
CHINESE STATE POLICIES TOWARDS TIBET AND XINJIANG: WHY NOT THE HONG KONG SCENARIO?

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Abstract

This article investigates what influences a state's choice of methods to resolve its territorial integrity issues and China's strategies towards Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong in particular (or, to be more specific, what causes the differences between these strategies). Chinese state policies in four areas — political, economic, cultural and foreign policy — are compared to reveal what the differences between the Chinese approaches towards the three regions are, and a framework of analysis based on a modification of Milton Esman's theory is developed and applied to define how the selected factors influence China's policies towards the three regions and which of them were the ones determining the PRC's choice of different methods.

Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC), a multi-ethnic state with strong regional and even global aspirations, has been (and still is) facing both internal and external challenges to its sovereignty. Since 1949 China has participated in 23 territorial disputes with its neighbours only,¹ yet it was capable of resolving most of its land border issues and regaining some territories from former colonial powers. Meanwhile, the Taiwan question and, most notably, inner challenges to its sovereignty remain unsettled, and the latter may become one of the main obstacles on its way to the top of the international system since 'a state cannot

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¹ M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 1.

vie for global power if its legitimacy is in question domestically'.² After communistic ideology was pushed aside by Deng Xiaoping's reforms, Han nationalism and economic development became the two basic pillars of the contemporary Chinese system, thus preserving territorial integrity is essential for the Chinese central government if it wants to stay legitimate in the eyes of the Chinese nation and prevent the entire system from collapsing.

There are a number of methods to settle sovereignty and territorial integrity issues, from coercive to cooperative, autonomy being one of them. In the PRC, officially two types of autonomy exist: the one that is granted to the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions under the 'one country, two systems' principle and the regional autonomy that is provided to minority regions by the Law on Regional National Autonomy (LRNA).

The 'one country, two systems' principle means that 'while PRC retains its sovereignty over a contested territory, it nevertheless tolerates non-communistic systems of governance and economy to co-exist within the boundaries of Communist China'.³ Hong Kong and Macao, former colonies of Britain and Portugal respectively, have been allowed to preserve their capitalist economies, quasi-democratic political systems, and mostly independent judiciary for at least 50 years after the handover, at the same time transferring foreign policy and defence matters into the hands of the central PRC government.

The second type of autonomy, regional autonomy, is given to those regions that have a higher population of a particular officially recognised minority ethnic group (*shaoshu minzu*). According to the law, these regions enjoy a certain degree of autonomy over cultural and religious matters, the local economy, and education and have broader legislative powers than the regular provinces of the PRC. However, in real life none of this works since all decisions made by the local government are subject to revision by the central government. Beijing tightly controls almost every aspect of life in autonomous regions and all demands for greater autonomy are rejected and silenced, often by force.

Currently there are currently five autonomous minority regions in China — Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia and Guangxi — but only in Xinjiang and Tibet are ethnic unrest and separatist activities intense enough to pose a threat

² Jessica Koch, 'Economic Development and Ethnic Separatism in Western China: A New Model of Peripheral Nationalism', *Asia Research Center Working Paper No. 134*, Perth: Murdoch University, August 2006, p. 19.

³ Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001, p. 208.

to the Chinese state (or at least to challenge the legitimacy of its government's rule).

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) is China's largest province, comprising one-sixteenth of the PRC's territory. Since it is located in the north-west of the country and borders eight states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Pakistan and Afghanistan), it has always been of extreme strategic importance for China. It is rich in natural resources and holds some of the China's largest deposits of oil, gas, coal and uranium. Moreover, it also provides access to the even more plentiful energy resources in Central Asia, which are crucial for the developing Chinese economy. Out of Xinjiang's 21.81 million (2010)⁴ inhabitants from 47 ethnic groups, the biggest one is the Uyghurs, a Muslim Turkic ethnic group making up about 47% of the population of the XUAR, Han Chinese being the second biggest. Historically, Xinjiang was under Chinese influence since 200 BC, and in 1884 it was fully incorporated into the Chinese Empire.⁵ During the Chinese civil war, the independent East Turkestan Islamic Republic was declared twice (in 1933 and 1944), but in 1949 it was occupied by the Chinese Communists. Despite the centuries of Chinese control, the region has a continuous history of nationalist struggle, Uyghur riots against Chinese rule occurring from time to time. The collapse of the Soviet Union, which resulted in the independence of the neighbouring Muslim countries, and the growth of radical Islamism in the world, fostered the Uyghur push for independence, and a number of nationalist organisations fighting for Uyghur ethnic rights and/or seeking Xinjiang's secession appeared, the most radical ones resorting to nationalist terrorism.

The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) neighbours Xinjiang and is the second biggest but least densely populated province of the PRC. The region is rich in different minerals (at least 16 major deposits of copper, iron, lead, zinc and other minerals have been found⁶) and its windy climate and vast water resources make it a perfect place to develop alternative energy projects. Unlike Xinjiang, Tibet has a long history of independent statehood; a Tibetan empire existed since

⁴ 'Xinjiang Renaissance'. <http://www.bjreview.com.cn/Cover_Stories_Series_2011/node_55661.htm> [2011-12-02]

⁵ Davide Giglio, 'Separatism and the War on Terror in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region'. Thesis for the partial completion of the requirements of the Certificate-of-Training at United Nations Peace Support Operations, Williamsburg: Peace Operations Training Institute, p. 7

⁶ 'China and Britain ready to exploit Tibet's natural resources'. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/2793852/China-and-Britain-ready-to-exploit-Tibets-natural-resources.html>> [2011-12-08]

the 7th century. Although during some periods of time it was subordinated to other countries, it has always preserved a high degree of autonomy and its own government. In 1951 the state was occupied by Chinese Communists and in 1959, after a suppressed uprising, the Dalai Lama and his government went into exile in India. Unlike Uyghurs, Tibetans tend to use peaceful conventional means in voicing their demands for independence.

Despite a number of differences between these regions, such as cohesiveness of leadership, history of statehood, or international support for their cause, they also share a lot of similarities — economic backwardness, deposits of natural resources, distinct religion, etc. — so there is no surprise that they are both subjects of similar Chinese state policies.

Meanwhile, the type of autonomy that exists in Hong Kong and Macao represents a genuine autonomy that is lacking in Tibet and Xinjiang. Political accommodation in Hong Kong⁷ is a result of negotiations between the United Kingdom and the PRC. Hong Kong, a territory on the PRC's southern coast, is more than 1000 times smaller than the regions described above and with its population of 7 million people is among the most densely populated areas in the world. It became a colony of Britain in 1842, handed over to the UK by a treaty with China. In 1898 another treaty was signed, transferring the territory north of Hong Kong, known as Kowloon and the New Territories, into British hands for 99 years. As the expiry date for the lease was approaching, the PRC made it clear that it expected to restore its sovereignty not only over the New Territories, but also Hong Kong. After complicated negotiations between the UK and PRC, an agreement was reached in 1984. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) was established, and a system known as 'one country, two systems' was launched in 1997.

Throughout its 15 years of existence, the 'one country, two systems' solution has appeared to be highly effective and proved that extensive autonomy is possible under authoritarian Chinese rule. When it comes to minority regions however, the PRC is more than unwilling to give them any autonomy. Why has China chosen different methods to solve its territorial issues? Why are some regions granted autonomy while others are tightly controlled and suppressed with coercive measures?

⁷ Macao is not included in this analysis because 1) it is much smaller and less populous than Hong Kong and economically as well as politically not significant enough to be placed next to Xinjiang or Tibet and 2) unlike Britain, Portugal was not legally obliged to return Macao to China and voluntarily decided to do so as a result of its de-colonisation process. Thus it did not try to challenge the PRC's sovereignty.

From a broader perspective, what influences a state's choice of conflict management methods? And how is it possible that different strategies are applied to different regions by the same state? The main question raised in this article is what factors determine the differences in Chinese state policies towards Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong. To answer it, a framework for analysis based on a modification of Milton J. Esman's theory of ethnic mobilisation is developed, because even though separatism, ethnic conflicts, and other types of sovereignty issues cannot complain of a lack of attention from scholars, there is no coherent theory dedicated to explain a state's choice of methods in dealing with separatist issues. Although these are different types of territorial integrity issues (Tibet and Xinjiang are cases of ethnic separatism, while Hong Kong is a former British colony reclaimed by China), I believe that these regions can be compared and the same methods can be used to analyse these cases since 1) all of them are administrative units of the same state, 2) special rules, different from those in regular administrative units of the PRC, are applied to them, and 3) all of them pose (or have posed) a challenge to Chinese sovereignty and its nationalist aspirations; whether the challenges are internal or external, on an ethnic, legal or any other basis, from the state's standpoint the essence of the issue in all cases remains the same: it is perceived as a threat that has to be eliminated.

1. Framework for analysis: factors influencing a state's choice of solutions for territorial integrity issues

Territorial disputes are most often analysed in the context of the inter-state disputes over the definition of borders, i.e. they concentrate on *external* challenges to sovereignty. Meanwhile scholars interested in *internal* challenges — separatism and ethnic conflicts (these two terms are used as synonyms in this article) — can be divided into two main categories: 1) those trying to explain the sources of separatism and to define the conditions under which it is likely to occur and/or to be successful and 2) those interested in intrastate conflict management as well as strategies and methods used in such conflicts. Among the latter are academic works (relatively few unfortunately) that focus on the strategies central authorities employ to deal with the separatist issue, such as studies of John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary⁸ and the aforementioned Milton Esman. They all name a number

⁸ John McGarry, Brendan O'Leary, 'Introduction: the Macro-political Regulations of Ethnic Conflict'

of different strategies a state employs and categorise them according to the main goal a state pursues (elimination *vs.* management of ethnic differences), but they do not provide any explanation *why* the specific methods are chosen.

To understand why a state prefers some strategies and methods to others is to answer the question of what influences a government's decisions on this issue. As a basis for my model, I will use Milton Esman's works on the process of the mobilisation of ethnic groups and state strategies for management of ethnic conflicts.

Esman names a number of different strategies a state may employ — genocide, forced and induced assimilation, exclusion, power sharing, etc. — and classifies them according to the goal the state pursues (homogenisation *vs.* acceptance of pluralism) and type of methods it employs (coercive *vs.* conventional).⁹ He states that a 'government's goals and how it implements them are affected by the factors akin to those that facilitate or constrain the very ethnic movements that challenge them'.¹⁰ Unfortunately, he himself does not elaborate on the factors limiting the states, but he extensively analyses the factors influencing ethnic movements. These are political opportunity structure, leadership, ideology, organisation, goals, resources, and strategies and tactics.

As not all the factors make sense in the context of the actions of a state, this list has to be modified and adapted to the specifics of a state, and for the PRC in particular.

- *Political opportunity structure* is a factor external to the ethnic movement; it is the environment that is set by the state and in which the ethnic movement has to act. Meanwhile, *organisation* indicates the movement's internal organisational structure, which depends on its own decisions, i.e. it is an internal factor. Thus in the state context these two can be merged into one, as they both are internal factors for the state, holding almost the same meaning.
- Because China's political system has recently been depersonalised — since Deng Xiaoping, the personalities of political leaders have not affected state politics significantly — it would be more relevant to analyse the coherence of attitudes inside the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) instead of the *leadership* factor. Due to the closed Chinese political sys-

in John McGarry, Brendan O'Leary (ed.), *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. 1–41.

⁹ Milton J. Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

tem and its lack of transparency, however, such data is not accessible. This factor will therefore not be included in the analysis.

- State *goals* may be understood in the way they are defined by Esman: ethnic homogenisation or acceptance of pluralism.
- The notion of *resources* here, first of all, means the political, military and economic assets accessible to the *state*. Yet I believe that the resources *owned by the disputed territory* also matter since gaining/preserving access to these resources not only motivates the state, but also may define the approach it chooses in order to acquire and use these resources in the best possible way.
- *Strategies and tactics* in this case mean the strategies of those challenging a state's territorial integrity (not the strategies of the state itself, since the latter is a dependent variable of the research).
- *International factors* are added because they are considered to be one of the most important determinants in a number of academic works on the separatist issue. This includes not only international support for the state and the ethnic group in the struggle, but also international status (prestige) of the regime overall¹¹ and indirect international influences such as the collapse of the Soviet Union or Kosovo independence.
- Finally, since this analysis involves both ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts, an additional factor, *type of conflict*, has to be included not to overlook the role played by the ethnic element.

Thus the final list of factors that influence the PRC's decisions towards Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong and that will be analysed in this article is the following:

1. state political structure and organisation,
2. type of conflict,
3. ideology,
4. state goals,
5. resources (both those of the state and the disputed territory),
6. strategies and tactics of the (ethnic) group(s),
7. international factors.

¹¹ Gurr, Harff, p. 86.

2. Chinese state policies towards Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong

2.1. Chinese policies towards Tibet and Xinjiang

2.1.1. Political and military measures

National minorities in China officially enjoy autonomy and are subject to various types of preferential treatment. Tibet and Xinjiang, being regions dominated by national minorities, were granted the status of autonomous regions, which gives the locals broader rights in the areas of language, education, political representation, administrative appointments, local economic and financial policies, and the use of local natural resources. However, the system, officially described as autonomy, in fact ‘enacts heteronomy, or rule by others’.¹² All autonomous government organs are under the leadership of the State Council and must obey it.¹³ All decisions made by the local government are subject to revision by the central government: any regulations related to the exercise of autonomy (local legislation) ‘shall be submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) for approval before they go into effect’.¹⁴ Due to this double-check system, adoption of any law in the autonomous region is even more complicated than it is in a regular province.¹⁵ Even the right of organs of autonomy to ‘alter or suspend’ policies or orders promulgated by higher-level government units is made a subject to approval by those superior units.¹⁶ Beijing retains veto power over decisions of the local People’s Congress, and the Supreme Court retains supervisory power over local courts.¹⁷

Chinese autonomy law specifies *shaoshu minzu* representation in local and national government (at least 12% of the NPC’s members have to be minorities).¹⁸

¹² Gardner Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent*, Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2004, p. 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴ Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, 1982 <<http://www.hkhrm.org.hk/english/law/const02.html>> [2012-03-30].

¹⁵ Michael C. Davis, ‘Autonomy and Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Tibet’. Panel on ‘Local Resistance and External Influence’, ISA Annual Meeting, March 26–29, 2008, San Francisco, p. 4.

¹⁶ Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang*, pp. 15–16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Barry Sautman, ‘Preferential Policies for Ethnic Minorities in China: The Case of Xinjiang’. *Working Papers in the Social Sciences*, No. 32, Clear Water Bay: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 1997, p. 25.

There are also many minority cadres at 'village and township levels, yet an extremely small number advance to positions in the central administration'¹⁹ or in the CCP, where the vast majority of state power is vested.²⁰

Administrative division of the autonomous regions is used as a political tool to reduce the power of the dominant ethnic community. The TAR comprises only half of historical Tibet; the rest of it is divided and assigned to the provinces of Yunnan, Qinghai and Sichuan.²¹ Meanwhile Xinjiang was divided into constituencies in such a manner that other ethnic groups would gain a disproportionately large amount of power in comparison to the size of their population in the region. Twenty-seven 'subautonomies' were established, in 15 of which the titular *shaoshu minzu* comprised less than 50% of the population (in some even less than 15%).²²

Another element of Chinese strategy is political indoctrination. Cadres are regularly sent to monitor the situation and 'improve grassroots party organizations'²³ in rural areas, where most minority people live. Despite that, the participation of minorities in the activities of the Communist Party remains low because 1) being an atheist is a precondition for becoming a CCP member²⁴ and people are unwilling to give up their religion and 2) they do not see any prospects for gaining any real power there. 'Government institutions have been heavily colonized by Hans, and have been subordinated at all levels to the Han party structure'.²⁵ All the significant positions in the ruling apparatus, both at the state and autonomous region levels, including the local party secretary, are occupied by Han; not a single party secretary of a national autonomous region was ever actually of that nationality.²⁶ The position of the chief executive belongs to minorities according to law, but he is appointed by the central government. The central government uses

¹⁹ Koch, p. 8.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 7.

²¹ Michael Davis, p. 2.

²² Gardner Bovington, 'Heteronomy and Its Discontents: "Minzu Regional Autonomy" in Xinjiang', Book: Morris Rossabi (ed.), *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004, p. 118.

²³ June Teufel Dreyer, 'Economic Development in Tibet Under the People's Republic of China'. Book: Barry Sautman, June Teufel Dreyer (eds.), *Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006, p. 149.

²⁴ Koch, p. 7.

²⁵ Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang*, p. 4.

²⁶ Li Datong, 'China's Tibet: Question With No Answer', 23 April 2009 <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/chinas-tibet-question-with-no-answer>> [20012-04-29].

chief executives to announce unpopular political decisions and implement them, with no real power given to them.²⁷

Chinese military presence and security measures are high in both regions, but in Tibet it serves mainly to deter India while in Xinjiang these are used to fight ‘terrorism, separatism and religious extremism’²⁸ inside the region. The Chinese government began the crack down in Xinjiang in 1996, shortly after the first meeting of the Shanghai Five,²⁹ and the grip was tightened after 9/11 when the ‘Global War on Terror’ was announced. This security policy consists of several elements: anti-terrorism operations, demonstration of military capacities and forceful suppression of Uyghur demonstrations that often results in the deaths of protesters. Yearly anti-terrorism ‘Strike Hard’ campaigns aim to capture large numbers of suspected criminals in massive dragnets and prosecute them according to an accelerated schedule. Tens of thousands of people are arrested annually for terrorism-related activities, which can involve anything, including communication with foreign journalists,³⁰ and many are executed.

According to Hannum and Lillich, legal autonomy requires an independent local legislature not subject to central veto power, a locally chosen executive, an independent judiciary, local decision-making not compromised by the centre’s ‘reservation ... of general discretionary powers’, and binding power-sharing arrangements.³¹ It is obvious that ‘autonomy’ in Xinjiang and Tibet fails to satisfy any of these criteria. The current system based on autonomy laws and official rhetoric creates an illusion of autonomy, but it is used to control and subordinate those regions. They are politically under the strict control of the central state, and extensive security measures are applied to suppress any turmoil in the region, the preservation of political stability being a top priority for the government.

²⁷ Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang*, p. 4.

²⁸ Sharon LaFraniere, ‘China Starts Two-Month Security Crackdown in Western Region’, 16 August 2011, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/17/world/asia/17china.html>> [2012-04-29].

²⁹ Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, ‘Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China’, Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, January 2008 <<http://www.apcss.org/apcss-library/publications/uyghur-muslim-ethnic-separatism-in-xinjiang-china/>> [2012-05-01].

³⁰ Chien-peng Chung, ‘Confronting Terrorism and Other Evils in China: All Quiet on the Western Front?’ *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4(2), 2006, p. 75.

³¹ Hurst Hannum, Richard B. Lillich. 1980. ‘The Concept of Autonomy in International Law’. *American Journal of International Law* 74(4), p. 886–887.

2.1.2. Socio-economic policies

Tibet and Xinjiang are economically backward regions with poorly developed commercial capacities, yet rich in raw materials. For a long time, they suffered from the central state's unequal economic development policies, which favoured coastal areas. Tibetans are in the worst position, ranking in last place among all Chinese regions in almost every single indicator.

China recently changed its position and started putting efforts into improving the economic situation in these regions, trying to eliminate one of the major sources of tensions and unrest. In 1999 the PRC launched the 'Go West' campaign that promotes business and encourages investment in the two western provinces. The programme includes elements such as favourable rates for lease of land, tax breaks, and large-scale infrastructure projects. Since then average income has been rising constantly, mostly because of extensive governmental subsidies and a number of state-funded infrastructure projects.

Extraction of natural resources and production of raw materials remain the main driving forces of the economies of Tibet and Xinjiang, especially the latter. 'Most of the region's resources are exported unprocessed to China proper, and are re-imported as manufactured goods at higher prices.'³² In Xinjiang it is mainly extraction of oil, coal and aluminium, as well as production of wool and cotton, and in Tibet this involves the mining industries, timber, and electricity, since due to its climate Tibet is a perfect spot for wind and hydro-electric projects. Tourism, followed by growing Tibetan involvement in handicrafts, textile production, and other traditional crafts have recently become other features of the Tibetan economy.

The two regions rely heavily on state subsidies, which make up more than half of their budgets. According to the PRC, the subsidies these regions receive exceed the value of natural resources transported to the heartland.³³ Local business is disproportionately dominated by state enterprises: 'four-fifths of the provinces' industrial assets remain in state hands, in contrast to prosperous southern provinces such as Guangdong',³⁴ and therefore the local economy is not self-sufficient and entirely depends on state subsidies, investment and poverty reduction measures.

Beijing also uses preferential policies and affirmative action programmes, hoping to create an 'ethnic middle-class that is, if not pro-Chinese, at least not

³² Giglio, p. 7.

³³ Sautman, 'Preferential Policies', p. 34.

³⁴ Matthew Moneyhon, 'Controlling Xinjiang: Autonomy on China's "New Frontier"', *Asian-Pacific Law and Policy Journal*, 3(1), Winter 2002, p. 147,

willing to tolerate instability in the region'.³⁵ There are job quotas reflecting the ethnic composition in the state sector.³⁶ Minority people can enter college with lower examination scores, find jobs in state-owned enterprises with fewer qualifications, and join some governmental bodies more easily than their Han counterparts.³⁷ Minority students in Xinjiang boarding schools do not have to pay for tuition and books, and they get free food, clothing, lodging and study materials.³⁸ Large numbers of minority students with the best grades are sent to Han schools in the heartland under the banner 'intellectual aid scheme'³⁹ and later given first priority for good jobs, thus encouraging them to adapt to Han culture.

When it comes to higher education, the situation is slightly different, because many minority people live in poverty, and despite the discounts, higher education is beyond their capacities. Most minority students study in minority universities, which are less prestigious than other higher education institutions in China. They have limited possibilities to enrol in the key state universities; *shaoshu minzu* students go there as part of the so-called minority cohorts and have to sign a contract obliging them to go back to their regions after graduation.⁴⁰

In addition, an exception from the one-child policy is made for minorities, allowing *shaoshu minzu* in urban areas to have two children, and in rural areas, where there is a bigger need for a labour force, three. (Meanwhile Han can have one in urban areas and two in rural ones.) However, minorities are dissatisfied with any kind of family planning regulations, which are considered incompatible with religious beliefs and an attempt to expand the one-child policy to *shaoshu minzu* in 1985 caused major protests in Urumqi.

The underlying idea of the PRC's economic approach 'is that if the western regions have sufficient development, then the minorities will prosper, be less restive, give less support for separatist activities, and be more integrated into China'.⁴¹ However, current policies are not bringing the expected effect; on the contrary, they are just deepening the cleavages in society.

³⁵ Chung, p. 80.

³⁶ Sautman, 'Preferential policies', p. 23.

³⁷ Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang*, p. 37.

³⁸ Sautman, 'Preferential policies', p. 23.

³⁹ Kalsang Wangdu, 'Making Tibetans in China — Dislocated Secondary Education'. 18 September 2011 <<http://www.merabsarpa.com/education/making-tibetans-in-china-dislocated-secondary-education>> [2012-05-03].

⁴⁰ Sautman, 'Preferential policies', p. 11.

⁴¹ Elizabeth Van Wie Davis.

First of all, Tibetans and Uyghurs feel like they are being exploited by Beijing, which is taking away resources without adequate compensation. For example, the petroleum industry contributes to over 60% of Xinjiang's economy, yet the petrol price in Urumqi is higher than it is in Shanghai.⁴² Moreover, the companies working in this profitable business are almost exclusively Han and 'import' Han workers instead of employing local minority people. Cotton and textile production, the second most important industry of Xinjiang (Xinjiang is the biggest producer of cotton in China)⁴³ is monopolised by the Production and Construction Corps (PCC), another exclusively Han institution. These paramilitary farms, introduced in 1949, serve to induce Han immigration and to ensure security and stability in the troubled regions. Spread throughout the main strategic points and employing about 2.5 million Han immigrants, the PCCs constitute a separate system operating under their own rules and are accountable to Beijing only. This network prevents Uyghur mobilisation as well as illegal emigration to neighbouring countries and ensures continuous growth in the Han population in the region.⁴⁴

Han immigration, always an issue, was additionally boosted by the economic development policies. Han are coming to the western provinces to start small businesses under favourable conditions and to work on infrastructure projects managed exclusively by Han companies. Although locals receive a set percentage of profits from the extracted natural resources,⁴⁵ the ones who profit the most from these industries and the massive infrastructure projects are ethnic Han.

Locals also question the need of certain infrastructure projects since they are mostly conducted for military projects or resource extraction⁴⁶ and not for the needs of locals, especially in Xinjiang, where roads, rails and pipelines to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are built for the PRC to get access to the Central Asian energy resources.⁴⁷ Such projects, together with the intensive extraction of natural resources, are also believed to have negative impact on the local environment.

⁴² Ji Da, 'China's Crises in Tibet and Xinjiang: Beijing Believes Investment Is the Way Out', *New Epoch Weekly*, 20 February 2010 <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china-news/chinas-crises-in-tibet-and-xinjiang-30091.html>> [2012-05-02].

⁴³ James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, 2nd ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 299.

⁴⁴ Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang*, p. 27.

⁴⁵ Barry Sautman, 'Ethnic Law and Minority Rights in China: Progress and Constraints', *Law & Policy*, Vol. 21, Issue 3, July 1999, p. 294

⁴⁶ Sautman, Dreyer, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Van Wie Davis.

Overall it is obvious that the policies originally designed to eliminate the socio-economic grievances of the local populations produce the opposite effect. The impressive economic growth of the regions is much less impressive than it seems in pure numbers. Development rates are high because of the extensiveness, not the intensity, of the development,⁴⁸ and the benefits of this growth are not divided equally either: ‘while the standard of living of the Hans has risen manifold, the living standards of the native people remain static’.⁴⁹ In short, state economic policies can be characterised as ‘non-engaging’, meaning that they ‘have been imposed rather than negotiated, and are designed to benefit the center rather than the region’.⁵⁰

2.1.3. Cultural policies

Although during the Cultural Revolution minority people and their cultures suffered even more than the rest of the population, after the death of Mao Zedong Tibet and Xinjiang experienced a period of liberalisation and revival of national culture and religion. However, the grip was tightened once again after the unrest in the 1990s, such as the series of street protests in Lhasa in 1987 and the armed Uyghur uprising in Baren in 1990. The teaching of Tibetan was curtailed in schools, many monastic schools were closed, the number of monks and nuns was restricted, and forced re-education of the remaining clergy was imposed. Tibetan bureaucrats unable to write in Chinese, as well as those educated in India, were fired, and some were sent to inner China to be re-educated.⁵¹ In Xinjiang, some mosques were closed and the construction of the new ones was halted. ‘Inconvenient’ clerics were fired and new regular political examinations for imams imposed, along with the stipulation that all new clerics have to be trained at Xinjiang’s sole religious institute in Urumqi.⁵² Only religious material published by the state Religious Affairs Bureau is allowed and *Haj* pilgrimages for Muslims are limited to participants over 50 years of age.⁵³

⁴⁸ Dreyer, ‘Economic Development in Tibet’, p. 137.

⁴⁹ Daniel Tan Kuan Wei, ‘Investigating the Dynamics of Separatism’, *Pointer*, 28(4), October–December 2002 <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2002/Vol28_4/4.htm> [2012-03-20].

⁵⁰ Koch, p. 6.

⁵¹ Dreyer, ‘Economic Development in Tibet’, p. 138.

⁵² Bovington, *Autonomy in Xinjiang*, p. 33.

⁵³ Giglio, p. 22.

In 1994 the PRC significantly intervened in Buddhist religious processes for the first time. The central government replaced the Dalai Lama's choice of a new reincarnation of Panchen Lama, one of the most important religious figures in Buddhism, with its own, and soon the former one mysteriously disappeared. This was followed by the radical decision of the CCP Secretary for Tibet to prohibit any public expression of support for the Dalai Lama, and even his image became illegal in Tibet.⁵⁴ Another recent attempt to control Buddhist religious matters was the so-called 'Reincarnation Law', launched in 2011, requiring Tibetan monks to get permission to reincarnate from the Chinese authorities.⁵⁵

As mentioned, party members, as well as underage people and students, are not allowed to practice religion, and atheism is a compulsory subject at all levels of education. 'There are party committees in monasteries, and sermons are well-attended by informers and plain clothes policemen.'⁵⁶

Some cultural rights are preserved in order to maintain the appearance of cultural autonomy. Secondary education is available in minority languages, and they are used in newspapers, broadcasts, and government documents. However, in order to take advantage of any educational and economic opportunities, the native populations are obliged to learn Chinese.

The main element of the PRC's cultural strategy is Sinification through immigration. During the times of Mao Zedong, Han immigration was forced, but now it is encouraged through favourable conditions for business, job opportunities in Han companies, looser application of the one-child policy,⁵⁷ subsidies for college graduates willing to move, temporary swaps of cadres, etc. At the same time, minority people are transferred to inner China: Xinjiang exported 1.87 million 'surplus agricultural labourers' in 2008; those unwilling to move face a fine of up to six months' income.⁵⁸ Xinjiang experienced a dramatic shift in its demographic structure as the number of Han inhabitants increased from 6.7%

⁵⁴ Robert Barnett, 'Beyond the Collaborator-Martyr Model: Strategies of Compliance, Opportunism and Opposition Within Tibet', Book: Barry Sautman, June Teufel Dreyer (eds.), *Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Naresh Kumar Sharma, 'New Chinese Law Aimed at Wiping out Tibetan Identity', 14 February 2011 <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-02-14/india/28542221_1_tibetan-issue-panchen-lama-tibetan-government> [2012-05-04].

⁵⁶ Chung, p. 80.

⁵⁷ Giglio, p. 6.

⁵⁸ John Chan, 'China's Police-State Crackdown in Xinjiang Creates International Tensions', 17 July 2009 <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/jul2009/chin-j17.shtml>> [2012-05-03].

in 1947 to the present 40%,⁵⁹ making the Han the second biggest ethnic group in Xinjiang. Meanwhile the data on Tibet is contradictory. According to official statistics, 90% of TAR inhabitants are ethnic Tibetans (Hans — 8.17%),⁶⁰ but the Tibetans say they are already outnumbered by the Han. These differences occur because soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and 'short-term' (up to 10 years) Han workers with no residence permit are not counted.⁶¹ The Han are mostly concentrated in the urban areas and make up the majority of inhabitants in both capitals. Uyghurs and Tibetans are afraid of the scenario of Inner Mongolia, where ethnic Mongolians now comprise only 17% of the population, compared to almost 80% Han.

To sum up, 'long-term Chinese policy is founded on the principle that giving minority areas a degree of autonomy pacifies them by sustaining their own customs, religion, language, and limited self-government until the immigration of Han Chinese slowly changes the makeup of the population'.⁶² The degree of autonomy is very low, religious matters are under strict control, and in order to get any educational or career opportunities, people have to become Sinicized. Meanwhile, a constant inflow of Han from other parts of China makes the possibility of Uyghurs and Tibetans becoming minorities in their own regions highly realistic.

2.1.4. Foreign policy measures

The PRC's foreign policy in relation to Tibet and Xinjiang consists of two main elements: 1) preventing the creation of an international precedent that could encourage Tibet and Xinjiang to seek independence and 2) discouraging other countries from supporting these separatist movements.

The PRC has always been consistent in its support for the principle of territorial integrity. It has refused to extend diplomatic recognition to not only Kosovo, but also the Russian 'protégés' Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Its position leaves no doubt that China would use its veto right to block the discussion of similar questions in the UN Security Council as well.

⁵⁹ Anthony Howell, C. Cindy Fan, "Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi." *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 52(1), 2011, p. 119.

⁶⁰ 'Tibet's population tops 3 million; 90% are Tibetans', <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/7369781.html> [2011-12-08].

⁶¹ Dreyer, 'Economic Development in Tibet', p.131.

⁶² Moneyhon, 'Controlling Xinjiang', p. 133.

At the same time, the PRC does everything to keep its separatist regions isolated. Borders are closely monitored, cross-border migration is limited, and Internet access is restricted.⁶³ In the face of any disturbances, borders are instantly closed and foreigners, especially journalists, prohibited to enter the regions.⁶⁴

Even more important than physical isolation is international isolation, which the PRC achieves mainly by using its economic power. 'Economic incentives such as free-trade zones, purchases of a country's exports, and promises of investment [are used] to help ensure [other states'] compliance with its wishes.'⁶⁵ Trade with Nepal and India is intensified in order to discourage their governments from supporting Tibetan refugee communities in those countries.⁶⁶ China contributes a lot to the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the primary goal of which is to fight the 'three evils': terrorism, separatism, and religious fundamentalism. The PRC demands that other SCO states suppress Uyghur activities, pledging massive loans to them and making concessions in border disagreements in exchange.⁶⁷ These efforts have not been in vain: Uyghur activities in these countries are closely monitored, extradition treaties have been signed, and the PRC is even allowed to cross borders to fight Uyghur guerrilla groups if necessary.⁶⁸

At the same time, the PRC punishes other states for acting against China's interests. For example, some Pakistani traders were expelled from Xinjiang and visas for Pakistanis wanting to travel to Xinjiang were restricted when the PRC suspected that Muslim groups in Pakistan were providing arms to Uyghur fundamentalists.⁶⁹ It is also very sensitive about the Dalai Lama question and often threatens that a high-level political leader's reception of the Dalai Lama would have a negative impact on bilateral trade. It was estimated that such a meeting

⁶³ Dibyesh Anand, 'Sovereignty and Separatism in China and India: The Myth of Difference', 20 October 2010 <<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/10/20/sovereignty-and-separatism-in-china-and-india-the-myth-of-difference/>> [2012-05-04].

⁶⁴ Alex Neill, 'Xinjiang: the Hidden Dimension to China's Separatist Problem', London: Royal United Services Institute. <<http://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C47FE3D1B2E2B3/>> [2012-05-03].

⁶⁵ Dreyer, 'China's Vulnerability to Minority Separatism', p. 78.

⁶⁶ Dreyer, 'Economic Development in Tibet', p. 133.

⁶⁷ Bovington, p. 23.

⁶⁸ David Bachman, 'Making Xinjing Safe for the Han? Contradictions and Ironies of Chinese Governance in Chinese Northwest', Book: Book: Morris Rossabi (ed.), *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004, p. 160.

⁶⁹ Giglio, p. 20.

causes the so-called ‘Dalai Lama effect’, decreasing exports to China by 8.1–16.9% for about two years.⁷⁰

Not only economic measures are used by the PRC; Chinese involvement in the global war on terror became one more carrot for other states. After 9/11, the PRC used its chance to highlight the Xinjiang conflict internationally as based on the activities of Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups linked with Al-Qaeda to justify its hard-line policies in the region. To join the war on terror, the PRC voted for Resolution 1368 in the UN Security Council, which gave permission to invade Afghanistan and marked the first time China has voted in favour of authorising the international use of force. These efforts were not in vain; the little-known Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) was declared a terrorist organisation by the USA and UN in 2002, and international society became much less supportive of the Uyghurs.

To sum up, China’s international strategy based on a carrot and stick approach, its support for the principle of territorial integrity in the international arena, and participation in the global war on terror are designed to achieve two main goals: to cut Tibet and Xinjiang off from outside support and to ensure the PRC wide freedom of action inside its borders.

2.2. China’s Hong Kong policies

2.2.1. Political accommodation

Hong Kong’s political system operates according to the provisions of the Basic Law — Hong Kong’s *de facto* constitution: it is headed by a chief executive, who is monitored by the parliament, the Legislative Council (LegCo), and adjudicated by a relatively autonomous judicial system that is based on British common law. Hong Kong is mostly independent on the international level as well (economic and cultural spheres, not political), has its own representations (Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices) around the world, and even enjoys a separate membership in various international organisations such as the World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and International Olympic Committee.

Despite its multi-party system and free elections however, the HKSAR has only limited democracy, which provides China with multiple channels for influence.

⁷⁰ Andreas Fuchs, Nils-Hendrik Klann, ‘Paying a Visit: The Dalai Lama Effect on International Trade’, *Discussion Paper 113*, Goettingen: University of Goettingen, 2010, p. 22.

Only half of the 60 LegCo members are elected directly. Another half comes from 'functional constituencies': professional or interest groups where both natural and legal persons can be voters. Since these representatives are not accountable to the public and mostly pro-Chinese, the PRC uses them to influence the decisions made in the LegCo.⁷¹ The number of directly elected LegCo members is high enough to maintain a democratic façade, yet not enough to oppose China's interests. The chief executive, the most important political figure in Hong Kong, is elected by the 1,200 member Election Committee consisting of individuals and entities from functional constituencies and later has to be appointed by the central authorities. In addition, all principal official positions are occupied by Beijing's political appointees, not civil servants. Judicial independence, although broad, is limited as well. Under the Basic Law, Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal is supposed to ask the Standing Committee of the NPC to interpret provisions of the Basic Law concerning the relationship between Beijing and Hong Kong in adjudicating cases.⁷² In 1999 the PRC interfered in Hong Kong's judicial process when the Standing Committee overturned Hong Kong court's decision concerning the right of abode in the HKSAR.

This limited democracy is the main source of dissatisfaction among Hong Kongers, and a number of protests concerning this issue have taken place (unlike Mainland China, Hong Kong enjoys freedom of speech and press, as well as other civil liberties). After years of persistent refusal, the PRC's government finally stepped back and promised direct presidential elections in 2017 and parliamentary elections in 2020.⁷³

To sum up, Beijing manipulates Hong Kong's political system, which was from the very beginning designed to serve this purpose. Civil liberties, free elections, a mostly independent judiciary, and the rule of law are preserved, at the same time ensuring that no decisions against the PRC's interests are made.

2.2.2. Economic accommodation

Being a British colony, Hong Kong developed a highly competitive capitalist economy, the preservation of which was the main stimulus for the introduction

⁷¹ Zaijun Yuan, 'One Country, Two Systems Is Dying in Hong Kong', 4 September 2011 <<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2011/09/04/2003512398>> [2012-05-04]

⁷² Frank Ching, 'One Country, Two Systems?' 25 June 2011 <<http://the-diplomat.com/2011/06/25/one-country-two-systems/2/>> [2012-05-04].

⁷³ *Ibid.*

of one country, two systems. It has an independent economic system based on capitalist principles and an independent financial system: its own taxation system, currency and budget and full discretion over that budget.

However, Hong Kong's economy is becoming increasingly integrated with Mainland China. After the opening of China, Hong Kong companies were quick to move their manufacturing assets to southern China⁷⁴, transforming Hong Kong into a service-oriented economy. At the same time, many Chinese companies and government entities moved their offices to Hong Kong 'to gain international exposure and market opportunities'.⁷⁵ Hong Kong remains China's most important international trade channel and foreign currency financing centre, and the range and scope of cross-border business activities is expanding. In addition, during the Asian financial crisis in 1997 the PRC provided a financial injection to stabilise the currency in Hong Kong. This process of integration has both positive and negative sides for Hong Kong: having a strong Chinese back-up gives it an advantage over the other Asian Tigers and makes its economy more resistant to global and regional economic turbulences, but it may erode the economic separation necessary to preserve Hong Kong's economic autonomy.⁷⁶

To sum up, the PRC gives Hong Kong independence over its economic and financial matters to preserve its status as an international trade centre, at the same time intervening when necessary to prevent the system from crashing. Expansion of economic cross-border ties is encouraged since this decreases the likelihood of radical actions in Hong Kong, as the Hong Kongers are unwilling to damage economic ties and risk losing their assets on the mainland.

2.2.3. Cultural aspects of the Hong Kong settlement

Hong Kongers are not ethnically distinct from the mainlanders; 96% are Han, although they speak the Cantonese dialect instead of Mandarin, which prevails on the mainland. The question of Hong Kong's identity is extremely complicated because during British rule Hong Kong moved far from its ethnic roots in Mainland

⁷⁴ Tao Wang, Hong Liang, 'Economic integration between SAR and Mainland China', Book: Eswar Prasad (ed.), *Hong Kong SAR: Meeting the Challenges of Integration with the Mainland*, Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2004, p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Michael F. Martin, 'A Changing Hong Kong and U.S. Policy', *Hong Kong Journal*, No. 20, 2011 <http://www.hkjourn.org/archive/2011_spring/1.htm> [2012-04-30].

China, but it did not relate with the British either. The lack of statehood also prevented it from developing a full-fledged identity. Instead of national features, capitalist thinking became the basis for the identity of Hong Kong.

Since the handover, efforts have been made to link Hong Kong's identity with China through official rhetoric and various 'national identity' education programmes in schools and kindergartens.⁷⁷ Moreover, the language of instruction was switched from English to Cantonese in 75% of secondary schools, which caused major public dissatisfaction.

Han immigration is also a problem in Hong Kong, just in a different way than it is in Xinjiang and Tibet, since most mainlanders go to the island for a short period and not to settle permanently. Twenty-eight million Mainland Chinese visited Hong Kong last year — four times the population of the city — 'many flush with cash and on the hunt for everything from baby formula to hospital beds and luxury brands to high-end apartments'.⁷⁸ Chinese women coming to Hong Kong to give birth (not only for the better quality services, but also Hong Kong citizenship for their children) overcrowd local hospitals, not leaving spots for the local women. Wealthy Chinese buying real estate in Hong Kong are driving property prices beyond the reach of the locals. In 2011 Mainland Chinese snapped up about a third of Hong Kong's new residential flats, and home prices had risen about 70% since 2009.⁷⁹ Dissatisfaction of the locals about the negative economic effects of this migration and disrespectful behaviour of the mainlanders resulted in a burst of cross-border conflict marked with offensive rhetoric from the public on both sides.⁸⁰

In short, the PRC's strategy is to use the influence it has on the Hong Kong government for it to adopt rhetoric and policies that would help the people of Hong Kong to develop a Chinese identity. At the same time, cross-border migration, which should foster Hong Kong's psychological integration with the mainland, actually brings the opposite effect, creating tensions between the locals and mainlanders.

⁷⁷ Mathews, Ma, p. 84.

⁷⁸ Pomfret, Tung.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ David Eimer, 'Hong Kong rails against invasion of Chinese "locusts"', 2 February 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/hongkong/9056268/Hong-Kong-rails-against-invasion-of-Chinese-locusts.html>> [2012-05-07].

2.3. Similarities and differences between the PRC's approaches towards Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong

The political dimension is the most important one for the PRC because its main goal — recognition of its sovereignty over a certain territory — is a political action. It is therefore not surprising that the central government's involvement and/or control is felt the most in relation to political processes, while economic, cultural and foreign policy measures have a supporting role.

In all three cases, the PRC relies on local executive power to ensure proper control over a region's political life; chief executive officers are appointed and instructed by Beijing, although the level of dependence differs. In Xinjiang and Tibet, these are puppet figures acting as apologists for state policies, whereas Hong Kong's leader is more of an autonomous figure under the influence of the PRC. Yet the biggest difference lies in the degree of democracy and civil liberties. Hong Kong's democracy, although limited, is still a democracy with free elections, and the possibility to make independent decisions exists. It has an almost entirely independent judiciary and enjoys political freedom that enables an open expression of dissatisfaction, whereas their counterparts in Xinjiang and Tibet do not have any democracy, cannot influence political decisions, and any anti-PRC opinions are suppressed with force. Overall, the PRC's strategy towards Hong Kong is to give it enough space without letting it drift too far away; meanwhile Tibet and Xinjiang are strictly controlled.

The economic approaches towards these regions are completely different. Most economic decisions for Tibet and Xinjiang are taken in Beijing. The PRC exploits the resources of the regions and subsidises them heavily in return to raise the living standards of locals without enabling them, i.e. making them dependent on the funding from the centre. Preferential policies and investment programmes do not achieve the initial purpose of overcoming ethnic resistance by satisfying their economic needs since they mainly benefit Han; they create the appearance that the state is making efforts to help the backward regions and serve as a Trojan horse to attract more Han to those regions. Meanwhile Hong Kong has a separate economic and financial system and independent budget and handles its economic matters without an outside intervention. The PRC becomes involved only in the face of crisis and economic integration is achieved by encouraging cross-border business ties instead.

The PRC's cultural strategies also differ significantly. In Tibet and Xinjiang, all aspects of ethnic and religious identity are tightly controlled and various means (coercive as well) are used to erase the distinctiveness of ethnic groups, although

some cultural rights are preserved for the maintenance of *de jure* cultural autonomy. In Hong Kong, there is no need for measures against national identity because there is none. Instead, a Chinese national identity is being built. While all three regions face big inflows of Han Chinese from the mainland, in Xinjiang and Tibet this is an intentional process to assimilate local minorities, whereas in Hong Kong this is more of a side effect of Hong Kong's status and the opportunities it offers.

Overall, although formally Tibet and Xinjiang are autonomous, *de facto* they are under the direct rule of the central authorities. Hong Kong on the other hand is basically autonomous, acting independently in all dimensions except the political one, and the PRC instead uses indirect measures to influence politics in Hong Kong.

3. What influences China's choice of methods in solving its issues of territorial integrity?

The effects seven factors have on the state's choice of methods can be briefly summarised in the following table.

Table 1. Factors influencing the state's decisions and their effects

Effect Factor	Limiting/enabling	Causing differences
Political structure	Full-fledged democracy and complete political autonomy — impossible; reliance on executive power; homogenisation as the ultimate goal; inclination to use coercive measures; ignorance of domestic legal agreements; unlimited access to state resources for the central authorities.	

Type of conflict		<p>Interstate dispute = parties more willing to negotiate.</p> <p>Non-ethnic dispute = concessions more likely.</p> <p>Distinct ethnicity = measures to erase ethnic identity; no ethnic differences = identity-building measures.</p>
Strategies		<p>State acts in responsive manner: various elements of the strategies of locals are either being suppressed/prevented from success or used against the locals themselves.</p>
Resources	<p>The state's resources are used to ensure support or/and non-interference of external actors and to implement policies inside the state.</p>	<p>Different resources determine the way the regions are treated: political and economic systems are designed to better exploit their resources.</p>
International factors	<p>The more influential internationally the state is, the more reluctant other international actors are to confront it; yet the more concerned it is about its international prestige.</p>	<p>Wide external support and presence of foreign actors in a region = state unwilling to use coercive measures, and vice versa. Some other relevant international factors (e.g. the Taiwan issue) and events may also contribute to the differences between policies.</p>
Goals	<p>Only policies aimed at achieving the main goal are implemented (i.e. if homogenisation is an ultimate goal, policies encouraging pluralism are excluded).</p>	<p>The more advanced the state is in the achievement of its goals, the less compromising it is.</p>
Ideology	<p>Ideology is a catalyst: by defining what methods are acceptable and which differences between the cases matter, it turns those differences into the different state policies.</p>	

This table reflects that all these factors influence the state's choice of methods, although in two different ways. Some of them merely define the state's capabilities and its field of action by enabling or restricting it, i.e. they work as a filter to define

which of all the possible measures a certain state *could* use. Once the spectrum of tools available for the state is set, to understand why one measure or another from that spectrum is chosen in a particular situation, one has to look at the second group of factors. There are also factors that fall in between these categories, because some elements of that factor determine a state's possibilities whereas other elements result in differences in state policies.

Political structure is a limiting/enabling factor. The PRC is an authoritarian communistic state with a *de facto* single-party system. According to the constitution, the PRC is a 'unitary multinational state', and operates according to the principle of 'democratic centralism', key elements of that being total obedience to the CCP, nominations from above, and the notion that the higher levels are not accountable to the lower levels.⁸¹ The CCP enjoys unchallenged authority since no other rival political or social organisation is permitted. The party is present at every level of the state, and every local organ or institution is shadowed by a CCP committee or 'leading group' that is *de facto* in control of it.⁸² This system does not permit plurality of attitudes, and there are no channels to express them. The public sphere is censored and there are no conditions for civil society to function. The only channels to voice any political opinions are inside the party. However, due to the top-down approach embodied in the principle of democratic centralism, bottom-up communication is very limited. Moreover, since the CCP is reluctant to allow minorities to attain high positions in the party structure⁸³ (due to nationalistic reasons), there are no channels for dialogue between the state and minorities.

This system results, firstly, in China's uncompromising stance over political matters such as sovereignty or democracy. Full-fledged democracy is not acceptable even in Hong Kong (not to speak of Tibet and Xinjiang): the HKSAR political system ensures that the autonomy it exercises will not undermine the interests of the PRC and that the level of democracy will not become high enough to pose a threat to the PRC's own political system. Second, the state chooses not to respond to separatist demands and is even inclined to use coercive measures as a solution in Xinjiang and Tibet because granting autonomy to those regions might start a precedent causing other regions and even the public in general to demand more rights, thus threatening the basis

⁸¹ Monte R. Bullard, *Strait Talk: Avoiding a Nuclear War Between U.S. And China Over Taiwan*, Monterey: Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2004, p. 41.

⁸² Koch, p. 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

of the current system. Third, the PRC's political system enables it by relaxing its legal commitments to domestic society: as the rule of law is subordinate to the rule of the CCP, the PRC is not a legal state, and any regulation can be interpreted in any convenient way or even ignored, which is the case in Xinjiang and Tibet. After the handover, the Hong Kong agreements also became a domestic matter and compliance with those agreements totally depends on the goodwill of China. Finally, the PRC's authoritarian nature provides the central authorities with unlimited access to the state's political, economic and military resources; in addition, the CCP's deep penetration into every aspect of life in the state gives it tools to detect and eliminate those challenging the state's sovereignty (and authority of the ruling party), not only in Xinjiang and Tibet, but also in Hong Kong (the necessary level of control in the latter is ensured through the system of political appointments).

Type of conflict belongs to the second category — who is challenging the PRC's authority and on what basis it is challenged affect its perception of how the situation should be handled. Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong constitute two different types of territorial disputes, the first two being ethnic conflicts and the latter one being an intrastate dispute of legal origin. The main differences between them lie in the status of the parties and the origin of the dispute.

Ethnic conflicts challenge a state's sovereignty from the inside, the ethnic movement being an inferior party in of the dispute both in legal terms and in terms of power. Meanwhile in the Hong Kong case, the state's sovereignty was being challenged from the outside, by another state, i.e. the parties of this dispute were (at least legally) equal. The Hong Kong question was an inter-state dispute between the PRC and Britain, with no involvement of the territory itself. The PRC categorically rejected any kind of Hong Kong participation in the negotiation process, thinking it would give an advantage to Britain, whereas Britain, treating its colony in a paternalistic manner, saw Hong Kong's involvement as preferable, yet not necessary. Moreover, both sides were driven by pragmatism. After the PRC announced it would resort to unilateral actions⁸⁴ if no legal agreement were reached, Britain's main aim was to ensure the best possible conditions for the handover, conditions that would not undermine British interests and would save its citizens and companies from tremendous financial losses. At the same time, the PRC was willing to make many concessions as long as its sovereignty over the territory was restored. In cases like this, compromise is more likely because the costs of failure to come up with one would be too high, especially if both sides are

⁸⁴ Tsang, p. 104.

similar in terms of power. Moreover, the equal status of the parties provides a basis for negotiation, whereas in the case of internal conflict, the government (especially in an authoritarian state) is unwilling to negotiate, not eager to legitimise the ethnic movement and its claims. Being the more powerful party and not willing to negotiate, the state is likely to choose to suppress the conflict instead.

Another difference between these types of conflict lies in their origin. Ethnicity was never a factor in the Hong Kong issue; Hong Kongers differ from the mainlanders in their values, not ethnicity. Even the recent sparks between them, caused by Han immigration, are socio-economic rather than nationalistic. Such disagreements are seen as more rational, easier to solve, and thus less threatening to the state. Meanwhile, ethnic differences are harder to overcome and ethnic groups tend to seek independence even if it is not rational. After the Tibetan occupation in 1951, a system, technically and functionally similar to one country, two systems, was introduced,⁸⁵ but a massive armed uprising nevertheless took place in 1959. The PRC took it as a lesson that the satisfaction of an ethnic group's demands could not guarantee it would not seek more in the future, and therefore the best way to eliminate the risk of separatism is to discourage any active actions with coercive measures until the group is totally assimilated.

The strategies of the people in the troubled regions is another factor producing differences and can best explain the peculiarities of Chinese strategies designed specifically for every region: depending on what strategy the region uses, the PRC chooses tools that prevent these strategies from success or uses those strategies against the regions themselves. These tools differ in every case, because Hong Kongers, Tibetans and Uyghurs differ significantly in their degree of mobilisation, strategies, and patterns of action.

The main features of the Uyghur strategy are 1) the plurality of actors, 2) the relatively high number of domestic protests and demonstrations, and 3) terrorist activities. There are a number of different groups acting in the name of the Uyghurs which have separate and sometimes even contradicting visions for Xinjiang's future. New groups and organisations both inside and outside the region appear while old ones dissolve, and at least 30 different active groups operate at the same time.⁸⁶ Lack of coordination and consensus among these groups prevent them from building a single strategy and ensuring support for their cause. This has become even harder since some Uyghurs turned to radical Islamism and terrorism because ruthless suppression of all Uyghur demonstrations in Xinjiang left no room for

⁸⁵ Norbu, p. 208.

⁸⁶ Giglio, p. 14.

overt political action. A number of terrorist acts conducted by different groups appeared inside and outside the region in the 1990s, not only against the Han and the government, but also against the clerics ‘collaborating’ with the Chinese government and the leaders of rival Uyghur movements. Even though there are a lot of peaceful Uyghur groups operating around the world (Uyghur American Association, Uyghur World Congress, etc.), and only a few terrorist activities have taken place over the past decade, China managed to use this to project a negative image of the Uyghurs to the world and to justify its heavy-handed policies against them.

Meanwhile, the main elements of the Tibetan strategy are 1) reliance on a charismatic leader, 2) peaceful means, and 3) the appeal for international support. ‘Since his 1959 flight into exile, the Dalai Lama has become a global celebrity, welcomed and respected as a great spiritual leader by popes, kings, publics, and presidents.’⁸⁷ Although in March 2011 the Dalai Lama completely resigned from his political functions in the democratically elected Tibetan government in exile, Tibetan unity still rests mostly on his authority. He promotes the so-called ‘middle way’, ‘genuine autonomy’ in the Chinese state instead of complete independence. Due to the popularity of Buddhism, the Dalai Lama’s personality, and his peaceful programme, Tibetans enjoy broad international support: numerous Tibet support groups operate around the world, and the Dalai Lama is frequently accepted at the highest political level by world leaders. However, some Tibetans, especially the younger generation, see his approach as ineffective and are inclined towards more radical measures, riots in Lhasa in 2008 being the best example. The Dalai Lama’s authority is still high enough to make Tibetans comply with his strategy, but it means that Tibetan unity rests on one person. The PRC’s anti-Tibetan strategy therefore consists of efforts to undermine the Dalai Lama’s authority and restrict his influence. Domestically China tries to prevent any contact between the exiled community and local Tibetans and disrupt religious ties between them by closing or tightly controlling Buddhist monasteries and interfering in religious matters. To diminish international support for the Tibetan cause, China mostly relies on economic measures to effect other states’ decisions. The PRC expects that after the Dalai Lama’s death, with no one equally charismatic to step up, Tibetans will lose their unity and international support, this way becoming easier to deal with.

Finally, Hong Kongers mostly use conventional means and existing political channels because, unlike Tibetans and Uyghurs, they *can* do this: 1) demonstrations are not forbidden and the press is not censored; 2) the LegCo, although politically

⁸⁷ Richard Madsen, ‘The Upsurge of Religion in China’, *Journal of Democracy*, 21(4), 2010, p. 13.

weak, serves as the main channel for the Hong Kong public to express their demands through democratically elected representatives; 3) Hong Kong is not internationally isolated; 4) there is a separate institution in the PRC for Hong Kong matters, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, which serves as a political channel to communicate with the PRC's authorities; and, most importantly, 5) the PRC does not entirely ignore Hong Kong's demands. Although Hong Kongers were passive and silent during the Sino-British talks, their dissatisfaction that their opinion had been ignored came to the surface after the handover. Democratic parties have always been highly successful in elections (in geographical constituencies where LegCo members are elected directly), forcing the government in the HKSAR and Beijing to deal with perpetual electoral opposition, and protests and demonstrations became a regular phenomenon in the HKSAR, the peak of which was an annual 1 July march in 2003, when a demonstration against a new anti-subversion law that would have provided a basis for restricting civil rights attracted about half a million participants.⁸⁸ However, Hong Kongers, being rational and pragmatic, seek only limited goals (universal direct elections, not full independence). Thus the PRC, not perceiving their actions as a real threat and understanding that keeping Hong Kong isolated would be against its pragmatic interests, chooses to respond partially to their demands by using various symbolic concessions and postponing important decisions at the same time. In 2003 it forced the unpopular Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa to resign, favouring preservation of the system over certain personalities, allowed limited political reforms towards greater democratisation (e.g. raising the number of Election Committee members), and promised universal suffrage in 2017 for the LegCo and for the chief executive in 2020. However, this was not the first time a similar promise had been made: the government of the PRC has continually pushed the deadline for universal suffrage back for years, and most recently the 'consultative process' was infringed again due to the economic crisis.⁸⁹ Yet the strategy of concessions and promises, accompanied by economic inducements, seems to have worked quite well so far, because since 2005 the political activity of the Hong Kong public has decreased: democratic forces, being very fragmented, manage to mobilise only on very concrete issues (like the anti-subversion laws in 2003), but dissolves once the PRC acts in a more cooperative manner.

Among the factors that both enable/restrict the state and cause differences at the same time, probably the most notable is **resources**. The resources of the

⁸⁸ John Chan, 'Huge Rally in Hong Kong against Anti-subversion Laws', 8 July 2003 <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jul2003/hoko-j08.shtml>> [2012-05-10].

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

state enable it, since being the world's second largest economy with annual military spending of \$100 billion, China can use these resources 1) to ensure non-interference of *external* actors by bribing, punishing or discouraging other states, and 2) to implement certain policies *inside* the state. To gain the support of other states, the PRC uses the expansion of economic ties, investment, aid (mainly in the neighbouring states, the cooperation of which is crucial for solving territorial issues), and the restriction of trade (e.g. the 'Dalai Lama effect') to punish them. At the same time, extensive military power and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council make any outside intervention into Chinese internal conflicts extremely unlikely. Resources are also used to legitimate Communist rule and reduce tensions *inside* the state: financial resources are used to subsidise Tibet and Xinjiang, the cheap labour force and scope of Chinese exports are used to fortify economic ties with Hong Kong, and the well developed military and security structures are used to suppress and deter potential separatists. The difference between the PRC's policies towards the three regions is however mostly determined by the type of resource these territories own: the pragmatism that prevails in the PRC's policies inclines it to take up policies guaranteeing that these resources are exploited for the biggest advantage of the central government.

Xinjiang and Tibet are economically backward, yet extremely rich in natural resources. The current system gives local governments only minimal control over their resources: there are some power-sharing agreements allowing them to sell the surplus of extracted resources⁹⁰ and transferring a set percentage of the income from the resources to local budgets,⁹¹ but all the major decisions over extraction, use and management of resources are made in Beijing. Real autonomy in these regions, enabling them to decide how to use their own resources, would likely not allow the central government to have access to these resources at such favourable conditions. Moreover, since Xinjiang is essential for the PRC to gain access to Central Asian energy resources, this determines the strict security measures the PRC uses in the region as it tries to ensure stability in Xinjiang and protect highly vulnerable pipelines that are being built to link oil and gas fields in the Central Asian republics to industrial areas in eastern China.⁹²

Meanwhile, even though Hong Kong is a small, overpopulated territory with no significant resources, it has extreme economic importance for China. For many years, Hong Kong has been the PRC's main *entrepôt*, and even now about 40% of

⁹⁰ Moneyhon, 'Controlling Xinjiang', p. 143.

⁹¹ Sautman, 'Ethnic Law and Minority Rights in China', p. 288.

⁹² Giglio, p. 7.

China's external trade is still conducted through Hong Kong.⁹³ As a British colony, Hong Kong established itself as one of the most active trade and financial centres in the world, and after Deng Xiaoping launched the Four Modernisations campaign in 1978, Hong Kong with its capacities was seen as a way to contribute to Chinese modernisation. Since Hong Kong already had the status of an international trading centre, all the PRC had to do was to take over it without interrupting its economic processes. To achieve this, the handover had to be carried out in a delicate manner, with only minimal changes to the previous system being made, since Hong Kong's success rests on the highly volatile financial markets and sensitive investors. Foreign businessmen are drawn to Hong Kong by the ability to access China's markets without operating in its authoritarian environment.⁹⁴ Without its autonomy, Hong Kong would therefore be useless to China. Instead of complete integration with the PRC system, indirect measures such as encouragement of economic ties between the region and the mainland are used to make sure Hong Kong will not separate from China. These conventional measures are less worrisome for international investors, yet effective: almost all Hong Kong's re-exports go to or come from China, and, after all its manufacturing and industrial assets were moved to the mainland, Hong Kong's economy completely rests on its *entrepôt* related services, and separation from the PRC would be a suicidal step for Hong Kong.

International factors also have a double effect. The international status of the state both enables and restricts it. On one hand, the PRC's economic power, military capacities, and, especially, a permanent seat on the UN Security Council provide it with a certain level of freedom to act, making other states unwilling to confront China or even desirous to gratify it in order to receive benefits. (Many believe that the US included ETIM on the list of terrorist organisations in exchange for getting the Chinese vote in the UN Security Council for the mandate to launch war in Afghanistan.)⁹⁵ However, due to its international status, China, striving for global leadership, is concerned about its international prestige and cannot totally ignore the opinion of international society. Autonomy law, preferential policies, and affirmative action programmes provide the basis for the official rhetoric that minorities in the PRC enjoy cultural autonomy and preferential treatment, while at the same time coercive actions are presented as necessary to ensure public security.

The international factor that already results in differences between Chinese policies is the level of external support for the separatist movements. Tibet enjoys

⁹³ Wang, Liang, p. 3.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁹⁵ Neill.

broad international support from both governmental and non-governmental actors, from the US Congress to various Tibet support groups and organisations of Tibetan diaspora, and this became especially true after Buddhism became so popular in the West. These supporters are constantly escalating the question of Tibetan rights, launching protests in different countries against the PRC government, and monitoring the situation in Tibet (as much as it is possible). This restrains the Chinese government, since any more obvious mistreatment of Tibetans would be hard to hide and widely publicised around the world. Not having the tools to affect non-governmental actors, the PRC tries to diminish support for Tibetans at least from other states (by appealing to their pragmatism).

Meanwhile Uyghurs have almost no international support, although they used to have some. The collapse of the USSR provided them with support from the newly established Muslim states bordering China, and Turkey for a long time was their strongest supporter outside the region. The PRC managed to cut Uyghurs off from this support, however. It established ties with the governments of Central Asian states, mainly through the SCO, which proved to be highly successful, especially since these states, and those with authoritarian secular governments and/or sizeable Uyghur minorities in particular, are concerned about Muslim radicalisation themselves.⁹⁶ Meanwhile Turkey, which ‘has ideologically inspired Uyghur nationalism, offered sanctuary for Uyghur refugees and provided moral and material support for Eastern Turkestan movements, organisations and activities’,⁹⁷ soon realised it could not compete with Chinese and Russian influence in Central Asia and decided to take a pragmatic stance instead by expanding economic and military cooperation with China. The Uyghur chances of gaining any international support decreased even more after 9/11, which provided China with a convenient justification for its actions against the Uyghurs: although not many terrorist activities have been visible since the 1990s, the PRC has used the past events and ties of some Uyghurs with Al-Qaeda to present them as a part of the international terrorist network.

In Hong Kong, international factors probably play the biggest role, but in a different way than in the other two. First of all, the UK contributed a lot to the current exceptional status of Hong Kong; the backup from another state was the main advantage Hong Kong had over Tibet and Xinjiang in the initial stage of the PRC’s choice of approaches. Foreign companies that came to Hong Kong during

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Van Wie Davis.

⁹⁷ Yitzhak Shichor, *Ethno-Diplomacy: The Uyghur Hitch in Sino-Turkish Relations*, Honolulu: East-West Center, 2009, p. 10.

British rule also played their part, making the PRC hesitant to take any actions that might drive them from the region or harm the PRC's international image. From the very beginning, the PRC's actions and decisions concerning Hong Kong were mostly driven by the need to ensure the continuous presence of foreign investors in the region, this way preserving its profitability, and it still remains the main motivation to continue the exceptional treatment of Hong Kong.

Another international factor contributing to Hong Kong's exceptional treatment is the Taiwan issue. Reunification with this *de facto* independent yet diplomatically unrecognised state is enshrined in the PRC constitution, but due to the US support for Taiwan, unilateral actions are excluded. The PRC therefore came up with the one country, two systems solution for Taiwan, and saw Hong Kong as an opportunity to show a working example of this system. Not to compromise its efforts to convince Taiwan to join the PRC under one country, two systems and to overcome the distrust of the US on this issue, the PRC has to make sure that the Hong Kong experiment does not fail.

The role a **state's goals** play in its choice of policies depends on how they are defined. If they are understood the way Esman defines them — homogenisation vs. acceptance of pluralism — then it is a limiting factor; the PRC is clearly inclined to the former and thus uses homogenising policies such as forced and induced assimilation with all three regions (i.e. pluralising policies are excluded from the spectrum of available measures). Yet to understand why it uses coercive measures in one case and conventional in another, one has to look at a higher goal, the one that produces the need for homogenisation, and how close the state is to achieving it. In this case, it is the ultimate Chinese nationalist goal, reunification of Great China and restoration of its proper position in the world. To achieve this, the state has 1) to regain lost territories and 2) to preserve them once they are regained. Thus once the first task is fulfilled, the state switches to the second one. Although in all three cases the PRC has already switched to preservation, in Tibet and Xinjiang it happened almost 50 years earlier, and this causes the difference. In order to gain the territory, the state is willing to make many concessions. For example, while still trying to consolidate their power during the Chinese Civil War, the Communists promised political autonomy and self-determination⁹⁸ to most minorities, including Tibetans and Uyghurs. Once the state gains the territory, it establishes itself there through investment, infrastructure, migration, etc. and thus gains more rights to that territory.⁹⁹ The more time passes, the more legitimate the

⁹⁸ Matthew D. Moneyhon, 'Taming China's "Wild West": Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang', *Peace, Conflict and Development: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 5, p. 7.

⁹⁹ Jeff McMahan, 'Just Cause for War', *Ethics and International Affairs* 19 (3), 2005, p. 12.

state's rule becomes and the more likely international actors are to support the state over the separatist movement, and thus the less compromising the central state is likely to be. After 60 years in Tibet and Xinjiang, the PRC feels it can treat those as internal matters and use harsh methods if needed. Meanwhile in Hong Kong, not enough time has passed since the handover for China to feel confident enough to resort to more drastic measures, so it chooses a more compromising stance. After more time passes, the PRC may become less willing to make concessions, but that does not mean Hong Kong will follow the path of Xinjiang and Tibet, because other factors also play a role.

Finally, **ideology** occupies a special place in this process: it is not just an enabling/restricting factor, nor does it produce differences between the cases on its own. Instead, it works as a catalyst transforming differences between the cases in the realms of other factors into differences between state policies by determining a state's preferences, how it interprets those differences, what are considered to be acceptable methods, etc. Current Chinese ideology consists of three elements — communism, nationalism and pragmatism — that are closely interlinked and make up a single ideological drive behind the Chinese state; the Maoist version of Communism contains a strong element of Chinese nationalism, and economic development, in its turn, is mostly subordinated to nationalist aims. Communism/Maoism is the official ideology of the state, yet Han nationalism and pragmatism (dedication to economic growth) stepped up as *de facto* ideologies after Deng Xiaoping's reforms when it became too difficult to justify the state's decisions with communistic ideology. Han nationalism as a prevailing way of thinking in China emerged at the very end of the 19th century with the anti-foreign Boxer Uprising¹⁰⁰ and has not lost its significance since then. During the colonial period, China was a playground for the external powers, and since the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese therefore saw the restoration of their rightful place in the world as their major goal, territorial expansion, restitution of former territories, and economic modernisation being the main means of achieving this goal. When the latter was set as a primary goal for the state, pragmatism emerged as one more element of Chinese ideology. Democracy, as opposed to political stability, was presented as an obstacle for the rapid development of China¹⁰¹ and infringed for the sake of economic achievements.

¹⁰⁰ Tsang, p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004, p. 29.

All these ideologies in their own way affect Chinese decisions when dealing with territorial integrity issues. Communism 'calls for the achievement of a common proletarian culture based on the blending of all nationalities',¹⁰² and Maoism, being a *nationalist* form of Communism, favours *Sinification* over the total rejection of ethnicity, since Han are perceived as superior and further along the road of progress. Other ethnic groups therefore have to 'follow the "more advanced and civilized" Han example'.¹⁰³ It results in policies of Sinification and restrictions on the cultural aspects of life in Xinjiang and Tibet. In Hong Kong such harsh policies are not needed because it does not have a clear national identity, and positive means to build Chinese identity are used instead.

However, as the significance of Communism is sharply decreasing, when communistic and nationalistic interests collide, nationalism is placed higher, and this is reflected in the one country, two systems solution for Hong Kong. From the nationalist standpoint, since the main goal is to reunite Great China at any cost, any means to return Hong Kong were acceptable, even if it meant having to agree with conditions that do not correspond with communistic ideology. Nationalism can also explain why the minority people in Xinjiang and Tibet are politically under-represented and not allowed to enter higher levels of the party system, even though it is against egalitarian communistic ideology: they are taken as inferior and untrustworthy and viewed with suspicion.

Finally, if nationalism can explain why the one country, two systems solution was acceptable in the very beginning, pragmatism explains why this system is being preserved; Hong Kong can contribute the most to the economic growth of the PRC by preserving its current status, which requires an open capitalist economy and a certain degree of democracy. The Hong Kong system is possible in the PRC framework because it is seen as subordinated to China's authoritarian communistic system, contributing to its economic modernisation and thus helping it to achieve its pragmatic nationalistic goals.

4. Why different solutions?

After an analysis of the role the seven factors play in the PRC's decisions concerning its issues of territorial integrity, it becomes evident that although all

¹⁰² Moneyhon, 'Controlling Xinjiang', p. 128.

¹⁰³ Moneyhon, p. 134.

of them affect the PRC's strategies in their own way, the ones that resulted in different policies towards Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong are ideology, state goals, type of conflict, resources of the disputed territories, international factors, and most importantly, their interaction with ideology, which works as a catalyst that transforms certain differences between the cases into different policies towards them. To be more specific, the reasons why the policies applied to Hong Kong differ from those in Tibet and Xinjiang are the following:

- Hong Kong's profitability depends on its capitalist system and market economy and requires a certain level of democracy to ensure the proper implementation of legal agreements and a receptive atmosphere for foreign investors. Without autonomy, Hong Kong would lose most of its value to China. Meanwhile, Xinjiang's and Tibet's natural resources can best be exploited through direct rule.
- The inter-state status of the Hong Kong dispute made the PRC more willing to negotiate and seek a compromise since it dealt with Britain and not Hong Kong itself. The highly internationalised environment in Hong Kong continues to contribute to the special status of the region because it prevents China, reluctant to harm its international image, from using coercive measures or harsh policies towards it.
- Lack of ethnic differences between the Hong Kongers and mainlanders makes the actions and demands of people in Hong Kong seem less threatening to the PRC government than the ethnic grievances of Tibetans and Uyghurs.
- The PRC's determination to preserve a working example of one country, two systems for Taiwan remains one of the driving forces behind Hong Kong's exceptional status.
- The strategies of the groups in the problematic regions may explain those aspects of the Chinese strategies that are unique for every separate case.

Conclusions

The cases analysed in this article constitute two different approaches the PRC takes to cope with challenges to its sovereignty. The socio-economic, cultural and foreign policy measures used with Hong Kong differ significantly from those used with Xinjiang and Tibet. Only in the **political** realm can some similarities be seen: in all cases the PRC excludes the possibility of full-fledged democracy and

relies on strong executives controlled from Beijing. However, Hong Kong enjoys a certain level of democracy, although limited, and civil rights and liberties are protected there. Conversely, Tibet and Xinjiang are fully integrated into China's authoritarian single-party system and coercive measures are used to suppress any opposition in those regions.

In other areas there are even less similarities between the PRC's approaches. **Economic** decisions for Xinjiang and Tibet are taken in Beijing, the regions are totally dependent on state subsidies, and the overall economic structure benefits the Han instead of the local minorities. Hong Kong meanwhile has a separate budget and economic and financial system and handles its economic matters independently, with China intervening only in the face of major crises. Economic integration is achieved by strengthening economic ties between the region and the mainland. **Cultural** and religious matters in Xinjiang and Tibet are tightly controlled and ethnic identity is suppressed, the main feature of the PRC's cultural policy being intensive Sinification based on Han immigration. In Hong Kong, the PRC is attempting to build a new Chinese identity for Hong Kongers through positive means: official rhetoric and education. Finally, **foreign policies** differ radically, too: while the PRC puts extensive effort into isolating Uyghurs and Tibetans internationally, Hong Kong performs mostly independently on the international level, has its own representations around the world, and even enjoys separate membership in various international organisations.

To understand why these differences occur, a framework for analysis consisting of seven variables was applied for all three cases. Analysis revealed that all the factors have an impact on state policies, yet in two different ways: some of them define the spectrum of tools and measures available for the state by enabling or restricting it and others explain how the choice inside that spectrum is made. *Political structure* belongs to the first group, and *type of conflict* and *strategies of the people* in the disputed regions belong to the second. There are also some factors (*resources*, *international factors* and *state goals*) that may be assigned to both groups since some aspects of these factors define the state's capabilities, whereas other elements result in differences in state policies. The resources of the central government are an enabling factor, expanding the spectrum of tools it can use to solve its sovereignty issues, and at the same time the resources located in the territories in question determine the way these territories are treated. Similarly, the state's international status works as an enabling/restricting factor, while international factors such as the Taiwan issue and presence of foreign actors in the region have an impact on the differences between Chinese policies. And the effects of *state goals* depend on how the goals are understood: if perceived as defined by Esman (homogenisation vs.

acceptance of pluralism), then they perform as a restricting factor, but if understood in a broader sense, as the main goal of the state, then the stage at which the state appears to be in achieving its goals influences its position towards a certain region. *Ideology* occupies a special place in this process by being a catalyst that transforms the differences between the other factors into the differences between the different approaches.

Coming back to Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong in particular, the conclusion can be made that the differences are caused by the interaction of China's ideology, pragmatic nationalism, with the different types of resources the territories own, internationalisation of the Hong Kong issue, lack of ethnic differences between the Hong Kongers and mainlanders, and different strategies all three groups use. The unsettled Taiwan issue also contributes to the exceptional status of Hong Kong because the PRC wants to preserve a working example of one country, two systems.

The framework for analysis developed in this article proved to be helpful in understanding a state's decisions in dealing with its territorial integrity issues, and why the different strategies are chosen. Unfortunately, a major multi-case analysis that would increase the explanatory power of this model and provide a basis for broader generalisations was beyond the scope of this article. I believe however that this model could also be used to explain other cases and may become a starting point for the development of a coherent theory or model to explain why a state chooses certain policies to deal with separatism or issues of territorial integrity.