

'Securitisisation, Insecurity and Conflict in Contemporary Xinjiang, China' - 'Titrisation, insécurité et conflits dans le Xinjiang contemporain, Chine'

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En 2013, un véhicule utilitaire a atterri les touristes à la place Tian'anmen de Chine et a pris feu. Trois occupants et deux touristes ont été tués, alors que le manque de renseignements autorisés, alimentés par la censure médiatique, a donné lieu à des spéculations sur les médias sociaux chinois. Un internaute a soutenu que plutôt qu'une attaque terroriste planifiée, c'était une protestation suicide, en écrivant: «Les pétitionnaires au désespoir choisiraient de mourir ensemble comme une famille, parce que ceux laissés derrière souffriraient encore plus. Un autre a suggéré que les occupants du véhicule ne trouvaient aucune solution à leurs problèmes sociaux, et ont été forcés de prendre des mesures extrêmes. Quelques jours plus tard, la Chine colorait l'incident comme la «première grande attaque suicide» de la nation, perpétrée par des «militants» séparatistes du Xinjiang. Depuis lors, une série d'incidents violents ont eu lieu, y compris une attaque de couteau à la gare de Kunming en 2014, un attentat-suicide à la gare ferroviaire d'Ürümchi Sud en 2014, un attentat suicide sur un marché Ürümchi en 2014, une attaque contre la police et les bureaux du gouvernement à Yarkand en 2014, et une attaque contre la mine de charbon Sogan à Aqsu en 2015. En réponse, la Chine a accéléré sa répression en cours sur les «3 maux» (séparatisme, extrémisme, terrorisme) et a lancé une campagne antiterroriste . Dans ce contexte, cinq spécialistes des études ouïghours examineront les significations de ce virage apparent aux conflits violents. Ils demanderont dans quelle mesure la violence accrue est-elle liée aux politiques de titrisation de l'État? Nous concevons la titrisation au sens large, incluant ses manifestations évidentes (présence militaire et policière accrue), ainsi que les politiques impopulaires qui portent atteinte aux droits humains fondamentaux: migration; l'imposition de l'éducation chinoise-moyenne; et la répression de religion.

Communication 1 : Joanne Smith Finley

'The Wang Lixiong Prophecy: Has Xinjiang Finally been "Palestinised"?'

In *Your Western Regions, My East Turkestan* (2007), Chinese dissident Wang Lixiong warned against the 'Palestinisation' of the Xinjiang question, defined as reaching 'a critical point in time' where Uyghurs and Han Chinese enter an interminable 'ethnic war'. At the root of this transition was, he wrote, Han in-migration, competition for resources and employment, religious restrictions, and a securitisation strategy that treats symptoms rather than root causes. Following the knife attack on Han civilians in Kunming (2014), seen by many as a premeditated incident of Uyghur terror, Wang reminded us that he had foreseen just such a trajectory seven years earlier. But how comparable are the Palestinian and the Uyghur situations? There are some obvious parallels, such as occupation of contested land; the notion of second-class citizenship in one's own territory; local unemployment and economic exclusion; expropriation of land, water and resources; restrictions on religious activity; state surveillance, repression, and violence (including against children); and the conduct of an 'all-out war' against terror that sees only today.

But to what extent can Xinjiang be realistically described as 'Palestinised'? How far has the absence of formal channels of opposition caused Uyghur individuals to develop the level of calm towards death required by acts of suicide bombing against civilians? This paper addresses these and other questions in an attempt to trace causal links between securitisation strategy, increased insecurity and violence across three contemporary case studies: China-Xinjiang, Israel-Palestine and Turkey-Kurdistan. It concludes by suggesting a more convincing parallel: the cycle of atrocity and reaction that marked the end of France's colonial rule in 1950s Algeria.

Communication 2 : Amit Elterish

Words and Images of Xinjiang: Good for Securitisation but Bad for Security?

Ethnic conflict related to Uyghurs in China's far western region of Xinjiang has worsened in recent years in spite of increased securitisation throughout this region. The present article examines securitisation of ethnic conflict in Xinjiang through words and images as well as its impacts on security in this region. Using securitisation theory as a tool, the article analyses the declared existential threats of ethnic separatism, illegal religious activities and terrorism, and corresponding measures such as launching campaigns for ethnic unity, imposing religious and cultural restrictions, deterring violent behaviour that the state has taken to tackle these threats. The article argues that the increased securitisation is adding insecurity in this region.

Communication 3 : Rachel Harris

Islam by smartphone: the changing sounds of Uyghur religiosity

Over the past few years, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China has been caught in a spiral of rising religiosity, police crackdowns, and interethnic violence between Muslim Uyghurs and the majority Han Chinese, a situation widely blamed by state media on 'online Islamic extremist propaganda'. In this remote region, which is rather effectively shielded from international media attention, there are particular problems with the dominant state narratives and lack of credible alternative voices. As Davide Panagia (2009) argues, an exclusive focus on reasoned debate misses the wider picture of political life and creates a de facto partition between those who can and cannot speak, between appropriate and inappropriate sounds.

How might a focus on alternative ways of listening disrupt the dominant narratives and enable new understandings of changing patterns of religiosity and the rising violence in the region? This paper focuses on "inappropriate sounds": examples of religious media which operate "beyond text" to capture the popular social imagination and challenge social norms in often disturbing ways. These include examples of Qur'anic recitation, sermons and religious songs, and videos which promote piety through highly affective - shocking, terrifying or moving - sounds and images. Recent work in the anthropology of the Middle East explores how online forms of imagery and vocal performance accessed by Muslims shape new forms of religious sociality and impact upon religious structures of affect (Hirschkind 2012). This

paper focuses on the persuasive role of mediated sound in promoting new ways of being Muslim in Xinjiang. We trace the paths of religious media items as they travel across different media platforms, provoking powerful emotional responses and accruing conflicting layers of meaning as people comment and share these items via social media, and respond to them in their everyday lives.

Communication 4 : Remi Castets

Communication 5 : Mamtimyn Sunuodula

“Let Xinjiang's Ethnic Youth Enjoy the Fruits of Splendid Chinese Culture”: Language, Discourse and Securitization of Language-in Education

The change in the medium of instruction (MOI) language from Uyghur to Mandarin Chinese in Uyghur education from early 2000s was a critical turning point in the history of Uyghur education. It effectively spelled the end to the decades of modern Uyghur MOI education. The overwhelming emphasis was placed on achieving Mandarin Chinese proficiency among the Uyghurs and it was discursively constructed as an imperative for economic development, national unity and political stability. However, the change is seen by many Uyghurs as an attempt to weaken their ethnic identity and a threat to the survival of Uyghurs as a distinct ethnic group. In this article I discuss why and how the political discourse reconstructs the education of Uyghurs in Chinese MOI as an imperative for Chinese nation-building and political stability. I also demonstrate, using the Copenhagen School's 'securitization' framework, why the loss of Uyghur MOI education is discursively constructed as an existential threat by Uyghur elites. The article reveals that the state securitizes the Chinese MOI education by directly linking it to national unity and political stability, which are constructed as among its core interests and major referent of its security. While Uyghur elites engage in securitizing speech acts about the state's language education policy, they do so in order to raise the issue on the agenda of the state and the Uyghur public, and seek to safeguard Uyghur MOI through China's political process and within existing national legal framework. While Uyghur elites may not seek authority to resolve the issue outside the normal political and legal framework, it will be shown that Chinese government securitizes the Uyghur elites' speech acts to their detriment. This process, known as security dilemma, leads to more insecurity, in contrast to the state's claim of these policies.