The Art of Symbolic Resistance: Uyghur Identities and Uyghur–Han Relations in Contemporary Xinjiang
JOANNE SMITH FINLEY
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"Nowhere does the conflict between the two models of a political system – empire and nation-state – manifest itself more acutely or more ambiguously than in the People's Republic of China," wrote Stevan Harrell in his now classic volume, *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (University of Washington Press, 2001). And nowhere, one may add, has this conflict between the simultaneous efforts at promoting and diluting ethnic identities resulted in so much inter-ethnic enmity and political violence than in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Laid bare during the murderous riots of July 2009 in the regional capital Urumqi – the most deadly inter-ethnic incident in the post-Mao era – and compounded by blanket repression, ethnic tensions in Xinjiang have now reached a high point, boiling over into recurrent acts of terrorism and the clandestine flight of thousands of Uyghur refugees to Southeast Asian countries. How did it come to that?

In what is undoubtedly the most richly detailed, "thick" anthropological monograph of contemporary Uyghur identity published to date, Joanne Smith Finley – a lecturer in Chinese studies at Newcastle University's school of modern language – offers some answers through the minute analysis of salient aspects of Uyghur identity discourse in the two decades that preceded the July 2009 conflagration. Researching in a particularly difficult environment, where fieldwork on sensitive issues such as ethnic relations was (and remains) off-limit to foreign scholars, Smith Finley found that "the most viable method of enquiry was unstructured interview (in the shape of informal conversation), followed up by semi-structured interview" (p. xviii). Despite this challenging methodology, she brings back an unprecedented wealth of descriptive material, cogently organized in seven tightly knit chapters that manage the rare feat of being both evocative and exhaustive.

The author shows how the very notion of resistance – rather than mere differentiation – took a growing importance in Uyghur discourse and self-identification through the 1990s and early 2000s, in response to a powerful assimilative drive by the Chinese state. Uyghur identity – which the author argues cannot be reduced to a construct by the Chinese state, and which always included a pan-ethnic dimension larger than the mere "Oasis Identities" described by Justin Rudelson (Columbia University Press, 1998) – evolved and morphed rapidly, simultaneously strengthened and weakened by the accelerated Sinicization of the region.

"What catalyzed identity change" [in the 1990s], Smith Finley writes, "stemmed almost exclusively from the ill-conceived policy of Han in-migration to Xinjiang" (p. 409). As a consequence, Uyghurs faced "escalating inequalities in the spheres of language use; education; employment and wealth distribution; accelerated resource exploitation; environmental damage; and an absence of true indigenous political representation" (p. xxiii). It should be no surprise, the author tells us, that "development minus equality equals conflict" (p. 74).

Each chapter deals with a specific enquiry: the socio-economic background of Xinjiang (chapter one); Uyghur discourse and stereotyping of the Hans (chapter two); the ways symbolic spatial and social segregation is articulated and enforced (chapter three); the hidden transcripts of Uyghur popular music (chapter four); the sources and dynamics of Islamic renewal (chapter five); endogamy and intermarriage

(chapter six); and the status of *minkaohan* (Chinese-educated Uyghurs, chapter seven.) Although the author divides the volume into pre- and post-1997 periods (with the Yining/Ghulja uprising as the juncture), most of the observations made apply to the entire period under consideration (1991–2011).

One of the most interesting chapters deals with the re-invention of religion by what Smith Finley calls "Islamic reverts" precisely at the time when the state increases its suppression of Uyghur Islam and religiosity. Responding to a desire to draw new "symbolic barriers" with an ever more present Han-Chinese entity, Islamic reverts embrace a discourse (and sometimes, but not always, practices) that is part resistance, part avoidance of the new Chinese order. Among the sources of this religious renewal, the author identifies "a form of local opposition to national oppression; a response to failed development; a desire to return to social egalitarianism; a response to frustrated ethno-political aspirations; a reaction against modernity and return to cultural 'purity' and a vehicle for personal and national reform" (p. 236). While Smith Finley stresses that at the time of her research this process had been "symbolic, peaceful and cathartic … rather than violent or extremist, as the state suggests" (p. 236), we can now identify the emergence of a parallel phenomenon: "instant reverts." Seemingly acting more out of a desire for spectacular (and suicidal) revenge against all things Han than in pursuit of a clear political agenda, "instant reverts" have turned to cyber-jihadist resources – much as they do in the West – as a motivating force to carry out indiscriminate violent attacks such as the knife attack at Kunming train station in March 2014 or the car bombings in Urumqi in May of the same year.

The Art of Symbolic Resistance is an indispensable volume in the field of Xinjiang and ethnic-relation studies in post-1989 China, as well as useful addition to the field of political anthropology of the kind pioneered by James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1992).

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New Challenges for Maturing Democracies in Korea and Taiwan
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Taiwan and Korea share similar developmental trajectories and experiences of democratization and within comparative democratization research they have become comparators nonpareil, with particularly strong work on political institutions, voting behaviour and political attitudes. As "Confucian heritage democracies" that have democratized organically from within (albeit with encouragement from the US), Taiwan and Korea are a living rebuttal to the refusal of authoritarian rulers in other polities with Confucian legacies such as Singapore and China to make the transition.

Taiwan and Korea are two of a small number of third-wave democracies that have become consolidated liberal democracies. Others, like fellow middle-income polities Argentina, Turkey and Mexico, have failed to do so. By most measures, Korea and Taiwan are extraordinarily successful democracies. In terms of political rights and composite measures of governance, they lag only slightly behind advanced liberal