THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF THE "WAR ON TERROR": THE CASE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND UYGHUR MUSLIMS IN THE XINJIANG UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the global implications of the "War on Terror" by exploring how China exploits the discourses of the "War on Terror" to justify the internment of Uyghur Muslims. In the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the Chinese government is responsible for human rights abuses, violations, and genocide of Uyghur Muslims and other Turkic minority groups. In 2018, it was reported that approximately more than one million Uyghur Muslims and other Muslim minorities in China have disappeared and are subject to arbitrary detention, surveillance, forced labour, forced sterilization, and regulations which restrict religious and cultural expression in supposed "counter-extremism centers" allegedly committed to political indoctrination fighting terrorism (Human Rights Watch, 2021; United Nations Human Rights, 2018). This study explores the processes and practices used to deny the internment of the Uyghur Muslim population. I achieve this through my research question, which aims to explore: **How the Chinese government manufactures and justifies its own "War on Terror" by suppressing Uyghur Muslims and simultaneously denying the use of internment camps?** I analyzed pro-government national China Daily English newspaper articles from 2001-2020 using qualitative content analysis to answer this research question. As a result, my main argument is that **the Chinese government has manufactured and exacerbated a domestic "terrorism" problem by exploiting the discourses of the "War on Terror" to justify its internment of Uyghur Muslims. Simultaneously, the Chinese government has produced a deflection campaign committed to diverting criticisms and denying the use of internment camps under the guise of the "War on Terror."** I conclude this thesis by presenting the need for additional research to explore how other countries in the East might also suppress different racialized groups in the context of the "War on Terror."

THESIS INTRODUCTION

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, profoundly impacted North America and the world. Subsequently, following the attacks, the United States of America launched the "War on Terrorism" as a global counterterrorism strategy. Many other countries followed in support. The effects of the "War on Terror" continue to persist beyond the Western context and this has negative consequences for ethnic minority groups in the East.

This thesis examines the situation of Uyghur Muslims. It explores how the Chinese government uses the pretext of the "War on Terror" to justify the oppression of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). These repressive conditions are identified as global consequences. These consequences are justified based on problematic representations of Muslims, which are naturalized and normalized through the racial project of the "War on Terror."

Unpacking the historical conceptualizations and representations of Muslims and Islam provides insight into how Muslims have been portrayed and treated since September 11, 2001. Problematic representations of Muslims are rooted in a long and enduring history of anti-Muslim sentiments associated with colonialism and imperialism (Alimahomed-Wilson, 2019; Cainkar, 2009; Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Kumar, 2012; Nagra, 2017; Omi & Winant, 2015; Perry, 2013; Rana, 2011; Said, 1979; Said, 1981). In the current context, these problematic sentiments are recurring. This thesis explores the persistence and reproduction of the "War on Terror" in the Chinese context.

CHAPTER ONE - LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

First, this thesis highlights the existing political governance in China to provide a historical and contemporary context of authoritarianism. Subsequently, I describe the Uyghur Muslim population and their cultural and religious traditions within the context of an authoritarian state, the People's Republic of China. I also discuss the lack of accountability and human rights violations inherent in the People's Republic of China's historical establishment and political governance. This literature highlights the Chinese government's contradictory behaviour of portraying itself as a human rights defender while simultaneously engaging in human rights violations. Understanding political governance and the operation of human rights in China provides the necessary background knowledge to comprehend how the Chinese government continues to employ internment camps despite these spaces being sites of gross human rights violations and abuses.

In this chapter, I also review the literature on the "War on Terror" to explain how the Chinese government engages in particular strategies to deny the suppression of Uyghur Muslims. This section explores how the premise of the "War on Terror" is a narrative constructed, controlled, and manipulated by those in positions of authority (Jackson, 2005). The "War on Terror" is central to this thesis because it enables the Chinese government to deny using internment camps and suppress Uyghur Muslims. Furthermore, the discourses surrounding the "War on Terror" allow the Chinese government to exacerbate fears surrounding "terrorism" and to present internment camps as a viable strategy for countering terrorism. This is accomplished through the China government's institutionalization of their own "War on Terror," whereby they

construct an "enemy" to justify a "counter-terrorism" strategy that relies on problematic processes of "radicalization" and "de-radicalization."

To conclude, I discuss the literature on camps. This literature examines how nation-building is achieved through the construction of spaces. The People's Republic of China is complicit in actively producing internment camps, that are intended to suppress the religious and cultural identity of Uyghur Muslims. These spaces are legitimized through the narrative of the "War on Terror."

To elucidate the establishment and reasoning behind internment camps in China, I incorporate the political philosophy of the critical theorist Giorgio Agamben. Specifically, his ideas on power, political life, "Homo Sacer," the state of exception, and exception as the norm. These ideas are connected to the historical and contemporary conditions of internment camps in China. The use of camps is deeply intertwined with the historical development and establishment of the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.). I use this context to explain how the use of internment camps continues to persist as a "counterterrorism" strategy under the guise of the "War on Terror."

1.2. Political Governance

1.2.a. Chinese Authoritarian Governance

In China, authoritarian governance has become more consultative, responsive, and fragmented (Heurlin, 2016; Teets, 2014, pp. 2-3; Yang, 2013). Consultative authoritarianism aims to integrate civil society to maintain and stabilize an authoritative regime and central government control (Teets, 2014, pp. 2-4). This allows for the integration of citizens, specifically, citizen involvement in assessing policies, encouraging citizen feedback, remuneration from central and local branches of government, and formulating policies that

benefit citizens (Heurlin, 2016, p. 3; Teets, 2014, pp. 4-6). This is accomplished through the implementation of the "mass line." The "mass line" refers to the relationship between the Republic of China and civil society, in which citizens actively participate in politics, and those in power serve the interests of the citizens in exchange for their support of the regime (Tang, 2016, pp. 8-9). China's authoritarian regime also necessitates the development of innovative techniques to suppress resistance and ensure compliance with the government (Teets, 2014).

Despite the integration of civil society, the relationship between society and the state remains repressive because the state and civil society are not independent (Teets, 2014, pp. 6-8). An increase in the civil society sector, including non-governmental and non-profit organizations, in China creates the illusion of progress (Teets, 2014). Groups and organizations are only partially autonomous from the state because they must align with its goals and depend on state funding (Teets, 2014, pp. 6-8). Yang (2013) argues that to sustain an authoritarian regime, China has implemented a symbiotic relationship between fragmentation and authoritarianism to uphold the illusion of reform. This balances the Chinese government's goals of maintaining control and manufacturing consent.

Drawing from elements of democratic governance, China has also implemented modernization, the development of grassroots organizations, the concept of individual rights and liberties, and gradual democratization to sustain its authoritarian rule (Klein, 2010, p. 34-9; Tang, 2016, p. 2-3). This allows China to maintain the illusion of progress and divert attention from the controlling aspects of its authoritarian regime. Despite attempts at reform, civil and political rights and liberties are only sporadically guaranteed to Chinese citizens.

1.3. Historical Context

Authoritarian governance has an impact on the representation of minority groups. The Uyghur population is an ethnic minority group (UNC University Libraries, 2020). The Uyghur population is a Muslim ethnic minority group that accounts for 45% of China's population (Congressional Research Service, 2023; Kashgarian, 2023). Based on the 2020 census conducted in China, approximately 11 million Uyghurs are estimated to reside in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, while the number of Han Chinese living there exceeds 10 million (Kashgarian, 2023). The Han population accounts for forty percent of the population.

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is located northwest of the People's Republic of China (Congressional Research Service, 2023). This region is socially, politically, and economically valuable for China. This explains the state's efforts to control ethnic minorities and establish sovereignty. For example, Xinjiang is located in the Silk Belt, facilitating global exchange and trade (Bhattacharya, 2003, pp. 359-372). Xinjiang is also valuable to China because it shares borders with eight countries, including Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, India, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Russia, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 357; Cunningham, 2012, p. 9; Zenz, 2018, pp. 3-4). This region possesses eighty percent of China's gold, jade, and other valuable resources, such as petroleum, coal, cotton, oil, wool, and copper (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 372; Cunningham, 2012, p. 9). Xinjiang is also a nuclear testing site and a part of a gas pipeline project that connects Xinjiang, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan (Cunningham, 2012, p. 4).

1.3.a. The Struggle for Independence

The Xinjiang region has a history of turmoil. The Uyghur population has a history of conflict and struggle for religious, regional, and national representation and independence

(Bhattacharya, 2003). The state's effort to control ethnic minorities and establish sovereignty has resulted in a struggle for independence. This context is imperative to understanding the struggles of the Uyghur population in the present.

Uyghurs had an empire (Uyghur Kingdom) in Mongolia that dated back to 744 A.D. but was fragmented due to the Kirkhiz invasion (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 359). As a result, the Uyghur Kingdom was split into the Kingdom of Kanchow (the eastern branch), which is now the Gansu region (Bhattacharya, 2003, pp. 359–360). The Kingdom of Karakhoja/Qocho (the western branch), which persisted for four centuries is now Turpan, Xinjiang (Bhattacharya, 2003, pp. 359–360).

Afterwards, the Mongols occupied the Western branch and Central Asia in 1220 A.D. (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 360), resulting in the Uyghur population encompassing the Mongol authority (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 360). The central Asian region, under the Mongol Chagatai rulers, contains two areas: the Transoxiana/ Western Turkestan, which is Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, today and Eastern Turkestan, which is Xinjiang, today (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 360). After the Manchu conquest of East Turkistan in 1759, Uyghur/ Turk nationalism proliferated (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 361). Uyghur writers and poets expressed protest of the Manchu and Chinese oppression over the years (Bhattacharya, 2003, pp. 361-62).

Uyghur nationalism is also identified through attempts to establish the independence of East Turkistan to end Chinese colonial rule (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 362). Bhattacharya (2003) recalls the first pursuit for Uyghur independence, which occurred from 1865 to 1877, by a local chieftain, Yakub Beg (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 362). Following the dwindling Mongol ascendancy, Uyghurs lived in many small territories and were independent (Bhattacharya, 2003). In 1876, the Manchu Empire occupied the Islamic Uyghur Kingdom of East Turkestan

(Bhattacharya, 2003). After eight years of war, in 1884 (November 18), the Manchu empire annexed East Turkestan within its territory and renamed the region "Xinjiang," referring to a "new territory"/ "new frontier" (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 360). Bhattacharya (2003) posits that the name "Xinjiang" itself infers that the region is not historically a part of China despite the Chinese government claiming otherwise (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 360).

Post-1912 marked the development of the Republic of China and the formation of Kuomintang also referred to as the Nationalist Party of China (Maizland & Albert, 2020). However, in 1921, the Communist Party of China overthrew the Nationalist Party of China **(**Maizland & Albert, 2020). During the 19th century, Uyghurs attained a short-lived statehood twice (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 362). The first was from 1931-1934 with the formation of the "Turkistan-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan" and from 1944-1949 with the formation of the "East Turkestan Republic" (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 362).

In 1949, the Communist Party of China became the ruling party of the People's Republic of China, and East Turkistan became Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Millward & Peterson, 2020, p. 436-37). The struggle for independence and identity emerges from the Chinese government's narrative that historically positions Xinjiang as a part of China rather than an indigenous population of East Turkistan (Bhattacharya, 2003, pp. 359-360; Bovingdon, 2002; Clarke, 2008, pp. 274-76; Davis, 2008, pp. 16-8; Raza, 2019, p. 489).

1.3.b. Religious & Ethnic Identity

The struggle for representation and independence has impacted the Uyghur population and their cultural and religious expression. Assimilation is strenuous, and conflict is inevitable due to the population's religious/ cultural differences from Han Chinese. Emphasizing the individuality of the Uyghur population is essential. It is an active effort to undo the

homogenization of Muslims and Islam by identifying the population's unique religious and cultural practices.

Bhattacharya (2003) posits that the two approaches to ethnic identity are the: primordialist and constructivist schools (p. 358). The primordialist school conceptualizes and presents ethnic identity as a "natural" phenomenon where individuals are born into an ethnic group, become members and obtain the qualities/ attributes unique and specific to the group (language, race, religion, customs, food, and clothing) (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 358). The constructivist school conceptualizes ethnic identity as socially constructed through human action and choice, where individuals culturally and physically define themselves (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 359). Political activities and processes organize and assemble ethnic factors into a group (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 359). Bhattacharya (2003) presents a "balanced approach" where ethnic groups consist of subjective and objective indicators which can be innate or produced to form ethnic groups (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 359). Based on these remarks, ethnicity is not stable or constant. This is central to the case of Uyghurs in Xinjiang because ethnicity is constructed through varying social, political, and economic contexts (Bhattacharya, 2003, p. 359). Ethnic identity is signified through cultural practices amongst a group of people. Cultural practices are cultural differences ascribed to those belonging to that group (Finley & Zang, 2015, p. 1). Cultural differences range from racial identity, location of the native home, economic independence, religious beliefs/ practices, and physical markers for culture (food, dress, music, and dance) (Finley & Zang, 2015, pp. 1-2).

The difference between Uyghur Muslims from Han Chinese is their ethnic identity and cultural practices. Being Turkic and Muslim is fundamental to Uyghur ethnic identity (Dwyer, 2005, p. 22). Uyghur Muslims are also Muslim Turkic who speak the regional native lingua

franca language, Uyghur (Dwyer, 2005, pp. 12-19; Finley & Zang, 2015, pp. 10-11). Uyghur is lingua franca which is a language or a combination of languages that are used amongst different populations who speak other languages. Uyghur is a common language spoken by approximately 8 to 11 million people in regions such as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Kazakhstanstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Mongolia (Dwyer, 2005, p. 12).

Other cultural differences range from public religious practices such as commissioning death ceremonies/rituals (isqat and barat), commemorating death (näzir), visiting Islamic cemeteries, and marriage ceremonies (Bellér-Hann, 2020, pp. 343-44, 350-54). Islamic holidays such as the Festival of Sacrifice (qurban) and end-of-month fasting (rozä) are also celebrated by Uyghurs (Bellér-Hann, 2020, pp. 354). Uyghurs practice religious activities which extend to their dietary practices, such as consuming halal products, consuming ceremonial fried cake during life cycle rituals, giving birth, male circumcision, and weddings, along with avoiding the consumption of pork (Bellér-Hann, 2020, pp. 343, 352-54).

Other religious activities range from visits to the mosque (masjid), visiting shrines (mazar), praying a minimum of once a day, possessing religious scriptures like the Qur'an, and partaking in the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca (Bellér-Hann, 2020, pp. 343, 352-54; Finley & Zang, 2015, pp. 9-11). Reciting prayers and rituals during food preparation is also considered a sacrifice to dead spirits (Bellér-Hann, 2020, p. 355). Specifically, the preparation of food every Thursday when it is believed that spirits require sustenance to travel to Mecca for Friday prayers (Bellér-Hann, 2020, p. 355). The gender divide is also an aspect of the lives of Uyghur women. Communal prayer is gendered, so females are separated and do not partake in worship at the Mosque or attend rituals. Women are also refrained from participating in some activities during Islamic holidays (Bellér-Hann, 2020, p. 355).

Clothing is another signifier of cultural and religious differences between Uyghur Muslims and Han Chinese. Leibold & Grose (2016) state that the veil is highly politicized and a way to police the lives of Uyghur women. According to the Chinese government, the veil and coverings adorned by Uyghur Muslims are physical signifiers of "religious extremism," "backwardness," and "tradition" that are targeted and scrutinized through policies and government campaigns (Leibold & Grose, 2016, pp. 88-90). The government's campaigns, such as "Project Beauty" exemplify the commitment to civilize, modernize, beautify, and educate Uyghur women in Xinjiang on fashion (Leibold & Grose, 2016, p. 89). This campaign frowns upon veils, robes, and long fabrics covering the female body and attempts to unveil Uyghur women because it opposes modernity (Leibold & Grose, 2016, pp. 89-91). The veil and hijabs are banned and should not be worn publicly (Leibold & Grose, 2016, pp. 95-6). This campaign is a part of the Chinese government's efforts to exterminate the cultural and religious expression of Uyghurs and foist Han culture and traditions.

Clothing as a form of cultural and religious expression varies amongst Uyghur women. The "doppa" is an example of a traditional Uyghur headpiece worn by men and women (Bellér-Hann, 2020, p. 351). Clothing adorned by Uyghur women has changed with time. Leibold & Grose (2016) state that variations of the veil were diverse preceding 1949 but continued to develop during the formation of the People's Republic of China to consider cultural variations in Central Asia and reasons to cover (pp. 82-85). Approximately 30% of Uyghur women do not veil anymore, but 43% of women wear a single-piece headscarf in different variations of fabric, colour, and what part of the body is covered (Leibold & Grose, 2016, pp. 85-8). The hijab (covers the head or face), tor romal (fabric draped on the head), and niqab (covers the nose, face, and body) are the least adorned by Uyghur women (Leibold & Grose, 2016, p. 87). In the city,

Uyghur girls started to cover their heads at around 12 years old (Hultvall, 1981; Leibold & Grose, 2016, p. 82). Some Uyghur women wore the "paranji" with a long cloak and a horsehair veil (Northrop, 2007; Leibold & Grose, 2016, p. 82; Rakhimov, 2007). Many other Uyghur Muslim women wore a long "Bragi dress" with a "doppa" (Leibold & Grose, 2016, p. 83). The different ways to cover the face, head, and body exemplify the different variations of religious garbs. This demonstrates the complexity of the representation of Muslim religious identity, which is not monolithic and simplistic but is informed by time, space, and place.

1.3.c. The "Terrorism" Issue

The state's effort to control ethnic minorities and establish sovereignty continues to persist through China's response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. This further strains the ability of Uyghur Muslims to express their ethnoreligious identity and seek independence. The Chinese government has linked and framed Uyghur "separatism" with "terrorism" to justify the suppression of Uyghur Muslims (China Report, 2002; Clarke, 2008; Davis, 2008; Raza, 2019, pp. 495-97; Zenz, 2018). The shift in rationales was justified due to George Bush's decision in 2002 to include the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in the list of official terrorist organizations (Clarke, 2008, pp. 271-72).

The East Turkistan Islamic Movement is an international group committed to Xinjiang's independence (Millward & Peterson, 2020). China's categorization and association of East Turkish organizations with "terrorism" is questionable. During the late 90s to early 2000s, China reported approximately 200 acts of terrorism, in and outside of China, by East Turkistan organizations (China Report, 2002, p. 437). However, there are inconsistencies in the report regarding deaths/ injuries. The connection between the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and organized terrorist groups attempts to position and present Uyghur Muslims and

other ethnic minority groups as “problematic.” The connection between the Taliban, Al Qaeda and ETIM is also weak, and the reported acts can be categorized as criminal, dissident, and violent (Clarke, 2008, pp. 283-95).

In 2020, the United States Bureau of Counterterrorism removed the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) from the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list (U.S. Department of State, 2020). This change and contradictions in the data reported by the Chinese government produce questions, such as why these acts are identified as “terrorism” and what purpose the suppression of Uyghur Muslims serves the Chinese government.

1.4. Human Rights and Accountability in China

The context of authoritarian political governance and the historical position of the Uyghur Muslim population in Xinjiang are necessary to understand the sociopolitical conditions that permit the Chinese government to continue engaging in human rights violations and evade accountability. Human rights violations were embedded in the emergence of the People’s Republic of China (Cohen, 1987; Pye, 1986).

1.4.a. The Cultural Revolution

The late 1940s marked the establishment of the People’s Republic of China and the Communist Party of China through a communist-led revolution under the single-party ruling leader Mao Zedong (Millward & Peterson, 2020). From 1966-1976, the Cultural Revolution movement was committed to maintaining and protecting Chinese Communist identity by suppressing and targeting national minorities and counterrevolutionaries (Cohen, 1987). The Cultural Revolution aimed to “eliminate their enemies once and for all” (Heberer, 2017, p. 23). This was achieved through pressure and forced assimilation, deprivation of special rights, language, and customs, and loss of national, religious, and cultural identity (Heberer, 2017, p.

17). The Cultural Revolution resulted in mass human rights violations, persecution, abuse, violence, and oppression and conviction of approximately 1.13 million people (Cohen, 1987, pp. 448, 489). However, the inaccuracy of the numbers of those victimized, infringement of rights, and violations can never be known (Cohen, 1987; Pye, 1986).

Aside from targeting Uyghur Muslims, the Cultural Revolution also targeted Tibetans. During the mid to late 1950s, the Chinese government pursued control over Tibet, resulting in resistance and turmoil (Heberer, 2017, p. 120). Persecution of Tibetans was amplified during the Cultural Revolution when their independence and political organizations were obliterated, religious spaces were demolished, and their culture was exterminated (Heberer, 2017, p. 120).

Other national minorities targeted during the Cultural Revolution are Mongolians in Inner Mongolia, otherwise known as the Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia (Heberer, 2017, p. 27). Approximately 346,000 people were persecuted and wrongfully accused of forming the "Revolutionary People's Party of Inner Mongolia," a spurious party committed to separatism (Heberer, 2017, pp. 27-8).

Before the formation of the People's Republic of China, in 1949, the Communist Party of China presented its minority policy as upholding the equality of all nationalities, autonomy rights, respect of all nationality cultures, the right to one's native language, and a superior living standard for everyone (Hsieh, 1986, p. 7). However, the Cultural Revolution altered policies about national minorities by dismissing the identification of China as a multinational country and disregarding China's nationality policy (Heberer, 2017, p. 25). Minority groups and their regions were no longer designated any specific labels that identified the need for special treatment due to their conditions in the territories (Heberer, 2017, p. 25). Traditional products were also not produced for minorities (Heberer, 2017, p. 25). The national and regional autonomy policy was

also denounced, autonomous regions were disintegrated, and "special financial allowances" were terminated (Heberer, 2017, p. 26). Natural resources in minority regions were also demolished to limit livelihood (Heberer, 2017, p. 26). For example, a significant decrease in livestock was due to minorities being forced to eliminate their pastures in traditionally produced livestock regions (Heberer, 2017, p. 26).

The identity and expression of minorities were also targeted. Dialects, traditions, customs, and cultures of minorities were abolished and transformed (Heberer, 2017, p. 26). For example, individuals who celebrated traditional holidays were arrested as "counterrevolutionaries," and minorities in some regions were to renounce their religious traditions (Heberer, 2017, p. 26). Additionally, educational, health, medical institutions, and minority entertainment and leisure activities, such as writing, dance, films, folk songs, and operas, were also eliminated, prohibited, and adapted to the standards accepted by the Han majority (Heberer, 2017, p. 27). As international human rights discourse became prominent during the late 1970s, the level of violence during the Cultural Revolution was identified as a human rights violation by the United Nations (Cohen, 1987, pp. 489; Kent, 1999, pp. 343-44).

1.4.b. Limits to Compliance

From the 1970s to the late 1980s, pressures from the United Nations and Western countries, such as the United States, have resulted in compliance with international human rights (Kent, 2019). Legal compliance is exemplified at the legislative level (Kent, 2019, p. 65). For example, China is a part of 21 international human rights conventions and is associated with eight major human rights instruments, which entail covenants on social, political, economic, and cultural rights, racial / gender discrimination, torture/ inhuman punishment, and the protection of children's rights (Chan, 2005, pp. 183-90). However, there is a lack of substantive compliance

(Kent, 2019, pp. 65 & 71). Substantive compliance focuses on the application, implementation, and practice of human rights. This highlights how China engages in performative work that fails to elicit real change or reform. China's compliance with the international human rights regime is a strategy to counter and maintain control over foreign intervention and establish Chinese interpretations of the international human rights regime (Chan, 2005, pp. 181-82; Kent, 2019). This allows China to divulge from the interference of the international rule of law, the Western model of universality, consensus, and accountability of UN norms that implement the same human rights standards for all nations (Kent, 2019, p. 68). This is replaced with the principle of state sovereignty, allowing states to establish interpretations of human rights, and prioritizing individual national interests in international institutions (Kent, 2019, pp. 68-76).

As an authoritarian state, China's acquiescence to the international human rights regime allows the Chinese government to standardize human rights to their political context. Resulting in, the innovation of universal international human rights standards to withstand human rights regimes. China also establishes non-interference, cultural difference, cultural relativism, and countermeasures, which emphasize Western human rights violations and contradictory standards condemning China (Chan, 2005, p. 183). Furthermore, the Information Office of the State Council of China also publishes White Paper reports on human rights. These reports highlight the national progress in human rights and social, political, and economic development (Chan, 2005, pp. 198-99). This exemplifies the performative work that fails to elicit reform and is committed to producing a positive global image of China.

Human rights violations are embedded in establishing a communist revolution (Cohen, 1987). Compliance, cooperation, and efforts to promote human rights should not detract from the level of violence ethnic minorities, such as Uyghur Muslims, continue to endure in China. Kent

(1999) states that human rights apparatus is accepted and has become a norm, but there is a lack of international implementation and enforcement (p. 10). This predicament illustrates the sociopolitical conditions that continue the legacy of human rights violations and abuses.

1.5. The Narrative of the "War on Terror"

In the contemporary context, the Chinese government continues their historical legacy of human rights violations by suppressing Uyghur Muslims. They do so by exploiting the narrative of the "War on Terror." Jackson (2005) asserts that the "war on terrorism is now the dominant political narrative in America, enjoying widespread bipartisan and public support" (p. 2). This narrative is mobilized and supported by a wide range of personnel in power, such as nation-states, politicians, and security agencies (Jackson, 2005). Individuals who challenge the language of the "War on Terror" are predominantly disregarded, censored, and excluded (Jackson, 2005, pp. 1-2).

The "War on Terror" is politically driven and attached to specific meanings associated with the event to justify military responses (Jackson, 2005, pp. 30-31). Jackson (2005), discusses characteristics of the "War on Terror." To begin with, the attacks are established as an "exceptional tragedy" with severe harm (Jackson, 2005, p. 31). There is an extraordinary focus on the suffering, tragedy, and grievances of the American population (Jackson, 2005, p. 31). The attacks are perceived as a national "calamity," "loss," and "horror" (Jackson, 2005, p. 32). This rhetoric positions America as a "primary victim" (Jackson, 2005, p. 32). Victimhood is extended to humanity at large which is achieved through personalized statements which produce feelings of empathy and sympathy to depict the casualties as normal and innocent victims (Jackson, 2005, p. 34).

The attacks are also described as an “act of war” as opposed to identifying the attack as any other crime, such as crimes against humanity and mass murder (Jackson, 2005, p. 31). The attacks are established as an unprecedented circumstance and a “supreme emergency” to rationalize any countermeasure (Jackson, 2005, p. 148). This linguistic configuration constructs a “new” kind of war that differs from “traditional” warfare with a “new” enemy (Jackson, 2005, p. 39, 148). This insinuates that we live in a “new” world order which requires a “different” kind of war (Jackson, 2005, p. 148). This “new” world order also identifies a “new kind of enemy” which does not require any state recognition or any special regard (Jackson, 2005, p. 148). This “new” war also requires new rules because the rules of “traditional” war are untenable (Jackson, 2005, pp. 148-49). This “new” war imparts policymakers with the discretion and flexibility to justify anything that does not concur with traditional warfare. For example, the use of torture in interrogation and extra-legally killing terrorist suspects, overseas (Jackson, 2005, p. 149), such as the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. This “new” war is also constructed to suggest that it will take a long period to conclude (Jackson, 2005, p. 150). This conveys the assumption that this war might also never end (Jackson, 2005, p. 150). Consequently, justifying the prolonged use of the “War on Terror” narrative in global contexts, such as China’s “War on Terror.”

Additionally, there are many ways to interpret, understand, and explain the attacks on September 11, 2001. Dominant narratives of the “War on Terror” become public knowledge and ascertain different ways to acknowledge, respond, and accept methods used to counter the attacks (Jackson, 2005). The narratives emphasize the “identity and nature” of the “terrorists” to present them as “barbaric” and “primitive” (Jackson, 2005, p. 54). Post-9/11, this perception of “terrorists” is mobilized to position Muslims as “barbarians” and Islam as a “threat.” For

example, Nagra (2017), interviews fifty Canadian Muslim men and women to explore their experiences of national belonging and exclusion, post-9/11. Young Canadian Muslims expressed being harassed by the state and public (Nagra, 2017, p. 15). Despite their victimization, transgression of their religious freedoms, and an increase in state surveillance practices targeting their Muslim identity this put forth the perception of themselves as "potential threats, not loyal Canadian citizens" (Nagra, 2017, p. 15). In a broader context, the Muslim population is perceived as a "serious threat" to the West (Thobani, 2007). Second-generation young Canadian Muslims are also increasingly racialized and othered based on gendered stereotypes (Nagra, 2017, p. 15). Muslim men are identified as "barbaric" and "dangerous" while Muslim women are perceived as "passive," "oppressed," and "subservient" (Kundnani, 2016; Nagra, 2017, p. 15). This presumes that the rationale for the attacks is grounded in the "nature" of the attackers as opposed to any other reasoning, such as political resentment or hostility (Jackson, 2005, p. 54) which justifies increased security, surveillance, and policing. This also highlights how illustrating Muslims and Islam as a "threat" is used as a scapegoat to explain the motivation of 9/11 as opposed to the examination of other possible political rationales which potentially implicate Western states for targeting its citizens (Nagra, 2017, p. 163). In the broader context, Islam is perceived as a scapegoat for what society dislikes about the social, political, and economic order (Said, 1981, p. 55). Rightists have mobilized Islam to represent barbarianism (Said, 1981, p. 55). These ideas follow the structure of Islamophobic ideology which distinguishes Muslims as prone to "terrorism" and "extremists" who are "disloyal" to the nation, spread "extremism," are economically unproductive, and sexually dysfunctional (Kundnani, 2016, p. 3-4).

In the context of the Chinese government, establishing Uyghur Muslims as a "domestic threat" based on the historical trajectory of "separatism," "extremism," and "terrorism" in Xinjiang legitimizes the expansion of security measures, increase in discretion, surveillance, policing, and the use of internment camps as the normalized exception.

Jackson (2005), demonstrates how 9/11 is connected to four dominant meta-narratives. These metanarratives are used to suppress different explanations which implicate American foreign policy (Jackson, 2005, pp. 31-32). The metanarratives linguistically position the nation as a victim that is "innocent and peaceful" and undeserving of the violence (Jackson, 2005, p. 54). To begin with, the attacks are linked to historical events and are presented as an expansion of historical meta-narratives, such as World War II and the Cold War (Jackson, 2005, p. 40-47). Connecting the attacks with historical narratives of war subsists the perception of the American government as struggling for its independence (Jackson, 2005, p. 41). Like the Chinese government aligning the historical trajectory of "separatism" and "extremism" to "terrorism" in attempts to justify a domestic "terrorism" problem.

Furthermore, the civilization versus barbarianism meta-narrative perceives terrorists as "the new barbarians" (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996, p. 156) and the "uncivilized nations are terrorists" (Jackson, 2005, p. 48). The civilization versus barbarianism dichotomy is based on the Western traditions committed to establishing fear of the "imaginary monsters" that are not a part of one's community (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996, p. 156). This is connected to the historical narrative to civilize the non-Western and European to modernity with the intent to "rescue" and "save" the "savage" and "primitive" (Jackson, 2005, p. 50). For the West, in the contemporary context, the "terrorist" is perceived as the archetype of savagery (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996, p. 156). This is achieved by distinguishing the attacks as an act of "barbarity" which is an attack on

"civilization" (Jackson, 2005. p. 48). This linguistically constructs an identity of the civilized "us" who engage in violence for good and the barbaric "them" who are "savages" and have no regard and value for human life (Jackson, 2005, p. 49-50).

Lastly, the events of September 11, 2001, are also presented as an attack on globalization and economic growth (Jackson, 2005, p. 51). Jackson (2005), asserts that this meta-narrative is connected to the civilisation-barbarism narrative because globalization is a part of Western civilization (p. 51). Additionally, central to globalization is political and economic freedom, prosperity, and opportunity (Jackson, 2005, p. 51). This meta-narrative reaffirms the assumption that "terrorists" threaten the global economy, are irrational and resist modernity and freedom (Jackson, 2005, p. 52-53). Hence, the attacks posed a threat to global economic expansion and prosperity because attacking civilization would mean attacking globalization (Jackson, 2005, p. 51-52).

In this thesis, I argue that the Chinese government is justifying the use of internment camps based on the narrative of the "War on Terror." This is achieved through the institutionalization of China's own "War on Terror." In this section, I argue that the "War on Terror" is institutionalized through the historical trajectory of connecting "separatism" with "terrorism," legislation, the language used to frame the "War on Terror," and the construction of the "enemy." The institutionalization of the "War on Terror" permits the Chinese government to justify its "counterterrorism" strategies. Additionally, the "War on Terror" is also being called into question to de-legitimize the narrative. This is achieved by highlighting the political and controversial nature of the concept of "terrorism" and calling attention to specific "radicalization" and "de-radicalization" processes along with their consequences and implications.

1.5.a.i. Historical Trajectory

To begin with, China has established terrorism as a domestic and international problem (Clarke, 2018, pp. 3-4). Over the years, China conceptualized "separatist" sentiments as a cause of "terrorism" (Clarke, 2018, p. 4; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016). This narrative is strengthened by exemplifying ethnic tensions in the Xinjiang region. For example, a series of documented acts identified as "domestic terrorist attacks" from 2012 to 2015 provides a deeper understanding of "terrorism" in China (Sprick, 2020; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, pp. 4-5).

In May 2014, the Chinese government launched a one-year strike-hard campaign referred to as the "People's War on Terror" under the control of the General Secretary of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping (Çaksu, 2020, p. 176; Human Rights Watch, 2021, April 19; Sprick, 2020; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 43). This campaign was formulated due to a domestic terrorist knife attack at the Kunming railway station in March 2014 (Sprick, 2020, p. 181; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 4). These attacks were orchestrated by eight Uyghurs who attempted to leave China and supposedly amalgamate with "jihad" (Sprick, 2020, p. 182). However, after not making it to the border, they travelled to Yunnan, where they were arrested. (Sprick, 2020, p. 182). The rest attacked Kunming train station, wounding 14, killing 31 persons, and killing four attackers (Sprick, 2020, p. 182; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 4).

In April 2014, an explosion at the South Train Station in Urumqi, Xinjiang, killed one person and two attackers (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 5). A car bomb attack followed this in May 2014, killing 30 people and four attackers (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 5). Whether the attacks were motivated by separatism and discriminatory policies or terrorism is inconclusive (CBC NEWS, 2014; Forsythe, 2014; Tiezzi, 2014).

In September 2015, in Guangxi, 17 letter bomb explosions killed 10 people and injured 50 (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 5). However, in the case of the letter bomb explosions, the link to terrorism is not clear, and possible suspects were arrested, but no motives or causes were discovered (BBC NEWS, 2015; CNN, 2015; The Guardian, 2015; VOA News, 2015). Regardless of the inconclusive motivations of these acts, the Chinese government is attempting to present these attacks as "terrorism." For example, in the newspaper article "*Intensify anti-terrorism fight*," it is proposed that:

> "The March 1 terrorist attack at Kunming railway station in Yunnan province shows how terrorism has spread from the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region to Beijing in the east and Kunming in the southwest. But Chinese citizens should not panic, because that is exactly what terrorists want. However, the government should be fully prepared to fight against terrorism. Terrorism has grown in China because of both internal and external factors. Domestically, some separatists in Xinjiang are using more violent means to strike fear among the people, while the approaching date of withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan has made terrorists unleash a new round of terror across the world. In a way, the Kunming attack, in which 29 people were killed and scores were injured, marks the beginning of China's renewed fight against terrorism." (Sumei, 2014, March 13th)

The connection between "separatism" and "terrorism" will be further developed in Section 4.1.e. "*The Discourse of "Separatists as Terrorists*." This passage establishes how the Chinese government connects these identified acts of "terrorism" to "separatism" to produce the "threat" and "fear" of terrorism. The "threat" of terrorism is amplified to justify "counter-terrorism" strategies. Clarke (2018) argues that establishing "Uyghur terrorism" serves as a "cognitive threat amplifier" because 9/11 permits Beijing to present its response to the Uyghur "separatist" issue as "counterterrorism" (pp. 5-6). This is based on the premise that "Uyghur terrorism" is recognized as a "transnational threat" (Clarke, 2018, pp. 5-6). This permits the amplification of Beijing's domestic and international policy approach, which has contributed to the securitization and establishment of organizational structures of national security (Clarke, 2018, pp. 5-6). Consequently, further institutionalizing the "War on Terror."

1.5.a.ii. Legislation

To curb the perceived "threat," the Chinese government has proposed legislative action that institutionalizes the "War on Terror." For example, under Xi Jinping's Presidential administration, China's 2015 Counterterrorism Law supposedly aims to penalize terrorist activities, ameliorate counterterrorism, and protect the security of the nation, public, people, and property (China Law Info, 2015). China's 2015 Counterterrorism Law states that "terrorism" is: "any proposition or activity that, using violence, sabotage or threat, generates social panic, undermines public security, infringes upon personal and property rights, or menaces state authorities and international organizations, to realize political, ideological and other purposes" (China Law Info, 2015; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 39). Terrorist activities are identified as organizing activities that result in loss of human life, damage to property, disorganization of social order, and advocation of terrorism linguistically or physically, directing a terrorist organization of three or more, providing monetary resources, materials, and labour to execute terrorist activities (China Law Info, 2015). Based on this broad definition, the state can identify any action or activity as connected to "terrorism" and as grounds for state intervention.

1.5.a.iii. Language

The "War on Terror" is further institutionalized through the language used by the Chinese government. For example, on October 11, 2001, a Chinese official used the term "East Turkistan terrorist," concerning violence in Xinjiang, for the first time at the People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs daily press (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, pp. 24-5). This attempts to demonstrate that "terrorism" is a problem by identifying a group presumably responsible for violence in the region. Additionally, in 2002, the People's Republic of China State Council Information Office published a document which categorized "East Turkistan

terrorists" as responsible for the violence in the region (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, pp. 24-5). This is significant as it provided China's first comprehensive published account of the alleged violence in Xinjiang. This illustrates how the state magnifies the perceived seriousness of "terrorism" in the region. In 2003, the People's Republic of China's Ministry of Public Security also released China's first terrorist organization list, which listed the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, East Turkistan Liberation Organization, World Uyghur Congress, and East Turkistan Information Centre as terrorist organizations associated with the Uyghur independence movement (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, pp. 24-8). These terms are mobilized to further institutionalize the "War on Terror" and identify the perception of developing "threat" to justify 'counter-terrorism" strategies.

1.5.a.iv. Construction of the "Enemy"

The narrative of the "War on Terror" narrative constructs a dangerous "enemy." The "enemy" is perceived as "barbaric," a "threat," and a "danger" which should be "feared," "hated," and "othered" (Jackson, 2005). These terms have profound implications because the "War on Terror" has normalized Islamophobic perceptions and representations of Muslims and Islam, which are used to justify racist counterterrorism strategies and securitization regimes. Said (1997) documents Orientalist conceptualizations of Islam before 9/11. However, post-9/11, there has been an exacerbation of Orientalist representations of Islam (Nagra, 2017, p. 38). This exercise of power produces simplistic and negative representations of Islam that are mobilized to evoke the fear of terrorism (Agnew 2007; Jiwani 2012). The fear of terrorism is then used to justify security regimes that produce racism against Muslims (Agnew 2007; Jiwani 2012). In this case, racist and Islamophobic conceptualizations of Muslims and Islam are mobilized by the

Chinese government to legitimize their engagement in the "War on Terror" and suppress Uyghur Muslims.

Construction of the "enemy," based on Islamophobic representations of Muslims and Islam, also profoundly affects other minority groups. For example, the "War on Terror" has widened the suspicion net. Nguyen (2019) uses the term "anti-Muslim racism" to consider the bodies "(mis)racialized" as Muslims, such as Sikhs, and to account for the diversity of multiple Muslim identities, such as Black Muslims (pp. 14-5).

Aside from Muslims and Arabs, an increase in national securitization and surveillance practices targets and racializes other populations as well. Nguyen (2019) asserts that one of the counterterrorism measures, the CVE (countering violent extremism) racialized state project, under the Obama administration, was implemented to encourage community-oriented approaches to deter youth from engaging in "violent extremism" (pp. 2-11). However, the implications of this initiative have resulted in the criminalization of any person perceived to be a Muslim (Ngyuen, 2019, p. 7). This is a consequence of the "War on Terror" racial project, which reduces Muslim identity.

Katy Sian (2017) also posits that the "War on Terror" has increased the suspicion of brown bodies. Specifically, the aftermath of 9/11 and its impacts on the Sikh community, which is also subject to racism through racialization (Sian, 2017, p. 38). In Canada and America, after 9/11, there has been a reported increase in hate crimes against Sikhs who have been "identified" as "Arab"/ "Muslims" (Sian, 2017, pp. 38-9). Sian (2017) refers to Ash Amin's argument that the West engages in the "racialization of everything" and that Western nation-states are preoccupied with visible differences embedded in governance practices/regulation of racialized communities (38). Additionally, the "War on Terror" has impacted Latinos/as, who have

historically been conceptualized as a national security threat, "illegal aliens," foreign, violent, criminal, disloyal, and overtaking the border (Bender, 2002, pp. 1154-55). Latinos/as have also been subjected to profiling for potential security/terrorism-related threats. They are called in for questioning about the suspected willingness to aid terrorists and their supposed association with terrorism (Bender, 2002, pp. 1154-55). The "War on Terror" not only affected Muslim communities but also all racialized communities.

1.5.a.v. Conceptual Limitations: "Terrorism"

Despite practices committed to institutionalizing the "War on Terror" narrative, the concept of "terrorism" is controversial and limited. For example, despite China's definition of terrorism, which is entrenched in the law, there is no collective or universal agreement on the definition of terrorism (Gibbs, 1989; Laqueur, 2017, p. 7; Roberts, 2020, pp. 10-11; Schmid, 2004). The definition of terrorism has also been subject to change based on space, time, and place (Laqueur, 2017, pp. 7-8).

The way acts of "violence" are labelled as "terrorism" is also racialized (Kundnani, 2014, p. 36). The racialization of "terrorism" identifies a specific racial identity of the "terrorist," which assumes that Muslims are responsible for acts of political violence (Kundnani, 2014, p. 30). Laqueur (2017) demystifies the assumption that terrorism comes from a select group of racialized and ethnic people. Explicating the history of terrorism establishes that terrorism is a global phenomenon in Europe, Hungary, Romania, Russia, France, and Ireland, not only in the Middle East (Laqueur, 2017). Laqueur also posits that "old" manifestations of terrorism were imagined to be motivated by nationalism, communism, and leftist political violence (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 4-5). "New" manifestations of terrorism are perceived as expressions of Islamic fundamentalism embedded in fanaticism and Islamist theology (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 4-5).

Indeed, power is embedded in what acts are constructed as an issue of "terrorism." Roberts (2020) argues that "terrorism" is a political label that is strategically used to undermine any form of defiance in opposition to the state or society (p. 10). Positioning terrorism as a political label explains how the Chinese government identifies "separatism," "extremism," and "terrorism" as the "three evils" but also attempts to exterminate the religious and cultural expression of the Uyghur people (Regencia, 2020).

Furthermore, the ambiguity of defining and conceptualizing terrorism also explains why terms such as "separatism" and "extremism" are interchangeable with terrorism. As opposed to contextualizing the social, political, and economic factors that produce conflict. Factors such as "separatism" and "extremism" are presented as causes of "terrorism" that individualize "terrorism." Martha Crenshaw, a terrorism studies scholar, also emphasizes that understanding terrorism requires historical context, which entails unpacking the social, political, and economic factors that produce the problem (Clarke, 2018, p. 14; Crenshaw, 1995). Uyghur violence in China can be traced back to the 1990s (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, pp. 19-23). However, the "War on Terror" permits the Chinese government to combat the same issues with a new agenda by framing separatists as terrorists to adopt a counterterrorism agenda which focuses on Xinjiang and Islam (Clarke, 2018, p. 6; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 24).

1.5.a.vi. The "Radicalization" & "De-radicalization" Models

The 'War on Terror" narrative has constructed an "enemy" which has resulted in the use of internment camps as a "counter-terrorism" strategy. This approach is based on the exacerbated relationship between "separatism," "extremism" and "terrorism." This relationship is justified by explaining the issue of "terrorism" through "radicalization" and presenting internment camps as a viable "de-radicalization" process. The concepts of "radicalization" and "de-radicalization," are

central to the "War on Terror" narrative. In this subsequent subsection, the assumed process of "radicalization" as preceding and legitimizing "de-radicalization" efforts is called into question, specifically, how the state and security agencies present this narrative to justify their actions.

1.5.a.vii. Problematizing Radicalization

Kundnani (2012) analyzes scholars, academics, and experts who have discussed and constructed the discourse regarding radicalization, counter-radicalization, and terrorism. He examines how the concept of radicalization appeals to the interests of policymakers to examine how "terrorists" are produced and justify extreme "counter-terrorism" strategies through analytical research (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 4-5). Similar to him, other scholars assert that the concept of radicalization is limited and rudimentary because scholarly research does not examine the underlying root causes of terrorism, which undermine the compliance of Western nations and their allies (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 5-6; Schmid, 2013).

There is also a lack of consensus on the causes of terrorism despite the popularity of the concept (Schmid, 2013, pp. 1-3) which permits the subjective use and application of the concept of "radicalization." There is also a multitude of radicalization models/ agendas, and there is no consensus on the definition of radicalization, but it is a popular politicized phrase with many variations depending on context (Borum, 2011, pp. 12-13; Koehler, 2016; Kundnani, 2012; Sedgwick, 2010; Schmid, 2013). Kundnani (2014) posits that "radicalization" is presented and imagined as an alleged theological-psychological process which entails becoming a terrorist and transitioning to extremist/ radical religious thoughts (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 4 & 7-18). This knowledge of theological and radicalization processes permits government-funded industries to suggest interventions to preclude extremism in Muslim communities (Kundnani, 2012, p. 3). Consequently, normalizing the construction of Muslim communities as "suspect communities"

(Kundnani, 2012, p. 3). Conceptualization of this concept, in the context of the "War on Terror," highlights the power of Western nation-states and security agencies to legitimize "terrorism" through concepts such as "radicalization." This exhibits how context and power relations determine what is identified as "radical," "extremist," "terrorism," and "acceptable."

Furthermore, the concept of radicalization is used to investigate, analyze, and formulate policies on terrorism (Kundnani, 2014, pp. 5-10). Focusing on radicalization allows governments to pre-emptively address and prevent terrorism before it occurs (Kundnani, 2014, p. 6). This enables an increase in government funding for research on national security, surveillance, policing tools, risk assessment, program evaluation, managing threats, and statistical analysis of de-radicalization and policing which intervenes in the lives of Muslims (Koehler, 2016; Kundnani, 2012; Kundnani, 2014, pp. 6-10). There is also an emphasis on individual cultural-psychological disposition/ pre-disposition that focuses on how people supposedly become perpetrators of terrorism and defend extremist thoughts (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 9-11; Kundnani, 2014, pp. 142-44).

Kundnani (2014) also states that American and European law enforcement, national security, and the military have identified Muslim bodies and their physical appearances, language, and religious/political views as signs of radicalization. This is problematic because the research on radicalization perceives Muslims as "suspect communities" (Kundnani, 2012) which normalizes an inferential heuristic that is xenophobic, Islamophobic, discriminatory, and racist. An individual's religious or cultural practices are a matter of choice and not an indication of radicalization or suspicion.

Kundnani (2012) further suggests that the developing scholarship and funding in radicalization since 2004 serves the interests of policymakers and government officials (6). It

produces terrorism as something that can examined, analyzed, and used to produce policy-based solutions (Kundnani, 2012). This means that the literature on radicalization validates the "War on Terror" and its "counter-terrorism" strategies. This demonstrates how the "War on Terror" is not objective or bias-free. Flawed scholarship on radicalization post-9/11 influences government policies and further contributes to bias, prejudice, discrimination, and ideological assumptions toward Muslims (Kundnani, 2012, p. 8). Consequently, religious expression becomes perceived as a precursor to radical religious thoughts contributing to terrorism. Kundnani (2014) asserts that this is a consequence of the theological radicalization model, which allows security and intelligence officers to intervene and target Muslims based on an irrational connection between radical religious beliefs and terrorism (Kundnani, 2012, pp. 9-11).

1.5.a.viii. Problematizing De-radicalization

De-radicalization is central to a counter-terrorist agenda and policy-making (Kundnani, 2014). Framing "religious extremism" and "separatism" as a precursor to "terrorism" allows the Chinese government to focus on de-radicalization as a strategy to curb terrorism (Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016; Zhou, 2019). The concept of de-radicalization is depicted as letting go of extremist behaviour and adopting mainstream principles, morals, and standards (Zhou, 2019, pp. 1187-89). Similar to radicalization, there is no accepted definition of the concept it is subjectively and "poorly" defined (Schmid, 2013, p. 1-2). However, disengagement is presented as the underlying objective of de-radicalization. Disengagement is perceived as central to the transformation from an unacceptable to an acceptable state which entails a behavioural change (Koehler, 2016, p. 3; Schmid, 2013). This is problematic because it normalizes state intervention through counter-terrorism strategies which assume that, through the process of de-radicalization, individuals can be potentially transformed through government policies and programs which

supposedly "disengage," "rehabilitate," and "re-integrate" individuals. In the context of the Chinese government, de-radicalization is accomplished through repressive regulations and internment.

In 2014, Xinjiang's legislature amended the "XUAR's Regulation on Religious Affairs," which permits authorities with greater discretion to limit religious practices and online speech and restrict clothing or beards that are associated with extremism (Zhou, 2019, p. 1193). In 2015, Xinjiang's capital city's legislature passed the "Urumqi City's Regulation on Banning the Wearing of Burqas in Public Places," which banned the burqa and other extremism-related symbols (Zhou, 2019, p. 1193). In March 2017, the Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification sought to place restrictions on Uyghur Muslims and their right to practice religion with freedom, such as targeting the choice to wear a burqa, face coverings, having beards, and specific names (The International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation, 2017). This regional regulation aimed to further crack down on the religious, ethnic, and cultural expression of Uyghur Muslims which are identified as "symbols of extremification" which "spread religious fanaticism" (The International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation, 2017).

In August 2018, it was also reported that approximately one million Uyghur Muslims and other Muslim minorities in China were forced into camps (United Nations Human Rights, 2018). These camps are categorized into three levels. The first level comprises the "illiterate Uyghur farmers" whose crime was not speaking Chinese, the second group is people with religious and separatist content either in person or on cellular devices, and the third group is people who have been abroad and studied religion and came back to China (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180-81; Raza, 2019, pp. 493-94). Those detained can be sentenced to almost ten to fifteen years (Çaksu, 2020, p.

180). These spaces are discerned by an apparent lack of due process, no court of law, and those targeted have no system to oppose or appeal detention (Çaksu, 2020, p. 177; United Nations Human Rights, 2018).

Bitter Winter's (2018) video provides evidence of the structure of the buildings used as "vocational training centers" in Yining, Xinjiang (Introvigne, 2018). It documents physical evidence of windows with guard railings and netting. Rooms have double iron doors, guard railings, and keypad locks to maximize movement control (Bitter Winter, 2018; Introvigne, 2018). These spaces are carceral and are not a conducive learning environment.

There is also a lack of freedom and privacy. Washrooms located within a room are surveilled, and spaces are overcrowded, with almost fifteen people in each room (Introvigne, 2018). Additionally, those detained are surveilled for twenty-four hours, and cameras are positioned to optimize the visibility of all spaces, both inside and outside, of the building (Bitter Winter, 2018; Çaksu, 2020, pp. 178-9 Introvigne, 2018). There are also chain-link fences and wire netting on the exterior of the building, which mimic a courtyard for those detained (Introvigne, 2018). All these measures are committed to avoiding the possibility of escape and limiting rights and freedoms.

Based on the exclusive report, Bitter Winter's video exemplifies that internment through re-education camps focuses on political indoctrination (Introvigne, 2018). There are slogans and banners inside and outside of the buildings, such as "make a habit of studying Mandarin" and "follow the guidance of Xi Jinping's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, and untiringly strive to achieve the dream of the people of China to bring great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (Introvigne, 2018). These slogans indicate an environment committed to

preserving the dominant Chinese political and social values, lifestyle, dialect, traditions, and customs.

Education is also provided as a tactic of ideological indoctrination, such as exposure to laws, regulations, anti-terrorism, self-criticism, and dangers associated with religious extremism, radicalism, or separatism (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180; Raza, 2019, p. 494). Education is often tested through reciting memorizations of government documents, quizzes on Xi Jinping's speeches, and patriotic songs (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180; Raza, 2019, p. 494). Detesting or accepting politically and culturally motivated education results in punishments or rewards (Raza, 2019, p. 494). Raza (2019) states that the goal is to remove religious/ ethnic identity and replace it with a patriotic identity (p. 492).

Consumption of specific foods is also linked to the possibility of inciting extremism and radicalization. Detainees report being forced to consume pork and drink alcohol because these actions are prohibited in Islam (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180). Other forms of abuse ranged from being unable to use the bathroom for an extended period, to being deprived of a physician's care, and some were subject to solitary confinement, where they were beaten and tortured (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180). There is also the abuse of discretion by the authorities in charge and there is no procedure to oversee discretion or accountability measures Çaksu, 2020).

Additionally, central to the indoctrination of Chinese values and lifestyle is the condemnation of ethnic minorities. For example, washing hands and feet is prohibited because it is considered an Islamic practice (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180). Women also apologize for wearing long clothing like Muslim attire, praying, and teaching their offspring the Quran (Çaksu, 2020, p. 180). Mihrigul Tursun, an Uyghur Muslim woman, recounts her story of horrors and abuse in re-education camps. She was stripped of her children and detained for the first time for three

months in 2015 when she travelled from Egypt to China to meet her family (Cockburn, 2018; Connell, 2018). She was then sent back to re-education camps twice in 2017 and 2018, where she spent three months detained in a room with approximately sixty women (Cockburn, 2018; Connell, 2018). She was released on parole after discovering her son had died (Cockburn, 2018; Connell, 2018).

She recounts stories of being interrogated with no sleep for four days, malnourishment, reciting songs that eulogized the Communist Party of China, forced medication, consumption of unknown liquids resulting in bleeding, her hair being shaved off, being electrocuted, and watching almost nine other women in her cell pass away (Cockburn, 2018; Connell, 2018). She was targeted and questioned for speaking a foreign language and being an Egyptian resident (Connell, 2018). China's Foreign Ministry denies Mihrigul's story, stating it is a fabricated lie, Tursun had ulterior motives, and her experience is an accusation and slander targeted towards the Chinese government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2019).

These reports and evidence are contradictory to official White Paper reports published by The State Council of the People's Republic of China in 2016 & 2018, which indicate that China is committed to allowing its citizens to practice their religion with freedom (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2016; 2018). The discrepancies between the accounts of Uyghur Muslims detained in re-education camps, and state official reports establish how White Paper reports maintain a fictitious narrative of upholding religious freedoms.

1.5.a.ix. Consequences & Implications

"Radicalization" & "De-radicalization" models are conceptualized and implemented by the state and security agencies to present "terrorism" as an individualized problem confined to a specific population. This is an exercise of power. Kundnani (2014) states that ignoring context

diminishes the contribution of Western state violence and manufacturing the problem of extremism (p. 32). These models further propagate and legitimize the terror industrial complex and "War on Terror" framework which increase counterterrorism strategies/ practices, such as carceral practices, mass incarceration, arbitrary detention/ arrest, securitization, militarization, intelligence work, surveillance tactics, and the use of inhumane practices, such as torture (Byler, 2022; Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Caksu, 2020; Kundnani, 2016; Nagra & Maurutto, 2016; Rana, 2011; Rana, 2016; Razack, 2008; Stampnitzky, 2013).

A de-contextualized explanation of "terrorism" legitimizes the problematic correlation between "adopting radical views" and engagement in "extremism" and "terrorism." This thesis explores how the Chinese government constructs the problem of "terrorism," consequently, further justifying the need for "disengagement" through state intervention. This attempts to illustrate how the Chinese government strategically mobilized internment camps as a tactical solution under the guise of the "War on Terror" to suppress Uyghur Muslims.

1.6. The Xinjiang Context: Internment Camps

The Chinese government has normalized the use of internment camps as a "counter-terrorism" strategy committed to de-radicalization. However, the use of internment camps has a long history dating back to the establishment of the People's Republic of China. This historical context is imperative to understand the contemporary use of prisons and internment camps, specifically, how internment camps have become the "normalized exception" and continue to be implemented under the guise of the "War on Terror."

1.6.a. The History of Internment Camps

Internment camps are not a new phenomenon in China. There is a long history that is linked to the prison system in China and the establishment of the Communist Party of China and

the People's Republic of China under the ruling leader Mao Zedong in the late 1940s (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.; Millward & Peterson, 2020; Pejan, 2000). It is reported that approximately 50 million have been processed in the Laogai prison system after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.).

The prison system in twentieth-century China transitioned from barbaric and torturous forms of punishment to a system of incarceration, surveillance, and policing (Dutton, 1992; Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 14-5). However, suppression and cruel treatment remain central to maintaining communist regimes of power (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.). This connects to Foucault's (1995) argument that legal and penal reform in the 18th century was not a development and progression toward the humanitarian respect of humanity because torture continues to persist (pp. 75-78). Instead, penal reform is based on a new method of punishment as "a tendency towards a more finely tuned justice, towards a closer penal mapping of the social body" (Foucault, 1995, p. 78). During the 18th century, the intensity of punishment decreased to the detriment of increased intervention (Foucault, 1995, p. 75). Greater intervention refers to a "new economy of power" focusing on disciplinary power through incarceration, surveillance, and policing (Foucault, 1995).

As discussed in the next section (*1.6.c. The Normalized Exception*), this "new economy of power" is widespread and is not limited to prisons (Foucault, 1995; Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, pp. 110-15; Murray, 2010, p. 59). It is no longer the visualization of penalties through torture and the spectacle. Instead, it is the "soul, too, but in so far, as it is the seat of habits. The body and the soul, as principles of behaviour, form the element that is now proposed for punitive intervention" (Foucault, 1995, p. 128). This did not mean less punishment but amelioration of the technology

of punishment so that it could "punish more deeply into the social body" instead of physical pain to the body (Foucault, 1995, p. 82).

Furthermore, punishment's objectives are not based on modern transformation or humanitarianism but on efficiency and productivity (Foucault, 1995). This means that:

> "The true objective of the reform movement…was not so much to establish a new right to punish based on more equitable principles, as to set up a new 'economy' of the power to punish, to assure its better distribution, so that it should be neither too concentrated at certain privileged points, nor too divided between opposing authorities; so that it should be distributed in homogeneous circuits capable of operating everywhere, in a continuous way, down to the finest grain of the social body…The reform of criminal law must be read as a strategy for the rearrangement of the power to punish…that render it more regular, more effective, more constant and more detailed in its effects." (Foucault, 1995, p. 80)

Under Communist control and modelled after the Soviet Gulag, the Laogai prison system served as a form of labour and reform that served a political purpose (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.; Seymour & Anderson, 1998, p. 15). Central to this system is ideological indoctrination, achieved by suppressing and reforming behaviour to transform the individual into a productive socialist being that exhibits consent and conformity to the state (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.). This system is not so much a "reform" as it is a "whole technology of power over the body" (Foucault, 1995, p. 30) that exerts more control.

1.6.b. China's Labour Reform System

A part of China's vast prison system is the labour reform system. The Laogaidui is a political term which was used after the Communist Party of China acceded to power in 1949 (Wu, 1992, p. 6). It is composed of the **Laogai** (convicted labour reform), **Laojiao** (re-education through labour), **Jiuye** (forced job placement for released prisoners), prisons, detention centers, and juvenile offender's camps (Pejan, 2000; Wu, 1992, pp. 2-7). The overall purpose of the Laogaidui system is to maintain the Chinese government's understanding of public security, and

the Communist regime, and ideologically control the mind. The Chinese prison system also aims to exterminate, punish, and suppress those against the socialist system, class enemies, and counterrevolutionaries through labour (Wu, 1992, pp. 1-5, 19, & 35). The goals of the labour reform system are accomplished through a lack of formal due process and deprivation of rights, destroying bodies, categorizing people into classes and political categories, and transforming people into “tools of production" (Pejan, 2000, p. 1; Seymour & Anderson, 1998; Wu, 1992, pp. 6 & 35). This system also serves an economic purpose because it encourages domestic and international trade, the exchange of goods produced by prisoners, and mimics a factory (Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 6-7; Wu, 1992, pp. 2-6 & 34-35). Dutton (1992) emphasizes that the labour reform system produces disciplinary spaces which maximize productivity, transformation, reform, and policing bodies into acceptable socialist citizens (Dutton, 1992; Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 6-7).

The **Laogai** (convicted labour reform) in Xinjiang are isolated, remote, and scattered (Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 87-89). From the beginning of Laogai, the quality of life for prisoners has been inadequate due to a lack of space, overcrowding, and lack of facilities, such as showering facilities (Seymour & Anderson, 1998, p. 87). Prisoners described the laogai as a lawless space where officers in charge abuse their discretion and power (Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 176-77). Abuse varies from solitary confinement, punishment for not completing daily labour requirements, food deprivation, regular beatings to unconsciousness or even death, sexual assault, and torture, such as electric shocks, consuming garbage and urine and completing labour with leg chains (Seymour, 1998, pp. 177-78).

Harry Wu, the author of “*Laogai, The Chinese Gulag*,” founder of the Laogai Research Foundation and the Laogai Museum, is a human rights activist and was a political prisoner. He

was imprisoned in China for nineteen years for being identified as a counter-revolutionary (Langer, 2016). He recounts stories of being beaten, tortured, in horrible working conditions, and in camps plagued with diseases (Langer, 2016; Pejan, 2000). Additionally, Albanian historian, Osli Jazexhi, travelled to Xinjiang and referred to internment camps as concentration camps and sites of total control (Jazexhi, 2019). Inmates were targeted for religious crimes, such as praying five times a day, referring to the Quran or Allah, maintaining a halal diet, refraining from speaking Turkic languages, and being isolated from loved ones (Jazexhi, 2019).

In 1994, the Laogai system was condemned by international human rights groups, such as the Laogai Research Foundation (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2005; Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.). That same year, the Chinese government replaced the name "Laogai" (reform through labour) with "prison" and "community correction centers" in official documents (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2005; Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.). However, this change was superficial because the goal of reform through labour remained constant, and the poor conditions and human rights violations continued to persist (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2005; Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.).

The **Laojiao** (re-education through labour) targets various categories of people, such as counterrevolutionaries and anti-socialists (Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 18-20). This system aims to reform through labour, re-educate and target those who are problematic but not charged or convicted of a crime (Pejan, 2000, p. 1; Wu, 1992). Punishment is arbitrary, there is a lack of sentencing structure, and some prisoners are subject to sentences for almost five years (Laogai Research Foundation, n.d.; Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 20-22). The conditions and forms of labour are also severe, harsh, and limited to rural settings (Seymour & Anderson, 1998, pp. 22-3).

Lastly, the **Jiuye** (forced job placement for released prisoners) is an extension of labour reform committed to sustaining the dictatorial regime and public order (Wu, 1992, pp. 108-9). Those under this system are identified as "job placement personnel" who have served their prison term (Wu, 1992, pp. 108-9). These individuals do not possess the same freedoms and rights as citizens (Wu, 1992, p. 108). Instead, individuals in this system cannot choose their jobs and must work at labour reform enterprises operated by the Public Security and Judicial Bureau (Wu, 1992, pp. 108-9).

Regarding living conditions, personnel residing in the Laogaidui are under the military system and their family can be given housing in labour reform camps, participate in labour, and earn a salary (Wu, 1992, p. 114). Personnel also receive worker's compensation, benefits, and paid leave (Wu, 1992, p. 114). All aspects of life are controlled. Workers have no identification register cards to return home and require a family visitation certificate from the labour reform camps (Wu, 1992, p. 114). Personnel must also attend a local public security branch to provide a report and acquire supervision and instruction (Wu, 1992, p. 114). After they return, they are required to report to a public security branch and the Laogaidui is informed (Wu, 1992, pp. 114-115). However, if personnel fail to report back, they are identified as "escaped convicts" (Wu, 1992, p. 114). The public security agency is informed, they are apprehended and report back to their labour reform camp where they are subject to self-criticism and solitary confinement and are required to "do another stint" (serve additional laogai/ laojiao terms) (Wu, 1992, pp. 114-5). Upon arrival at the labour reform camp, convicted labour reform, and re-education through labour the population is subject divided into "study groups" (Wu, 1992, p. 28-29). The time spent in these groups is dependent on the prisoner's crime, confession, consciousness, judgements, and repentance (Wu, 1992, p. 28). The new prisoners are assembled into small

groups and are led by an elder convict who is appointed as a group leader by public security cadres (Wu, 1992, p. 28). The other group consists of hardened criminals (Wu, 1992, p. 28). There is a lack of freedom and all movement is controlled (Wu, 1992, pp. 28-9). There are three stages of self-criticism central to these study groups (Wu, 1992, p. 28). The first entails acknowledgement of the crime committed and guilt (Wu, 1992, p. 29). The second stage pertains to recognition and criticism of the crimes committed while expressing benevolence and gratitude for the Communist Party to demonstrate the process of "reform" and becoming a "new person" (Wu, 1992, pp. 29-30). The last stage is "submitting to authority" (Wu, 1992, p. 30). This entails learning the rules and regulations of the labour reform camp which is based on the premise that prisoners have recognized their crimes, successfully engage in self-criticism, and exhibit repentance (Wu, 1992, p. 30). All the information (self-criticism and reform proposal) is approved by the public security cadre and submitted to the prisoner's file (Wu, 1992, p. 30). Individuals in jiuye also take part in political study sessions and yearly criticism, fiercely attack criminal activities, punishment, and reward meetings where individuals can also be arrested and sentenced terms (Wu, 1992, pp. 115-6).

1.6.c. The Normalized Exception

The legacy of camps is central to the foundation of the People's Republic of China. In the contemporary context, internment camps continue to be used to exert social, political, and economic control. In this section, the main argument is that the use of internment camps has become the normalized exception to control minority groups, such as Uyghur Muslims.

Giorgio Agamben focuses on the construction of spaces through Foucault's conceptualization of power (Murray, 2010). Foucault uses a genealogical approach to illustrate the history of power (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). This is achieved by analyzing sovereign power,

disciplinary power, and biopower (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). Sovereign power entails a monopoly of power exercised by the sovereign, allowing the sovereign to repress behaviours through violence and punishing within the ramifications of the law (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, pp. 112-13). Disciplinary power is negative (repressive) but positive (productive) because it serves to manage, conform, control, and transform people through institutions such as prisons, hospitals, and schools (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, pp. 110-15; Murray, 2010, p. 59).

Agamben explicitly uses Foucault's concept of biopower. Biopower entails power, control, and governance of bodies to organize surveil, statistically manage risk, and make predictions (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, pp. 110-19; Murray, 2010). Biopower is not limited to control of persons who jeopardize the state but control of the entire population through technologies of power (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, pp. 109-10; Murray, 2010, pp. 58-9). Positive (productive) and negative (repressive) technologies of power refer to institutions that exert control and exercise power to govern better (Murray, 2010, p. 59).

Murray (2010) states that, according to Foucault, biopolitics is central to the modern state because life and politics become separated. This progressive development of contemporary politics entails the state's control of an entire population through technologies of power to monitor, manage, protect, and extinguish internal/ external threats (Murray, 2010, pp. 58-9). Biopolitics is a modern form of power which diverges from sovereign and disciplinary power (Murray, 2010). The body is identified as a site of power, both positive and negative (Murray, 2010, p. 59).

However, Agamben emends Foucault's thesis and argues that biopower is not modern and that biopolitics does not depart from classical politics which establish Western society (Murray, 2010, pp. 59-60). For Agamben, this means that politics and life are not unconnected

(Murray, 2010, pp. 59-60). This is connected to the case of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang because forming a dominant and exalted Han majority, based on the management of Uygur Muslims, demonstrates that politics and life are connected. Additionally, the categorization of ethnic minorities due to the lack of political identification with Han Chinese illustrates the connection between life and politics.

Agamben's argumentation of sovereign power and politics is further explained through his account of the "*Homo Sacer*." "*Homo Sacer*" exemplifies an individual who experiences biological unqualified life itself (zoe), political/qualified life (bios), and "bare life" at the disposal of the sovereign exception (Lechte & Newman, 2013, pp. 49-51; Murray, 2010). These concepts are used to explain the conditions of Western society. "Zoe" refers to life itself, a characteristic everyone has in common, but life itself is unqualified and only entails the state of being alive (Murray, 2010, p. 61). "Bios" refers to life beyond "zoe," which entails a collective, qualified, and political life for humans (Murray, 2010, pp. 60-61).

"Bare life' refers to the condition of Western politics, which is a consequence of the division between zoe (biological life itself) and bios (political/ qualified life) (Murray, 2010, pp. 56-61). The state of "bare life" lacks political life, which means that rights are eliminated, and everyone is diminished to bodily existence (Murray, 2010, pp. 67-8). Agamben conceptualizes "*Homo Sacer*," the "sacred man," as exemplifying "bare life" because this man is subject to death by law but cannot be sacrificed (Murray, 2010, p. 64). According to Roman law, sacrifice is a ritual punishment and purification rites encompass the religious legal sphere (Murray, 2010, p. 64). This "sacred man" is deprived of his political life and can be killed without retribution or punishment (Murray, 2010, p. 64). "*Homo Sacer*" is a human deprived of its political life and human value which means that "*Homo Sacer*"' is not a part of the religious legal sphere and

cannot be sacrificed (Murray, 2010, p. 64). For Agamben, “bare life” is a political crisis because individuals are in an inclusive-exclusive space, deprived of religious, legal, and political belonging (Hayden, 2008, pp. 249-50; Murray, 2010, pp. 61-64).

In this case, the exclusion of Uyghur Muslims, through the use of internment camps, results in a disengagement from political life (Hayden, 2008, pp. 250-53; Lechte & Newman, 2013, p. 50; Murray, 2010, pp. 64-5). A qualified life for Uyghur Muslims entails the freedom of religious and cultural expression. However, for the Communist Party of China, a qualified and political life entails a pro-government and pro-socialist Han Chinese identity with minorities at the periphery. This enables the majority’s dominance at the expense of the exclusion of Uyghurs from political and qualified life due to their Muslim identity and practice of Islam.

1.6.d. The Present Conditions of Internment Camps

The exception as the norm is no longer an exceptional measure but is a technique of government (Agamben, 2005, p. 6-7). Exception as the norm refers to a permanent state of affairs which has normalized the temporary suspension of the rule of the law and juridical order (Agamben, 1995). In the French translation of the “*State of Exception*,” Agamben states that spaces of exception are a “no man’s land” of indefinity (Agamben, 2005, p. 12; Damai, 2005, p. 260). Agamben postulates that spaces, such as camps, exemplify a persistent structural problem of the exception, becoming the rule (Damai, 2005, p. 262; McQuillan, 2010). In this case, under the guise of the "War on Terror,” internment camps are being used as to suppress Uyghur Muslims.

This is also achieved through exceptional laws and regulations instead of formally establishing a state of exception (Damai, 2005, p. 260). For example, the anti-pan halal campaign in Uyghur regions is mobilized to allegedly maintain “stability” and “unity.” “Pan-halal,”

"halalification," and "pan-halal tendency" refer to the expansion of the application of the halal label (Çaksu, 2020, p. 184; Kuo, 2018; Ruohan, 2018). The term halal is not only limited to food items but extends to other items, such as halal haircuts, baths, milk, napkins, medicine, cosmetics, and clothing (China Daily, 2019, March 19; Jia & Bo, China Daily, 2015, March 30). This campaign was established to extinguish the possibility of Islamic practices endangering secular life in China (Ruohan, 2018). This resulted in the closing down of approximately 700 locations selling pan-halal items (Kuo, 2018; Ruohan, 2018). This exemplifies the exception as the norm because the Chinese government creates camp-like conditions by limiting religious freedom through campaigns. Consequently, this subjects Uyghur Muslims to a permanent state of exception and denies them a qualified political life.

Additionally, the "Pairing up and becoming family" campaign also illustrates the exception as the norm, which routinizes surveillance, monitoring, and sexual violence beyond spaces of exception. The campaign is presented as an "affectionate cultural exchange" **(**Kang & Wang, 2018). However, this campaign is committed to sinicization, political indoctrination, and assimilation of non-Han to a Han Chinese lifestyle. The objective is to present Uyghur Muslims with a secular Han Chinese lifestyle by letting Chinese authorities and officials into their homes to curb potential extremism (Çaksu, 2020, p. 184-85; Human Rights Watch, 2018, May 13; Kang & Wang, 2018). Chinese personnel are to be treated as family members who live, eat, and sleep with Uyghur families (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Kang & Wang, 2018). Chinese personnel also collect information and monitor their behaviours, activities, religious expression, finances, and relatives (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Kang & Wang, 2018). Uyghurs also recount stories of being unable to pray or having the Quran (Kang & Wang, 2018).

It has also been reported that Uyghur women whose husbands have been sent to camps are compelled to marry and cohabitate with Chinese authorities (Çaksu, 2018, p. 185; Kang & Wang, 2018; Ma, 2019). This is a form of sexual violence which is a consequence of the exception becoming the norm. Aside from a lack of a qualified and political life, sexual violence is an overlooked consequence. This campaign permits Chinese authorities and officials to routinize the sexual violence against Uyghur women. Consequently, further entrenching and normalizing patriarchy, unequal gender relations, and the persistence of gendered violence.

The "Pairing Up and becoming family" campaigns are also accompanied by the "Becoming Family" campaign and "Home Stay" program in China (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Kang & Wang, 2018). These programs set up approximately a million cadres spending time, a week every two months, randomly in homes of minorities in Xinjiang (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Kang & Wang, 2018). There is the encouragement of political ideas of the Communist Party of China, teaching the majority language, singing political songs eulogizing China's political system, and raising the national flag propriety (Human Rights Watch, 2018). These programs and campaigns are all problematic and examples of how suppression of Uyghur Muslims and their religious, ethnic, and cultural expression has become the norm.

Giorgio Agamben's distinction between Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt's approach to the state of exception is essential to this research project because the everyday life of ethnic minorities, such as Uyghur Muslims, emulate internment camps. Projects, campaigns, and internment camps are committed to the overall goal of assimilation and political indoctrination, which has become the norm. The exception as the norm is further justified based on the "War on Terror" narrative. Over time, these practices suppressed Uyghur Muslims and their ethnic, religious, and cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

In this literature review, I provide social, political, and historical context to examine the research problem of the suppression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Despite China's efforts to garner support and consent through innovative techniques, I emphasize that China's authoritarian regime is repressive. This sociopolitical context provides the information necessary to examine how human rights function in a repressive state. Furthermore, China's authoritarian government has produced conditions conducive to human rights violations and abuses. Dating back to the emergence of the People's Republic of China and the Cultural Revolution, human rights violations and abuses have become central to the nation's emergence and the nation-building processes (Cohen, 1987; Pye, 1986). This context explains how China's social, political, and economic conditions permit the continued use of internment camps. Human rights abuses continue to manifest in different contemporary contexts under the guise of the "War on Terror."

I use a critical lens to delegitimize the 'War on Terror" and its concepts and challenge the normalization of internment camps. Examination of the "War on Terror" from a critical lens also explores the interests of nation-states, state officials, and policymakers who have the power to define "terrorism" and structure "counter-terrorism" strategies. This permits the Chinese government to frame its "War on Terror" narrative.

Based on the literature on authoritarian governance, the suppression of religious and cultural characteristics/ identity of Uyghur Muslims, human rights, the "War on Terror" narrative, and the normalized exception have contributed to analyzing how the past informs the present. As mentioned earlier, the establishment of the People's Republic of China was based on suppression, indoctrination, and assimilation. The Chinese government continues their legacy

through the "War on Terror." This narrative is a political facade for the Chinese government to continue suppressing minority groups like Uyghur Muslims.

Upon review of the literature on my topic, I acknowledge the underdeveloped gap in the literature that focuses on the West and the "War on Terror." Cainkar & Selod (2018) posit that scholars need to be conscious of the global dimensions of the racial project of the "War on Terror" and incorporate intersectional approaches (p. 165). This literature review accounts for a global dimension by presenting the historical and contemporary social, political, and economic context necessary to understand the suppression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. This literature review also includes an intersectional approach by incorporating religion and race to demonstrate how Uyghur Muslims are racialized. This leads to my research question, which attempts to understand and explore: **How the Chinese government manufactures and justifies its own "War on Terror" by suppressing Uyghur Muslims and simultaneously denying the use of internment camps?** To address this gap in the literature, this research question aims to explain how the "War on Terror" is being expanded in the East by countries like China.

CHAPTER TWO - THEORY

2.1. Theoretical Framework

I utilize critical race theory as the theoretical approach for my research project. Critical race theory is rooted in a political movement comprising "activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic 2001, p. 2). The movement encompasses broad social, political, economic, historical, and social contexts and issues regarding the law, civil rights, activism, and ethnic studies discourses (Delgado &Stefancic, 2001). A critique of liberalism, critical race theory evaluates how racism is entrenched in the law, institutions, and practices, which position minorities in

"subordinate" dispositions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, pp. 21-2). A theme central to critical race theory is the "social construction" thesis which presents race as a consequence of social relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, pp. 7-8). Race is not conceptualized as objective, biological, genetic, innate, or definite (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, pp. 7-8). Instead, race is a classification and categorization, which society conveniently produces, controls, exploits, and expediently mobilizes depending on context (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, pp. 7-8).

In this section, I mobilize different theoretical perspectives and concepts with akin epistemological beliefs. Specifically, I draw on the work done on ***Orientalism, Imagined Communities***, ***Race & Racialization*** and ***Racial Projects*** as a framework to theorize the implications of the "War on Terror." I present the epistemological and ontological assumptions embedded in Edward Said's Orientalism. This imperialist and colonial political tradition is mobilized to establish the identity of the "outsider" and "other." This is connected to the concepts of race and racialization to demonstrate how "imagined communities" are often based on race. This examines how the Communist Party of China attempts to organize their population. However, "Muslim" is a religious not a racial category and moving beyond the taxonomic conceptualization of race demonstrates how religion can be "raced" through racialization. This is applied to the case of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang to demonstrate how this population is racialized. The racialized Muslim is embedded in the historical Oriental conceptualization of Islam, which remains a contemporary sentiment that has been exaggerated post-9/11. Lastly, Michael Omi and Howard Winant's framework of racial projects is used to illustrate how the "War on Terror" is a racial project. Racial projects produce specific racial meanings and conceptualizations of race. The conceptualization of race through the "War on Terror" is problematic, reductionist, Islamophobic, and Xenophobic.

2.1.a. Edward Said's "Orientalism"

Edward Said's (1979) "*Orientalism*" presents a system of ideologies, discourse, and cultural hegemony in the Western and Euro-Atlantic imperialist and colonial political tradition. Said (1979) explains that the Orientalist discourse is comprised of its academic tradition (ontological and epistemological beliefs), scholars, scholarship, principles, and tenets (Said, 1979). The Orientalist discourse is a system of power and knowledge signifying Western domination and superiority over the East (Said, 1979). The hegemonic Orientalist discourse manifested itself in representations, images, and descriptions of the East (Said, 1979). Central to this discourse is how the East is presented as a "subaltern" based on the presumed superiority of the West (Said, 1979).

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Orient was presented as a European conception that defined European and Western civilization and culture (Said, 1979, pp. 28-29). Orientalism is a British and French enterprise, but since World War two, the United States has subjugated the Orient (Said, 1979, pp. 28-29). This means that the Orientalist system of power and knowledge continues to persist. The core of Orientalism is the ontological and epistemological beliefs underlying the "Orient" about the "Occident" (West) (Said, 1979, p. 30). Said (1979) emphasizes that there is no ontological constancy of the Orient or the Occident (West); both are "man-made," are not a fact of nature and reflect each other (pp. 32-33). The image and representation of the Orient are constructed by the occident (Said, 1979). The relationship between the Orient and the Occident is an exercise of power, domination, and hegemony (Said, 1979, p. 33). Periodically, the construction of the Orient has been produced and reproduced (Said, 1979, p. 15). Over time, those in power instituted a "semi-mythical" conceptualization and construction of the Orient that can be controlled and managed (Said, 1979, pp. 15).

Geographically and historically, the Orient is located in the East and excluded from European society (Said, 1979, pp. 94-95). The Orient is presented as an aberration that is not like "us" (the West) and disrespects "our" (Western) values and beliefs (Said, 1979, p. 17). Consequently, producing a dichotomous "us" against "them" binary (Said, 1979, p. 17). The occident (West) is presented as "rational, developed, humane, and superior," and the Orient is presented as "aberrant, undeveloped, and inferior" (Said, 1979, p. 389). Additionally, the Orient is depicted as "eternal", "uniform," and a population that fails to define itself, but generalized, systematic, and scientific language is used to discuss the Orient (Said, 1979, p. 389). This representation presents the Orient as an entity to be feared, controlled, pacified, researched, developed, and occupied (Said, 1979, p. 389).

The Orientalist tradition and discourse extends to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia (Said, 1979). Said (1979) presents this as "hybrid representations" of the Orient, which encompass Japan, China, India, and Pakistan (p. 370). Concerning Islam, Arabs, and Muslims, Said (1979) posits that they are presented as on "one side" while Westerners are "on the other" (p. 14). Since the Middle Ages, Islam has been depicted as an "outsider" in opposition to European civilization (Said, 1979, p. 97). For example, the Islamic civilization continues to be at odds with the Christian West (Said, 1979, p. 340). Said (1979) further posits that these ideas are embedded in the discourse of the empire, which is an endeavour to civilize, enlighten, establish order and democracy, and use force if necessary (Said, 1979, p. 18).

Additionally, Arab and Muslim societies have historically been articulated as being backward and undemocratic, revoking women's rights and rejecting modernity and enlightenment (Said, 1979, p. 15). Popular images and social science representations have also produced negative representations of Arabs (Said, 1979, pp. 370-72). These negative perceptions

of Arabs, Muslims, and Islam continue to persist and are embedded in the "War on Terror." The "War on Terror" is not an isolated event and has a long history which is connected to imperialist, colonialist and Orientalist political traditions. Nagra (2017) in "*Securitized Citizens*" highlights that:

> "Edward Said (1979, 1981) argues that from the end of the eighteenth century to the present day, reactions to Islam and Muslims have been dominated by a radically simplified mode of thinking…Through the lens of orientalism, anything viewed as being "oriental" is categorized as inferior, traditional, and backward."

In this case, Said's insights on the historical Orientalist political tradition of "othering" can be mobilized to explain how establishing "sinocentric order" is an "othering" process. This can be identified this as a form of Sinocentric "othering" of the Uyghur population. Previously, China was the core of the Sinocentric order (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 3). A characteristic of the Sinocentric order is categorization of insiders, outsiders, and intermediary groups (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 3). Insiders include "civilized" people who belong to the Han civilization (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 3). Outsiders include "beasts" who do not belong and are "uncivilized" (Ang, 206; Katzenstein, 2012, p. 3). Lastly, intermediaries include "barbarians" who have the potential to become "civilized" with sustained communication and association with the dominant Han civilization (civilization's center) (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 3).

In China, Gladney (2014) states that by analyzing the representation of minorities, we can learn about the identity construction of the majority (p. 93). This appeals to the Orientalist tradition of the occident relying on the constructed identity of the Orient to represent itself as the "dominant majority." By classifying "insiders" and "outsiders," the nation can demarcate itself, as citizens, and identify "others." For example, sinicization practices, which will be further explored in section "*2.1.b. The "Imagined Community*," position Han Chinese as chauvinistic and Uyghurs are identified as exotic and not modern (Ang, 2016, p. 403). Specific ways of

dressing, dialect, and actions guided by faith are identified as problematic, exotic, and backward way of life (Ang, 2016, pp. 402-403). This demonstrates how the Chinese government engages in "Sinocentric othering."

Other ways the Chinese government engages in "Sinocentric othering" is through the emphasis on Han-centrism which has influenced population policies in China (Ang, 2016, p. 402). For example, the Chinese government's efforts to incentivize Han migration to Xinjiang have significantly decreased the Uyghur population (Ang, 2016, p. 402). In 1949, 95% of the population was Turki-speaking and Muslim, and 45% was Han Chinese in Xinjiang (Ang, 2016, p. 402). Consequently, Uyghurs have become a minority group (Ang, 2016, p. 402). This is an active effort to "other" the Uyghur population. This also has political repercussions because Xinjiang is permitted minimal autonomy due to its substantial distribution of ethnic minority groups and a population decrease of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, resulting in a tenuous foundation for independence (Ang, 2016, p. 402). Furthermore, administration in the region is also problematic and continues the process of "othering" because the region's "First Secretary" must always be Han, and Uyghurs who would like to join the Communist Party must reject their religion (Ang, 2016, p. 402).

Socioeconomically, Han Chinese managed major industries, and despite an increase in employment, Uyghurs also experienced tough employment competition in opposition to Chinese-speaking Han immigrants (Ang, 2016, p. 402). Cunningham (2012) also states that China has strategic border control, a regional Uyghur national Chinese identity, economic resources, and security interests. These interests result in control of the region to ensure the stability of Xinjiang and its economic development (Cunningham, 2012). Economic growth and stability are encouraged to curb ethnic separatism and independence amongst Uyghurs

(Cunningham, 2012). However, scholars have established that economic development and regional stability do not ensure equality between Han Chinese and Uyghurs (Bhattacharya, 2003; Davis, 2008; Sun, 2020; Zenz, 2018). Additionally, the resources produced in the region are used to develop and advance Eastern parts of China as opposed to further developing Xinjiang. Consequently, the Han majority in Xinjiang prosper, benefit, and dominate major industries and economic production compared to the minority (Ang, 2016; Bhattacharya, 2003). This form of "othering" results in a lack of opportunities between minority and majority groups. This exemplifies how economic inequality is a consequence of "Sinocentric othering."

2.1.b. The "Imagined Community"

In this section, I mobilize Benedict Anderson's theoretical contributions to nationalism and nation-building to contextualize how the Chinese government established their "imagined community." Orientalist ideology informs China's "imagined community" because it is a means to categorize "other" groups who do not belong. In "*Imagined Communities,*" Benedict Anderson (2006) argues that the nation is an "imagined community" because it is socially constructed by those in power. Those in power construct the dominant conceptualization of the nation, produce national identity, establish belonging to the foreign "other," and produce the division of accepted and unaccepted national values. The objective is to position the nation as homogenous and solid (Anderson, 2006, pp. 24-26).

Identifying and establishing a "national minority status" is an example of how those in power have control over the representations of the "other" to establish belonging. China is an example of an "imagined community" because there is an established illusion of a unified national identity and a valorized Han Chinese majority. The valorized identity of the Han Chinese and the integrated alienism of Uyghur Muslims define the "imagined community." The

valorized “imagined” national identity of the “Han” nationality was established through the historical development of the Communist Party of China (Gladney, 1994). The representation of “minorities” in China is based on the establishment of a “majority” nationality (Gladney, 1994). Anything outside the boundaries of the dominant national identity is foreign to the imagined community (Creese, 2011). The ethnic and religious identity of Uyghur Muslims is outside the boundaries of the normalized Han Chinese identity.

Furthermore, the “imagined community” is based on exclusionary nation-building processes. Nation-building is based on categorization and classification practices establishing a dichotomous conceptualization of belonging. Sunera Thobani (2007) posits that this is a Western ontology which relies on the binary of the “self” constructed about the “other” (p. 5). This manifests in the dichotomous relationship between the “exalted” and the “outsiders.” The process of nation formation and establishing community belonging is developed by empowering bonds between national subjects and the state (Thobani, 2007, p. 10). The exalted subject position solidifies the subject’s “sense of self” belonging and arranges the subject’s relationship with the nation-state (Thobani, 2007, p. 10).

The national subject is exalted and represents the state’s national subjects who are legitimate beneficiaries of rights appointed by the state (Thobani, 2007, pp. 3-4). “Exaltation” of the “national subject” establishes distinctive rights allotted to nationals which are assumed as a part of the subject’s inherent worthiness as opposed to the colonial violence, resistance, and exploitation a part of nation formation (Thobani, 2007, p. 11). Additionally, the “exalted subject” is identified as a nation-state member who possesses the desired characteristics of the nation, embodies nationality, and is under the authority, control, and domination of a country, ruler or

government (Thobani, 2007). The "subject" position is conditional on sovereign power, but the "subject" is also an individualized entity that respects state power (Thobani, 2007, p. 4).

On the contrary, the "outsider" is a "stranger" who does not possess the desired characteristics and values of the nation-state but wants to be like the national subject (Thobani, 2007, p. 4). The "outsider" or "stranger" desires what the nation possesses because they lack the characteristics of the nation (Thobani, 2007, p. 4). The "outsider" elicits anxiety, hostility, intolerance, patriarchy, and lawlessness and denies nationality (Thobani, 2007, pp. 4-5). However, Thobani (2007) emphasizes that the differences between the "nationals" and "outsiders" are exaggerated (p. 6).

The scholarship on nationalism and nation-building, in relation to the "War on Terror," has focused on the Western and European contexts. In this thesis, I show the relevance of these theories in understanding how nationalism and nation-building operate in China. Concerning the case of Uyghur Muslims. the dichotomous process of nation-building has utility because delineating between the "exalted" and "outsiders" is inherent to producing China's "imagined community" of the "Han" nationality and "minorities."

The majority of China is Han Chinese, constituting the largest ethnic indigenous population in China (UNC University Libraries, 2020). The Han Chinese is presented as normal and un-exotic (Gladney, 2014, p. 98). Compared to the "outsiders" who are racialized, stigmatized, and strangers to the nation due to the threat they pose to the exalted nationals (Razack, 2008, pp. 1-9; Thobani, 2007, pp. 4-6). Thobani (2007) states that "race" is an exercise of power (p. 2). This power is embedded in racialization, contributing to nation formation and producing national subjectivity (Thobani, 2007, p. 2). Uyghur Muslims are the "outsiders" because of their ethnic and religious identity as Muslims who practice Islam. Uyghurs are one of

the largest national minority populations in China (UNC University Libraries, 2020). Yet they comprise less than one percent of China's population (UNC University Libraries, 2020). Controlling the representation of minorities contributes to the overall goal of the nationalization and modernization processes which produce a homogenized majority (Gladney, 1994, p. 95). In China, after 1949, the difference between exalted nationalists and minorities was established by identifying a national minority status on official documents, such as passports (Gladney, 1994, p. 96).

Balancing between maintaining a multi-ethnic nation and a Han-centric national identity is essential to nation-building in China. Classification contributed to the democratic illusion of China as a modern multinational state (Gladney, 1994, pp. 95-6). From 1911-1949, the new Republic adopted a multi-national narrative approach to nation-building to maintain a Han-dominant nation and other groups (Sun, 2020, pp. 31- 2). This approach consisted of five categories. The Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, Hui (all Muslims in China), and Hans were subject to the territorial boundaries of the Manchu dynasty (Duara, 1997, p. 76; Sun, 2020, p. 31). This model did not persist because it did not account for other minority groups (Sun, 2020, p. 33). A Han-centric national identity and a multi-ethnic nation were the Communist Party of China's adaptation of the Soviet's ideology of procuring a minority proletariat through class universalism (Sun, 2020, pp. 33-5). Class universalism emphasizes cultural assimilation and social and political exclusion but also presents the illusion of establishing rights of the powerless, equality amongst nationalities, and integration (Linzhu, 2015, pp. 6-7; Sun, 2020, pp. 34-5). This ideologically maintained the acquiescence of minorities. From the 1950s to the 1980s, fifty-five ethnic minority groups and the Han majority were established (Linzhu, 2015, pp. 1-2, 12-3; Sun, 2020, p. 39).

Furthermore, Sinicization is central to establishing the "imagined community." A Sinocentric worldview implies a "civilization center"/ "civilization core state" and a "periphery"/ "differentiated zones" (Katzenstein, 2012, pp. 9; 69). Ang (2016) discusses how "since imperial times, China has been conceptualized as a civilization and not as a political nation-state" (p. 399). However, Katzenstein (2012) suggests that "China's civilizational identity does not trump national identity" (p. 14). Rather, it is a broader social identity that is of political relevance and contains national, ethnic, and other identities" (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 14). Underlying Chinese imperialism is the cultural belief that "non-Han people can become Chinese or *Zhongguoren* (Chinese people) if they embrace Han civilization—its culture (rituals and institutions) and economic development" (Ang, 2016, p. 399). *Zhongguoren* is a cultural concept which perceives and organizes the state and its populace based on the principle of assimilation to acculturate (Ang, 2016, p. 399). The civilization process identifies the "Self" from the "Other" (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8). One aspect of this process reproduces a civilization's "Other" to be similar to the civilization's "Self" through assimilation or conformity (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8). The other aspect of this process entails the "Other" appropriating characteristics of the 'Self" to employ its influence on the civilization center (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8). Thus, sinicization is a civilization process (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8).

Katzenstein (2012) argues that "Sinicization is a non-linear, multi-sited, and multidirectional set of processes. It is interactive and can involve both practices and discourses that change the identities of Self and Others" (p. 9). Ang (2016) further asserts that sinicization ideologically refers to modernization, industrialization, and progress but at the expense of the "outsiders"/ "others" (Ang, 2016, p. 403). This process entails the Han-Chinese civilization transforming, influencing, and assimilating the non-Han (Fathil, 2019; Katzenstein, 2012).

Transformation is achieved through assimilation, conformity, and establishing differences between the Han and non-Han populations (Fathil, 2019; Katzenstein, 2012). Katzenstein (2012) states that the modern definition of sinicization is guided by the goal of assembling and integrating fragmented regions/ populations in China (p. 65). Assimilation and integration are presented as committing to changing the lifestyles, customs, traditions, and cultures that do not align with the majority (Fathil, 2019, pp. 167-168). Fathil (2019) states that assimilation is not just an imposition of power on minority groups but entails minority groups accepting the dominant culture, customs, and traditions (pp. 175-179). This entails adopting the majority's lifestyle, culture, and traditions. Anyone resistant to sinicization practices is categorized as opposed to Chinese socialist values, lifestyle, and culture. This is an example of how the concept of sinicization bridges power and politics. Katzenstein (2012) states that sinicization is a form of civilizational superiority and is a political tool (p. 8). Sinicization is necessary for nation-building and maintaining the power of the majority by controlling the representation of minority groups.

In the context of Uyghur Muslims, the Chinese government's attempts to assimilate the population. Fathil (2019) states that cohesion between Confucianism and Islam was present during the Imperial Ming dynasty which permitted pro-Islam policies (pp. 168-178). Nonetheless, assimilationist efforts persist because integration did not result in autonomy but encouraged accommodation. To begin with, China has been instrumental in developing the modern identity of the Uyghur population (Ang, 2016, p. 400). For example, derived from the language Uyghur, the Communists used the term "Uyghur" to identify the inhabitants of Xinjiang, which united the Turki population encompassing the Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Tatars, and Uzbeks (Ang, 2016, p. 400). The Chinese scholars also emphasize Uyghurs as only having a

history of 3,800-3,900 years and trace migration from Mongolia (Ang, 2016, p. 400). Additionally, the Chinese government proposes that the Han Chinese population is the earliest to settle in Xinjiang (Ang, 2016, p. 400). These narratives attempt to position China as historically claiming Xinjiang (Ang, 2016, p. 401)

On the contrary, Uyghur historian, Turgun Almas, has found that the Uyghur population has a history of 6,400 years based on their ancestry, which can be traced back to the Tarim mummies and Caucasian appearances (Ang, 2016, p. 401). This means that Uyghurs have East Asian and Caucasian genetic traits which are primordial to the Tarim Basin, and "Xinjiang has always been the Uyghur homeland" (Ang, 2016, p. 401). Additionally, Uyghur scholar, Muhemmed Imin Bughra, contends that Uyghurs are similar to Turks and have a 9,000-year history (Ang, 2016, p. 401).

These narratives and counternarratives illustrate aspects of the civilization process. By controlling the narratives that present the Uyghur population's historiography and emergence, China attempts to reproduce a civilization "Other" (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8). After the Qing empire dissolved in 1911, the civilization "Other" was inadvertently reproduced through Han chauvinism which emerged through Chinese nationalism to re-establish Han superiority (Ang, 2016, p. 401). The distinction between the "Self" and "Other" permits Chinese Nationalist policies that reject the acknowledgement of Uyghur independence and indigeneity in Xinjiang (Ang, 2016, p. 403). This explains the sinicizing practices employed by the Chinese government to reproduce the "Other" as similar to the civilization "Self" through assimilation or conformity (Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8).

The Chinese government has also implemented sinicization policies to weaken Uyghur culture and ethnoreligious identity (Ang, 2016, p. 401). Han Chinese revolutionaries ceased to

acknowledge Uyghurs as one of the five "peoples" in China (Minzhu), which includes the Manchu (Man), Mongols (Meng), Tibetan (Zang), and Hui (Muslims) (Ang, 2016, p. 401). This distinction is based on religion and geography, not race and blood (Ang, 2016, p. 401). Additionally, post-1949, books by Uyghur scholars presenting counternarratives of dominant Chinese narratives of Uyghur historiography were prohibited (Ang, 2016, p. 402). Chinese was also recognized as the official language and was institutionalized in education, work, and administration settings (Ang, 2016, p. 402).

Since the 1990s, control over religious freedom has been intense and severe, resulting in conflict between Uyghurs and Han Chinese (Ang, 2016, p. 402). For example, fasting during Ramadan is banned for party members, civil servants, teachers, and students (Ang, 2016, p. 402). Women are directed to avoid wearing veils, men are advised to shave, and there are restraints regarding who can participate in the annual Hajj pilgrimage (Ang, 2016, p. 402). Muslims were also subject to a Chinese dress code and adopted Chinese religious texts, dialects, and cultural knowledge (Fathil, 2019, p. 178). Furthermore, Imams were subject to surveillance and forbidden to teach in person, prayers in public were prohibited, prayers were not to be longer than a half hour, and mosques were even forcibly shut down (Ang, 2016, pp. 402-403). Former Xinjiang Party Chief Zhang Chunxian discussed "the need for religion to be sinicized" (Ang, 2016, p. 403). This presents religion operating under socialism to develop the economy, encourage social and ethnic harmony, and unify the country (Ang, 2016, p. 403). This narrative is mobilized to restrict religious freedom to manage the three assumed threats of separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism in Xinjiang (Ang, 2016, p. 403).

As mentioned earlier, the other aspect of the civilizing process entails the "Other" appropriating characteristics of the 'Self' to employ its influence on the civilization center

(Katzenstein, 2012, p. 8). Despite the discriminatory and oppressive practices established between the "Self" and "Other," the civilization process of sinicization also permits the Uyghurs to reclaim their identity as an ethnoreligious group (Ang, 2016, p. 403). For example, despite attempts at economic/ political integration and assimilation of ethnic minorities, government policies did not produce equality. Instead, these processes produced opportunities for resistance. Resistance emerged from the Communist Party of China wanting to transform Uyghurs into citizens versus Uyghurs trying to maintain their identity (Bovingdon, 2002, p. 44). Bovingdon (2002) discovers that Uyghurs resist the way they are represented by the Communist Party of China (p. 46). Everyday forms of Uyghur resistance range from dismissal of assimilation efforts, denial of the claims that all minority groups are politically and economically equal, and critical of the assumption of autonomy and independence in Xinjiang (Bovingdon, 2002, pp. 46-47). These forms of resistance are examples of the "Other" employing its influence on the civilization center.

2.1.c. Race & Racialization

In this section, I introduce the concepts of ***race*** and ***racialization*** to present the contemporary conceptualization of race and how Muslims are subject to the process of racialization. I mobilize these concepts to understand how the "War on Terror" has exacerbated and solidified problematic racial sentiments toward Muslims and Islam post-9/11. The concept of race is central to my research project. Race is a mechanism to establish difference, inequality, prejudice, bias, and discrimination (Omi & Winant, 2015). The idea of race first materialized from the religious rejection, of Muslims and Jews, in the 14th and 15th centuries by Christians (Rana, 2011, pp. 33-4). This resulted in Jews and Muslims adopting Christians' religious customs, traditions, physical appearance, and attire (Rana, 2011, p. 34).

The conceptualization and categorization of race is a Western and Eurocentric discourse. The modern conceptualization of race is embedded in the rise of the empire, European vanquishment of the West, the conquest of land and people, slavery, genocide, imperialism, and colonialism resulting in the formation of a racial hierarchy and nation-building (Omi & Winant, 2015, pp. 14 & 75-6). This connects to Benedict Anderson's (2006) concept of the "imagined community." Specifically, how those in power can ascertain national belonging (Anderson, 2006). Race becomes a qualifier for belonging. This means that the conceptualization of the nation does not objectively exist in nature. Instead, the white nation is a product of social, political, and economic processes which cannot be isolated from social structure (Cainkar, 2018; Omi & Winant, 2015).

The allocation of race also produces hierarchy. The historical dominance of white nationalism encourages national unity but also results in racial division (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 76). Biological differences are established through visible indicators of race, such as skin colour and pigmentation of melanin (Omi & Winant, 2015). However, Omi & Winant (2015) state that the correlation between skin colour and race is a common-sensical, superficial, and limited way of understanding race (pp. 4-5). Conceptualizing race as biologically innate excludes Uyghur Muslims from the scholarship on race because "Muslim" is not a race. Rana (2007) states that, throughout history, Muslims have been subject to racism based on a shift from biological to cultural racism (p. 149).

The history of Islam is also connected to the genealogical premise of the concept of race itself (Omi & Winant, 2015; Rana, 2007, pp. 149-50). The Muslim "other" is differentiated from non-Muslims based on race, geography, body, and cultural characteristics (Rana, 2007, p. 150). Omi & Winant (2015) trace suspicion and violence towards Muslims, which emerges from

Christian Europe and the identification of Muslims and Jews as non-Christian "others" (p. 113). Rana (2011) also presents the example of Giorgio Agamben, and his use of the term "Muselmann" to identify the appearance and similarities of Jews to Arab Muslims held at Nazi camps (pp. 45-46). This connects to the case because the racial and religious "othering" of Uyghur men and women is based on a longstanding history of targeting Muslims.

As mentioned earlier, understanding the concept of race from a critical theoretical perspective is central to my research project. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) present three principles and beliefs that critical race theorists generally agree on (pp. 6-7). The first is that racism is normal, ordinary, and not an anomaly (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). The second is that the hierarchal supremacy of "white over colour" serves a psychic and material purpose which benefits white elites and the working class (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). Delgado & Stefancic (2001) posit that the third theme of critical race theory is the social construction thesis (pp. 7-8). Delgado & Stefancic (2001) assert that "races are the product of social thoughts and relations…categories that society invents manipulates or retires when convenient" (pp. 7-8). Race should be conceptualized as a flexible concept, subject to change in space and time, and as a social construction (Garner & Selod, 2015; Omi & Winant, 2015). Omi & Winant (2015), state that "race is unstable, flexible, and subject to constant conflict and reinvention" (viii).

Race operates as a "common-sense" concept, a basic component of social cognition, identity, and socialization…race appears to be a given attribute, an ordinary "social fact" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 4). From an objective and scientific perspective, race is conceptualized as static, fixed, and a mode of categorization based on biological and phenomic differences (Omi & Winant, 2015). Race can also be conceptualized as an ideological construct or "illusion" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 109-110). However, Omi & Winant (2014) posit that race is not biological and

cannot also be conceptualized as an "illusion" (p. 110). Rejecting that race is only biologically innate and natural allows for discussions on the intersection between race and ethnicity, culture, religion, nationality, and language (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Garner & Selod, 2015; Omi & Winant, 2015).

In today's social sciences, race is predominantly conceptualized as a social construction (Chan & Chunn, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 106). The history of science and scientific development has established racial differences that are perceived as natural, static, and fixed despite the scientific conceptualization of race being denounced (Skinner, 2006). Additionally, race as a "social category" continues to be used widely, explaining how racial sentiments persevere (Chan & Chunn, 2014, p. 7). Chan & Chunn (2014) state that race continues to be a lived experience for many, and the concept of racialization can be used to discuss race experiences (p. 10).

Furthermore, Zavala & Beck (2020) posit that discourse is central to the concept of race. Through the concepts and ideas of "racialization" and "racialized," the concept of race is produced, reproduced, and established through language practices (Zavala & Beck, 2020). The concept of racialization requires unpacking the ideology of racism (Chan & Chunn, 2014, p. 10). Miles & Brown (2003) discuss racism "as an ideology that is characterized by its content…it is a content that asserts or assumes the existence of separate and discrete "races," and attributes a negative evaluation of one or some of these putative "races" (p. 84). The negative evaluation of "race" is expressed by the person constructing the racist ideology itself, who does not consider themselves as belonging, and assumes recognition of the "other" who is negatively evaluated (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 84). Miles & Brown (2003), also discuss ideologies based on "a positive conceptualization of Self as a "race" (p. 84). The Third Reich and the identification of

the “Self” as an Aryan is an example of “race” as a positive evaluation (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 84). In this case, the Self is articulated as a superior “race,” and the Other is identified as the inferior “race” (Miles & Brown, 2003, pp. 84-5). Thus, Miles & Brown (2003) posit that racisms that inferiorize the Other is heterophobic (anti-Other) (p. 85). Furthermore, Chan & Chunn (2014) posit that “racism is the product of racial attitudes and beliefs that endure through social life” (p. 7). A product of the ideology of racism is racial categories (Chan & Chunn, 2014, pp. 5-10). These categories are socially constructed, not natural or inherent (Chan & Chunn, 2014, pp. 5-10).

Central to the ideology of racism is the dialectic of the Self and Other (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 84). The Other entails “imagined attributes” that are identified as a dichotomy that is positive or negative (Miles & Brown, 2003, pp. 85-86). The “Other” is defined as “inferior” and is negatively defined as “race” (Miles & Brown, 2003, pp. 84-86). While the Self is an “imagined attribute” identified as a positive conceptualization of “race.” The relationship between the Self and Other is dialectic because the imagination of the Other reflects and solidifies the imagination of the Self (Miles & Brown, 2003, pp. 84-6). Miles & Brown (2003) argue that “racialization is a dialectic process of signification” (p. 101). This refers to attributing specific material, imagined, or biological characteristics or meanings to ascertain the Other while simultaneously defining the Self (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 101). Miles & Brown (2003) assert that the Self and Others are bound by a “common world of meanings” (p. 102). This refers to the racialized discourse used to ascertain the Other and identify the Self to legitimize and validate the European discourse of race (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 101-2).

Additionally, Garcia (2003) suggests that race is an attribute that someone possesses and racialization is “done to a group, by some social agent, at a certain time, for a given period, in

and through various processes, and relative to a particular social context" (p. 285). Over time, these ideas are reified and solidified through social policies and practices which reproduce racial boundaries, power relations, racial classifications, racial inequality, violence, oppressive practices, and naturalized differences (Omi & Winant, 2015; Zavala & Back, 2020).

Hochman (2019), contends that the concept of racialization is an alternative to Michael Omi and Howard Winant's "racial formation theory," which explains how races are formed, transformed, and dismantled (p. 1245). The concept of racialization acknowledges how racialized groups are formed (Hochman, 2019). Based on intersectionality, race intersects with other social characteristics, such as gender, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, and disability, to construct racialized positions (Chan & Chunn, 2014). As a result, I mobilize the concept of racialization to explain how religion is "raced."

Rana (2011) argues that there is minimal scholarship on the intersection of the concept of the history of race and religion (p. 31). Critical race scholars have established an intersection between religion and race to explain how Muslims are racialized (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Garner & Selod, 2015; Omi & Winant, 2015; Said, 1979; Said, 1981). The concept of racialization is not a new idea and emerged in the late 1960s to early 1970s as a part of the literature on race, ethnicity, black power movements, and new social movements, such as feminist, queer, student, anti-war, and insurgent labour movements (Garner & Selod, 2015; Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss, 2019; Omi & Winant, 2015).

The racialization of Muslims is embedded in a long history that can be traced before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (Alimahomed-Wilson, 2019; Bayoumi, 2015; Cainkar, 2009; Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Kumar, 2012; Love, 2017; Nagra, 2017; Ngyuen, 2019; Perry, 2013; Rana, 2011). Anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-middle East sentiments are historically

embedded in European and American imperialist, colonialist, orientalist, and racist histories that contribute to the formation of the empire through war and vanquishment (Rana, 2011). This demonstrates how the concept of race and the process of racialization is a part of nation-building and establishing those who belong (Thobani, 2007; Razack, 2008). Long before the attacks of 9/11, colonial orientalist narratives embedded in American culture had conceptualized Arabs and Muslims as violent and barbaric, men as misogynists, and women as mistreated and abused (Suleiman, 1999). This history can be traced back to Christian-European antagonism regarding Islam (Grosfoguel, 2012; Shohat, 2012; Selod & Embrick, 2013, p. 645).

The concept of racialization departs from the biological taxonomic conceptualization of race. Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss (2019) state that the process of racialization surpasses the categorical classification of black and white to include global and interdisciplinary approaches (pp. 505-506). Specifically, racism is also produced and reproduced by attaching racial meanings to individuals adjudged as "non-racial" (Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss, 2019, p. 506). These racial meanings are problematic because the attributes, physical or cultural, characteristics become seen as intrinsic to a specific group of people (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Omi & Winant, 2015; Rana, 2007; Selod & Embrick, 2013). Thobani (2007) posits that racial difference constructs different types of humans who are attributed different characteristics presented as inherent and innate (p. 28). These physical and cultural attributes are also embedded in racial meanings connected to specific social problems (Omi & Winant, 2015; Selod, 2015, p. 79). For example, Muslim cultural characteristics that are racialized range from gender, clothing, language/ speech, physical appearance, and religious practices (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Çaksu, 2020; Kundnani, 2016; Nagra & Maurutto, 2016; Rana, 2011; Selod, 2015; Selod & Embrick, 2013). The concept of racialization is mobilized to exemplify how Uyghur Muslims are also racialized and ascribed

"inferior" positions based on their cultural and religious practices which is used to justify the exploitation of the discourses of the "War on Terror."

Garner & Selod (2015) also postulate that religion can be "raced" because definitions of racism, racialization, and Islamophobia are not static. Instead, these definitions depend on context, can be subject to change, and evolve (Garner & Selod, 2015). In the case of Muslims, they are not a homogenous population. Historical, social, political, cultural, religious context and geographical location all impact "Muslimness." Central to the state is establishing "racialized distinctions" that are produced to create homogeneity from heterogeneous populations (Thobani, 2007, pp. 24-28). State practices based on "racial distinctions" impose, restrict, regulate, and repress to produce national homogeneity instead of heterogeneity (Thobani, 2007, pp. 24-25).

Lastly, the racialization of Muslims in the present is similar to anti-Semitism and connected to racism in the U.S. and U.K. (Kundnani, 2014, p. 17). Western and European democratic nation-states, such as Canada, America, and the United Kingdom, are complicit in arbitrarily targeting Muslims and widening the net of suspicion (Kundnani, 2014; Nagra & Monaghan, 2020; Sian, 2017). Nagra & Monaghan (2020) argue and exemplify how national security practices in Canada target Muslims and homogenize Muslim communities (pp. 167-172). Security practices range from the Canadian Anti-terrorism Act, preventative arrest, investigative hearings, intrusive mass surveillance, increased airport security, expansion of border policing, employing Security Certificates, and the "no-fly list" under the Passenger Protection Program, which disproportionately targets Muslims, in Canada (Dua et al., 2005; Nagra & Monaghan, 2020, pp. 168-170; Roach, 2011). In the case of Uyghur Muslims, internment camps and regulations are mobilized to attempt to produce homogeneity rather than accept heterogeneity. This is a consequence of racialization, which homogenizes the Muslim

population. A narrow and reductionist conceptualization of Muslim identity becomes the basis of state intervention.

2.1.d. Racial Projects

The concept of ***racial projects*** is a part of Michael Omi and Howard Winant's "racial formation" theory which analyzes how race is formed and socially constructed in the United States (Omi & Winant, 2015). Omi & Winant (2015) posit that race is a sociohistorical structure with signifiers which permeate individuals and collectives (p. 125). This means that the process of racial formation relies on the connection between social structures and signification (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 125). The concept of "racial projects," is used to explain how racial meanings are racially signified, transpired, produced, and reproduced into social structures or challenged (Omi & Winant, 2015, pp. 109-125). This concept explains how the "War on Terror" is a racial project with specific racial meanings mobilized to racialize Muslims.

"Racial formation" refers to understanding how race is defined and the sociohistorical process of "race-making," which entails the production, reproduction, transformation, destruction, and resistance of race and racial identities (Omi & Winant, 2015, pp. 108-9). Omi & Winant (2015) explain the process of "racial formation" through a conceptual analysis of "racialization" to explain how physical bodily characteristics procure social meanings (p. 109). "Race-making" accounts for context, such as the social, political, economic, historical, structural, cultural, intersectional, and hierarchal factors which reproduce conditions of inequality, subordination, oppression, difference, marginalization, domination, and class stratification to maintain white supremacy, in the United States (Omi & Winant, 2015, pp. 105-12). This explains why "race-making" can also be interpreted as the process of "othering" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 105).

Omi & Winant (2015) mobilize the "racial formation" theory to explain how "racial projects" influence racial meanings in specific ideological and discursive practices that become a part of racially categorized and signified social structures (p. 125). There is a diverse range of "racial projects" that operate at the macro (organizational/ institutional/ group) and micro (individual/local) level (Omi & Winant, 2015, pp. 125-126). These projects vary based on contextual factors, such as time, space, and place, which can compete, maintain, and challenge the existing racial system and shape policy (Omi & Winant, 2015, pp. 125-126). "Racial projects" produce race and racial meanings through interpretations and representations which racially categorize and allocate economic, political, and cultural capital (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 125). These "racial projects" produce, organize, and normalize everyday "common sense" understanding of race (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 126). This alludes to the main argument that the "War on Terror" is a racial project because it shapes specific meanings and conceptualizations of race. The "War on Terror" has racialized Islam and reduced Muslims to a singular entity that rejects the population's global diversity (Rana, 2007; 2011). For example, the racial project of the "War on Terror" has reduced the identity of Muslims to the "savage," "enemy," "terrorist," "criminal," "immigrant," and 'threat" (Rana, 2011). This problematic conceptualization of the Muslim is produced to establish the perception of a "threat" which is used to justify state-intervention. These racial meanings, embedded in this racial project, are further produced and reproduced in China's "War on Terror."

CONCLUSION

I mobilize theoretical perspectives and concepts in this section to frame my research problem. From a theoretical perspective, Orientalism provides the historical foundations of the power relations embedded in the dialectic relation of the "Orient" and the "Occident." I mobilize

Orientalism discourse to discuss how it informs the process of "Sinocentric othering." This provides an understanding of the Western binary opposition used to establish differences and justify Western colonization and imperialism (Said, 1981). Another way of establishing differences is through national belonging. The dialectic relation between the "Orient" and "Occident" is a precursor to establishing national belonging in the "imagined community." This Western ontology continues to reverberate through the binary of the exalted "self" (national subject) constructed about the "other" (Thobani, 2007, pp. 5-10).

Additionally, the concepts of race and racialization are also used to establish differences. Moving beyond the taxonomic and biological explanations of race permits the intersection of religion and race. This conceptualization of race is mobilized to explain how Muslims are racialized. The racialization of Muslims produces problematic racial meanings. This is a consequence of the racial project of the "War on Terror" which is used to inferiorize Uyghur Muslims in the context of the People's Republic of China.

Furthermore, Cainkar & Selod (2018) state that it is important to be conscious of the global dimensions of the racial project of the "War on Terror." Based on the literature review, I have identified how research on the "War on Terror" predominantly focuses on the West. In this section, the different theoretical perspectives are used to theorize a new dimension which analyzes the global impact of the "War on Terror," in China. Specifically, by explaining how the Chinese government exploits the discourses of the "War on Terror" to deny the use of internment camps and suppress Uyghur Muslims under the guise of the "War on Terror" (see Chapter Four: *Results and Analysis*).

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

I designed my research question to explore and analyze how the Chinese government defends their efforts in the "War on Terror" and actively curbs criticisms. In this section, I will explain the methodology implemented to analyze how the Chinese state both justifies and deflects its internment of Uyghur Muslims. I describe how the Chinese government frames and presents "terrorism" to suppress ethnic minorities under the guise of their manufactured "War on Terror."

I introduce the research paradigm central to this thesis and then discuss the ontological and epistemological considerations guiding my research project. Subsequently, I identify the research sample and defend my reasoning for collecting newspaper articles to answer the research question through a critical, qualitative content analysis of the data. Furthermore, I highlight the weaknesses and criticisms of the research method, I have chosen.

3.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.a. Critical Research Paradigm

A critical qualitative approach is grounded in critical theory and is committed to maintaining human rights, social justice, emancipation, transformation/ change, and resistance towards inequality, impoverishment, and suppression (Asghar, 2013; Denzin, 2017, p. 8; Morrow & Brown, 1994). This approach also critiques the structures that produce unequal and discriminatory conditions for vulnerable populations, such as ethnic minority groups (Denzin, 2017, pp. 8-9). Additionally, a critical paradigm critiques the status quo. Specifically, personnel or groups who possess and exercise power over others (Asghar, 2013, p. 3123). A critical qualitative approach permits the analysis of the Chinese government's narratives presented as the "objective truth." Luna & Berg (2017) state that we should question the truthfulness of bodies of

knowledge that are considered facts (p. 12). This defends the primary focus of this thesis which pertains to the examination and analysis of the narratives presented by the Chinese government.

Lastly, a critical qualitative research approach allows users to emphasize the importance of language analysis and interpretation to decipher how power is embedded in language. Specifically, how language is mobilized to present and frame specific "truths." This is supported by Foucault (1972-1977), who asserts that "truth isn't outside power or lacking power" (p. 131) but emphasizes that power shapes the truth. However, there is no absolute dominion over what constitutes the "truth." Instead, there are many competing and contesting regimes of truth. Foucault (1972-1977), further posits that:

> "Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: this is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts are true." (Foucault, 1972-1977, p. 131)

The Chinese government has dominion over establishing "true" and "false" statements, how truth is acquired, and who can disseminate ideas presented as "true." I frame the information presented in China Daily newspapers as narratives put forth by the state. As a result, I am examining the China Daily newspaper articles to identify and explore the narratives the Chinese State has put forth regarding how they are treating Uyghur Muslims.

Furthermore, Alasuutari (1995) posits that data can be viewed as a specimen and that data and reality are interconnected because the data collected is a part of the reality being examined and critiqued (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 63). Interpretation of the data requires the identification of classifications and distinctions in the data collected to explain how reality is constructed (Alasuutari, 1995, pp. 63-65). Therefore, a critique of the language used in the data collected is a

gateway to produce codes and understand how reality is constructed and presented by the Chinese government.

3.1.b. Ontology & Epistemology

Working within a critical paradigm ontologically establishes the existence of an objective reality that can be measured and quantified (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 109-10). However, reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and historical processes and institutions that become perceived as natural (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 109-10). This thesis intends to critique the narratives portrayed as "reality" by the Chinese government. Underlying this critique is the understanding that the use of internment camps is not a natural, factual, and objective process. Instead, they are embedded within a social, political, cultural, economic, and historical context which is inherently dynamic across different time, spaces, and geographical contexts.

Working within a critical paradigm epistemologically establishes that knowledge is subjective, political, and value-laden (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Acknowledging political values will allow me to explore the underlying meanings embedded in the data collected. Adopting a critical epistemological perspective in guiding my research project further establishes how power relations shape knowledge. Asghar (2013) states that central to critical theory is the concept of power and power relations (p. 3123). This signifies that the racial project of the "War on Terror" is an expression of power that produces a global impact, yielding consequential outcomes for minority groups. In the forthcoming analysis section, I will exemplify how the selection of specific language used to justify China's "War on Terror" is subjective, political, value-laden, and an expression of power by interpreting the data collected.

3.2. RESEARCH SAMPLE

3.2.a. Data Source

Language was a barrier to the data collection process. This directly impacted my choice of online newspaper platforms and I decided to explore English newspapers operated by the state. Amongst the other online English newspaper platforms, in China, I chose China Daily because I had access to the largest repository of newspaper articles to collect and analyze.

I opted to use the online China Daily newspaper articles as a primary source. As mentioned in "*Section 1.2.a. Chinese Authoritarian Governance*" the state and civil society are not independent from each other (Teets, 2014). Chin (2019) asserts that liberal news media is expected to undergo full-flown commercialization to attain independence. This independence can be used to position the news media as the overseer of the state (Chin, 2019). However, in the context of authoritarian governance, the Chinese media and state are interdependent (Chin, 2019). The way media operates in an authoritarian government, like China, permits direct access to the state's narratives and discourses through online newspaper platforms, such as China Daily.

I analyzed these newspaper articles to identify, describe, and explain how the Chinese government justifies their own "War on Terror" and simultaneously suppresses Uyghur Muslims. The use of newspaper articles allows the development of contextual and meaningful codes. In "*Covering Islam*," Edward Said (1981) acknowledges that anti-Muslim, anti-Islam, and anti-Arab beliefs and ideas are immersed in American and Western media. In this thesis, I intend to explore how these sentiments expand beyond the Western context by examining the online Chinese pro-government English newspaper platform, China Daily. This source permits the critical analysis of the narratives naturalized, normalized, and presented as objective facts.

Moreover, I have opted for this platform as the scope of China's "War on Terror" is not limited to the Western regions but extends towards a global movement.

Said (1981) further posits that Islam is "(mis)represented" through an Orientalist perception and is engulfed with media stereotypes that are not based on qualifying arguments (p. 17). The media is also full of ignorant claims, exaggeration, sensationalism, dramatization, negative images, hostility, and irrational generalizations toward Islam, Muslims, and Arabs (Said, 1981, pp. 17-32). Examination of the China Daily platform provides a deeper insight into how the Communist Party of China, its political leaders, and its officials are presenting the issue of "terrorism" and deploying strategies to deflect criticism and justify their claims. Additionally, I chose this newspaper platform to identify the different discourses of the "War on Terror" to understand how the Chinese government is expanding the "War on Terror."

3.2.b. The Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Department

To understand the role of the press and media in China, it is imperative to discuss the influence of the Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Department (CCPPD). Shambaugh (2007) states that "virtually every conceivable medium which transmits and conveys information to the people of China falls under the bureaucratic purview of the CCP Propaganda Department" (28). The history of propaganda is central to the Chinese Communist Party and has been influenced by the Soviet, Nazi, and totalitarian states' propaganda systems (Shambaugh, 2007, pp. 25-6). The Chinese Communist propaganda system is based on the Leninist principles of indoctrination and mass mobilization, which have been documented as central to Mao Zedong's reign (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 26). Mao Zedong was regarded as a:

> "master propagandist in his own right, and he and his regime used a variety of "thought control" techniques throughout their rule. These included mass mobilization campaigns, the construction of "models" to be emulated, the creation of study groups and ideological monitors throughout society; incarceration for the purpose of "brainwashing"; the

> promulgation of a steady stream of documents to be memorized; control of the subject matter to be taught throughout the educational system; control of the content of newspaper articles and editorials; development of a nationwide system of loudspeakers that reached into every neighborhood and village; domination of the broadcast media; the use of propaganda teams (xuanchuan dui) to indoctrinate specific segments of the population; and other methods." (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 26-7)

In the contemporary context, these active control mechanisms continue to be present. For example, since 2004, under Hu Jintao, the former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, regime and CCP's command, there has been a significant crackdown on media sources and the intensification and maintenance of the propaganda system (Shambaugh, 2007 pp. 28-9). Resulting in forced closures, prosecutions, imprisonments, deaths, and exiled investigative journalists (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 29).

These active control mechanisms are accompanied by passive and proactive controls (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 29). Central to the Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Department (CCPPD) is passive control, such as self-censorship, as opposed to direct bureaucratic intervention (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 29). Proactive propaganda is much more common and entails disseminating and writing information circulated and inculcated (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 29). Since the foundation of the CCP, proactive propaganda has been imperative because it is regarded as a means of educating the masses and is used to transform and shape society based on the ideals of the Party (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 29). This is significant because the Chinese government uses newspaper articles to disseminate their narrative of denying the existence of internment camps. Through the China Daily platform, this narrative is propagated amongst the masses.

The CCPPD is composed of regulatory departments and institutions. These include the State Council Information Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information Industry/ Public Security/ State Security, People's Liberation Army General Staff Department/ Third Department for Communications/ Fourth Department for Electronic

Countermeasures, PLA General Political Department, and State Council General Administration of Press and Publications (Shambaugh, 2007 p. 30). The structure and organization of the CCPPD are secretive and unclear (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 36). Central to the focus of this section is the CCPPD/ State Council Information Office's administration, organization, and control of the Xinhua News Agency and domestic media (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 30).

The Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Department (CCPPD) is divided into two interrelated systems: internal and external propaganda (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 31). Central to the internal propaganda system is the Central Leading Group on Propaganda and Ideological Work (CLGPIW), which is identified as the "overall coordinator" of the bureaucratic propaganda system (Shambaugh, 2007, pp. 31-2). Their work entails observation and analysis of the ideological field, control and coordination of propaganda work in theory, culture, media, publishing, and other departments, and offers suggestions (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 31). The CLGPIW consists of a head & deputy of the Secretarial Group (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 31). The Leading Group head is identified as a Party Politburo Standing Committee member, and the Deputy's head is the Minister of the Propaganda/Publicity Department (Shambaugh, 2007 p. 31).

The external propaganda system is overseen by the External Propaganda Leading Group (EPLG) and encompasses a variety of media sources (Shambaugh, 2007, pp. 47-8). The external system expanded due to China's involvement in world affairs and its concern regarding its global reputation (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 47). The four main goals underlying external propaganda are to extend China's narrative to the world, disseminate China's government approach and policies, develop Chinese culture overseas, extinguish negative foreign propaganda against them, oppose Taiwan's independence, and promulgate China's foreign policy (Shambaugh, 2007 pp. 47-9).

3.2.c. China Daily: Background Information

The China Daily newspaper platform is identified as a media source of the external propaganda system (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 48). China Daily was founded in June 1981 and is China's leading English-language news platform (About China Daily, China Daily, n.d.). China Daily has 12 print media publications: the China Daily, China Daily US Edition, China Daily European Weekly, China Daily Asia Weekly, China Daily Hong Kong Edition, China Watch, and 21st Century English Education Media (About China Daily, China Daily, n.d.). China Daily also has a Digital Media platform, a "round-the-clock, multi-channel news network" (About China Daily, China Daily, n.d.). The digital media platform encompasses the China Daily Website (chinadaily.com.cn), which accounts for approximately 31 million daily page views with 60% of visitors overseas, China Daily apps, China Daily multimedia messaging service (MMS), China Daily eClips, Asia News Photo Website (asianewsphoto.com), and the Newscartoon Website (newscartoon.com.cn) (About China Daily, China Daily, n.d.).

In 1995, China Daily launched its China Daily website and became the first major national daily online newspaper (About Us, China Daily, n.d.). In January 2000, the China Daily website was listed as one of China's five top state news sites (About Us, China Daily, n.d.). Its mission is to inform foreign and Chinese readers of the latest news about China, aims to connect the world to China, and serves as an "online bridge" between China and the world (About Us, China Daily, n.d.). The online platform serves news 24 hours a day and publishes over 1,600 news articles daily (About Us, China Daily, n.d.). Due to the lack of access to print media, I used the digital media China Daily Website (*chinadaily.com.cn*) to collect the newspaper articles for my research project.

3.3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.3.a. Qualitative Content Analysis

A qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data collected. This method provides an unobtrusive approach to examining words for their underlying patterns, themes, and meanings from independent data sources (Schulenberg, 2016, pp. 50, 231). This is imperative to the research project as it examines the global consequences of the "War on Terror" specific to the case of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Furthermore, qualitative content analysis systematically describes, understands, and analyzes the data collected to explore how things are as opposed to how they are presented (Hammersley, 2013; Schulenberg, 2016, pp. 50, 238). Hammersley (2013) states that establishing "how things are" allows the researcher to uncover underlying beliefs, attitudes, and motives. Accordingly, my purpose in this research design is to portray how the Chinese government frames the issue of "terrorism" to deny the use of internment camps.

Qualitative content analysis also aims to generate a systematic description and coding of the data collected to produce latent and context-driven meanings (Allen, 2017; Schrier, 2012, pp. 15-6; Schreier, 2014, p. 175). Latent-driven meanings refer to discovering underlying/ deep structural meanings and developing interpretations of content that are not immediately conspicuous or transparent and require context to make sense of the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, pp. 1283-84; Schrier, 2012, pp. 15-6). I aim to uncover latent meanings by examining how racialization and the discourses surrounding the "War on Terror" materialize within the context of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. This analysis will enable me to elucidate the subtle or implicit implications embedded within these phenomena. Context-driven meanings account for all contextual information, such as the text from which passages are taken, the publication domain,

and additional background information (Schrier, 2012, pp. 15-16). Producing context-driven meaning is essential to my research design, as I intend to interpret newspaper articles that are presented as factual. Context of the newspaper platform and its purpose is required to critically analyze the legitimacy of the narratives. Through this, I aim to explore how the "War on Terror" is neither objective nor natural and how the Chinese government actively deploys deflection strategies.

3.3.b. Coding

The coding process involves organizing segments of text into meaningful categories, enabling the categorization of textual data into cohesive and similar groups (Schulenberg, 2016, p. 308). For this research project, I collected a repository of 915 newspaper articles between the dates of 2001 to 2020. I chose newspaper articles written after September 11th, 2001, to examine how China gradually began implementing its own "War on Terror" agenda and denied using internment camps. I conducted an advanced search on the China Daily online newspaper website. I identified terms, such as "Uyghur" and "terrorism," to find the greatest number of articles on my topic. Due to the expansive set of newspaper articles, I employed the software NVivo. I identified a framework to organize the different data units into nodes. The nodes are broken into three main blocks to sequence and analyze the data. In doing so, I utilized conventional and directed strategies (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to structure the coding and analysis process. A blended coding strategy emphasizes the literature on the topic and data to answer the research question.

3.3.b.i. Directed Coding

The directed strategy is a deductive approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), starting with specific predetermined concepts and themes (Schulenberg, 2016, pp. 308-9). Directed content

analysis requires the integration of an existing theory, literature, or research on the topic (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). This approach is structured because it is guided by existing theory or research to establish concepts and predetermined codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). The initial coding process requires reading the data collected and developing categories based on prior research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). I have chosen to integrate the existing literature on the "War on Terror" and theoretical critical race concepts to produce categories and a coding scheme. Next, the categories are assigned definitions. Then, Hsieh & Shannon (2005) suggest coding the highlighted data sections using the pre-determined categories (pp. 1281-1282). This strategy will determine if the Chinese government is exploiting the discourses of the "War on Terror" to justify its own.

3.3.b.ii. Conventional Coding

A conventional strategy is an inductive approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) which identifies patterns and themes that emerge from the data (Schulenberg, 2016, p. 309). This strategy begins with reading the entirety of the data and deriving codes by highlighting words related to a thought or concept (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). This approach also accounts for one's impressions and ideas about the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). During the coding process, labels are produced to facilitate the grouping of the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). The labels describe what is interpreted as possible strategies the Chinese government has deployed. This process generates context-driven meanings rather than counting the frequency of codes and themes. The codes are then sorted into categories based on relation and similarity to produce a group of codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). Lastly, definitions for the categories are produced, and examples of the categories are identified in the data collected for the analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). This strategy is mobilized to

establish how the Chinese government curbs criticisms and denies using internment camps to suppress ethnic minority groups, such as Uyghur Muslims.

3.3.b.iii. Coding Block #1

For the first coding block, I deployed a deductive approach to demonstrate how Muslims are racialized based on the concepts of race and racialization. The conceptualization of the oppressed Muslim woman produces the image of the oppressive, dangerous, violent, and aggressive Muslim man who is a national threat and possible terrorist (Cainkar, 2009; Rana, 2011; Razack, 2008; Selod & Embrick, 2013). Upon coding the first block, I realized that racialization is gendered and divided the newspaper articles based on this distinction. This also signifies that the language of the "War on Terror" is "gendered" (Jackson, 2005, p. 157). The literature indicates a gendered difference in the behaviours and actions identified as cultural and religious expression. This coding block demonstrates how Uyghur Muslim women are racialized by identifying the terms: "niqab," "veil," "headscarf," "coverings," "burqa," "burka," and "hijab." Deductive reasoning guides the subsection, *"Unveiling" Uyghur Women*" because the terms searched are commonly referenced in the literature on the racialization of Muslim women. However, inductive reasoning guides the subsection, "*Dangerous" Uyghur Men*" because I identified the word "beard" as being a recurring term to exemplify how Uyghur Muslim men are racialized.

3.3.b.iv. Coding Block #2

For the second coding block, I identified the different discourses of the "War on Terror." I implemented deductive reasoning to use the literature on the "War on Terror" to deduce search terms. I organized the discourses of "threat," "evil," "disease," and "war" into units. I coded the second block and noticed that the Chinese government presented discourses specific to the case.

An inductive strategy is deployed to produce the "*The Discourse of "Separatists as Terrorists*" (See Section 4.1.e), which demonstrates the historical progression of "separatists" becoming "terrorists" over time. The development of the history of terrorism, connected to separatism, is used to justify China's "War on Terror" agenda. I used inductive reasoning to identify the terms "three evil forces" (terrorism, extremism and separatism) to illustrate this suggested historical trajectory. Furthermore, I identified the "East Turkistan Islamic Movement" to understand how this group has been presented and how this discourse is used to assert a specific historical narrative to delegitimize separatist movements.

Additionally, I identified "*The Discourse of "Global Alliance*" (See Section 4.1.f). I implemented deductive reasoning to use the literature on the topic of "global alliances" to develop this section. In the context of the "War on Terror," I focused on "global alliances" to understand how nation-states form alliances with other countries to justify and support each other's actions. I used inductive reasoning to identify terms in newspaper articles to develop this section further. Throughout this process, I identified the terms "cooperation" and "co-operation" recurring throughout the newspaper articles collected. The objective is to identify the techniques used to establish "global alliances" for the case.

3.3.b.v. Coding Block #3

For the third coding block, I implemented a conventional coding strategy to identify units specific to the data. This coding block was organized to identify the different deflection strategies deployed by the Chinese government. This was achieved through a conventional coding strategy that relies on an inductive approach to identify codes emerging from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I relied on the data to procure new observations, patterns, and meanings specific to the case and issue. The deflection strategies are specific to the case of the

People's Republic of China, its "War on Terror," and the recurrent efforts of the Chinese government to divert and deflect any form of anti-state sentiments (See Section 4.2.a-d.).

In the section "*Denial of the Existence of Internment Camps"* (See Section 4.2.a.), I identify the terms associated with the identification of camps throughout the data collected. To name a few, the terms "counter-extremism training centers," "re-education centers," and "political re-education camps" are used as opposed to internment camps. Furthermore, I identify different government testimonials (See Section 4.2.b.) mobilized to deflect criticism actively. In the section "*Discrediting Credibility & Denigrating Dissidence*" (See Section 4.2.c.), I identified terms, such as the "Xinjiang Data Project," "Xinjiang Victims Database," and "Uygur Transitional Judicial Database" to explain how the credibility of organizations are deprecated to discredit any information that counters the narrative of the Chinese government. Lastly, for the strategy of "*Comparison with other Nation-States*" (See Section 4.2.d.), I present passages which directly refer to other countries the Chinese government compares itself to minimize the seriousness of their actions.

3.3.c. Qualitative Content Analysis: Limitations & Criticisms

Schrier (2012) posits that there is no definite division between qualitative and quantitative content analysis. A limitation in the literature on content analysis is presenting the method as either qualitative or quantitative. Historically, qualitative research has been identified as a "soft" science which lacks rigour as opposed to quantitative research, which relies on objective and experimental techniques (Cope, 2014). However, producing detailed descriptions and context-driven knowledge is essential to discuss how countries are expanding the "War on Terror" and legitimizing Islamophobic, Xenophobic, the discriminatory, and racist conceptualization of Muslims and Islam.

Krippendorff (1969) presents critical issues with the content analysis research method. Namely, a criticism of qualitative content analysis is that it does not necessitate analytical sophistication (Krippendorff, 1969, p. 1; Krippendorff, 2004). Specifically, "definitional ambiguities" are listed as the inability to provide an absolute definition of "content analysis" itself (Krippendorff, 1969, pp. 1-2). A lack of definitional clarity can result in ambiguity regarding the analytical objective, methodology, and subject-matter domain (Krippendorff, 1969, p. 3). However, the lack of definitional ambiguity means the researcher has flexibility in the procedures used to answer their research question. For example, for this thesis, inductive and deductive reasoning is used to code and analyze newspaper articles. This blended approach and flexibility allow me to answer my research question.

Krippendorff (1969) also highlights that content analysis lacks a validity criterion due to indeterminacy and ambiguous conceptualization of the analytical processes (p. 4). The researcher can choose, design, and categorize possible categories based on the hypotheses (Krippendorff, 1969, p. 4). The argument entails defining categories to confirm or reject any hypothesis (Krippendorff, 1969, p. 6). Additionally, intersubjective verifiability is a problem with content analysis (Krippendorff, 1969, p. 16). Specifically, intersubjective verifiability is when knowledge, concepts, and ideas are agreed upon amongst many individuals (Krippendorff, 1969, p. 17). However, Krippendorff (1969) specifies that intersubjective verifiability is optional in content analysis because it disregards the respective complexity of the scientific observer and variations in perception and interpretations that are valuable (pp. 17-19).

Another drawback of content analysis is sampling bias due to the type of data collected or the sampling process, where some data is less likely to be used than others (Allen, 2017, p. 248). Coding/ researcher bias is another drawback while developing codes and coding (Allen, 2017, p.

248). The coding process allows the researcher to include their opinions, knowledge, and interpretation of the data (Allen, 2017, p. 248). Allen (2017) further mentions that by assessing specific coding units apart from the larger context, the content may lose or alter its meaning (Allen, 2017, p. 248). Concerning my research project, I have explained the processes used to produce each coding block and identified where the data is derived from (existing literature on the topic or the data collected). This avoids the inclusion of biases and opinions throughout the data collection, coding, and analysis process.

Content analysis encounters the challenge of producing generalizability concerned with the sampling process and producing a representative sample (Allen, 2017, p. 245). This indicates that the study's results cannot be generalized (Allen, 2017, p. 245). Connected to this limitation is purposive sampling, which refers to the researcher intentionally and specifically selecting the data for the study (Allen, 2017, p. 1545). Purposive sampling challenges generalizability and research bias because the researcher is subjectively deciding what data to collect and the characteristics that are relevant to the research project. However, selecting what data to collect and what characteristics are appropriate is important because the data analyzed is sequenced and organized to present meaningful insights as opposed to a summary of the data collected.

Additionally, content analysis is flexible, and there is no “right” way to conduct a content analysis, making the process challenging (Elo et al., 2014, p. 113; Weber, 1990, p. 13). This suggests a limitation because qualitative content analysis can be criticized as less procedural and systematic. However, as mentioned earlier, this method allows the researcher to blend strategies and produce detailed knowledge. Allen (2017) further mentions that content analysis is a “complex, time-consuming, and meticulous process” (p. 245). The number of newspaper articles

collected from 2001 to 2020 constituted a large dataset. Consequently, collecting, coding and analyzing the material required significant time and effort.

Lastly, the standards used to assess qualitative research are central to criticism of content analysis. Again, in the literature, regarding the procedures and processes of qualitative research, there is debate on the appropriate terms used to assess validity (Cope, 2014; Elo et al., 2014, p. 2; Koch & Harrington, 1998). Since qualitative and quantitative research are methodologically different, critique standards are also different (Cope, 2014). For example, rigour/ validity are the standards for quantitative analysis, and credibility/ trustworthiness are the criteria for qualitative research (Cope, 2014). However, research is complex and not linear, rigid, or strictly procedural. Hsieh & Shannon (2005) posit that the dichotomous differentiation of content analysis as either a qualitative or quantitative research method is limited (p. 1277). A reason could be that some terminology can be used by both qualitative and quantitative researchers (Polit & Beck, 2004), and the researcher must judge what methods are suitable and relevant to their research problem (Weber, 1990, p. 13). For example, using inductive and deductive processes, content analysis can be used with qualitative or quantitative data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS & ANALYSIS

4.a. Introduction

This section will present and discuss the findings and results of my research. My main argument is that the Chinese government has manufactured and exacerbated a domestic "terrorism" problem by exploiting the "War on Terror" discourses to justify its internment of Uyghur Muslims. Simultaneously, the Chinese government has produced a deflection campaign committed to diverting criticisms and denying the use of internment camps under the guise of the "War on Terror." With my research, I hope to document the global implications of the "War on

Terror," which enable authoritarian countries like China to justify the internment of Uyghur Muslims and expand the "War on Terror."

In this chapter, I present and discuss the themes that emerged from a qualitative content analysis of the pro-government China Daily news articles. I have divided the themes into two sections: The **Discourses of the "War on Terror"** and **Deflection Strategies**, to explain how China's "War on Terror" is produced, justified, and deflected. In Section 1, I unpack the themes of the discourses of the "War on Terror." This includes the discourses of "threat" and "fear" of the "other," "evil," "disease," "war," "separatists as terrorists," and "global alliance." I argue that the Chinese government exploits these discourses to establish, expand, and justify its "War on Terror."

PART ONE - 4.1. The Discourses of the "War on Terror"

Richard Jackson (2005) posits that the discourse of the "War on Terrorism" is guided by an explicit political objective which is an exercise of power because it benefits some and disadvantages others (pp. 1-2). This demonstrates how the language of the "War on Terror" is not objective, neutral or a depiction of reality (Jackson, 2005, p. 2). Instead, language establishes meaning and presents ideas/ events from different perspectives (Jackson, 2005, p. 2). In the data collected, I have identified the discourses of the "War on Terror" to unpack how the Chinese government presents "terrorism" and expand the "War on Terror."

In this section, I unpack the "War on Terror" discourses embedded in China Daily's coverage of Uyghur Muslims. This includes the discourse of "threat," "fear" of the "other," "evil," "disease," and "war." These discourses predominantly focus on the Western context. I have also applied the strategies Jackson (2005) identified in the U.S. "War on Terror" to the Chinese context to determine the discourses of "separatists as terrorists," and "comparison with

other nation states." By identifying these case-specific discourses, I contribute to the literature on the "War on Terror."

4.1.a. The Discourse of "Threat" and "Fear" of the "Other."

In this section, I will establish how Uyghur Muslims are perceived and presented as a "threat." Further, I will explain how the gendered process of racialization and establishing "threat" and "fear" is a precursor to constructing Uyghur Muslims as the "other." I argue that the gendered processes of racialization and construction of the "other" justify the use of internment camps under the guise of the "War on Terror."

The discourse of "threat" and "fear" of the "other" is central to the "War on Terror" and "counterterrorism." The "threat" is conceptualized as disrupting social, political, and economic order, legitimizing extreme measures. Jackson (2005) suggests that the construction of fear is a strategy of social control for most nation-states (p. 114). The "fear" of the "other" is constructed as irrational, constant, and infinite, which justifies exclusion, containment, securitization, surveillance, militarization, and the use of repressive laws and policies (counter-terror strategies) (Nagra & Monaghan, 2020; Jackson, 2005).

The China Daily newspaper articles present terrorism as a "severe" threat to the government, both domestic and international security, property, the public, and global society. The former minister, Tang Jiaxuan, states that "**terrorism is a common scourge of the international community** and poses a **severe and imminent threat to world peace and stability**" (China Daily, 2001, November 13). Additionally, to establish the seriousness of the "threat," Tang Jiaxuan also states that:

> "**China, too, is threatened by terrorism**. "Evidence shows that **the 'East Turkistan' terrorist forces, as trained, armed and financed by international terrorist organizations, have carried out a series of terrorist activities both inside and out of China**. Combating and eradicating the 'East Turkistan' terrorist forces is an important

> component of the international struggle against terrorism." (China Daily, 2002, January 18)

This presents the "threat" of terrorism as domestic and international. This illustrates how politicians are mobilized to legitimize and validate the perception of a "threat." This is further achieved by exacerbating the "threat" presented by "East Turkistan" groups. I will further unpack the significance of "East Turkistan" in the section on the discourse of *"Separatists as Terrorists*" (See Section 4.1.e).

Additionally, I have identified the process of "animalization" to materialize the discourse of "threat" and "fear" of the "other." "Animalization" is a strategy of demonization and dehumanization, reinforcing imperial and colonial attitudes, deployed in the "War on Terror" to differentiate between the "civilized" and "superior" from the "inferior" and "barbarians" (Jackson, 2005, pp. 47-50 & 73-75). In the data collected, regional Chairman Ismail Tiliwaldi stated, "**Terrorists are now hated and detested** in Xinjiang…**They are like rats running onto the street, and everyone is screaming: "Smash them!**" (Jing, 2005, August 26). This passage illustrates how alleged "terrorists" are compared to "rats" who should be "hated." They are identified as "terrorists" and presented as an entity to be "feared," resulting in "screaming, which justifies the action to "smash them." Additionally, President Xi Jinping, the current General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, stated:

> "Calling terrorism the common enemy of the people, Xi urged improving counter-terrorism systems and abilities and the public to **build a "wall of bronze and iron" to fight against terrorism**…(We must) **make terrorists become like rats** scurrying across a street, with **everybody shouting 'beat them!**"…Resolute and decisive measures must be taken and high pressure must be maintained to crack down on violent terrorists who have been swollen with arrogance." (China Daily, 2014, April 26)

Zhu Rongji, former Premier of the People's Republic of China, also stated that "**guerrillas trained in Afghanistan** are now seeking new bases to continue their separatist activities against

China" (China Daily, 2002, April 17). This reaffirms the assumption that "terrorists" are "not human," "normal," and "good" (Jackson, 2005, p. 73). Instead, they are perceived as "savage," "wild," and "wild animals," and those labelled as "terrorists" should be treated as such (Jackson, 2005, p. 73). Consequently, maintaining the alleged "threat" and "fear" of assumed "violent terrorists" justifies "othering" practices.

The perception of "threat" is also amplified by establishing an association between "terrorism" and "religious extremism." For example, Shi Lan reported that:

> "**The true threat to Xinjiang and its residents is religious extremism**. **Religious radicals, apart from planting baseless stories, such as the one on Aktash, in the Western media, also force men to grow thick beards and women to wear hijab, and socially boycott or even attack those who disobey their diktats**…**Such disturbing developments have aroused concern worldwide, even among the Western media. Religious extremism poses a threat to all countries no matter which ideologies they follow. Facing this common enemy, the right choice for all countries is to work together to free society of the negative influences of religious extremism, not to distort facts or blame each other**." (Lan, 2015, May 14)

Identifying physical appearance as an indicator of "religious extremism" suggests a specific racialized conceptualization of who is recognized as a "terrorist." This Islamophobic and racialized conceptualization, also dominant in the West, allows the Chinese government to align itself with the international community to emphasize a "worldwide" concern and an alleged "common enemy." Additionally, presenting "religious extremism" as a "threat" further legitimates the perception of a domestic "threat" that is specific to the region of Xinjiang, consequently, justifying China's own "War on Terror" to allegedly "free society of the negative influences of religious extremism" (Lan, 2015, May 14).

To further unpack the perception of "threat" and "fear," I focus on how Uyghur Muslims are racialized. Racialized conceptualizations of Muslims and Islam have existed since the establishment of the European and American empires, which continue to persist post-9/11 (Kumar, 2012; Nagra, 2017, p. 17; Rana, 2011). Muslims are racialized as an omnipresent and

monstrous enemy who have no consideration for human life (Thobani, 2007; Razack, 2004). This normalizes a reductionist identity of Muslims which discriminates, labels, and "other" Muslims in Western-nation states (Nagra, 2017, p. 17).

Furthermore, Nagra (2017) posits that gender is central to shaping racial discourses post-9/11 (p. 41). The data collection and analysis process indicate Uyghur Muslim men and women are racialized differently through religious and cultural signifiers of racial difference. Muslim men and women are racialized differently because of their gender identities (Jiwani, 2005; Razack, 2004; Thobani, 2007). I argue that the perceptions of "threat" and "fear" are constructed through the gendered process of racialization, which is used to legitimize the "othering" of Uyghur Muslim men and women. The different gendered processes of how Uyghur Muslim men and women are racialized allow me to illustrate how religion is "raced."

"*Unveiling*" *The Uyghur Women*

In this section, I intend to identify and explain how Uyghur Muslim women are heuristically associated with "threat" and "fear." Clothing is a cultural signifier of racial difference used to racialize Muslims (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Kundnani, 2016; Nguyen, 2019; Razack, 2008). Uyghur Muslim women are racialized and presented as a "threat" because of the religious practice of adorning headscarves. Throughout the China Daily newspaper articles, headscarves are identified as "Islamic garb," "veils," "full-face veils," "full body coverings," "forced veiling," "full-face black veil," "traditional costume," and "heavy-veiled black long gowns." I argue that the headscarf is depicted and perceived as a "threat," which justifies the "othering" of Uyghur women.

Muslims have historically been victims of suspicion, but suspicion has escalated post-9/11 (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Nguyen, 2019). Headscarves also signify racial differences

connected to “suspicion” and “risk” through the securitization discourse. Aziz (2012) argues that women who wear the hijab are seen as suspicious, violent, and foreign and are identified as the “terrorist other” (p. 1). Additionally, Louise & Cainkar (2018) assert that the state and civil society manufacture the narrative of the threat of terror as a form of micro and macro control (p. 165). In the context of the Chinese government, I have identified internment camps and legislation as a mechanism for controlling the gendered expression of religion.

The process of gendered racialization presents Muslim women as “passive” victims who need to be “saved” from violence (Jiwani, 2005; Razack, 2004; Thobani, 2007). Kundnani (2016) argues that Muslim women are identified as dangerous extremists who can conceal threats (p. 14). In the context of Uyghur women, I have determined that the perceived “threat” or “victim” status associated with headscarves is materialized through the dichotomization of colour. I argue that the colour of religious attire is a cultural signifier of racial difference that racializes Uyghur women. Colour establishes what the Chinese government perceives as “acceptable” and “normal” religious expression. Colour becomes a way to attach negative connotations to headscarves and identify Uyghur women as a “risk” and “threat.” For example, following the riots in Urumqi, it was noted that:

> “The presence of alleged ringleaders, including several women in **long**, **black Islamic garb and black head scarves** who issued "commands" to rioters, was also noted in the report…"**Such dressing of women is very rare in Urumqi**, but these kind of women were seen many times at different locations on surveillance cameras on that day” (China Daily, 2009, July 20).

This demonstrates how the colour of a headscarf becomes a signifier of “suspicion,” which assumes that the women adorning headscarves can be identified as “alleged ringleaders.” The negative connotations attached to the colour “black” are used to justify the problematic depiction of headscarves as “abnormal” and a “threat.” Additionally, Amir Ali, a physician and director of the Aksu Hospital of Traditional Uyghur Medicine, stated that:

> "**Extremists are threatening the traditional way of life of the Uygur ethnic group in China's western regions**… in the past 12 months, **an increasing number of female patients and visitors have arrived at the hospital wearing the niqab, the full-face black veil favored by ultraconservative Muslims, instead of their usual colorful headscarfs bearing traditional Uygur patterns**." (Jia & Bo, 2014, October 31)

This perception of "risk" and "suspicion" associated with the colour of headscarves depicts clothing as a signifier of "extremism." The passage above illustrates a correlation between "extremism" and an increase in females wearing the "niqab" or the "full face black veil." Consequently, normalizing the perceived "threat" of a specific population of Uyghur women.

The Chinese government also reports that Uyghur women are allowed to wear "traditional clothing that is "colourful," bright," and "delicate." The adjectives associated with colour strategically establish that "acceptable" traditional Uyghur clothing is "colourful" and "bright." For example, it is reported that:

> "**Traditional Uygur clothing, which is usually colorful and a delicate blending of Islamic and Uygur ethnic cultures, is also under threat**…The **religious extremists leave the Uygur women with no choice of attire but the burka and forced veiling**. **Any refusal could easily invite isolation, accusation of betrayal and even life danger**…As a matter of fact, **deprived freedom of entertainment and forced burka wearing have never been a part of the Uygur heritage**. The **extremist groups are encroaching and annihilating the Uygur culture and hijacking Islam**…By doing so, **the extremists in Xinjiang aim to strengthen the religious identity of the Uygurs and weaken their ethnic identity** before they can finally separate Xinjiang, one sixth of China's total landmass, from the country…**Religious extremism, the primary motivator of acts of terrorism worldwide, has prompted a spate of terrorist attacks** inside and out of Xinjiang over the past five years." (China Daily, 2014, July 4)

"Extremists" are positioned as responsible for allegedly "annihilating the Uyghur culture and hijacking Islam." Traditional Uyghur clothing that is "colorful and a delicate blending of Islamic and Uygur ethnic cultures" is perceived as "acceptable" and "under threat" due to "religious extremism." This strategy permits the Chinese government to differentiate between "accepted" and "problematic" representations of religion.

Furthermore, the limits of "acceptability" are also further established through the negative connotations associated with the colour "black." The "**full-face black veil favored by ultraconservative Muslims**" (Jia & Bo, 2014, October 31) is presented as disfavoured by the Chinese government. Consequently, this language displaces responsibility from the government for defining the limits of acceptable religious expression which restricts freedom. For example, In Hotan, Kashgar, and Aksu, predominantly Muslim prefectures in the south of the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, it was reported that these:

> "areas overseas **separatism forces intend to penetrate most**, where the majority of the population are Muslim Uygurs…**Illegal religious activities have been rampant in these areas**, which has caused a strong religious environment, an imam said on condition of anonymity…**More Uygur women wear black Islamic robes instead of their traditional colorful Uygur costumes**." (Xinhua, 2013, November 26).

This demonstrates that "traditional colourful Uyghur costumes" are preferred and the Uyghur women who wear "black Islamic robes" are associated with "separatist forces" and "illegal religious activities." This further illustrates how the state is not being questioned for identifying specific groups as "problematic." Religious expression is a personal choice and demarcating the limits of acceptable expression, based on colour, is baseless. Nonetheless, this does highlight how the Chinese government controls and manages religious expression.

Additionally, "religious extremists" are presented as responsible for forcing Uyghur women to veil. The correlation between "extremism" and "terrorism," Islamic attire, and gender amplifies the implicit assumption of the deprivation of choice and forced behaviour. Razack (2008) argues that Western notions of femininity and equality guide the conceptualizations of Muslim women. This relates to Western and colonial discourses of possession, which conceptualize the female Muslim bodies as repressed and to be rescued/ saved, and unveiled

(Kundnani, 2016; Razack, 2008, p. 86). The discourse of possession is also guided by seduction, fantasy, and desire of the oriental women (Razack, 2008, p. 17).

Razack (2008) further posits that, through Western imagery, the body of Muslim women are classified as restricted, mutilated, and murdered by Muslim men (pp. 107-109). This presents the problematic assumption that Muslim women are "powerless" and must be "protected." Based on the discourse of victimization, abandoning the veil means rejecting "extremism" and "religious expression," allegedly encouraged by "religious extremists." This is a strategy to weaken Uyghur religious identity and control the alleged "threat" by strategically limiting religious expression.

Kundnani (2016) also conceptualizes the experiences of Muslim women through the discourse of victimization, which normalizes the assumption that they are weak, vulnerable, at-risk, and need to be liberated (Kundnani, 2016, p. 14). This connects to the conceptualization of the state as a "saviour" to rescue Uyghur women from their conditions because they are depicted as "victims" who are "oppressed." This illustrates how gendered Western narratives of the "War on Terror" impact Muslim women because Uyghur women wearing headscarves are presented as "victims" who must be "saved." Additionally, Razack (2008) asserts that the body of a Muslim woman is also a signifier of a community's position in modernity and a mechanism to establish belonging (p. 86). Establishing belonging also maintains racial order (Razack, 2008, p. 13). In the context of Uyghur women, wearing headscarves that are "unacceptable," as per the government's limits of acceptability, represents a religion that does not belong. Consequently, "othering" Uyghur women based on religious expression is justified to assert the government's position in modernity.

Kundnani (2016) further argues that the headscarf signifies racial difference because Muslim women's identity is reduced to physical appearance. In this context, the use of descriptive language, such as “dark,” “black,” and “long” to describe female Muslim headscarves is problematic because these negative connotations are naturalized and normalized as a part of the identity of Uyghur women. For example,

> “**Officials say the wearing of full-face veils and full-body coverings is associated with religious extremism**…**the number of women wearing such clothing in Xinjiang, especially in southern areas, has increased significantly over the past few years**…**The report says this reflects the deep and extensive spread of religious extremism imported from abroad, and adds that many women are forced to wear the clothes**…The Xinjiang **government believes the spread of extremism in the Muslim-populated region has led to an increasing number of terrorist attacks**. Eliminating this threat is one of the government's top priorities.” (Jia, 2014 December 12)

The veil is not an indivisible or natural characteristic of Muslim women, but through Islamophobic discourses, the veil is naturalized to the body of Muslim women (Kundnani, 2016, pp. 13-4). In this context, the veil is not an objective and natural indication of “religious extremism.” However, the veil presented as “natural” to amplify the perceived “threat” of Uyghur women that allegedly “reflects the deep and extensive spread of religious extremism imported from abroad” (Jia, 2014 December 12). This further justifies the “othering” of Uyghur women who adorn headscarves.

Additionally, establishing the perception of Uyghur women who adorn headscarves as a “threat” justifies government activities and actions under the guise of “anti-terrorism.” For example, during the annual session of the National People’s Congress, Nayim Yasen, the director of the Standing Committee of the Xinjiang People’s Congress from 2015 to 2018, stated that the full face and body coverings are “not traditional ethnic costumes, but expressions of religious extremism” (Jia, 2015, March 13). This is a reductionist and simplistic conceptualization of

religious garbs, which completely disregards and neglects the possibility of agency, choice, and variation in one's preferences of religious garbs to adorn.

Discriminatory regulations further exacerbate the Islamophobic correlation between female Islamic attire and "extremism" to problematize everyday religious practices. The correlation between Islamic clothing and "extremism"/ "terrorism" also normalizes the problematic dominant Western conceptualization of the Muslim woman oppressed by ultraconservative Muslims (Cainkar, 2009; Rana, 2011; Razack, 2008; Selod & Embrick, 2013). For example, on December 10, 2014, the regulation banning the Islam veil in public passed during the 21st Meeting of the 15th Standing Committee of the Urumqi People's Congress (BBC News, 2014, December 11; China File, 2015) was based on the problematic assumption that:

> "**wearing of full-face veils and full-body coverings is associated with religious extremism**… A recent report by the **Regional Bureau of Religious Affairs says the number of women wearing such clothing in Xinjiang, especially in southern areas, has increased significantly over the past few years**…The report says **this reflects the deep and extensive spread of religious extremism imported from abroad, and adds that many women are forced to wear the clothes**…**The Xinjiang government believes the spread of extremism in the Muslim-populated region has led to an increasing number of terrorist attack**s. **Eliminating this threat is one of the government's top priorities**… The revised regional regulation on religious affairs is the first in the country to target religious extremism, and is due to come into force on Jan 1." (Jia, 2014, December 12)

In the following months, on January 1, 2015, the regulation was ratified by the 12th Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and came into effect on February 1, 2015 (BBC News, 2014, December 11; China File, 2015; Grose & Leibold, 2015). This regulation further entrenches Islamophobic and anti-Muslim sentiments in the law due to the assumption that "the Xinjiang government believes the spread of extremism in the Muslim-populated region" (Jia, 2014, December 12).

However, in 2015, the Chinese government also published the White Paper report, "*China respects religious freedom but fights extremism*," which reiterated that "China respects and protects the religious belief freedom of people in Xinjiang, but will firmly curb religious extremism in line with the law" (Xinhua, 2015, September 24). This is contradictory and hypocritical because the Chinese government presents itself as upholding religious freedom while, in reality, they are limiting it.

Testimonials are also used to strengthen the narratives of the Chinese government and their presentation of Uyghur Muslims as a "threat." These narratives problematize religious expression and maintain the perception of "threat" but also uphold the illusion of religious freedom. These testimonials demonstrate how headscarves and body coverings are presented as a cultural "threat" that should be "abandoned" through indoctrination which is presented as "training" and "education." For example, Alyinisa Ablimit is a 33-year-old farmer who allegedly "followed her husband's orders and refused to communicate with others" (Bo & Jia, 2014, December 31). With the alleged intervention of "local religious leaders" and "authorities," Alyinisa Ablimit, according to the China Daily, "has taken off the niqab, the full-face black veil favoured by ultraconservative Muslims, and wrote local officials a letter saying that they have led a good life and will shun extremism" (Bo & Jia, 2014, December 31). Additionally, Kariman Ali, a 29-year-old farmer, stated that she was:

> "**persuaded by her fellow villagers to abandon extreme religious doctrine**. **She always wore a niqab**, even when she sold snacks…"**I thought it was the traditional costume of our ethnic group," she said**…**The training classes set up by the county have changed her mind**. **The county invited respected religious leaders to teach religion, and classes on laws, national regulations and histories of Xinjiang and nationalities were also arranged**…**Kariman's business improved after she gave up the niqab and started wearing colorful clothes**." (Bo & Jia, 2014, December 31)

Underlying the problematization of religious expression is the narrative of "transformation" and "reform" to allegedly control Uyghur women and the presumed "threat' they pose. This unveils the underlying motivation to "transform" the victimized Uyghur women into a representation of femininity and religious expression that is "accepted," in China. The "accepted" representation of femininity, according to the Chinese government, is not the racialized Uyghur women who choose to wear the niqab, hijab, or any religious veil/ covering that is "dark," "black," and "long."

Zulipunur Turson was also identified as being "influenced by religious extremists" after rejecting a position as a civil servant and "began wearing clothing associated with extremist views and used social media to encourage people to follow suit" (Jia, 2018, October 31). This assumes that the use of "vocational education and training" committed to allegedly providing skills for employment allowed Turson to reject "religious extremism" (Jia, 2018, October 31). The testimonials' accuracy cannot be confirmed, but they are presented as narratives of "reform" and "education" through state intervention. However, state intervention has normalized ideological indoctrination through internment camps. Based on the testimonials presented, it is important to note that the government's focus on "transformation" and "reform" responsibilizes individuals for their actions and choices. Once again, there is a lack of accountability and responsibility on behalf of the state for problematizing religious expression in the first place and these testimonials highlight an expected gratitude for state intervention.

"*Dangerous" Uyghur Men*

As mentioned earlier, cultural signifiers of racial difference differ for Uyghur Muslim men and women. Richard Jackson (2005) indicates that the language of the "War on Terror" is "gendered" and is based on patriarchal understandings of gender roles (pp. 157-158). The

dominant Western conceptualization of the oppressed Muslim woman produces the conceptualization of the Muslim man as oppressive, dangerous, violent, aggressive, a national threat, and a possible terrorist (Cainkar, 2009; Rana, 2011; Razack, 2008; Selod & Embrick, 2013). In this section, I argue that Uyghur men are racialized, and their physical characteristics are depicted as a "threat" to justify the "othering" of Uyghur men.

There is a presumption that men immersed in culture and religion reject rationality and are prone to violence (Razack, 2008, p. 29). Razack (2008) further argues that Muslim men are identified as misogynistic patriarchs and have failed to advance into modernity (pp. 16-17). Edward Said (1979) posits that these ideas emerge from characterizing Arab and Muslim societies as backward, undemocratic, and people who repudiate women's rights (p. 18). However, dominant views on modernity, enlightenment, and democracy are contested, complex, and not static (Said, 1979, p. 18). These ideas are also Western and Islamophobic because they homogenize Muslim identities and classify them as "uncivilized" and "violent."

The China Daily newspaper article depicts a correlation between cultural signifiers of racial difference and "religious extremism." For Uyghur Muslim men, facial hair, specifically beards, is identified as a cultural signifier of racial disparity. For example, the former Chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Nur Bekri, states:

> "**extremists attempt to pit believers against "pagans," alienating non-believers and those who do not conform to their rules or practices**, hurling insults such as "traitors" and "scum" on them…They also advocate "religion above all," and a pan-Islam society, he added. They forbid believers to watch TV, listen to radios, read newspapers or even "laugh during weddings or cry during funerals." **He said they force men to grow beards and women to wear burka.**" (Xinhua, 2014, April 7)

Depicting men as being "forced" to grow beards by "extremists" establishes the Islamophobic and discriminatory correlation between "religious extremism" and Islam. This correlation is a superficial and baseless assumption. Razack (2008) also presents that belonging is used to

maintain racial order and identify oneself as modern. In this context, the perception of "threat" establishes that Uyghur men do not belong and maintains the racial hierarchy by "othering" Uyghur men.

Additionally, the correlation between "religious extremism" and "terrorism" establishes the perception of beards as a "threat," which defines what is "acceptable" and "unacceptable" in the community. For example, Amir Ali, a physician and director of the Aksu Hospital of Traditional Uyghur Medicine, stated that he:

> "posted notices in the entrance hall of his hospital to remind people that the niqab is not traditional Uygur clothing, **and also that it's inappropriate for young men to wear long beards**…"**Extreme religious thoughts in people's minds are more difficult to treat than diseases in their bodies**" (Jia & Bo, 2014, October 31)

This passage defines the limits of acceptability by presenting "long beards" as "inappropriate." Based on this passage, the assumed inappropriateness of beards also poses the assumption that "extreme religious" thoughts are "innate." This produces the perception of natural inferiority based on the assumption that "people's minds are more difficult to treat than diseases in their bodies." This also positions Uyghur men as allegedly possessing an "innate perversion," which assumes a proneness to "terrorism." Establishing an innate "inferiority" and "perversion" justifies attempts to "reform" through state intervention. This reductionist conceptualization of Uyghur men fails to contextualize how the state constructs and manufactures the problem of "terrorism" through arbitrary, unjustifiable, and Islamophobic correlations.

Furthermore, the Chinese government also deploys legislation to exacerbate the correlation between 'religious extremism" and "terrorism." For example, the newspaper article "New Xinjiang regulation aims to prevent extremism" states that:

> "**Lawmakers in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region have passed China's first legislation on anti-extremism to prevent terrorism from spreading in the region**…**The regulation, adopted on Wednesday by the Xinjiang People's Congress,**

> **prohibits people in the region from wearing full-face coverings and long beards, which are deemed to promote extremism**…Thirteen **other behaviors that indicate extremism are also banned, such as forcing others not to associate with people from other ethnic groups and extending the concept of halal, Islamic dietary law, to apply to things other than food**." (China Daily, 2017, March 31)

This illustrates how the racialization of Uyghur men justifies discriminatory and Islamophobic legislation which "other" Uyghur men. This passage also conveys how the racialization of Uyghurs normalizes the policing of religious symbols. Associating with people from different ethnic groups, extending the concept of halal, and Islamic dietary limitations are all normal behaviours and actions. However, these religious symbols and practices are problematized and policed by the Chinese government.

4.1.b. The Discourse of "Evil"

Jackson (2005) highlights that the conceptualization of those identified as "terrorists" produces a dichotomy (p. 59). The paradox is between the demonized, vilified, evil, barbaric, and inhuman "terrorists" and the Americans identified as heroic and peaceful (Jackson, 2005, p. 59). This is central to "counter-terrorism" strategies. The rhetoric of "evil" serves a political purpose that moralizes the problem of terrorism, which produces the dichotomy of "good" versus "evil" (Jackson, 2005, p. 69). The dichotomy of civilization and barbarianism is embedded in the process of "othering" and dehumanization, which is also central to the "War on Terror" (Jackson, 2005, pp. 59-60). In this section, I argue that the "threat" and "fear" of the "other" are further exacerbated through the conceptualization and perception of "terrorists" as "evil." Additionally, I assert that the exploitation of the discourse of "evil" strategically constructs the perception of Uyghur Muslims as "devilish." Since Uyghur men and women are presented as a "threat," presenting the population as "evil" is justified. Consequently, these processes further propagate China's "War on Terror."

The discourse of "evil" is central to China's "War on Terror." This discourse produces a dichotomy between "legitimate" Han citizens and "de-legitimate" non-Han citizens. This reproduces racial order, hierarchy, and inequality. For example, former Vice Minister of Public Security Meng Hongwei stated that: "the **"three evil forces" of separatism, extremism and terrorism**, which could do great harm to Xinjiang's prosperity and stability, **are the common enemies of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang**" (China Daily, 2013, April 29). This passage exemplifies the negative implications of the discourse of "evil." "Separatism," extremism," and "terrorism" become associated with "evil" to establish the perception of a "common enemy."

The perception of "evil" is also achieved through the exacerbation of "religious extremism" as a "problem" associated with the "three evil forces." For example, in the newspaper article "*Fighting terrorism a long-term challenge for China,*" it is stated that:

> "**The "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism have been increasing their penetration into Xinjiang**, **a remote region with more than half of its population ethnic minorities with a Muslim belief**…The **infiltration of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism into Xinjiang** is threatening the region's social stability and economic and social development…**ETIM, together with other groups, are propagandizing religious extremism in Xinjiang** and instigating ethnic hatred in order to seek independence…**South Xinjiang's Hotan, Kashgar and Aksu are areas overseas separatism forces intend to penetrate most, where the majority of the population are Muslim Uygurs**…**Illegal religious activities have been rampant in these areas, which has caused a strong religious environment**, an imam said on condition of anonymity" (Xinhua, 2013, November 26).

This passage exemplifies how the discourse of "evil" indirectly problematizes the Muslim population in Xinjiang. The Chinese government cannot blatantly state that Muslims are "evil." Instead, they are presented as "evil" by emphasizing the "infiltration of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism." Additionally, there is an emphasis on Xinjiang being a Muslim-majority region. This passage produces the problematic supposition that one's Muslim identity assumes an

association with “illegal religious activities.” This rhetoric normalizes and naturalizes the assumption that one’s identity is the justification for their actions, and because “terrorists” are conceptualized as “evil,” they are also not rational (Jackson, 2005, p. 59). The rhetoric also normalizes the problematic assumption that “terrorism, separatism and extremism” can easily “penetrate” and “influence” a Muslim majority region.

The discourse of “evil” is also problematic because it decontextualizes and de-politicizes “terrorism” as an individual problem. These processes permit the Chinese government to present its terrorism campaign as “**a battle between good and evil and between civilization and savagery. Anti-terrorism must be the common stance of all the world’s peace-loving and the common responsibility of all mankind**” (China Daily, 2014, May 23). De-contextualization assumes that “terrorism” is biologically based and an aspect of an individual’s nature (Jackson, 2005, pp. 73-4). De-politicization and de-personalization isolate “terrorism” from the social, political, economic, and historical context necessary to understand how “terrorism” is constructed as a problem, who benefits, and who is victimized (Jackson, 2005, pp. 70-5). The reductionist and homogenizing conceptualization of Muslims assumes that an “innate perversion” guides Muslims and their behaviours. The “Muslim enemy” is presumed as “inherently aggressive” and possessing a “threatening nature” (Kundnani, 2016). This assumed “fixed nature of the Other” (Kundnani, 2016, p. 7) is used to rationalize the conceptualization of an inherent inferiority. This explains why the Chinese government uses the phrase the “three forces of evil” as a blanket term for “terrorism,” “separatism,” and “extremism” (China Daily, 2002, September 16). This normalizes the assumption that those identified as “terrorists,” “separatists,” and “extremists” are naturally “evil” and this is a part of their “fixed nature.” This also demonstrates how the discourse of “evil” fails to contextualize the social, political, and

economic conditions that produce violence, crime, and deviance. Nonetheless, exploiting the discourse of "evil" is politically expedient and is used to justify China's "War on Terror."

The discourse of "evil" is also connected to "inhumanity," which is mobilized to further de-contextualize and de-politicize "terrorism." For example, the domestic attack in Urumqi, Xinjiang, in May 2014 was identified as a "terrorist attack." The attack was reported as follows:

> "brutal acts of terrorists – targeting innocent people, especially senior citizens, women and children – **has revealed their evil designs and inhuman nature**. Terrorists have no concern for humanity and challenge the bottom line of civilized society; they are the enemy of the entire race." (China Daily, 2014, May 30)

This passage emphasizes "terrorists" as possessing an "evil design and inhuman nature" which in turn is used to explain their lack of humanity. Consequently, normalizing the conceptualization of an inherent and natural inferiority (Kundnani, 2016, p. 16). This is also an example of how the discourse of "evil" further exacerbates the dichotomy of "civilization" and "barbarianism," which is embedded in the process of "othering" and legitimizes the Chinese government's "crackdown" on terrorism. This is achieved by normalizing the conceptualization of "terrorists" as an aberration, different, and deviation from the normality of humankind (Jackson, 2005, p. 73).

Lastly, "counter-terrorism" tactics are established through the exploitation of the discourse of "evil" to maintain the "threat" of terrorism. Jackson (2005) argues that the public discourse of the "War on Terror" threatens the destruction of human life, democracy, freedom, and civilization which justifies the "War on Terror" as a rational and logical response to the threat (pp. 1-2). Former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji states,

> "International terrorism has posed a **serious threat to the human race**. The US horror demonstrates that t**errorism knows no boundaries and evil won't be wiped out unless all nations join together to fight it…the early establishment of the Bishkek Anti-Terrorism Centre should be one of the organization's current aims so the six nations will be armed with legal means to fight this evil scourge**" (Yuan, 2001, September 15).

Establishing a perceived "threat" is a precursor to justify the discourse of "evil," which in turn justifies initiatives, such as the "joint anti-terror military drills" and ratification of the "Shangai Convention on Combating Terrorism" under the Shangai Co-operation Organization (SCO) (China Daily, 2001, November 13; Tian, 2006, August 28). The purpose of the Shangai Co-operation Organization (SCO) is "for the organization's member countries to co-operate in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism to safeguard national interests" (China Daily, 2001, September 12). In the case of Uyghur Muslims, the exploitation of the discourse of "evil" individualizes "terrorism" to justify initiatives and organizations committed to "combatting terrorism" under the guise of China's "War on Terror." Under the discourse of "evil," these initiatives also justify the increased use of troops, police, securitization, and militarization (China Daily, 2014, May 13; China Daily, 2014, September 1; China Daily, 2010, September 11; China Daily, 2013, September 13). Evaluating the establishment of organizations and initiatives dedicated to "counterterrorism" strategies is important because they are normalized as a "natural" response to the "War on Terror." Jackson (2005) mentions that, in the American context of 9/11, the risk of mortality due to car accidents, pedestrian deaths, substance use disorders, suicides, and other diseases is likelier than fatalities due to terrorism (p. 92). From an international context, the staggering percentage of the population that die due to hunger, weapons, and other diseases, such as influenza, HIV-AIDS, diarrhoeal, and tuberculosis, is greater than the fatalities due to terrorism (Jackson, 2005, p. 92). It is important to note that the Chinese government might have more serious problems, like poverty, which are overlooked through the sensationalism of terrorism.

4.1.c. The Discourse of "Disease"

The discourse of "disease" is another aspect of the "War on Terror." Metaphorically structuring terrorism as a "disease" or "sickness" assumes that terrorism can "infect" countries, such as Afghanistan because it is a "disease" that can impact all human life (Jackson, 2005, p. 73). Jackson (2005) connects the rhetoric of disease to the language of evil, which further sustains the assumption that terrorism is innate to human nature (pp. 73-74). The metaphorically structured language of "disease" justifies the disregard for human rights and immoral treatment of venerable groups (Jackson, 2005, p. 75). In this section, I assert that the discourse of "disease" is exploited to exacerbate the perception of "fear" and "threat" used to legitimize China's "terrorism" problem.

To magnify the problem of "terrorism," there is an emphasis on exploiting the discourse of "disease" to establish it as an international and domestic problem. For example, terrorism is presented as a:

> "**public nuisance**, and also a **chronic and stubborn disease, of the whole world**. We should attach great importance to the campaign against terrorism, be on high alert and **get tough with terrorists**. Meanwhile, efforts should be made not to exaggerate the capabilities of the terrorists so as to avoid causing social panic or a state of extreme nervousness." (China Daily, 2014, May 23)

Comparison to "disease" magnifies the perceived seriousness of "terrorism." To further magnify and amplify the issue of "terrorism," the Chinese government also compared religious extremism to other diseases. In the newspaper article "*The rise of intolerance*," Amir Ali, a physician and director of the Aksu Hospital of Traditional Uyghur Medicine, states:

> "**The spread of religious extremism is like the Ebola breakout** – it happens quickly and there is **no effective cure once people have it**…People's mindsets and lifestyles have changed because of it, but not in a good way…**Extreme religious thoughts in people's minds are more difficult to treat than diseases in their bodie**s" (China Daily, 2014, October 31).

Comparing terrorism to an “Ebola breakout” explicates how the Chinese government exploits the discourse of “disease.” Comparing “religious extremism” to a disease further reinforces the assumption that if “terrorism” is not eliminated, it will “spread.” A senior Party official of Xinjiang, Shawkat Yiming, also stated, “**Extremism is like drugs that can drive people insane** and turn normal people into cruel killers. If extremism exists**, terrorism will spread like cancer**” (China Daily, 2017, March 31). The logic that terrorism is a “cancer” that “destroys” also justifies China’s manufactured “War on Terror” and its goal of supposedly “uprooting **the cancer of terrorism**” (Xinhua, 2014, May 23).

The 2014 bomb attack in Urumqi became an event to further implement the discourse of “disease.” It was emphasized that the “bomb attack in Urumqi, the bloodiest in recent years, once again **reveals the brutal and inhuman nature of terrorists and the urgency to eradicate this "social cancer"** (Xinhua, 2014, May 23). Comparing the “threat” of cancer to terrorism assumes that terrorism and terrorists “spread” like “cancerous cells” who have no agency, “infect,” and “destroy” the body (Jackson, 2005, p. 74). This rhetoric of “disease” is mobilized to justify the Chinese government’s initiatives to obliterate acts identified as “terror.”

This discourse illustrates how the Chinese government has manufactured the problem and controlled the solution. As mentioned earlier, the risk from terrorism is diminutive in comparison to other factors causing deaths (Jackson, 2005, pp. 92-3). However, exploiting the discourse of “disease” produces the perception of fear of “terrorism” which justifies its containment through extreme proactive measures, such as internment through “re-education camps.” Additionally, suggesting that religious extremism has “no effective cure” further justifies the longevity of extreme responses to “contain” it (Jia & Bo, 2014 October 31).

Another identified term connected to the discourse of "disease" is "plague." The term "plague" is mobilized to magnify China's problem of "terrorism" and its presumed "consequences." For example, the Director-General of the International Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Li Boadong, states that "International co-operation is imperative in the **fight against terrorism, which - like a plague - can not only deprive many innocent people of their lives but also have an enormous impact on the world's political and economic structures**" (Zuhqing, 2002, September 11).

Like the rhetoric of "plague," the term "poison" elicits fear and anxiety that officials reinforce through their activities and operations (Jackson, 2005, pp. 112-14). These fears and anxieties are guided by the notion that poison is foreign, dangerous, and will "spread" (Jackson, 2005, p. 74). For example, the community is "shocked that they are **trying to take society backward** by publishing religious extremism and **poisoning the masses**!" (Bo, 2014, June 4). The fear that terrorism will affect many is a strategy that focuses on pathology and de-responsibilizes the Chinese government from accountability.

The rhetoric of disease also assumes that the "poisoned" must be "treated." In the newspaper article "Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang," the Chinese government has established the following:

> "It is hard for some people who have been convicted of terrorist or extremist crimes to abandon extremist views, as **their minds have been poisoned to the extent of losing reason and the ability to think sensibly about their lives and the law**. **Without necessary intervention measures, it will not be possible for them to cast off the shackles of religious extremism, get back to normal life, and improve their prospects for a better future**." (China Daily, 2019, August 17)

As mentioned earlier, emphasizing that "poisoned" individuals have lost "reason and the ability to think sensibly" allows the Chinese government to control the problem they have manufactured. Amplifying the "*discourse of disease*" through descriptive terms, such as

"poisonous" and "evil," justifies the "necessary intervention measures" which are internment camps committed to indoctrination and assimilation through state intervention. The discourse of "disease" has normalized the "War on Terror" and internment. However, internment is not medical treatment or a pathway to a wholesome education or learning environment. Internment is a carceral setting of confinement and state control.

4.1.d. The Discourse of "War"

A discourse central to the "War on Terrorism" is the discourse of "war" itself. Referring to terrorism as war is a metaphor (Jackson, 2005). The term "war" is the basis of the argument that justifies the "enemy," "fight," "attacks," "crime," and "combat," "defence," and "strategies" of "counter-terrorism" (Jackson, 2005). The metaphorically structured language of "war" is a strategy to justify and legitimize the oppression of Uyghur Muslims through the framework of "counter-terrorism" strategies. Jackson (2005) argues that language normalizes and naturalizes the practices of the "War on Terror" so they become accepted and understood as "normal" (pp. 1-2). This conduct is justified because extreme measures and human rights violations are justified to "defeat" the "enemy." In this section, I argue that the construction of the "enemy" and the perception of a legitimate "battle" to "combat" terrorism in Xinjiang is achieved through the exploitation of the discourse of "war."

To begin with, I have identified how the normative foundation of war is distinctive in the context of Uyghur Muslims in China. Historically, the foundation of war requires another nation-state to declare war on another. However, the "War on Terror" is an anomaly because the United States declared the "War on Terror," albeit no other nation declared war against them. For example, a part of the global military campaign of the "War on Terror" was the development of the American military in new global domains, such as the "Operation Enduring Freedom"

campaign, which was an attack in Afghanistan after the attacks on September 11, 2001 (Jackson, 2005, pp. 9-10). Concerning this case, China is also following this tradition by declaring war, although there has not been an attack by another country. The China Daily newspaper articles abrogated the normative operation of the war.

The Chinese government has also identified and exaggerated intragroup differences between Uyghur Muslims to justify their domestic "War on Terror." This "war" is achieved by establishing the perception of the "enemy," which normalizes the efforts and initiatives to "combat" and "fight" the perceived "threat" of terrorism. The rhetoric of "argument is war" allows China to position itself as a "victim" of terrorism. "Self-victimization" legitimizes the "fight" against terrorism, which garners support for "the War on Terror." For example, it is reported that:

> "**China is a victim of terrorism**, and to **fight the menace and better protect its national interests**, it has been strengthening its security measures. And with security concerns intensifying within and outside the country, **China has enacted a law to fight terrorism**." (Aimin, 2016, February 6)

The protection of "national interests," legitimized through self-victimization is used to justify "counter-terrorism" strategies. Self-victimization also requires a pre-condition of an existing and persisting "threat" to justify a "war." Self-victimization is reinforced through reaffirmation and international support of the discourse of "war." This amplifies and legitimizes the perceived "threat," essential to maintaining the "War on Terror" for the Chinese government.

Terrorism as a "war" was reaffirmed by the West. During the "address to the nation on the September 11 attacks," the former President of the United States of America, George W. Bush, stated that "America and **our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world**, and we stand together to **win the war against terrorism**" (Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush, 2001, September 11th, p. 58). Additionally, George W.

Bush, during the "address to the joint session of the 107th Congress," stated that "**our war on terror begins with al Qaeda**, but it does not end there. **It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated**" (Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush, 2001, September 20th, p. 68). These speech transcriptions reaffirm that the "War on Terror" is a "war" to be won against a specific and global enemy who must be "defeated" to maintain the nation, "peace," and "security." The Chinese government exploits this rhetoric to justify its "War on Terror." For example, Wang Jinxiang, the Vice-Chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, stated:

> "his regional government had long placed equal emphasis on strengthening ethnic unity and **battling terrorist forces in the region**...given Xinjiang's sensitive status as a border region where many ethnic groups live, the **fight against terrorist and separatist forces is vital**, the vice-chairman stressed" (Zhigang, 2003, March 12).

The Chinese government presents itself as "battling terrorist forces." The government must "battle" terrorism, and this "fight" is perceived as "vital" because it "strengthens unity" against those identified as "terrorists" and "separatists."

Terrorism as a "war," "fight," and "combat" also justifies strategies of "counter-terrorism." It was reported that "China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has taken "**iron-fisted measures**" against the "three forces" of separatism, terrorism and religious extremism to protect its economic development" (Jing, 2005, August 26). "**Noose tightening** on Xinjiang terrorists" is also identified in the data as a strategy against separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism (Jing, 2005, August 26; Huanxin, 2007, March 10). Abudu Reheman Ayli, a deputy of the fifth session of the ninth National People's Congress (NPC), also stated that: "The **law is a very important weapon** in **fighting terrorism**" (China Daily, 2002, March 8). These short passages exemplify how the language of "war" is embedded in the "solutions" presented by the Chinese government to "fight terrorism."

Counter-terrorism strategies produced through the discourse of "war" also justify the bureaucratization of the "War on Terror." This is achieved by establishing departments and organizations dedicated to "counter-terrorism." For example, in 2002, Li Baodong, the director-general of the International Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated: **To fight terrorism in China, the Ministry of Public Security has set up an anti-terrorism bureau**…This was the first time a Chinese official confirmed the existence of such an organization (Zhuqing, 2002, September 11). Additionally, Lie Wei, the director of the Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies under the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, mentioned that: "**the September 11 event is regarded as a turning point in the international anti-terrorism campaign**…**An international coalition has taken shape, pushing the anti-terrorism campaign to an unprecedented level**" (Zhuqing, 2002, September 11). The establishment of these centers and institutions is justified through the discourse of "war," which presents "terrorism" as a problem that should be dealt with through "combat" or "battle." The "anti-terrorism campaign" also encompasses and justifies "large-scale joint anti-terrorism exercises" in different Xinjiang regions. For example:

> "**China and Kyrgyzstan have agreed to hold joint anti-terrorism military exercises** along the border area in October… **the planned exercise would involve "tens of thousands" of troops and cover a 100-kilometer-deep (63-mile-deep) area along the border**...The exercise aims **to practice coordinated operations against international terrorism and test various anti-terrorism tactics**… It will be **the first bilateral anti-terrorism exercise within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which groups six states in and around Central Asia including China and Russia**." (China Daily, 2002, September 16)

This passage demonstrates how the discourse of "war" also justifies extreme measures, such as internment, and legitimizes the expansion of securitization, surveillance, policing, and militarization. The bureaucratization of the "War on Terror" normalizes "war" as a mundane part of everyday life, contributing to the longevity of the "War on Terror."

The expansion of extreme measures justified under the guise of the "War on Terror" also presents the Chinese government as expanding the "War on Terror." For example, Zhu Zhiqun, professor of political science and international relations at Bucknell University, stated:

> "**To some, the US' war on terrorism is only to serve its own interests**. "**The US released the three Uygurs and transferred them to Slovakia because 'they do not pose threat to the US'**. This is very shaky excuse. **Uygur radicals do not attack American police or kill American civilians, but they do pose a security threat inside China**,"…The ETIM, which has a track record of carrying out terrorist activities, was designated in 2002 by both the US and the UN as a terrorist group associated with Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network. **The US State Department later took it off the Foreign Terrorist Organization list…"Terrorism may take different forms or result from different situations, but all kinds of violence is inexcusable and must be stopped**," Zhu said…"**As the global leader in the anti-terror campaign, the US should be consistent and condemn all terrorist acts and work with other countries to curb terrorism globally.**" (Weihua, 2014, January 9)

This passage demonstrates how the Chinese government position itself as taking the problem of "terrorism" more seriously than the West. This passage also illustrates how the discourse of "war" is used to further exacerbate the perception of "terrorism" as a problem specific to China to justify their campaign against terrorism.

4.1.e. The Discourse of "Separatists as Terrorists"

Countries like China may develop unique discourses specific to their social and political context to justify their participation and expansion of the 'War on Terror."

In the newspaper articles, there is an established connection between "separatism," "extremism," and 'terrorism." This connection attempts to exhibit a historical trajectory of terrorism in Xinjiang which emerges from separatism. In this section, I argue that the discourse of "separatists as terrorists" demonstrates how the Chinese government establishes a historical trajectory of "terrorism" in Xinjiang to legitimize the perception of their "terrorism" problem.

This discourse enables the Chinese government's attempts to develop a history of terrorism which was present before the escalation of the "War on Terror" agenda, post-

September 11, 2001. This is achieved by exacerbating the connection between "separatism," "extremism," and "terrorism." For example, the former Chairman of Xinjiang, Shohrat Zakir, stated:

> "**Since the 1990s, the "three evil forces" (terrorism, extremism and separatism) in China and abroad have plotted, organized and conducted thousands of violent terrorist attacks including bombings, assassinations, poisoning, arson, assaults, unrest and riots, causing the deaths of a large number of innocent people and hundreds of police officers, as well as immeasurable property damage…**People of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang were enraged and shared hatred toward the terrorist crimes." (China Daily, 2018, October 17)

This passage illustrates how the Chinese government continues to renew their commitment to focusing on the same issues with a new agenda by framing "separatists as terrorists" (Clarke, 2018, p. 6; Tanner & Bellacqua, 2016, p. 24). Additionally, this passage demonstrates that the connection between "separatism," "extremism," and 'terrorism" is presented as a historical progression. This is achieved by exploiting the proximity of the issue of "separatism." Due to the exploitation of the discourse of "separatist as terrorists" the Chinese government can expand the perception of "separatism" as a domestic problem related to "terrorism."

There is also an emphasis on how violent acts in Xinjiang date back to the 1990s and are associated with the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (Wang, 2003). The organization, East Turkistan Islamic Movement, allegedly has a domestic and international presence, and the movement has been identified as responsible for acts of violence in Xinjiang (Millward & Peterson, 2020; Wang, 2003). The organization also claims to establish East Turkestan as an independent state comprising segments of Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) (Council on Foreign Relations, 2014). Their political goal of seeking independence has allowed the Chinese government to push the narrative of "separatism" under the framework of terrorism.

In the newspaper article, "*East Turkistan" terrorists exposed,*" it is emphasized that "East Turkistan" is not merely a geographical concept but **a political concept first put forward by old colonialists with the aim of dismembering China**" (China Daily, 2002, January 21). The perception of "separatist" sentiments being a threat is further exacerbated by establishing that Xinjiang has always geographically been a part of China. For example,

> "**After the establishment of a frontier command headquarters (duhufu) in the Western Region by the Han Dynasty in 60 B.C., Xinjiang became a part of Chinese territory.** From that time on**, the central government has never ceased jurisdiction over Xinjiang**. **But in the beginning of the 20th century, a handful of fanatical Xinjiang separatists and extremist religious elements fabricated the myth of "East Turkistan" in light of the sophistries and fallacies created by the old colonialists. They claimed that "'East Turkistan' had been an independent state since ancient times," and that the ethnic group in that state had a history of nearly 10,000 years**. They incited all ethnic groups speaking the Turkic language and believing in Islam to unite to form a state featuring the "integration of religion and politics."…Since the formation of the "East Turkistan" theory, separatists of every description have conducted activities in the name of "East Turkistan," in an attempt to set up a political state called "East Turkistan"…under the influence of extremism, separatism and international terrorism, part of the "East Turkistan" forces inside and outside Chinese territory turned to splittist and sabotage activities with terrorist violence as the main means, even brazenly declaring that terrorist violence is the only way to achieve their aims" (China Daily, 2002, January 21)

This historical narrative presents Xinjiang as always being a part of the Chinese territory. This narrative is used to establish a history of "separatism" in Xinjiang which the Chinese government strategically mobilizes to present "separatism" as a precursor to "terrorist violence." This narrative is put forth to delegitimize separatist movements. Additionally, in the newspaper article "*East Turkistan Terrorists* Exposed," it is stated that:

> "Incomplete statistics show that from 1990 to 2001, **the "East Turkistan" terrorist forces inside and outside Chinese territory were responsible for over 200 terrorist incidents in Xinjiang, resulting in the deaths of 162 people of all ethnic groups**, including grass-roots officials and religious personnel, and injuries to more than 440 people." (China Daily, 2002, January 21)

This trajectory of establishing the historical presence of "separatism" as a long-standing "problem" allows the Chinese government to "responsibilize" "East Turkistan" for the violence allegedly linked to "terrorist forces."

To exacerbate the connection between "separatism" and "terrorism," politicians amplify the perceived "threat" of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement. For example, Pan Zhiping, a researcher at the Central Asia Studies Institute in the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, states that among the "East Turkistan" forces, **the most violent and dangerous** is the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) - a terrorist organization based somewhere along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border" (China Daily, 2010, September 11). Additionally, the former minister, Tang Jiaxuan, stated:

> "Evidence shows that the **'East Turkistan' terrorist forces, as trained, armed and financed by international terrorist organizations, have carried out a series of terrorist activities both inside and out of China. Combating and eradicating the 'East Turkistan' terrorist forces is an important component of the international struggle against terrorism.**" (China Daily, 2002, January 18).

Both passages suggest that the East Turkistan Islamic Movement attempts to establish an independent state. The Chinese government mobilizes this assumption to produce the conditions for "separatist" sentiments, which are perceived as a precursor to violence. Additionally, the eight-year gap, from 2002-2010, between the two passages highlights how connecting the issue of "separatism" with "terrorism" prolongs the relevance and longevity of the problem of "terrorism," in China. Solely focusing on the topic of "separatism" limits the relevance and longevity of "terrorism" in the region.

The "ETIM" organization is also presented as allegedly associated with Al Qaeda and the Taliban through training and dispersing material aid, such as weapons, ammunition, transportation, and telecommunication equipment (Wang, 2003). This association is reflected in

the newspaper articles to exacerbate the connection between "separatists" and "terrorists." For example, former foreign minister Kong Quan, in the newspaper article "*Notorious ETIM on terrorism list,*" stated that:

> "**ETIM has close ties with Osama bin Laden's al Qaida network…As part of the international terrorist force, the organization has committed a number of violent acts inside and outside China**, posing a serious threat to regional security and stability… **the explosion of a storehouse in Urumqi in May 1998 and a similar explosion in Hotan the following March were committed by ETIM**." (China Daily, 2002, September 13)

This passage illustrates how "separatism" is perceived as historically evolving into a larger problem which is presented as an "international terrorist force" that is specific to China. Additionally, there are also claims that the:

> "The terrorist forces led by bin Laden have **given much financial and material aid to the "East Turkistan" terrorists**. In early 1999, bin Laden met with the ringleader of the "East Turkistan Islamic Movement," asking him to "coordinate every move with the 'Uzbekistan Islamic Liberation Movement' and the Taliban," while promising financial aid…**Moreover, the bin Laden terrorists, the Taliban and the "Uzbekistan Islamic Liberation Movement" have offered a great deal of arms and ammunition, means of transportation and telecommunication equipment to the "East Turkistan" terrorists**…**Bin Laden's group has also directly trained personnel for the "East Turkistan" forces**…**After the training, some of the key "East Turkistan" members were secretly sent back to China to set up terrorist organizations, and planned and carried out terrorist activities;** some joined the Taliban armed forces in Afghanistan, some joined the Chechen terrorists in Russia and some took part in terrorist activities in Central Asia." (China Daily, 2002, January 21)

The perception of "ETIM" as an "international terrorist force" is further amplified through claims of financial/ material aid, trade, and training. Consequently, ETIM is presented as evolving into an advanced terrorist network to further propagate the alleged "threat" they pose.

The discourse of "separatists as terrorists" is also strategically mobilized to justify China's "War on Terror" as a "counter-terrorism" endeavour. For example, in the newspaper article, "*Truth about Xinjiang's anti-terrorism efforts the West doesn't tell,*" it is stated that:

> "**China has been "waging its own counterterrorism offensive against the extremists" who "operate across China's porous borders and train alongside the Taliban and Islamic State."** But unlike the US' war on terror, which has "claimed half a million lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, and many more in Pakistan, Syria and Libya", **China's counterterrorism campaign, which "includes enhanced security and what China calls vocational training and education centers" seems to have worked. "There have been no reports of terror attacks since 2017."** (China Daily, 2021, April 25)

The perception of an association between "separatism" and "terrorism" is mobilized to justify extreme measures, such as internment camps. This illustrates how the exploitation of the discourse of "separatists as terrorists" constructs and problematizes the historical progression of "terrorism" in China in attempts to control the solution.

4.1.f. The Discourse of "Global Alliance"

The discourse of "global alliance" is also specific to the context of China's manufactured "War on Terror." The newspaper articles present the Chinese government as forming alliances with other countries to "combat" terrorism through the "War on Terror." For example, in the newspaper article "*Joint crackdown on terrorism moves ahead*," it is reported that: "**The Chinese Ministry of Public Security on Friday reiterated China's firm support for international co-operation** in combating terrorism and its hope of **gaining more assistance from other countries for its anti-terror endeavour**" (China Daily, 2004, February 14). In this section, I argue that the Chinese government has produced a global alliance through "international co-operation" and "assistance from other countries." This discourse is exploited to maintain the legitimacy and longevity of China's "War on Terror."

Central to the discourse of "global alliance" is the hegemony of the United States as a superpower (Nagra, 2017, p. 25). Nagra (2017) discusses how "at the end of the Cold War, the U.S. emerged as the world's only superpower, confident in its hegemony" (p. 26). However, the 9/11 attacks dismantled the image of the United States as a state that is not indestructible

(Thobani, 2007). Post 9/11, the "War on Terror" was mobilized to maintain the power and perceived dominion of the United States (Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007). To reclaim its power, the United States acquired the right to rescind the citizenship of Muslims in other countries, such as Canada (Helly, 2004; Nagra, 2017; Thobani, 2007). Canada demanded to follow the anti-terrorist framework and security approaches of the United States (Nagra, 2017, p. 26). Maintaining power entails support from other nation-states to accept and adopt their anti-terrorist framework. For example, Dua, Razack, & Warner (2005) state that in response to pressure from the United States, following 9/11, the Canadian government implemented policies, such as the "no-fly list," the smart border declaration, an increase in security procedures, and federal legislation, such as Bill C-36 (Anti-terrorism Act). Dua, Razack, and Warner (2005) also suggest that Canada's agreement to these policies is related to its reliance on trade with the United States. Canada supported the development of the American empire by seeking out and eliminating the Muslim enemy as established by the United States. Countries like Canada, France, and the United States have united as a Western civilization to fight the "War on Terror" (Thobani 2007). This illustrates how the "War on Terror" has fostered global alliances between nation-states. In this case, the Chinese government demonstrates itself as establishing alliances with other nation states to justify their actions in response to the 9/11 attack, such as internment camps. This illustrates the perception that the Chinese government has a network of support which further legitimizes their exploitation of the "War on Terror."

I use the literature on this topic to explore how China might also form alliances with other nation-states to defend their actions and legitimize their manufactured "War on Terror. For example, the newspaper articles present the Chinese government as forming "alliances" with nation-states. For example, it was reported that:

> "**First, the September 11 attacks led to the forming of a worldwide anti-terrorism alliance. The major powers have, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, reached a consensus on security issues, while also strengthening co-operation and co-ordination in anti-terrorism efforts**…After September 11, **both American allies and non-alliance countries such as Russia and China expressed support for the US fight against terrorism. It is unprecedented in the history of contemporary international relations for the global anti-terrorism alliance** to include all the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, political and economic powers such as Germany and Japan and some regional powers…**Second, co-operative efforts among the big powers to fight terrorism have become a catalyst for improving their relations. The United States has cemented its relations with Russia and China, while easing disparities with allies**." (China Daily, 2002, January 11)

The "global alliance" discourse permits the Chinese government to join a "worldwide anti-terrorism" alliance. There is also an emphasis on how the Chinese government has "**expressed support for the US fight against terrorism**" (China Daily, 2002, January 1). However, establishing the perception of support for the West, on its' own, cannot justify China's "War on Terror." It is not enough because, in the newspaper articles, there is a longstanding conflict between the West and China regarding human rights violations and genocide. This discourse also emphasizes how the Chinese government illustrates that they can engage in the "War on Terror" without support from the West.

This discourse of "global alliance" is unique to the case of the Chinese government because it does not explain how the Chinese government is forming alliances with the West to fight terrorism. Instead, this discourse explores how the Chinese government paints a picture of global partnerships with other countries to legitimize their actions. These alliances are produced through cooperation with other nation-states. For example, the former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, President Jiang Zemin, emphasized that:

> "China and the US, both having a major influence in the world, shoulder common responsibility for protecting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. He said that **the Chinese side is willing to work together with the US side to reinforce exchanges and co-operation and make efforts to protect world peace, stability and development**…**China yesterday reaffirmed its opposition to terrorism, urged the**

> **United States to avoid hurting civilians** during its retaliation and called for peace to be restored quickly." (China Daily, 2001, October 9)

The Chinese government highlights the urgency of forming alliances through "cooperation" by emphasizing that "world peace, stability, and development" are at stake. By maintaining "its opposition to terrorism," the Chinese government attempts to ally with the United States. Alliance with the United States of America has also deemed the U.S. complicit in re-affirming China's own "War on Terror." In 2002, the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, officially identified the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as an international terrorist organization (China Daily, 2002, September 13). This reaffirms China's stance as a "victim" of terrorism to further legitimize their actions. The Chinese government attempts to assert the perception of itself as "fighting" the global "War on Terror" alongside countries such as the United States. Based on the newspaper articles, I have identified that this is complex because the "global alliance" discourse is exploited to emphasize the lack of Western support in China's "War on Terror." In some instances, the China Daily newspaper articles maintain the perception that the Chinese government aligns itself with the United States "War on Terror." However, the Chinese government also denounces the United States for not providing enough support to China's own "War on Terror." For example, in the newspaper article "*Salt on our wounds,*" it was reported that:

> "From the charter of the United Nations to criminal codes of all countries, killing is considered the most heinous crime and, hence met with the severest penalty. **Yet those identifies as the masterminds behind July 5 carnage in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, instead of being reproached, are being valorized and welcomed as "heroes" in the West**…**In the merciless "war on terror", the Western world was so furious that Iraq was shattered and its civilization heritage pounded. We did not complain when Westerners failed to show due sympathy for the ethnic Han victims of the Urumqi rioting. We forgave their ignorance of the truth**…It is one thing to take a blatantly partisan and unjust view. It is altogether another matter to stand facts on their heads, and this is exactly what is being done by some…**Westerners love to blame the Chinese for being nationalistic. They**

> **should ask themselves: Why? Some of us are suspicious of Western intentions.** And, should we not be?" (China Daily, 2009, August 30).

This passage establishes the perception that there is a "double standard" to China's "War on Terror while the West's "War on Terror" endeavours are accepted. In turn, this is mobilized to present China's "terrorism" problem as being undermined. This is achieved by highlighting how the West perceives "the masterminds behind the July 5 carnage in Urumqi" as "heroes." Establishing the lack of support from non-Western nation-states becomes important to present the West as hypocritical. This is achieved by emphasizing the harms the "Western world" contributed to in Iraq and questioning "Western intentions." Additionally, establishing a lack of support also maintains the Chinese government's "victim" position, which is mobilized to defend itself. This illustrates how the discourse of "global alliance" is conveniently accepted and rejected depending on the needs and goals of the Chinese government.

Establishing "alliances" and "cooperation" with international and multinational allies and organizations is another way to justify China's own "War on Terror" and garner support for their actions. For example, establishing the Shangai Co-operation Organization in June 2001 has been reported to maintain development and stability and address political, economic, and security problems regarding terrorism, separatism, and extremism (China Daily, 2001, September 12). The prime ministers of the Shangai Co-operation Organization have established that "**international terrorism has posed a serious threat to the human race**…**terrorism has no boundaries** and **evil won't be wiped out unless national join together to fight it**" (Yuan, 2011, September 15). This organization comprises alliance and cooperation between China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, Mongolia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Turkey (United Nations, n.d.). The "global alliance" discourse is not only fixated on garnering support from Western

nation-states. Instead, I assert that the Shangai Co-operation Organization has constructed its global organization to fight "terror" apart from the Western/ North American context.

The newspaper, China Daily, also utilizes quotes from other personnel and politicians in different nation-states to support their "War on Terror." For example, a China observer and geopolitics professor at the University of Paris VIII is quoted as saying, "**China is no exception to terrorism**, as it is becoming more open" (Jia, 2013, November 2). The former French President, Francoise Hollande, also is quoted as stating that he is willing to increase communication with China to cooperate in fighting against global terrorism" (Jia, 2013, November 2). This is justified based on the assumption that "**This type of terrorist attack can happen anywhere, in any city, in any country**…**we have to take effective and important action and cooperate to fight all types of terrorism**" (Jia, 2013, November 2). Additionally, in the newspaper article "*Eastern Turkistan' terrorist killed*," there is an established emphasis that Afghanistan "supports" China. For example, Afghan spokesman, Omar Samad, stated that: "**Afghanistan and China identified terrorism as a common concern** and **agreed that international cooperation is very important** for regional security" (China Daily, 2003, December 24). These quotes illustrate that the Chinese government has support from other parts of the world. Establishing the perception of "support" and "co-operation" is imperative for the Chinese government to maintain the perception of a "terrorism" problem that is specific to the Xinjiang region.

PART TWO - 4.2. Deflection Strategies

In the second section, I present China's pro-government deflection campaign. This campaign is strategically mobilized to divert and deflect criticism and anti-state sentiments. I have identified and organized these themes as "deflection strategies," which encompass: the

"*Denial of the Existence of Internment Camps*," "*Government Testimonials*," "*Discrediting Credibility and Denigrating Dissidence*," and "*Comparisons with Other Nation States*." These strategies permit the Chinese government to maintain and justify its "War on Terror" by actively deflecting and diverting domestic and international criticisms. These deflection strategies also work in tandem with each other to deny the use of internment camps under the guise of the "War on Terror." The narrative of the "War on Terror" has become the exceptional condition to justify the continued use of internments camps that has contributed to human rights violations, abuses, and genocide. In this section, I argue that this pro-government campaign is contradicting. On the one hand, the Chinese government engages in discourses to justify its "War on Terror." However, they also use deflection strategies to deny using internment camps to engage in the "War on Terror."

4.2.a. Denial of the Existence of Internment Camps

The use of internment camps is justified under the guise of the "War on Terror." In the newspaper articles from 2018 moving forward, I identify how the China Daily denies the existence of Internment camps. Mid-way through 2018, the Communist Party of China's English news platform claims that more than a million in Xinjiang had undergone "government organized occupational education programs" (Raza, 2019, p. 493). Internment camps are identified as "government occupational education programs" to deny their existence as a repressive form of state intervention. This also highlights how language is used to justify the exception becoming the norm. In this case, the exceptional condition of the "War on Terror" is manufactured and produced through the exploitation of the discourses of the "War on Terror." However, the use of internment camps has become a normalized technique of government by framing these spaces as committed to "education" through state intervention. In this section, I

argue that the way these spaces are presented and identified is a strategy for the Chinese government to deflect criticism and deny/ reject the use of internment camps.

This deflection strategy permits the Chinese government to put forth the narrative that they uphold religious freedom and human rights. For example, in 2018:

> "**Hu Lianhe, a member of the Chinese delegation, said the freedom and dignity, economic and social rights, civil and political rights and other rights of all the ethnic groups in Xinjiang are fully guaranteed by law and in practice. "There are no such things as 're-education centers' or 'counter-extremism training centers' in Xinjiang," the official said**. **Xinjiang, a victim of terrorism which is making an effort to protect the life and property of all ethnic groups in the autonomous region, has undertaken special campaigns to crack down on violent terrorist activities, put on trial and imprisoned a number of criminals according to the law**, he said…the authority **provides them with assistance and education by assigning them to vocational education and employment training centers to acquire employment skills and legal knowledge, with a view to assisting their rehabilitation and reintegration**," Hu said…"**The saying that 'a million Uygurs are detained in re-education centers' is completely untrue**," the Chinese official said" (China Daily, 2018, August 14)

This passage demonstrates how language is an important mechanism strategically mobilized to normalize the use of "re-education camps." This is achieved by rejecting "re-education centers" and replacing them with identifying spaces as "vocational education and employment training centers." This emphasizes the underlying narrative that these spaces are committed to "rehabilitation," "reintegration," and "education."

Presenting "vocational education centres" as spaces of "rehabilitation" and "reintegration" assumes that there are specific characteristics that are intrinsically "unacceptable" about those "othered" in society. For example, Lianhe, a member of the Chinese Delegation, stated:

> "The freedom and dignity, economic and social rights, civil and political rights and other rights of all the ethnic groups in Xinjiang are fully guaranteed by law and in practice…**There are no such things as 're-education centers' or 'counter-extremism training centers' in Xinjiang**…**Xinjiang, a victim of terrorism which is making an effort to protect the life and property of all ethnic groups in the autonomous region, has undertaken special campaigns to crack down on violent terrorist activities,** put

> on trial and imprisoned a number of criminals according to the law…With respect to persons involved only in minor offenses, **the authority provides them with assistance and education by assigning them to vocational education and employment training centers to acquire employment skills and legal knowledge**, with a view to **assisting their rehabilitation and reintegration**." (Xinhua, 2018, August 14)

What is presented as "unacceptable" is constructed in the image of the "real citizen." Thobani (2007) contends that exalted characteristics provide a reference point for the subjects to "fix" the "inherently unstable sense of self" (p. 10). In the context of China's "War on Terror," characteristics indicative of the "unstable sense of self" refer to any actions or behaviours the Chinese government deems as connected to "violent terrorist activities." This becomes the requirement to exclude an individual from the national community. Consequently, exclusion justifies "rehabilitation" and "reintegration" through internment. The newspaper articles implicitly assume that individuals who accept "rehabilitation" and "reintegration" can be a part of the national community and possess nationalist characteristics. This becomes a rationale used to normalize internment camps as spaces of "assistance and education" and deny their existence.

Emphasizing "rehabilitation" and "reintegration" also resolves the state-constructed problem. Additionally, in the newspaper article, "*Claims of "forced labour" in Xinjiang dismissed*," it was reported that:

> "Elijan Anayit, a spokesman for the information office of the regional government, **denied reports that "re-education camps" in Xinjiang have "detained" over 1 million Uygur people and said that this is a fabrication**…"**There are no such re-education camps," he said, adding that the vocational education and training centers are a useful and positive way to counter separatism and prevent terrorism**." (Jin, 2020, December 22)

As mentioned earlier, the Chinese government has manufactured, exasperated, and presented "terrorism" as a historically evolving problem that is specific and unique to the Chinese context. This permits the Chinese government to generate and present solutions that serve their interests. This also enables government officials to deny the existence of "re-education camps" and

identify these spaces as a "fabrication." Additionally, this passage establishes how the Chinese government controls the solution to present internment camps as "useful" and "positive" to "counter separatism and prevent terrorism." Presenting internment camps as "useful" and "positive" also permits the Chinese government to put forth the narrative that the Chinese government respects religious freedom. For example, at a news conference, Mehmut Usman, director of the region's Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, stated:

> "**Residents in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region enjoy complete freedom in religious beliefs**…Our practice shows **Xinjiang residents' religious needs have been fully satisfied**…the **normal religious practices are protected by the Chinese Constitution and Xinjiang's regulations on religious affairs, but the rules forbid activities that disrupt public order, harm people's health or obstruct the national education system under the guise of religion**." (Lei, 2018, May 5)

"Xinjiang's regulations on religious affairs" present China as compliant with upholding the rights of all ethnic minorities and permitting religious expression. This narrative maintains the illusion that China has been acknowledged universally by the international community for their human rights efforts. Additionally, in 2004, it was reported that:

> "**The China Human Rights Society and the China Human Rights Development Fund have sent many delegations to a number of countries in Europe, North America, Oceania and Africa, invited human rights organizations and officials to visit China, and carried out extensive exchanges and co-operation with regard to human rights**… **China holds that the development of human rights is an important mark of the continuous progress of the civilization of human society, and an important part of the progressive current of world peace and development.** Full **realization of human rights is the common goal of countries throughout the world as well as an important target for China**… **China will, as always, devote herself to promoting the human rights cause, actively carry out exchanges and co-operation with the international community**" (China Daily, 2004, March 31)

Presenting initiatives, such as the "China Human Rights Society" and the "China Human Rights Development Fund," further entrenches the narrative that China upholds human rights. This undermines the consequences, implications, and existence of internment camps.

Lastly, the State Council of the People's Republic of China has also published white paper reports. These reports are also committed to the narrative that China upholds religious freedom. From 2011 to 2022, the State Council of the People's Republic of China published white papers reports denying the existence of internment camps. These reports exemplify how this deflection strategy is a multi-year campaign committed to denying the use of internment camps through the narrative of "rehabilitation," "reintegration," and "education." These strategies are also contradictory because if internment camps were "useful" and "positive, " then the Chinese government would not need to continuously emphasize their initiatives and efforts committed to human rights.

4.2.b. Government Testimonials

The "*Denial of the Existence of Internment Camps*" is further propagated through the deflection strategy of "government testimonials." Shambaugh (2007), states that China's propaganda system is identified as a bureaucratic establishment which is a part of every source which circulates and publicizes information (p. 27). China Daily is recognized as a media source of the external propaganda system (Shambaugh, 2007, p. 48). In this section, I argue that government propaganda is a strategy the Chinese government mobilizes to deflect criticism and present a positive national image.

Throughout the newspaper articles, I have identified testimonials by Uyghur Muslims as pro-government propaganda to corroborate my argument. These testimonials allow the Chinese government to deny that Uyghur Muslims are controlled and harmed by presenting internment camps as spaces of "vocational education and employment training centers." Additionally, these testimonials extinguish what the Chinese government identifies as "foreign propaganda" against

them to suppress claims of human rights violations and abuses. For example, in the newspaper article "*Why the West flogs the dead horse of Uygur suppression again*," it was stated that:

> "**The tirade of propaganda against China continues with renewed vigor despite the efforts of the Chinese government to allay all doubts regarding the accusations against so-called 'Uygur suppression.'** The **fresh propaganda campaign is using international media and social media to sow doubts** about China's treatment of Muslims…The ploy now being used is **causing the fake Uygur sympathizers to raise concerns regarding the alleged missing persons**. **Even human rights activists have picked up the cudgel to campaign on behalf of these alleged oppressed Uygurs**." (China Daily, 2019, December 27)

This passage presents the narrative that the Chinese government must "defend" itself against a Western propaganda campaign against them. This passage also establishes a position of "self-victimization" by stating that Western media "sow doubts" and present "fake Uyghur sympathizers." This suggests that Western media is questionable and should be discredited. This is used to justify testimonials countering claims and criticisms from the West.

The testimonials I have identified are allegedly from "trainees" who attended the internment camps. These testimonials are government propaganda, so their authenticity and accuracy cannot be confirmed. However, these testimonials are imperative to understand how the Chinese government justifies and legitimizes internment through propaganda. For example, I present a testimonial from Alimjan Mamatali, 28 years old, who supposedly attended a re-education camp in Hotan City. In the newspaper article, "*Uygurs recount how training centers changed their* lives," the individual stated that:

> "**According to some overseas media and institution, in the vocational education and training center we are forced to work in factories as cheap and free labor. This is sheer falsification and slander**. As a graduate trainee, I'm very clear about what is going in the vocational education and training center. I took part in the training in the vocational education and training center of Hotan city. During my training, no one ever forced us to do anything.
>
> **In the vocational education and training center, from Monday to Friday, we have six hours of classes every day, mainly learning Mandarin, law, vocational skills, and**

> **some courses which help us to get rid of extreme ideas.** During weekends and official holidays we can contact our family through phone calls. We can ask for a leave any time if necessary. We have got a colorful leisure life at school. There are libraries, recreation rooms and classes based on our interest at the center. We often hold basketball games, badminton matches, recreational parties and so on.
>
> **In the vocational education and training center, we learned about the Constitution, criminal law, anti-terrorism law, religious affair regulations, etc**. What **we were learning taught us what is legal and what is illegal and what we can do and what we can't do**. **Through learning, we came to understand the hideous and ugly essence of those religious extremists who deliberately schemed to turn us into a brutal and murderous demon, coercing us to commit crime at the cost of our lives**. We visited an anti-terror photo exhibition and learned various atrocities committed by the terrorists, feeling grateful that we had become the trainees in the vocational education and training center which prevented us from traveling on the wrong track and from meeting a dead end. In the vocational education and training center, we were never forced to work in the factory… **Some ill-intentioned people maliciously consider our practical training class as a means of cheap or free labor. What a ridiculous falsification!** At present, I am doing a stable work and my salary is over 3,000 yuan. I'm very satisfied with my present life." (China Daily, 2021 January 28)

The purpose of this testimonial is to emphasize how the Chinese government has branded "vocational education and training centers" as spaces of "education," "volition," and "transformation," as opposed to spaces of suppression and extreme state intervention.

Additionally, Mamatniyaz Iminniyazi, an alleged trainee in one of the "re-education camps" in the Kashgar prefecture, also supposedly stated that:

> "In the past, **I came under the influence of some religious extremists** in the business cycle and **they filled me with extreme ideas**. Consequently, I began to avoid Han people gradually with the false belief that I should never do business with Han people because their commodities were not halal. Worse, I forbade my wife to work outside the home. When my wife showed any protest, I would beat or curse her. In January 2018, at the request of my family, I went to the vocational education and training center and took part in training.
>
> **In the vocational education and training center, we mainly learned Mandarin, law, vocational skills, and some courses which help us to get rid of extreme ideas**. Through the training and learning, I got to understand what Islam really means, and **that the religious extremists are poisons to us**. I got to understand that it is an illegal behavior to bully my wife and restrict her freedom. **If I had not been trained in the vocational education and training center, I would have been poisoned by the religious extremist ideas and fall into the abyss of crime**. At the thought of this, I feel scared and as well regret my past behavior." (China Daily, 2021, January 28)

Testimonials of “re-education camps” attendees are used to validate and justify extreme measures to “treat” those arbitrarily identified as “influenced” by “religious extremists.” These testimonials are also used to present the perception that these “vocational education and training centers” are “positive” and “beneficial” spaces for reform. This supposes that the attendees must exhibit their gratitude to the government for not being “poisoned by the religious extremist.”

Additionally, Thobani (2007) suggests that exaltation allows the national subjects to appropriate certain positions (p. 11). This instils the desire to conform and reproduce specific characteristics (Thobani, 2007, p. 11). Through these government testimonials, the Chinese government emphasizes the narrative of a supposed desire of the Uyghur population to conform and instil the characteristics of an accepted national subject through the use of internment camps. This assumes the narrative of individual free will and the choice to “change.”

Also, individual choice emphasizes “transformation” as the outcome of internment strategies, such as “re-education camps.” However, in this case, “transformation” is guided by the goal of indoctrinating. Based on the contents of these passages, this is achieved by establishing that those unacceptable qualities must be “changed,”—resulting in self-criticism and the criticism of others. Criticism is accompanied by pathways to change, which the Chinese government accepts, such as learning Mandarin, the law, and understanding actions permitted to censure and replace one’s thoughts. An obligated sense of gratitude follows this for the Chinese government, which contributes to producing a positive image of these “vocational education and training centers.” Consequently, normalizing internment through the guise of “reform” and “transformation.”

Refuting the legitimacy of testimony from Uyghur Muslims is another aspect of government propaganda to deny accountability and extinguish negative foreign propaganda

against them. For example, a BBC interview with a Uyghur woman, Zumrat Dawut, is presented as misrepresenting events and disseminating false information. Dawut's experiences are deliberately challenged and retorted with an alternative argument that serves the goals of the Chinese government. During a news conference, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, stated:

> "**she claimed to have been detained in a "re-education camp", but the fact is she never studied in any vocational education and training center in Xinjiang**. **She also claimed she was forced to undergo "forced sterilization" with a hysterectomy, but the fact is when she was giving birth to her third child in the maternity wards of a women and children's hospital in Urumqi in March 2013, she sighed a childbirth consent form voluntarily, requesting "to have a caesarean section and tubal ligation", and then the hospital conducted operation as she required. She was never sterilized, not to mention a hysterectomy.** She also claimed that her father was detained and investigated several times by the Xinjiang authorities and died recently from unclear causes. However, the fact is that her father stayed with the family until he died of heart disease on October 12, 2019 and was never detained or investigated. Zumrat Dawut's two elder brothers have offered clarifications on all these…**This woman has become an actor and a tool for anti-China forces' attacks on and hyping up of Xinjiang.**" (China Daily, 2021, February 5)

Once again, these testimonials' authenticity and accuracy cannot be confirmed. The purpose of this testimonial is to emphasize that any information that does not produce a positive image of the Chinese government is challenged and is identified as false. This passage also illustrates the efforts of the Chinese government to silence the voices of Uyghur women. This is a form of systemic violence wherein the social and political structure marginalizes racialized women. Thus, demonstrating how the experiences of racialized women are purposively delegitimized.

Forced sterilization aims to eradicate Uyghur identity through a deliberate attempt to limit Uyghur population growth. This form of racial eugenics, racial injustice, and systemic violence emphasize the problem of consent, the lack of access to reproductive rights, and the lack of control that racialized women have over their bodies due to state intervention. Additionally, allegations of forced sterilization are denied by emphasizing responsibilization and

individual choice. Lastly, Zumrat Dawut is identified as an “actor” and “tool” (China Daily, 2021, February 5), which highlights the extent to which Chinese politicians will vilify a racialized woman and undermine experiences to defend internment camps and produce a positive image of the Chinese government.

Throughout this section, I have established that government propaganda is enabling because testimonials support the government and propagate pro-government sentiments. However, government propaganda is also disabling because testimonials are used to extinguish anti-state rhetoric. This circular reasoning of enabling and disabling is contradictory but essential to denying the existence of internment camps.

4.2.c. Discrediting Credibility & Denigrating Dissidence

I have identified the “government testimonials” strategy as part of a larger deflection strategy committed to “discrediting credibility and denigrating dissidence.” Throughout the newspaper articles, the Chinese government has discredited the “Xinjiang Data Project," "Xinjiang Victims Database,” "Uygur Transitional Judicial Database,” and various scholars to legitimize the internment of Uyghur Muslims. In this section, I present how the Chinese government questions the logic, credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability of resources, knowledge, and information that bring to light China’s containment and mistreatment of Uyghur Muslims. I achieve this by including the information on all the databases and then demonstrating how the Chinese government opposes this information.

Firstly, the Xinjiang Data Project is an Australian-based research project by researchers and global experts at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s International Cyber Policy Centre and funded by the U.S. Department of State (The Xinjiang Data Project, n.d.). The project produces empirical policy-relevant research on human rights violations, internment camps,

surveillance, forced labour, and other issues about Uyghurs and other minority groups in Xinjiang (The Xinjiang Data Project, n.d.). Their website comprises information, reports, official statistics, press investigations, charts, data sets, and open-source data, such as interactive satellite imagery of detention facilities and cultural sites (The Xinjiang Data Project, n.d.).

In August 2022, the Xinjiang Victims Database also identified and recorded 40,760 victims with biographical information, profession, sentence, place of origin, current location, the rationale for detention[1], and health status (Xinjiang Victims Database, n.d.). Additionally, deaths, suicides, victims, deportations, extraditions, eyewitnesses, releases, and forced labour cases and the number of prisons, camps, detention centers, and factories are all recorded on the website (Xinjiang Victims Database, n.d.). Lastly, testimony submission forms are available for the public to report potential victims (Xinjiang Victims Database, n.d.).

The Xinjiang Victims Database documents information and evidence of the detention and mass incarceration of ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang (Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Hui) status (Xinjiang Victims Database, n.d.). Specifically providing information regarding detention facilities, interactive maps identifying detention centers, a name dictionary, statistics, and region analytics (Xinjiang Victims Database, n.d.). This database also includes the missing population, which has disappeared or is allocated to forced work and labour (Xinjiang Victims Database, n.d.). Its objective is to elicit acknowledgement and accountability of the Chinese government and reconnect loved ones of the Chinese government.

Additionally, the Uyghur Transitional Justice Database is a project committed to registering Uyghurs who have either disappeared or are subject to internment by providing forms

[1] The Xinjiang Victims Database (Rationales for Detention listed on the website): “related to religion,” “challenging authority,” “contact with the outside world,” “related to going abroad,” “relatives,” “phone/computer,” and “registration issues,” “problematic association,” breach of party disciplines,” “separatism,” “terrorism,” “extremism,” “two-faced,” “other,” or “no reason.”

to register family members in camps (Uyghur Transitional Justice Database, 2019). The database also compiles information on institutions, camps, prisons, and testimonies and aids/ mobilizes support in completing registration forms (Uyghur Transitional Justice Database, 2019). All three databases validate the argument that the Chinese government is responsible for the human rights violations, genocide, atrocities, and arbitrary mass incarceration of Uyghurs and other minorities in the Xinjiang region. However, there is subterfuge underlying the arguments of Chinese government officials who believe that the public is being denied the truth and Western organizations are convoluting the true nature of the Chinese government's fabricated "War on Terror," which is supposedly "fighting" against the historically evolving problem of "terrorism."

Over the years, researchers and independent bodies have created these databases and research projects to document and highlight a repository of information corroborating the human rights violations and abuses against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. The Chinese government has attempted to discredit this information. For example, in the article *"Ambassador Cui addresses Xinjiang "lies,"* former Chinese ambassador Cui Tianki states:

> "**critics should "heed the opinions of objective and rational scholars and media**, especially those from other countries and regions, **so they will be able to tell truth from falsehood and right from wrong**"…"Given such undeniable facts, **why are some Western organizations and individuals, disguised as academic institutions and scholars, still making all noises and blatantly fabricating lies**?" Cui said. "Why do **some forces in America use Xinjiang to launch massive smear campaigns against China? The truth is, they want to bring about a collapse and split-up of China from the inside."**… In recent years, anti-China forces have concocted **the "Xinjiang Data Project"**, **"Xinjiang Victims Database"** and **"Uygur Transitional Judicial Database"** by **gathering "witness accounts" to misrepresent Xinjiang to the world.**" (Deng, 2021, May 7)

This passage illustrates how the newspaper is used to dispute counterinformation as "blatantly fabricating lies." This is achieved by presenting counterinformation as "opinions" that question the databases' and research projects' credibility and reliability. "Western organizations and

individuals" are also presented as "disguised" academic institutions and scholars. This further exemplifies how credibility and reliability are challenged. Additionally, the discourse of "self-victimization" is present here as well. Former Chinese ambassador Cui Tianki positions counterinformation as a "massive smear campaign against China" and "anti-China forces," which questions the trustworthiness of the information in the China Daily newspaper articles.

This strategy is also achieved by identifying any form of criticism as misinformation and discrediting the credibility of any source as fallacious and erroneous. During a news conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin stated:

> "We hope that certain people in the US administration will respect Xinjiang's achievements in stability and development, **respect the call of Xinjiang's 2.5 million people of all ethnic groups, respect facts, and act responsibly instead of being misled by fake news produced by certain media**. We firmly **oppose any external interference in China's internal affairs under the pretext of Xinjiang-related issues**, and will resolutely safeguard our national sovereignty, security, and development interests…Recently **we've seen so many badmouthing misinformation against Xinjiang** and China. Several names have repeatedly come up in them, like the BBC." (China Daily, 2021, February 5)

This passage demonstrates the logic of presenting sources as fallacious. This is achieved by identifying any dissidence or counter-narratives from the Western media as "fake news." These efforts of the Chinese government strengthen the "facts" being presented. Additionally, establishing the notion of false news and misinformation is a way to deflect the harm the Chinese government is perpetuating. Deflection of harms is also achieved through opposition to "any external interference in China's internal affairs." Thus, any information that presents the Chinese government as responsible is discredited and denigrated.

Furthermore, external agents are presented as strengthening the narrative that justifies using internment camps under the guise of the "War on Terror." For example, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin states:

> "regarding Xinjiang's economic and social development, the Chinese side has published eight Xinjiang-related white papers, and the government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has held 25 press conferences. **More than 1,200 diplomats, journalists, and representatives of religious groups from more than 100 countries have visited Xinjiang. In the face of these facts and truths, all the lies and misinformation cooked up by anti-China forces will collapse**." (China Daily, 2021, February 5)

The legitimacy of these claims cannot be confirmed. However, it is important to emphasize that there needs to be more transparency regarding who can visit Xinjiang. Specifically, there needs to be more disclosure regarding the interests, motivations, and agendas of the person permitted to visit Xinjiang. Also, Wang Webin does not acknowledge how there might be limits to these visits. Additionally, despite publishing white papers and organizing press conferences, no substantive and concrete evidence demonstrates the conditions and circumstances in Xinjiang. Publishing white papers and organizing press conferences do not constitute "facts" and "truths." Instead, these government efforts maintain the narrative that China respects and upholds human rights and religious freedom.

The denigration of scholars, such as Adrian Zenz, is central to deploying this strategy. This strategy entails discrediting the credibility of any dissidence or counter-knowledge. Adrian Zenz is committed to exposing human rights violations in Xinjiang. Zenz and other researchers contend that the treatment of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang is consistent with the definition of "genocide" established in the Geneva Convention (Dou, 2021). Through China Daily, the Chinese government aims to dismantle Adrian Zenz's credibility by emphasizing that his research is false and fictitious. Wang Wenbin states that:

> "**He makes a living from fabricating Xinjiang-related rumors and slanders against China**. His reports and remarks **have been proven to be falsehoods by facts**. **He fabricated** a so-called "Karakax (Moyu) List" where the most frequently cited internment reason was a violation of birth control… In his reports, normal police recruitment in Xinjiang is depicted as preparing enforcement personnel for so-called "detention operations"; the "Fanghuiju activity" which is meant to learn people's needs

> and difficulties by paying visits to households and which is also well-received among all ethnic groups, is described as making preparations for "detention operations"…Such **far-fetched, ridiculous fabrications have only revealed that nothing is off-limits for him when he lies to serve his purpose, and his arrogance and unhinged state are fully exposed**." (China Daily, 2021, February 5)

This passage illustrates how language is mobilized to discredit Adrian Zenz. This is achieved by suggesting that Adrian Zenz "**makes a living from fabricating Xinjiang-related rumors and slanders against China**" to demonstrate a self-interest in studying Xinjiang. Also, there is an emphasis on a denigrating character by emphasizing Zenz's "arrogance and unhinged state." This passage indicates no credible information or legitimate evidence to discredit and denigrate Zenz's credibility and claims. Instead, these are opinions and judgements mobilized to challenge dissidence.

The denigration of Adrian Zenz also extends to discrediting the credibility of his work in China Studies at the Victim of Communism Memorial Foundation. Identifying him as:

> "**not a so-called expert on China Studies**, but **a member of the far-right group "Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation**" sponsored by the U.S. government. He is also **a key figure in an anti-China organization** set up by U.S. intelligence agencies and **a notorious racist**." (China Daily, 2021, February 5)

This passage attempts to de-legitimate the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. This is achieved by presenting Adrian Zenz as a "not a so-called expert." This deliberately undermines Adrian Zenz's position as the foundation's Senior Fellow and Director of China Studies (Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, n.d.). Additionally, the notion of "far-right" politics is mobilized to problematize the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and identify Adrian Zenz as a "notorious racist." Once again, there is no legitimate evidence to demonstrate these claims. Instead, these claims are opinions used to deflect the harms that the Chinese government is perpetuating by focusing on challenging scholars' credibility and the organizations' de-legitimation.

4.2.d. Comparison with other Nation-States

Lastly, I have identified the deflection strategy of the "comparison with other nation-states." This strategy is mobilized to deflect the consequences and severity of the Chinese government's compliance in expanding the "War on Terror" and exacerbate their manufactured problem of "terrorism." In this section, I argue that this deflection strategy is achieved by comparing the Chinese government with other countries engaging in human rights violations and abuses. This is achieved by minimizing and extinguishing anti-state rhetoric through de-responsibilization and self-victimization, which diminishes accountability.

De-responsibilization refers to how the Chinese government rejects accountability for their actions and fails to take responsibility for the harm they are causing. Self-victimization refers to how the Chinese government controls their narrative by presenting itself as the "victim." To corroborate the argument, I have identified how the Chinese government actively rebuts criticism from Western and European nation-states through comparison with other nation-states. For example, in the newspaper articles, it is mentioned that:

> "The Canadian parliament passed a non-binding motion on Monday declaring that China's Uygur Muslim minority in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region is suffering from genocide …**China criticized Canada for politicizing these issues and denied that any so-called genocide was taking place**. **Ottawa is disrespecting real genocide victims by portraying Beijing's proactive anti-terrorism measures against radicalized and at-risk individuals in such a way. Its motion disrespects real genocide victims**." (Korybko, 2021, February 24)

This passage attempts to justify the narrative that the Chinese government is not against human rights violations by emphasizing how other countries, like Canada, are "disrespecting real genocide victims." This inadvertently rebuts criticism from Western countries by denying the genocide in China (Chase, 2022). This passage also exemplifies de-responsibilization to justify self-victimization. De-responsibilization is achieved by criticizing the Canadian parliamentary to establish that Uyghur Muslims are not "real genocide victims." Self-victimization is achieved by

explaining “Beijing’s proactive anti-terrorism measures” as committed to “de-radicalization” and presenting terrorism as a unique problem, in China, through comparison. This devalues and undermines the harms produced through state intervention initiatives, such as internment camps.

Comparison with other nation-states also permits the Chinese government to present other countries as hypocritical. This is achieved, for example, by presenting the human rights violations perpetrated by the Canadian government. For instance, in the newspaper article, “*Canada is exactly trampling upon human rights by fabricating lies about Xinjiang- related issues,*” it is stated that:

> “**Posed as a human rights preacher, Canada indeed has a very poor record of human rights protection.** In 1870s, the Canadian government put **assimilation of aboriginal people on its official agenda, and implemented a policy of cultural extinction against aborigines through the establishment of boarding schools. School-age aboriginal children were forcibly taken away from their families, forced to convert to Christianity, and banned from using indigenous languages. Many children involved were sexually assaulted and beaten**…From **establishing the first boarding school in 1870, to shutting the last one in 1996, this policy lasted for over a century**. According to incomplete figures, **over 150,000 aboriginal children were forced to go to these schools, 50,000 of whom were beaten to death**…Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission reached a conclusion in 2015 that the country's former policy of **forcibly putting aboriginal children into boarding schools can best be described as "cultural genocide**…Besides, a report released in 2019 concluded that **Canadian governments at all levels held serious prejudices and had structural problems in dealing with cases related to indigenous women, which is even amounted to a "Canadian genocide”…** Obviously, what Canada needs is introspection.” (Sheng, 2021, March 4)

This passage indicates that the Chinese government also presents the West as complacent in human rights violations and abuses. By highlighting the historical atrocities and continued systematic racism and discrimination towards Indigenous people, the Chinese government attempts to discredit Canada’s ability to comment on human rights violations. Additionally, this illustrates how the Chinese government engages in de-responsibilization by mitigating the seriousness of the genocide of Uyghur Muslims, in China, through comparison. This strategy is also used to completely deny the genocide of Uyghur Muslims by emphasizing that “**the so-**

called "genocide" claimed **by Canada's House of Commons is complete nonsense**" (Sheng, 2021, March 4).

This extends to the United States as well. The newspaper article, "*It's time to set the record straight on "genocide*" is it highlights that:

> "**the United States was responsible for ruthlessly expelling and killing Native Americans during the westward movement of settlers.** The **US has also caused tens of thousands of innocent casualties in many anti-terrorism wars against Muslim countries, including Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan**. **The US is also one of the few nations to have allegedly engaged in germ warfare**…**Even today, black Americans continue to suffer widespread racial discrimination and human rights abuses**. George Floyd, an African American, died last year after a police officer knelt on his neck during his arrest. Less than three months later, another black American, Jacob Blake, was shot seven times in the back by police and seriously wounded. Such things happen frequently." (Simon & Sihao, 2021, April 1)

Comparison with Western countries, such as Canada and the United States, denigrates the dichotomy which presents the West as a place of civilization and progress. As opposed to the East, which is presented as a place of barbarity and primitivity. This permits the Chinese government to deliver "education and vocation centres" as spaces of "progress." This further allows the Chinese government to argue that they are not responsible for the genocide of Uyghur Muslims because their objective is to "educate" and "rehabilitate." This allows the Chinese government to focus on Western countries perpetrating genocide (Simon & Sihao 2021, April 1).

As a part of the comparison of the nation-state's strategy, de-responsibilization and self-victimization also extinguish anti-state rhetoric by allowing the Chinese government to deny their actions as genocidal. Andrew Korybko, a political analyst writing for China Daily, states that:

> "**What's happening in Xinjiang isn't genocide** by any objective understanding of this highly sensitive term. **There are neither mass killings nor concentration camps like during the Holocaust that Nazi Germany carried out in World War II against Europe's Jewish population.** That crime against humanity raised global awareness of genocide after the conflict ended. **Other examples of genocide include Imperial**

> **Japan's mass killing of millions of Chinese** during that war **and the attempted extermination of Rwanda's Tutsi minority by extremist Hutus** over 100 days in 1994 that ultimately killed an estimated 800,000 people." (Korybko, 2021, February 24)

De-responsibilization is achieved through comparison with other countries, such as "Nazi Germany," to emphasize their actions' extreme severity and consequences. Self-victimization is achieved by stressing how Western countries are accusing the Chinese government of genocide. This strategy allows the Chinese government to minimize the seriousness of their actions through deflection. Emphasizing the harms and crimes produced by other countries does not detract from China's genocidal efforts. This strategy highlights the extent to which the Chinese government will justify internment under the guise of their "War on Terror" and "counter-terrorism" strategies while simultaneously challenging any form of anti-government opposition.

THESIS CONCLUSION

The "War on Terror" has produced extensive harm, disproportionately impacting racialized groups globally (Dua et al., 2005; Nagra, 2017; Razack, 2005; Thobani, 2007). The case of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang presents how the "War on Terror" continues to produce racial hierarchy, heuristic preconceived notions about race, racism, Islamophobia, and Xenophobia. The existing academic literature has focused on presenting how the "War on Terror" is an exercise of power and is a Western endeavour. The "War on Terror" profoundly impacts the East as well. My research findings attempt to demonstrate how the "War on Terror" logic persists in different contexts, specifically, how countries like China innovate techniques to justify their engagement in the "War on Terror" and curb criticisms.

This thesis explains how the "War on Terror" has serious global consequences. Uyghur Muslims in China are suppressed through the framework of the "War on Terror," which serves the interests of the Chinese government. Section one of this thesis discusses how the Chinese government frames their "terrorism" problem to manufacture and exacerbate a domestic

"terrorism" problem by exploiting the discourses of the "War on Terror." The "War on Terror" racializes Uyghur Muslims in an attempt to "other" the population, Consequently, the discourses of the "War on Terror" produce the sociopolitical conditions conducive to the use of intrusive state intervention, such as internment camps. The Chinese government attempts to control their alleged "terrorism" problem through the use of internment camps. These camps are justified under the guise of the "War on Terror" and through the production of a deflection campaign committed to diverting criticisms and denying the use of internment camps.

Through the collection and analysis of pro-government newspaper articles, I have identified how the Chinese government exploits the discourses of the "War on Terror." Edward Said (1981) states that knowledge about human society is historical knowledge which is based on judgement and interpretation. Examining the China Daily newspapers allows me to document how pro-government newspaper articles are a means to disseminate ideologies and propaganda central to the Chinese government. The Chinese government is attempting to present their narratives to the world. However, the truth is that Uyghur Muslims are being persecuted, suppressed, and subject to human rights violations (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The narratives presented by the Chinese government in the China Daily attempt to minimize the seriousness of repressive state intervention.

In section one, the discourses of the "War on Terror" are mobilized to manufacture China's "War on Terror" to justify the suppression of Uyghur Muslims. The discourses of the "War on Terror" are used in attempts to construct and legitimize the impression of "terrorism" as a problem. This is achieved through the exacerbation of a domestic "terrorism" problem. The perception of a domestic "terrorism" problem is established through different discourses of the "War on Terror." The Chinese government attempts to establish a "threat" and "fear" of the

"other." This discourse permits the gendered process of "othering" which is based on the perception of a "threat" and "fear." This enables the Chinese government to engage in the "War on Terror."

Constructing the impression of an incessant "threat" and "fear" is an antecedent to further justify the presumption that the Uyghur population is "evilish" and a "disease." Consequently, justifying the discourse of "war" which is mobilized to put forth internment camps as a solution to the alleged domestic problem of "terrorism." The discourse of "war" is further legitimized through the discourse of "separatists as terrorists." The historical trajectory of connecting "separatism" with "terrorism" contributes to the relevance and longevity of China's "War on Terror." The discourse of "war" is also justified through the discourse of "global alliance." This discourse attempts to establish the perception of alliances with nation states to continue legitimizing China's engagement in the "War on Terror."

Simultaneously, the Chinese government has produced a deflection campaign committed to denying criticisms of their treatment of Uyghur Muslims. In 2017, the Chinese government claimed that there were no reported acts of violence (Raza, 2019, p. 493). However, towards the end of 2017, approximately 10% of different Uyghur majority communities were detained (Raza, 2019, p. 493). Despite a reported decrease in violence, there has been an expeditious augmentation of camps in China (Çaksu, 2020, p. 177). Following that, in 2018, lawmakers in Xinjiang also amended local regulations to permit local governments to set up "educational facilities" for those identified as being "lured into terrorist activities and those affected by extremist thoughts" (Jia, 2018, October 12). The deflection campaign is mobilized to continue justifying the use of internment camps. Moreover, this is achieved through the strategy of the "denial of the existence of internment camps" which is central to the deflection campaign. The

deflection campaign is strengthened through the use of government testimonials which emphasize the significance of state intervention. This strategy attempts to eliminate any counter-narratives which responsibilize the Chinese government and highlight the seriousness of harms and human rights violations perpetrated by the state.

Furthermore, denying the existence of internment camps is fortified through the "discrediting credibility and denigrating dissidence" strategy. This strategy is mobilized to validate propaganda presented by the China Daily newspaper and invalidate counter-information. Additionally, this deflection campaign is also further reinforced through the "comparison with nation states" strategy. These strategies attempt to justify the "War on Terror" by actively denying anti-state rhetoric and dissidence.

This thesis demonstrates how the Chinese government has controlled and framed the way the problem of "terrorism" and its solution are presented and framed. The Chinese government is engaging in circular reasoning. If there was a legitimate threat then the Chinese government would not have to actively defend their claims and narratives. If there is no legitimate and justified "threat," why does the use of internment camps persist? Central to this predicament is the notion of power. The use of internment camps is a means of social, political, and economic control, allowing the Chinese government to ascertain and maintain its power. Power is maintained by producing the "imagined community" of the People's Republic of China. This "imagined community" exalts the Han-centric identity of the nation, permitting the Chinese government to control how minority groups are presented. Additionally, representing internment camps as a "successful" form of state intervention reinforces the impression of the Chinese government as a humane, compassionate, and civilized nation state who is defending its nation.

5.a. Current Conditions

The internment of Uygur Muslims is an ongoing human rights crisis. On February 22, 2021, Canada became the second country, joining the United States, to identify the genocide by the People's Republic of China against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims by a motion sponsored by the Conservatives (Cecco, 2021; House of Commons, 2022, February 22). This was based on an opinion that:

> "the People's Republic of China has engaged in actions consistent with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260, commonly known as the "Genocide Convention", including detention camps and measures intended to prevent births as it pertains to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims." (House of Commons, 2022, February 22)

The following year, on June 20th, 2022, Sameer Zuberi, Member of Parliament for Pierrefonds-Dollard, for the Liberal Party of Canada, proposed a motion that the government should acknowledge that Uyghurs & other Turkic Muslims that have fled other countries and are experiencing pressure from the People's Republic of China to return to China where they face the risk of "arbitrary mass detention, arbitrary separation of children from their parents, forced sterilization, forced labour, torture, and other atrocities" (House of Commons, 44th Parliament, 1st Session).

In the opinion of the House of Commons, the Government of Canada should also acknowledge that the People's Republic of China is applying diplomatic and economic pressure on countries to detain and deport Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims fleeing the People's Republic of China (House of Commons, 44th Parliament, 1st Session). The focus is resettling the Uyghur and Turkic populations from other countries rather than China (Robertson, 2023). Furthermore, the House of Commons recommends that the government should strengthen support from the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian

Resettlement Program to accelerate the arrival of 10,000 Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Canada who need protection in the next two years from 2024 (House of Commons, 44th Parliament, 1st Session).

Lastly, a report regarding the implementation of a refugee settlement plan should be implemented in 100 sitting days succeeding the adoption of the motion (House of Commons, 44th Parliament, 1st Session). This motion was debated in the House of Commons from October 26, 2022, to January 30, 2023. On February 1, 2023, after amendments to the motion, the Canadian Parliament unanimously voted 322 (yea) to 0 (nay) for M-62 Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims (House of Commons, 44th Parliament, 1st Session; House of Commons, 2023, February 1). The fruition of this monumental vote is yet to be implemented in the coming year.

Additionally, on August 31, 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission released a report. This report listed serious human rights violations, such as the deprivation of life, torture, slavery, detention, and racial discrimination that are crimes against humanity, in Xinjiang (Farge, 2022; Hoornick, 2022; OHCHR, 2022, p. 3). However, there is no substantive justice or genuine accountability.

In October 2022, the United Nation's Human Rights Council rejected the motion of a draft resolution to hold a debate which will address the human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Farge, 2022; Hoornick, 2022). The vote indicated nineteen against, seventeen for, and eleven absentees (Farge, 2022). There was an apparent lack of support from non-Western nation-states regarding the circumstances of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Western countries like the United States, Canada, and Britain supported the motion. It was rejected by Muslim-majority countries, such as Qatar, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan (Farge, 2022). The lack of support attempts to legitimize the Chinese government's

human rights violations and abuses. China's foreign ministry also stated, "Xinjiang-related issues are not human rights issues at all, but issues of counter-terrorism, de-radicalization and anti-separatism" (Farge, 2022). The vote outcome also emphasizes the politics underlying the Human Rights Council when countries like Eretria, Cuba, and Venezuela voted no based on state sovereignty, non-interference, and double standards (Hoornick, 2022).

Support from Western nation-states, such as Canada and the United States, juxtaposed with opposition and defiance from the International community, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, presents the complexity of human rights procedures, seeking justice and implementing social change. The incongruence between nation-states and the international community makes it difficult to provide the necessary resources that will have a long-term and profound impact to support Uyghurs fleeing China.

5.b. Future Research

A potential research avenue I have not explored is how the Uyghur population and other ethnic minority groups resist suppression. The China Daily newspaper articles present the Uyghur people in Xinjiang as docile, submissive, and gratuitous of state intervention. This is a problematic conceptualization that is mobilized to deny the use of internment camps. This conceptualization is also problematic because it is presented as the consensus amongst the population, which might not be the case. According to news media, research, and scholarship, it is evident that the Chinese government is committing genocide, serious harm, and human rights violations/ abuses. Given these conditions, it would be beneficial to explore how resistance manifests in the context of an authoritarian government to reject the perception of compliance and docility and how resistance manifests to deny the exploitation of the "War on Terror' which is mobilized to inferiorize Uyghur Muslims.

My research findings document the global implications of the "War on Terror." I illustrate how the rhetoric of the "War on Terror" is mobilized to justify state violence, genocide, and human rights violations and abuses in China. Future research should explore and analyze how the rhetoric of the "War on Terror" manifests in different places in the world. For example, the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the governing party in India, is responsible for perpetrating arbitrary violence and punishment against the Muslim community in India (Human Rights Watch, 2022, October 7). This is a continuation of anti-Muslim sentiments and politics, which dates back to the India-Pakistan partition (Dalrymple, 2015). Exploring this case will provide the potential opportunity to analyze how the Indian government might exploit the discourse of the "War on Terror," to contain Muslim communities and perhaps also engage in strategies of deflection to justify their actions. Investigating diverse global contexts can be used to explore how this thesis potentially applies to different cases. Exploring different global contexts can also provide the opportunity to further develop this thesis and account for distinct peculiarities in various other nation states.

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