Language, Education and Uyghur Identity in Urban Xinjiang

Edited by
Joanne Smith Finley
and Xiaowei Zang

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As the regional *lingua franca*, the Uyghur language long underpinned Uyghur national identity in Xinjiang. However, since the 'bilingual education' policy was introduced in 2002, Chinese has been rapidly institutionalised as the sole medium of instruction in the region's institutes of education. As a result, studies of the bilingual and indeed multilingual Uyghur urban youth have emerged as a major new research trend.

This book explores the relationship between language, education and identity among the urban Uyghurs of contemporary Xinjiang. It considers ways in which Uyghur urban youth identities began to evolve in response to the imposition of 'bilingual education'. Starting by defining the notion of ethnic identity, the book goes on to explore the processes involved in the formation and development of personal and group identities. It considers why ethnic boundaries are constructed between groups and when ethnic identity markers might be employed in the pursuit of interests. It also questions how ethnic identity is expressed in social, cultural and religious practice and explores the relationship among language use, education and ethnic identity formation and expression. In order to address these matters, it reviews some key arguments in the field of ethnicity theory, and then considers research findings around identity development.

As a study of ethnicity in China this book will be of huge interest to students and scholars of Chinese culture and society, Asian ethnicity, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics and Asian education.

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This series provides a timely and important outlet for research outputs on ethnicity in Asia. It will encourage social science debates on theoretical issues related to Asian ethnicity and promote multidisciplinary approaches to the study of ethnicity in Asia.

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1 Language, education and Uyghur identity

An introductory essay

Joanne Smith Finley and Xiaowei Zang

This book explores the relationship between language, education and identity among the urban Uyghurs of contemporary Xinjiang. We start by defining the notion of ethnic identity: what are the processes involved in the formation and development of personal and group identities? In what circumstances do ethnic identities (rather than other available identities) become salient? How and why are ethnic boundaries constructed between groups? When might ethnic identity markers be employed in the pursuit of interests? How is ethnic identity expressed in social, cultural and religious practice? And what is the relationship among language use, education (including language teaching and learning), and ethnic identity formation and expression? To address these questions, we review some key arguments in the field of ethnicity theory, and then consider research findings around identity development. Next, we provide a basic outline of Uyghur ethno-history, and discuss self-representations among the Uyghurs of contemporary urban Xinjiang in the context of current language and education policies.

Ethnic identity

Primordialism, a concept put forward by early anthropologists, refers to the tendency of human beings to attribute power to certain shared 'givens', such as perceived (or actual) origins, language, territory or cultural characteristics (Shils 1957). Ethnicity is not of itself primordial; rather, humans perceive it as such because it is embedded in their common experience of the world (Geertz 1973). The concept has been criticised as 'essentialist' insofar as it posits that ethnic identity is fixed, 'natural' and unchanging (Green 2006; Bayar 2009). Primordialism is also a subjectivist position in defining an ethnic group to be a 'self-perceived group of people who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by the others with whom they are in contact' (De Vos 1975, 9). Group members select ethnic identity markers with which to structure their group from within (Eriksen 1993, 37), and thereby define how the group differentiates itself from others (De Vos 1975, 16). In this process of 'self-ascription', the features taken into account are not the sum total of 'objective' cultural differences relative to other groups, but *only those which the actors themselves regard as significant* (Barth 1969, 14, our emphasis). 'Criteria for cultural difference' may include – but are not limited to – racial

uniqueness (a sense of genetically inherited differences), place of origin (territory), economic independence, religious beliefs and practices, aesthetic cultural forms (food, dress, music, dance), and language (De Vos 1975, 9). When ethnic identity is treated as 'primordial' by a group, that group's perception of irreconcilable cultural differences can make cultural assimilation difficult (Spencer 2006, 77), or provoke fear, conflict and violence between groups (Geertz 1973).

Advocates of the instrumentalist (also situationalist/circumstantialist or objectivist) school, frequently political scientists, hold that ethnic groups – and indeed nations – are the artificial constructs of modern political and cultural elites (Green 2006). These scholars emphasise the interest-oriented dimensions of ethnicity, such as a group's desire for political power or their articulation of demands for socio-economic equality (Keyes 1981). They hold that ethnicity becomes important 'only insofar as it serves to orient people in the pursuit of their interests vis-à-vis other people who are seen as holding contrastive ethnic identities' (Despres 1975, 199). Without the incentive of material advantage, some have argued, psychological boundary maintenance between ethnic groups would simply disappear (Despres 1975, 199). Others take the more nuanced view that in order to be viable ethnicity must involve both instrumentalist and primordialist elements, namely, it must simultaneously serve political ends *and* satisfy psychological needs for belongingness and meaning (Cohen 1974). Within this complex understanding of ethnic identity as an intermeshing of common origins and shared political or socio-economic interests vis-à-vis the 'others', the notion of 'homeland' may assume a prominent position:

> The 'historic' land [. . .] where terrain and people have exerted mutual, and beneficial, influence over several generations. The homeland becomes a repository of historic memories and associations [. . .] The land's resources also become exclusive to the people; they are not for 'alien' use and exploitation.
>
> (Anthony D. Smith 1991, 9)

While re-introducing primordialism into the equation, these scholars departed from the earlier notion of culture as fixed, eternal and insulated from outside influence. Fredrik Barth famously argued that all ethnic groups 'must include cultures in the past which would clearly be excluded in the present because of differences in form' (1969, 12). He also proposed that ethnicity is not isolated, but relative, writing extensively on the role of psychological boundary maintenance: 'Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation [. . .].' (Barth 1969, 9. cf. Eriksen 1993, 10). In other words, ethnicity can only develop if an ethnic group is in regular contact with another group or groups from whom it considers itself substantially different. Drawing on Sartrean theory to expand this position, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993) argued that both 'we-hood' and 'us-hood' are essential for an ethnic category to come into existence: not only must group members have historical and cultural experiences in common, they

must also share a marked sense of feeling different from the 'others'. Ethnicity thus involves both commonalities (complementarisation) and differences (dichotomisation) between categories of people, and 'group identities must always be defined in relation to that which they are not' (Eriksen 1993, 35, 10). It is for this reason that the relevance of ethnic identity has sharply increased in the context of human migrations and globalising flows. Most scholars today agree that ethnic groups are fluid and endogenous to a set of social, economic and political processes (Bayar 2009). Individuals and groups may adopt a variety of identities in different contexts and at different times. Identities are by nature transient; they can lie dormant for a time, then be re-created in modified or modernised form in reaction to certain stimuli. This is how, for instance, group consciousness of a shared heritage of values led young Mongols to create an ancient Mongolian identity anew in the form of modern pop songs about Chingis Khan (Gross 1992, 15).

Given the consensus that ethnic identity is contingent on the society around us, it follows that identity formation involves an interplay between the psychological and the social. Albert Epstein, while contending that identity is 'fed by taproots from the unconscious', notes that it is cognitive in another of its aspects (1978, 101). Eriksen emphasises the interdependence of the inner and social organisation, describing identity formation as a process 'located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture' (cited in Epstein 1978, 7). The identities we assume as adults consist of 'identity fragments' (Eriksen 1993, 147), understood as unconscious identifications made during childhood, combined with pieces of identity we consciously gather from the social world, based on positive and negative experiences. In this way, ethnic identity is constructed and modified as young people become aware of their ethnicity within the larger socio-cultural setting (Phinney 2003, 63).

Ethnic identity formation, like other forms of identity construction, becomes especially salient during adolescence. During this fragile transition period, ethnic discrimination in society (for example, a language policy that disadvantages a particular group) can lead members of socially devalued groups to internalise negatively perceived traits, resulting in a decreased will to achieve, self-degradation, or a sense of inferiority. According to scholarship on three generations of ethnic change in the US, minority individuals from the younger generations became increasingly embedded in the 'American' way of life, and gradually became detached from the neighbourhoods of their parents and grandparents. Ethnic characteristics (e.g. cultural expressions of identity, religious affiliations, language use) became less stable over time, and, with each successive generation, rates of intermarriage rose. On the other hand, these studies show that ethnic prejudice in society in some cases fuelled group pride, leading to the ethnic incorporation of the devalued group. Thus, some groups worked to reinforce their ethnic identity, and resisted ethnic assimilation in all its forms, including exogamy (Horowitz 2013). It was common for later generations to develop novel and different ways of understanding and connecting to their ethnicity, a phenomenon some called 'symbolic ethnicity' (Gans 1996).

Ethnic identity development

We can gain further important insights into ethnic identity by looking at studies of identity development. Theories in this area are situated at the intersection of developmental and social psychology. Developmental psychologists built on Erikson's seminal work *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), which explains how the 'identity crisis of adolescence' is resolved by reconciling identities imposed by family and society with the personal need for an identity that brings feelings of satisfaction and competence. Meanwhile, social psychologists centred on the sense of group belonging, and the negotiation of social identity in the context of the value placed on group membership by society (summarised in French, Seidman, Allen and Aber 2006). Findings showed that individuals belonging to highly valued groups in society need not modify their social identity, while those belonging to devalued groups usually resort to one of three strategies:

(a) individual mobility – if possible, the individual chooses to physically leave the group and change group membership; where not possible owing to gender, race or ethnicity, the individual chooses to psychologically leave the group by dis-identifying with it;

(b) social creativity – the group as a whole chooses to redefine the meaning of their group membership by comparing themselves with the out-group on a dimension on which they are superior, or by changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group from negative to positive; and

(c) social competition – the group as a whole fights the current system to change the hierarchy of group membership in society.

(Tajfel and Turner 1986)

It was further suggested that people who are high in collective self-esteem are more likely to seek to actively redefine ethnic group membership (strategy b) or to restore a threatened social identity (strategy c), while people low in collective self-esteem tend to opt for individual mobility (strategy a) (Crocker and Luhtanen 1990).

Studies show that older adolescents are more likely to be at higher stages of identity development than younger adolescents, suggesting that individuals progress linearly as they age, although it is also possible for individuals to regress to lower stages over time. French, Seidman, Allen and Aber (2000; 2006) conducted two studies to measure factors influencing changes in ethnic identity during early and middle adolescence. Using subscales of 'group-esteem' (how one feels about ethnic group membership) and 'identity exploration' (the extent to which an individual searches for meaning in ethnic group membership) in the second study (2006), they recruited 420 students in the grade prior to the transition to either junior high or senior high school. Their average age at the time of the pre-transition year assessment (Time 1) was 11.28 years for the early adolescents and 14.01 years for the middle adolescents. At Time 1, both the early and the middle adolescents attended schools which were predominantly homogeneous in ethnic terms.

At Time 2 (the transition year), the early adolescents transitioned into similarly homogeneous junior high schools, but the middle adolescents generally transitioned into ethnically diverse senior high schools.

The results of this study are compelling: they indicate a significant increase over time in both group esteem and identity exploration, with higher increases occurring among the two minority groups (African American and Latino American) than among the majority group (European American). They also confirm a rise in identity exploration across the normative transition to ethnically mixed senior high schools. The authors explain this by noting that early adolescents live in racial and ethnic enclaves and thus may not interpret ethnicity as worthy of exploration. However, once adolescents leave the safety of the neighbourhood and are faced with persons who look and act differently, ethnicity becomes salient, and the process of exploration begins. At this point, negative 'encounters' with members of other ethnic groups may push individuals towards exploring the meaning of ethnic group membership. Despite this lack of exploration, however, early adolescents had already begun to develop positive group esteem. The authors suggest that this results from the positive social influence of parents, peers and popular media. When it came to the middle adolescents, the African American cohort reported low group esteem at Time 1. They appeared to hold a negative view of their group membership, and to be psychologically distancing themselves from their group. However, over the next two years, group esteem increased dramatically among this cohort, indicating a rejection of the standards by which their group is judged by the wider society. These findings, which indicate ethnic identity development towards higher levels with age, provide an important backdrop to the questions explored in this volume. Below, we consider ethnic identity development among the Uyghurs through history.

A concise Uyghur ethno-history

There are 56 officially recognised nationality groups in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Han Chinese are the ethnic majority, whereas the Uyghurs constitute the fifth largest minority nationality. There were nearly 3.3 million Uyghurs in Xinjiang in 1949 when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took over this vast region (Yin and Mao 1996, 43–4; Li 2003, 38–9; Toops 2004, 243–8). The first PRC census found 3.6 million Uyghurs living in Xinjiang in 1953; the second PRC census, more than 4 million in 1964; the third PRC census, nearly 6 million in 1982; the fourth PRC census, nearly 7.2 million in 1990; and the fifth PRC census, more than 8.3 million in 2000, respectively (Toops 2004, 243–8; Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Local History Compilation Committee 2004, 1). According to the sixth PRC census, taken in 2010, Uyghurs in Xinjiang numbered more than 10 million, compared with a regional Han population of just over 8.4 million (Australian Centre on China in the World 2012). The vast majority of Han residents inhabited the 'economic belt' and surrounding industrial cities of north Xinjiang in 2006, while over 80 per cent of Uyghurs were clustered around the impoverished southern oases of Artush, Kashgar, Yengi Shähär, Yarkand,

Khotän, Lop and Keriya (Harlan 2009). In 2009, there were 1.75 million Han Chinese resident in Ürümchi city (regional capital), compared with 310,000 Uyghurs (Howell and Fan 2011, 125).

Chinese sources claim that the origins of the Uyghurs can be traced back to the Dingling nomads of north and northwest China, and to the areas south of Lake Baikal and between the Irtish River and Lake Balkhash (in today's Mongolia), by the third century B.C. The Dingling were subsequently referred to as the Tiele, Tieli, Chile or Gaoche, and Weihe in Chinese historical documents prior to the seventh century (Chang 2003, 40). In 744 they formed a powerful Uyghur steppe empire, which would last for one hundred years. Inhabiting a vast territory, their capital was Karabalghasun, located on the high Orkhon River in what is now the Republic of Mongolia (Mackerras 1972). When the Uyghur khanate collapsed in 840 following an invasion by Kyrgyz nomads, the Uyghurs migrated towards the south and southwest in three streams. One stream fled south to China; the second eventually settled in Gansu; while the third crossed the Tianshan to the region now known as south Xinjiang. There, in the Turpan basin, they built the Buddhist kingdom of Qarakhoja/Gaochang (850–1250), and gradually fused with the high-nosed, bearded Iranian inhabitants of the Tarim basin (Geng 1984, 5–6; Barfield 1989, 150–7; Millward 2007, 42–6).

The Uyghurs did not fall under direct Chinese rule until much later, when the Qing empire gained control over Xinjiang following a series of successful military campaigns against the Dzunghars (Mongolian warriors and rulers of the region at that time) in the seventeenth century. Qing rule in Xinjiang was contested in a series of local Turkic rebellions, of which the most serious was led by Yaqub Beg (1864–1877). Though feted as a Uyghur national hero today, Yaqub Beg was in fact a foreigner from the Khoqand khanate situated to the west of the region. Already at the beginning of his rule, local Kashgarians were collecting troops to oppose him (Kim 1986, 113–14), and over time they increasingly resented the privileges that Khoqandians held over them (Tsing 1961, 145) as well as the heavy taxation imposed by that regime (Tsing 1961, 149; Kim 1986, 189). Partly as a result of local disaffection with Yaqub Beg, the Qing Army was able to put down the local Turkic rebellion, and Xinjiang became a province of the Qing empire in 1884. Qing emperors relied on a *beg* system (*beg* was a generic term for the chief of a Turkic group in an oasis, appointed by the central government) to maintain their rule over the region. These indigenous leaders, who were bound by salaries and titles to the Qing empire, were frequently dubbed 'dogs with human faces' by their ethnic brethren (Kim 1986, 46). While Qing officials ran political and military affairs in the region, local peoples were able for the most part to preserve local languages, cultures and social practices under their jurisdiction (Newby 1998; Borei 2002, 276–80; Ji 2002, 95–162; Kim 2004, 11; Clarke 2011, 18–21).

After the Qing empire was toppled in 1911, Xinjiang was ruled successively by three Chinese warlords: Yang Zengxin (1912–1928), Jin Shuren (1928–1934), and Sheng Shicai (1934–1944). In particular, General Sheng sought to suppress the emerging Uyghur nationalist movement, was known for his extensive use

of torture in his campaigns against pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic activities, and was regarded by Uyghurs as a ruthless mass-killer (Forbes 1986, 151–61; Hyer 2006, 81). In 1933, Uyghur rebels formed the Turkish-Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan (TIRET), based in Kashgar. While this republic was suppressed by Chinese and Tungan (Hui) forces in 1934, the central government of the Nationalist (Guomindang) regime was nonetheless unable to place Xinjiang under its direct control until 1944. It appointed four governors of Xinjiang between 1944 and 1949: Wu Zhongxin (1944–1945), Zhang Zhizhong (1945–1947), Masud Sabri (1947–1949) and Burhan Shähidi (1949) (Clarke 2011, 28–41). Later, with the support of the Soviet Union, Uyghurs established the East Turkestan Republic (ETR) in Ili, Tarbaghatay and Altay in northern Xinjiang between 1944 and 1949. Together, the TIRET (1933–34) and the ETR (1944–49) are regarded as landmarks in the evolution of Uyghur nationalism, beginning in the 1920s (Forbes 1986; Benson 1990; Bovingdon 2001; 2010). The East Turkestan Republic was absorbed into the PRC when the CCP and its army entered Xinjiang in 1949 (Braker 1985, 109; Bai and Ozawa 1992; Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, Institute for Historical Research 1997, Vol. 2, 328–40; Vol. 3, 92–165, 166–85, 329–34, 335–6, 435–48, 483–5, 495, 511–27; Ji 2002, 252–78; Li 2003, 145–57, 218–23; Huang 2003, 79, 127, 144; Clarke 2011, 37–9). Some Uyghurs expected that they would soon enjoy full political independence in Xinjiang as they had been promised by Mao Zedong a decade earlier; instead, 'CCP officials asked Uyghurs to be satisfied with autonomy' (Bovingdon 2004, 5; Clarke 2011, 40–1). The region became the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on 1 October 1955.

The Uyghurs under the CCP

During the Maoist period (1949–1976), the CCP promoted measures to integrate Xinjiang into the PRC, and prosecuted some Uyghurs with 'deviant' political or religious views (Millward and Tursun 2004, 88–9; Shichor 2005, 127; Van Wie Davis 2008, 2; Hess 2009, 85–6). In 1962, some 60,000 Uyghurs and Kazakhs fled northern Xinjiang into the Soviet Union, exasperated with CCP policies and with the number of Han migrants that had flooded the region in the wake of the famine associated with the Great Leap Forward (McMillen 1979; Niu 2005, 23; Bovingdon 2010, 51). Yet despite these incidents, there were relatively few examples of direct Uyghur–Han conflict between 1949 and 1966 (Dillon 1995; 2004; Millward 2004).

This situation changed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), when the CCP carried out a draconian political campaign against the so-called 'agents of local nationalism' (local leaders and intellectuals who advocated cultural rights for minority groups) (Rudelson 1997, 104; Heller 2007, 47–8). During this ten-year period, 99,000 of a total of 106,000 minority cadres in Xinjiang were dismissed from their leadership posts (Koch 2006, 8). Large-scale religious repression took place, including the closing of rural bazaars, attacks on imams and mosques (with some turned into slaughter-houses for pigs), and the public burning of religious

scripts (Dreyer 1968; Fuller and Lipman 2004, 322, 326–8; Rudelson and Jankowiak 2004; Van Wie Davis 2008, 2; Hess 2009, 86). This campaign was perceived in Xinjiang as an all-out attack on ethnic minority cultures and religions by the Chinese government and the Han people, which is an important factor underlying the growth of ethnic consciousness and resentment towards the CCP among Uyghurs in the post-1978 era (Heller 2007, 49).

After the Cultural Revolution, the CCP recognised the damage that had been done. To attempt reconciliation, the Party introduced new policies which opened up a relatively tolerant environment for ethnic and religious expression from the late 1970s to the early 1990s (Rudelson and Jankowiak 2004, 307; Hess 2009, 87). Uyghur intellectuals were given some freedom to express their versions of Uyghur history and culture, which were not always consistent with official rhetoric (Rudelson 1997, 115; Bovingdon 2001). Grose (2012, 372) shows that, during this time, Uyghur editorial teams were able to replace 'rigid Han-centric imaginings of Chinese national identity' in textbook content with 'narratives that provide space for asserting a distinctively Uyghur ethno-national identity'. An example is one Uyghur language textbook published in 1991, compiled by two Uyghur editors, and 'embroidered with markers of Uyghur identity' (Grose 2012, 376). Written right to left in the modified Arabic script, it introduces Uyghur customs and festivals, the different oases of Xinjiang, daily life among Uyghurs, and the major religions that Uyghurs have followed. Crucially, the editors satirise the failure of Han Chinese cadres in Xinjiang to make efforts to learn about ethnic minority customs (Grose 2012, 376–7). Religion also flourished once more during this period. Pilgrimages to Mecca were resumed in 1979, after a fifteen-year break (Shichor 2005, 122), and some Uyghurs went to Malaysia, Pakistan and the Middle East to study Islam (Bequelin 2000, 88; Fuller and Lipman 2004, 330). By 1989, the number of mosques in Xinjiang had increased by 5.8 times compared with a decade earlier, to some 20,000 (Smith Finley 2007b, 634; Van Wie Davis 2008, 2). The Chinese government also accorded Uyghurs a certain level of preferential treatment in the areas of family planning, college admission, job placement and leadership representation (Rudelson 1997, 125; Koch 2006, 16; Reny 2009, 502).

Since 2000, the CCP has placed economic development and regional stability firmly at the centre of political rhetoric with the launch of the Great Western Development (*Xibu da kaifa*, 西部大开发) campaign. This campaign consolidates policies pioneered during the 1990s; with it, the government hopes to resolve the 'nationality problem', and strengthen ethnic unity in the region by way of accelerated economic growth (Sines 2002; Bequelin 2004; Goodman 2004, 317, 319–20; Hess 2009, 94–5; Koch 2006, 6, 14, 16; Van Wie Davis 2008, 4–5). At the same time, the CCP has endeavoured through its routine use of the phrases 'Chinese person' (*Zhongguoren*, 中国人) and 'Chinese people' (*Zhonghua minzu*, 中华民族) to include all nationality groups within the unitary 'Chinese nation'. The CCP insists that China is a united, multi-ethnic nation. This nation, it argues, resulted from the 'outgrowth of the historical development of the past several thousand years', and consists of a 'big fraternal and co-operative family composed of all

nationalities', within which ethnic minorities 'form with Han Chinese a single, unbreakable unit' (Bulag 2002; Hyer 2006, 76–7; Mackerras 2011, 114).

Rising Uyghur ethnic consciousness since the 1990s

Despite the CCP's efforts to promote national unity in the PRC, ethnic consciousness has increased on a dramatic scale among the Xinjiang Uyghurs since the 1990s. Scholars report a growing discontent against a range of state policies (and in some cases Chinese rule itself), and there is an acute sense of separation between Us (Uyghurs) and Them (Han Chinese) (Cesàro 2000; Bellér-Hann 2002; Smith 2002; Koch 2006, 10–11; Van Wie Davis 2008). Within this context, a small number of Uyghur activists have taken direct (and sometimes violent) action against buildings, infrastructure and people representative of the Chinese government (Millward 2004; Shichor 2005, 121; Hess 2009, 89–90; Bovingdon 2010, 105–34). Yet the vast majority of Uyghurs have engaged in 'everyday' or 'symbolic' resistance of a non-violent nature (Rudelson 1997, 137; Smith 2002; Bovingdon 2002; Heller 2007, 8–9, 54; Smith Finley 2013a), a pattern that continues despite successive crackdowns following the Ghulja disturbances of 1997 and the Ürümchi riots of 2009. Of particular note is the process of re-Islamisation, which has gained momentum among a section of the Uyghur population, and which increasingly cuts across categories of age, gender, social/class background and oasis origin (Waite 2007; Smith Finley 2007b; 2013a; Harris and Isa 2014). It is significant that this pattern is also observable in the regional capital Ürümchi, a city formerly often viewed as a symbol of Uyghur linguistic and cultural 'dilution'. In the southern city of Kashgar, global flows have introduced reformist ideas, broadening local disputes over what are considered 'correct' Islamic beliefs and practices (Waite 2007). This process of re-Islamisation has been largely peaceful and cathartic, and there is a diverse set of reasons behind it (Smith Finley 2013a). While some articulate Islamic renewal as a symbol of local opposition to national (Chinese) and global (US, Russian, Israeli) oppression of Muslims (Smith Finley 2007b), others characterise it as a response to failed development (as perceived by those who failed to benefit from it), and a corresponding desire to return to social egalitarianism. While some have returned to Islam as a response to the frustrated ethno-political aspirations of the 1990s (failure to achieve independence along the lines of the new Central Asian states), others did so as a reaction against modernity and a return to cultural 'purity' – a process previously documented for many Middle Eastern societies (Ayubi 1991; Esposito 1997; 1998). For still others, Islam is a vehicle for personal and national reform in a context where (ethno-) political non-fulfilment is conceived as a divine punishment for moral decline.

The re-Islamisation process both reflects and reproduces a rising Uyghur ethnic consciousness since the early 1990s. As Fuller and Lipman note, Islam is most prominent among a set of distinguishing Uyghur characteristics, and attending mosque and engaging in other public religious rituals are 'consciously recognized as a means of reinforcing the distinctiveness of the Uyghur community from the dominant Han population and the Chinese state' (2004, 339). For Dwyer

(2005, 19, 22), being Turkic and Muslim is central to the modern manifestation of the Uyghur ethnic identity. Other scholars argue that in recent years the Uyghur national identity has come to be equated exclusively with Islam (Koch 2006, 10), and that those with questionable adherence to Islam are unlikely to be accepted as authentic members of the Uyghur nation (Hess 2009, 82).

Nevertheless, other Uyghurs, in particular the urban youth, have drawn on a wider variety of sources to define and celebrate their ethnic identity. One such source is transnational cosmopolitanism. In the early 2000s, a young musician named Arken Abdulla (also known as the 'Uyghur Guitar King') provided a contemporary role model for Uyghur youth, as it began to move between regional and national boundaries, and then stepped across the national boundary altogether. As Baranovitch shows, Arken was one of the first artists to make 'the move beyond Uyghur tradition and the geographical boundaries of Xinjiang', immortalising this act with his first studio album, *The Dolan Who Walked Out of the Desert* (*Zou chu shamo de Daolang*, 走出沙漠的刀郎), the title of which signals his aspiration to 'connect to the rest of the world' (2007, 70). This emerging cosmopolitanism among young Uyghurs should be regarded as both 'subaltern' and 'rooted' (or 'partial'). It is 'subaltern' because cosmopolitanism can never be gender or ethnically neutral, in other words, cosmopolitan sociability cannot negate preexisting social relationships of unequal power. It is also 'subaltern' because cosmopolitan openness is constrained by the particularities of the historical moment; by time, place and circumstance (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011, 411–13). It is 'rooted' or 'partial' because cosmopolitan sociability is embedded within practice-based identities, and can be found only in social relationships that do not negate cultural, religious or gendered differences. Transnational networks of connection between people of different cultural backgrounds do not necessarily produce cosmopolitan openness; rather, they involve limits (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011, 403–4). For Uyghurs in urban Xinjiang, cosmopolitan sociability with other groups is limited by contestations over territory and culture, in a historical context of comparatively recent colonial domination (little more than two hundred years). They are therefore unlikely to enter into relationships of cosmopolitan sociability with Han Chinese. Instead, they seek out peoples with whom they have 'experiential commonalities despite differences' (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011, 403). This goes some way to explaining the fascination of contemporary Uyghur youth with the Flamenco culture of southern Spain, itself heavily influenced by North African Sufism, or with politically informed hip-hop in the US (Smith Finley 2011b). As one leading Uyghur musician put it: 'Some cultures are more alike than others' (Smith Finley 2013a, 208).

Cosmopolitanism is often conceived as a threat to the claims of the nation-state; as sitting in opposition to national identity, and as seeking to transcend the nation (Catterall 2011, 342). Its trans-border loyalties may be seen as 'treacherous', indeed, as a critique of nationalism itself (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011, 401). In Xinjiang, where Uyghur continues to serve as the regional *lingua franca* despite increased levels of urban bilingualism, the popularity of

Central Asian and Turkish songs (with their vocals in Turkic-Altaic languages) derives from a sense of linguistic and cultural closeness. In the Uyghur-dominated Yan'anlu district in southeast Ürümchi, university students 'listened to music from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey rather than from other regions of China' in 2005, and the district was fast becoming 'a cultural hotspot influenced primarily by the Turkic west' (Eri 2008, 77–8). A shared linguistic identity also means that Uyghur customers will normally choose imported Turkish chocolate over locally produced Chinese chocolate, because it is labelled in the Latinised modern Turkish script and comprehensible to most Uyghurs, who retain familiarity with the *yengi yeziq* (the Latinised New Script in use before 1980) (Erkin 2009, 425–6). This food shopping phenomenon is of course also attributable to a shared cultural and religious identity. Uyghur customers are more likely to believe that Turkish brands of chocolate are halal (permitted in the Islamic religion). In this way, 'branding, like national identity, trades upon familiarity, trust and aspiration' (Catterall 2011, 337); only, in this case, identifications and aspirations are linked not to the bounded Chinese nation-state but to the transnational pan-Turkic world. Smith Finley observed an example of pan-Turkic identification in Ürümchi in 2004, when 18-year-old Uyghur students Ömär and Dilbär related the following story around international football:

> During the last World Cup, it happened one time that China had to play Turkey. We were watching it in the big hall at school and, of course, China lost! It was really funny; every time Turkey began to do well, we cheered them, and our Han classmates looked askance at us and got really irritated!
>
> (Smith Finley 2013a, 387)

She reports that, as they spoke, the two sat eating Turkish biscuits and chocolate, thus expressing (Pan-Turkic) cultural, religious and political affinities through the simultaneous consumption of international sport and halal foodstuffs. Such incidents fully demonstrate the importance of the notion of 'alternate centres' (Bequelin 2004, 377) in stressing an alignment away from Beijing and towards Turkey and the Turkic cultural sphere.

In another example of identification with alternate centres, recent studies find that a minority of students in Xinjiang prefer to learn a different foreign language in place of Chinese (Schluessel 2007, 268–9). Uyghur youngsters seemingly have no fear of the 'global advance of English'; for them, the threat to the Uyghur language emanates rather from Chinese, as the 'hegemonic language culture' in their region (Catterall 2011, 338). Their preference for the mother tongue (Uyghur) and selected foreign languages is further suggested by the fact that since at least 2008 the Yan'anlu district of Ürümchi, which regularly receives Russian- and Turkic-speaking merchant visitors, has been characterised by a trilingual language environment, with signs reproduced in Uyghur, Chinese and Russian (Eri 2008, 79). Uyghur students' preference for foreign languages other than Chinese suggests an alternative set of cultural and political allegiances in defiance of the Chinese state requirement of minority group alignment with the Han centre.

In addition to cosmopolitan goods, sports and foreign languages, many Uyghurs in Ürümchi seek to purchase real estate in ethnically Uyghur (Uy. *milliy*) districts of the city such as the Yan'anlu area. Yet this preference does not reflect an inward-looking, culturally exclusive myopia. Rather, many Uyghurs simply consider the district to be 'more cosmopolitan' than other parts of Ürümchi. As one Uyghur university professor observed, foreigners and elements of foreign civilisations can be seen there, and 'modern ideas and fashions reach Yan'anlu first' (Erkin 2009, 425). In this way, it is Central Asian businessmen – and the influx of Central Asian cultural products that they enable – who are viewed as bridging the gap between Xinjiang and the modern outside world. The emerging Uyghur middle class chooses to enhance its identity with reference points from *outside* China rather than from within (Erkin 2009, 420, 422). Another salient reference point for contemporary identifications is the Middle East. A fashion for belly-dancing has emerged in Ürümchi since the end of the 1990s, and spread to high-end Uyghur restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai. This new trend almost certainly emanated from the Arab world, which has become a major inspiration for young Uyghurs, who see it as rich, modern, Muslim (therefore culturally close) and autonomous (Harris 2005, 633). In this way, selective reception of global flows enables the evolution of a modern Uyghur culture that orients itself towards the Turkic and Arab west, while Yan'anlu becomes the locus for a selective cosmopolitan modernity.

Uyghurs have long been known as 'one of the most nationalistic and least assimilated minorities in China' (Heberer 1989; Dautcher 1999, 54–5, 337–9; Rudelson and Jankowiak 2004, 311; Mamet, Jacobson and Heaton 2005, 191; Kaltman 2007, 2; Millward 2007, 348–51). In the context of a rising Uyghur ethnic consciousness since the early 1990s, Chinese state actors perhaps feel that this is more true now than ever. In response, the government has carried out multiple 'Strike Hard' campaigns to target what it calls 'the three evils' of separatism, terrorism and religious extremism, in a bid to securitise Xinjiang (Fuller and Lipman 2004, 324–5, 330; Rudelson and Jankowiak 2004, 307, 316–18; Hess 2009, 90). So far, however, this repressive and punitive policy seems merely to have encouraged the further development of Uyghur ethnic consciousness vis-à-vis the Han Chinese (Dwyer 2005, 63; Hastings 2005, 32; Hyer 2006, 78–9; Hess 2009, 89–90). In 2013 and 2014, perceived state violence was met with indigenous violence on several occasions. These incidents, while unsophisticated, were significant in touching civilian victims in China proper for the first time in Uyghur history.

'Bilingual education' and Uyghur identity

As suggested by the above discussion, a complex combination of factors may have contributed to a strengthened Uyghur ethnic identity in contemporary times. One possible factor is repression of the Uyghur language: the regional *lingua franca* in Xinjiang. In this volume, we ask: to what extent has the sense of Uyghur identity been either weakened or strengthened as a result of the bilingual education policy? Although there are several published articles on this topic, there is

yet to appear a book that empirically examines the relationship among language, education and Uyghur identity in the post-2002 era. This is therefore a preliminary attempt to narrow the knowledge gap by focusing on the patterns, effects and meanings of language use among contemporary urban Uyghurs. Scholars have consistently shown that the Uyghur language is central to Uyghur ethnic identity (Smith 2000, 155, 157–61; Smith 2002, 159–61; Dwyer 2005, 59; Hess 2009, 82; Schluessel 2007, 260; Reny 2009, 493–4). As the regional *lingua franca*, the Uyghur language has long underpinned Uyghur ethnic identity. However, since 1995 state education policy has steered away from accommodative pluralism towards assimilative monoculturalism (Dwyer 2005, 29, 38–9; Schluessel 2007, 256–8, 263). In particular, starting from 2002, the Chinese government has promoted the so-called 'bilingual education' (双语教育) policy in Xinjiang. The term 'bilingual education' is a euphemism for the imposition and mandatory use of Mandarin Chinese (i.e. the language of the majority Han) in what were previously minority-language schools or classes (Schluessel 2007). The new policy abolished the 'separate-but-equal' parallel education system, which formerly allowed Uyghur parents to choose the linguistic medium (Uyghur or Chinese) in which their children received tuition. By 2005, all minority-language schools and Chinese-medium schools in urban Xinjiang had been 'consolidated', with students from all nationalities taught together in one class (Schluessel 2007, 257). As a result, Mandarin Chinese has been rapidly institutionalised as the sole medium of instruction in the region's higher, secondary and primary institutes of education. A secondary impact of the policy has been to relegate foreign languages such as Russian, English and Japanese to the status of third language, with pupils forced to study this third language through the medium of Mandarin Chinese.

Not surprisingly, a broad range of Uyghur social groups objects to 'bilingual education', even while the majority refrains from taking direct action to protest it. Studies suggest that despite the gradual institutionalisation of Mandarin Chinese, many Uyghurs continue to prefer the use of their mother tongue in all but the professional realm (i.e. situations in which they must converse with Han co-workers) (Smith 2002; Baki 2012; Smith Finley 2013a). Dwyer (2005, 55, 63; also Yee 2005, 47; Schluessel 2007, 262–3) writes that many Uyghurs consider their mother tongue to be the central aspect of their identity and inviolable. In this context, the bilingual education policy has been perceived as 'linguicide' or 'linguistic genocide' (the forced extinction of the minority language) and as a direct attack on Uyghur identity. Potential parallels may be drawn here with language trends among native Americans in the US. In her work on contemporary Navajo communities, Louise Lamphere (2007, 1,133–6) points out that linguistic assimilation, in addition to occupational and residential integration, spatial dispersal and intermarriage, has been a key catalyst of structural assimilation.

Yet Uyghur objections to bilingual education do not mean an outright rejection of learning Mandarin. In fact, opinions among Uyghur parents as to the pros and cons of an education in the mother tongue versus an education in Mandarin have been divided since at least the 1990s. While some Uyghurs view their mother tongue as intimately bound up with Uyghur culture and identity and a cultural

property to be defended, other Uyghurs are more instrumentally driven, thinking strategically in terms of the potential socio-economic constraints associated with exclusively speaking the mother tongue, and the corresponding benefits of learning Mandarin (Benson 2004, 198; Reny 2009, 493–4). The latter believe that 'we must compete with the Chinese on their terms', and consider a Chinese-medium education essential for promoting Uyghur identity *from within the system* (Rudelson 1997, 128, 144). Nonetheless, it seems clear that the vast majority of parents would at least have preferred to retain the choice regarding medium of education. Few Uyghurs would describe themselves as actively choosing to 'acculturate' to Han culture; in their own words, they make a pragmatic decision to accommodate to the prevailing system. Via a process Schluessel (2007, 270) terms 'instrumental acceptance', they opt to use Mandarin Chinese as a tool to further personal and group interests, and to improve their life chances. At the same time, many continue to express their separate ethnic identity through certain patterns of language use (Smith 2002; Smith Finley 2013a, 135–9).

The Uyghur authentic

The fact of Chinese as sole medium of education across all levels of schooling since 2005, combined with a heavily Han-centric curricular content, inevitably raises the question of cultural authenticity of the Uyghur youth trained under that system. According to Vannini and Williams' social constructionist theory of authenticity (2009), negotiation of the 'authentic' is a flexible and powerful scheme of evaluation, which involves boundary-making and has direct implications for the shaping of in- and out-group processes. Thus, definitions of what is – or is not – culturally 'authentic' can affect relationships between Uyghur sub-groups as well as relationships between Uyghurs and other ethnic groups. Following state efforts since the 1950s to foster a Chinese-speaking minority elite, by the 1980s, two Uyghur linguistic sub-groups had emerged in urban Xinjiang: *minkaohan* (i.e. Uyghurs educated in Mandarin Chinese) and *minkaomin* (Uyghurs educated in Uyghur). The *minkaohan* can be loosely divided into three generations, emerging within different political and socio-cultural environments. First-generation *minkaohan*, schooled in the 1950s–1960s, appear to have got on reasonably well with the first generation of Han Chinese who settled in Xinjiang. While newly appointed Uyghur cadres learned Chinese, many Han newcomers attained at least functional fluency in the Uyghur language, and nearly all abstained from cultural practices considered offensive in Islamic practice (Smith 2002, 172–3; Taynen 2006, 50–1). As a result, this early cohort of *minkaohan* was well placed to form a bridge between Chinese administrators and the local people.

The second generation was essentially the product of repression of minority languages and cultures during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). These individuals enjoyed no control over their education. Few Uyghur schools remained open during this period, and most children in urban areas were forced to attend Han schools (Dreyer 1976). There, they were taught in the Chinese language, which subsequently became their first language, if not their mother tongue.

At the same time, the Arabic script, used by the Uyghurs since their conversion to Islam (and known to contemporary Uyghurs as the Old Script, *kona yeziq*), was discontinued in favour of the New Script (*yengi yeziq*) based on the Latin alphabet (Bellér-Hann 1991; Dwyer 2005). The experience of this generation of *minka-ohan* was characterised by an acute sense of schizophrenia; a lack of belonging, either to the Chinese social world to which they were expected to assimilate, or to their own people among whom they felt themselves 'fakes'.

The third generation has grown up during the free market economy period in the context of accelerating Han migration to Xinjiang, and represents a conscious decision taken by urban Uyghur parents to increase their children's life chances (education, employment, socio-economic status and stability) in a rapidly changing society. As numerous informants in Ürümchi explained in 2004: 'A decade ago, private Han-run companies would only consider hiring *minkaohan* [not *minkaomin*]; now, many won't hire Uyghurs full stop' (Smith Finley 2007a, 220). For this third wave, there was an element of choice regarding medium of education, albeit within an ethnically stratified environment that seemed to point to only one course of action. The *minkaohan* of the 1990s grew up in Uyghur families, where most received a solid and positive home education in Uyghur socio-cultural practices, many of them deeply influenced by Islam. On reaching school age they went to Han schools, where Chinese gradually replaced Uyghur as their first language, and where they were exposed to contrastive Chinese notions of culture (Ch. *wenhua*, 文化), including different attitudes to education, social and gender relations, religion and so on. The transfer affected individuals in different ways, producing a myriad of 'types' on a broad spectrum of hybrid cultural combinations. For some, the experience produced a – temporary or permanent – sense of shame regarding their minority background, and a sense of cultural lack, as it had for second-generation *minkaohan*. Others enjoyed more positive identities, considering themselves 'modern', 'progressive' and 'internationalist'. Often, third-generation *minkaohan* experienced all of these emotions, at once or in different moments. Upon leaving education, they entered adult life to find that their partial sinicisation earned them only partial entrance to the sphere of Han privilege, with access increasing in proportion to the degree of sinicisation, but not guaranteed. At the same time, the two worlds they spanned were fundamentally divided by inter-ethnic tension, and they were considered neither (wholly) Uyghur by *minka-omin* nor wholly Chinese by the Han.

The experience of Chinese-educated Uyghurs in many respects mirrors that of Russian-educated Kazakhs in contemporary Kazakhstan, where the Russian-speaking identity is several decades more established (Smith Finley 2007a). The Russified Kazakhs, product first of the language and cultural policies of Tsarist Russia and then of Soviet nationality policies, were moulded by an aggressive programme of 'cultural colonization' (including the introduction of atheistic education), intended to effect change in Kazakh self-identity (Akiner 1995, 51–2). As a result, some felt a sense of cultural deprivation regarding their limited command of the mother tongue (Akiner 1995, 58), while others began to associate the Kazakh language with 'backwardness' and stigma (Nazpary 2002, 155–6). Today,

many young 'cosmopolitan' Kazakhs prefer the Russian-language press to the Kazakh-language press, considering it a better medium for acquiring information from the outside world (Dave 1996, 56). Yet awareness of a specifically Kazakh identity persists, and young people generally name Kazakh as their mother tongue (Akiner 1995, 51–2).

In Xinjiang, the status of having Chinese as first language came to be perceived as a 'minus' by sections of the Uyghur community in the 1990s, and as representing linguistic and cultural 'dilution' (Taynen 2006, 46; Smith Finley 2007a, 229–30). *Minkaohan* were often accused of having incomplete Uyghur linguistic and cultural knowledge, and even of becoming 'quasi-Hans' (Smith 1999, 163–4). *Minkaomin* in particular claimed that *minkaohan* acted 'less like Uyghurs and more like Han' (Schluessel 2007, 259). Labelled 'Xinjiang's 14th nationality' (Smith Finley 2007a, 229), *minkaohan* became the 'preferred scapegoats' of the *minkaomin* community and the butt of jokes; some even saw *minkaohan* as potential collaborators with Han Chinese, as 'traitors' and 'sell-outs' (Taynen 2006, 51, 57; Smith 2007a, 230). Meanwhile, the superior status of Uyghur – as the mother tongue – was symbolically underlined by the frequent sight of a Uyghur offering apologies to an ethnic peer after mistakenly addressing them in Chinese (Smith 1999, 217–18; Smith 2002, 159–60; Taynen 2006, 48–9). In Beijing, too, a similar language hierarchy has been observed among minority students; there, *minkaomin* have tended to consider *minkaohan* as only loosely representative of their ethnic group, causing *minkaohan* in Beijing to experience a 'torn identity' (Hasmath 2011, 1,850–1).

Several scholars have examined the psychological effects of a *minkaohan* education among Uyghurs in Xinjiang. They found that, if growing up in a predominantly Uyghur neighbourhood, individuals tended to be academically confident and socially well-adjusted. If, however, an individual grew up in a mainly Han neighbourhood, they were more likely to be quiet, withdrawn and uncertain about taking the lead in activities with Han children (Taynen 2006, 52). *Minkaohan* often felt isolated in the Han classroom, being slow to follow the jokes and banter (in Chinese) of Han peers. Inhabiting 'an uncomfortable middle ground', they had to contend with levels of ethnic discrimination not encountered by *minkaomin*, who studied in the linguistic and cultural safety of Uyghur-medium classes (Taynen 2006, 46; Smith Finley 2007a, 227–8, 230–1). One *minkaohan* father, who claimed it had taken him years to feel secure and capable, described the Chinese-medium classroom as 'soul-destroying' for Uyghur children (Taynen 2006, 53–4). The situation was equally unbearable when *minkaohan* returned to a Uyghur cultural environment. Put in a situation where they were expected to demonstrate Uyghur linguistic or cultural knowledge, many *minkaohan* felt trepidation and fear (Smith Finley 2007a, 226–7; Eri 2008, 76). Because they tended to be more articulate and comfortable using Chinese, they would shift easily between Chinese and their mother tongue. This frequent code-switching fed mistrust among *minkaomin*, and created a social barrier between the two (Taynen 2006, 48–9; Smith Finley 2007a, 229–30). Taynen cites a typical example of one Uyghur woman, who declined to dance at a Uyghur wedding because she felt she

did not know how to dance 'correctly'; other guests took offence at this, viewing the woman's refusal as a social 'slight' (2006, 56). In response to their experience of double prejudice from both Han and Uyghur communities, some *minkaohan* began to form a 'third community'; others, however, remained the 'perpetual outsider observing other people's cultures' (Taynen 2006, 46, 56).

Following the standardisation of Mandarin Chinese as sole medium of education in the post-2002 era, one might expect that the stigma attached to *minkaohan* should gradually fade, as the proportion of Chinese-educated youth increases. In 2006, Taynen (2006, 48) noted that *minkaohan* children were 'irresistibly drawn' to Chinese movies, TV shows, comic books and music. Eri similarly observed that the growing popularity of Uyghur performers singing lyrics in Chinese to Uyghur-style music symbolises 'the current social expectation for young Uyghurs to be fluent in Mandarin at the same time as being proud to be Uyghur' (2008, 78). Such developments may however be received with horror by the older generations. To give an example, older Uyghur musicians tend to see any musical innovation, such as a new style of playing the *tämbur* introduced by Nurmuhämmät Tursun, or the fusion of Uyghur sounds with the *rumba flamenca* gypsy style, as a shocking deviation from authenticity that must necessarily have resulted from Chinese influence. Their horror reflects core anxieties surrounding the retention or loss of Uyghur culture and identity in an environment increasingly dominated by the Han language and culture (Harris 2005, 642; Smith Finley 2013a, 208). Despite these growing anxieties within the Uyghur community, it is increasingly clear that a Chinese-medium education does not have to lead to deep acculturation. Young Uyghurs can – and often do – emerge with multilingual and multicultural proficiency, while continuing to identify themselves solidly as Uyghur. The trend is reminiscent of Lamphere's study, in which she shows how young Navajos in the US are combining elements of their own culture with Anglo culture while continuing to view themselves as Navajo (2007, 1, 133).

Yet while young urban Uyghurs have become increasingly proficient at negotiating multiple languages and cultures, this proficiency has not improved their experience in an ethnically stratified labour market. In fact, employment opportunities have become increasingly scarce for Uyghur applicants, regardless of language proficiency. Poor labour market outcomes, including rising unemployment and under-employment, are another important reason for the growth and persistence of Uyghur ethnic consciousness. At the root of Uyghur disaffection is ethnically informed hiring discrimination, understood within a framework of relative deprivation. While it is true that economic development has been comparatively booming in urban Xinjiang, with a per capita GDP of 28,000–30,000 Chinese yuan in 2011 (Momtazee and Kapur 2013), and a regional GDP growth rate of 12 per cent in 2012 (China Briefing 2013), increasingly, Uyghurs are not accorded equal access to employment opportunities. In the early–mid 1990s, *minkaomin* faced discrimination in job search on the basis of insufficient fluency in the Chinese language. Following the Ghulja disturbances in 1997 (see Millward 2004), *minkaohan*, once 'significantly better equipped to succeed economically' (Taynen 2006, 47, 54–5), also began to be disadvantaged, as Uyghur applicants

were rejected solely on the basis of their ethnicity (Smith Finley 2007a, 220; 2013a, 44–55). It is common to see this caveat in the text of job advertisements in Xinjiang: 'The above-described post is restricted to ethnic Han applicants' (Ch. *yishang zhaopin xian Hanzu*, 以上招聘限汉族) (Uyghur Human Rights Project 2012, 3–6). Moreover, Maurer-Fazio, Hughes and Zhang (2007, 177) have provided quantitative data to show that Uyghur men have been badly affected by these changes, with the percentage of working-age males in employment falling dramatically from 80 per cent to 60 per cent between 1990 and 2000.

Even where Uyghurs are able to secure employment, they are often faced with poor or unequal progression opportunities. Relegated to lower administrative positions from where there is no hope of upward mobility (Taynen 2006, 51), or passed over for promotions, they watch as Han colleagues ascend within the hierarchy. Zang (2011; 2012) reports a substantial gap in income between Uyghur workers and Han workers in regional capital Ürümchi. As a result, many *minkaohan* experienced a strengthened ethnic awareness in response to workplace discrimination (Smith Finley 2007a, 228–9), and came to feel that they had sacrificed their culture and ethnicity (in the form of the mother tongue) to gain socio-economic advantages that did not materialise (Taynen 2006, 52).

Outline of chapters

Given the institutionalisation of Chinese-medium education in Xinjiang since 2002, the relationship among language, education and ethnic identity constitutes an important direction for new research in Uyghur studies. Five chapters collected in this volume were originally explored at the workshop 'Uyghur Youth Identities in Urban Xinjiang', held at the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield in July 2011. At the workshop, established scholars and talented postgraduates came together to consider ways in which Uyghur urban youth identities are evolving in response to the imposition of 'bilingual education'. In particular, we attempted to gauge where individuals – including *minkaohan* and *minkaomin* – locate themselves on the various spectra of modernisation, sinicisation, re-traditionalisation and globalisation. Following the Sheffield workshop, we successfully solicited another three contributions to the project, and decided to include Xiaowei Zang's paper on the major determinants of Uyghur ethnic consciousness, published in *Modern Asian Studies* in 2013, as a reprint. Below is a brief outline of the nine chapters.

In **Chapter 2**, Xiaowei Zang seeks to identify the causes of rising Uyghur ethnic consciousness in the post-1978 era. Using quantitative survey data gathered in Ürümchi in 2007, Zang asks: is there a high level of ethnic consciousness among Uyghurs? And, if so, is Uyghur consciousness based more on instrumental factors than cultural properties, or *vice versa*? To answer these questions, Zang examines five potential sources of rising Uyghur consciousness: Han migration into Xinjiang; social stratification within the Uyghur community; Han–Uyghur inequalities; Uyghur language use; and Islamic religiosity. Data

analyses show a high level of ethnic consciousness among urban Uyghurs in Ürümchi. They also suggest that the effect of Han migration on Uyghur ethnic consciousness is not statistically significant. In other words, increased Han in-migration is not resulting in the cultural assimilation of local peoples; indeed, the opposite is more likely to be true. This finding demonstrates that levels of ethnic consciousness are not necessarily related to the relative size of minority and majority groups, and echoes patterns of ethnic revival observed among minority groups in the US and in Europe, where minority languages and cultures prevail despite the cultural and economic hegemony of white Americans and Europeans. On this basis, Zang concludes that levels of ethnic consciousness in Xinjiang are not dependent on the ethnic composition (majority–minority ratio) of the regional population.

On the other hand, his study indicates that religiosity and Uyghur language skills are both good determinants of Uyghur ethnic consciousness in Ürümchi, as too are class subjectivities (a Uyghur person's perception of their relative social rank). This latter should not be confused with level of income, which did not appear to be related to the degree of ethnic consciousness. So, why is a Uyghur high income earner not less nationalistic than a poorly paid Uyghur worker? Zang suggests that this is because Uyghur high income earners are more likely than other Uyghurs to work alongside Han Chinese. Many will have had to obtain higher qualifications or work harder than the latter in order to receive similar wages, in the context of ethnically based labour discrimination. Others, after comparing themselves with a Han counterpart, may place themselves on a lower rung in the urban social hierarchy, a comparison which in turn leads to resentment and heightened ethnic consciousness. Again, the perception of relative deprivation is salient here, helping to explain why class subjectivities are a good predictor of Uyghur ethnic consciousness, whereas income is not. Zang concludes that while levels of ethnic consciousness in the Uyghur community were based mainly on occupation in the 1980s (with intellectuals significantly more aware than either merchants or peasants), today, Uyghur language skills and Islamic affiliation are the key determinants of Uyghur ethnic consciousness in a context where cultural and religious factors have emerged as universal forces capable of promoting ethnic cohesion and unity.

In **Chapter 3**, 'Between *minkaohan* and *minkaomin*: discourses on "assimilation" amongst bilingual urban Uyghurs', David Tobin examines how Chinese party-state discourses on modernisation and 'bilingual education' seek to produce the boundaries of, and order the meanings attributed to, the national and the ethnic in Xinjiang. In representing the Uyghur language as 'backward', the state positions the Uyghur minority on a rung below that imagined for the majority Han. Furthermore, this model of nation-building seeks to disconnect Uyghurs from their existing linguistic and cultural community through the elimination of the Uyghur language in PRC education. However, as Tobin shows, as they receive, negotiate and resist such discourses, young, urban, bilingual Uyghurs produce communities of a different kind. These alternative communities find shape in shared practices and social relations, in daily experiences that are real and visceral

rather than 'imagined'. While meanings attributed by individuals to the use of the Uyghur language vary, that language retains a fixed viscerality and symbolic power to determine who is, and is not, a Uyghur.

In seeking to predict possible futures for Uyghurs as 'bilingual' schooling is rolled out region-wide, Tobin presents two in-depth, ethnographic case studies. At the request of his interviewees, Mukhtar and Mahigül, interviews were conducted primarily in English – a circumstance which attests to the status of Mandarin as language of last resort among the Uyghur youth. Tobin's case studies illustrate a divergent social trend apparent in Xinjiang since the second half of the 1990s. Mukhtar's stance represents resistance to the imagined Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*) while Mahigül's position is better described as accommodation. Yet at the same time, the attitudes articulated by these respondents bring nuance to the fixed boundaries of *minkaohan* and *minkaomin*. Rather than language use itself, Mahigül and Mukhtar emphasise the importance of a person's attitude towards language use. Through this lens, only those *minkaohan* who actively *prefer* to use Mandarin are placed outside of the self-identified Uyghur community (cf. Smith Finley 2013a, 368, 375; also Baki Elterish in this volume). For all other Chinese-educated and Chinese-speaking youngsters, Mandarin is simply seen as an unavoidable reality and necessity, which must be instrumentally negotiated to maximise the chance of finding decent employment in a labour market plagued by ethnically based hiring discrimination. As Tobin rightly underlines, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that by learning Mandarin, Uyghurs will 'become Chinese'. After all, neighbouring Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Tajiks did not 'become Russian' simply by dint of being Russian speakers (cf. Smith Finley 2007a, 221–2). Ultimately, coercive integration or 'impact integration' (see Chen in this volume) is unlikely to produce a willing and united multi-ethnic, national community; rather, it will produce destabilising effects as it strengthens Uyghurs' attachment to the mother tongue and their ethnic group.

Continuing the focus on 'bilingual' education, Ablimit Baki Elterish shows in **Chapter 4** how the use of Uyghur or Chinese in interaction reveals much about contemporary identity construction. Starting from the premise that urban society in Xinjiang offers spaces in which people may become bilingual naturally through social experience, he compares language use among older people (Uyghurs aged 30 plus) and the youth (those aged between 15 and 29), as well as among *minkaohan* and *minkaomin*. Baki Elterish pays special attention to the internal identity politics produced among Uyghurs by the state policy turn towards Chinese as sole medium of education. His study illustrates how judgments concerning authenticity are often based on an individual's use of language: with whom and when does a person speak Chinese or Uyghur? And, more importantly, what is their personal attitude (see Tobin in this volume) towards the use of either language?

The most significant finding in Baki Elterish's study, and one that helps to gauge the success (or failure) of the state's 'impact integration' – or linguistic assimilation – agenda, is that next to no respondents use only Chinese (and no Uyghur) for verbal communication. While *minkaohan* use mainly Chinese for reading and writing, most use predominantly Uyghur – or code-switch – in verbal

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