghur as soon as w By 'outside', he meant environments where Uyghurs interact with Han Chinese speak Uyghur. These are usually state work units or private companies se Chinese that employ mainly Han staff and where all administrative paperw Chinese language. At home, however, almost all Uyghurs speak Uyghur. The this rule are some *minkaohan*, who tend to have a stronger foundation in Ch their native language and often code-switch at home.

In university dormitories, *minkaomin* speak Uyghur to one another. The Uyghur to *minkaohan* roommates until the latter show signs of discomfort. The in a mixture of Uyghur and Chinese, or entirely in Chinese, until the po grasped. In this way, the rules are slightly altered to accommodate the *min* sometimes have problems expressing themselves in Uyghur, especially in acad sations.

On the street, it is taken for granted that conversations between Uyghurs a in Uyghur, whether the other person is an acquaintance or a stranger. I Uyghur-dominated Erdaoqiao district, Uyghurs always spoke to me in U breaking into Chinese only if they perceived that I could not understand. The b of the Uyghur preference to speak Uyghur came from 'accidental' obs interactions between Uyghurs. Once, while browsing in Ürümchi's Hongsha store, I witnessed a Uyghur man approach the counter and, without lookir talking to the store assistant (whom he assumed to be Han) in Chinese. Half his sentence, he glanced up, saw that she was Uyghur, and instantly switched in Uyghur. They both laughed, and he apologised for his mistake. The same thi on another occasion when I boarded a bus with Räwiä, a French language Ürümchi. She initially addressed the Uyghur bus conductress (whose facial f closer than usual to those of Han Chinese) in Chinese, but changed to Uyg through the sentence and apologised. Räwiä is *minkaohan* and therefore pr comfortable with Chinese than with Uyghur. Yet she was quick to correct

24 Cesaro 'Consuming Identities' devotes a paper to analysing ways in which Uyghurs draw on prescriptions in order to strengthen boundaries between themselves and the Han Chinese. Her field out during 1996–97, the year following my own.

25 The names of key informants and details of their occupations have been altered to protect their ide details of age, social group and hometown are retained.

Her action represented a public acknowledgement of mutual ethnic origin and of shared difference *vis-à-vis* the Han Chinese. Once, I was eating with Šöhrat, a young male archaeologist from Ürümchi, in a Uyghur street restaurant in Turpan and was dressed in winter clothing typical of an Ürümchilik woman. As I had only just begun learning Uyghur, we conversed in Chinese for the sake of convenience. When we left, we overheard two old Uyghurs in the corner mutter: 'But she's a *Uyghur* girl! Why on earth is she speaking in Chinese?' To them, it was inconceivable that Uyghurs should speak Chinese to one another while eating lunch in a non-Han environment.

Whether they want to or not, many Uyghurs are now forced to master Chinese if they are to compete with Han immigrants. However, they describe the decision to learn Chinese as a purely strategic career choice, claiming that the only way to get ahead in the Han-created urban society in Ürümchi is through fluency in Chinese. Learning Chinese is thus seen as a means of survival. Regarding the trend in recent years of putting Uyghur children in Han Chinese schools, Tömür said: 'I'll tell you, there's only one reason why we learn to speak Chinese, and that's just to get a better job!' This view was echoed by Räwiä and many other Uyghur parents in Ürümchi throughout the year. Aliyä, a female postgraduate studying dentistry in Ürümchi, explained: 'We speak Chinese because of its dominant position in this society. There is no way around it. Uyghur is not as important as Chinese now'. Despite the acknowledgement, she spoke Uyghur at all times except when speaking to Han Chinese or when intermingling Uyghur and Chinese for the sake of *minkaohan* dorm-mates.

Most Uyghurs (with the exception of *minkaohan*) prefer to read and write in the Uyghur script. Periodicals and journals containing minority-nationality literature have appeared all over Xinjiang since the early 1980s and the re-introduction of more relaxed minority policies.[26] In 1986, at least 12 journals were being published in Uyghur in Xinjiang.[27] In 1996, over 70 different publications appeared in Uyghur, indicating that there is a large audience of literate Uyghur who increasingly prefer to read in their native language. There are also many Uyghur language newspapers in addition to several Uyghur language television channels. Most southerners watch the Uyghur language channels in preference to the Chinese language channels, although Ürümchiliks (who tend to be at least semi-fluent in Chinese due to the large Han population in the city) also like to watch soap operas or dramas on the Chinese channels.

Urban Uyghurs frequently register rejection of the Chinese language by making it the object of humour or ridicule. The most common example is the Chinese expression *Manman zou!* (literally, 'walk slowly' or 'go slowly'), uttered when a person takes leave. On one occasion, Sultan, a specialist in Russian literature in his fifties, joked: 'Why would anyone want to walk slowly? They should walk quickly! Otherwise they will never get to where they are going before night falls!' That Uyghur intellectuals strive to compare the Uyghur language favourably to Chinese indicates that they feel themselves to a certain degree to be in cultural competition with Han Chinese.

In rural areas, however, boundaries concerning language use are more blurred. Uyghur peasants, many of whom have received little education in either Chinese or Uyghur, are often proud to show off their limited knowledge of Chinese. Ömärjan, a peasant in his sixties in Aqsu, translated all the terms for the crops he raised into the equivalent Chinese for me. For him, the ability to speak a few words of Chinese carried novelty value and was an evident source of pleasure and pride. It seems that, for Uyghur peasants living in

26 Colin Mackerras, 'Uygur Performing Arts in Contemporary China', *The China Quarterly*, no. 101 (March 1985), p. 77.

27 Eden Naby, 'Uighur Elites in Xinjiang', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 5, nos 3/4 (1986), p. 243.

relatively Han-free areas and still untouched by discrimination of language i of education and work, the Chinese language remains free of stigma.

Time is another criterion through which Uyghurs (and other Central Asians draw a symbolic boundary between themselves and Han Chinese. It is the vel which they underline their belongingness to the land *vis-à-vis* the Han Chinese Muslims, whom they perceive to be newcomers. While the watches and clock of Xinjiang's population read 10 a.m., those belonging to the other half insist 8 a.m. Further investigation into this strange circumstance reveals that, while and Hui Muslims use China's official 'Beijing time', Uyghurs, Qazaqs, Özbäk others all use 'Xinjiang time', the local time congruent with the region's position and two hours behind 'Beijing time.' Änwär, a *minkaohan* interpreter i from Ürümchi, explained: 'You see, all the original inhabitants of Xinjiang us It's what we're used to.'[28] By 'original inhabitants', he indicated people of C origin who have lived in the region for centuries. Over the next few weeks, it l that while official Han Chinese work units (companies, shops, railway st 'Beijing time', the Central Asian peoples of the region were unanimous in the use of local time.[29]

Uyghurs persist in using local time, despite the obvious inconveniences (t the constant need to ask: 'Do you mean Xinjiang time or Beijing time?'). On tl their persistence in using local time as opposed to Beijing time reflects a desi old habits and practices. However, it also represents a symbolic rejection of I hegemony and administration, all the more remarkable in the light of the inco causes to all concerned. It represents a symbolic boundary between the 'origi Asian inhabitants and the Han Chinese and Hui Muslim 'newcomers'. The ti is further complicated by the fact that Hui Muslims regard 'Beijing time' ar time' as one and the same thing. When asked which system they used, they us 'Xinjiang time' or 'Ürümchi time'. On closer questioning, it transpired that tl used Beijing time but called it 'Xinjiang time'. Like the Han Chinese, the F Beijing time the standard time for Xinjiang as for all regions of China. This is p factor contributing to the mutual mistrust between Uyghurs and Hui Muslims

Still, there are some Uyghurs who use Beijing time either because they accustomed to using it or because their job requires that they do. These individ some (but by no means all) *minkaohan* and some Uyghurs who work in Han Cl units or whose spouses do. The former attended Han Chinese schools where I was used throughout their school lives. The latter have to use Beijing time ever work environment. In particular, a Uyghur whose job is concerned with tim station, travel agency) uses Beijing time simply because it is too confusing t with local time. Nevertheless, the majority of Uyghurs working in Han Chinese keep their watches set to local time and calculate the time difference.

One factor that has led Uyghurs and other Central Asian Muslims in (particularly the south) to draw boundaries between themselves and the Han Chi attitude towards birth control. Uyghur opinion on birth control is divided along and urban–rural lines. Although many northern urbanites have begun to e

28 He referred to Uyghurs, Qazaqs, Özbäks, etc. as the *tumin* (in Chinese) of Xinjiang, literally, the or the 'native people'.

29 On discovering that I had set my watch to local time after only a few days in Ürümchi, an Americar smiled and said: 'Well ... what other time is there?' The gesture also met with a positive reaction f When Räwiä first noticed that my watch had been re-set to local time, she smiled, nodded, and s Rome, do as the Romans do'.

'modern' conception of smaller families and are not particularly averse to family planning,[30] southerners and Uyghurs in rural areas abide by the Islamic notion that children are 'a blessing from Allah' and tend to be strongly opposed to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) birth control policy.[31] Southern Uyghurs often enquired whether there was birth control in England, and wanted to know why Westerners usually had small families (that is, whether they were constrained to by law). Tursun, one peasant in his thirties from a small village in Aqsu, lamented that Uyghurs could do nothing about birth control policy in Xinjiang 'because our king is the Han'.[32] I asked another recently married young Aqsuliq how many children he would have if there were no mandatory birth control. He replied airily: 'Oh, twenty or thirty! It can't be helped.' Although this figure was exaggerated for comic value, he was clearly desirous of having lots of children. Perhaps more significantly, he considered pregnancy to be a matter out of his hands and dependent on the discretion of Xuda (Allah).

In 1996, southern peasants were unanimously unhappy with the family planning methods being enforced by Han Chinese authorities. Many women in the countryside had never seen a condom. Tursun's wife, Arzigül, originally had an IUD coil fitted after having her third child, but this caused headaches, incessant bleeding and extreme weakness. When she went to the doctor, he removed the coil immediately and said that she might have died had he not done so. Many women in the area have reportedly died from using the coil, which seems to have been routinely fitted. Now, Arzigül takes a birth control pill prescribed by her local hospital, but suffers frequent headaches. A visit to the family planning clinic in Aqsu New Town revealed that the authorities are heavily promoting a new pill, which serves as a morning-after pill or in varying doses as a drug that induces miscarriage. Glossy adverts on the clinic wall proclaim it safe, painless and 100 per cent effective.

Tursun and Arzigül stated that those who have more than the legal quota of children face fines of 8,000–10,000 yuan (compared with the rural family's annual income of 5,000 yuan in a good year). They also confirmed frequent reports of pregnant women in the south being rounded up, loaded onto trucks and taken away for mandatory abortions. Those who do have more than three children are forced to send the fourth or fifth child to live with relatives elsewhere. Alternatively, the mother may give the child over to a childless woman to bring up as her own. Although a small minority of urban southern women would prefer to bear fewer children, for the vast majority of southern and rural Uyghurs, the issue of birth control has become the main focus of opposition to Han rule, if not necessarily to Han Chinese as individuals.

A further symbolic boundary between Uyghurs and Han Chinese is the current Uyghur-enforced taboo on intermarriage. Although Uyghurs and Han intermarried in the past, such an idea was unacceptable by the 1990s. The chief reason cited for this development is differences in religio-cultural practices. One young Ürümchilik woman told me:

> We believe in different religions. Before, there was intermarriage, but nowadays there is none. Once a couple gets older, they start to realise their customs and practices are different. And their religions are different. One person says one thing and the other says something else. They can't agree. It almost always ends in divorce.

30 This notion may have been engendered by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda, which publicises the advantages of birth control and points out that many modernising Islamic countries (e.g. Iran) now practise birth control. Alternatively, Uyghurs may have absorbed the notion from television images of modern nuclear families in the West.

31 It is generally conceded that Islamic beliefs are stronger in the south than in the north of the region. Historically, the southern oasis of Qäšqär was greatly influenced by the Islamic centres of Bukhara and Samarkand, and Uyghurs today continue to make pilgrimages there. Rudelson, 'Oasis Identities', p. 49.

32 Tursun used the word *padišah* ('king') in keeping with Uyghur tradition.

For Uyghurs and other Central Asian Muslims, national customs are almost ins from Islam. Past experimentation seems to have proved to many that marria non-Muslim can be fraught with difficulty. Liu Lan, a 20 year-old *erzhuanzi*[3 parents had divorced twelve years before, explained that 'national sentiment had pr strong' on the side of her Uyghur mother. Many older Uyghurs also reported that seen mixed marriages fail. A friend of Räwiä's concluded: 'Two separate races c still have areas that are very different at the end of the day. These differences c resolved with love.' This woman was *minkaohan*. Although *minkaohan* are g supposed to be culturally closer to Han Chinese, most nonetheless reject the o intermarriage.

In 1995 and 1996, young Uyghurs rarely had romantic relationships with Han Those that did came under attack from Uyghur elders and peers. I spoke to a 19- girl from Ürümchi who had a Han Chinese boyfriend. She told me: 'It's really ha to even go out anywhere. If other Uyghurs see us together in public, they give us If Uyghur men see us together on a public bus, they swear at us and hit us. Uyghu aren't so bad, but they still make comments.' The young woman's elder sister (a r Beijing) also planned to marry a Han Chinese. Under the weight of public disappr mother would not allow her younger daughter's marriage to go ahead in Xinjia though the Han boyfriend had given up pork and begun to learn the Uyghur l (thereby removing what barriers he could that might obstruct the match). She however, to the elder sister's marriage, since the wedding would take place far aw Xinjiang, and her married life would be spent in Beijing away from public pressu suggests that rather than religio-cultural differences *per se*, it is the threat of dis from within the Uyghur community that rules out intermarriage at present. Uyghu 1990s are coming under significant pressure from ethnic peers to conform to pat ethnic segregation.

Spatial

In each of Xinjiang's oases, there is a similar pattern of spatial segregation of Uygh Han Chinese. Each oasis has an Old Town (*kona šähär*) and a New Town (*yengi* The populations of the Old Towns are composed entirely of Uyghurs. The popula the New Towns are composed mainly of Han Chinese immigrants, but include a pr of Uyghurs employed in Han Chinese work units. The one exception to this Ürümchi, where there is no division of New Town and Old Town. The entire cit be described as a New Town in which Han Chinese immigrants dominate all district one: the Uyghur district of Erdaoqiao in the south-east. In Erdaoqiao, there are ne Han Chinese. Comparatively small numbers of Uyghurs are spread throughout t Chinese districts.

In this case, the boundary has been drawn by the Han Chinese. From the st Chinese government pursued a policy of settling Han immigrants in areas not se Uyghurs, or in New Towns that were constructed adjacent to the Uyghurs' Old T In this way, they probably hoped to manage religio-cultural differences (in particu raising of pigs by the Han Chinese as against the Uyghur avoidance of pork) and s conflict. It is likely that the policy also made the prospect of immigration more ap

33 The derogatory term in Chinese designating children of one Uyghur and one Chinese parent. The equivalent would be 'half-breed'.

34 It has been suggested that Uyghurs perceived this new pattern of Han settlement as 'encirclement', a led to the obscuring of historical oasis divisions and a new focus on rivalry with the Han Chinese. Rudels *Identities*, p. 38.

to new Han settlers, many of whom were reluctant to move to Xinjiang, which they perceived as a distant and hostile territory.

In the present context, it would be untrue to say that all Uyghurs prefer to live separately in Old Towns. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that many are willing to compromise and go to New Towns if a good job and a new house beckons. *Loufang*[35] homes in New Towns all have water supplied on tap, and so the problem of sharing a common water supply to wash 'clean' and 'unclean' meat does not exist. In addition, some *minkaohan* have, over many years at Han schools, partly internalised the Han Chinese perception of hygiene and beauty. As a result, they prefer the clean new *loufang* homes to the traditional one-storey Uyghur homes of Old Towns, which are made of earth and trap the dust.

Despite this concession, Uyghurs endeavour to ensure and maintain spatial segregation as far as possible. They do so by laying a deliberate emphasis on the Islamic avoidance of pork. Certainly, Uyghurs, as Muslims, should strictly avoid eating pork or coming into contact with pigs. Yet it appears that in the present context, Uyghurs are not simply adhering to dietary prescriptions for their own sake. Rather, they are actively employing dietary differences as a means to separate and segregate themselves from the Han.[36] A middle-aged Uyghur doctor in Xotän observed: 'There are still huge differences in culture between the two nationalities. For instance, food. A Uyghur will not eat pork, although the Han do. If a Uyghur ate pork, he would no longer be a Uyghur. It is as simple as that.' Han immigrants in Xinjiang similarly cite Islamic dietary prescriptions as the main factor complicating interaction between the two groups at present. A young Han woman in Ürümchi explained that Uyghur rules governing diet were so strict that in the rare case of Han Chinese marrying Uyghurs, they must drink a bitter concoction to sterilise their intestines and then convert to the Muslim diet. However, the rules surrounding avoidance of pork are not hard-and-fast. Uyghurs are constantly negotiating this boundary, which is permeated with contradictions and with concessions made in particular circumstances.[37]

The boundary operates firstly on a symbolic level. The scandal surrounding *zhuancha* (brick tea) from the mid-1990s provides adequate demonstration.[38] During 1995–96, several Uyghurs in Ürümchi told me they had ceased drinking brick tea, a tea imported from China proper and once popular among Uyghurs. Upon further enquiry, they explained that a Uyghur reporter had a few years earlier circulated some photographs, allegedly showing Han Chinese workers slaughtering pigs within a brick tea factory complex in China proper. They added that the pictures also showed Han workers trampling the tealeaves while sweating profusely. Although there was clear doubt surrounding the validity of the evidence, the ensuing scandal united many Uyghurs in a boycott of the product for five months, a boycott inspired not only by the alleged presence of pigs in the factory grounds but also by the vision of Han Chinese sweat soaking into the leaves. According to Šöhrat, the young male archaeologist in Ürümchi, the Chinese government later launched a campaign to persuade Uyghurs to resume drinking brick tea (sales from the tea make up a large proportion of profits from three Chinese provinces, including Hubei and Hunan).

35 Five or six-storey residential blocks that became popular in China after Liberation.

36 Cesaro ('Consuming Identities', pp. 230, 234) notes that Uyghurs in the 1990s defined categories of forbidden/allowed foods according to what people those foods were associated with and not necessarily according to which items are explicitly forbidden in the Qur'an. In this way, articulation of the 'food boundary' can be seen as a form of Uyghur resistance against the Han people.

37 Cesaro 'Consuming Identities', p. 234 similarly notes a tension between what Uyghurs say they do and what they actually do.

38 See ibid., p. 231.

Subsequently, many people did not know what to believe, and brick tea lover drink it once more.

The food boundary should in theory necessitate spatial segregation betwee and Han Chinese in many environments. However, on close investigation, evident that Uyghurs employ dietary differences to ensure spatial segregation c as it suits them to do so, and often make concessions if they stand to benefit. Fo if one examines patterns of Uyghur patronage of different eateries, a number c contradictions emerge. In Ürümchi and urban areas of Xinjiang, signs outside state whether food served inside is *hancan* ('Han cuisine', including pork an 'unclean') or *qingzhen* ('pure and true', avoiding pork and selling mutton and b Within this basic distinction, there are three types of restaurant:

(1) Han-managed *hancan* restaurants which sell Han Chinese food including p
(2) Han-managed *qingzhen* restaurants which serve Chinese- and Uyghur-style avoid pork;
(3) Uyghur and Hui *qingzhen* restaurants serving 'pure and true' Xinjiang disl

Uyghurs avoid the *hancan* restaurant without exception. This is an underst fact in Xinjiang. Following my arrival in the city, Uyghurs at the local mark attempted to dissuade me from entering *hancan* restaurants, arguing with Han Ch invited me into their establishments: 'She doesn't eat Han food! She eats Mu don't you?' In this way, they tried to ensure that I would eat only *qingzhen* food Xinjiang and thereby align myself (culturally and politically) with them. It difference that I might well eat pork when in the UK; indeed, Uyghurs chose to b I did not. In this way, Uyghurs used the food boundary as a means to reject the H but chose not to apply the same rules to Westerners.[39]

If dietary requirements truly represented a hard-and-fast rule, one might e Uyghurs would refuse to enter any establishment where food comes into contact Chinese. Yet I found, for example, that Uyghurs eat in Han-managed *qingzhen* under certain circumstances. Uyghurs from my work unit (*minkaohan* and *n* usually ate in nearby Han-managed *qingzhen* restaurants when lunching with Ha work colleagues. I also observed that groups of young Uyghurs (again, *minka minkaomin*) liked to hold birthday parties and other special events in Han *qingzhen* establishments, though they ate in Uyghur or Hui *qingzhen* rest most other times. It is notable, however, that they were rarely if ever accom Han Chinese. The Han Chinese managers of these restaurants rarely confo Muslim diet themselves, and are evidently only interested in increasing p excluding pork dishes from the menu, they can attract both Han and Uyghur c When I questioned why Uyghurs should consent to eat in a restaurant whose mana and waitresses came into regular contact with pork at home and possibly also d lunch break (and which might therefore be considered ritually 'unclean'), Šöhrat, archaeologist from Ürümchi, countered: 'But have you noticed that it is a certa Uyghur who goes there? Those who went to Han schools [*minkaohan*]. They're n about things like that. And, also, those who haven't received a higher

39 See also Cesaro 'Consuming Identities', p. 232. A computer programmer I knew in Ürümchi was plate with Chinese politician Li Peng's signature on it during a trip to Beijing. He refused it, saying you. It's not *qingzhen*!'

They haven't thought of all the implications, you see.' He thus stated (albeit unwittingly) that the only type of Uyghur not to eat in Han-managed *qingzhen* restaurants is the educated *minkaomin* like himself, of whom there are relatively few. One further wonders how he could tell *minkaohan* and *minkaomin* apart just by looking at them.[40]

Uyghurs willingly eat in either Uyghur or Hui restaurants since both are *qingzhen*. Yet given the choice, they will usually enter Uyghur rather than Hui establishments. Some Uyghurs explained that they were not so keen on the flavour of noodles served in Hui restaurants, complaining that Hui did not know how to cook *läghmän*[41] sauce and always put in too many chilli peppers.[42] Uyghur restaurants are distinguishable by the sheep carcasses that hang outside, which indicate that meat sold there is *halal* ('clean').

On university campuses, kitchens and dining halls are segregated. Lunchtime visits to Ürümchi's Universities of Medicine and Education revealed separate queues before the *hancan* and *qingzhen* serving hatches, the former queue composed entirely of Han Chinese students, the latter of mainly Uyghur students. Likewise, universities usually have separate dorms for Uyghurs and Han Chinese, in order to manage dietary differences. Yet Uyghurs informed me that they sometimes chose to live in mixed dorms in order that they might practise their Chinese with Han room-mates (Chinese language ability being crucial both for success at university and in the urban job market). They claimed that in such cases, Han Chinese students always took care not to eat pork in the dormitories and ate out instead, though I did not have the opportunity to observe whether this was truly the case.

Uyghurs often cite the problem of utensils, crockery and cutlery being 'unclean' as a key factor preventing them from visiting the homes of Han Chinese (and ensuring spatial segregation in the domestic sphere).[43] Yet here, too, there are many inconsistencies. For example, Uyghurs serve food to Han Chinese customers in Uyghur restaurants every day, meaning that their Uyghur customers come into contact with the same plates, bowls, chopsticks and spoons used by Han (who eat pork).

When I queried this point, Uyghurs usually responded by saying that there was no way around this problem, since they needed Han Chinese custom to keep their businesses ticking over. Šöhrat, the archaeologist from Ürümchi, went on to insist that it was a different case when a Han ate in a Uyghur home: 'On the few occasions that a Han comes to a Uyghur home, the bowl, dish and chopsticks he uses are thrown away afterwards.' I subsequently asked a Uyghur in his late thirties in rural Aqsu whether he also followed these guidelines. He shrugged, said that he himself would just wash the crockery in hot water, and added that such an extreme attitude was to be expected from a Qäšqärliq.[44]

Uyghurs also claim to feel disgusted by the sight of live pigs or by the smell of pork cooking. It is true that Han immigrants in rural areas have to raise pigs on all-Han settlements well removed from Uyghur dwellings due to the problem presented by the rural water supply. When I asked a Uyghur peasant from Aqsu prefecture whether Han Chinese

40 To an extent, it remains unclear which types of Uyghurs enter Han-managed restaurants and under what circumstances. Cesaro ('Consuming Identities', p. 231) writes that Uyghurs tend to avoid Han-managed *qingzhen* restaurants on the grounds that the food may have come into contact with a Han. This issue would certainly benefit from further research.

41 Thick round noodles in spicy tomato, red pepper and mutton sauce.

42 Cesaro 'Consuming Identities', p. 230 also observed Uyghur reluctance to eat in Hui restaurants and attributes this to a lack of trust, arguing that Uyghurs inevitably associate the Hui with the Han Chinese. This would correspond with my own findings on Uyghur responses towards the Hui preference for 'Beijing time' over 'local time'.

43 Whenever I was invited to Han Chinese homes, Šöhrat and others tried to dissuade me from going: 'You don't want to go there! The Han eat pork, and the food will be cooked and eaten out of the same pans'. See also Cesaro 'Consuming Identities', p. 230.

44 The inference derives from the common perception that the Islamic faith is strongest in the southern oasis of Qäšqär. The respondent alluded to the fact that Šöhrat's original hometown was not Ürümchi but Qäšqär.

who lived nearby raised pigs, he replied decisively: 'No, they can't. They do all use the same water from the same rivers and streams. If they raised pigs, th drink from the streams, the meat would be washed in the streams ... then the flow downstream to us! That would cause big problems.' It is also true that U not come into physical contact with pigs.[45] Yet I got the distinct impressio Uyghurs exaggerated their disgust regarding pigs and pork in order better to ar dislike for the Han Chinese. For instance, one young female student in Ürümch that she and her friends always went the long way round at the local market passing a Han butcher's stall. In practice, I never noticed her doing so duri strolls around the market. In Aqsu New Town, a Uyghur chef insisted with s that Han could not open many *hancan* restaurants there since 'pork stinks cooking'. Nevertheless, this fact has not prevented *hancan* establishments fro across Ürümchi. Nor does it prevent Uyghur petty entrepreneurs from selling directly in front of those establishments.

Social

With the exception of practical relationships formed within the work environme do not willingly mix with Han Chinese. Accordingly, ethnic segregation is between the two groups in the home environment, on the street and in all socia If I asked Uyghurs whether they socialised with Han Chinese, the enquiry negative click of the tongue or a decisive shake of the head.

Once more, the principal reason cited for this absence of social interaction dietary habits.[46] On a purely practical level, the Han Chinese inclusion of pork makes socialising in many situations that involve food impossible. The reality, that Uyghurs simply do not want to socialise with Han Chinese, and use abst pork as a means of ensuring not only spatial but also social segregation. The on to this rule is lunchtime in the work unit. At work, Uyghurs seem willing to ber whether for the sake of protecting their jobs or preserving basic harmony in an e where they are obliged to work with Han Chinese on a daily basis. A compror reached in the workplace if Han Chinese agree to eat lunch with Uyghurs i restaurants. However, such compromises are rarely made outside the work unit conversation with a Uyghur woman in her forties in Ürümchi:

Author: Do you have any Han friends?
Uyghur: Yes, but only at work.
Author: So they're work colleagues?
Uyghur: Yes.
Author: Don't you have any close friends you spend time with?
Uyghur: We don't usually socialise with Han. We don't go to their homes. Our eati aren't the same. They eat pork ... so we don't like to socialise with them.

Not only do Uyghurs avoid visiting Han Chinese homes but they also feel able about Han Chinese coming into their homes. A Uyghur peasant in his forti told me that Han colleagues occasionally visited his home or the homes of his r

45 Once, a sleeper bus on which I was travelling was delayed by a flood across the road. Presently, a pigs made it through the water from the other side and drove past us. One Han Chinese passenger n surprise to his neighbour that a Uyghur had been driving the truck. His companion was scornful: When did you ever see a Uyghur transport pigs?'

46 Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*, p. 63 identifies pork as the main factor influencing interaction between Han Chinese in Turpan: 'These social borders may appear invisible ... but they become salient i interethnic social, religious, and commercial interactions'.

At these times, he said, they always asked the Han guest: 'Would you like something to eat?' Such an enquiry indicates reluctance in Uyghur culture and is tantamount to stating that you do not wish to entertain a guest. Conventionally, a Uyghur host just produces tea and refreshments and enjoins the guest to tuck in: '*Yäng! Iching*!' ('Eat! Drink!').

Ethnic segregation is plainly visible on the streets of Ürümchi and Xinjiang's New Towns, where Han Chinese walk hand in hand, and Uyghurs arm in arm, but mixed groups are never seen. Similarly, Han Chinese rarely attend Uyghur social gatherings,[47] unless in an official capacity (for example, a Han superior from the work unit might briefly drop in on a Uyghur wedding party to pay his respects, or a Uyghur businessman might take a Han businessman to a Uyghur dance restaurant). Certainly, there are any number of objective reasons why Han Chinese might find it difficult to participate in Uyghur social events. First, Uyghur gatherings provide an arena for Uyghurs to make music, sing, dance and generally take centre stage. A comparable love of public performance does not figure in the social lives of most Han Chinese, who do not consider themselves natural show-offs and tend to be less extroverted than Uyghurs. While many Uyghurs love to be in the limelight, Han Chinese are usually loath to be the 'bird that sticks its head out of the nest'. Participation would also require that Han guests were *au fait* with traditional Uyghur music and dance. As Uyghurs like to honour special guests by asking them to dance or sing, one could easily imagine that Han guests might soon find themselves in an awkward and embarrassing position.

Secondly, the Uyghur way of serving and consuming food is often different from that of the Han (Islamic dietary prescriptions aside). At house parties, for instance, Uyghurs sit cross-legged in a circle on the floor and feast from the *dastixan* (special tablecloth) rather than sit at table, as Han Chinese do.

Thirdly, Han Chinese might be confused by conventional patterns of sexual segregation practised by Uyghur men and women at such events. For example, when attending birthday parties, Uyghur adults in Ürümchi usually sit at sexually segregated tables. It is not so much that an inalienable social law forces them to do so, but rather that Uyghur men and women simply feel more comfortable in the company of their own sex. During house visits, women often retire to one room while the men sit in another. At Ürümchi wedding parties, men sit together down one side of the hall, while women sit along the other. At funerals, also, men and women move in separate groups.

Fourthly, Uyghur ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and circumcisions are strongly influenced by Islam and participants require special 'insider' knowledge in order to understand and fulfil their roles. To give some examples, the young male friends of the groom at a Uyghur wedding know that they are responsible for the fetching of the bride, which is carried out with much noise, enthusiasm and playing of practical jokes. The door of the bride's home is barricaded against the men, who have to bribe their way in with presents for the bride and her family. The bride knows that her passage to the groom's home or the hall will later be blocked, and she in turn must buy her entry with presents given to the men. Female guests, on the other hand, know that they should bring pieces of cloth or money gifts to be collected as presents for the bride.

Uyghur funeral ceremonies similarly require 'insider' knowledge in order to run smoothly. The ceremonies are held in the home of the deceased or of their relatives, and

47 These include Islamic ceremonies (weddings, funerals, circumcisions, etc.), street-restaurant and house parties, group outings to the Uyghur dance restaurant or *wuting* (Chinese dance hall), all-Uyghur university dances, the *mäšräp* (a mass out-door gathering held during the hot summer months, where men and women feast, play *dutar*, sing, dance, tell stories and jokes, and play games), and the rural orchard gathering. For a description of the historical origins and various forms of the *mäšräp*, see Zheng Ping, Luo Anji (trans.), *Xinjiang: The Land and the People* (New World Press, Beijing, 1989), pp. 134–7.

the bereaved rely heavily on the support of neighbours. Räwiä, the Fren specialist from Ürümchi, related how Ürümchiliks particularly regret having neighbours at the time of a death:

> When Uyghurs have a death in the family, that's when they most wish they had oth as neighbours. Especially during the first week after the death, friends and relativ the house with gifts of food, since the family is too beside itself with grief to coo many guests coming every day, the family will really wish it had Uyghur neighl would simply open up their homes and allow the guests to overflow into their ho

Meanwhile, the close relatives of the deceased must know how and wher 'crying' (similar to wailing or the recitation of Islamic verses) is loud, theatri public. It demonstrates to relatives, friends and neighbours the love that one deceased. If close relatives do not cry at the moment of death and throughout they are criticised and it is assumed that they did not care for the deceased Westerner or Han Chinese, however, the crying seems almost unearthly.

Finally, the vast majority of Han Chinese cannot speak Uyghur and wou place in an environment where Uyghur is spoken almost exclusively.

Still, these facts alone should not absolutely prohibit Han Chinese from soc Uyghurs. The *wuting* (dance hall) within the Chinese work unit is one venue wh and Han Chinese might potentially share a love of dance. Although few Hai Xinjiang can dance traditional Uyghur dance, many enjoy ballroom dancing. brief greeting, Uyghurs and Han Chinese sit in separate groups, Uyghurs goi with Uyghurs, and Han with Han. Uyghur men occasionally ask Han Chines dance (usually their next-door neighbours), but all return to their separate s afterwards.

The Consequences of Boundary-Crossing: Bus Stories and Str

Where Han Chinese transgress these boundaries, trouble can occur. At a private party in a Uyghur friend's street restaurant in Ürümchi, groups of Han Ch stumbled through the door and demanded to be served food, or stood grinning . The owners said nothing but looked quietly angry, threw the intruders an initial looked elsewhere as they waited for them to leave. The second time this occur got up with a furious look on his face and bolted the door when the offending had gone.

Situations where Uyghurs and Han find themselves unwillingly cramm within a limited physical space, such as on crowded buses or at markets, car conflict. I often observed Uyghurs and Han Chinese go out of their way to avoid to one another on buses. I heard one story of how two Uyghurs spread thems three seats to prevent a Han policeman from sitting beside them. Fights break o over issues as simple as a Han Chinese stepping on a Uyghur's foot. As a result have become a favourite subject of Uyghur storytelling. Street fights are guarant if Han Chinese men dare to approach Uyghur women. Romantic relationsh Uyghurs and Han Chinese are presently taboo, and Uyghur men are extremel

48 There is a strong feeling among urban Uyghur towards *muhalla*, a real group determining the between individuals, and providing unity and solidarity. Within the *muhalla*, obligations and resp placed upon individuals in return for support and services, so that members celebrate wedding together, organise funerals and rituals together, and help one another when needed. Urban Uyghurs that *muhalla* life is disappearing in the big cities, particularly Ürümchi, thinking this the result o presence (Aysha Eli, communication).

over the honour of female relatives, colleagues and classmates. Furthermore, they view Uyghur women as their monopoly and not to be won by Han Chinese.

In the south of the region, ethnic conflicts often occur in public shower-houses, these being one of the few places where Han and Uyghurs are forced to interact. In one small village in Aqsu, the shower-houses were not only sexually but also ethnically segregated. When I inquired why this was, the local people told me that it was 'to prevent fights breaking out'.

Managed Interaction in the Workplace

There is one environment in which the two ethnic groups contrive to manage interaction: the workplace. The mutual pursuit of good jobs, regular salaries and a better livelihood in a competitive urban society has meant that Uyghurs and Han Chinese have, to a certain extent, learned to live with one another in the work environment.

My observations of Uyghurs and Han Chinese employees in work units and Han-dominated companies in Ürümchi lead me to believe that relations there are relatively friendly, at least on the surface. Uyghurs and Han courteously refer to one another as 'Han comrades' and 'minority comrades.' They frequently gossip about their colleagues (a phenomenon one might expect to find in any workforce in the world). Indeed, a love of gossip is one thing that Uyghurs and Han Chinese seem to have in common. Uyghur and Han employees usually ask one another their lunch plans. If they decide to lunch together, it is Han Chinese colleagues who must compromise by accompanying Uyghur colleagues to suitable restaurants that do not offend their religious sensibilities. Mixed lunch parties therefore eat in Han-managed *qingzhen* restaurants or Uyghur or Hui Muslim restaurants.

There is a certain sense that appearances should be kept up and that harmony should be preserved in the workplace. Some Uyghurs employ humour to try to smooth the way. I once observed a conversation between a Uyghur academic and a Han academic. The Han asked the Uyghur if they would go to a meeting together or if he should go alone. The Uyghur replied: 'Together, together! Of course we'll go together ... after all, we *are* inextricably bonded, aren't we?'[49] In this way, he attempted to lighten up relations with his Han colleague by making a joke at the expense of the Chinese government's catchphrase 'the unity of the nationalities'. On this occasion, the Han colleague was unsure whether to laugh or not and left the room in confusion.

Relations in the workplace occasionally break down along ethnic lines. This tends to happen in situations where minority nationality employees feel that their respective languages or cultures are being ignored or played down by Han colleagues. Alternatively, an employee who privately subscribes to separatist ideologies may try to bring about a temporary mutiny against Han employees.

Besides sometimes taking a work lunch together, the only other time Uyghur and Han colleagues socialise with one another is at events organised by the work unit (for example, meetings over lunch or national celebrations such as the fortieth anniversary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1995). These events take place in working hours, and members of the work unit are obliged to attend. At meeting lunches, Han Chinese and most Uyghurs present tend to drink large amounts of *baijiu* (a spirit distilled from sorghum or maize) and make constant toasts. It is possible that alcohol and the act of honouring one another through frequent toasting further helps to smooth interaction. Beyond

49 He used the Chinese term *libukai* to describe the notion of Uyghur and Han Chinese being inextricably linked to one another, the same term frequently used in CCP propaganda to encourage 'the unity of the nationalities'.

never visit the homes of Han colleagues, and Han Chinese rarely enter the hon colleagues. Han work unit members occasionally pay festival visits to Uyghur the Qorban and Rozi festivals, as a gesture of courtesy and a public display Uyghur culture. These interactions, too, are often managed with the help c amount of alcohol.[50]

Another arena where the two groups seem able to manage interaction a local market. Here, some Uyghurs and Han Chinese petty entrepreneurs hav mutually beneficial working relationships.[51] I regularly observed scenes in Ü Uyghurs and Han Chinese collaborated to increase one another's business, de that one dealt with *halal* ('clean') meat and the other with *haram* ('unclean') Ürümchi market, Uyghur youths rent kebab stands in front of 'unclean' *hanca* To an extent, the location of these stands is undesirable for business, s customers never eat in *hancan* restaurants. However, Ghäyrät and his fellow exploit the situation by attracting the custom of Han Chinese instead. They customers and encourage them to eat in the *hancan* restaurant in front of their that the customers will later call for some kebabs to be brought in. In return, managers of *hancan* restaurants recommend the Uyghurs' kebabs.

Since both parties are self-employed and reliant on their own efforts to sub find things in common to talk about when business is slack. Their personal remains basically untouched by popular Uyghur perceptions of economi because Uyghurs here can see that these Han at least are no better off than Uyghurs and Han Chinese petty entrepreneurs often sit chatting about the amo they have earned that day or how much they paid for such and such an artic talk is limited to money matters in this way, conversation remains perfectly a where cultural differences are touched upon, a sense of ethnic competitivene equation, and Uyghurs and Han tease one another about those differences:

> Uyghur: I went to that wedding on Sunday afternoon. Everyone was dancing. I w too. Uyghur weddings are lively! Not like Han weddings! Han just fetch stand outside the house, let off a few firecrackers, and then go inside to eat
> Han: No, the groom has to carry the bride over the threshold! You lot don't you?

However, such exchanges do not seem to cause long-term offence, at leas environment. Everyone is happy to continue warming their hands over the k charcoal embers and devour hot chestnuts. A good working environme established which remains fundamentally undamaged by religio-cultural diffe

Still, as with relationships between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in work un between these petty entrepreneurs do not extend beyond the working environme instance of Uyghur stallholders socialising with Han Chinese outside work market pool tables. There, Ghäyrät and others often played pool with Han C taking a break from work. However, the opponents said little to one another th game, which was characterised by a tangible element of ethnic competition. Wh was over, they thanked one another and went their separate ways.

50 In the 1980s, it was apparently common for Uyghurs to visit their Han Chinese colleagues at h Chinese Spring Festival. However, this kind of social exchange has become very rare recen communication).

51 The occurrence of an ethnic group establishing mutually advantageous patterns of transaction wi (e.g. trading relations) has been termed ethnic symbiosis. Barth, 'Introduction', p. 20.

The Underlying Factor: Perceived Socio-Economic Inequalities

Important as symbolic boundaries are, it is the 'food boundary' which has become the primary means of drawing ethnic distinctions between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in the 1990s, allowing Uyghurs to ensure spatial and social segregation between the two groups on a day-to-day basis. Yet they often compromise this boundary, and usually in situations where they stand to gain socially or financially. Uyghurs find jobs in Han work units and move to New Towns in order to secure a home, a steady income, and a livelihood. Uyghur restaurant owners oblige their Uyghur customers to use the same chopsticks, cutlery and crockery as Han customers because they need (or want) the extra custom. Uyghur students choose to share dorms with Han Chinese students because their studies and career chances will improve if they speak better Chinese. Uyghur petty entrepreneurs co-operate with their Han counterparts at the local market as a strategy to improve business and so forth. In situations where they stand to benefit, Uyghurs often forego the supposedly hard-and-fast rules surrounding concepts of 'clean' and 'unclean' food (and people), and can forge relatively amicable relationships with Han Chinese, at least on the superficial level. However, the compromises made in these situations are not extended to other situations. Presumably, it should be possible to invite Han Chinese to Uyghur social events, provided that they conform to Uyghur dietary habits for the duration. But Uyghurs are clearly not willing to do this. Even in the Han Chinese dance halls, where Uyghurs and Han might share a love of ballroom dancing, they choose to sit separately.

Yet there is evidence that there was less social segregation of Uyghurs and Han Chinese in the past. Uyghurs in their thirties or forties told me that, during their childhoods, they had sometimes entered the homes of Han Chinese playmates. At that time, differences of diet had been 'managed' whereby Uyghur children were allowed to play in Han Chinese homes so long as they did not eat or drink anything while there. At the present time, however, there are almost no instances of Uyghur children socialising in this way. Similarly, giving up pork was once the prerequisite for a Han Chinese to marry a Uyghur, but this is no longer enough. Whether purely for religio-cultural reasons or for other reasons, public disapproval has made intermarriage practically impossible in recent years. That Uyghur children no longer have Han Chinese friends and that intermarriage between adults is no longer an option suggests that, in addition to long-standing religio-cultural differences, there are other new factors making the estrangement between Uyghur and Han adults more pronounced, and leading Uyghurs to keep themselves and their children segregated. Most salient among these is a growing awareness of socio-economic inequalities. In the present context, urban Uyghurs have begun to emphasise religio-cultural differences and use them as symbols to demarcate ethnic boundaries between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in what is actually an articulation of demands for ethnic equality in education and work, and the control of Xinjiang's natural resources.

Conclusion

Uyghur national identity in Xinjiang in the 1990s defines itself in relation to Han Chinese immigrants in an 'Us and Them' dichotomy. In emphasising the failure of Han Chinese to adhere to Islamic social laws, Uyghurs define the differences between themselves and the non-Muslim Han along religio-cultural lines. On another level, however, they define themselves as an ethnic group in competition with Han Chinese in a new urban social hierarchy. To state that increased interaction between Uyghurs and Han Chinese is necessarily conducive to increased ethnic tensions would be too simple. The fact is that the proportion of Han Chinese immigrants within Xinjiang's total population had already grown

to 40 per cent (roughly equal to somewhat questionable official estimates in 1996) Yet instances of ethnic conflict did not begin to accelerate until the end of the eig the start of the 1990s.[52] Similarly, we hear that just one generation ago, Uyghur children were allowed to play in each other's homes, that intermarriage between and Han was common across the region, and that Uyghur colleagues visited Har colleagues at home during the Spring Festival.

What is clear is that Uyghur attitudes towards Han settlers have changed sig over time (while religio-cultural differences have existed between them all along). it is said that the Uyghurs originally 'welcomed the Han Chinese with open Uyghurs in the 1990s say they want the influx of Han immigrants to stop. The Uyghurs distinguish between first-generation and new Han immigrants further con change of heart. The distinction is reflected both in the way Uyghurs speak abou and new settlers, and in the nature of the relationships they enjoy with each. The relationships they have with original settlers are characterised by a willingness o of Han Chinese to learn the Uyghur language and adapt to Uyghur customs (for Han Chinese giving up pork). Worsening relations with new Han immigrants, on hand, result from a growing unwillingness on the part of the Han to embrace or to adapt to Uyghur culture.

Over and above the Great Han chauvinist attitudes prevalent in urban Xinjiang daily reality of the marginalisation of Uyghurs in education and work that mo contemporary Uyghur–Han relations. Since working in Han Chinese work companies requires fluency in Chinese (and, unofficially, acceptance of the Han many Uyghurs have been excluded from the Han-dominated labour market a default. Unqualified for white-collar jobs, Uyghurs end up doing blue-collar jobs in traditional agricultural roles. The result is widespread resentment at Han privilege. Televised publicity of 'success stories' of Han Chinese immigrants, add daily sight of Han Chinese living in clean new housing and driving (and apparently brand new cars,[54] only exacerbates these feelings. Although Han Chinese have new urban job market in Xinjiang, as well as putting mechanisms in place to faci exploitation of the region's natural resources, few urban Uyghurs believe that t profited from these developments. Uyghur standards of living are at least the s probably substantially better than they were before 1949. However, urban dissa stems from the fact that Uyghurs now have something to compare themselves w

Finally, the 'contamination effect' of the vision of the adjacent CIS republics sl be underestimated. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the ment across the border of six independent Muslim republics (Azerbaijan, Q Özbäkistan, Qirghizstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan), the Uyghurs, the Tatars Salars became the only Central Asian Muslims in Xinjiang without an independen named after their ethnic group.[55] Since that time, the mass media have enabled U

52 See Smith, 'Four Generations of Uyghurs', and Smith, 'Changing Uyghur Identities in Xinjiang in Appendix I: 'A catalogue of Uyghur disturbances in Xinjiang 1949–1997'.

53 Cf. Ömärjan Alim's song *Mehman Bašlidim (I Brought Home A Guest)*, banned by the Chinese auth after release.

54 Such vehicles are often the property of the Han work unit and are not actually privately owned by the themselves.

55 The Salars are said to have originated from a Turkmen tribe (Henry G. Schwarz, *The Minorities of Nort A Survey* [Western Washington University Press, Washington, 1984], pp. 39–40), and therefore migh have their own country in Turkmenistan. The Tatars and the Salars in Xinjiang numbered only 4,82 persons respectively in 1990 (compared with 7,194,675 Uyghurs). Hoppe, 'Die chinesische Ost-Turkestan/Xinjiang', p. 360, cited in Dillon, *Xinjiang*, p. 48.

sit and watch as their newly independent Muslim cousins took control of their social, political and economic structures and of the exploitation of their abundant natural resources.

This paper suggests that religio-cultural differences alone might have been managed in such a way that Uyghurs and Han Chinese were able to interact in situations where those differences were not felt to matter. However, growing resentment of ethnic discrimination and socio-economic inequalities, added to the knowledge that other Central Asian Muslims now enjoy control both over their politics and their economic development, led Uyghurs in the 1990s to exaggerate certain religio-cultural differences as a means of ensuring symbolic, spatial and social segregation from the Han.